

Under Calvin's Spell.



BY D. ALCOCK.



Class

PZ3

Book

A354V



'THESE HANDS YOU MAY CRUSH, THESE ARMS
YOU MAY SEVER.'

UNDER CALVIN'S SPELL

A Tale of the
HEROIC TIMES
in
OLD GENEVA

By
DEBORAH ALCOCK
Author of
"THE SPANISH BROTHERS," &c.

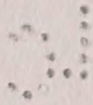


NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

PZ3
A3574

130709

10



P.H.-Oct. 22, 10

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE NUNS OF ST. CLAIRE	5
II. THE STORY OF AMI BERTHELIER	14
III. 'THE GREAT WHITE THRONE'	29
IV. FRENCH EXILES AND GENEVAN LIBERTINES	42
V. DE CAULAINCOURT'S TWO FRIENDS	52
VI. NORBERT DE CAULAINCOURT'S ONE FRIEND	61
VII. SISTER CLAUDINE	74
VIII. THE NEW GENEVA	87
IX. A DISASTER AND AN APPEAL	102
X. A GLEAM OF LIGHT	114
XI. IS THERE ANY HELP?	128
XII. A 'GENTLEMAN OF THE SPOON'	142
XIII. THE GENEVAN BRIDE	151
XIV. AN UNEXPECTED MEETING	170
XV. A SAVOYARD HOVEL	179
XVI. AMI BERTHELIER FINDS A FRIEND	186
XVII. BEFORE THE GREAT COUNCIL	202
XVIII. NORBERT DE CAULAINCOURT IS THANKED	212
XIX. THE 'EGREGIOUS' AMI BERTHELIER	218
XX. A GENTLEMAN OF THE SPOON AGAIN	231
XXI. RENUNCIATION	241
XXII. A DREADED INTERVIEW	249

Contents

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXIII.	NORBERT'S ERRAND	258
XXIV.	LYONS	267
XXV.	IN THE PRISON	279
XXVI.	IN THE CATHEDRAL	289
XXVII.	DARK DAYS	297
XXVIII.	OLD THINGS PASS AWAY	308
XXIX.	BEARING THE BURDEN OF THE YEARS	317
XXX.	'GO IN PEACE'	331
XXXI.	THE PASSING OF CALVIN	340
XXXII.	THE END	357

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FACING PAGE

- √ “THESE HANDS YOU MAY CRUSH, THESE ARMS YOU
MAY SEVER” Title
- √ “THANK GOD!” HE SAID WITH EMOTION, “HIS FREE
CITY!” 29
- √ “LET US PLAY TOGETHER THE GAME OF THE KEY” 94
- √ “OH, SIR, HAVE PITY, HAVE PITY!” 112
- √ A PERSON IN A NOTARY’S ROBE BEGAN TO READ . . 119
- √ “DAMIOSELLE, I DRINK TO YOUR HEALTH AND
HAPPINESS” 147
- √ THE VEIL WAS RAISED, JUST A LITTLE 154
- √ SOME CLUNG TO THE PILLARS, SOME GOT UP INTO
THE WINDOWS 202
- √ AT A SIGN FROM HIM THE BEARERS STOPPED . . . 220

✓ HE KNELT ON ONE KNEE AND STRETCHED OUT HIS HAND	236
✓ NORBERT DREW NEARER, AND STOOD LISTENING . .	269
✓ THEY SOON CAME TO THE GLOOMY GATEWAY . .	280
✓ THE TORCHLIGHT SHOWED HIM A FIGURE THAT CROUCHED ON THE FLOOR	290
✓ AS GABRIELLE ENTERED HE TURNED AND LOOKED AT HER	304
✓ SHE ONLY SAID ONE WORD—"VICTOR"	334

UNDER CALVIN'S SPELL

CHAPTER I

THE NUNS OF ST. CLAIRE

IT was very early, not yet five o'clock, on a dull and cloudy August morning, in the old city of Geneva, more than three centuries and a half ago. Already a crowd had gathered about the stately gateway that led to the convent of the nuns of St. Claire. There were a few sober citizens, in gowns or doublets of good serge, who lent to the rest an air of respectability they much needed, being mostly the lowest of the people, rough men, and idle street boys who were jesting, shouting and playing pranks on each other and on the bystanders after the manner of their kind. But amidst their discordant and often meaningless cries was one which ever rose above the rest, 'Down with the Mass!'

'Hold thy peace, malapert urchin!' said a man in a cassock, administering to one of the shouters a sound box on the ear. "'Tis little thou knowest;—"Down with the Mass" means "Up with the School." And may thy master never spoil *thee* by sparing the rod!'

Under Calvin's Spell

'Take that for your blow!' the boy retorted, pulling off his assailant's round cap and flinging it into the gutter.

'Prithee, stand you back!' cried a third speaker. 'Let us see the fair faces of the ladies as they pass out. The council hath dealt with them better than they deserve, giving them courteous leave to depart whither they would, and a covered waggon for the infirm.'

'A covered waggon, forsooth! A bath in the lake would have served them better,' said another. 'We are well rid of them and of all their pestilent brood. Curse them!'

The cassock wearer turned on him indignantly. 'What did the nuns of St. Claire do thee or thine, that thou shouldst curse them? Look to thyself, heretic. Curses, like chickens, come home to roost.'

'Hush! no brawling here,' spake the voice of authority, as the crowd fell back before one of the syndics, or chief magistrates of the town. 'Stand back—stand back! The ladies are coming forth. For our honour, children of Geneva, let them not hear an ill word among us.'

The peremptory voice of the syndic secured obedience; and the people stood in momentary silence, looking at the great gate which so long had been closed upon the world outside. They knew what it had shut out—but what had it shut *in*, all those years?

As they looked the gate trembled, shook, as if about to be opened from within. Twice, thrice, it seemed ready to give way, yet still its fastenings held. Perhaps the hands of the aged porter, who was trying to open it, trembled too much for his task. For indeed it was

The Nuns of St. Claire

a sad one. The nuns of St. Claire were going forth for ever from the ancient house of their order—to some of them the only home they had ever known. Geneva had accepted the Reformation; and the religious houses were to be transformed into schools or hospitals. Their inmates, however, were free to remain in the city, or to leave it, as they pleased. In either case no one would molest them. The nuns of St. Claire had chosen to leave. They were going to another house of their order, at Annecy.

While the crowd stood waiting, a white-haired, feeble-looking man made his way to the front. He was very lame, leaning heavily on a staff, and his long threadbare coat hung loose on his wasted frame. His face was worn and his cheeks hollow, but his eyes were bright and keen, and burning with eager expectation. The crowd made way for him with a kind of respect, and the man of authority gave him place to stand beside him. While he murmured a word of thanks, there was a general movement. All eyes turned to the great gate as at last it swung wide open.

Two and two, in mournful silence, holding each others' hands, the black-robed, close-veiled nuns came forth. At the head of the sad procession walked the aged lady superior, bent and trembling, her head bowed low, and her tottering footsteps supported by the stronger arm of the prioress, a tall and stately personage, who marched on, erect and steady, holding a crucifix aloft and chanting in a firm voice the *Salve, Regina*. She knew that the prayer to the Queen of Heaven was blasphemy to her hearers. So much the worse for them!

Under Calvin's Spell

A piercing cry stopped the chant. 'Claudine! Claudine! My sister!'

The white-haired man had flung himself upon one of the nuns who was following the prioress. She had been walking with bowed head, weeping quietly behind her veil, which now, in surprise and terror, she flung partially aside. Her face was sweet and pleasant to look upon, though perhaps it had never been beautiful, not even in youth. Her soft brown hair was still untouched with grey, and her brow and cheek still unwrinkled. It seemed as though life had dealt gently with her, and so, after one great agony, in truth it had. She listened with troubled looks to the pleading voice of her brother. 'Come with me, my sister, come with me, I need you!' he went on, not aloud, but in a low, intense, half-choking whisper.

She shrank away from him in bewildered terror. 'No, no,' she faltered. 'Oh no, I am the bride of Christ.'

Still he clung to her. 'Look at me, Claudine, only look at me,' he pleaded. 'I am Ami, your brother, whom you loved so in the old, old days. Do you not remember?'

Then she looked at him, looked earnestly, wistfully; and a new light dawned in her dim blue eyes. 'Yes, I remember,' she said dreamily. 'The old days!—But they are past, so long past—I am dead to the world. Let me go!'

Still he held her fast. 'Claudine,' he pleaded, 'look on me yet again.'

She looked again. 'But you are *not* Ami. You are an old man, a stranger,' she said, doubt shadowing her

The Nuns of St. Claire

face. Then, in an altered tone, 'And I cannot talk with you. See, we are stopping the way. I must go.'

'You shall *not* go, Claudine! Hear me! By the memory of our orphaned childhood, when I was father and mother both to thee——'

Here the prioress turned and spoke. 'What means this unmannerly interruption?' she asked sternly. 'Was it not covenanted we should go in peace, without let or hindrance? Is this your heretic faith-keeping? Man, stand back! Touch not the holy sister, the bride of Christ.' Then, in the voice of unquestioned authority, 'Sister Agatha, come on.'

The frail form of the broken man seemed to dilate, and he spoke with a kind of majesty, 'She whom you call Sister Agatha is my sister, Claudine Berthelier. She is coming home with me.'

'She shall *not*! Sister Agatha, remember yourself and your vows. Pass on! Master syndic, fulfil your promise, and bid them clear the way.'

The man of authority cleared his throat and looked irresolute. 'If the lady will——' he began.

'She will keep her vows. Come, sister.'

Claudine's bewildered eyes turned piteously from one to the other. Her colour came and went, she looked about to faint. But she did not stir, and made no movement to shake off her brother's grasp.

Then, at last, the lady superior interposed. 'Let Sister Agatha choose,' she said, in the weak, quavering voice of old age. 'Sister, what wouldest thou?'

'Yes, choose,' said the prioress sternly. 'Come with us, and keep thy vows; or go back to the world thou hast renounced, and lose thy soul for ever.'

Under Calvin's Spell

'If God give thee not repentance,' the lady superior said. 'But choose, Sister Agatha, for we must go.'

Claudine trembled exceedingly. Like a flood, the days of her youth swept back upon her. But then, there was the habit of half a life-time, there were her vows, there was what she thought her duty to God. She had no power to decide.

Ami's strong will decided for her. He placed his arm in hers, and with gentle force he drew her away. It was time: too long already they had stopped the way. The lady superior turned from her with a sad 'Fare you well;' the prioress with a stern, 'God forgive you,' which might have been rendered, 'I believe He never will.'

Ami led his sister through the throng, for the most part silent and respectful, save for the jeers of a few impudent street boys at the runaway nun. When they got into a quiet street he said, 'We have something of a walk before us, for I dwell beyond the bridge, in the Rue Cornavin. My lodging is poor, but comfortable, and I have had a chamber prepared for you. I knew you would come to me.'

She had walked on with him mechanically, as one amazed. Or rather, in such bewilderment as one transplanted suddenly into another world might feel. Streets, houses, passers-by—all were a marvel. The boys who jeered at her were not a marvel only, but a horror. Even the ground beneath her feet gave her a sense of unreality, with which there mingled strangely a feeling of wrong-doing. She was where she had no right to be—and where she had no place. So many houses, so many people, so many faces—and all unknown to her.

The Nuns of St. Claire

But hearing her brother speak, she tried to rouse herself. In her bewildered brain the instincts of gentle birth and breeding asserted their sway. She made courteous effort to respond, though scarce understanding his words. 'You live alone, then?'

'There is always Marguerite.'

Claudine's dazed, perplexed face showed absolutely a gleam of pleasure. 'The dear old nurse!' she said. 'But no—it cannot be. She would be a hundred years old.'

A dim smile hovered round Berthelier's firm, clear-cut lips. 'She is just sixty-three,' he said. 'It is but sixteen years since we parted, and she was not old then, save to you and me.'

'Sixteen years? I had thought it scarce so long. In Religion, hours are long, but years are short.'

'I had thought it far longer. Besides Marguerite, there is the child.'

'What child?' with a faint accent of surprise.

'A few years ago, when we feared an attack from the Savoyards and the League, we laid waste our own suburbs, by way of defence. You heard of it, of course?'

But Claudine shook her head.

'The people came into the city for shelter, even from St. Gervais. Marguerite and I came too, though the Rue Cornavin was not destroyed. We gave refuge in our lodging to peasants from the country, a man and a woman, who died there of the fever, leaving this little babe. Marguerite must needs tend and feed her, and—what would you have? Could I put the babe out upon the door-step?'

Under Calvin's Spell

'You could have brought it to a convent.'

Berthelier shrugged his shoulders, and was silent. Presently he resumed, 'Marguerite took good care of the babe, but now the child grows and—I want you.'

'For her?' with a sense of disappointment she did not herself understand.

'More for myself.'

Silence followed; until at last Claudine, whose senses seemed slowly returning to her, ventured a question, 'Brother, what has made you white-haired, and so lame?'

'I thought you knew. The dungeon and the pulley. But they got nothing out of me. And I have had my revenge. What we fought for has been won, though not by us, nor in our way.'

'I do not understand,' said Claudine. After a pause she added, 'But I hope, brother, you have not forsaken the Faith, and become a heretic like the rest. Your soul would be lost for ever.'

The dim smile came again. 'I do not believe as you,' he said. 'But take comfort; for as little do I believe the new doctrines of Master William Farrel and Master John Calvin. And perchance at bottom I hold these gentlemen no better than the priests. Still, they have done our work for us.'

'I do not understand,' Claudine said again, this time rather piteously.

'One of the many things I want you for, my sister,' Ami added kindly, 'is to teach little Gabrielle her prayers, for Marguerite in her old age must needs go after the new doctrine, while I think the old—if not so

The Nuns of St. Claire

good for strong men—far meeter for little maids. But at last here we are.’

‘This house, with the bookbinder’s sign?’

‘No, the next. But cross yourself, Claudine, as you pass; for there has just come to live Master Calvin’s own brother, who binds his books for him.’

As Berthelier approached his own door a beautiful little girl, dark-eyed and dark-haired, sprang out and flung herself upon him with a rapturous, overflowing welcome.

‘Softly—softly!’ said he. ‘Beware of my staff and my lame leg. Gabrielle, this is my dear sister, and your good Aunt Claudine, who is coming to live with us, and take care of you and me. Go to her, kiss her hand, and ask her to love you.’

The child hung back, pouting. ‘I don’t like her clothes,’ she said, ‘and I don’t want any one to love me but you and Marguerite.’

Berthelier looked at his sister. ‘You see already that you are needed here,’ he said. ‘Neither Marguerite nor I know aught that should be done for a child, except to love it. But come in, my sister. Welcome to my home, or rather, to your own.’

CHAPTER II

THE STORY OF AMI BERTHELIER

‘But freedom’s battle, once begun,
Bequeathed from bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft, is ever won.’

WHEN the fair city of Lake Lemman accepted the Reformation, she had already felt the glory and the glow of the rising sun of liberty. Some twenty years before, she had cast off the chains of a two-fold tyranny, which in truth was but one. For behind the crozier of the cruel, profligate prince-bishop were the sword and sceptre of the Duke of Savoy ; and bishop and duke together had pressed her down until the burden grew too heavy to be borne, and her citizens asked each other in shop and market-place, ‘Why should we bear it any longer?’

They were very capable of asking the question, and of finding the answer. Their faculties were trained and quickened by the social and municipal life of a busy town, by commerce, by skilful handicrafts, often by travel, sometimes by all of intellectual advantage the Age could offer—and it was the Age of the Renaissance. For them, as for most of their contemporaries, the Time was young ; it was full of activity, of expectation, of

The Story of Ami Berthelier

promise—full also of the faults of youth, of rashness, audacity, and petulance, and of the ignorance which is absolutely sure of everything in heaven and upon earth.

Still, when the Time is young, it is well with those that are young also. Such was the lot of Ami Berthelier, the orphan of a wealthy citizen of Geneva, who had more than doubled his possessions by marriage with the heiress of one of the merchant princes of Augsburg, with whom he had business relations. The young Berthelier, educated at Padua, caught the spirit of the Renaissance, and learned to love well his classical lore, his Latin verses, his library, his 'brown Greek manuscript.' But better still he loved the dream of a free, regenerated Geneva. He was a young man of fashion, a student, a scholar, but before all these he was a citizen of Geneva, and heart and soul a Huguenot. This name of honour and renown had as yet no religious significance; religion entered not at all into the thoughts of such men as Ami Berthelier; to them it meant merely the member of a league, at first and ostensibly a league of *combourgeoisie* with the friendly citizens of Fribourg, but really and ultimately a league for the defence of the ancient liberties of Geneva. His chief friends were the brilliant and versatile Bonivard, the celebrated Prior of St. Victor, known to history, romance and poetry as the Prisoner of Chillon; Lévrier, the incorruptible judge, most stainless of Genevan patriots; and, above all, his own kinsman, Philibert Berthelier.

This remarkable man was a typical tribune of the people. With them he jested, laughed, caroused, hiding his graver thoughts beneath a mask of frivolity. He

Under Calvin's Spell

became their idol ; and he used all the influence thus obtained to inspire them with his own love of liberty, and to help them to obtain it. Whilst rendering a gay and careless homage, that all men saw, at the shrine of pleasure, the true devotion of his heart was kept for the altar of freedom, upon which he was ready, if need were, to offer up his own life also.

His young and wealthy cousin, Ami, chose to burn incense only at the nobler shrine. Early left independent by the death of his father, his tastes led him to prefer intellectual pursuits to grosser pleasures, and to fill his charming country house by the lake with scholars and students, rather than with boon companions. His mother died in his boyhood, but he was much attached to his only sister, ten years his junior ; and it was well known that a yet tenderer tie would one day unite him with the beautiful Yolande Lévrier, niece and ward of the patriot judge.

All things were going well with him, when suddenly the storm broke, and the bolt fell that meant ruin. The detested prince-bishop, backed by the sword of Savoy and the influence of the Mamelukes (or friends of despotism in the town), made himself, in an evil hour, master of Geneva. A reign of terror followed, in which confiscation, imprisonment, torture, and death were the order of the day. Two of the protagonists of Genevan liberty, Berthelier and Lévrier, died on the scaffold, both with undaunted courage, Lévrier most like the devout Christian he seems to have been. The third, Bonivard, was thrown into the dungeon which his sufferings, and the immortal stanzas of the English poet, have made so famous. But there were others

The Story of Ami Berthelier

who bore their share in that great agony, though they missed the glory.

‘They had no bard—and died.’

Very bitter was the cup borne to the lips of Ami Berthelier, well known as the devoted admirer and intimate friend of his great kinsman. As even a shred of evidence to convict the patriots of anything that could be called a crime was hard to find, desperate methods were used to obtain it. But neither rack nor pulley, neither chains, nor darkness, nor starvation could open the locked lips of the faithful disciple; though they broke his strong frame, turned his hair white, and added two-score years to his age. When at last deliverance came, it found him shattered in mind and body, a shadow of his former self. His wealth had been seized by the oppressors; only enough remained (husbanded and watched over by secret friends) to secure a frugal maintenance for whatever future might remain to him. Marguerite, an old servant of the family who had been his sister's nurse, came back to him to manage his slender resources, in the modest dwelling-place his friends had obtained for him, consisting of the *étage*, or upper story of a house in the Rue Cornavin, of which the lower part was used as a store by a dealer in foreign fruits. His sister, when the evil days began, had found refuge with the nuns of St. Claire, to his great relief.

He came back like a ghost to the world of living men. Little life was left in him, and all there was seemed turned to bitterness. It must be a thing most terrible to walk in the furnace heated seven times

Under Calvin's Spell

without the presence of the Son of God. The marvel is that any do it, and survive. But inasmuch as Ami Berthelier, for all the anguish, had not sinned against his own soul, and betrayed the innocent, we may hope that One he saw not nevertheless stood by him unknown, nor ever quite forsook him, even when he doubted His very existence. Ami Berthelier went into his dungeon a careless semi-pagan of the Renaissance, with little faith to lose, but he came out of it a confirmed unbeliever, 'having no hope, and without God in the world.'

A chill, hard despair of himself, of his country, of all men, had laid hold upon his soul. Even when the Reformation, the true sunrise of modern freedom, of which the others were but prophecies and promises, rose upon Geneva, he was as one to whom, after long agony of separation, his old love comes back again—and he does not know her.

The great 'Twenty-first of May'¹ found him cold and unmoved. He stood, indeed, in the vast church of St. Peter, amongst the throng of citizens who lifted up their right hands and swore to be faithful to God and to His truth, now revealed to them for the first time in His Holy Gospel—but he raised no hand, he spoke no vow. The whole transaction was foreign to his consciousness, it had for him no meaning and no message.

He did not read the signs of the times. He set his face towards the sombre West, whence no light

¹ When the Genevans solemnly swore adhesion to the principles of the Reformation.

The Story of Ami Berthelier

could come; and thus, though the East behind him was one blaze of sunrise glory, he could not see it.

The sons of Philibert Berthelier, and others of the old Huguenot party who had survived the persecution, or returned from their exile, came to visit him. But they were to him for the most part vanity and vexation of spirit. Some had thrown themselves heartily into the new movement; but others, led by the young Bertheliers, had quite as little liking for the Reformers as their fathers had for the prince-bishop. They reflected the lower, not the higher section of the old Huguenots; and Ami, though he had no objection to their irreligion, was revolted by their frivolity, their coarseness, and the license both of their speech and their practice.

Still, when in consequence of her acceptance of the Reformation there arose around Geneva a host of powerful enemies, who threatened her very existence, the fire of the old patriotism flamed up amidst its ashes. He, who thought that tears were no more for him, felt hot drops on the fingers that veiled his eyes from the sight of Genevan citizens marshalled to defend their homes, when he could not go with them to the fight. He gave out of his poverty to the defence, and but for Marguerite, would have starved himself to give still more. When the patriotic citizens destroyed their own suburbs, sacrificing their beautiful country houses and much of their wealth, to keep the enemy from finding a foothold there, he gladly abandoned his dwelling in the Rue Cornavin, which belonged to the suburb of St. Gervais, and came to a poor lodging in what was then called La Fusterie. In his narrow quarters there he gave shelter,

Under Calvin's Spell

as he told his sister, to a peasant and his wife, who were, like many others, left homeless by the destruction of the suburbs.

The peasant was a dull, honest fellow, of the class whom the citizens of Geneva contemptuously styled 'Grey-feet,' living on and farming his own small plot of ground; the wife was a Savoyard, and far sharper. They had with them a babe, assumed to be their own. The unwholesome crowding of the town soon brought fever, and both the man and the woman took it and died. When the woman sickened the babe became Marguerite's care, and to her, when she felt herself dying, she confided that the child was not her own, but a babe of gentle parentage which she had taken to nurse. This information Marguerite duly passed on to her master, who, however, scarcely listened to the tale, and soon forgot all about it. But he did not refuse her earnest request that she might keep the babe and nurse it. By the time they returned to the Rue Cornavin, which happily it had not been necessary to demolish, her nursling had become the great joy of her life.

Time passed on. Soon, all too soon as it seemed, there was no longer a babe to nurse, but a dark-eyed, dark-haired child-maiden, full of mischief, to guard and guide—a little body, all life to the finger-tips, to keep from falling into the fire or pulling the stools down upon itself, and a little active mind to keep from troubles of another kind and to feed in another way. The strange thing was, that this perplexing creature made up her mind to look for everything to Ami Berthelier himself. With the caprice of childhood, she was the tyrant of the devoted nurse who toiled for her night and day, and

The Story of Ami Berthelier

the adoring slave of the white-haired man who bestowed upon her an occasional, parenthetic notice. She watched for his look and his smile, employed all her pretty arts to attract his attention, and was lifted to the height of beatitude by a seat on his knee.

Berthelier liked it, of course; a child's love is the sweetest of flatteries, as may be seen from the fact that no length of time ever obliterates the remembrance from the mind of its object. But as years went by he grew unhappy about the little Gabrielle. He knew she ought to be taught and trained, but he had not the smallest idea how to do it. Nor indeed had Marguerite, who could cook and wash with the best, but even with the needle her hands were unskilful. As for weightier matters, she could not read; and the kind of religious instruction which, as a devoted but not very enlightened follower of Calvin, she was disposed to give, did not seem to her master exactly food for babes. In all these things his own hands were empty of help. 'Well-born' maidens, he reflected, should be taught to sew, to read, and to pray, and of these three desirable accomplishments he could impart but one.

This was how, even to himself, he accounted for his appearance that August morning at the gate of the nuns of St. Claire. But the great deeps of the human heart lie far beneath the tide of consciousness. The touch of childish hands had been gradually awakening much within him which he thought was dead for ever. Longings for the sister he had loved so well began to haunt him, growing ever stronger, till they took the likeness of those, the strongest of all, which wring our hearts for—

Under Calvin's Spell

'The touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still.'

Suddenly he remembered that his sister was *not* dead, that he could yet hear her voice, could yet touch her hand. Why, then, not try to do it?

His purpose grew and strengthened, and when the banishment of the nuns at St. Claire gave it opportunity, it bore fruit to action. But would the result be a success? For a season he was tempted to doubt it.

By his hearth, as one in a dream, sat a pale, bewildered woman, dressed now, not in conventual attire, but in the ordinary garb of a Genevan dame, and vainly trying to adjust herself to the new conditions, and the new conditions to herself, as a child puts together a difficult dissected puzzle.

In appearance she found her nurse far less changed than her brother; but the change in old Marguerite's mind was one of the most perplexing of all the perplexing elements around her. She prayed, but she did not tell her beads like a Christian; she talked of religion, using long words, such as justification, regeneration, sanctification, which to her hearer might as well, or better, have been Latin, for then she would have believed they had a meaning, though she might not know what it was. Poor Claudine (no one called her Sister Agatha now) was of opinion that the world, since she left it, had gone quite mad!

Within doors and without, it was much the same. The streets were full of unknown perils; the rough market-women with their cries and quarrelling, frightened her almost out of her senses; even the oxen being driven to the shambles she took at first for wild beasts.

The Story of Ami Berthelier

In the house she was scarcely more happy. Her brother was kind, and Marguerite duteous, but both treated her as the child which in all worldly matters she certainly was. Even little Gabrielle ignored her, after the unflattering custom of her kind towards a 'grown-up' who is neither loved nor necessary. She sighed in secret for the convent. She even began to call herself an apostate, and to think she had committed the unpardonable sin.

Deliverance came to her; and through nothing greater than the torn garment of a child. One day Gabrielle ran to her in great distress with her holiday dress, a gay little petticoat of Lyons silk, torn down almost from waist to hem. She had been playing, she explained, with the bookbinder's little boys next door, and Jeannot did it.

'The naughty varlet!' said Claudine. 'But why dost thou play with those ill lads, Gabrielle? It is not seemly for a little maid.'

Gabrielle pouted. 'Father lets me,' she said, and ran away, calling Marguerite.

At Claudine's heart tugged the demon of jealousy. She fetched hastily a simpler dress for the child, and pursued her to the kitchen, where she found her climbing up on the table, to sit there and wait for Marguerite, who, as Claudine's good star ordained, was just then at the market.

'Let me put this on thee,' she said, 'and see, Gabrielle, I will mend thy blue silk, before father comes home to take thee for that walk on the Molard he promised this morning.'

A little more coaxing and the blue silk was safe in

Under Calvin's Spell

her hands. The rent was a bad one ; but under the skilful hand of the convent-taught needlewoman it was neatly and quickly repaired. Claudine, as she worked, could not help seeing that the garment was ill-made and ill-fitting. 'I would alter it so, and so,' she thought, 'and I would embroider the hem with that pretty stitch Sister Ursula taught me.'

As she planned, Marguerite came in, and looked with interested eyes. Presently she went into another room, returning with a great armful of little hoods, kirtles, bodices, tippets, and what not.

'To tell you the truth, damoiselle,' she said, 'through these clothes of the little one the devil has had much advantage over me.'

'I no way misdoubt of it,' returned Claudine, with unusual energy ; 'though I think he makes much more use of Master Calvin's heresies than of the petticoats of an innocent child.'

'I will not dispute with you, my damoiselle, seeing you are still, as one may say, in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity ; but, all the same, that poor innocent's green hood and blue kirtle agree no better than the Mamelukes and Huguenots used to do before the Gospel came to us—and she as proud of them all the time as a peacock of its tail or a papistical bishop of his crozier.'

'Well, let us see what can be done,' said Claudine, diplomatically ignoring Marguerite's offensive allusions.

'See then, my damoiselle, here is this bit of purple gros-grain Madame de Maisonneuve gave the master, wherewith to make for her a little coat for Sundays and holidays. 'Tis a beauty, is it not? She will like to see

The Story of Ami Berthelier

it on her ; but I could never make my mind up to cut it, since, if scissors go wrong, 'tis a sin with no place of repentance.'

Thus Claudine, the skilled needlewoman, found her vocation, and was troubled with no more fears about the unpardonable sin. Still she continued, in the Protestant city, at heart a devout Catholic. With all the strength of her nature (not great at the best), she longed for the Sacraments of her Church, especially for the Mass, at that time interdicted there. Once or twice she received religious consolations from a priest in disguise, whom her brother found out accidentally, and in his good-natured indifference invited to visit her. With Berthelier's consent she taught Gabrielle her own prayers and the elements of her own creed ; to the infinite disgust of Marguerite, who did all in her power to counteract the mischief, taking the child, whenever she could, to St. Peter's to hear Master Calvin, and trying to impress his doctrines on her young mind. Outside of both himself, Berthelier looked on with quiet amusement at the battle of the Creeds. He knew that anything like an open adherence to Catholicism would expose Gabrielle, when she grew up, to very great practical inconveniences, if she remained in Geneva ; but he never doubted that his sister's pretty superstitions, as he thought them, would drop off from her when she came to years of discretion, and that she would think and believe like every one about her. Meanwhile, he did not care who won the victory ; not realizing that in such battles it is apt to go hard with the young souls that are fought for, and for whom every thing is so real, so earnest.

Under Calvin's Spell

As for Gabrielle, to whose childish mind the preaching at St. Peter's did not appeal, she inclined at first to the teaching of 'Tante Claudine,' as she learned to call her. She became very fond of the gentle, kindly woman; although from first to last 'Father' reigned in her heart without a rival.

In the larger world without, as in the young heart of Gabrielle, rival forces were fighting for the victory. It is true that, to our modern thinking, that world itself was a microcosm. The Czar Paul, the ruler of fifty millions, contemptuously styled a civil conflict in Geneva 'a tempest in a tumbler of water;' and the yet more scornful Voltaire averred that whenever he dressed his perruque he powdered the whole Republic. Yet the little State was destined to illustrate in her own history that doctrine of theology which her greatest divine so definitely formulated, that (although by no means peculiar to him, nor held more strongly by him than by many others) it has gone thenceforward by his name. Because the sublime and simple thought 'elect,'—chosen of God, has been hardened into dogma, compressed into the bounds of system, and sometimes even distorted into absolute falsehood, it is not therefore the less grand or the less true. The brave little city by the lake was as really 'elect'—or chosen—of God as the Zion of old in which He put His Name. She was chosen to receive His Word, and to show to all the world the spectacle of a community honestly endeavouring to obey it. She was chosen to be a city of refuge for His persecuted servants throughout all Christendom, who thronged to her gates as to a very haven of rest, where they might dwell safely, and fear no evil. 'Let

The Story of Ami Berthelier

Mine outcasts dwell with thee,' was God's special charge to Geneva ; and she heard and obeyed.

It needed deep religious conviction, as well as heroic courage, for the little State to brave the anger of her powerful neighbours by receiving and sheltering these refugees. Moreover, not without much personal self-denial, on the part of her citizens, could so great a concourse of strangers be maintained. Yet the kindness was amply repaid ; Geneva found it indeed more blessed to give than to receive. Not merely because the 'gentle and honest strangers' contributed to her population a most valuable element, greatly increasing her moral and intellectual strength, but also because, through her sacrifices for them, she was saved from the dangers of a morbid austerity and asceticism. Her earnest spirits shared with their contemporaries the tendency to look on the darker and sterner side of religion and of life, and the powerful genius of the man who inspired and dominated them tended also in the same direction. But practical benevolence has a broadening influence on character. Fasting for its own sake may tend to narrowness ; but fasting to feed the hungry enlarges the heart, and heart and mind are interdependent. This work of ministry for God's outcasts lent the stern *régime* of Calvinistic Geneva a grace and a glory it would otherwise have lacked. Perhaps it could not save it wholly from the hardness of fanaticism, but it certainly redeemed it from its selfishness.

But before the little city could accept and fulfil her mission, she had to be trained and educated, and purged from the elements irreconcilable with it. These

Under Calvin's Spell

were twofold. The worst foes of true order and of true liberty (which in their essence are but one), are a false order, which is slavery, and a false freedom, which is license. In throwing off the yoke of Rome, Geneva had emancipated herself from the first; she had still before her a long and bitter struggle with the second, represented by the party known in history as the Libertines.

But the final act of this drama did not take place for years after the events which made the little Gabrielle and the nun of St. Claire joint inmates of the house of Ami Berthelier.



'THANK GOD!' HE SAID WITH EMOTION,
'HIS FREE CITY!'

J.R.
C.2

CHAPTER III

'THE GREAT WHITE THRONE'

'Who so in one thing hath been true,
Can be as true in all.'

SEWELL.

YEARS came and went. Again it was an August morning in Geneva, only fairer than that which witnessed long ago the departure of the nuns of St. Claire. The gate of Cornavin had just been opened to admit the vendors of milk, fruit, and vegetables, who were bringing their wares to the early market. Walking behind a cart full of country produce, as if in charge of it, there slipped in unnoticed two who had nothing to sell, a tall man in a blouse, and a dark-haired boy who might have been fourteen, but if so, was small and childish-looking for his years. These two soon stepped aside from the throng, and drew unobserved into the shadow of a house. Then, with a sudden impulse, the older traveller knelt down and pressed his lips upon the rough, uneven ground.

'Thank God!' he said with emotion. 'His free city! This blessed Genevan soil!' There were tears on his strong face when he rose again.

'Father!' cried the boy. 'Look, father, look!

Under Calvin's Spell

Yonder is the Throne of God, the Great White Throne!'

For the monarch of mountains rose above them, distant yet plainly visible in the pure clear air—not flushed in a sunrise glow, but white and stainless, in its awful majesty, like the everlasting righteousness of God.

Germain de Caulaincourt raised his tear-dimmed eyes.

'That is Mont Blanc, a very great mountain,' he answered indifferently.

Sixteenth-century souls did not often thrill to the touch of Nature's sublimities, though many of them quite appreciated her gentler charms. But no doubt there were exceptions, and the look in Norbert de Caulaincourt's young eyes as he gazed was enough to rank him amongst them. He had large dark eyes and a beautiful face, of a soft, girlish type.

His father laid his hand kindly on his shoulder. 'You must be very tired,' he said, 'and very hungry.'

'So are you, father,' young Norbert answered brightly, though without withdrawing his gaze from the white wonder in the sky.

'I know not what to do, till it is later, and we can go before the syndics,' pursued De Caulaincourt.

'An inn?' suggested Norbert, still looking up.

Germain shook his head. 'Inns have scant welcome for penniless visitors,' he said.

As he spoke a door was opened on the other side of the street, and a white-haired man came forth slowly, for he was lame. He looked for a moment at the two strangers, turned away, took a few steps down the street, turned back, and looked again, as one irresolute.

‘The Great White Throne’

The strangers removed their peasants’ caps, and saluted—not with the air of peasants. Ami Berthelier responded, and by a common impulse they drew nearer. He spoke first, ‘I think, monsieur, you are strangers here?’

‘We are, monsieur. We come from France, exiles for the Gospel’s sake.’

‘How have you contrived it?’

‘By long wanderings over the mountains, hiding in peasants’ huts, and journeying mostly in the night time. I brought with me from home a little money and a few jewels—just what I could conceal about my person; but on the hills we were set upon by brigands, and robbed of everything—indeed, we were glad to escape with life. Last night we walked from a little mountain hamlet—I do not know its name. And this morning we hung about the gate till it was opened for the market-people, and came in with them.’

‘Strangers who seek refuge with us go to the Town Hall, and tell their case to the magistrates.’

‘I know it. And I pray you, tell me of your kindness where to find the Town Hall.’

‘Nay, monsieur, not yet. Their worships do not sit until after service, which is at six o’clock. Rather come in first with me and break your fast.’

‘But you were going forth. I shall disarrange you.’

‘Not at all. I am of Geneva, you are of the Faith. That is enough. Do me the honour to come in.’

They were soon in Berthelier’s living room, where a plainly-dressed woman, with a sweet, rather sad face, was introduced to them by their host, who had already learned their names, as his sister, Claudine Berthelier.

Under Calvin's Spell

She responded courteously, if not cordially, and went out to hasten the breakfast.

Soup was in Geneva the universal morning meal; but, in consideration for the hunger of his guests, Berthelier whispered a word to Claudine, and presently the old servant, Marguerite, brought in a dish of cold salted beef, which with soup, bread, and a pitcher of light sour wine completed the preparations. The table was well polished and spotlessly clean, but table-cloths were not then in use, and a piece of bread scooped out was the only salt-cellar.

'Where is Gabrielle?' asked Berthelier as his sister entered. He had scarcely finished speaking, when a lovely girl, half child half maiden, came in; her very plain bodice and petticoat of grey serge could not hide the graceful lines of her figure, while her flower-like face looked all the fairer for the contrast. She was followed by the old servant, who brought with her, after the custom of her class, her own pewter plate, and set it down modestly at the end of the table.

All gathered round the board—Berthelier at the head, the two Caulaincourts at one side, and Claudine and Gabrielle at the other. The strangers stood, expecting a lengthy grace. But to their surprise Berthelier only murmured, 'May God bless our food,' and began to carve the salt beef, as welcome to his hungry guests as the daintiest fare.

'Is it true, monsieur,' he asked presently, 'that King Henry has issued a new persecuting edict?'

'Too true, monsieur; though indeed he need not have taken the trouble, since under the old one fires were already blazing throughout the kingdom.' The

'The Great White Throne'

exile proceeded to give examples and details, which culminated in horrors that would have effectually destroyed the appetites of a modern breakfast-party. Here the only one through whom they sent a shiver of positive pain was Claudine; for Berthelier already knew all, and Marguerite thought only of the glories and rewards of martyrdom. As for young Norbert, his eyes and thoughts were dwelling with a kind of fascination on his opposite neighbour. Gabrielle was scarcely older than himself, yet to the boy she seemed a 'maiden fair' whom any knight might be proud to fight for or to serve. But why was she not dressed like his sisters? Why did they cover her all up with that horrid grey thing? Still, what eyes, what a mouth, what lips! How grave she looked, how quiet! He wished that she would speak, or at least smile. By way of an overture he essayed to pour out some wine for her; whereupon she thanked him (in the sweetest of voices), but said she only drank water; at which he did not greatly wonder, in view of the quality of the wine.

At length every one had finished. 'Grace after meat,' was said very briefly; then the old servant beckoned to the boy. 'Young sir,' she said, 'the bell is ringing for morning prayers. Will you come with me and worship God?'

Norbert looked at his father, who, however, was so deep in talk with Berthelier that he was obliged to speak to him. 'Will you go, father?' he asked.

'Go thou, my son; I go not this time,' Caulaincourt answered, and continued his discourse.

So Norbert and Marguerite went to church, and

Under Calvin's Spell

Claudine and Gabrielle into another room. Berthelier and his guest remained standing at the window, and looking out upon the street, now filling rapidly with men and women on their way to the morning service at the neighbouring church of St. Gervais; the men in gowns or doublets of frieze, save a very few, who wore broadcloth, being in office or members of the council, while the women wore frieze skirts and bodices with close-fitting hoods. As the materials were plain, the colours also were sober; scarce a bright hue was to be seen, far as the eye could follow 'the long unlovely street.'

'Master Berthelier,' asked the Frenchman suddenly, 'what do men find to do, who come here penniless as I?'

'That depends, monsieur. You are a gentleman of France?'

Caulaincourt bowed his head, and Berthelier's look said, 'I thought so.'

'Almost,' said Caulaincourt, 'could I wish myself an honest silk-weaver, or a mason or carpenter, so that my boy and I might not be a burden to strangers.'

'There are no strangers here, for you. To a Genevan every Protestant is a brother.'

'Yet no man wants to cling helplessly about his brother's neck. It is written, "Bear ye one another's burdens," but also, in the same place, "Every one must bear his own burden." How can I bear mine, and the boy's?'

'No difficulty about the boy. When the syndics have seen you and heard your story, some citizen will offer to take you both into his house. Then your son will go to school. And you——' he paused.

‘The Great White Throne’

‘And I?’

‘Can do what you like, within the limits of the law, which here, I own, are somewhat strict. Still, I suppose you will not want to play games of hazard, or to dance or sing profane songs on the Sabbath day?’

‘Why, no,’ Caulaincourt returned, smiling. ‘Yet that which I want to do, my countrymen would think more disgraceful than all these together. For I would fain learn and practise any honest craft which would keep me from adding to the burdens, already so great, of our generous hosts.’

‘But that would be hard for you. A gentleman——’

‘Should not be a beggar, nor a thief.’ After a pause he added, ‘In my journeyings I thought of printing. It seems to require less than most other crafts that bodily labour to which I am unused. And I have always loved books.’

‘So much,’ said Berthelier, ‘I have guessed already.’ He had not talked so long with his guest without discovering in him a man of intelligence and education. ‘Still, I doubt that hands will take kindly to the compositor’s stick which have been used, or I mistake, to handle the sword.’

‘I have served the king, and in more realms than one,’ De Caulaincourt said modestly. ‘But since I received — through Christ’s honoured martyr, the Councillor Du Bourg—the knowledge of His truth, I have lived in retirement on my own estate, which is that called Gourgolles, in Dauphiny—as I told you, did I not?’

‘I suppose even there you found you were safe no longer?’

Under Calvin's Spell

Caulaincourt assented. 'It cost me much to go,' he added sadly. 'And much that is very dear to me is left behind. Two little maids and two boys, one of them a babe. Thank God, I kissed them as they slept. And their mother, dearest of all. But she knew, and forgave me.'

'For taking her son?'

'She is not Norbert's mother, though he is dear to her almost as her own little ones. I was slow to believe in the danger, and I shrank from the sacrifice. I hoped times might change, and I hoped also that I might be able to instruct my wife and children in the things that accompany salvation. But the hearts of women cling so to the old, the well known.'

'Of that,' said Berthelier, 'I have a proof. My sister, who was once a nun of St. Claire, remains, even in this stronghold of the Religion, a Catholic at heart.'

'And my children,' Caulaincourt went on—'children care for naught but play and merriment.'

'Not here,' said Berthelier, smiling. 'Here the very children burn to go as missionaries to France, or Italy, or the Low Countries, and to win the crown of martyrdom.'

'Then I fear my Norbert will scarce find comrades here to his liking. He is a strange boy; very childish in some ways, yet by flashes unexpectedly manly. It used to grieve me that the boy who was all mine seemed the least disposed of all to share my thoughts. He preferred playing squire of dames to his step-mother, or sharing the sports of his little sisters, to attending to his studies or listening to the Word of God. And yet that child, for he is no more, hastened home alone

‘The Great White Throne’

from a masquerade in the neighbouring town, and sought me in my study. I was ill-pleased with him, for he had gone there with his step-mother against my will. But when I heard his story, I saw the hand of God’s providence. He had overheard a whisper between the mayor, at whose house the entertainment was, and a captain of the king’s cuirassiers stationed in the town, about their plan for the arrest of the heretic lord of Gourgolles the next day. And he came to warn me. Then, at my desire, the brave boy hurried back to the town, alone and in the dark, two long leagues, to fetch my wife, whilst I made such scanty preparations as I could. Thanks to Norbert’s good running, she arrived in time to receive my directions about our children and the estate. As I have said, she forgave me. We parted in peace. At the time I scarcely felt anything. My heart seemed dead within me, like a stone. Only I was conscious of a pang, and a keen one, when I gave Norbert also the farewell kiss, and he did not cling to me, nor seem as if it hurt him to part.

‘So I took my solitary way down the hill. I was walking on doggedly in dull heaviness of spirit, when I heard quick footsteps behind. “I am betrayed,” I thought, and did not greatly care—for what had I to live for? I turned. It was the dark before the dawn, but I could see the figure of a boy, who ran after me, panting, breathless. Next moment Norbert’s hand was on my cloak, his voice in my ear.

“Father, stay for me!”

“*You?*” I said.

“Why did you bid me good-bye?” he panted, “when you knew——”

Under Calvin's Spell

“Knew what?” said I.

“Knew I was yours.” As soon as he found his breath he added, “I have learned one verse out of your Bible—‘Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.’” Monsieur Berthelier, what I did then, it shames my manhood to tell of now. I had not wept at the parting—but the deeps were broken then.’

‘I understand,’ said Berthelier. ‘When I was in prison, if I could have wept, I might not have lost faith in God and man.’

‘Ah, you too have suffered?’ said the Frenchman, with interest.

‘Not as you. Go on, I pray of you.’

‘It would but be tedious to tell of our wanderings, our dangers, our escapes. And, indeed, I care not greatly to look back upon those days of hardship and peril, which grew to weeks. In God’s mercy we are here, and safe. A word that sounds strange on the lips of a Protestant. For the boy’s sake I am glad.’

‘You are as safe,’ said Berthelier, ‘as the ramparts of Geneva and the hearts and hands of her citizens can make you. If only,’ he added, ‘Geneva were at one within herself.’

Caulaincourt looked surprised. ‘Are there then dissensions among you?’ he asked.

‘There are ; and I, with the luck of all my life, am on the wrong side, or rather, I should say, on no side at all.’

‘You speak in riddles, monsieur.’

‘Did you know that, ere your new faith reached

‘The Great White Throne’

us, we Genevans had a hard fight for our ancient liberties?’

‘Wherefore do you say *your* faith, as though it were not also yours? Surely you are no Catholic.’

‘I am a Huguenot.’

‘Then—a brother.’

‘Not in your sense. With us a Huguenot formerly meant one who loved our ancient liberties, and leagued himself with our friends of Fribourg to maintain them. But now, instead, the children of the champions of liberty in Geneva are called Libertines.’

‘Methinks the old name was better.’

‘And they were better men who bore it.’

‘But what should your Libertines, or Huguenots, do now? The truth, which you have received, has made you free, and thus done all, and more than all, they wanted.’

‘All their fathers wanted, perhaps. Yet I scarce think even that. Master Calvin and the Consistory tie men’s consciences too tight, to my thinking.’

‘Men cannot be tied too tight from sin, or from error.’

‘That depends. The Libertines, at all events, like the new state of things even less than their fathers did the old. In this I think them both right and wrong.’

‘How can that be? You cannot walk to the right and the left at the same moment, nor be at once in light and in darkness.’

‘Is one ever either wholly right or wholly wrong?’ asked Berthelier, with a slight shrug of his shoulders. ‘Who knows? Certainly not the man who walks.—

Under Calvin's Spell

These Libertines of ours claim the liberty to live as they list.'

'Making liberty a cloak for licentiousness,' De Caulaincourt threw in.

'True; but is what I have under my cloak the business of other men? Methinks if Master Calvin and the Consistory were well advised, they would let men go their own way—within reasonable limits, and avoiding open scandals—and not insist upon every one's living like St. Antony, or like Noah, Daniel, and Job, as the Bible hath it. But they must needs have all cut out after their own pattern, which may be pure and lofty, but it does not suit every one. Let the Church keep her province, and the world hers, say I. But my kinsmen say, "Very well, then. In revenge for the irritating supervision you Churchmen persist in keeping upon us, we claim Church privileges. If we do not belong to you, let us alone; if we do, then make us free to everything you can give." So they insist, while they keep their vices, upon going to the Holy Supper. The Council of Twenty-five, which we call the Little Council, and which is part with Master Calvin and part with them, has given an ambiguous decision, but the ministers (and here I think them right enough) protest against what they call a profanation. So things are at present.'

'And I perceive that Geneva is not, just yet, a heaven upon earth,' said De Caulaincourt.

'Nor ever will be,' acquiesced Berthelier, with a bitter smile. 'But I think it is now time to present yourself at the Town Hall. With your good leave I will walk with you to the door, but my escort further

‘The Great White Throne’

would not be helpful, as I am rather in ill odour with their worships. Both on my own account and my sister's I am under censure, and have been fined once and again for our non-attendance at church, and other sundry misdemeanours.'

CHAPTER IV

FRENCH EXILES AND GENEVAN LIBERTINES

‘One still strong man in a blatant land.’

ON the next Sunday morning, which was the first in September, the great bell ‘Clémence’ was tolling forth its summons to the early service in the cathedral church of St. Peter. It was to be, on this occasion, the most solemn and sacred service of the Christian Church—the administration of the Holy Supper. All the streets leading to the cathedral were thronged with worshippers, or at least with those who were seeking the house of prayer. Upon this special day—a day to be much remembered in Geneva—these crowds presented a more gay and varied appearance than they were wont to do. There were plenty of sober citizens in dark garments of serge or cloth, bare-headed apprentice lads, boys in blouses, and servant girls with ‘half-girdles’ of silver, horned head-dresses well starched, and stout leather shoes. But there were others of a very different kind, few in comparison, yet abundantly conspicuous in their pomp and glory of apparel, their velvet mantles and plumed bonnets, and the swords that hung by their sides. Some were escorting dames whose silks and laces glared defiance to the sumptuary laws of

French Exiles and Genevan Libertines

the city. As they passed along, many a face frowned darkly upon them, and many a voice was heard to murmur, perhaps in the solemn words of Scripture, unflattering forecasts of the doom awaiting 'godless libertines' in the next world. There were allusions to 'the bravery of tinkling ornaments,' to 'cauls' and 'round tires like the moon,' which if not particularly apposite, at least relieved the minds of the speakers. At all events, the compliments were repaid with interest; gibes and jeers, scornful glances and flouting words being lavished by the Libertines upon the 'regenerate,' the 'mortified,' the 'saints.'

One boyish face, however, looked upon them kindly, one young heart rejoiced in the bravery of their apparel, and the stir and brightness they brought into the gloomy streets. Norbert de Caulaincourt had been only six days in the town, yet already he had come to the conclusion that the lines had fallen unto him in very unpleasant places. Not that he repented casting in his lot with his father—not that he would utter, to him, one word of complaint—no, wild horses should not drag it from him! But, to begin the tale of his sorrows, the bookbinder, Master Antoine Calvin, who lived in the Rue Cornavin, next door to the Bertheliers, had opened his house to them, offering them bread and shelter in God's name. Very good of the bookbinder, no doubt; Norbert thought vaguely that he must be 'making merit' thereby, and expecting some reward in the next world. But for him, Norbert de Caulaincourt, and for his father—a gentleman of France, a prince amongst these *bourgeois*, this *canaille*—to sit at meat with the tradesman, his wife and his sons, the elder working

Under Calvin's Spell

at their father's 'caitiff' trade, seemed a hardship and a degradation. It is true the refugees were treated as honoured guests; the boys of the family helped the apprentice to serve, and used towards their young French 'companion' a courtesy slightly tinged with awe, but this scarcely softened his scorn.

Moreover, he had begun to go to school, and the sentiment with which his masters and his schoolfellows inspired him, though far removed from scorn, was scarcely less unpleasant. He could not deny that these *petits bourgeois* of his own age and younger, knew a great deal more of their 'humanities' than he did. But that was like to be remedied soon enough, though with no choice of his own. At first he tried upon his teachers, whom he regarded as greatly his inferiors, the carelessness just touched with insolence that had served his purpose with some of his previous instructors. But he learned very quickly that he must alter his bearing, if he wished to avoid the intolerable indignity of receiving public chastisement the next Saturday afternoon.

'But I am a noble of France,' said he to the kindly lad who warned him, an exile like himself.

'So am I,' returned Louis de Marsac; 'but if we were both sons of France—the children of the king—it would make no difference.'

Therefore, that Sunday morning, as he walked to church by his father's side, his young soul was bitter within him. He felt like a bird in a cage too small for it, and a very ugly cage moreover. Even the sight of Master Berthelier passing by with his pretty daughter (as he supposed her), holding his hand, and Marguerite

French Exiles and Genevan Libertines

following them in her Sunday best, scarcely proved consolatory, though he capped to them duly. 'It is all so *triste* here,' he said to himself, with a sigh he could not repress.

'What is it, my son?' De Caulaincourt asked, coming down with difficulty from the solemn rapture with which he was anticipating the Holy Feast, to him so rare a privilege, and one only enjoyed hitherto at the risk of his life.

'Nothing, father—but, oh, look! Yonder goes a brave gentleman, apparelled like those at home;' and Norbert bestowed upon the handsome young Libertine, who swaggered by them in silk and velvet, the most friendly glance the poor gentleman had been favoured with that day.

At last he stood with his father in the great cathedral church. They were early, yet already it seemed nearly full. The congregation looked uneasy, restless, as if expecting or foreboding something. Norbert had scant respect for the mixed crowd of citizens about him, and presently relieved his mind by giving a shrewd thrust in the ribs to a stalwart apprentice who, he thought, was jostling his father unnecessarily. The youth might have returned the compliment had not a man beside them stretched out a warning hand.

'Remember,' he said, 'this is the house of God.'

'Who could have thought it?' retorted Norbert, looking round contemptuously on the plain interior, stripped of everything savouring of Romish superstition. '*Ma foi!* if these be Genevan courtesies——'

His unfinished sentence was smothered in the cloak of a stout old woman, who came violently against him.

Under Calvin's Spell

And now every one about him was pushing or being pushed, jostling his neighbour, or trying to give way to him when there was no way to give. 'So this is the house of God!' thought Norbert—'something extraordinary must be happening, though.'

Next, he recognized in the press one of the fine gentlemen in gay apparel. Some gold lace on his velvet cloak caught in the buckle of the apprentice's leather belt, and the lad roughly pulled himself loose, tearing the costly garment. The gentleman pushed on unheeding, but a bystander said quite loud, 'Stand close, friends! Keep them out!' No blow was struck, no hand was raised, but the people closed in firmly and stood still—a solid wall of human flesh and muscle, resisting what seemed to be a forcible intrusion.

Norbert's blood boiled. All his sympathy was with the intruders. What right had any one to keep them out—if they were such fools as to want to come in? If fine gentlemen chose to go to church—and *such* a church too—whose business was it but their own? Finding himself close to the velvet cloak, he joined himself to its wearer, and pushed right heartily with him.

He soon saw there were many gentlemen, and they were gaining their point and forcing their way up the church in a solid body, in spite of silent, determined opposition. He had quite lost sight of his father, so he went on with the rest, who came to a stand—it cannot be called a standstill—when they succeeded at last in placing themselves conspicuously in front of what he called the 'altar.'

But was it an altar? All Norbert's wondering eyes could see was a fair, white linen cloth, covering

French Exiles and Genevan Libertines

something, he knew not what. He had never witnessed an administration of the Lord's Supper amongst the Reformed. The very strangeness and simplicity of the thing gave him a faint, far-away touch of awe, presently dispelled by the muttered remark of a Libertine near him, 'I think we have conquered the saints this time.'

'They are at the foot of the wall without a ladder,' said another, more loudly.

'Hush!' interposed a third. 'If we have the best of it, let us play fair, and give the black coats a hearing.'

Then Norbert became aware that the service was proceeding. A minister was droning something from a desk, whether reading, prayer, or exhortation, he neither knew nor cared. Only it was interminably long. But what followed aroused even him. A psalm of Clement Marot's, sung by the great congregation, made the old church ring again. Norbert joined; he knew these psalms, which were often sung in France, even by Catholics. Then came more reading and praying, quite incomprehensible to one who did not care to comprehend; then another psalm, during which a dark-robed, slender figure entered the pulpit. 'It is Master John Calvin!' said Norbert to himself. 'The brother of our host, good Master Bookbinder! And not so well-favoured. Just a dark man, thin and pale, with a meagre, wasted visage, black hair, pointed beard, long nose, and eyes that go through you like a sword.'

The congregation, as one man, disposed itself to listen. Even the Libertines, after a buzz like that of a swarm of flies disturbed at a feast, fell into a sort of protesting stillness, as if forced to hear what they hated. The spell was upon Norbert too; he had to hear.

Under Calvin's Spell

Those cold, clear, unimpassioned words came from a depth of conviction, from a depth of feeling even, deeper than the founts of passion. So steel is cold, but the utmost heat of the furnace has gone to the making of it. Each word was the fittest for the purpose the language could supply, and set in its place like a stone in a mosaic. Norbert, without knowing this, felt its power. Caring nothing for the subject, which was the right reception of the Lord's Supper, and telling himself it did not concern him in the least, still he could not withdraw his attention.

He tried to shake off the impression, and to think of other things. He tried to look about him. Which of those finely-dressed gentlemen might be Master Philibert Berthelier, the leader of the Libertines, and the kinsman of their next-door neighbour, the lame man with the pretty daughter? '*Sacre!* How angry they all look, and how determined! See them clapping their hands on their swords! If 'twere not a church, there would be hot work here. Ay, and perhaps there will, for one can scarce call this a church.'

Here the forceful voice caught him again, and held him in a giant's grasp. It was calm, rather low even, yet it filled every inch of the great building.

'I will guide myself by my Master's rule,' said John Calvin, 'which to me is clear and well known. As we are now about to receive the Holy Supper of our Lord, if any one who has been debarred by the Consistory shall approach this table, though it cost my life, I will show myself such as I ought to be.'

Words of solemn prayer followed. Then the preacher calmly descended the pulpit stairs, came forward, and

French Exiles and Genevan Libertines

took his stand at the Table of the Lord. Reverently he lifted up the white napkin and uncovered the bread and wine; a strange sight to Norbert, accustomed to receive a wafer and adore a chalice he never dreamed of tasting. With deep solemnity Calvin blessed the elements, then stood calmly waiting.

There was a sudden sound, a clash, a tramp of feet. The armed Libertines strode forward, each right hand extended to take the bread, each left hand resting on the sword.

‘They have it!’ Norbert had almost said. But he choked back the word, awe-struck. Over the bread and wine two hands were stretched—defending hands—frail and weak as a sick woman’s or a dying child’s. But there was no weakness in the voice that rang through the crowded church: ‘These hands you may crush, these arms you may sever, this life you may take, but you shall never force me to give holy things to the unholy, and dishonour the Table of my Lord!’

Profound and awful was the silence that fell upon the angry crowd. Norbert held his breath as he watched, fascinated, the lowering faces of the Libertines. Their right hands fell, they glanced doubtfully at each other. At last, to his astonishment, and probably to their own also, those strong men armed turned silently away, and walked slowly down the church. Quietly the people made way for them. They were gone.

Then, as if nothing had happened, Master Calvin prayed, followed by another minister; and afterwards the people came up reverently, and each, standing in his place, ate a morsel of bread and drank a little wine.

Under Calvin's Spell

That was all Norbert saw; but he felt something there which he saw not—the presence and the power of God.

Later, father and son stood together in their sleeping-room, their only place for private converse within doors. De Caulaincourt looked anxious.

‘I am grieved for thee, my son,’ he said.

‘Why so, father?’ Norbert asked, looking up from the boot he was unlacing.

‘Thou knowest that at Gourgolles I never laid my commands upon thee. I let thee worship with thy step-mother. But here it is different. Thou hast said, “Thy God shall be my God.”’

‘I hold to that, father, because I hold to thee. Though I confess I like the old ways better.’

‘I would have thee love this way, not because it is mine, but because it is the right way. And thereunto I thought thou wouldest be moved, through God’s grace, by the solemn service of to-day, by our prayers and preaching, and our reverent and solemn order, especially in the receiving of the Lord’s Supper. But God has not seen fit to grant my desire. What thou hast seen to-day—I say it with grief and shame—was more fit for a field of battle than for the house of God.’

Norbert stood straight up before his father, and looked at him with kindling eyes.

‘Father,’ he said, ‘I have seen a field of battle to-day. And I have seen the best man win. Yon starveling black-coat with the long face may preach what he likes, and, indeed, I scarce understood a word he said, but he has the right, for he stands to it, and

French Exiles and Genevan Libertines

makes all men mind him, because he is a man and a brave one. But, father,' he added after a pause, 'have the kindness, I pray of thee, to speak naught of this to the household. Those froward companions, the bookbinder's lads, would be past all bearing with conceit, did they know I was driven to say so much in praise of their uncle, whom they worship as a king.'

'He will be King of Geneva, ere all is done,' returned De Caulaincourt. 'But I will respect thy confidence, my son,' he added with a smile.

'Here is a sample of God's ways, and a rebuke to my faithless heart,' he thought afterwards. 'The very thing I feared would revolt my wayward boy has touched him in the right place. God grant me sometime—somewhere—to see my whole desire for him fulfilled!'

CHAPTER V

DE CAULAINCOURT'S TWO FRIENDS

'Calvin for the rest

Made bold to burn Servetus—ah, men err!'

E. B. BROWNING.

TO De Caulaincourt, as well as to his son, the life of Geneva was new and strange, but to him it was also delightful. His host introduced him promptly to his own *cercle* or *abbaye*, which was that of the printers. These *cercles* resembled modern clubs, almost every trade or craft having its own, where matters of general interest were discussed, news told or heard, and anything that called for united action debated and decided. He speedily made acquaintance with many of his countrymen, exiles for the Faith like himself, some of them men of remarkable gifts, and all of high character. Still, owing probably to some peculiarity in himself, though he was friendly with all, he became intimate only with two—his host, Antoine Calvin, and his next-door neighbour, Ami Berthelier. These two, in his thoughts, he called respectively the morning and the evening, because the one was sad and cynical, the other always full of hope and cheer. The description was truer than he knew. Berthelier was the

De Caulaincourt's Two Friends

representative of old causes, old principles, old ambitions, while the great Reformer's brother was a son of the morning—the future was with him and his. Still, the 'evening and the morning were the first day.' Not more surely does evening lead to night, than through night again to morning: there were thoughts in the lame old Huguenot's mind which belonged not to the past, or even to the present, but to the centuries yet to be. No one suspected this; every one thought, and most of all himself, that he was 'behind the times,' and that his rightful place was with the bygone generation.

One evening in October, when De Caulaincourt was supping with Berthelier, his host, with some pride, called upon him to admire the firmness the syndics had shown that day in the matter of Michael Servet. Every one in Geneva knew that this man—whose name will be for ever associated with misfortune that was his own, and with shame that was not his own—lay in prison accused of heresy, blasphemy, and sedition.

'What have they done now?' De Caulaincourt inquired, taking mental note of Berthelier's joy in all that redounded to the honour of Geneva.

'Commissioners from Vienne were sent here, requiring in the king's name that Michael Servet should be delivered up to them; he being judged and condemned already by what they call the Holy Inquisition, to be burned alive at a slow fire.'

'Well?'

'The syndics sent for the man, and asked him whether he would remain with us and abide our judgment, or go with those who claimed him? He

Under Calvin's Spell

implored them, weeping, to do with him themselves as they would, only not to send him back with the hangman.'

'And they?'

'Refused to give him up. Within the walls of Geneva there is safety alike for all, whether innocent or guilty, until judged righteously, and condemned by her own laws.'

'But who is this, Servet, or Servetus, of whom every one is talking?'

'Oh, a Spaniard. And as to his heresies, as they call them, 'tis said he believes that everything is God, and God is everything.'

'What blasphemous nonsense!'

Berthelier shrugged his shoulders. 'For my part,' he said, 'I find it so hard to believe that God is anything—anywhere——'

He was stopped by the horror of anguish in the clear, honest eyes of his friend. Laying his hand on his arm with a kindly, deprecating gesture—

'Forgive me,' he said, mournfully. 'I forgot. The truth is, you always understand so well what I say—and even, sometimes, what I do not say—that I was tempted to the breaking of my rule of silence, and the utterance of those strange thoughts that keep me apart from my fellow-men, alone and solitary.'

De Caulaincourt recovered himself, thinking he had found a meaning in what seemed to him at first mere incomprehensible profanity.

'I do understand,' he said. 'You were saying that you find it hard to realise the presence of God, that He has withdrawn from you the light of His countenance.'

De Caulaincourt's Two Friends

Be comforted, my friend; it has been often so with those He loves. Ay, sometimes with the greatest saints. I have heard that such have even thought themselves forsaken and reprobate. But what saith the Holy Scripture unto such, when they walk in darkness? Is it not, "Let him trust in the Lord, and stay himself upon his God"?''

Berthelier did not answer; for De Caulaincourt's sympathy only served, like a torch, to show the depth and breadth of the gulf that yawned between them. How many silences there are like that, in almost all human intercourse! But presently he resumed—

'As for Servetus, I think him less dangerous as a heretic than as a tool of the Libertines. If he is acquitted, they triumph.'

'You wish it not?'

'No—by my faith! Though their leader bear my name, and they be my old friends and comrades. Better the reign of the saints than the reign of the ruffians and roysterers. So, Monsieur de Caulaincourt, you see where I stand—as I said, alone and solitary. To Master Calvin and the Consistory I am a heathen man and a publican, who ought to be thankful to escape prison and exile; to my kinsfolk and old friends I am a coward and recreant, who has deserted the cause of freedom. But you, at least, ought to pray for the defeat of Philibert Berthelier, Michael Servetus, and all the rest. For their cry is, "Geneva for the Genevans," and if they win they will make short work of the *Françillons*.'

'Like me?'

'Like you, and those who support and shelter you.'

De Caulaincourt presently took his leave. His heart

Under Calvin's Spell

was perplexed and sad, not with any foreboding of danger for himself, but with the thought of the friend to whom his heart went out unwittingly. 'He is so right about many things,' he thought, 'yet so wrong in one thing, the greatest of all. Still, I love him better than I love many a good Christian—which I doubt not is my sin. Never saw I any one just like him. There seems to be no place to put him in; his life is that of a good man, and yet—well, God knows all! And at least he is unhappy—I can pray for him.'

Musing thus, he stepped into the workshop, where, late though it was, Antoine Calvin still sat; bringing, by the aid of a lamp, the 'tooling' on a choice volume as near perfection as he might. He was alone, having long since dismissed his assistants. When De Caulaincourt entered he looked up, and smiled. His face bore the same resemblance to that of his famous brother that the copy of some masterpiece of painting might bear to the original. The features were less strongly marked, less rugged and irregular, and they had far less individuality, and lacked that fire from within which is the outward and visible sign of transcendent genius.

'There, monsieur,' he said, showing De Caulaincourt his almost completed work, 'I think my brother will be pleased with this setting for his gem. I have done my best, since the volume is destined for presentation to some prince or great personage—whom, I know not.'

'It is beautiful,' De Caulaincourt answered, as he looked admiringly at the rare and costly binding of Spanish leather, and the elaborate gilding, done with exquisite care and precision.

De Caulaincourt's Two Friends

'There is never a book Jean sends out into the world but I have my share in it as well as he,' resumed Antoine, his smile broadening into a laugh.

'The world does not know that,' De Caulaincourt returned.

'What matter? Does not Jean preach to us that the good God has chosen us before the foundation of the world? Well, He chose Jean to write the books, and me to bind them.'

'After the good pleasure of His will,' said De Caulaincourt, solemnly.

'A good pleasure and good will, M. de Caulaincourt. For it would in no way have suited me to preach in St. Peter's, to write the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, and to rule in the Consistory, even if I had the wit and the skill, which I have not. So I am very thankful that He happens to want somebody to bind my brother's books, and lets me do it for him. Moreover, does not the Holy Scripture tell us a brother is born for adversity?'

'That is so; yet it does not seem to apply, since for your brother it is scarcely now in Geneva the hour of adversity. Rather, of triumph.'

'Whatever outward trials he had, and they were many, it was not adversity, so long as God lent him my good sister Idelette, his true and loving wife,' said Antoine. 'But it is four years now since He took back the loan. She was one of whom the world knew nothing. But you may know what she was from this—never Papist nor Libertine of them all, who flung abuse and curses at my brother all day long, found one ill word to say of her. Whilst we, the few who knew her in the

Under Calvin's Spell

home—— Doubly, now that she is gone, I think Jean hath need of me. No, that is too proud a word, for he hath need of no one save his God ; but he likes to have me near, and now and then to talk to me.'

Then Antoine bent his head once more over his lowly work. 'Perhaps,' he thought, 'I have been saying too much of myself.'

'Do not forget your promise,' said De Caulaincourt, rising to go ; 'you are to take me to-morrow as your pupil.'

De Caulaincourt, in opposition to the advice of his fellow-exiles, had tried his hand at the printing without much success. His sight was not strong, he found the minute metal types hard to distinguish ; moreover, his unaccustomed fingers lacked the required dexterity. He thought he might succeed better with the outside of the books than he had done with the inside.

'I would not seek to dissuade you, monsieur, from what is pleasant work, and not over hard ; but yet—— Have I your leave to tell you what I think ?'

'Certainly, my friend.'

'Then I think God has not chosen *you* to bind books.'

'How can you tell that ?'

'By your talk, and your ways altogether. You are one of God's fighting-men, monsieur.'

'But there is no War of Religion now.'

'There is always the war of religion, though the weapons of that warfare be not always carnal. Many exiles for the Faith who come here, go forth again to spread the light in their own, or in other lands.'

De Caulaincourt's Two Friends

De Caulaincourt started. 'I had not thought of that,' he said.

'Nor need you now—nor ever—unless God Himself whispers you in the ear. And in the meantime, monsieur, if you like to see how things are done here, and try your hand upon the tools, I shall be honoured by your companionship. Honest labour, indeed, I take to be a joy, and at the same time a means of grace.'

Whilst he and others went on with their daily work, in that Geneva which they loved and for which they laboured, there fell a dark blot, not yet effaced, on the white robe of the Reformation. Upon the white ground every blot shows with terrible distinctness; the black you may steep in ink without perceptible change. Whilst not even persecution, not even martyrdom, can 'drag into fame' the innumerable victims of Rome, or find room even for their names on the crowded pages of history, that one name, Michael Servetus, stands out in characters of fire, imperishable, legible to all. Its sad celebrity is our vindication. Had the victims of Protestantism been more numerous, they would have been less remembered. But of the thousands to whom it is familiar, how many know anything of the man's real character and opinions, or of the complicated causes that led up to that terrible tragedy on the Place du Champel? Nor would this be the place to discuss them; since those children of their own age whose lives we are endeavouring to trace (with perhaps one exception), saw the matter from the standpoint of that age, and not from ours. But a significant circumstance may be worth the mention. The very man upon whom posterity has conspired to lay the blame of the tragedy,

Under Calvin's Spell

happens to have been the only man who sought to mitigate its horrors. John Calvin, together with nearly all his contemporaries, Catholic and Protestant, believed that Servetus ought to die ; but it was his earnest—though, alas ! his unavailing—prayer, that for the death of fire there should be substituted the milder doom of the headsman's axe.

CHAPTER VI

NORBERT DE CAULAINCOURT'S ONE FRIEND

'And when you've saved his bloomin' life, he
Chaws yer bloomin' arm.'

RUDYARD KIPLING.

'HOW dare you touch my dog?'

'How dare you call him by that name?'

'I shall call my own dog by what name I please. Come here, Cain, Cain!'

'You shall not get him. How dare you, I say?'

'You must be in love with the first murderer, if you resent my calling a brute after him.'

'You know as well as I that when you say "Cain" you mean——'

'Oh, very well! Then the tyke shall have his name, and the whole of it. Come here, *Calvin!*'

'Take that for yourself! And as for the cur, he shall have a long rope and a short shrift.'

This angry colloquy took place one Saturday afternoon on the great field called the Plain-palais, whither the Genevan youth resorted for the 'Plays,' or contests in shooting at the mark and other manly sports and exercises in which they delighted, and all the more because there was not in their daily lives too much

Under Calvin's Spell

recreation or amusement. A group had gathered round the two disputants, a tall lad named Perrin, nephew to the noted Libertine, Ami Perrin, and a scholar of the academy who was vowing summary vengeance upon the ill-looking mongrel dog, to which the Libertine youth, after the custom of his party, had given the name of Calvin by way of insult and mockery. Holding the dog by the throat with one hand, he dealt Perrin with the other a stinging blow in the face; and this being speedily returned, and others joining in, there was the prospect of a very pretty fight. The Libertines were the weaker party; and for that reason only, young Norbert de Caulaincourt, who was present, must needs take their side. The luckless dog was the object of contention, and bid fair to be strangled or pulled to pieces in the fray. At last Norbert, always in the midst of things, flung himself over the creature, body, limbs and all, as an English boy in a football scrimmage would throw himself on the ball. It was a wonder boy and dog had not their lives crushed out of them. Norbert made sure that at least a dozen 'ill companions' were on the top of him, squeezing the breath out of his body; while the wretched dog underneath, not knowing friend from foe, was making frantic efforts to get his head free and to bite him. He began to think his last moment had come.

All at once the weight grew less, seemed to be rolling away. He could breathe again. Presently he saw the light, as well as he could for the sparks that danced before his bewildered eyes. 'Get up,' said a voice in his ear. Then a hand touched him, and helped him so effectually that he stood upon his feet, and

Norbert de Caulaincourt's One Friend

tried to look about him, though he was still dazed and giddy.

He saw in his rescuer one of the foremost scholars of the academy, the same young Frenchman who, on his first coming, had given him timely warning of the penalties of disobedience. The tall fair-haired youth, with sunshine in his face, standing over the prostrate dog, reminded him of a picture he had seen somewhere of St. Michael and the Dragon.

'Thanks, De Marsac,' he panted. 'Curse that dog! He has bit me,' putting his hand to his arm.

'He is dead,' said another voice, 'or if he is not, he ought to be. Let us finish him.'

'What good will that do?' De Marsac interposed. 'Because some silly fellow has given the beast a name too big for his nature, is that a reason for killing him? Let him be, or take him to his master, whom I see yonder. Caulaincourt, are you much hurt?'

'Nothing to signify,' Norbert said bravely. 'The ungrateful brute! Next time they may hang him, for me,' he added, trying to laugh.

'Let me play the barber,' said De Marsac, producing a fair white kerchief.

Here the dog rose slowly and shook himself, after the manner of his kind. Perhaps he saw his master, who was coming towards them with a doubtful air, half hostile and half friendly. Louis de Marsac 'capped' to him politely.

'Here is your dog, Master Perrin,' he said. 'It was no fault of his that his name gave umbrage to some of us. There are plenty of good names to choose

Under Calvin's Spell

from. One might call a dog Cæsar, now, or Alexander, without offence; but here in Geneva it were wise not to meddle with a greater name than these. Though at present there is no harm done, save that my friend here, who was trying to protect him, has had his arm bitten.'

'I am very sorry,' said Perrin. 'And I thank him, and you. For one of the Regenerate you speak very fairly. If the rest were like you, we might get on better with them.'

He went off, his dog limping after him with a disconsolate air.

De Marsac turned his attention to Norbert, and very deftly bound up his wound, which was not serious.

'I will walk home with you,' he said. 'There are friends of mine who live next door to you in the Rue Cornavin, and I shall be very glad to visit them this holiday evening.'

Norbert was delighted. In spite of his hurt, he walked gaily along beside De Marsac, who chatted with him pleasantly.

'You will soon be done with school, will you not?' Norbert asked him.

'Yes, with the academy. But I have still to attend the theological school.'

'I suppose you will be glad to leave. I should be, I know.'

'I shall be glad, not for what I leave, but for what I go to,' and over his bright young face there passed a look that made it brighter still.

They had now reached the Porte Neuve, by which they entered the town, with many others who were

Norbert de Caulaincourt's One Friend

returning from the Plain-palais. As they walked along the Corratorie they met Berthelier and Gabrielle, taking the air, as the afternoon was very fine for the season of the year.

Both the lads saluted; De Marsac with a flush and a beaming smile.

'I did not know you knew them,' said Norbert.

'Oh yes; did I not tell you I was going to see them? Master Berthelier's sister, Damoiselle Claudine, and I are fast friends. Some years ago, when I came here first, a mere child, I was one day in the market, looking about me and buying cherries or the like, when I saw this poor damoiselle being frightened half out of her senses by a group of angry, scolding fishwomen. That was before such good order was put in the market, and in all the town, thanks to Master Calvin. She had told them, quite truly, that they were trying to cheat her. I fought her battle with all my might, which in truth was not great, and at last brought her home in triumph. She was much more grateful than the occasion required, and has been my very good friend ever since. I—they—they are all good to me, though lately, being much occupied with my studies, I have seen them but seldom.'

'Do you not think the young damoiselle very pretty?' asked Norbert. 'I do.'

'She is beautiful,' Louis answered quietly; and the subject dropped.

'De Marsac,' said Norbert, after a pause, 'may I ask you a question?'

'Why, of course.'

'You said anon you were glad of that to which you

Under Calvin's Spell

go when you leave the school. You cannot mean those long lectures of Master Calvin. What is to come after?'

'I go back to my country—my France, to preach the Gospel there.'

Norbert stopped, and looked at him surprised. 'What makes you do it?' he asked at last.

'Why should I not?'

'Why should you, once safe out of the lions' den, thrust your head into it again?'

'Because I am on His errand who can shut the lions' mouths.'

Norbert was silent. He felt a kind of awe. He had heard such things said before by Master Calvin, Master Bonna, or others of the ministers. But this lad, his own school-fellow, was going to prove them—a very different thing.

However, as they turned into the Rue Cornavin, he said—

'You will not want to go farther, having seen that your friends are out walking.'

'My friend is the Damoiselle Claudine, who is like to be at home. I will go and ask for her.' So he accompanied Norbert to his own door.

Thus began one of those boyish friendships, so delightful in youth, so helpful often for all the after-time. Perhaps the most perfect are those when one friend is just leaving childhood, and the other just entering manhood; for then there is added to the schoolboy's sense of comradeship the almost adoring reverence of the younger, and the protecting tenderness of the elder. Norbert certainly adored Louis de Marsac; he copied his ways as far as he could; he even tried to learn his

Norbert de Caulaincourt's One Friend

own lessons properly, that at next 'Promotions' he might enter a higher class, and so stand a little nearer to his idol. Nay, he carried his affection so far as to try and listen with attention to the sermons of Master Calvin. He had many opportunities; on Sundays Calvin, with the other ministers, took it in turn to preach in the churches of the town, and thus he was often in St. Gervais, the parish church of the dwellers in the Rue Cornavin. Besides, every Wednesday all the scholars of the academy were obliged to attend his lectures in the cathedral. Norbert longed to discover the secret of the magic spell which could hold his high-spirited friend, brimming over with life and energy, in rapt, motionless attention, often for nearly two hours by the sand-glass. But he failed utterly; he held Master Calvin, as a man, in much respectful awe, but as a preacher he might almost as well, for Norbert de Caulaincourt, have spoken in Greek.

Long sermons were not perhaps the worst part of the general dulness of everything in this dull, sad Geneva; where every day he regretted the sports and the pleasures of 'La belle France'—the gay dances, the masques, the merry-makings. Everything here was so cold, so colourless. How he hated the weary, monotonous round of lessons, preachings, admonitions! Scarcely less distasteful were the sober meals, where the conversation was sure to turn upon things he cared not for, or could not understand, and the fare, though always wholesome and sufficient, was certainly frugal. Along with other childish traits, the child's taste for sweets and dainties remained with him still; and he could not hide his contempt and disgust when informed

Under Calvin's Spell

that the number of dishes people might have for dinner or supper was strictly regulated by law. Though this perhaps was rather from his disdain for *bourgeois* syndics and councillors, than from his love for pasties.

It was part of the same childishness that at school he was not only idle, but wayward and petulant, sometimes even rebellious. Here De Marsac's influence came in most opportunely. His kindly help and frank, brotherly counsel saved Norbert from the consequences of some of his escapades, and kept him out of others, and worse ones.

Under this influence he began to grow; and as he grew he began to find that even in Geneva there were some pleasures to be had. It was good—but that had been always—to be with his father, to whom, indeed, even in his worst moods he was ever loyal and obedient. It was good to see De Marsac every day in school, to exchange words or looks with him whenever discipline allowed it, to go with him on Sundays for a quiet walk on the Crêts or by the river, and on holiday afternoons to the sports on the Plain-palais, where he applauded his triumphs, and sometimes shared them.

There was something else which he found very good, perhaps better than all the rest. His father took him with him occasionally, when he went to sup with his friend Berthelier. Then Norbert enjoyed the supreme felicity of a seat at the table opposite pretty Gabrielle Berthelier. Occasionally he could serve her, though it might be only with bread or salt; he could even exchange a word or two with her. Often, too, they met in the street, when he 'capped' to her, and got sometimes a word of greeting. No one guessed—he could not have borne

Norbert de Caulaincourt's One Friend

that any one should guess, even his father or De Marsac—what these meetings were to him, and how he watched for them.

So time passed on, until the winter was nearly over ; although the weather continued most severe, and the snow was deep on the ground.

The March night was at its very coldest, darkest, and dreariest when Norbert de Caulaincourt, lying on his truckle-bed beside his father, heard a cry go up from the street, 'La four chauffe' (the oven is hot). He had been fast asleep, but he had the valuable power of waking at will, when his will was strong enough, as in this case it certainly was. He had determined the night before exactly what to do. He started up—he had lain down half dressed—threw on his blouse and buckled it, took his shoes in his hand, and then, very cautiously, for fear of waking his father—usually a much lighter sleeper than himself—groped his way out of the room and downstairs.

He was not the only wakeful person in the house. Jeannette, the servant, was already in the kitchen, kindling a lantern at the embers of last night's fire, which for the purpose she had stirred to a blaze. Before it was a goodly store of the black bread in common use, which had been kneaded the night before, and left, as housewives say, 'to rise,' and this she proceeded to place carefully in a great wooden bowl, with a view to carrying it to the oven of the 'Quarter.' Each morning a certain number of households sent their bread (usually a fortnight's supply) to this public bakery, summoned by the cry in the street, 'La four chauffe.'

Under Calvin's Spell

'In heaven's name, Master Norbert, what takes you out of your warm bed this freezing night? But since you are here, just help me with this, like a good lad.'

'This,' was the great, heavy bowl, which, tied securely with rope of twisted straw, had to be hoisted upon the back of the strong serving woman. Norbert set it there, and whispered in her ear—

'You told me the Bertheliers' Marguerite was ill, and that now, there being none else fit to do it, Damoiselle Gabrielle was to bring the bread to the oven.'

'So the wind blows that way! A child like thee! Well, well, young folk are young but once. Come along, then. Here, take the lantern, while I open the door.'

A blast, cold enough to chill them to the marrow, met them as they stepped out into the snowy street. But Norbert felt no cold, for just then the door of the next house had opened, and a slight, shrinking figure was coming timidly out. Gabrielle's basket was not nearly so heavy as Jeannette's, the household being so much smaller, she could easily hold it in her hands. She had no lantern, trusting probably to Jeannette's.

'Please you, damoiselle,' began Norbert, drawing near. But he got no farther. To his unspeakable disgust, a tall figure stepped out of the shadow, and, almost without a word, relieved her of the basket.

This was intolerable. Stung to sudden fury, Norbert sprang upon his supplanter, and struck him violently in the face.

'Begone, rascal!' cried the person assailed, attempting no reprisal, but keeping fast hold of the basket. "'Tis

Norbert de Caulaincourt's One Friend

a thief,' thought he, 'who would make me let go, that he may run off with the bread.'

But Norbert recognized the voice of Louis de Marsac. Louis, his hero, his friend, his Jonathan—nay, his royal David, for the higher name, the greater glory, were his unquestioned—Louis to supplant him thus!
Et tu Brute!

'*Oh, Louis!*' he cried aloud, in a tone of keen reproach. 'And you knew I meant to do it!'

'Nay,' said the other, amazed and perplexed. 'Nay, how could I know? Only yesterday, after the lecture, I heard of the servant's illness.'

'Come on, come on!' Jeannette cried impatiently. 'Gabrielle, you will lose your place at the oven, and Master Berthelier's bread will go unbaked.'

'Damoiselle,' said Louis, quietly, 'please to say which of us you will have to accompany you, and to carry your basket.'

Gabrielle hesitated, but only for a moment. Then she spoke.

'M. de Marsac has walked all across the town from the Rue de Rive, while M. de Caulaincourt lives next door. Therefore, if he will, M. de Marsac shall come with me, and carry the basket. M. de Caulaincourt, it is so very cold, you ought to go back at once to bed.'

Gabrielle was not the first of her sex, nor the last, to spoil a tactful speech by just a word too much. Louis had come a very long way, there was reason in the plea, which Norbert could acknowledge—but then—to be sent back to bed out of the cold, like a child!

With a bow—as he flattered himself, of manly dignity—quite lost in the dark, he withdrew, re-entered

Under Calvin's Spell

the silent house, and regained his bed, his strong young frame chilled to the bone, but his heart hot within him. He was angry with all the world—very angry with Louis ; for what precise reason he would have found it hard to say ; angry with Gabrielle also—and yet—and yet—amongst his confused medley of feelings the predominant one towards her was certainly not anger. As he lay in the cold and dark, for perhaps the first time in his life unable to sleep, one thought came slowly out from the confusion, and stood before him clear and plain. It was a thought so great that it seemed to hide, or to swallow up, all the rest. 'When I am a man,' Norbert de Caulaincourt said to himself, 'I will not stay in this dull, cold Geneva. I will go out into the world and fight, and win fame and glory. I will be a soldier of fortune. There is plenty of demand for such, and fine opportunity every day for a good sword in a brave hand. Then I will come back, and marry Gabrielle Berthelier.'

There was much comfort in this resolve, so he tried to make it as solemn as he could. 'I shall very soon be a man,' he continued. 'Then I shall have my will. I swear it!' He slipped his cold hand within his shirt, and pulled out a little gold crucifix given him by his step-mother, which, unknown to his father and little thought of by himself, he still kept with him. 'I swear it upon this,' he said, 'and all men know that what is sworn upon the cross must needs be done, and come to pass.'

With this happy certainty sleep overtook him ; and the next thing he saw was his father standing over him, telling him the morning soup was growing cold, and asking if he meant to sleep all day.

Norbert de Caulaincourt's One Friend

Meanwhile, Louis de Marsac was thinking with some penitence that he had not dealt quite generously with his boy friend. 'And he has so little,' he thought, 'while I have so much.' For his own heart knew—oh, so well!—what the result of the appeal to Gabrielle would be. It was scarcely fair of him, and too hard on poor Norbert! 'Though, of course,' his thoughts ran on, 'being but a boy—indeed, a mere child—he would not feel it like another, nor understand. Still, it was hard on him. And I might have been kinder. I ought—when I have so very much.'

When they met that day in school, he was frankly and sweetly kind. Norbert, on his part, felt conscious that he had made rather a fool of himself, and was only too glad to be taken on the old terms. Thus the little wound in their friendship was quickly healed, and it left no scar behind.

CHAPTER VII

SISTER CLAUDINE

‘The old order changeth, giving place to new.’

MEANWHILE in Geneva time was passing, bringing with it growth and change. One change had taken place already in the household of Berthelier, which, though to outsiders seemingly of small importance, had caused great pain to a timid, tender spirit. Poor Claudine, whilst still clinging fondly in heart to her own creed, sorrowfully renounced her claims to the crown of martyrdom, and left the Church she loved. Not that actual martyrdom would have followed, even had she persisted in her refusal to conform; there is no record of such a fate befalling any zealous Roman Catholic in the city of Calvin; but she might have been fined and imprisoned, and if obstinate, obliged eventually to leave the town. But what weighed with her more than any fear of personal inconvenience, was the trouble she would have brought upon her brother.

Berthelier's position was already precarious. It is true that a certain amount of indulgence was tacitly accorded to him, because of his sufferings in the cause of freedom. Still, the yearly domiciliary visit of the

Sister Claudine

pastors to enquire into the faith and morals of the citizens was a terror on his account to Claudine and to Marguerite ; though he himself seemed rather to enjoy perplexing and baffling their reverences. These pastors were nearly all good men, some of them really able men, though no doubt they suffered in the popular mind from their association with Calvin, a giant who made tall men look like pigmies. Berthelier's favourite amongst them was one Abel Poupin, who, during a visitation of the plague some ten years before, had been appointed to minister to the stricken. He began well ; but presently, overcome by the horrors of the pest-house, he prayed to be relieved. For this weakness, which he bitterly repented, he was atoning by a life of unremitting attention to duty, and of earnest, simple piety.

To him Berthelier explained that he had no wish to disturb the present order of things, that he would attend the preaching whenever his health permitted, and behave in all things as a loyal citizen. But as for believing unto salvation, did not Master Calvin himself teach that we could not do it without special grace, which was given only to the elect? If it was not given unto him, what was he to do?

'You could pray for it,' Poupin said.

'Not unless I had it already,' Berthelier retorted.

Very earnestly Poupin answered, 'Master Berthelier, you are only fencing with me. You know very well that upon these questions any man may talk himself into a blind alley, but he who walks always finds the way out. Are *you* walking?'

Berthelier bowed his head and said gravely, 'God knows.'

Under Calvin's Spell

The pastor added solemn words about the shortness of time and the nearness of eternity ; and Berthelier, as he saw him depart, said heartily—

‘There goes a true man.’

A few days afterwards Claudine and Gabrielle sat together sewing. The room was comfortably furnished, for Berthelier was careful that his sister should want for nothing, but it was quite devoid of any ornament or any touch of brightness or beauty. Save one, indeed—the young girl who sat on her footstool beside the chair of the elder woman, seemed to have gathered into her face, as into a cup, enough of brightness to have flooded a palace. Hers was the beauty of the South, hair of polished ebony, eyes that were ‘dark suns’ veiled by long black lashes, complexion just tinged with brown, features of perfect, delicate loveliness. Just then the flower-like face was bending, in evident anxiety, over a difficult piece of embroidery.

Claudine had needlework of her own, but seemed to be thinking much more of Gabrielle's. She looked frail and ill, her troubles of mind had told upon her health, never strong.

‘I think the light begins to fail,’ Gabrielle suggested, with a little sigh.

‘Now that is foolish. My eyes are old, yet I have good daylight still. But you tire quickly of your needle. In the convent we always wrought on until vespers. I should like to know what would have happened if one of the novices had announced that she was tired, and would like to stop, as you often do, Gabrielle.’

‘Ah, but in the convent you were slaves obeying the will of others. Now, we are free.’

Sister Claudine

‘Free? If the apprentice were free of his master, how much of his craft would he learn, think you?’

‘Of course,’ Gabrielle said submissively, ‘I would obey you, *ma tante*, even though I were not, like an apprentice, learning from you.’

‘Learning from me? ’Tis long since thou hast done that.’ There was some pain in the tones of Claudine.

‘I am learning this broidery from you. And I want to learn it.’

‘’Tis worth it. Our lady abbess learned it from a near kinswoman, who was taught by one of the ladies of the late Duchess of Savoy, God rest her soul! That was in the good old times when our lord the duke used to visit us, and the prince-bishop used to come and dwell in the Evêché, and there would be great stir and joyance in the town.’

‘But now,’ said Gabrielle, ‘we have got rid of the Savoyards. And we thank God for it.’

‘It is easy to talk of getting rid of the Savoyards, but not so easy to do it. Knowest thou how many of our best families are of Savoyard blood and race? Knowest thou not, moreover—ah, but I believe thou dost not, and I ought not to have spoken.’

‘What meanest thou, dear aunt?’ asked Gabrielle. ‘What know I not?’

‘Oh, nothing—nothing of the slightest importance.’

‘Is it that any of our friends have come of Savoyard blood, as thou sayest, aunt? Indeed, already I know they have. But what does it matter, if they are good and true, like the Rosets, the Vandels, the Auberts? And you know the French exiles are the best, the very best, among us.’

Under Calvin's Spell

Why did not Claudine accept this way of escape from a perilous subject, instead of returning on its traces? It was surely some fatality that made her say—

‘If Savoyard blood is good, I like it better than French blood. And there is that among us. Nay, even—but I do not think I ought to say more.’

‘Why not, Aunt Claudine? What harm is in it? Now I am a child of Geneva, what should I care, if I heard that my great-great-grandfather had been a Savoyard?’

‘Wouldest thou care, child, if it came nearer to thee? After all,’ thought Claudine, ‘she will have to know the truth some day, and Ami never forbade me to tell her.’ Yet still she paused, as in doubt.

‘What mean you, *ma tante*? Speak, I pray of you,’ said Gabrielle, with the curiosity the ‘I could an I would’ manner never fails to awaken.

‘Thou art my brother’s adopted child, and he has ever been to thee a father indeed. I think he cares not to be reminded, nor to have thee reminded, that thou art not his own. Yet he is fond of saying we ought to know, and speak, all things that are true, though they tend not either to pleasure or to edification. But men are ever inconsistent.’

‘I do not want any father or any friends, save those God has given me. Never child had better,’ said Gabrielle warmly.

‘Has it never come into thine head to think upon thine own parents, and wonder who they were?’

‘Never,’ Gabrielle answered promptly. ‘What does it matter? Though I suppose,’ she added, ‘they were

Sister Claudine

peasants, "Grey-feet" as they call them, from the country, or at least from the suburbs destroyed at that time for fear of the enemy. My father took them in for the love of God—and they died. That is all I know, or want to know. I am a child of Geneva.'

'Do you know, my dear, I am almost sure you are a child of Savoy?'

Gabrielle started. 'Oh no, no!' she cried, 'that cannot be! I am no Savoyard, I am of Geneva—I! I will not be a Savoyard. They are cruel, wicked. They rob and slay the innocent, and they torture and burn the martyrs of God!'

'Dost thou not think God made Savoyards as well as Genevans? And have no cruel or wicked things ever been done by children of Geneva? But be that as it may, thou canst not help thy birth. And there are two sides to every matter. Take the satisfaction of knowing it was gentler than thou wottest of. Gentler? Nay, as noble as the best. The poor people who died here, Marguerite tells me, were but thy foster-parents. From things they said, and from something—a scrap of paper, wrapped in silk and put round thy baby-neck as a charm—it was gathered thou wert of Savoy, and of noble birth.'

Gabrielle looked up, amazed and wondering, but certainly far more pained than pleased. She asked very naturally—

'Aunt, where is this scrap of paper? I should like to see it.'

'That canst thou not, and more the pity! Thy father (thou knowest his way) told me, when I asked for it, that he had burned it by mistake. Like a man's

Under Calvin's Spell

carelessness! Perchance thereby he hath lost thee some fair inheritance.'

'Nay,' said Gabrielle, with energy. 'He hath done me a good turn, and I thank him. With Savoy have I nothing to do—nor will I.'

'That knowest thou not yet. I was thinking of all this yester eve, when M. de Caulaincourt supped with us, and talked of going forth into Savoy.'

'I thought he only meant to go amongst the country-folk round about,' said Gabrielle. 'I hope he will not venture beyond the Liberties. That were too dangerous.'

'Belike he thinks as little of danger as that poor young De Marsac, over whom I could weep,' said Claudine. 'Child—Gabrielle, what ails thee?' For she saw the girl's hands were trembling, and her colour came and went. With quickened instinct she went on, speaking slowly and deliberately, as one who forced herself to the task. 'M. de Marsac is a very amiable young man, and I esteem him highly—as a friend. But we are not of his kin, nor has he any here, parent or guardian, to restrain his actions. So we need not speak of him farther. I marvel how M. de Caulaincourt, being a Frenchman, is so well acquaint with the tongue of Savoy. He must find it very convenient here, where that *patois* is used so commonly.'

'Norbert told me——'

'Speak up, my dear, for I cannot hear thee. What ails thy voice? Norbert told thee what?'

'That his father, in his youth, was a prisoner in Savoy,' said Gabrielle with an effort, her face bent low over her work, which she was doing very badly.

Sister Claudine

'I knew he would soon tire of printing and book-binding, which are handicrafts not fit for gentlemen. And he would tire still more of doing nothing. So for sheer lack of occupation he must needs go about the country, like a wandering friar (save that he is a heretic), spreading the doctrines of Master Calvin. It is all strange to me. But then, everything is strange here ; everything is changed.'

'Not strange—no,' Gabrielle said falteringly.

'Not to thee, child ; for thou too hast forsaken the old paths, which were good enough for our fathers, and our fathers' fathers, who sleep in God. It is hard—for me. Because, I taught thee, I love thee——'

'You *love* me,' Gabrielle said gently, putting her hand in hers.

'Yes, child, I love thee. Therefore I grieve to see the change in thee. I used to hope thou wouldest be to me as a dear daughter, my joy and consolation in this new, cold, faithless world. But now thou wilt learn no more from me. Thou dost prefer, forsooth, the teaching of an old serving-woman, thy nurse and mine. A good nurse, I am bound to say, and a faithful servant. But an ignorant, presumptuous, high-minded "intruder into things not seen, vainly puffed up of her fleshy mind," as saith the Holy Scripture. I should like to have seen our lady superior—no, not her, she was too gentle—our prioress—take old Marguerite in hand.'

'Dear aunt, I have not learned from Marguerite, but—from you.'

'That is folly, child. Thou hast cast my teaching to the winds.'

Under Calvin's Spell

'Not willingly. Indeed, for long I was perplexed and sorrowful. I knew not what to think.'

'Why not think as all good men and women thought before us?'

'So I said to myself. And I tried—oh, how earnestly!—to say all the prayers you taught me, and to believe just as you did.'

'As I *do*, and I care not who hears me say it. Though I have lived so long in this heretic city, and have been forced to conform to the ways of it, and to forego the sacraments of the Church, for the avoidance of greater evils.'

'Marguerite, I acknowledge, did one thing for me,' Gabrielle said in a low voice. 'She gave me the New Testament; and she bade me read it with prayer—she, who cannot read herself. But *you* did more, for you taught me to love Him of whom it speaks.'

A change, not sorrowful, passed over Claudine's sorrowful face. Gabrielle had touched a chord that thrilled in response. She crossed herself in silence.

'Then the Book made me love Him more,' Gabrielle said. 'It showed me He was all I wanted. That day when the priest came to us, disguised in the butcher's smock and apron, and you wanted me to confess to him—how could I? My heart was just full of the peace and the pardon of our Lord Himself, and I needed no other. So I went away to St. Gervais, where there was a service. And you were sad for me, and troubled. I have wanted ever since to tell you how it was.'

'You speak well, child,' said Claudine. 'But then you are not learned, nor am I. There are other

Sister Claudine

commands of our Lord which are not written in the Book. But I am only an ignorant woman, and know not what they are. The priests used to teach us. Now I—I know nothing. Only I know I am right.'

'And I too know I am right,' Gabrielle would have made instant answer, but that would have been disrespectful, and the maiden of the sixteenth century was nothing if not respectful to her elders. She kept silence, thinking, however, of something Louis de Marsac had once said in her hearing. Unconsciously, all her thoughts were taking colour from Louis de Marsac's—especially her best and highest thoughts. Her own faith at this time owed no little of its joy and brightness to her contact with one whose inner life was 'all sunshine.' Half unawares she spoke out, 'I am minded of something Louis said——'

'*Who* said?' her aunt asked sharply.

'M. de Marsac,' Gabrielle corrected herself, blushing 'One night here, at supper; he and my father differed on some matter, and he said, "Sir, you know there are people on the other side of the world whose night is our day, and whose day is our night, yet for all that we all see the same sun." Then my father made answer, with that quiet smile of his: "M. de Marsac, if you understand your own parable, and go where it leads you, you will be a far wiser man than Master Calvin."'

'Certainly *I* do not understand. But, Gabrielle, I understand too well that M. de Marsac should not come here so often. Nor, if he does, should you and he talk together, as of late you have fallen into the habit of doing. You are no more a child now, but a young maiden, who must be wise and circumspect.'

Under Calvin's Spell

'I am trying to be wise,' said Gabrielle with a trembling lip.

'I know it, my child. Thou hast grown vastly in prudence and in thoughtfulness. No one would know thee now for the froward child I found thee, when I used to put thee "in penitence" for playing with the bookbinder's boys.'

Gabrielle thought there was a vast difference between talking with Louis—who was good and wise, and from whom she always learned so much—and playing with rough boys, as she used to do long ago, when she was a child. What could her aunt mean? With the question a thrill came to her, unfelt before. In 'the purple twilight under the sea' of conscious thought, *something* was stirring within her, she knew not what.

'I am grown up now,' she said. And she felt it.

'Not quite; but thou art growing fast. And I would have thee know that there are snares in the young maiden's path more dangerous than those which beset the child. Moreover,' she added, with a touch of bitterness, 'your new religion has swept away the safe refuges of other days for the tried, the tempted, or the broken-hearted maiden.'

'Aunt, did you become a nun of St. Claire because you were broken in heart?' Gabrielle asked suddenly; thus, by a bold stroke, carrying the war into the enemy's country.

'I was broken-hearted for my brother's sake, to whom all my life was devoted. Besides, I had nowhere else to go.'

'I thought,' Gabriel hazarded, 'that there might have been—some one——'

Sister Claudine

‘Certainly not!’ Claudine said, with emphasis, as if repelling some injurious accusation. ‘I am the bride of Christ. That is, I *was*,’ she added, with a deep sigh. She went on presently in an altered tone: ‘What I am now, He only knows. And whether He can forgive me, He knows also.’

“He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,” Gabrielle ventured to whisper.

‘I do not doubt it. What I doubt is, that He will forgive *me*. No, do not speak to me. It is but a little while until all these dark things shall be made clear before me. I shall be glad, even though I go, not to peace, but to pain. There—I know what you would say; you have got rid, along with other things, of the cleansing fires of purgatory. So also you have got rid of the *vidâme*, who used to act for the bishop and punish your offences. But you know the *vidâme* is gone, and cannot return. Who has risen from the dead, to tell you the fires of purgatory are gone too?’

‘Christ has risen, for our justification,’ Gabrielle said softly. ‘To the justified there is no more suffering for sin.’

‘Let that be as He will,’ Claudine answered. ‘As for thee, Gabrielle, thy father may need, in the days to come, thy loving ministrations. Thou wilt not fail him?’

‘I? Do I not love him more than—as much as child ever loved father?’

‘Then stand by him, and help and cheer him as long as thou canst. Not that I am saying to thee, “Do not wed.” These are things we women cannot arrange after

Under Calvin's Spell

our own will and pleasure. But, whatever thy lot may be, see thou do not leave him desolate. Remember, he saved thy life; and all thou hast thou owest unto him. But I hear his foot upon the stair. Put up thy work, Gabrielle, and go and help Marguerite to serve the supper.'

CHAPTER VIII

THE NEW GENEVA

MEANWHILE the city by the lake, where Claudine, Gabrielle, and the rest led their quiet, uneventful lives, had become the scene of a strange experiment. Not all her citizens, indeed, but the best part of them, and the part that was more and more acquiring the preponderance, were bent on making her a pure theocracy; to be governed in strict conformity with the law of God, by those who regarded themselves as His servants and deputies. That magnificent experiment had been tried before. For a few bright, glorious, disappointing years Savonarola had taught his Florence that Christ alone was her Lord and King, till even the children shouted in the streets, 'Viva il Re Gesù!' We know how it ended—how, after misfortunes and mistakes not a few, the prophet, as was meet and fitting, died for his disowned, repudiated King. The work of the prophet of Geneva lasted longer; and he was spared the final tragedy, which, nevertheless, would have immeasurably heightened his fame. But there were many points of resemblance, if many also of contrast, between the fervent, passionate Italian and the calm, strong

Under Calvin's Spell

Frenchman, whose fire was the more intense because it burned inwardly.

That the Frenchman's work not only lasted longer, but went deeper than the other, was doubtless partly owing to the fact that he was seconded by some in whom there was really 'the law of the Spirit of life'—the new life, which means righteousness, power, and victory.

But even outside the Libertine party—with which we shall have more to do—there were always those in Geneva who remained untouched by the mystic influence, like Ami Berthelier, and his sister, and young Norbert de Caulaincourt. Still, there were many who threw their whole souls open to it, as the fuller spreads his cloth in the sun to bleach it. Norbert's father was one of these. His life since he received the new faith had been a lonely one. The occasions were very few when he could receive at Gourgolles some itinerant Huguenot preacher, or journey in disguise to some field meeting, or secret administration of the Holy Supper. It is true that he had always the Word of God, and that spiritual life may be maintained at a very high level by direct access to the fountain, without any intermediate streams or channels; still, in the normal course of Christian life, streams and channels are God's way of blessing.

'I am another man since I came here,' he said to his friend, Antoine Calvin.

'Now you will go and spread the light,' Antoine answered, stitching away diligently at the new edition of his brother's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.

'I am willing. But—where to go? What to do?'

'Ask my brother.'

The New Geneva

‘I do not care to trouble him with other men’s business.’

‘*That* is his business. He saith to one man “Go,” and he goeth, to another “Come,” and he cometh, and to his servant—that is to say, to every Genevan—“Do this,” and he doeth it.’

De Caulaincourt paused a while ere he answered, ‘Then let him send me whither he will. For,’ he added with emotion, ‘all places are alike to me now. I have tried once and again to communicate with the dear ones left behind at Gourgolles. But in vain; no word, no token comes to me. I see that I am dead to them, as they must be to me. Henceforth I have no home on earth; saving that which your kindness gives me here.’

So he went to Calvin, and was sent forth presently on an evangelistic mission to the peasants of the Savoyard district adjoining Geneva. His knowledge of their *patois*, so unusual in a Frenchman, was a special qualification for the work, and as the scene of it was near at hand, he could easily return for counsel, guidance, or encouragement—that is to say, if he returned at all. For every missionary of the Reformation went forth with his life in his hand; and he knew it.

All the new Geneva was burning and glowing with missionary zeal. Not eager youths alone, like Louis de Marsac, but men of mature age, like De Caulaincourt, caught the fire, and longed to spend and be spent—nay, to be offered up—for Him whom their soul loved.

Him whom their soul loved! That was what the Reformation, that was what Protestantism—nay, that was what Calvinism meant for them. Not an iron system of logic, but the face of a living, everlasting

Under Calvin's Spell

Friend, who, each man felt, loved *him*, chose *him* before the foundation of the world 'to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever.' Dogmas that to us look stern, look repellent even, seemed to them—like that other 'stern Daughter of the Voice of God' of whom the poet sings—to wear—

'The Godhead's most benignant grace,
Nor was there anything so fair
As was the smile upon (their) face.'

There was sweetness unutterable, there was strength adamantine, which no world in arms could subdue, in the creed of these heroic souls—'Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.' And not stronger souls only, but nobler, holier, and tenderer than those who held it thus, has the world never seen, and is never like to see.

Their code of morals did not shut out the pure and sacred joys of earthly life, even if sometimes too austere to take account of its minor charms and graces. Youths like Louis de Marsac, who looked towards martyrdom as the eager young soldier of to-day might look towards the Victoria Cross, did not dwell always on the heights of spiritual exaltation. Or rather, the heights where the air was keen and pure and one had wondrous Pisgah views, and the valleys where flowers blossomed and sweet waters ran, were to them but parts of the same journey, with the same Friend walking beside them, and the same Home in prospect at the end.

One day Claudine Berthelier came home from a short walk in considerable excitement.

The New Geneva

‘I have just met Madame de Maisonneuve,’ she explained to Gabrielle and Marguerite. ‘And she insists, positively insists, on our going there to-morrow night, to a supper they are giving in honour of the Seigneur de Vezelay, who has just come from France.’

The Maisonneuves—properly Baudichons de Maisonneuves—were the wealthiest family in Geneva, and zealous Protestants.

‘My father will not go,’ said Gabrielle.

‘True. M. de Maisonneuve could not persuade him, though he did his best. But madame says you must come; she will take no excuse. And, unfortunately, so must I, much as I hate it; for thou couldest not go alone. God knows, child, it is no will of mine to put vain thoughts into thy head; still, it is very plain these “Regenerate” have enough of the world about them to like to see a pretty face at their supper-table. What wilt thou wear?’

‘What but my Sunday robe, my silver girdle, and the blue ribbons my father gave me?’ said Gabrielle, her eyes sparkling with pleasure.

‘Well,’ said Claudine, only half content. ‘A plague upon these new sumptuary laws, which will allow no more, I suppose, to the daughter of a simple burgher, not in office—even on a feast day. Though, if all had their rights—— As for me, I shall do well enough in my grey robe, with a muslin kerchief and a well-starched coif. Madame will send for us, and send us back again, under safe escort.’

‘A good thing you will not need mine,’ said Marguerite. ‘There will be some one left to take care of the master. But I own that, though I have little

Under Calvin's Spell

opinion in general of feasting and revelry, I am not sorry the child should have a bit of pleasure for once in her life.'

A very mild 'bit of pleasure' indeed, that entertainment at the *Maisonneuves*, would have seemed to a twentieth-century maiden. The repast, restricted carefully to the number of dishes by law allowed, was served upon a long, narrow table, or 'board' of polished wood, the men, all covered, sitting at one side, the ladies at the other. But if there was no great variety in the fare, it was abundant and very good. The wine was good too, and freely though temperately used. Placed first upon the table was that old Genevan institution, *pot au feu*, a literal pot of noble dimensions, containing hares, capons, venison, and other meats in their own rich soup, made with wine instead of water. Joints, roast and boiled, succeeded, and gave place in turn to goodly piles of the confectionery for which Geneva was still famous, although, under the new *régime*, the market for it had declined. There were not many young people present, but by those who were this part of the entertainment was thoroughly appreciated.

'I wish Norbert was here,' said a familiar voice.

Gabrielle looked up, and met the smiling glance of Louis de Marsac, who sat opposite, and was inviting her attention to some particularly delicious almond cheese cakes. Of course, she had known he was there all the time; but she was doubly glad to have him speak to her, for her aunt, in virtue of seniority, had a place a good deal above her, and the young people on either side were strangers. She put her hand out for a cake.

The New Geneva

‘This is better,’ said Louis, giving her another.

‘Is it right to take the best?’ she hesitated.

‘Certainly, when no one else wants it.’

Just then the concluding grace was said by one of the pastors present; and they all rose from table and dispersed about the hall, forming little groups for conversation.

Gabrielle stood uncertain, feeling rather lost and lonely among all these strangers. She was grateful to De Caulaincourt, who came to her side and pointed out some of the personages present, whom she did not know.

‘But where,’ she asked him, ‘is the Lord of Vezelay?’

‘Do you not know him? That tall, handsome man in the velvet cloak edged with fur.’

‘I thought that was Dr. Theodore Beza.’

‘Who is Lord of Vezelay,’ said De Caulaincourt, smiling. ‘A man of learning, a poet, and at the same time the lord of broad lands and much wealth. And all he has, gold, learning, genius, he asks no better than to lay at the feet of his Lord and ours.’

‘I know he is a great friend of Master Calvin,’ said Gabrielle. ‘I thought *he* would have been here to-day.’

‘He was bidden, but was too busy to come. But there are here four pastors out of nine, and three syndics out of four, so methinks Church and State are represented fairly.’

‘I have been seeking you, De Caulaincourt,’ said their host, coming up at that moment. ‘I want to present you to Dr. Theodore. He knows one who hath been lately near to Gourgolles, and he can give some

Under Calvin's Spell

tidings of your family ; not much, but good as far as they go.' So De Caulaincourt was hurried off, and Gabrielle left alone once more. But Louis had been on the watch for his opportunity, and approached her.

'I pray of you, damoiselle,' he said, 'let us play together the game of the key.'

He led her to a small table, upon which lay a large and heavy key, or a piece of metal made to resemble one, with marks and figures on it. To push this key as far as possible over the edge of the table without letting it fall, formed the simple, unexciting pastime with which the Genevan citizens rested their weary brains after much political and theological debate. There is a tradition that Master John Calvin himself was known, in some rare moments of leisure, to 'push the key.' Two other youths joined the game, and volunteered to instruct Gabrielle, who usually gave the key too strong a push, and sent it clattering to the floor, to her own dismay and the amusement of the rest. They used to stoop all together to pick it up, and the one who got it claimed the post of instructor. But by-and-by the other two dropped off, and Gabrielle said to Louis, 'How is it I cannot do it?'

'Because, mademoiselle, you do it too well. You put forth more strength than is needed.'

'I see. But most things one has to do as well as one can. With all one's strength.'

'I think not. No more than one would give all one's money to a beggar. Then, one would have nothing for the next ; and worse, one would become a beggar oneself.'

'I suppose that is so. But no one ever tells us not



'LET US PLAY TOGETHER THE GAME
OF THE KEY.'

The New Geneva

to give too much. All say, "Give," "Spend thyself," "Deny thyself." That last must be right always, M. Louis.'

'No, damoiselle—indeed no!'

Gabrielle looked up, surprised, at the bright young face before her. She knew, how well! what Louis meant to be and do. Surely this was strange doctrine—for him! She said softly—

"Even Christ pleased not Himself."

'His purpose was not to please Himself, nor to deny Himself. It was to do the will of God.'

'But that will, for us, is to take up the cross.'

'Not the cross always. Often it is joy. The Master sits at the board and pours the wine for the feast. He bids us drink, and give thanks.'

The young man's face glowed, his bright eyes met Gabrielle's. There was something in them that moved her, almost too strongly. She took refuge in a commonplace.

'My aunt and the pastors, who do not agree always, agree at least in this—they prefer fasts to feasts. I think my aunt is glad that I have no proper day of *fête*, as no one knows exactly when I was born or christened. But my father objects, and must needs keep my *fête* next Sunday.'

They stopped to listen to the psalm a company of well-wishers of the Maisonneuve family were chanting outside in their honour. Then followed Bible reading and prayer, led by Beza and one of the pastors. So the party broke up, and De Caulaincourt and Louis de Marsac escorted the Bertheliers to their home.

Next Sunday a little packet was put into the hands

Under Calvin's Spell

of Gabrielle. It contained an ivory table, set in silver, a choice specimen of the work of a well-known Italian artist, an exile for religion, settled in Geneva.

She remembered with burning shame that she had inadvertently told Louis de Marsac that day was to be her *fête*. Gifts were such rare things in her experience that she had never dreamed of expecting them. And yet they were precious—sometimes.

* * * * *

Thus time passed on, bringing by-and-by an event, in the crowded annals of Geneva, scarce worth a recording line, yet to certain young lives of decisive import. One day in mid-winter there was a solemn service in St. Peter's, and after prayer and blessing and exhortation, the hands of the Presbytery were laid upon two young heads bowed before them in reverent awe. Denis Poquelin and Louis de Marsac were ordained as pastors and missionaries, that they might go forth bearing the Bread of Life to their native country of France.

Master Calvin preached from the very appropriate text, 'Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.' And in the crowded church there were not a few who could scarce hear his words for weeping. It was not that the young missionaries had kindred there. Louis de Marsac had been brought to Geneva, in early childhood, by his father, an exile for the Faith, long since dead. Denis Poquelin, also a Frenchman by birth, had but newly come from Lausanne, where he had been educated. But all who held 'the Faith' were of kin in those days.

Berthelier was not present, he had declined to go.

The New Geneva

'Human sacrifices are not to my taste,' he said. 'Neither the pope's, nor yet Master Calvin's.' Claudine was there, however. 'At least,' she said, 'I can put up a prayer for these two poor innocent children, who are being flung into the fire for the sins of other folk.'

De Caulaincourt was absent in Savoy. Norbert had gone to church with the scholars of the academy, but, as it was half-holiday, he walked home with the Bertheliers. When they got out of the church and into the street 'of the rising sun,' Claudine's wrath, the wrath of the wounded dove, broke forth in most unwonted fashion, for her.

'Now God forgive that long-nosed, black-avised, heretic preacher you have all sold your souls to!' she said. 'There he stands, free and safe, with all Geneva at his back to protect him, and bids those two poor boys go forth and be burned at slow fires, as calmly as I should say to Marguerite, "Go into the kitchen and fetch me a dish-clout." If he thinks as much as he says of the glories of martyrdom, why does he not go and win them?'

'That is what I sometimes think,' Norbert chimed in. 'I would not even send him to France, but only to the Marches of Savoy, where my father goes. It may be very wise, very *prudent*, to stay here and preach to us all, but—— And yet—I know he is a brave man. Did I not see him face the Libertines that day in the cathedral?'

From beneath the hood that shaded Gabrielle's face came a low, trembling voice—

'Perhaps it is not the hardest thing to go.'

Norbert left the Bertheliers at their own door, and

Under Calvin's Spell

then walked slowly back to the Rue Coutance. There was a vague hope in his heart, which was destined to be gratified. He met De Marsac, who took his hand after the fashion of the time, and said—

‘I was looking for you.’

Norbert made as if to turn, ‘I suppose you are going to the Bertheliers?’

‘No. My farewells there are said. ’Twas thee I sought. Come with me.’

‘Thy going is fixed for to-morrow morning, is it not?’

‘Yes.’

‘I shall see thee off. Give me the rendezvous.’

‘Thanks. I knew thou wouldest be there. But so will others. And Denis, for so short a time as he has been here, has friends also.’

Norbert understood. Louis meant that this should be their real farewell. They had so much to say to one another that for some time they said scarce anything. Then Louis tried to give Norbert some advice about his studies.

‘I’ll do what I can,’ Norbert said gloomily, ‘but I shall hate the school now. All the good has gone from it, with you.’

‘Oh no! You will think of me, and do these things for me.’

‘Ah! if thou wouldest ask me to do something for thee, really, for thyself!’

‘Let us turn here into the Rue des Chanoines. There strikes the clock of St. Peter’s, and it is the hour at which I am to wait upon Master Calvin, and have him bid me God-speed. Wilt stay for me outside, Norbert? I shall not be long.’

The New Geneva

‘With all my heart,’ said Norbert, relieved ; for he feared (very needlessly) that Louis would have proposed their going in together.

Louis knocked, and Norbert made haste to slip out of sight before the door was opened. He walked up and down for a few minutes, but no very serious demand was made upon his patience. It was not long before Louis came forth, his bright face shadowed, and tears trembling in his eyes. Men were far less careful then than now to hide such evidences of emotion.

‘What is the matter?’ Norbert asked, sympathizing.

‘Nothing ; all is well. If tears come, they are for joy—joy that such honour is given me—that I am counted worthy. Yet there is pain too—my dear father in God ! But do not let us talk of it. Come to the cathedral court, where all is quiet.’

They did so, and for a little while walked up and down in silence.

Then Louis spoke suddenly, ‘Thou saidst, if I would ask thee to do something, for myself?’

‘Ah ! try me.’

‘Thou dost know, thou hast guessed, whom in all Geneva, in all the world, I hold most dear.’

‘Yes, I have guessed. Although, I own, I marvel at thy taste.’

‘What? You marvel? I thought you held also in esteem, in admiration——’

‘Esteem and admiration are no words for it. Never in all my life was I so frightened of any one——’

‘Frightened ! at gentleness itself, and loveliness?’

‘Gentle he may be to thee, whom he likes. Not to

Under Calvin's Spell

ill scholars like me. But lovely! Heaven help thee, Louis, where are thine eyes?'

'Of whom are you talking?' asked Louis, standing still.

'Of whom should I talk, save the man from whose door you have just come forth? I know you love him with a love which unto me is passing strange.'

'There is another kind of love passing—but not passing strange. Oh, Norbert, hast thou not guessed? Thou hast seen her so often; thou hast seen us together more than once or twice. Dost not remember that morning when both you and I rose before cock-crow to carry her bread to the oven?—We have not drunk out of the same cup. Nor have I spoken to Master Berthelier, far less to her. For see, I go forth with my life in my hand, and whether I return or no shall be as God wills. But if I do, and I think I shall—*she knows*. Norbert, I hold thee somewhat as a knight would hold his dear and loving squire, a young brother already in heart, later perhaps in arms. Wilt thou do the squire's, the brother's, part for me whilst I am absent, serving her in aught wherein she may need thy true service?'

The boy who listened felt as if the solid ground was rocking beneath his feet. Had he been anything but a boy, in half his nature still a child, he would have known long ago. His misfortune was that in the other half he was not a child. At least in his own opinion it was a man's heart that broke within him now. His palace of delight had shivered at a touch, and fallen about him in shapeless ruin. For a while he did not dream of answering. He could not.

Louis, so much taller, looked down kindly, even

The New Geneva

tenderly on the boy beside him. He saw that somehow he was grieved and hurt, but he had no faintest suspicion why.

‘What aileth my young squire?’ he asked. ‘Have I hurt thee, Norbert, by calling thee thus?’ For he knew the lad, like others of his age, would fain be accounted a man.

‘No, oh no!’ Norbert roused himself to say. ‘Louis, I will do it. You may trust me.’

Little more was said till they parted at the door of De Marsac’s lodging. Louis thought Norbert only a boy, and supposed that his silence and his sorrowful looks were due to the approaching parting. His own heart was stirred to the very depths, he was leaving so much that he loved, and he was so grateful for the love poured forth from all sides upon him. Full of this thought, he took his young brother in his strong arms, and, as the way then was between man and man, folded him in a close embrace, and kissed him lip to lip.

CHAPTER IX

A DISASTER AND AN APPEAL

‘Thou sendest forth, and dost not spare
Thy best to meet the tyrant’s worst,
Thou sowest lives for seed of life—
Oh, starry stern through all despair,
Where is thine anguish in the strife?’

H. HAMILTON KING.

ALMOST all that Norbert remembered afterwards of the rest of that gloomy winter was the cold—cold within and cold without. In the dark, every morning, before the church clock struck six, he rose from his truckle bed, and threw on his clothes, which might with advantage have been warmer. Then he hurried to the kitchen, took his morning soup with the rest, and received from Mistress Calvin a piece of bread, with a slice of cheese or a handful of figs or raisins, for the *gouté*, or luncheon eaten by the scholars in class while they studied their lessons. Book and tablet in hand, he hastened through the dark streets, exchanging with his school-fellows remarks and greetings, which were bound to be in Latin, though its quality was very indifferent. When he reached the school, he took his place in the great, bare, dimly-lighted hall, and stood or

A Disaster and an Appeal

knelt at the opening exercises, shivering with cold, and casting rueful glances toward the place Louis de Marsac used to occupy. In the lessons and recitations which followed—mainly in Greek and Latin, which were admirably taught—his interest was absolutely *nil*. But, having a good memory, and what were called ‘excellent parts,’ he always contrived to know enough to pass muster and escape punishment. There was an interval of two hours for dinner and recreation, then an hour of sacred music, which he liked. At four o’clock all the classes assembled in the great hall, where three of the scholars in turn recited the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments in French, the principal pronounced the Benediction, and every one went home—Norbert all the more gladly when his father chanced to be there. Wednesdays and Saturdays were half-holidays, though Norbert thought the former dearly bought by having to attend a long sermon at the cathedral. Most of his spare time he gave willingly to manly sports and exercises on the Plain-palais. Here he won far more praise than he did in the school. Though small for his age, and remarkably childish in appearance, he was strong and dexterous, and soon learned to handle with skill the arbalist or cross-bow, and the arquebus.

His father’s influence only excepted (and his father was constantly absent), everything at this time contributed to harden him. He had lost the friend and comrade whom he looked up to and admired, and who, without any assumption of superiority, had contrived to keep him within the bounds of good and orderly behaviour. At the same time he had lost his cherished

Under Calvin's Spell

dream, his one private and particular ray of romance, which lit up the dark, waste places of his daily life. For it never even occurred to him that he might be false to his friend, or dispute with him the prize they both desired. Louis was the best man; and of course the best man must win. It was just his luck, and he must put up with it. Here, in this cold, gloomy, joyless Geneva, everything went against him. How he hated it; how earnestly he wished himself back in *La Belle France!* Had he but the good fortune to have stayed there and finished his education, then he might have gone to Paris, seen the king and the court, danced at balls and masquerades, fought in the king's wars, and won renown and glory. Well—perhaps, one day. Who could tell?

When his father was at home things were better. He would tell himself he was glad to have come to Geneva with him. They used to walk together on the Crêts, or go together to the *cercles* frequented by the French exiles, to hear the news of the day, which meant for them the news of the progress of Protestantism; and the father used to witness with pleasure the feats of the son in the games on the Plain-palais.

Germain de Caulaincourt was one of the fifty prominent French exiles who about this time had the freedom of the city of Geneva conferred upon them. His work was approved, and he grew more and more to love and to delight in it. It developed in him powers and capacities of which he had never known before. 'God is making me fruitful in the land of my exile,' he often thought with thankfulness.

A long absence of his in early spring did not prove

A Disaster and an Appeal

a happy time to his son. Hitherto, in the school, Norbert had been looked on rather indulgently. He was thought younger than he really was; no serious wrong-doings were suspected in the gentle-looking boy with the beautiful girlish face. Every one was surprised when 'M. de Caulaincourt's child,' as they called him, fell into a rather serious scrape. Disputing with another lad over a game of chance, in itself unlawful, he lost his temper, and swore by the sacred Name, which in France he had been wont to hear too lightly used. This being overheard and reported to the *dizainier* of his quarter, he was called up for punishment, not in the school, but before a magistrate.

According to the new law of Geneva, the profane swearer, for the first offence, had to pay a small fine and to ask pardon publicly of God and the city, kneeling and kissing the ground. Norbert offered to pay the fine, selling for the purpose one of his school books, but he positively refused to perform the *amende honorable*. Having heard that a second offence would be punished by a day's imprisonment, he committed it on the spot, by swearing that he would never submit to such degradation. He earned thereby twenty-four long hours—very long hours indeed—in the thick darkness of an underground cell of the Evêché. Nor would he have been released even then, as his insolence was an added offence, but for the compassion felt for the 'poor child,' whose father was even then perilling his life for the cause of the Gospel in Savoy. He was sent back to school, with an injunction to the authorities to keep a strict eye upon him; which they did, reporting as the result of their observation that he showed not the

Under Calvin's Spell

slightest interest in spiritual exercises, that his school work was carelessly done, that his temper was violent, and that more than once he had 'fought with fists,' the old Genevan method of settling disputes, which was strongly discouraged in the new Geneva.

At last the winter passed away, and the earth entered again into the possession of her golden heritage of spring. Norbert, quite unconsciously to himself, felt the influence of the time. One bright April afternoon he came bounding home from school as if he thought the world, and even the world of Geneva, no bad place to live in.

Antoine Calvin stood at his own door in earnest conversation with three others—Pastor Poupin, Ami Berthelier, and a blue-coated messenger from the town council. Norbert felt a sudden chill, for the certainty came upon him that they were talking about him. What had they found out now? he began to ask a conscience that was not too clear—his fight with Jean Amblarde, his breaking Syndic Ambard's window, his surreptitious meetings with that profligate young libertine, Ami Perrin? Something, surely, for as he drew near the pastor looked at him mournfully, and Berthelier and Antoine Calvin whispered together. They did not look angry, only sad and perplexed. He heard Antoine say—

'Do it you, Master Berthelier, I cannot.'

He turned into his own house. Poupin went with him, and the messenger withdrew.

'Come with me,' said Berthelier to Norbert.

He obeyed, wondering. Gabrielle was in the room they entered, but withdrew at a sign from her father.

A Disaster and an Appeal

Berthelier leant against the mantel-shelf, and turned his face away.

‘What is it, sir?’ asked Norbert, beginning for the first time to forebode something worse than blame for a boyish fault. Then, with a sudden thrill of terror, ‘Is it—my father?’

‘Yes, my poor boy.’

‘What? Oh, what?’ Norbert asked, breathless.

‘What was too likely. What we feared.’

‘He is not—dead?’

‘Nay, he is a prisoner.’

‘Ah! there is hope, then?’

‘I dare say not so. Be a man, Norbert, and face the truth. That is best, is it not?’

Norbert’s lips just breathed a ‘Yes.’ Then, rallying himself—

‘How do you know? Who told you? Perhaps—perhaps it is not true?’

Berthelier shook his head. ‘A Grey-foot, from beyond the Liberties, going on his own business to Chambéry, saw him bound, on a horse, in the midst of a band of armed men, who wore the colours of the Count of Lormayeur.’

A cry of despair broke from Norbert. He knew the fate of heretics who fell into the hands of the cruel and fanatical nobles of Savoy. And he knew the Count of Lormayeur as the most cruel and most fanatical of them all.

Berthelier’s kind hand was on his shoulder. ‘Be brave, my son. Bear it—as he would have you.’

‘I can’t!’ cried Norbert. ‘Were it death even, death in battle; that is fair—one is bound to face it.’

Under Calvin's Spell

But this—the torture, the ignominy—Oh God!—the boy's voice rose to a cry of passion. 'Why did we ever come to this hateful place, when men are sent forth for such things?'

'God has little to do with it, to my thinking,' said Berthelier bitterly. 'Tis breath wasted to cry to Him, or to complain. There is no help, but there is still patience. That is a hard lesson, specially for the young, like thee. But think, thy father would have thee learn it. He would be proud to see thee bear thy sorrow as a brave man should.'

There was a pause; then Norbert broke out impetuously—

'I will not bear it! I will have justice!'

'Justice, poor boy? Thou wilt have to go far to get that.'

'I will go—I will appeal—I will pray, on bended knees, with strong crying and tears.'

'To whom? To the Savoyard? Thou canst not reach him. And if thou couldest, such as he will only accept one ransom for a heretic—a ransom none can pay save himself, and thy father would account it far too high. To the syndics or the council? They are powerless as ourselves.'

'One man rules them all.'

'But his power ceases at the Pont de L'Arve. Norbert—Norbert! What wouldest thou? Whither goest?'

For Norbert turned quickly, dashed down the stairs, and was in the street before Berthelier finished speaking.

One man had done it all. One man reigned over

A Disaster and an Appeal

Geneva, and sent his father out to suffer and to die. Norbert, in his boyish heart, believed that man omnipotent. He was destiny, fate—stern, strong, resistless, all-conquering fate. Let him save his father now!

All Norbert's fear of him was gone. An hour ago, had the great man spoken to him, he would scarce have dared to answer. Now he only longed to see him face to face, and pour forth all his soul.

He flew down the Rue Cornavin, across the bridge, by the Rue de La Cité and the Grande Rue into the Rue des Chanoines. His knock at the well-known door was answered by a female servant, who told him every one knew Master Calvin was in the Franciscan Hall, delivering his lecture to the students of theology. Two minutes more brought Norbert to the old Franciscan monastery behind the cathedral, up the nearest staircase, to one of the closed doors of the vast pillared hall where the Great Council of Geneva was wont to meet. Now, instead of eager voices and tumultuous interruptions, one calm, even, unimpassioned voice reached his ear. He pushed the door gently, it yielded to his touch, and he went in.

Any wild thoughts of interrupting the speaker died in him instantly, slain by the spirit of the place. The great hall was crammed, each manly face turned to the chair at the upper end, and the slight dark figure with upraised hand, and lips from which issued the words that were as a sentence of life or death. For John Calvin, in his luminous style, and with his matchless command of his native French, was expounding the doctrine of Justification by Faith. To the strong

Under Calvin's Spell

deep-hearted men who listened, this was a question of life or death, *the* question of all others. 'How shall I stand acquitted before the bar of the living God?' each one had asked himself, and each one was hearing the answer now.

Norbert, though he could not listen, was awed into silence. The speaker held him like a hound in leash, hating the bond, yet unable to break it, for the master's hand was there. But his eyes were free, and they took note of things with which the brain had no concern. On a window near him was a great grey spider with a hapless fly in his web. No, he would not look at that—it was too horribly suggestive. A student just before him had his wide sleeve all torn, and the notes he had put into it dropping out one by one. Another wore spectacles, just like a notary or a doctor—what could a young fellow like that want with spectacles? Not that all were young; yonder tall, stout man looked forty at least. And there was one with his beard absolutely grey; while another was as bald as old Fléchier, who taught Latin in the school. Most, however, were young men in the very prime and vigour of their strength. But who was that little red-haired man, with the bold look and the burning eyes, honoured with a chair by Master Calvin himself, as a visitor of distinction? Oh, of course that was Master William Farel, come from Neufchâtel, where he was pastor, to visit his dear friend Master Calvin.

But the lecture was over at last. All stood up for the concluding prayer and blessing. Then, from the different doors the crowd poured out. Not noisily, as students might to-day in reaction after the strain of a

A Disaster and an Appeal

long attention, but gravely, thoughtfully, as if the voice they had been hearing was still sounding in their ears.

Norbert pushed his way up the hall, and stood—realizing with angry impatience that he might have to stand a long time. For a dense, eager throng pressed round Calvin. Every one wanted something of him, were it but the answer to a question, a word of greeting, a handshake.

‘Will they keep him for ever?’ thought Norbert. He seemed to himself to be standing still—yet gradually he was moving nearer, near enough at last to hear a boy, a schoolmate of his own, implore the master with passionate words to send him—him also—to France to preach the Word of God.

‘My son, thou art too young. Two, or perchance three years more of preparation are needful for thee,’ said the calm, impassive voice.

One eager forward thrust, and Norbert had dispersed the loiterers between; indeed, they gave way before him. He stood face to face with the master, his own face white, and his eyes wild.

‘Oh, sir,’ he cried, ‘send him *not!* Send no more forth to die!’

John Calvin looked at him in calm surprise. ‘Collect thyself, young man, and speak soberly,’ he said. ‘Who art thou?’

‘I am Norbert de Caulaincourt, and my father lies in a Savoyard dungeon. Oh, sir, you can do everything. Help him, for God’s sake!’

‘I know already what has happened, and I regret it. I hold M. de Caulaincourt in high esteem.’

The measured words fell like ice on the heart of

Under Calvin's Spell

Norbert. He asked for bread, and the autocrat of Geneva offered him a stone. He stood motionless, in bitter pain, gazing into the inscrutable face. But presently he saw something there, just the shadow of a shade, which moved him to throw himself at the great man's feet with a passionate cry.

'Oh, sir, have pity! have pity! your word is law—you do what you will—surely you can save him?'

'Am I in the place of God, to kill and to make alive? Norbert de Caulaincourt, wherefore kneelest thou to me? I can do nothing in this matter.'

Norbert rose up—it was no use in kneeling to this man. Then in his anguish the boy said a desperate thing, scarce any man in Geneva would have dared.

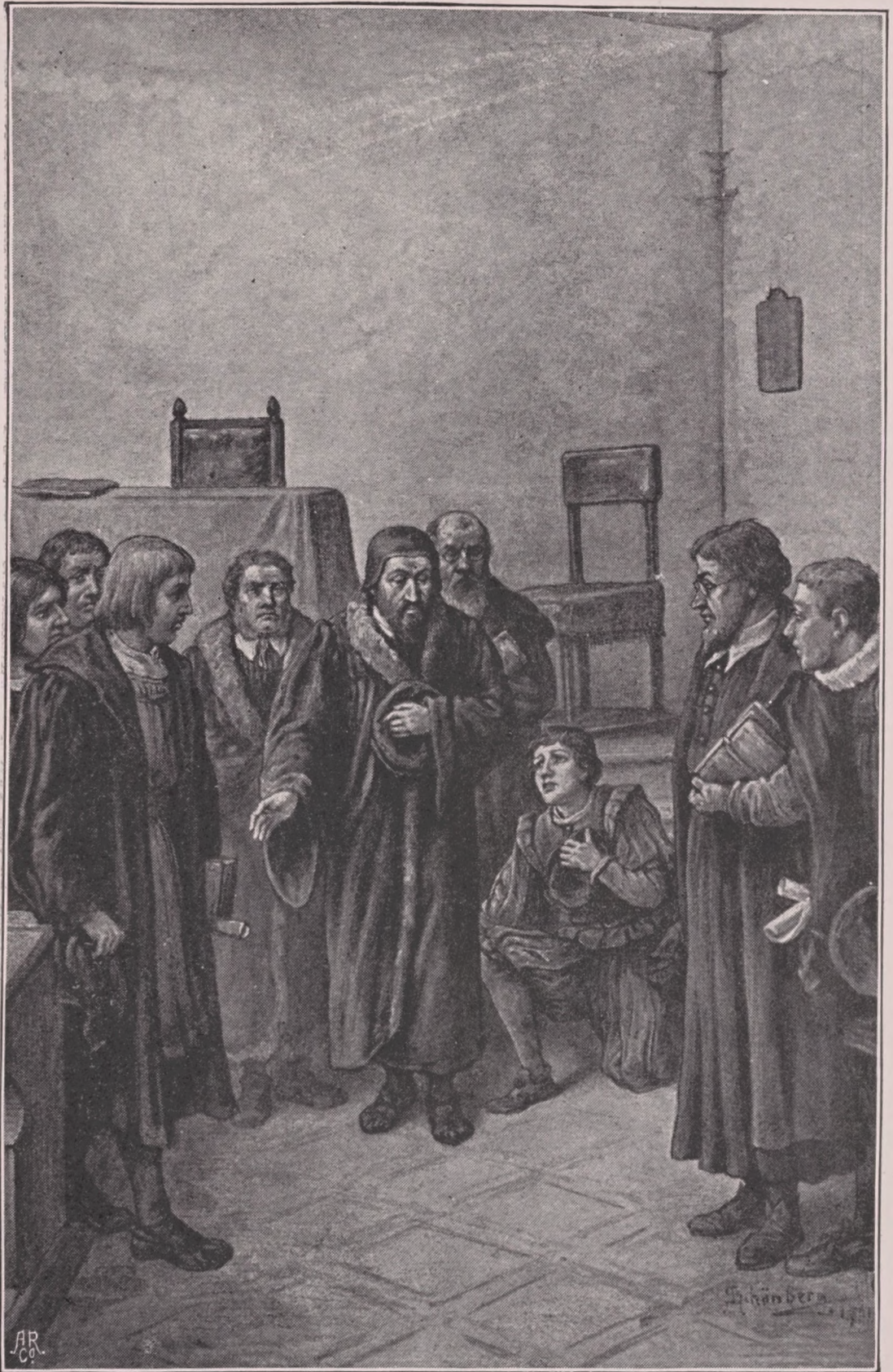
'Were you not in God's place to kill, when you sent him forth *for this?*'

For a moment Calvin did not answer. Then he said very calmly, even coldly—

'I sent him not. He went forth at his own desire, that God's will might be done by, and in, him. To that will, Norbert de Caulaincourt, thou and I and he must bow. There is nothing else. Go home; pray for thy father and thyself.'

Without another word Norbert turned and walked away. A cold, numb despair had him in its grasp. There was no help for him in Master Calvin, and no comfort. What, to the great man, was his father's peril, his own anguish? Only what the soldier's fall might be to the captain—perhaps not so much.

As he went home he thought sadly, 'Is there anything I can do?' But the only possible answer was 'Nothing.' To go into Savoy in the hope of seeing his



'OH, SIR, HAVE PITY, HAVE PITY!.'

A Disaster and an Appeal

father would be simply an act of insanity. He must stay where he was, and suffer, and eat his heart out.

Thus dreary days passed on, until the desperate pain in a measure wore itself out, and a kind of lethargy began to steal over him.

CHAPTER X

A GLEAM OF LIGHT

‘There is asked
A ransom far too high.’

ALL Geneva was moved with sorrow and sympathy for De Caulaincourt and anxiety about his fate. But presently even this was driven into the background by public events of a very important nature. The Libertine party, after several defeats still strong and daring, raised its head again and challenged a decisive conflict for the possession of Geneva. The special ‘foot of ground’ they chose to contest was the admission of the French exiles to the privileges of citizenship. These exiles were religious men, and warm friends of Calvin, himself a Frenchman. So the Libertines raised the cry, ‘Geneva for the Genevans,’ and tried to persuade the people that the ambitious preacher intended, by means of his countrymen, to get the whole power into his hands, crush the old citizens, and rule as a despot. This at least was plausible. But to the ‘baser sort,’ especially to the fishermen and boatmen of the lake, they told another tale. Calvin and his French, they said, were plotting to deliver up the city to the King of France, and thus deprive the citizens

A Gleam of Light

of their ancient liberties. Seeing that the first act of the King of France, if he got the city, would have been to burn the French exiles every one, this did not seem a likely story; yet it gained credence enough to cost a night of terror, during which the streets were paraded by armed bands of disorderly Libertines, and mobs of fishermen with arquebuses, crying, 'Kill! kill! Death to the Françillions—to the Porte-Français!' as they called the exiles and their friends. Happily, these all remained quietly within doors, so the rioters found no one to kill.

But this was open sedition. It showed that the foes of order must be dealt with decisively, else the new Geneva would be split into fragments, and no man's life would be safe in it. Some of the Libertine leaders, especially Philibert Berthelier and Ami Perrin, escaped to Bernese territory; but Daniel Berthelier, two brothers named Comparet, and others of less note, were arrested and imprisoned.

Ami Berthelier held himself aloof from the whole affair. Though not quite in sympathy with the new *régime*, he was still less so with his own kinsfolk, whose projects, if successful, would lead, he thought, to anarchy. Still, when party feeling ran so high, he could scarcely hope that one of his name would escape suspicion; nor would it have surprised him, at any moment, to find himself arrested on some charge or other and lodged in the Evêché.

Norbert, having nothing else to do, had gone to school again. He told himself he was as well, or as ill, there as anywhere else. It is true he did little, but then he had never done very much. And at this time

Under Calvin's Spell

all the office-bearers, from the rector to the *dizainier* of his class, were very lenient with him: they knew the bitterness of his soul.

The days wore slowly on. At last, one afternoon in May, on coming out of the school, he noticed an unusual concourse in the street. All were gazing at a burly horseman with a trumpet at his side, and a pole with a white pennon attached to his stirrup.

Norbert looked because the others did, but without interest, until some one called out, 'A Lormayeur!'

'What say you?' he cried, eager enough now.

'Look at the badge in his cap—holly for Savoy, broom for the Counts of Lormayeur. This means a parley, and tidings. Let us follow him to the Town Hall, and hear.'

When they got there they heard that the Little Council was then actually in session (a thing unusual in the afternoon), and the trumpeter was at once admitted to an audience.

Many hands were stretched out for his reins when he flung them down, but Norbert seized them first.

'I pray you, sir,' said he, 'know you aught of my father, the Sieur de Caulaincourt, a prisoner?'

'Ay, do I, young master. 'Tis about his ransom I am here.'

Norbert's heart leaped within him. He cried aloud with his sudden joy.

'And how does he fare?' he added hastily; but there was no time to answer. Already a messenger of the council was hurrying the trumpeter in, and bidding the bystanders take care of his horse.

A Gleam of Light

Still, Norbert had heard enough. That word 'ransom' sounded in his ears like the sweetest of melodies. It meant hope of deliverance; it meant, even now, gentle and honourable treatment—that of a prisoner of war, instead of that of a condemned heretic.

True, there was a question behind—where was the ransom to come from? It might prove—it was likely to prove—a very perplexing question indeed. But it did not trouble him yet.

Another official came out, a clerk with spectacles and a pen behind his ear.

'Take that horse to the Wild Man,' he said; 'his master will follow presently.'

Norbert sprang upon the clerk with eager questions, to be waived off in summary fashion.

'I am under oath. I can say nothing. You will know all in due time.'

'Come away, Norbert,' said two other lads. 'No use in waiting. We may cool our feet here for hours before the council thinks fit to break up!' But still Norbert lingered, unable to tear himself from the spot.

In about half an hour the clerk came forth again. Seeing Norbert waiting at the door, he said—

'I think you lodge near the dwelling of Master Ami Berthelier. Will you go and fetch him?'

'I will, sir,' cried Norbert, eagerly. 'Is there a letter for him? May I take it?'

'No; fetch him hither as quickly as thou canst.'

Norbert flew to the Rue Cornavin, and told his errand breathlessly.

Under Calvin's Spell

'Oh, sir, make haste!' he said; 'there is news of my father.'

A summons from the Little Council would not in itself have surprised Berthelier, who lived, as we know, in the expectation of being denounced by somebody as an enemy to the commonwealth. But a summons in connection with the messenger of Lormayeur!—What could that possibly mean? Whatever it meant, he must do all right and fitting honour to their worthinesses of the Town Council. So he put on his gown of broadcloth and his furred bonnet, and hung by his side the ancient sword he had never once had the chance of using.

'I am with you,' he said to Norbert.

With much difficulty the eager boy adapted his pace to the lame man's lagging footsteps. To him the time seemed endless till they reached the hall. Then he was told he might go home, which he did not do, and Berthelier was ushered at once into the presence of the twenty-five.

He bowed, removed his bonnet, and stood before them in respectful silence, awaiting their pleasure.

There, at the great table with the covering of green cloth, sat the four syndics and the rest, all well-known to him by face and name. They wore their hats and were dressed very plainly and soberly, but in robes of good broadcloth. Each of the syndics had his black baton of office laid on the table before him. They looked like a company of honest, but hard and stern, perhaps narrow-minded men. The thought came to Berthelier, as he waited there, that it had been the dream of his youth that such men as these should rule



A PERSON IN A NOTARY'S ROBE BEGAN TO READ.

A Gleam of Light

his Geneva, in place of the haughty duke and the dissolute prince-bishop. His dream had come true; but was Geneva the better for it, after all?

'Be seated, Master Berthelier,' said the first syndic, addressing him in terms of unlooked-for courtesy.

'This is a fairer beginning than I expected,' thought Berthelier, as he took the offered seat.

'We have sent for you,' continued the syndic, by name Amblarde Corne, 'because of a communication which we have just received from the Count of Lormayeur.'

Berthelier looked the astonishment he felt.

'The notary will explain,' continued the syndic.

A person in a notary's robe stood up at the end of the table and began to read. 'Philip Manuel Joseph, by the grace of God, Count of Lormayeur;' thus began the letter which the haughty Savoyard had so far demeaned himself as to address to the heretics of Geneva. A string of other titles followed, with a curt commendation to 'Them of Geneva,' as of one who strained a point to observe the barest rules of courtesy. But the next words were of thrilling interest. The count condescended to inform the Genevans that he had in ward one Germain de Caulaincourt, a Frenchman by birth, but a citizen of Geneva. This ill-advised person had been found upon the count's estate, disseminating heretical doctrines, and thus laying himself open to condign punishment. Two others of Genevan birth were in the prisons of the count, a certain Jacques de Maisonneuve, or Baudichon, supposed to be a cadet of an honourable house, and Jean Ardenot, companion of the Guild of Bonnet-makers. These also, as heretics,

Under Calvin's Spell

were liable to summary justice. But the count in his clemency was willing to regard all these as prisoners of war, and put them to fair exchange and ransom.

Here the notary paused, and Berthelier, much rejoiced, could not help saying—

‘Good! We will give to the last denier, and so will all the Frenchmen, for the ransom of M. de Caulaincourt. Maisonneuve will take care of his kinsman, and the bonnet-makers will see to their companion.’

‘Patience, friend,’ the first syndic said gravely. ‘It is not money that is wanted. Master Notary, read on.’

The notary bowed. ‘There is at present,’ he continued, ‘there is at present in your city a young lady, a kinswoman of the count, whose person his excellency desires to recover’—here Berthelier suddenly raised his head, with a look at the notary that disconcerted him visibly—‘desires to recover,’ he repeated, then rallying himself went on, ‘since of right she is his ward, and should be under his guardianship, that she may be educated suitably, and in honourable fashion, and placed in the possession of the estates that are her rightful inheritance.’ More followed, enveloped in many high-sounding words. But the meaning of all was abundantly clear. ‘Give me the young lady, and you shall have your three heretics safe and sound. I offer you Germain Caulaincourt, Jacques de Maisonneuve, and Jean Ardenot, in exchange for the Demoiselle Castelar, who goes amongst you by the name of Gabrielle Berthelier.’

Ami Berthelier spoke no word, uttered no cry,

A Gleam of Light

but he looked what he was—a man stabbed to the heart.

One of the council, who sat where he could see his face, interposed from an impulse of compassion.

‘We will do nothing rashly. This story has yet to be proved.’

‘And if it were,’ said another, ‘how is the count to make sure that we do not palm off on him some peasant girl, get our men back, and laugh in his face?’

‘The men of Geneva deal fairly,’ said the first syndic, in a tone of grave reproof. ‘And the count, of course, will take due precautions. Go on, Master Notary.’

The rest of the count’s letter, stripped of verbiage and circumlocution, contained the following facts—the child, Olive de Castelar, was stolen from her parents by her nurse, at the instigation of the devil, and of the rascally kinsman who hoped to inherit if they died childless. The nurse, one Josephine Mendol, passed her on for better concealment to her sister, the wife of a well-to-do peasant, named Robinet. She then induced this Robinet to come to Geneva, and they were lodging in one of the suburban houses which were destroyed by the citizens on account of the threatened Savoyard invasion. She lost sight of them after that, and did not hear until long afterwards that they both died of the plague, but that the child was living, and had been adopted by a citizen of Geneva. All these things, being stricken with remorse, she had revealed on her death-bed to her confessor, charging him to make them known to the relations of the child.

Under Calvin's Spell

'A fine story that!' said another syndic, named Bonna. 'But I pray you, how does it prove that the citizen who adopted the child was Master Ami Berthelier, here present before us?'

'There is more,' said the notary, who had been scanning the paper carefully, and wishing the count had employed a secretary who wrote a clearer hand, and a style less burdened with Savoyard idioms.

'Let us have it all,' said the first syndic.

'Some months ago,' the notary continued, 'an old servant of the house of Castelar, ignorant of these facts, being in town upon his own affairs, and under safe conduct, saw the young lady, and was struck by her likeness to her mother, whom he well remembered, though she is long dead. He inquired of the townsfolk, and learned that she was the adopted daughter of Master Ami Berthelier. That is not all. The traitorous nurse, it appears, did not wish all record of the child's parentage to be lost. What was strange in a woman like that, of the baser sort, she could read and write, having learned these arts in the service of the lady of Castelar. She used her clerkship to write the child's real name, with the state and quality of her parents, enclosing the said writing in a little bag, which she hung round the child's neck, calling it a charm.' The notary laid down the paper and took off his spectacles.

'Master Berthelier,' asked the first syndic, very courteously, 'have you any knowledge of this paper?'

Berthelier cleared his throat, though his voice was still husky, and sounded to himself a great way off.

'I do know it,' he said; 'it was lost—as I believed destroyed. But some weeks ago I found it again. It

A Gleam of Light

is all as you say.' The last words were a hoarse whisper.

'You must see, Master Berthelier,' Amblarde Corne resumed gravely, 'we have no choice left us. We must give her up.'

'Not so bad as it might be,' a member of the council threw in. 'The maiden goes to her kindred and her friends. Perhaps also to a fair inheritance.'

'But you forget,' said the third Syndic Aubert, well known as an excellent apothecary and a most zealous Protestant. 'You forget we are thrusting the poor child's soul into deadly peril. They will make a Papist of her.'

'Please you, my masters,' said the notary. 'There is here a sort or manner of post scriptum, which I did not observe before.'

'Read it,' said several voices together.

'The count, in his clemency, is pleased to take into consideration the regrettable fact that the young lady, through no fault of her own, hath been nourished and brought up hitherto in the pernicious doctrines'—so he says, my masters, I am bound to read his words as they stand written—'in the pernicious doctrines of the pretended Reformed, and he desires to assure her present guardians that no restraint will be put upon her in the matter of religion. Also, he thanks them for their good offices towards her, which upon due occasion he holds himself bound to requite.'

'Fine words!' said Aubert. 'How much are they to be trusted?'

'An' it please your worthiness, I have somewhat to say.' The speaker was a little insignificant-looking

Under Calvin's Spell

man with a squint. But he was of some weight in the town; besides being a member of council he was Prior of the Honourable Guild of the Tailors. 'I know the Count of Lormayeur very well. Indeed, I may say, after a fashion of speech, "I have taken his measure."' "

'In more ways than one, Master Pradel,' said the youngest of the councillors, and one or two grave faces relaxed a little. Pradel's renown in his craft extended to Savoy, and he had gone more than once, under proper safe conduct, to the Castle of Lormayeur, to place his skill at the service of its lord.

'I know the count,' he resumed. 'He is like all the rest of them—self first, the pope second, the duke his liege lord third and last—all else, nowhere. When I say self, I mean gold and lands for self. Depend upon it, this is at bottom an affair of these. He wants the maiden for some purpose that will bring them into his net. That purpose served, he will care for nought about herself or her religion, one way or the other.'

There was a pause, then Syndic Corne said gravely: 'Our duty is clear. Yet the matter should be voted upon, in due course and order. Master Bonna, my honoured colleague, what say you?'

Syndic Bonna's mind was quite made up, as indeed was that of every one else. But he could not record his vote with Berthelier's eyes of anguish fixed upon his face.

'I move,' he said, 'that Master Berthelier be requested to withdraw.'

Without waiting for more, Berthelier rose silently

A Gleam of Light

and retired to the ante-chamber. Syndic Bonna was right, no man should be present while the votes are taken upon his own death-sentence. He went over to the window, leant against it and looked out upon the street. A wave of agony swept over him, such as he had not known for years, such as he never thought to know again. Chords which had seemed broken for ever in the storm that wrecked his youth thrilled now with exquisite pain. Once more he had let himself love, and the power to love is the power to suffer. So the child—his child by every tie and claim, save that of birth—must go from him, and for ever! Were it but for her good, he could have borne it. But that she, the child of Geneva, the child of that new Faith which had such mysterious power to grasp and hold the souls it touched, should be flung into the midst of that cruel Papist crew—the thought was intolerable! A lily amongst thorns—she would be torn and tortured, perhaps done to death amongst them. He would not have it! He would refuse to give her up, and take the consequences. He would defy the syndics, the council, the whole city—what did he care for them all?

Ay, but then—were there not those behind for whom he *did* care? Would he choose, even if he could, to give up his noble friend De Caulaincourt, not to speak of the other two, to a death of lingering torture? His love for him, strengthened by every claim of justice and of right, surged back upon his heart, and forbade the thought. Impossible to abandon him—and yet, oh, how impossible to consent to that other thing! He felt like a wild beast in a net, unable to struggle, unable even to move, able only to suffer.

Under Calvin's Spell

The notary stood at the door. 'Master Berthelier, the honourable council desires your presence.'

He obeyed, and stood before the council as a man might stand awaiting his death sentence.

The first syndic addressed him mildly, with courteous intonation. 'You must see for yourself, respectable Master Berthelier, that there is no choice left us in this matter. These three worthy citizens must be saved. Therefore, we accept the terms of the Count of Lormayeur. And since they are no doubt pining in his dungeons all this time upon scanty pittance of bread and water, it is our unanimous opinion that what must be done should be done quickly. Therefore we require of you, upon your oath and your duty as a citizen, to hold the maiden known and designated as Gabrielle Berthelier ready in three days' time for honourable exchange against Germain de Caulaincourt, Jacques Baudichon, and Jean Ardenot. I pray you, Master Berthelier, if you have anything to say, speak freely; we shall hear you with all indulgence.'

'I have nothing to say. I obey the honourable council,' said Berthelier, hoarsely. He turned to go; then, remembering that these men represented Geneva, turned again, made his 'reverence,' and passed out.

At the door Norbert sprang upon him demanding news.

'He is saved,' said Berthelier.

'But how—how? Tell me all!' Norbert cried. 'Is it by ransom?'

'Yes, by a great ransom.'

'How much?'

A Gleam of Light

'Ask me no more. And I pray thee, let me go home alone.'

He waved off the boy, who would have given him his arm, and who stood waiting, his joy dashed with awe, as the old man passed slowly and wearily down the street.

CHAPTER XI

IN THREE DAYS

The sun of the morning

It rose in the east

And the world was bright

And the world was bright

CHAPTER XII

CHAPTER XI

IS THERE ANY HELP?

'The star of the unconquered will,
It rises in my breast,
Serene and passionless and still,
And calm and self-possessed.'

LONGFELLOW.

THAT night, in the house of Berthelier, no eye closed in sleep. Through its long hours four hearts wrestled sore, in conflict or in prayer, each one alone with God. No joy came in the morning; and yet perhaps there came to each a little of that rest, of that vision of an end to pain, which with great sufferers sometimes takes the place of joy.

Claudine and Marguerite had the same thought. Each resolved to go with 'the child' to the land of the stranger; Marguerite because she had nursed her; Claudine, with better reason, because being a Catholic at heart, she had nothing to fear from the Savoyards, and might perhaps smooth matters for Gabrielle.

Berthelier's comfort was less than theirs, in so far as it only touched himself. 'When there is nothing left to live for,' thought he, 'a man can always die.' Why not? Who could blame him, if only he made suitable provision for his sister and his old servant? He was

Is there any Help ?

free to take leave, when he would, of this new Geneva, in which he had neither part nor lot. It was what any of the great men of antiquity, whom he admired and wished to copy, would have done in his place.

As was meet and right, the strongest comfort was given to the sorest need. Child of Geneva, child of the Reformation as she was, every fibre of Gabrielle's heart clung round her home. All she knew and loved was there—or had been there. At first the blow, so sudden and so strange, stunned and bewildered her, but the power to feel all its bitterness came back only too soon. Happily, one relief was not denied her; when the first overwhelming shock was over, she could weep. At first she wept wildly, passionately, then in a restrained, quiet way, the quieter for Claudine's sake, whose couch she shared.

At last, in the tearless exhaustion that followed the long weeping, a light half slumber stole over her. Louis de Marsac stood beside her, holding in his hand a 'flute' or long narrow glass filled with wine. 'Maiden,' he said, 'wilt thou drink in this glass with me?' So in old Geneva troth was wont to be pledged; but those two, who knew each other's hearts, had exchanged no troth pledge. In her dream she answered steadily, 'I will,' and put forth her hand to take the glass. The action woke her. She came to herself, and knew that the proffered draught was no earthly vintage, but the sharp, strong wine of martyrdom. A great awe stole over her, and with it a great calm.

'Strength came to her that answered her desire.'

It was morning now. She arose, bathed her face,

Under Calvin's Spell

dressed herself noiselessly, so as not to wake Claudine, who was dozing, and went into the other room. Berthelier and Marguerite were there already, in earnest conversation.

'You must let me go, or my heart will break,' pleaded the old servant, her hand on her master's arm.

'Though your heart break, I cannot,' was the answer. 'I give you a month to bring yourself to the stake, and the poor child under fatal suspicion. 'Twould be enough to ruin her with these Savoyards, to have as her attendant a red-hot Calvinist like thee.' Then more gently, 'Thou dost believe in prayer. Pray for her; 'tis all thou canst.'

Then Gabrielle stood before them, pale and weary-eyed. But the morning greetings were spoken firmly, with a kiss for her father, and a faint, watery smile for Marguerite, who turned her face away, and quietly left the room.

'Father,' she said, sitting down beside him, 'you must not grieve over this too much.'

He woke the manhood in himself to speak to her bravely.

'I know they will be kind to thee,' he said. 'And thou wilt be rich, be honoured, be beloved—though never, I think, as we love thee here. Poor Marguerite has been pleading to go with thee. But it is best, hard though it sounds, that thou shouldest go alone.'

'I do not go alone, my father. Did those go alone who have gone to France to preach the Gospel?'

'Child, I know thy thought; and I am glad it comforts thee. But, Gabrielle, in that Catholic country

Is there any Help ?

thou must be very wise, very wary. Keep strong guard over thy words and acts, thy thoughts even. Remember the command, "Be ye wise as serpents."

'Do not fear. I shall not seek martyrdom. If there be divers ways to choose from, all leading home, naturally one chooses the easiest.'

To Berthelier these words seemed reassuring. He did not know the depth and intensity of Gabrielle's religious convictions, so he hoped she would bend to circumstances, as in his opinion she might do very lawfully. He was glad now that he had placed her in her childhood under the tutelage of his sister.

'To get home is all one wants,' she went on. 'And I think I shall get there soon.'

'My little girl, what wouldest thou say?'

'What I cannot make quite clear to you, or to any one. But I do not think God will leave me in the land of the stranger. He knows I could not bear it. If He means me to die for Him—like so many girls and women, as well as men—He will strengthen me. Still I don't think it will come to that. He has other ways—I feel as if no hand would touch me save His own, which does not hurt. And then there will be Home, even better than Geneva. You, too, father, you will come there ere long.'

'Yes, my child, ere long,' said Berthelier, much moved. There was silence, for he would not shadow the child's simple faith, even by a word. At last he spoke again. 'Tell me aught I may do for thee, Gabrielle.'

'We have two days yet, father. I want to choose gifts for the friends and neighbours, and to bid them

Under Calvin's Spell

all good-bye. You must have my little French Testament. My Bible I take, of course. For Aunt Claudine and Marguerite, I must think — and oh, father, one thing more !'

'What is it, dear heart ?'

'It is about Norbert, poor Norbert, who loves us so well. He will be breaking his heart because all this is for his father, chiefly. I pray you, go to him and comfort him. Were it not well to bring him in here for his morning soup? 'Tis a holiday, methinks, at the school.'

'I will go to him,' said Berthelier, soothed by the thought of doing something for her.

But as he rose, Marguerite with a scared face appeared at the door.

'Master, come here,' she said.

They followed her into the sleeping-room, to find Claudine on the floor in a swoon. She had tried to rise as usual ; but, already in frail health, the shock of the day before had proved too much for her. When she recovered consciousness, and had been helped into bed by her brother and Marguerite, she tried to reassure them.

'There was nothing the matter,' she said, 'save a passing weakness.' They must go and take their morning soup, she would rest a little, and then have some also.

But she looked so white that Berthelier said, when they left the room—

I will go round to Master Aubert and pray him to visit her. Norbert, too, I can see and bring back with me.'

Is there any Help ?

He returned presently with the syndic apothecary Aubert, who did not think seriously of Damoiselle Claudine's illness, though he gave her some very nauseous medicine, and told her to remain in bed. When he was gone, Berthelier said to Gabrielle—

‘I could not find Norbert. Last night Master Antoine told him all the matter as it was. Never a word did he say, but took up his cap and went out. He has not returned since, nor been seen by any one. They are going to ask the Watch if he passed last night through any of the gates.’

‘Poor boy!’ Gabrielle said pityingly. He was her own age, still he seemed to her as a younger brother—a child almost. But she had little time to think of him. Whether in spite of, or because of Syndic Aubert's draught, Claudine, though not seriously ill, was ill enough to require constant attention. It was very evident that she, at all events, could not accompany the poor little exile. Gabrielle must go forth alone, and in the depths of her heart she felt it was better so.

Meanwhile an inspiration had come to Berthelier. There was one thing, a thing of considerable importance, which he could still do for his child. It would be worse than useless to send a store of clothing or other personalities with her to Savoy; such things as she had been wont to use would be quite unsuited to her new position. But money? Always and everywhere money was of use. Much of Gabrielle's comfort, and especially her means of communication with her old friends, might depend on its possession. A capacious purse stored with good crowns, ‘well

Under Calvin's Spell

ringing and well weighing' would be her best servant in the land of the stranger. But how was he to get it, he whose modest income barely sufficed for the frugal needs of his household?

There was one way. Small love was lost between him and his distant cousin — distant in all ways — Philibert Berthelier, the leader of the Libertines. Still, Philibert remembered what Ami had suffered for his father's sake, and knew also that he had lent him large sums of money which were never repaid. More than once he had told him, in his careless way, to come to him if he were ever in need of a handful of good crowns. Philibert's own expenditure was lavish; and reckless and dissipated though he was, he inherited something of his father's *bon-homie* and good nature. Ami Berthelier had little doubt that he would help him in his need. A group of the banished Libertines, with Philibert and Perrin at their head, had established themselves in Pregny, which was in Bernese territory, but only a few miles from Geneva. Here they hoped, while quite safe themselves, to disturb the new *régime* and ferment discords in the town. All therefore that Ami Berthelier had to do was to hire a horse, ride to Pregny, explain his wishes to Philibert, and return by nightfall, bearing with him that 'golden load' which the Spaniards say 'is a burden light.' He told no one the nature of his errand; only saying he was obliged to be absent on important business, but would come back if possible that night, if not, the following morning. Gabrielle wondered secretly that any business should induce him to absent himself during so large a part of their last brief time together, but her

Is there any Help?

absolute trust in him kept her silent, if it could not keep her satisfied.

Norbert de Caulaincourt spent his night on the Crêts de Laurent, a rising ground inside the bastion near the Porte Neuve. To and fro, up and down, did he wander in that solitary place, trying to escape the pain that was tearing his heart in two. He was only sixteen, but if his love for Gabrielle was not all years might make it, if his heart was a boy's heart, not a man's, at least it was a full heart. He gave all he had, and who can do more? That he also loved his father right well added bitterness to his pain. The thought that Gabrielle was being sacrificed for him tortured him like fire.

Why had they ever left their native land, their own beautiful France? Since coming to this strange, hard Geneva there had been nought but ill fortune. Would they had 'wings like a dove,' as the psalm said which they sang in school, to fly back to the old time, the old place—perhaps the old Faith—as to that he did not know. Whatever else might keep him faithful to the new, it would not any more be Master John Calvin. No help in him! Never, never again would he go to him with prayer or plaint. He was iron—cold, hard, strong as adamant. He stood apart and calm, like some great general who sends his soldiers forth to die. He moved men as one moves the pawns on a chessboard. No player wants them taken, but if they are—what matter?

He and all the rest would bid him pray. Doubtless they were praying now, for Gabrielle, for his father, and the others. To what use, if the Almighty—the Eternal,

Under Calvin's Spell

as they called Him here—were also like that? And who could doubt it? He was working out His own high purposes. They would prosper. They would sweep on like fire, or storm, or hurricane; and all that came in their way was tow, and stubble, and dust.—What use in caring? What matter? If only he and his friends could all die together, and die without pain!

At last his thoughts began to wander, as thoughts will do even in the keenest anguish. Instead of present troubles, past pleasures came to him. His mind roved idly amongst fragmentary dreams and memories of the feasts, the dances, the masquerades his step-mother used to tell him of, and to which on a few rare, delightful occasions she had even taken him. Those masquerades—she had made him dress up for one of them as a girl. All at once a thought flashed like lightning through his brain, a thought wild, terrible, magnificent. With the glow and the glory of it he sprang to his feet, he cried aloud in that solitary place.

Presently he sat down under a tree, and pondered. Could this thing be possible? It was morning now. The glorious sun of May was shining on him through the scarce unfolded green of the young leaves. He did not see it. So far as he was concerned, it might still have been midnight.

Not until hours had passed did he rise up to return to the town. Little of the outside world though his senses took in, he gave one long earnest look to the majestic sight that had drawn his eyes and his heart when he trod first on Genevan soil—Mont

Is there any Help ?

Blanc in all his glory. He had called it then 'The Great White Throne.' Should he stand soon before a greater ?

He turned away, and went on, presently noting near the path a little pool. He went aside and gazed long and earnestly into its depths ; a passer-by would have thought he was admiring his own likeness, clearly reflected therein.

Then he hurried to the nearest gate. He had to cross the town to get to the Rue Cornavin. It was now near midday, and he had not tasted food since the previous evening. So, feeling very hungry, he turned into the first of the famous Genevan confectioners' shops he happened to pass, and, boy-like, made a hearty meal upon spiced bread and cheese-cakes.

This was on the Pont Bati, where the shops were excellent. He then turned aside into the Rue du Temple, and sought the shop of one Master Sangsoue, an apothecary.

'I dare not go to Syndic Aubert,' he said to himself, 'it would be too dangerous.'

'Oh, is that you, Master Norbert de Caulaincourt ?' said the man of drugs, who knew him by sight. 'Have you heard of the trouble of your friends the Bertheliers ? Though scarcely to be called a trouble, after all. Strange news indeed, that a slip of a girl growing up in our midst, whom no one thought anything about, should turn out to be a Savoyard lady of the noble house of Lormayeur.'

'Yes,' said Norbert, drearily, 'I know.'

'Do you know also that Damoiselle Claudine

Under Calvin's Spell

Berthelier had taken to her bed? Though that is not my affair, as no one but Syndic Aubert will serve the turn of her brother—who is not wont to be so fond of syndics. All I hope is, that he will give the poor lady plenty of antifebrine medicine. There's an herb now, gathered at the full of the moon—but I crave your pardon, young sir, for talking of the mysteries of leech-craft, which in nature you cannot understand. What is your pleasure with me?'

'An' it please you, Master Apothecary, I want a good strong sleeping-potion.'

'For whom, I pray you? Man, or woman, or child?'

'For whom should it be but myself?'

'Ah, now you jest. What should a strong, healthy lad like you want with a sleeping-potion?'

'That is all you know. Have I not been suffering tortures all this week from a bad double tooth?'

'Let me take it out for you. I shall not be a minute, and the charge is but a groat.' He turned to fetch the horrible instrument of which Norbert had once before had a most disagreeable experience.

'No,' he answered emphatically, backing almost out of the little shop. Then returning a step, 'Will you give me the potion, Master Sangsoue, or must I go for it to Master Aubert? Or, better still, for he would give it cheaper, to Master Solomon the Jew, on the Molard?'

Now Master Sangsoue hated Solomon the Jew like the poison he accused him of selling to honest Christians, so he hastened to take down a jar from the highest of his shelves.

Is there any Help?

‘Well, M. Norbert, since it seems you are not man enough to get rid of your foe at once, here is what will lull him to sleep for a good twelve hours. Hast brought a flask? No? Then I must lend you one. Be sure you bring it back.’

‘That will I, with a thank you. What am I to pay?’

‘Oh, a trifle of half a dozen deniers. But you had better have given the goat, and left the tooth behind you.’

‘’Tis not the pay I mind, but the pain,’ said Norbert.

‘Ah! Perhaps we shall have you consulting that new fellow, full of his conceits, who has come to the town. A dentist, forsooth, he calls himself, and proposes to mend folks’ teeth for them in their heads—such presumption! To think he could mend what God Almighty made! But, now that Master Calvin himself has let him try his hand upon him, we shall have all the town running after him. Here is your draught, M. Norbert; I hope it will serve your turn. Take it when you have said your prayers, and are lying down to sleep.’

Norbert took the flask, and turned his footsteps towards the Rue Cornavin. But as he drew near they slackened.

‘So far so good,’ he pondered. ‘But now the difficulties begin. What to do with Berthelier? All the others I can manage, but he—he is one of those Genevans who think a lie as bad as a murder. And he has it in him to stand like a rock, I see it in his eyes. Though it is all for her whom he loves

Under Calvin's Spell

so. No, it is for *both*. Perhaps, after all, there is some good in prayer, and since it is to save His servants, I might ask God to help me. I don't know. And here I am at the door. Now for all the good wit I have ever had! I'm sure I need it; I could wish myself a greybeard for the nonce. But no, that would spoil all.'

Marguerite answered his knock with a woebegone, tear-stained face.

'Come in, M. Norbert,' she said. 'She is asking for you. She is asking for you. She thinks you will be sorry.'

'I do not want to see Mademoiselle Gabrielle just now,' Norbert said. 'It is the Damoiselle Claudine I want, and you. Both together.'

'The Damoiselle Claudine is ill.'

'No matter,—I mean, I am sorry, but I must see her. Bring me to her chamber, and do you come too. I have something of importance to say.'

'What has come over the lad, to order his elders about in such fashion?' thought Marguerite. But to-day her wonted combativeness was crushed by sorrow. She only said—

'Nothing is of importance now, save the one thing you cannot help or hinder.'

Norbert put his lips to her ear and whispered, 'Perhaps I can.'

She shook her head sadly, but added, 'I will see if you can see the damoiselle.'

'Do so; and I pray thee do not let Master Berthelier know I am here.'

'Master Berthelier borrowed a horse, and went forth

Is there any Help?

betimes this morning, we know not where or wherefore. He said he might be back to-night, or perchance not till to-morrow.'

The stars in their courses were fighting for Norbert de Caulaincourt.

CHAPTER XII

A 'GENTLEMAN OF THE SPOON'

'Little hands clasp muckle gold,
Else it were not worth thy hold.'

E. B. BROWNING.

THE Queen of the Spring was holding her gracious and fragrant revel in a fair valley of Savoy. Orange trees were white with glorious blossom, and the carpet of wild hyacinths beneath them, though splashed here and there with patches of scarlet anemone,

'Seemed like the sky up-breaking through the earth.'

High above rose the glittering peaks of the everlasting hills, standing like priests between earth and heaven, in their ephods of untrodden snow.

Quite indifferent to all this beauty seemed the solitary horseman who rode along the bridle-path which traversed the valley. He was a good-looking youth of one or two and twenty, in a handsome riding costume with an embroidered cape, a fashionable *hausse col* or high collar, and a plumed velvet bonnet, which was further adorned with a golden ornament, oddly resembling a spoon. His features were regular, and would have been pleasant to look on, but for their

A 'Gentleman of the Spoon'

unmistakable expression of distress and anxiety. No one, certainly, would have guessed from his face that Victor de Lormayeur was riding to the 'bower' of the lady he loved. There are meetings in this world sadder than partings, and this was one of them. Once or twice the young cavalier made an effort to beguile his way with a drinking or a hunting song, but the words presently died on his lips. He relapsed into gloomy silence, broken only by what sounded like muttered curses, upon himself probably, or upon his evil fate.

Emerging at last from the valley, he came in sight of a gloomy, half-ruinous tower or keep, with a few cultivated fields about it. He rode through these, and up to a postern gate, upon which he knocked six times, loud and low alternately.

It was evidently a preconcerted signal. Presently an aged servant opened the door, and saluted him with much respect.

'Will it please my young lord to repose himself in the matted chamber?' he asked. 'I go to summon Rose, and to see to your excellency's horse.'

'Thanks, old friend,' said Victor, removing his bonnet. 'How fares it with thy lord?'

'Well as can be looked for, Sir Count, well as can be looked for. But he is old, very. One foot in the grave, as one may say. Ah me, his race is almost run!'

Victor thought his servant not far behind him in that race. But he only said—

'Let one of the boys hold my horse, Pietro; for I cannot stay,' and passed in through the hall to the matted parlour.

Under Calvin's Spell

He well knew his way about that house, the residence of an old kinsman on his mother's side. Philibert de Mayne was a broken-down, impoverished noble of Savoy, who had fared so ill in the vicissitudes of those rough times that at the end of a chequered and stormy life there remained to him only this half-ruined castle, and the few poor fields about it. He had, however, one other treasure, the best and dearest of his possessions, his orphaned granddaughter, pretty little Arletta.

It was she, and not the elderly bower-woman Rose, who opened the door of the matted chamber, and glided softly in.

Victor had been sitting at the table, his face buried in his hands. But he would have heard that light step, as he thought then, fathoms deep in his grave. He sprang up and turned towards her, his whole face kindling, but shadowed again the next moment with a look of pain.

As their hands touched each spoke but one word. 'Arletta!'—'Victor!'

Victor came nearer, as if to embrace her. 'No,' she said, drawing back. 'That is over. I know all.'

Victor's lips moved, but no sound came from them. She went on—

'Last week Pietro was at Lormayeur. Nothing is talked of there save the bride from Geneva, through whom you are to win back the broad lands of Castelar.'

'I care not for them! I hate them! I would give them all for one lock of hair from that little head of thine!' Victor broke in passionately. 'Arletta, hear me! I cannot give you up, and I will not.'

A 'Gentleman of the Spoon'

'Hush, Victor! These are idle words, which thou shouldst not speak, and I should not hear. Thou hast no choice.'

'But I have. I can tell my father the Genevan bride may drown in the Genevan lake for me.'

'As you will. Only remember, if you do, it is not the Genevan bride (whom the saints forgive me if I curse), but my poor old grandfather and myself, who may drown, or die by the roadside of cold and hunger.'

'I will take care of you.'

'How? when you are a close prisoner in one of the turrets of Lormayeur, and we are driven from this, the only shelter we have. I know thy father; he is relentless in hate, yet he can slay his hate for his greed's sake. His greed can he slay for the sake of nothing, in heaven or in hell. No, Victor, all is over for us. We children have had our play-hour, and dreamed our dream together. We are awake now, so we must forget it, and say good-bye.'

'I cannot—I cannot!'

Arletta's proud lip curled, and her dark eyes flashed. '*Cannot?* Is that a word for a man?' she said.

'To fight for you I could be a man—a hero. To give you up I am—a very child.' His head went down upon his hands again.

'Then I treat you as the child you are. I do for you what you are too weak to do for yourself. Listen, Sir Count, I give *you* up. What was between us is as nothing to me now.'

Victor sprang to his feet, and seized both her hands. 'Arletta,' he cried, 'you never cared as I did! No, no—you did not! Look in my face and tell me!'

Under Calvin's Spell

She bit her lip till the blood came, one crimson drop on the snow-white tooth. Then she spoke coldly—

‘M. de Lormayeur, you are hurting me. Let me go, sir.’

Victor dropped her hands, and, with a sudden revulsion of feeling, murmured, ‘Forgive—beloved! I do you wrong.’

‘There is no wrong. Only you must not question me. Nor—make it harder for us both;’ with the last words the firm voice shook a little.

‘What can it be but hard—bitterly, unsupportably hard?’

‘For you there are consolations. And as for me,’ she added proudly, ‘do not think, Sir Count, that I shall pine away, a love-lorn damsel, for you, or for any man. Far otherwise. My place and my welcome await me with the Ursulines of Chambery, all of them damoiselles of good family. There, when my grandfather goes to God, I shall rest in peace; and I shall not forget to pray for you, M. de Lormayeur. Meanwhile your sword is at your side, and the world is before your face. You will fight and conquer——’

‘And come back desolate, with an empty heart!’

‘No’—but she paused here, for her magnanimity stopped short of wishing him happiness with the Genevan bride. ‘No—in a man's life there are many things to fill the heart.’

‘There is but one that makes all life for me.’

‘So you think to-day. But, Victor, all this is useless, and worse. More anguish for us both. If you are not man enough to end it, I will. One word of your visits here to the count your father, and—not you, but



'DAMOISELLE, I DRINK TO YOUR HEALTH
AND HAPPINESS.'

A 'Gentleman of the Spoon'

my grandfather and I, would bear the weight of his vengeance. If you come again, that word shall be spoken.'

All this time Rose, the bower-woman, watched and waited outside, trembling for her darling. At last she went away, fetched wine and manchet bread, and brought them in. Victor was standing at the window, his face turned away, Arletta at the table, calm, but white as marble.

'The young count must not leave us fasting,' said Rose, laying down the silver tray she brought. With a hand that only trembled slightly, Arletta filled one of the tall Venice glasses and brought it to Victor. He raised it to his lips with the words, 'Damoiselle, I drink to your health and happiness.' That was the last thing Rose heard as she left the room. What other farewell those two who loved may have taken, neither ever told. Presently Victor came forth with a white face, mounted in silence, gave Pietro a piece of gold, and rode away.

The Savoyard girl had shown herself as heroic as her unknown sister in Geneva. But her soul was cast in a sterner mould than Gabrielle's. It would not have fared well with the Genevan, if she had been in her rival's power that day.

Arletta stood waiting until Victor had disappeared. Then she came back to the matted parlour, took up the costly glass he had drunk from, and flung it on the floor, shivering it to fragments. No lips should touch it again after his. But the next moment she knelt, took up one of the fragments, and hid it in her bosom.

Victor, meanwhile, was returning to Lormayeur. He

Under Calvin's Spell

was doomed to bow his neck beneath the yoke, repugnant though it was; and his doom pressed on him every moment more and more inevitably, irresistibly. To resist would have required not courage but heroism, and Victor de Lormayeur was no hero. He was only a brave, not unchivalrous young noble of Savoy. Deprived early of his mother, he had been brought up by a stern, unloving father, and a set of obsequious domestics, who humoured his lightest fancy. He owed nothing to his education, save the ability to read and write, after a fashion, and sufficient dexterity in all martial and knightly exercises. He had been taught to hold in the utmost detestation all the Reformed, and especially the Genevese. By his father's command, he joined the League of the Savoyard nobles against the Protestant city, which was called the 'League of the Spoon,' hence the emblem worn 'in bosom or in bonnet.'

This increased the terror and dismay with which he heard his destiny from his father's lips. To wed a maiden brought up in the heretic city, amongst burghers, *roturiers, canaille!* What a fate for the heir of Lormayeur!

Yet once more, on his return from his visit to Arletta, he ventured to urge his remonstrances. His father cut them short with scant ceremony.

'Hold thy peace, boy, an' thou hast a grain of sense left in thy stupid head. 'Tis enough to make a man mad, by all the saints, to hear thee play the fool, with all thy silly objections, while all the time that cur, that villain Santana, has in his grip the broad lands of Castelar, to which that girl is the heir direct! And no other way to get them from him, save to get hold of her.

A 'Gentleman of the Spoon'

Then, indeed, the duke will do right to her and to us, and we can fling Santana back into the mire he came from.'

'Count and father, why not secure the girl and the lands, and leave me free?'

'Belike! and leave *her* free too to marry Santana, who would be glad enough to clench his title thus—or to go into a convent, and take all to Mother Church. Thank you; I was not born yesterday. The Lady Olive is well worth those beggarly heretics I am buying her with.'

'That I doubt not, my lord. I only doubt if she be worth the sacrifice to me.'

'What sacrifice, you fool? To wed a fair bride? Old Muscaut chanted madrigals in praise of her beauty.'

Victor had not the courage to say with the English poet—

'What reck I how fair she be,
So she is not fair to me?'

He could only turn away in silence.

'Stay,' said his father. 'These burghers are in a hurry—afraid, no doubt, to lose so good a bargain. They will be ready on the third day. You must go and fetch the girl. Be sure you look your best and gayest. I am sending with you the fairest show of retainers I can muster. Also sumpter mules, with a pavilion for shelter, and good store of refreshment by the way. The weather is fair, and you can bivouac close at hand, so as to come right early to the trysting-place. Thus, one long day's ride—which ought to be one long day's pleasure to her—will bring her safely

Under Calvin's Spell

home. And thou art, for the journey, her very humble and devoted cavalier and servant. If thou canst not make good use of such a chance as that, then art thou, of a certainty, even a greater fool than I took thee for.'

CHAPTER XIII

THE GENEVAN BRIDE

EARLY on the morning of the appointed day, two companies met in the Plain-palais, just outside the Porte Neuve. They were in strong contrast each with the other. Those who had approached the town from the vineyards of Savoy were a gallant band, who sat proudly on their richly caparisoned horses, and wore with a lordly air their embroidered surcoats of scarlet and silver. They bore no arms except their swords, as they had come upon a peaceful errand, witnessed by the white flag their trumpeter bore before them. At their head rode young Victor de Lormayeur, in his richest dress, but with a gloomy, preoccupied air. When they came within a short distance of the other party, he stopped, and turned to those behind with a brief word of command.

There were three dark blots on the gay colouring of the Savoyard troop. Three horsemen bore each behind him a meagre and ill-clad figure, a patch of black or grey amidst the scarlet and the white. These were the prisoners whose ransom Gabrielle was to pay. At Victor's signal they were asked to dismount and take

Under Calvin's Spell

their places in front of the cavalcade, which then advanced at a foot pace, the riders uncovering as they drew near to the men of Geneva.

Then came forward slowly a group of sober, grave-looking citizens, robed in black, relieved here and there by a touch of violet. They were on foot; but in their midst, on a palfrey, sat a slight figure, closely veiled, dressed in a riding robe of plain but very fine black cloth, trimmed with costly fur, marten or 'cat of Mars,' as it was called then. Strapped behind her on the palfrey was a 'mail,' or portmanteau, of modest dimensions. The first thing Victor noticed was that the lady did not seem a practised rider, which, under the circumstances, was not unnatural.

He dismounted, and approaching still nearer, made the lowest of 'reverences' to the lady, and bowed to her companions with suitable though stately courtesy. If a Gentleman of the Spoon, he was a gentleman still, and would not show the contempt he felt for these miserable burghers. Then followed certain formalities; and each party solemnly asserted its readiness to perform what was agreed upon in the letters exchanged between the 'illustrious' Count of Lormayeur and the 'praiseworthy' citizens of Geneva. Then Germain de Caulaincourt and his two companions were handed over to the Genevans, who received them with lively demonstrations of joy.

'And now,' said the young count, with a smile, 'it is our turn to welcome, not a captive, indeed, but one who will find us her willing captives and true servitors.'

A grave, quiet-looking man, in very sober attire, led

The Genevan Bride

the palfrey forward. With him came the first syndic, bearing his staff of office, and followed by a notary dressed in his robe and carrying a bag.

‘Sir Count,’ said the syndic, ‘we bring and deliver to you, as covenanted, the Lady Olive de Castelar, otherwise Damoiselle Gabrielle Berthelier. The notary here present will place in your hands the papers relating to her, and give you any other satisfaction you may reasonably demand.’

Victor bowed once more to the lady, then, turning to the notary, received from his hand the offered papers. There was the precious fragment that attested the child’s birth and parentage, and a few entries from the registry of her ‘Quarter,’ in which she was mentioned as the ward and adopted daughter of Citizen Ami Berthelier.

‘I presume,’ Victor said, addressing the person who held the lady’s rein, ‘that you are the worthy citizen whom we have to thank for the care and upbringing of our young kinswoman?’

‘Not so, my lord,’ he answered, with evident embarrassment. ‘Master Berthelier being absent, I am here to represent him, as the neighbour and next friend of the maiden.’

‘But, of course,’ said the notary, ‘you are prepared, Master Antoine, to swear to her identity—though it be a mere matter of form.’

‘I swear it,’ said Antoine Calvin.

‘As I do also,’ said Syndic Amblarde Corne. ‘We can take oath, Sir Count, under any form, not contrary to the rules of our religion, which may be satisfactory to your excellency.’

Under Calvin's Spell

'Enough said,' the courteous young count made answer. 'I am quite satisfied.' Then he turned to the lady: 'Fair lady and dear cousin, permit me to welcome you to your kindred and your country, and in token of my true obeisance and devotion, to kiss your hand.'

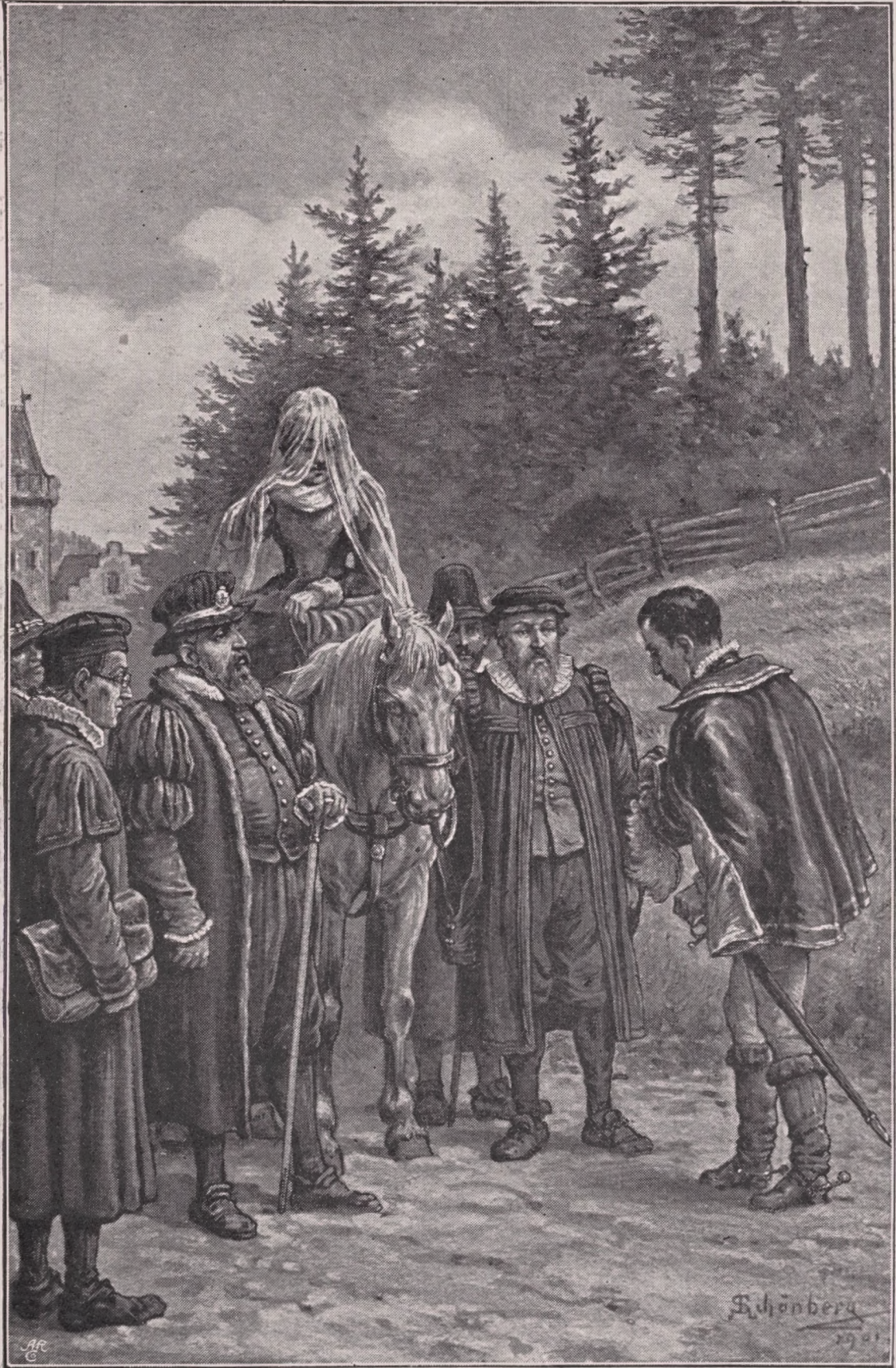
The hand beneath the lady's riding cloak trembled, as if about to come forth, but the syndic interposed.

'Were it not meet and fitting that the maiden should first raise her veil, so as to be fairly seen by those to whom we are delivering her?'

The veil was raised, just a little, affording a tantalising glimpse of a beautiful, downcast face, with traces of recent tears. But the pain and reluctance of the maiden were so evident that the chivalrous Victor hastened to say—

'Do not incommode yourself, sweet lady; your servitor will wait in patience till you condescend to rejoice him with the sight of your beauty. Will it please you now to bid farewell to these your good friends, whom we trust never to give you cause to regret?'

But the half-raised veil had been dropped again, and an indistinct, broken murmur was understood to mean, 'All my farewells have been said already;' so, with a deferential word of apology, Victor laid his hand on the palfrey's rein, and the captives' ransom was paid. The two bands saluted, as courteous foes when they meet on neutral ground. Then they went their different ways. But, ere they parted, the veiled figure on the palfrey had heard De Caulaincourt ask, 'But where is Norbert? Why has he not come to meet me?'



THE VEIL WAS RAISED, JUST A LITTLE.

The Genevan Bride

The gay Savoyard cavalcade rode on, Victor in close attendance on his destined bride, whom, little as he liked to think of in that character, he yet regarded with no small interest. It occurred to him as rather strange that she should have come quite alone; he had expected her to bring an attendant of her own sex, two or three, perhaps. He expressed a courteous fear that she might be incommoded on the journey for the lack of a tiring-maid or bower-woman, but added that this lack would be supplied when they reached Lormayeur, which he hoped to do that night.

Then for the first time he heard her voice, and its sound was pleasant in his ears—

‘We of Geneva have small need of tire-women. And no Genevan would have come with me—because of the religion.’

‘Ah, the religion!’ Victor said, scornfully. Then his tone changing: ‘Have no concern, sweet lady, about this matter of religion. We are both young, and you are very beautiful. I am sure the good God would have us enjoy our youth, without troubling our heads about death, purgatory, hell, and heaven, and the like melancholy themes.’

‘Is heaven a melancholy theme?’ asked the young lady.

‘All we have got to go through on the chance of getting there most certainly is. I, for one, prefer to leave the business with the priests, who are paid for minding it. Very ill they do it sometimes, I must own.’

‘True, Sir Count; therefore might it not be well to look into things a little for ourselves?’

Under Calvin's Spell

'Perhaps ; but there is a time for all things, and this is the time for ease and joyaunce, for pleasure and for pastime. A face so fair as that of the Lady of Castelar is meant to be the cynosure of adoring eyes, not hidden by a nun's veil or bent over stupid books.'

'Do you think books stupid, Sir Count?'

'Well, not all books. Not *Amadis de Gaul* or *The Seven Champions of Christendom*. But you do not have such books in your Geneva, I believe, fair lady?'

'No ; at least, I have not seen them there. We have good books, like the Bible.'

'The Bible! Heaven help you, lady! Or rather, heaven help the poor folk that are there still ; since, the saints be thanked, your loveliness is being translated into scenes more fit for it. Lady, I am transported at the thought of introducing you to pastimes you have never dreamed of yet, but for which you are so wondrously fitted. Perhaps, even, you have never learned to dance?'

'I think,' said the lady, with a slight tremor in her voice—'I think I could manage a country dance, if it were very simple—or a *violet*. We have them sometimes.'

'May I have the supreme honour and felicity of being your instructor in the gentle art, as we Savoyards practise it?' asked Victor ; adding mentally, 'Perhaps they of Geneva are not quite such barbarians, after all. I have no doubt,' he resumed, 'that the Lady of Castelar loves music, and can make it. With a face so lovely there must go a voice to match.'

The Genevan Bride

‘I can sing psalms.’

‘From such lips the dimmallest of Clement Marot’s dismal productions must sound like the melody of angels.’

‘There be angels—of divers kinds,’ said the lady demurely.

This strain of compliment Victor pursued for some time, with but brief answers from the lady, whose voice had sometimes a half-choked sound, which he attributed to suppressed weeping, and redoubled his efforts to cheer and console her. As he went on, he grew more and more florid in his compliments and unsparing in his flattery, all being entirely in the taste and after the manner of the age. But the strange thing was, that as his language heated his imagination cooled. He liked the young lady well, he liked her increasingly—as a friend or comrade. As his destined bride he found it difficult to think of her.

The noonday sun grew hot, but shade and refreshment were ready for the travellers. Some of Victor’s people had gone on before, and set up the pavilion in a pleasant glade, upon flowery grass. Here the midday meal was spread, and here, if she chose it, the lady could repose herself.

The repast was choice and abundant; and Victor saw with satisfaction that the lady did fair justice to the venison pasty, the ‘blanc mange’ of capon’s breast, and the sugared cheese-cakes he pressed upon her, though she drank but little wine. The hand that held the knife and spoon was not so small and delicate as he expected. ‘No doubt,’ he thought, ‘the poor child, brought up in ignorance of her rank, has done

Under Calvin's Spell

rough household work with it, after the wont of these burghers' wives and daughters.' Her face, better seen now, lost nothing of its beauty, yet it stirred in him entirely the instinct of *camaraderie*, not any warmer feeling.

As they toyed with the delicate confections that concluded the repast, a visitor was announced. It proved to be the Prior of Saint Marçaud, a monastery of the neighbourhood, who had come to pay his respects to the son of the lord of the soil, the Count of Lormayeur, passing by chance through his domain. Victor, of course, presented him to the Lady of Castelar; but, supposing the churchman would be necessarily obnoxious to the fair Genevan, was not surprised to see her shrink into herself, and even lower her veil. The prior, on the other hand—in the intervals of eating marchepane and drinking vin de Beaume, and also of detailing to the young count the difficulties and needs of his monastery—regarded her with interest and attention, perhaps not altogether friendly. She may have observed it, for when the visit had lasted about half an hour she turned courteously to Victor: 'Did I not hear you say, Sir Count, that we have a long way to travel before nightfall?'

At this rather broad hint the prior took his leave, Victor going forth with him.

'I wonder, Sir Count,' said the churchman, 'if the late Lady of Castelar, the mother of your guest, can have been a Frenchwoman?'

'No, father; she was an Italian from Piedmont, as I happen to know. She died young, but she was renowned for her beauty, which this young lady inherits. Don't

The Genevan Bride

you think so? In such matters churchmen, proverbially, are good judges.'

'Yes, but—if I may venture to say so—just a little bony, not quite *mince*—delicate—enough for my taste. A French cast of face, reminding me of some one I had lately seen. Of whom I could not think, and now—the thought is so strange I scarce like to say it. She favours that heretic preacher who was brought to the monastery by those that took him, and whom I sent to your father.'

'What a notion!' said Victor, with a laugh. 'Though, after all, the Frenchman was a gentleman. We brought him with us yesterday to Geneva; and on the way he thanked me very courteously for having sent something now and again to him and his companions, to mend their cheer when they were in the dungeon. Will you absolve me, father, for the same?'

''Twas no mortal sin,' said the prior good-naturedly. 'Still, Sir Count, you have need of care, lest your kindness of heart should outrun your good judgment. You should keep strict watch upon that young lady, and see that she be well converted from the error of her heretic ways. Forgive my freedom, M. de Lormayeur.'

Victor did not mind his freedom of speech, but he was hurt at his depreciatory remarks about the Lady of Castelar. Still, they parted amicably, and after a reasonable rest the wayfarers pursued their journey. With even greater assiduity than before, Victor devoted himself to his fair companion. After the fashion and the taste of the time, he racked his brains for flattering speeches, which would now be thought too gross and

Under Calvin's Spell

exaggerated, but were then quite permissible. He praised her hair, her cheeks, her lips, her eyebrows, her eyelashes, her eyes.

'But I am not the first, doubtless, to call those adorable orbs the sweetest ever seen,' he said. 'Even in your grave, cold Geneva, there must have been many to tell you of their exceeding beauty.'

'I do not think they said—quite that,' was the faltering answer.

'Those fair lips can only speak the truth,' Victor pursued. 'Else such dulness of sense and soul, even in that nest of heretics, would be past credence. But, sweet lady, you are going now into a world which will soon be at your feet; so it is well you should understand the might of the weapons with which you are gifted. A face of such surpassing loveliness——'

'Good Sir Count, I cannot but be flattered that you think it so. Still, if it please you, I would rather hear just now somewhat of *who* I am than of *what*, in your too partial judgment, I seem to be.'

'How well she speaks,' thought Victor, 'and how frankly she answers me! I have heard that "they of Geneva" make their girls learn like their boys. I should hold her lief and dear as a friend—or a brother in arms, if that were possible. But a bride—the saints help me!' Here the beloved and gracious image of Arletta rose before him in contrast. He choked down some strange feeling with an effort ere he answered, in his former tone of compliment and complaisance—

'The fair damoiselle I have the honour of addressing is no less illustrious a person than the Lady Olive de

The Genevan Bride

Castelar, sole heiress to the broad lands and the rich revenues of her noble house.'

'Is she—am I—heiress to any ties of kindred or relationship?'

'Sweet lady, your mother died at your birth, and your father soon afterwards. Brother or sister you had none. My father's father was first cousin to yours, so that you and I are cousins in the third degree. However, should certain hopes I am bold enough to conceive be crowned with success, a dispensation from his holiness will make everything right.'

'Do you really think it will, Sir Count?'

'Of a surety. But I ought to tell you, lady, you have another kinsman, on your mother's side—a Piedmontese—a soldier of fortune, named Santana, who fought under the late duke, and was high in his favour. You know what ill-luck our present liege lord, Duke Emanuel Philibert, has had, and how he has lost the greater part of Savoy. Poor gentleman! he could not look into things for himself, and he took Santana on trust from his father, grateful to any one who stuck to him in his troubles. The villain has got his ear, and won from him, too easily, the grant of the Castelar succession and estates—your estates, fair lady. He represented to his highness that the direct line was extinct. So, to do him justice, he thought, like every one else. But now,' Victor added incautiously, 'we have the trump card——'

'The trump card appreciates the honour at its just price,' said the lady with a bow.

Victor was covered with confusion. He had shown his hand too plainly; and the lady, evidently of keen

Under Calvin's Spell

intelligence, let nothing escape her. He hastened to retrieve his error. 'The trump card in this game is the queen of hearts,' he said.

'Take care lest the queen, in your hands, should change to a knave.'

'How sharp she is!' thought Victor. 'From this queen's eyes,' he protested, 'can nought look forth save the truth and candour of her soul.'

'Then will I use truth and candour in speaking to you, Sir Count. I perfectly understand you now, and also your illustrious father. Not for love of the unknown Genevan maiden have you undertaken this business. But for these same broad lands and possessions, she might have lived and died in her obscurity—and her heresy. And should she perhaps, even now, resign in your favour her rights and claims to them, methinks you would be well content.'

'Lady, you misjudge me,' Victor pleaded, in a fever of confusion and perplexity, whilst inwardly he cursed his own awkwardness and the lady's wit. Yet, strange to say, he admired her the more, and felt the more anxious to propitiate her. 'You misjudge me sorely; though perchance I have deserved it. I own that, before I saw you, before I basked in the light of your beauty, I may have thought, possibly, of lands—of wealth.'

'Very natural and usual subjects of thought,' the lady said.

Her veil was raised now, and she looked full in the face of Victor. The look, as he read it, was arch, provoking, bewitching, as of one who had the best of the situation, and knew it, and meant to keep it. A

The Genevan Bride

new spirit came over him ; at that moment it seemed easy to him to do what before he deemed intolerable. Yes ; and the quicklier it were done the easier. 'Better sin the whole sin out.' Better at once meet the inevitable, satisfy his father, and seal his own fate for ever. The customs of the time, and all he knew of knightly practice and device, sanctioned his purpose.

'Dear, adorable maiden,' he began ; she dropped her veil again, and drew a little apart from him, but he went on bravely, 'do you not see that there is one best, one perfect way of uniting all claims ? It is not well, it is not right, perhaps, to speak of it so soon. Perhaps in justice I ought to leave you free—free to see and enjoy the fair world of joyaunce and of song, of dance and tourney and festival, from which hitherto you have been shut out. But all these, and more, you shall have in full measure. Indeed, if your true servitor can make it so, your life shall be all one long, sweet joy. Is it too soon, then, to ask for a word of hope and encouragement ? If you think so, bid me be silent and wait, for a month, a year, two years even, if you will. Only speak. Lady, I am at your feet.'

'But that you say so, I should have thought you were on your horse,' was the unexpected answer.

Her coolness piqued Victor all the more. Having cried down the voice of his own heart, and done the thing his truer nature abhorred, the very stress of the effort drove him on to the bitter end. *Was* it bitter, after all ? A rush of feeling came upon him ; something strange possessed him—like strong wine. They were alone now, far in advance of their escort, riding through

Under Calvin's Spell

a wood. He sprang from his horse, and knelt in good earnest before her on the grass.

She reined in her palfrey, and looked at him, for a moment, as one perplexed. Then she said, in an odd, strained voice—

‘Sir Count, I pray of you to rise.’

‘Not till I have had a word from those fair lips of yours. Should that word be “Wait,” should you set me a time of probation, I am still your obedient and most humble servitor.’

‘Then obey me by rising. If you will not, you force me instead to ask of you some other thing.’

‘Ask what you will. ’Twill be my honour and my joy to grant it.’

‘No joy in this, and no honour, to thee or to me.’ She dismounted and stood straight up before him on the grass. ‘Sir Count, the boon I ask of thee is—to draw that sword of thine, and kill me.’

He gazed at her amazed—petrified. Had she suddenly gone mad?

Ere he found a word to speak, she had flung off her hood, her veil, her kerchief, and run her fingers rapidly through her disordered hair.

‘The queen has changed into a knave,’ said Norbert de Caulaincourt.

Victor's fair open face grew deadly pale. Once, twice, thrice, he crossed himself with trembling hand, as he struggled to his feet, he knew not how.

‘This is witchcraft!’ he murmured.

‘Only the witchcraft of a son who would save his father, and a friend who would save a young lady he esteemed from a dreaded fate.’

The Genevan Bride

‘Geneva shall smart for this!’

‘Geneva was not to blame. All was done in good faith. I had neither confederate nor helper, save Gabrielle’s nurse. And you can do no more to Geneva than you have done before.’

‘Holy saints! To think of my father’s fury——’

‘I have laid my account for that, and will pay the reckoning.’

‘If I bring you to him——’

‘You may, in justice. But if, as I think, you are generous, you may slay me where I stand instead. I should thank you.’

‘’Tis the strangest thing I ever heard,’ said Victor, standing still and gazing at him as one amazed. Yet, amidst all his amazement, one thought came surging up—a thought of joy. He was free now. Who could force him to wed a maiden who was safe within the hostile walls of Geneva? As his heart for the moment lightened, his eye was caught by a gleam of scarlet between the trees. It was the escort coming up to them. They must know nothing—he would stop them. ‘Stand where thou art,’ he said hastily to Norbert; then he mounted his horse, rode back, gave his commands, and returned.

‘Thou and I must settle this matter alone,’ he said.

‘I await your pleasure,’ answered Norbert.

Now that his part was played and his work done, he seemed turned to stone. He did not care, just then, what happened to himself. He supposed he had to die. That was all. He only hoped it would be soon over.

Under Calvin's Spell

'How did you ever come to think of such a thing?' Victor asked weakly. His superficial feeling still was sheer bewilderment, but underneath was a sort of admiration for the boy's audacity and cleverness, and, mingling with all, that strange, unutterable sense of relief.

'It was the only way.'

Victor stood bewildered. At last he broke out, 'I have been a fool, a cursed fool! I let myself be duped too easily. How I am to face my father after this, St. Victor, my patron, may tell me, if he knows! 'Twill not help my case to bring to Lormayeur, instead of the heiress of Castelar, a slip of a boy!'

Then, raising his eyes from the ground, he looked at Norbert steadily, thoughtfully.

Norbert met his gaze; the boy's face was strong, determined, fearless—the young man's weak, perplexed, angry. Yet presently there dawned in it a gleam of kindness.

'You are the most consummate young villain I ever saw, but you are a brave one! I am bound to confess that your courage deserves the honour of my sword. But then, on the other hand, I cannot fight a beardless boy. Would it make things fair, think you, if I were to bind one arm to my side and fight you with the other? I have seen it done. Will you try it?'

'To what end?' asked Norbert, impatiently, even with a touch of scorn. 'My life is forfeit, and yours to take. I could not save it by wounding you, suppose I did so.'

'Hast aught to ask of me?'

The Genevan Bride

‘Yes; to be quick and make an end.’

‘You said you ventured in this matter to save your father. But he was saved already.’

‘At the cost of another.’

‘You call it cost; I should say the gain of the lady. What was she to thee, that thou shouldst do this for her?’

Then first Norbert felt. All the romance of his young life swept over him. And he was about to die! His look changed; his firm lip began to quiver.

‘Nothing—that any one knew,’ he answered.

Victor looked at him curiously, with quickened interest.

‘Ha! by my faith is that it? Hast thou—a boy, a mere child almost—been playing already with these sharp tools, whereby a man cuts himself, belike to the very heart? Yet why not? I was young as thou when first I began to care for—*not* the Lady Olive de Castelar.’

He turned his face away, and silence fell once more between the pair. He was too bewildered even to reflect how fatally he had betrayed himself to this Genevan boy, who would think him a liar and deceiver. Nought for that at this moment did he care. He could care for nothing, he could see nothing, save the face of Arletta. She seemed to stand before him—actually there—beside the neglected steeds, who were cropping their evening meal of grass as contentedly as if love and death were not in the world at all. Arletta looked at him, spoke to him, pleaded with him for the life of the brave boy who knew, so young, what it was to love—as they did.

Under Calvin's Spell

Then gradually her face changed into the dimly remembered face of his own mother, who had been a gentle-hearted lady, kind and pitiful to all. Amongst the very few words he remembered hearing her say were these: 'My son, God loves the merciful.' 'Ay,' he thought, 'God loves the merciful. Then, perhaps—who knows?—if I show mercy to this boy, He will show the like to Arletta and to me, and give us each to other at last.' It was not the very highest of motives; yet perhaps there were nobler impulses struggling in the depths of that confused, ill-lighted soul than came forth into conscious thought. Besides, it is so easy to be kind when one is happy; and there is no denying that Victor's failure, even weighted with the prospect of his father's terrible wrath, made him happy—ininitely happier than success would have done. With the sudden decision of the undecided, he turned to Norbert.

'Your life is forfeit,' he said; but there was that in his look and tone that belied the sternness of the words.

Norbert bowed.

'Then, boy, I give it thee, for thine own courage, and for the love of God. Take thy palfrey, and go back to Geneva as thou camest. Take the next turning to the left, so shalt thou avoid my men. I shall tell my father—wait!—yes, I shall tell him that by the sorcery of these wicked Genevan heretics the Lady of Castelar was enabled to change herself into a hare, and disappear from our sight into the wood.'

'God reward you, Sir Count!' said the delighted Norbert, bowing low, then springing on his palfrey.

The Genevan Bride

'Hark thee, young cockerel!' Victor resumed, 'shouldest ever take it into that hare-brained head of thine to save thy soul and make thy fortune among good Catholics—come to me, for, on my honour as a Gentleman of the Spoon, thou art a lad of mettle, and I like thee.'

CHAPTER XIV

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING

BERTHELIER did not return to Geneva on the day he left it, or even on the next. That second day, the last day of her home-life, as she thought it, was to Gabrielle one long-drawn agony. She bore up as she best could through its weary hours ; but when night came, and her dear adopted father was still absent, the sense of desolation overpowered her, and she gave way utterly, weeping, sobbing, and crying aloud. Marguerite was with sister Claudine, who was still ill in bed ; but she heard the sounds of weeping, and hastened to her darling. With scarce a word, but with many a tender look and gesture, she took her in her strong arms and let her sob out all her sorrow. Never had the stern Marguerite been so gentle to any one. As at length Gabrielle's cries died away and her sobs abated, she whispered a hint of comfort—

‘God is good,’ she said ; ‘there's many a thing that ends better than it began.’

‘I know it,’ sobbed Gabrielle ; ‘but for this there is only one—good end. And I am so young.’

Finally Marguerite undressed her, and laid her in her own bed.

An Unexpected Meeting

‘We need not disturb your aunt,’ she said. Then leaving her for a moment, she returned with something in a cup. ‘Here, my little one, is spiced wine and water, which I have made hot for thee. Drink it up, ’twill make thee sleep.’

Gabrielle took the cup obediently, and emptied it at a draught.

‘It is very good,’ she said. ‘Though the taste, methinks, is a little strange.’

Quite exhausted with her weeping, she sank back on the pillow, and Marguerite soon saw with satisfaction that she was fast asleep.

When out of that long, deep, dreamless sleep she awoke at last, the sun was shining full into the room. She felt as one who has been very far away and is coming back—slowly, wonderingly, painfully.

The first thing she realized was, that she was in Marguerite’s chamber, not her own. Then gradually the truth, like a wave of bitter waters, flowed back upon her. Her head was like lead, her eyes were sore with weeping. But she would weep no more, she would do all that was required of her, ‘and with God be the rest.’

‘Marguerite,’ she said faintly, seeing the old woman’s shadow on the bed. ‘Marguerite!’

‘Well, child?’ was the answer, not in the caressing tones of last night, but in Marguerite’s ordinary voice.

‘Has my father returned?’

‘Never sign nor token of him. Those ne’er-do-well kinsfolk must be keeping him. But there is naught to

Under Calvin's Spell

fear. Bad as they are, they would scarce dare to hurt Master Ami Berthelier.'

'How is the aunt?'

'Just the same.'

As she spoke, and tried to rise, Gabrielle felt an overpowering sense of physical misery. Nothing seemed possible to her but to lie down and go to sleep again; mindful, however, of all that was before her, she made a great effort to shake off the drowsiness that oppressed her, and the sickness.

'Where are my clothes?' she asked.

Her costume for the journey, including mantle, veil and hood, had been carefully prepared, and laid in readiness for her the evening before.

'You need not dress yet,' said Marguerite. 'Lie down again and go to sleep.'

'Oh no—no! I must get up at once. Already it is late. I know it. Haste, I beseech thee, Marguerite, and bring me the things. Master Antoine promised, if my father did not return, to come for me in good time, and now I fear it must be nigh upon six of the clock. Haste, Marguerite!'

'There's no such haste, child.'

'Oh, but yes! And hark, even now he is knocking at the door. What shall I do? Oh, what shall I do?'

A fearful vision arose before her mind, all the magnates of Geneva kept waiting—by her! And, perhaps, some mischance befalling the prisoners thereby! She sat up in great distress, her sweet face flushed, her dark hair streaming over the white night-robe, for that age an unusual daintiness.

An Unexpected Meeting

And now the knock was on the chamber door, for the house-door having been left unbarred, the visitor had come in, and followed the sound of the voices. Marguerite went and opened—to Germain de Caulaincourt.

Gabrielle, from her position, could only see the top of a grey head, and never doubted it was her father's. In trembling joy she cried out—

‘Father—I am so glad! Come to thy poor child, and bless her ere she goes.’

De Caulaincourt stepped forward, and the two came face to face. Never did two human faces express more utter, blank amazement. Each thought the other could not possibly be there. One, indeed, might be in Geneva, if only the other were out of it—that both should be in Geneva together passed belief.

The sensation was like what one would feel if confronted with one's own double.

‘M. de Caulaincourt!’ faltered Gabrielle, finding her tongue the first. She was pale as marble now.

‘Gabrielle Berthelier!’ said De Caulaincourt, in equal astonishment.

‘Have you escaped—and how—why?’ Gabrielle asked brokenly.

‘You ask me that? Am I dreaming, or losing my senses? Or is it witchcraft? You, whom I saw two hours ago at the Porte Neuve, led away by the young count!’

He stopped, and passed his hand over his brow, in sudden terror. He had suffered much, and many men through suffering had gone mad—why not he?

Under Calvin's Spell

'I have only now just awakened,' Gabrielle explained. 'Too late, I fear—too late!'

'Whom then did I see—*whom*—or is it all a madman's dream, and am I still in the dungeon of Lormayeur?'

In his surprise he stepped back a pace, and now Marguerite came forward, and put herself between the two.

'It is no dream, monsieur,' she said. 'I will tell you all the truth. But first, I pray of you, tell me one thing: Why have you come here just now?'

'Why do you ask? I have come, naturally, to seek my son. I looked that his should be the first face to greet me at the Porte Neuve. But he was not there; and, what is strange, the Calvins say they have not seen him since yesterday. I thought he might be with you.'

'M. de Caulaincourt, I will tell you God's truth. One piece of deceit is enough, and too much, for a Christian woman to have on her conscience. Your son is gone to his death, and my soul to perdition.'

'Woman, what do you mean?' cried De Caulaincourt, in amazement and affright.

'Can't you understand? He took her place, and I helped him.'

Then De Caulaincourt, like the patriarch of old, 'trembled very exceedingly.' 'My son, my son!' he cried aloud in his anguish. But even in that anguish remembering Gabrielle's pain, he turned his face away, lest she should see it.

'Oh, Marguerite, is it true?' she gasped in dismay.

An Unexpected Meeting

‘He would not be turned from his purpose; he would not listen to anything. At last I consented, and so did your aunt.’

‘Consented to *that!* It was wicked, cruel! I will never trust you again. Now I know what I will do. I will go at once to the syndics, tell them all, and beg them to send me to Lormayeur.—M. de Caulaincourt!’

He was leaving the room, but turned back again. ‘My child,’ he said gently, though his voice sounded strange to himself, ‘you are not to blame. ’Twas no deed of yours. It is done now, for good or ill. And God is in Savoy as well as in Geneva.’

He passed out, not looking again at Gabrielle, and never looking at Marguerite at all. The words in his heart were these, “Would to God I had died for thee, my son, my son!” But instead, God help me, I fear he has died for me.’ Then came another thought, ‘And if I but had assurance he was one of God’s elect!’

Knowing nothing of any other motive for Norbert’s action, he had all the bitterness of feeling the boy had given his bright young life in exchange for his own worn-out, nearly ended one. An ill exchange, and the rather because he himself was, not willing alone but ready, to go to his God. He had scarce a hope that it was thus with Norbert. The earnest, strenuous souls of those days, hardened in the furnace of spiritual conflict, boldly faced alternatives which our softer tempers evade, or put by with vaguely charitable hopes and surmises. He, who loved Norbert as his own soul, allowed himself no illusions as to Norbert’s spiritual condition—yet still

Under Calvin's Spell

he tried to say, 'Whatsoever God wills to do with him, God's will be done.' But martyrdom would have been nothing in comparison to this.

Antoine Calvin heard his story in astonishment and dismay. And *he* had answered for the maiden's identity, had sworn to it! 'What will my brother say?' was his involuntary thought, as indeed it was wont to be his first thought in every emergency. Then came deep compassion for the anguished father. Seeing his evident exhaustion, he brought him a cup of wine and a piece of bread.

'Eat,' he said, 'that you may be able to think.'

'Nay,' said De Caulaincourt, 'I must fast and pray; for I know not whether God will be gracious unto me, and to my son.'

'Your son?' said Antoine very gently, laying his hand on his shoulder. 'He saved others, himself he did not save. Or here or there, his account is with Him of whom that was once said.'

Large tears welled up in the eyes of De Caulaincourt overflowed them—ere he knew it he was weeping without restraint. Though he had no proof that Norbert was 'elect,' 'regenerate,' 'mortified,' was there—might there be—after all some link between his wayward boy, and Him whom his own soul loved?

'Faint and far,
As star did touch with silver star,'

there came to him in that moment a hint, a surmising, that God's purposes of mercy might be wider than man's thoughts of them.

An Unexpected Meeting

But presently he started up, dashing his tears aside. 'I must go to the syndics at once, and tell them all,' he said. 'Are they—is the council sitting now?'

'Yes, the council is sitting; but it has far other affairs to think of. M. de Caulaincourt, you cannot get a hearing to-day; and I may say frankly that, if you could, nothing would be done? While you were absent, the ship of our Genevan State, always exposed to storms and pirates, has encountered the direr peril of a mutiny on board. Our rulers are in debate just now on the fate of the mutineers, the traitors, who, happily for us, are under watch and ward in the Evêché. Though for themselves, poor wretches, I fear it will go ill.'

He poured into the half-attentive ears of De Caulaincourt the story of the sedition of the Libertines, their rage against the French exiles, and the consequences so disastrous to themselves.

'I was glad you were not here at that time, M. de Caulaincourt,' he said.

'Would I were not here now!' the Frenchman answered sadly. 'But surely the twenty-five, at least, will hear my story.'

'We will try,' said Antoine, not very hopefully. Then, brightening a little, 'At all events, we will tell my brother. If anything can be done, he will know it.'

Meanwhile, next door, Gabrielle was watching and waiting with a breaking heart. She, at least, could do nothing, so Master Antoine, when she asked, had assured her. She must wait for her father's return. And why—oh why—did he not return? Surely he must have

Under Calvin's Spell

met with some terrible misfortune? As hour after hour of this, the fourth day of his absence, dragged slowly on, her misery grew almost unendurable. Nor had she even the relief of sympathy, for she held aloof from Claudine and Marguerite. There was in her heart a great anger against these two, who loved her, and yet had deceived her, so 'wickedly,' so 'cruelly,' as she said. True, they had done it *because* they loved her; but she could not yet feel the potency of the plea.

CHAPTER XV

A SAVOYARD HOVEL

NORBERT DE CAULAINCOURT rode in hot haste through the wood, urging on his tired palfrey with voice and spur. He knew not what he did ; he was as one drunk with strong wine—the glorious wine of life. With a resolute hand he had put the scarcely tasted draught aside, and now, behold ! it was given him back again. That wine was red ; it gave its colour in the cup ; it moved itself aright ; it gleamed and sparkled like ten thousand jewels. Thus, with light and joy in his heart, he rode on and on through the dim forest paths, which made yet darker the soft darkness of the still May night.

All at once his hand slackened on the rein, and his steed was only too willing to slacken his pace also, and to drop into a listless, shambling walk. The fact was, Norbert's young brain and nerves, held for four days by sheer strength of will at their uttermost tension, now suddenly revolted, and refused to work any longer. Utter weariness swept over him like a flood ; he must sleep, or he would die.

The place was dark and still, and lonely as the

Under Calvin's Spell

grave. What had he to fear? He dismounted, tied the palfrey to a tree, lay down on the grass, and in five seconds was fast asleep. It was one of those sleeps which put a solid bar between the before and after. We awake in a sense new made, all the cares and worries of yesterday gone from us, and heart and brain bathed afresh in the fountain of life. Is it not a faint foreshadowing of what the sleep of death will do for that mortal part of us which wearies and longs for rest, while in some mysterious way the immortal spirit will still hold living communion with its Maker and Redeemer?

The sun was up when Norbert awoke, yawned, stretched, and looked about him. His bones were aching, for Mother Earth does not offer her children the softest of sleeping-places. That was a small trouble. The sky above him showed blue through the tender green of the foliage, and somewhere up there in the branches a bird was singing. There was no other sound, save, close at hand, the champ of his steed, taking his morning meal with great leisure and evident satisfaction. Norbert wished he could as easily satisfy his own hunger. At the girdle of his riding robe there hung a purse, not full, indeed, as Berthelier would have had it, but still containing a few crowns. These would procure food, if only he could find anywhere to get it. But how go in this gear? He sat up, and looked himself over in blank dismay, giving a long groan of perplexity, which ended, however, in a burst of hearty laughter.

But the laughter passed, and the perplexity remained. How was a young lady, 'and a very beautiful young

A Savoyard Hovel

lady,' Norbert said to himself, to make her way, without protection or escort, through the wild and lawless district of Savoy, between the place where he was and the Genevese territory? Would that young Count of Lormayeur (whom Providence reward!) had but added to his kindnesses the present of a page's dress; probably he would have done it if asked, but Norbert had been far too dazed and bewildered to ask him.

There was nothing for him now but to mount his palfrey, just as he was, and turn his face steadily towards Geneva. He just knew the direction he should take—the way he was far from knowing, But clearly it was his first business to get out of the wood. He found the path he had been taking the night before, and thought he could not do better than follow it still.

Of the adventures and misadventures of that long, weary, perplexing day he never afterwards cared to talk. If forced to do it, he would sum up his experiences in such words as these—

'At least ten times I lost my way. As an unprotected damsel, I was afraid to go near the villages, lest the folk should do me a mischief, or make me a prisoner and hold me to ransom. Once I met a lad of my own size, and asked him to change clothes with me. When he refused, I offered to fight him for his, and throw mine into the bargain, but he ran away, shrieking out that I was a witch. I pursued and caught him, telling him that I was no witch, but an honest lad out upon a frolic, and wanting to get home. Whereat he called me, "He that has no white in his eyes," meaning the Evil One himself, slipped out of my

Under Calvin's Spell

hands and ran for his life. Finally, to crown my mishaps, the palfrey lost a shoe.'

When this last misfortune overtook Norbert, it was near nightfall, and he suspected he was already far out of his way. It was better for him to stay where he was until the morning. But he could not safely rest in the open, as he had done the night before; for he was now in an inhabited place—there might be passers-by. Bemoaning, for the twentieth time, his unfortunate disguise, he began to look out for a cottage where he might find refuge.

At last he saw in the deepening twilight a hovel of the humblest kind, probably the dwelling of a labourer or wine-dresser.

'For one of these crowns the "Grey-foot" will be glad enough to feed and shelter me,' he thought; 'only I must not let him see I have more than one, or he may rob and murder me.'

He dismounted, fastened his palfrey to a tree at a little distance, went to the rough wooden door, and knocked.

At first no one answered, but when he repeated his knock, a low voice bade him lift the 'pin,' or latch, and come in. He did so, and at first saw no one in the dark interior. But as his eyes grew accustomed to the dimness, he discerned, in the corner farthest from the door, a bed and a sick man lying on it. Another look showed him white hair, and a bandaged arm and shoulder.

While he hesitated what to do, a voice came from the bed, and its tones were strangely familiar.

'My mind wanders—ah, yes, I know it! But I

A Savoyard Hovel

am glad, since it brings me such a dream as this, Gabrielle.'

In wonder and amazement Norbert drew near, bent down close to the sick man, and saw.

'Master Berthelier!' he cried out.

'The voice is not Gabrielle's. But then that is to be looked for. So dreams and sick men's fancies change and melt, one passing into another. The robe is Gabrielle's—the costly fur-trimmed robe I bought her for the journey.'

'True, Master Berthelier, and——'

'Yes, Gabrielle's apparel, but the voice of young Norbert de Caulaincourt.'

Norbert knew that Berthelier had gone beyond the boundaries of Geneva, and more than suspected he had gone to fetch money for Gabrielle. What more natural than that, in returning with it through that lawless district, he had been robbed and wounded? Only he could not understand why he should have been returning through Savoyard territory, and not through Bernese. Either, or both of them, must be far out of their way, else certainly their paths could not have crossed.

'Master Berthelier,' he said, 'fear nothing. You are neither dreaming nor wandering, but in your right mind. I am Norbert de Caulaincourt.'

'But how? Why? What brings you here? And in that garb?'

'First let me give you the joy of knowing its owner is safe at home, in Geneva. As for me, I have had a merry day's ride with the young Count of Lormayeur, and a good companion he is.'

Under Calvin's Spell

'I understand nought of this. I have a fever, and am wandering.'

'Feel my hand, master. You will know it is not a lady's palm, but a lad's hard fist, that has dealt many a shrewd blow. And see—there is light enough still.' He threw off his headgear, and stood in the best light of the unglazed hole that served for a window.

'Norbert!'

'Yes, Norbert, in the garb of the *Damoiselle Gabrielle*. How save her else?'

'She would never have allowed it.'

'She was never asked. We gave her a potion.'

'We? Who?'

'Only three knew the secret, *Mademoiselle Claudine*, *Marguerite*, and myself.'

'*Claudine* too? It passes belief.'

'We persuaded her. But it was brave old *Marguerite* who contrived, and planned, and arranged all about the dress. And fortune befriended me, for you were away. And that being so, Master *Antoine Calvin* had to act the father's part by the maiden, and give her up to the *Savoyards*. So he—good easy man—did after the manner of his trade; the binding being all right, he never cast a glance within it. And I took care to keep my face well hid with my veil, like a very modest and sore distressed young lady. If on the way to the *Porte Neuve* any of the honest burghers spoke a word to me, I was far too overcome with grief and terror to do more than murmur an answer without looking up.'

'Wonderful!' said *Berthelier*. There was a long

A Savoyard Hovel

pause, then he spoke again. 'My son, thou art like that warrior of old, who at the same time was fined for disobedience and crowned for a glorious victory. What thou hast done is naught—very naught. But then also it is—it is——' Here his voice broke, and he murmured instinctively, 'God bless thee, Norbert de Caulaincourt!'

CHAPTER XVI

AMI BERTHELIER FINDS A FRIEND

PRESENTLY the door of the hovel was pushed open and a bent, withered, white-haired old woman came in. 'Mother,' Berthelier said to her, 'here is another guest for thee.' He spoke to her in the Savoyard *patois*, having previously been talking French to Norbert, to whom he whispered in that tongue: 'She lives alone; her husband was killed in battle, her son in a fray with robbers. Her grandson has gone away, she knows not whither.'

Seeing a lady's robe in the dark, the poor old creature murmured, 'Alack, the fine young lady,' then turned up the smouldering fire, fed it with sticks, and set a pot upon it.

'Poor soul,' Berthelier said, 'she is nearly as ignorant as thy steed—by the way, where hast thou left him all this time?'

'Tied to a tree out yonder. I forgot him in the surprise of seeing you. What can I do with him?'

'Do you ask "What *ought* I to do?" Is there a moon?'

'Not yet. I think 'twill rise about midnight.'

No doubt your steed is tired, and yourself—yet,

Ami Berthelier finds a Friend

M. Norbert, I would pray of you to mount again this night, and ride, whip and spur, to Geneva.'

'To Geneva!' He could not keep out of his voice the dismay that filled him at the thought.

'Even so.'

'But the very way I do not know. I must have wandered far out of it yesterday. Where are we now, Master Berthelier?'

'Close to the lake. I thought to go by water from Pregny to Geneva, but the rascally fisherman who undertook to bring me landed me here instead. And you—you must have wandered far. Yet, after all, a three hours' ride or so will bring you home.'

'Master Berthelier, if you came here by boat all the way from Pregny, how chanced it you were robbed and wounded?'

'Norbert, thou art in some ways a wise lad. Canst give that greatest proof of wisdom—the holding of thy tongue?'

'I think so.'

'Then hearken. It is my earnest wish, it may be my last wish, that none should know how I came by this wound. Not thyself even. And I pray thee, if any ask of thee, just say, "He fell among thieves."'

'I understand. But I pray you, master, do not talk of last wishes.'

Here their poor old hostess broke in upon their talk. She placed before Berthelier a shallow wooden bowl, not too clean, into which she had poured a steaming portion of the contents of the *pot au feu*—a kind of thick pottage made of roots, chiefly of parsnips—then giving him a clumsy wooden spoon, she prayed him to

Under Calvin's Spell

eat, with genuine good-will. Norbert she beckoned to the table, in the centre of which a hollow had been scooped out that served at once for dish and platter. She had already filled it with the pottage, and having supplied her guest with a spoon wherewith to eat it, had fulfilled, to the utmost of her power, the duties of hospitality. He, on his part, was far too hungry not to do justice to the fare, homely though it was. When he thought they had finished, he asked his hostess if he might have something also for his horse.

She assented willingly. It was quite in accordance with her ideas that the horses of gentlefolk should eat the food of poor Christians, and Norbert accordingly was able to bring the palfrey a fair equivalent for the 'warm mash' of a modern stableman. He then fastened him securely for the night to a post near the cabin.

While he was thus engaged, Berthelier explained to old Babet that the boy was from Geneva, and was a friend of his; that he had dressed himself, for a frolic, in the clothes of a young maid, but that he would now lend him his, and let him go home. The boy, in return would tell his friends where he was, and get them to send and fetch him.

Babet was very dull, very ignorant; yet in her 'dimly-lighted soul' there was one little window, through which a ray of light stole in. She was always trying to do kindnesses. She could never see a need or a pain without at least an effort to help and soothe it. She had the vaguest idea who her guests might be—and if they had tried to tell her she would not have understood—but she understood quite well that they

Ami Berthelier finds a Friend

were hungry, so they should have food ; they were weary, so they should rest.

Norbert, at least, was thoroughly weary. He told Berthelier that if he were to set out for Geneva at midnight, when the moon was up, he might chance to drop off his horse from fatigue. But even suppose he came safely, to what use? He would be too early to do any good. Besides, his horse had cast a shoe.

This was decisive. Berthelier bade him sleep till daybreak, then he would arouse him, and he could take the palfrey to a forge, not far distant, and ride on from that to Geneva.

‘In the morning I will give you a message to the syndics,’ he said. ‘You must see them at once.’

Babet, already settling for the night, showed Norbert a warm corner where he might lie down. Before he did so, however, he asked Berthelier—

‘Can I not do something to make you comfortable? I might change, perhaps, the bandage on your wound.’

‘It needs not. Babet is a good enough barber-surgeon for me—still, if you could fetch me a little clear water from the stream outside, and leave it beside me——’

Norbert did so, then lay down in his corner, with Gabrielle’s fur-trimmed robe for blanket and coverlet. The next moment, as he thought, he heard Berthelier calling him. He sprang to his feet, rubbed his eyes, looked about him, and felt ready for whatever fate might send.

It seemed better to him, on reflection, to retain the dress he wore, though Berthelier offered to lend him his.

Under Calvin's Spell

He thought his friend might be placed in great difficulty, perhaps in danger, by the want of it; whilst he would enter the town very early, go home at once, and put on his own clothes before any one saw him, except the town watch. He told Berthelier he would send him help as speedily as he could.

'That matters little,' was the answer. 'Don't let them run any risk. But stoop down, that I may give you my message for the syndics.'

There was no fear of listeners; for old Babet, at the farther end of the hovel, was fast asleep. Perhaps it was to save his own voice that Berthelier spoke low into Norbert's ear. Or perhaps he was ashamed, bitterly ashamed, of the tale he had to tell, ashamed likewise of the name he bore—that name of which heretofore he had been so proud. A listener, had such been there, might have caught the names, Philibert, Daniel, Comparet, Hubert d'Audriol. Then a mention of the Evêché, and a word about the boatmen, and their heavy two-handed swords. 'Now, boy, you understand, you will remember?' said Berthelier anxiously at the close.

'Depend on me, sir,' said Norbert, evidently much impressed. 'The thing is too strange and too terrible to forget, especially for a French exile, and the son of one who has received the freedom of the city.'

'I am giving Daniel up to the hangman, though the same blood flows in these veins,' said Berthelier with emotion. 'Can you marvel, Norbert, that I care not greatly to go home? Nor shall it grieve me much if death find me here.'

'Master Berthelier, you must not talk so. Think of Mademoiselle Gabrielle.'

Ami Berthelier finds a Friend

‘I do think of her. After this it may be best she should call herself Gabrielle—or Olive—de Castelar. After all, it is her name. But we must think now—of Geneva. You understand all? There is not a moment to lose. You will go straight to the syndics and the Council, and tell them my tale, word for word.’

‘Trust me, master. And see, here be three crowns, your own money too, laid ready in the purse of mademoiselle. These smaller coin will pay the smith and get me some bread by the way.’

‘Thanks, I am glad of somewhat to give our hostess. Go, and God speed thee. Farewell.’

‘Not farewell, for I will return,’ said Norbert to himself as he passed out.

Berthelier lay still and listened, until the sound of the palfrey’s hoofs had died away. ‘Bless the lad!’ he thought. ‘What a marvellous thing he has done! The conception wonderful! The execution, in its daring and audacity, past belief. But what will Master Calvin—what will the syndics say? And young Lormayeur, what a fool he must have been, not to look better to his bargain! Had that old fox, his father, been there, the cheat would not have been so easy. But it saved Gabrielle—and I may see her again!’ Ere he knew it the tears were in his eyes—were falling.

Then his thoughts reverted to himself; all that happened since he left Geneva came back upon his mind, and passed before it in due order and succession. He recalled the courteous and even cordial reception of Philibert Berthelier and his friend and host Ami Perrin, with Philibert’s ready consent to find for him the funds he needed. ‘So that is what you want, my good

Under Calvin's Spell

cousin?' said the chief of the Libertines. "'Money," quoth he "money," like all the rest of the world. Well, I have it not. When, I pray you, had a Berthelier so much as a spare crown in his purse? But then, I have some little credit; and my good friend Master Perrin has more. Between us, doubt not we shall send your pretty dove forth upon her flight with her wings well gilded. I shall see to the matter at once, and it shall be put through before supper, when thou and I shall empty a flute of the best wine of Beaume to the health and happiness of the fair traveller. Who talks of repayment? The young lady may pay us when she comes into her inheritance.'

Philibert's look, as he spoke thus, reminded Ami Berthelier of his illustrious father, to whom in the old days he had been as Jonathan to David. And now that he lay there, thinking over the past, it turned his tears to 'sparks of fire,' to know that his cousin all the time had been playing on his weakness, because he needed just such an emissary to concert his treasonable designs with his accomplices in Geneva.

Then came the banquet, the carouse. Ami Berthelier wondered if he, in his youth, had actually taken part in such scenes, and enjoyed them. Had he drained his wine glass—far more often than he cared to remember—to the very last drop, then poured that drop out to make 'a ruby on the nail?' Had he honoured the toasts—and often *such* toasts—with uproarious shouts and noisy rappings on the table with his knife handle? Had he seasoned his draughts with oath, and song, and jest that he blushed to think of now—he that had made himself the guardian of Gabrielle's innocent youth?

Ami Berthelier finds a Friend

Now he found the whole scene quite as abhorrent to his taste as to his principles.

When the strong wine had circulated freely, they drank to the Liberties of Geneva, and Philibert said he knew how heartily his cousin would honour that toast. But he explained that he meant her true liberties, not the sham ones, which only meant a change of tyrants. How were ministers better than priests and bishops? Then the others all chimed in, denouncing the utter detestableness of the new order of things. Curses—in this case not deep, perhaps, but certainly loud—were hurled upon Master Calvin, or ‘Cain,’ as they called him, and all his aiders and abettors. Then followed nods and winks, vague hints and mysterious whispers. ‘A time is coming, friends; oh yes, a time is coming. We shall soon see great changes;’ with much more of the same kind. ‘But we must be prudent,’ suggested some one, a shade more sober than the rest, with a warning glance in Ami’s direction. At which Philibert, who had drowned in the wine-cup the little caution he ever possessed, laid a friendly hand on his cousin’s shoulder. ‘Never fear him,’ he said. ‘Is he not a Berthelier? He is our good friend, who is going to help us.’

Then ‘twixt the wine-cup and the wine,’ there was unfolded to Ami Berthelier the part he was expected to play, and the message he was to carry back to Geneva. Philibert would return, and lead the fishermen and boatmen once more. Daniel and the other captives were to break prison, and join them. Together they would raise the town, kill or drive away the French, and make an end of the reign of the saints. Even the

Under Calvin's Spell

reckless Philibert, in his sober senses, would not have unmasked his designs so soon or so utterly.

Ami Berthelier listened with horror. He had, with much difficulty, avoided actual excess, yet the unaccustomed strength of the wine he had been obliged to drink stirred his blood and heated his brain. When the son of the hero and martyr of Geneva found words to ask him—*him*, who had shared his sufferings—to betray Geneva and destroy her, his soul straightway went on fire. With indignant scorn, which he took no pains to measure or to soften, he flung back the base proposal. It was no wonder that rage answered scorn, for his words, though he knew it not, seared and burned like vitriol. Angry tones were heard, threatening hands were laid upon sword hilts. Presently a foolish young Libertine, quite intoxicated, threw a glass of wine in his face. But another checked him, saying, 'That's too bad, Jacquot. If M. Ami Berthelier asks for satisfaction, he is within his rights.'

'Doubtless the young gentleman knows I cannot fight, being lame,' said Ami Berthelier, as he rose and, with a courteous gesture of farewell to M. Perrin their host, turned to the door.

'Stop him! stop him!' was the general cry. All sprang to their feet, saying, some one thing, some another, but the meaning of all was this: 'He must not go, he knows too much.' Philibert intercepted him, the others crowding round. He raised his arm to put his cousin aside, Philibert's sword flashed out, and in another moment was red with the blood of Ami. A scuffle ensued. Ami, nigh to fainting, could not tell

Ami Berthelier finds a Friend

what happened, save that he thought he was being pulled to pieces. But at last some one—it was the young man who had reproved Jacquot—tore the door open, saying: 'Go—go—or they will kill you!'

In the open air his senses came back to him, and he sat down and considered what to do. But, as he was thinking where to find his horse, and how he could manage, wounded as he was, to ride back to Geneva, the door shook, and he fancied the revellers inside were going to open it. In the strength of his fear he rose and walked on towards the little town of Pregny. On his way he met a peasant who worked on Perrin's estate. He told him he was a Genevan who had come on business to his master, but that he had met with an accident, and was now anxious to return home by the lake. The man took him to his cottage, bound up his wound in rough fashion, and told him that his brother, who was a fisherman, was actually going to Geneva that very night: would his worthiness be able, with help, to walk down to the beach and get on board the fishing-smack? All Berthelier's longing was to get to Geneva and tell his tale—if he died for it the next hour. So his soul 'held his body strengthened' for the work. All the more bitter was his disappointment when the fisherman, meeting comrades he wished to join, broke his bargain, and set his passenger down on Savoyard territory, scarcely nearer to the town than Pregny. Ill, feverish, and in much suffering from his wound, he made his way somehow to the hovel of Babet, and was glad to lie down on her wretched bed, as he said to himself, to die.

Yet it was life, not death, which surged through his

Under Calvin's Spell

soul that dim morning hour when Norbert left him. Once more he felt himself alone; for poor Babet's presence was no disturbance, while perhaps it lent him a shadow of human companionship, which kept loneliness from being desolation. Besides, she might sleep for hours, for it was yet but the breaking of the day.

His thoughts went back to the old times in the dungeon of Peney, where he had lain, as he lay now, in weakness, weariness, and pain. Better then than now, for then, though faith in many things had failed, faith in one thing was left him still—he believed in liberty. It still seemed worth while to him to suffer and to die that Geneva might be free. Well, he had lived to see Geneva free—and how much the better for it, after all? Did freedom mean the rule of the consistory—a band of fanatical pastors and elders, all at the beck and call of one ambitious, clever Frenchman who had shaken off the yoke of Rome to put his own instead of it? He knew, however, what freedom did not mean. Not the overthrow of Calvin and the saints, and the substitution of Philibert Berthelier and the Libertines. No; that last error would be worse than the first. 'I have given my life to prevent it,' he thought. 'And I do not regret it.'

'What, then, of all the past do I regret?' was his next thought. 'Nothing—absolutely nothing perhaps by itself—but the whole, as a whole. What good has my life been to myself, or to any one else? When I am judged, the most that can be said for me is this: "Twice over in his life he might have done harm, and refused, at some cost to himself." What is that to stand out, as the best of a man's record upon earth?'

Ami Berthelier finds a Friend

‘When I am judged.’ Was there then such a thing, after all, as a judgment to come? Berthelier felt sure that, if there were, his place would be with the condemned. And yet he longed for it, cried out for it, with his whole heart and soul and strength! It was far more intolerable to think that right should never be vindicated, that wrong should triumph always, than that he, a unit amongst millions, should stand convicted as the failure he knew he was. He had had his chances; it was his own fault if he lost them. He had lived his life; and in his retrospect now, that life was not all bitter. Had he not the memories of his youth, of the years before the Deluge—the glad, strong, eager years when everything seemed possible to him? The years when he hoped, waited, dreamed—and, more than all, when he loved? True, they were soon over. Soon hope had vanished, trust was betrayed, dreams were shattered, love itself was quenched in the grave. All was gone. What matter? he himself was going too. Out of darkness all came, into darkness all went again. That was the end.

Yet in his day he had tried to do something which might count as a man’s work in the world, which might not perish all. His soul had gone out in the patriot’s passion, which meant, for him, devotion to the city that was his fatherland. Was it all, indeed, for Geneva’s dear sake? Had he not ambitions of his own? Used he not to think often of the great citizens of Greece and Rome, and to dream of a name like theirs, a name that Geneva at least would not willingly let die? Though quite ready, in the young enthusiasm of his hero worship, to stand in the shadow of his great kinsman, still he

Under Calvin's Spell

hoped to be the second Berthelier, the worthy friend and helper of the first.

But now the noble name of Berthelier was stained, past repair. Philibert and Daniel Bethelier were traitors; the one was in prison, and the other in exile; not, like their father, for a good cause, but for a very bad one. Whilst he himself stood alone, an outcast from both parties, 'contrary to all men,' despised and rejected.

'Despised and rejected?' The words were familiar. Of whom had he heard them said? He thought for a moment. Then he remembered. They were in the Bible; part of a text such as Master Calvin would preach from, using long words, like election, predestination, justification. To him these were dreary abstractions without meaning. Still, the words haunted him. They ran thus: 'He was despised and rejected of men,' as if spoken of a man whose portion, like his own, had been contempt and failure.

Gradually, as he pondered, there rose up and took shape within him the conception of the human Christ. He was used to think of Socrates and other great heathens as men like himself—why not the Man of Nazareth? And yet the thought was new, startling, wonderful. Because—so he put it to himself—his mind all his life had been confused by the nonsense which Papists and Reformed alike were wont to talk. He did not believe, with them, that Christ was a strange, mysterious Being, whom one could not think about with any reasonableness, save just as part of a system, that clever system which Master Calvin had explained with such great perspicuity in the *Institutes of the Christian*

Ami Berthelier finds a Friend

Religion. One could not believe all that; but one might, and could, and must believe that there was once a Man called Jesus Christ, who tried in His day to do good to men—and failed.

The thought was soothing and helpful. It was as if, in his loneliness, some one had come to be with him, to stand by him. Perhaps, in the rest it gave him, a slight slumber stole over his senses, for the consciousness of a Presence grew and grew, till it seemed to fill all the room. He saw nothing, heard nothing, yet he knew it was there. Or rather, One was there, who had been despised and rejected, yet was now——

What was He now? The question woke him up thoroughly; he tried to think it out. Yes, he remembered the history, which he had never thought of before as a man's history, only as part of a Church's creed. He had failed, for the Jews would not believe in Him: 'He came to His own, and His own received Him not.' And then, at last, He was crucified, and by the very people He had tried to help. How crushed, disappointed, how bitter of soul He must have been! 'Indeed,' pursued Berthelier, 'if I remember right, I think He said so: "My soul is sorrowful exceedingly," or words like that. But was that the end? How did He come to think of it all afterwards?

'If I could speak to Him, and ask—but there, to be sure men do speak to Him every day, for they believe that He sits at God's right hand, is God Himself indeed. And they prayed. I do not know. I know nothing; I am a wanderer in the dark whose candle has gone out. But if, at least, so much as this one might believe, might hope, that "despised, rejected, crucified," did not end

Under Calvin's Spell

all the story—that these were but a dark passage into light beyond—why, then, for others too there might be light.

‘But then,’ thought Berthelier, ‘His failure, His rejection, was quite undeserved.’ He tried to remember all He could of the story of that life and death, which presently he summed up: ‘Yes, He deserved success and victory, if man ever did. He never sinned against His own nature, fell short of cleaving to His purpose. On that white robe of His there was blood indeed, but no stain of sin. It was good to think that One at least had proved Himself worthy of all trust and all honour. Perhaps men were right in thinking that such an one had not perished, could not perish. Could He? That was the question; everything turned upon that. If His defeat were final, if all ended there, then is evil stronger than good, and it will prevail.’

Berthelier could not believe it, any more than he could believe that the sun which set the night before would never rise again upon the world. No; all Christendom must be right in saying that He lived, that even now He sat a Victor in heaven. But if so, Christendom was right also in saying that men might speak to Him, and ask—but what should he ask? What was it that he had longed so to ask of Him? All the longing passed from him, it melted away in the very joy, the great, wonderful joy of believing He really was. He lived; He was somewhere in the world, to be admired, loved, trusted. Perhaps even He might teach others the secret of His victory, that they, after pain and failure like that which He had suffered—perhaps after mistakes too which He had not made—should also

Ami Berthelier finds a Friend

gain the victory. Yet for that, at least for his own possible share in it, he was not anxious. Enough if right had triumphed—and Christ.

Just then the first rays of the rising sun stole in through the little window. 'The sun has risen,' said Berthelier to himself. Old Babet stirred in her corner, and the next moment was on her knees, muttering a Pater Noster.

'Pater Noster—Our Father,' Berthelier thought; 'that is the prayer of Christ. It was He who taught men to say to the Infinite and the Everlasting, Our Father! He knew what He said, and told men no falsehoods. What if this were true? What if, at the centre of everything, there was the heart of the Father, and that He, the Son, came to reveal it?'

CHAPTER XVII

BEFORE THE GREAT COUNCIL

UPON that same May morning the noble hall in Geneva where Calvin was wont to lecture to his crowd of eager students was the scene of a very different assembly. The Great or General Council of the citizens held its meeting there. The canopied chair of state at the end of the hall, where of old sat the Franciscan prior, was occupied now, not by Master John Calvin, but by Syndic Amblarde Corne, with his black baton of office on the table before him. His three colleagues with their batons sat beside, and the stalls near them that lined the wall accommodated the Council of Twenty-five. Facing them in close serried rows on the front benches, sat the legitimate members of the Great Council, all of them enrolled and registered citizens of Geneva. But behind and about them, in every corner of the hall, surged and crowded a tumultuous mass, growing more and more, till scarce standing room was left. Some clung to the pillars, some got up into the windows and stood in the embrasures, others were fain to content themselves about the doors, or thronged the corridors and staircases.

From the dense mass there arose a continuous hum



SOME CLUNG TO THE PILLARS, SOME GOT
UP INTO THE WINDOWS.

Before the Great Council

and buzzing, 'like that of a swarm of bees,' but varied with occasional shouts and outcries. 'A plague upon your saints'!—'Aha, the Libertine! Knock him down—turn him out!' 'Down with the consistory!' 'To the Rhone with the lot of you!' 'Order! Order!' 'Hush citizens!—the first syndic is speaking. Order, I say! Order!'

Order was at last established, and silence enough obtained to enable the greater part of the assembly to hear the voice of Amblarde Corne. And as they heard, the silence deepened, for his words were of interest to them all. He spoke of the late tumults, 'stirred up by certain persons of evil intent, unruly citizens, and bad companions;' of their intention, thinly veiled, to bring to naught the greatness and the polity of Geneva, and to make her a prey to discord and disorder. With God's good blessing they would not succeed, but would rather leave themselves exposed to condign and well-merited punishment. They alleged as their pretext the dangers of foreign influence, and especially of that of the French exiles, now domiciled amongst them. But every one knew that these worthy and honourable persons——'

Here a disturbance at the bottom of the hall, which had been growing for some minutes, assumed proportions which could not be ignored. The speaker paused to administer a stern rebuke.

Then some one from a near bench pushed forward and said, 'Please, your worthiness, it is a person with tidings which seem to be of importance. He demands speech with the honourable syndics; but he cannot get through the press.'

Under Calvin's Spell

'Make way for him then—we will all hear him,' said Syndic Corne; and the cry, 'Make way—make way!' rang through the hall.

Not so easy to obey it, in that throng! However, with time and pains the thing was done. Two men of the city watch, with a slight figure in a lady's robe, stood before the syndics.

'Holy saints! What have we here? A girl?' cried a member of the council, never identified, for no one would own to the un-Protestant exclamation. A start and movement of surprise ran through them all.

The first syndic, as was meet, found voice the first. 'What is all this?' he asked. 'What mean you, city watch, by bringing this maiden hither?'

'Please your honourablenesses, she is a boy,' began one.

'Most worthy syndics, he is Norbert de Caulaincourt, and he comes to us with tidings from Pregny,' the other explained, more lucidly.

'Speak then, maiden, or young man, whichever thou art,' said the first syndic. But as he spoke he recognized with a start the fur-trimmed robe whose wearer he had himself delivered up to the Savoyards at the Porte Neuve. By this time Norbert's story was known in the city; though the surprise and excitement it would otherwise have created was swallowed up in the imminent and all-engrossing Libertine 'Terror.'

Meanwhile Norbert, overcome with shame and embarrassment, struggled to find his voice. 'Tis the fault of the watch,' he said, 'they would not let me go home and change.'

Before the Great Council

‘Never mind thy garments, but answer plainly—
Who art thou?’

‘I am Norbert de Caulaincourt.’

A murmur ran round the hall. The hero of the desperate adventure had been given up by every one as lost. There was joy as well as wonder in the sound. Some began to cheer and acclaim aloud, though cries of another nature were not wanting. ‘He deceived us,’—‘Brought us into evil odour with the Savoyards’—‘Transgressed the commands of Holy Scripture, as given unto—’ ‘No! No! No!’ ‘He saved a maiden of Geneva’—‘He risked his life.’ ‘He is *une brave jeune homme*.’ ‘He is a French exile and a traitor.’

With some difficulty the rising tumult was quelled sufficiently for the grave voice of Amblarde Corne to make itself heard.

‘It will be time enough to inquire into the case of this young man when we have heard the tidings which, the watch says, he brings to us from Pregny. Norbert de Caulaincourt, how camest thou to Pregny?’

‘I was not in Pregny, which is Bernese territory, but—on my way home hither, I met Master Ami Berthelier, who was. The message is from him.’

‘Now tell the honourable council whatsoever Master Ami Berthelier has bidden thee to say.’

Norbert happily had one of those minds which a great peril or a great occasion clears and steadies, in place of distracting. He spoke out bravely, and told his story so that all could understand. From his young lips, without pause or hesitancy, came the fateful words that took from Daniel Berthelier and his accomplices their last chance of life. After this, every man present

Under Calvin's Spell

there knew that the doom of the traitors was sealed. Even that tumultuous assembly was awed into a solemn silence, far more impressive than any amount of noise and outcry.

'We will debate presently upon this matter,' the first syndic said quietly. 'As for thee, Norbert de Caulaincourt, thou wilt have to answer before another Tribunal than this for contempt of the Honourable Council of Twenty-five, for fraudulent, insolent and immodest behaviour, and transgression of the commandments of Almighty God, as given us in Holy Scripture. Wherefore, and until there is leisure and opportunity for the due investigation of thy case, I propose, with the leave of the council of citizens here present, to commit thee to the prison of the Evêché.'

This stern address did not take Norbert altogether by surprise. He knew that the city authorities, and especially the first syndic himself, whom he had deceived and befooled, must feel indignant at his audacious trick. Even any of them who did not feel it would be bound to feign it. What, indeed, could he expect, after putting their high mightinesses in a position so ridiculous, if not so odious, in the eyes of their enemies the Savoyards?

He bowed his head, as one who acquiesces in a just sentence; yet the next moment he raised it again, and looked the first syndic boldly in the face. 'But you will send for Master Berthelier? He is sorely wounded,' he said.

The austere face of Amblarde Corne relaxed, almost into a smile, either at the boy's audacity, or at his simplicity in thinking the syndics needed to be reminded

Before the Great Council

by him of a duty so obvious. 'Enough said,' he answered, though not very sternly. 'Dizenier, remove the prisoner.'

Meanwhile, there was a stirring on one of the back benches, and several voices cried, 'Make way—make way!' as a tall figure pushed through the close-packed seats, came forward, and passed up the hall to the place of the syndics and the Council of Twenty-five.

With a start and thrill Norbert saw his father. Germain de Caulaincourt, citizen of Geneva, and duly elected member of the Great Council, had hitherto listened to the proceedings in silence, sitting modestly in the background, behind a pillar. Now he took his stand beside his son, laying one hand upon his shoulder. One quick look passed between them; then he bowed to the syndics, and spoke—

'May it please your worthinesses, and the honourable citizens here present, I, Germain de Caulaincourt, accuse this my son, Norbert de Caulaincourt, of contempt for the Council of Twenty-five, and of setting at nought its decrees.'

A murmur and a movement of astonishment ran round the hall. The syndics looked at each other in perplexity. Only the two Caulaincourts stood perfectly still, the elder awaiting the decision of the council, the younger stilled by the kindly pressure of his father's hand.

At last the silence was broken by the first syndic.

'M. de Caulaincourt, we know you for a true man and a good citizen. Assuredly it need not this to prove it. Whilst we honour your devotion to the city of your adoption, we would not have you strain it to such extremity.'

Under Calvin's Spell

'I do not strain it, sir. I act of my free will. I know it to be your law that the accuser must go to prison along with the accused.'

Norbert started, turned half round, looked full in his father's face. It was a look that spoke volumes. De Caulaincourt went on, his grave, quiet voice penetrating the assembly, which stilled itself to listen. 'Moreover, I hold that the responsibility in this matter rests partly upon me. That which my son has done—and I own the act was unlawful—he did for the love of me.' The hand on Norbert's shoulder trembled a little. 'Therefore, if to prison he must go, to prison I go with him, either as accuser or accused, whichever your worships may appoint.'

There was a short silence, then Syndic Aubert said, addressing his three colleagues: 'This matter, as it seems to me, appertains rather to the consistory than to the council.'

The suggestion was welcomed as a happy way out of a serious difficulty. No one wanted to send the elder Caulaincourt to the Evêché, yet it was evident that if Norbert went he would go too. With Norbert himself no one knew very well what to do; and in the minds of these subjects of a theocracy, the pastors and elders of the Church seemed the proper persons to decide. Moreover, as Norbert had broken a command of Scripture, his case fell certainly under their jurisdiction.

Meanwhile, the majority had reached its conclusions by a shorter road. The sight of the son and father together, both escaped out of the jaws of death, which the father had braved for his faith, the son for his father's sake, stirred their hearts as the wind sways the forest

Before the Great Council

trees. From the Little Council and the Great, from the benches, back, front and sides, from the mass that thronged the windows, the passages, the doors, the corridors, there arose a perfect clamour of voices: 'Let them go! Let them go! Long live Master Caulaincourt for a good man and an honest citizen!' It was not forgotten either that he was a prominent French exile, and that the majority were fighting the battles of the French exiles in Geneva.

Master Amblarde Corne, first syndic, did not wait to hear more. 'M. de Caulaincourt,' he said, 'you will hold yourself bound to produce your son, Norbert de Caulaincourt, whenever you shall be called upon to do so by the honourable consistory. We consign him in the meantime, and upon this understanding, into your own keeping.'

De Caulaincourt bowed his thanks, and taking his son's hand in his, they withdrew together, making their way through the crowd in the midst of a storm of cheers and congratulations, varied by a few cries of a contrary character, accompanied with groans and hisses. These came chiefly from the minority who still favoured the Libertines, and were thus the enemies of the French exiles, 'They have angered the Savoyards past bearing;' 'They have disgraced our city!' cried the malcontents. 'Treat them as they deserve.' And one daring fellow was bold enough to add, 'What of Master Calvin's own brother, who was deep in the plot? These "Regenerate" set us a fine example!' This was too much, more than nine-tenths of the assembly being strong Calvinists. 'Down with the traitor! Down with the Libertine!' was heard on all hands. 'To the Rhine with him!'

Under Calvin's Spell

shouted more voices than one, and already rough hands were laid on the luckless speaker, who had dared to associate the great name of Calvin with a vulgar fraud.

'Order! Order! Order!' The cry rang through the hall, heard clearly through all the noise and uproar. Then up rose the first syndic in his place, holding in his hand the black baton of office. 'Citizens of Geneva,' said he, 'respect the laws and the dignity of your Great Council. Let every man remain in his seat, silent and motionless.'

So much had the new *régime* already done for Geneva that the command was obeyed. After a few sullen murmurs, the assembly settled down into something resembling a state of order, and thus made it possible for business to proceed. Not all at once do communities learn the self-repression, the self-control, the 'temperate will' which only makes freedom worth having, a blessing, not a curse. The difficulty lies in this, that only freedom itself can rightly teach the use of it. Happy are they who, like the Genevans, have amongst them one, or more than one, who can guide, control, and weld together the heterogeneous elements called collectively 'The People' into a strong firm mass, changing the 'miry clay' into iron.

While the Great Council, with indignation stirred to the utmost by the tidings of Norbert, virtually sealed the fate of Daniel Berthelier and his chief accomplices, the two de Caulaincourts essayed to walk quietly home to the Rue Cornavin. Father and son had found each other again, and were well content. Norbert, much ashamed of his dress, would fain have escaped observation; but this was impossible. The palfrey

Before the Great Council

left at the gate of the Franciscan monastery where the council was held, had been easily recognized, for it had belonged to Baudichon of Maisonneuve, who had given it to Gabrielle for her journey. Whilst Norbert was within, some one brought it back to its former owner, at the same time spreading the news that young De Caulaincourt had returned from Lormayeur safe and sound. So the father and son were beset with greetings, congratulations, and enquiries, mingled with a few, a very few, demonstrations of disapproval. They were glad to reach at last the door of Master Antoine Calvin, whence Norbert rushed at once to their own room, and happily succeeded in donning his proper garments before being seen by his host, or by any of the family. Then his father said, 'I will go with you to our friends next door, for the first thing to be done is to give the damoiselles your tidings of Master Berthelier.'

CHAPTER XVIII

NORBERT DE CAULAINCOURT IS THANKED

THE three inmates of the house of Berthelier were intensely anxious about him, and their anxiety grew and deepened, as day after day passed by, and still he came not. Gabrielle, besides, was grieving bitterly on Norbert's account, who, she did not doubt, had already met his death—and for her. Yet she was spared what made the worst suffering of the other two, she, at least, had no cause to reproach herself. Sister Claudine, who continued weak and ill, said little, and Marguerite was silent also; neither wished to grieve Gabrielle by lamenting over what had been done by both for the love of her. Nor had they spoken of it even to each other, since, throughout the years they had dwelt together, their hearts never once had met.

But on the morning of the Great Council, Marguerite, coming as usual to the bedside of Sister Claudine with the *soup du prime*, found her, as she thought, asleep. But looking closer, she saw that the face was hidden purposely, whilst heavy sobs were shaking the feeble frame.

'Come then, my damoiselle,' said the servant, with a touch of sternness. 'Is this the way to go about making

Norbert de Caulaincourt is thanked

yourself strong and well, against Master Berthelier returns to us? That is to say, if it please God to send him back to us. And if it please Him otherwise, we have got to submit, and will want all our strength for that. But we need not go to meet sorrow half way.'

'If 'twere only sorrow,' Sister Claudine sobbed. 'But this is sin. For my consent to the fraud God may punish me by taking my brother!'

Always ready for a theological discussion, Marguerite set down the cup, drew her arms together in a militant attitude, and began: 'No wonder, damoiselle, that you find small comfort in your sorrow, if that is the notion you have of the Almighty, who sent it upon you. As to the master, whatever has become of him, though we know not, God knows. God has arranged it all, and settled it before you and I were born into the world, ay, and before the world itself was made. That is not our concern: one thing there is that does concern us, that is, our own sin. And we may be very sure that when that comes up in judgment before God, neither friend nor brother can take the blame or bear the punishment.'

Poor Claudine, happily, was not logical enough to suggest that our sin also might have been foreseen, if foreseen, fore-ordained, and if fore-ordained, inevitable—why then any punishment at all for us to bear? She caught at Marguerite's last words, rather than at the drift of her discourse. 'As to taking the blame,' she said, 'God knows I do it.'

'Not that you need—so much—after all,' Marguerite allowed generously. ''Twas my doing. You were unwilling, and I over-persuaded you.'

Under Calvin's Spell

'Oh, but to you, perhaps, it did not seem so very wrong. To me, knowing poor Norbert was a heretic, and that his soul would be lost for ever and ever—while Gabrielle might have been won to the true Church, and saved, soul and body. But then, my brother! His heart was just breaking, for she is the very apple of his eye.'

'And that is God's truth, my damoiselle. I too, I thought of the master, and of the child herself. They would have made her miserable, perhaps done her to death amongst them.'

'We both looked to the good for our own, and not to the harm for another.'

'We looked to the good end, forgetting the evil way. Still, 'tis worse for me than for you.'

'Not so! You do no penance, and you dread no purgatory.'

'Penance! Purgatory!' said Marguerite, with supreme scorn. 'What are they to stand between a soul and the God that made it? No! That which I dread is quite another thing. I—I—who, with all my light and knowledge, could sin so, can I indeed be one of the number of God's elect?'

'And yet,' said Claudine gently, 'He is very pitiful and of tender mercy.'

'Yes, to the faithful.'

'But how was any one ever faithful, if first He was not merciful?' asked Claudine, her words wiser than she knew. 'Marguerite, we have both of us done wrong,' she added, with a sudden impulse, stretching out her hand to the servant.

With her own rough, toil-hardened hand Marguerite touched it, not ungently. 'What am I to despise a

Norbert de Caulaincourt is thanked

Papist?' she said to herself, 'when I have failed to make my own calling and election sure? And do I not know full well that there is but one doom for unforgiven Papist or Protestant?'

'We have both done wrong—for love,' Claudine said. 'Then may God in His mercy forgive us both!'

'Amen!' said Marguerite.

'And you know, Marguerite,' Claudine added, 'you know, there is the blessed Lord. For His sake.'

'For His sake, damoiselle,' Marguerite assented. She knew not why she did it, but her next act was to stoop down and kiss the hand of Sister Claudine.

Gabrielle appeared suddenly, throwing the door open. Her eyes were eager, her cheeks glowing, her whole face transfigured. 'Aunt! Marguerite!' she cried breathlessly. 'Norbert has come back safe and sound! And he brings news of my father!'

Norbert himself was behind her, and he and his father, having asked and received permission to enter Sister Claudine's apartment, were presently pouring out their story into the ears of the two women.

Just at the point of Norbert's disclosure of himself to young Lormayeur, a loud, authoritative knocking at the street door interrupted them. It proved to be a message from the syndics, demanding his instant attendance to act as guide to the party they were sending to bring back Master Berthelier. They were bringing a litter for the wounded man, and Norbert was told there would be a horse for him.

'You had best bring with you the master's old cloak,' Marguerite said to Norbert. 'And you, young sir, when did you break your fast?'

Under Calvin's Spell

'At daybreak, in the blacksmith's hut, while he shod my horse.'

'Then food is the first thing to think of—"Mass or meal never hindered any man" (though God forgive me for naming the abominable thing!) Here is the morning soup, which was kept hot for mademoiselle, though 'tis just dinner-time——'

'No, no, I can't wait ; the word is instantly.'

'That must be taken with reason,' his father interposed. 'They have to get their band together.'

'Well, then,' said Marguerite, 'I have a good capon I roasted for her yesterday, and she would scarce touch it. I will bring it into the next room, with a manchet of bread and a cup of wine, whilst Gabrielle thanks you, Master Norbert, as it is meet and right she should, for the saving of her from the hands of the Papist folk.'

De Caulaincourt, from his place by the couch of Sister Claudine, looked thoughtfully at the boy and girl who stood together near the door, as Marguerite had left them. Sister Claudine looked also, and perhaps with deeper insight. One of the last things to fade from a true woman's heart is that yearning interest in the opening life of a young sister, a child-maiden she has loved and cherished. Those two who stood together there woke in her thoughts and hopes reaching far into the future. Though she also loved the absent Louis de Marsac, yet now from her heart she wished him forgotten.

Gabrielle, in her opinion, ought to have blushed, and hesitated, and found herself unable to utter a word. But instead, the girl spoke out frankly, as if Norbert had been another girl, or she herself a boy—

'Oh, Norbert—to thank you? But how can I? No ;

Norbert de Caulaincourt is thanked

I can never do it, not even if I tried all my life. You have saved me, and I——’ But here, at last, a quiver of emotion passed over her sweet face, and she paused.

De Caulaincourt and Claudine saw but two ; but each of those two saw another who stood between them. ‘You have saved me for him,’ said the heart of one. ‘Have I saved you only for him?’ was the thought of the other.

De Caulaincourt interposed in his courtly way, ‘My dear young lady, my son accounts it both a joy and an honour to have served you. Reserve, I pray of you, the thanks you are good enough to give him (though they are not needed) until he has the satisfaction of bringing back your father, which I trust he will do to-night.’

Then Marguerite appeared with a summons to the other room, and a voluble apology because she had no better drink to set before Master Norbert than a pitcher of *rasade*, the sour, common wine in daily use. ‘There is not a flask of Swiss wine left,’ she said, ‘though there is some good *eau de cerise*, if Master Norbert would care for that.’

CHAPTER XIX

THE 'EGREGIOUS' AMI BERTHELIER

AMI BERTHELIER had gone forth from Geneva a solitary, broken man, sad and bitter of heart, and well-nigh friendless. It was a striking proof of his isolation that, in the city of his birth, where every one knew every one else, and bonds both of kindred and association were so closely drawn, he had no one to whom he could turn when he happened to need a loan of moderate amount. He had to apply to his own proscribed and exiled kinsmen; and even that very application might well have seemed to his fellow-citizens an offence, and a proof of complicity in treasonable designs.

Moreover, it had failed; he was coming back wounded in body and in soul. He had endured mockery, insult, violence even, from those who bore his name, and whose fathers were the friends and companions of his youth. Yet, strange to say, his return was a triumph. The men of Geneva,—hot of heart, prompt to reward friends or to punish foes, and never doing either by halves—took a strong view of the service he had rendered them. Every one present at the Great Council believed that Master Berthelier had

The 'Egregious' Ami Berthelier

discovered an infamous plot of the Libertines, and sent information of it to the city, which was true; but the majority believed also that he had gone to Pregny and obtained the confidence of his cousin for that very purpose, which was not true, but added by romance as the story passed from lip to lip. Therefore, when that evening the stout guard, sent by the syndics, brought home the wounded citizen by way of the Porte de Rive, the whole population of the Rue de Rive and the other streets through which he had to pass, turned out to bid him welcome and to do him honour. Applauding shouts and cries filled the air. 'Long live all good citizens!' 'Long live a Berthelier who has a true heart to Geneva!' 'God send you health and cure, good Master Berthelier; you have redeemed the old name.' Sometimes, indeed, it was not 'good Master Berthelier,' but 'spectable Master Ami Berthelier,' and there were voices which gave him higher honour still, hailing him as 'Egrège Ami Berthelier,' for with the Genevans of the sixteenth century, 'Egregious' was a title of singular honour.

As he was crossing the Pont Pâti, with its high houses on either side, a dark-robed figure, not tall, but with 'the air of one accustomed to command,' came forth from a house. There was a murmur of reverence and a doffing of caps, for it was Master John Calvin. At a sign from him the bearers of the litter stopped, and the crowd made way. Berthelier, looking white and very weary, tried to raise himself, but Calvin stayed him by a gesture, and with grave courtesy wished him health and cure. Then, solemnly raising his hand, he pronounced over him the words of ancient benediction

Under Calvin's Spell

which had sounded first over the embattled hosts of Israel. It was the first time those two had met face to face. Ami Berthelier said softly, 'Amen.' The great man turned to go, and as he did so he raised his eyes and fixed them on Norbert, who was riding close to the litter. Lower and lower the boy's head drooped beneath that piercing, penetrating gaze; he only wished his whole body could sink with it, off the horse, through the bridge, down into the water beneath. And yet Master Calvin did him no harm; to his intense relief, he did not even speak to him.

At last Berthelier came to his own door, where De Caulaincourt, Antoine Calvin and two of his sons, stood ready with the help of their strong arms to lay him in his own bed. But Gabrielle's bright face was his best welcome. Claudine stood beside her, for the news of his coming had lent her strength to rise and meet him at the door. Marguerite only did not greet her master, she was too busy assisting and directing the bearers, and showing them the way to the chamber she had made ready. She scarcely spoke, or even seemed to look at him, until at last he was comfortably laid on the soft feather bed, with its fine and snowy linen, which she had so carefully prepared. Then she went out, and said to Sister Claudine, 'Damoiselle, you must get well quickly. He cannot spare you yet. But he will not need you long.'

'Then you think——' Claudine faltered.

'I think nothing. The time for thinking will come soon enough. It is now the time for doing and praying, my damoiselle. Be very earnest with the Lord, that He may reveal Himself to Master Berthelier.'



AT A SIGN FROM HIM THE BEARERS STOPPED.

The 'Egregious' Ami Berthelier

Marguerite desiring the prayers of a Catholic! That indeed was a wonder. Before that morning she could not have done it; perhaps she would not have done it now, if there had been time to think. But what would become of us all if we were not sometimes happily inconsistent?

'Of a surety I pray for my brother,' Claudine answered; 'and moreover he has done a good deed in separating himself from his ungodly kinsfolk, and revealing their plots.'

'All our good deeds are but filthy rags,' returned Marguerite, who was nothing if not polemical. 'But there—he is calling.'

What Berthelier wanted was, that she should ask M. de Caulaincourt to come to him for a few moments. So weak and ill did he seem that she hesitated, fearing the exertion would be too much for him—yet she could not find it in her heart to deny him anything. Presently the two friends were looking into each other's eyes, and exchanging the strong hand-grasp man gives to man when he trusts him from the bottom of his soul.

'I cannot forget, while I live, or after it,' said De Caulaincourt, 'that for my sake you offered up your one ewe lamb.'

'And for her sake,' Berthelier answered, 'your son offered up his life. That neither sacrifice was demanded was not their doing or ours. But monsieur my friend, I have sent for you—seeing I am like to grow fevered, and my mind may wander—to tell you, whilst yet I am myself, that in that hovel by the wayside I met—a Friend of yours.'

Under Calvin's Spell

'What friend? Some Savoyard to whom I spoke of the Gospel ere the prior's men laid hold on me?'

'No. Not one you helped, but One who helps you. One you have often urged me to seek. But I did not understand.'

De Caulaincourt understood now, and his face lit up with strange and sudden joy. 'O God, I thank Thee!' he said.

But Berthelier had to say, 'Now go, my friend, for I am very weary, and I fain would sleep. Thank that brave boy of yours for me. I think that when he grows to be a man he will put us all to shame. Good-night; God be with thee and him.'

The next day, and for many days after, little was thought of in Geneva save the trial and condemnation of Daniel Berthelier and his accomplices. Ami Berthelier's fresh evidence made an absolute end of all hope for them, little as there had been without it. In vain the aged and venerable mother of Daniel Berthelier came to Geneva, to implore upon her knees the life of her son, for the sake of his martyred father. The council was inexorable; he was doomed to the scaffold, with three of the most guilty of his associates. Philibert Berthelier, Ami Perrin and the other expatriated Libertines were condemned to perpetual banishment, and their accomplices to minor penalties.

This crisis in the fate of the city diverted general attention from the affair of Gabrielle and the Count of Lormayeur; although in some quarters a good deal of apprehension was felt about the retribution the irascible Savoyard would inflict for what was an

The 'Egregious' Ami Berthelier

undeniable, though on the part of the citizens an unintentional, cheat.

'You had better take care,' said Ami Berthelier to Syndic Aubert, who visited him in his private capacity of a well-skilled apothecary. 'Ere you can look about you, the old count will be thundering at our gates, and cursing us by all his gods.'

'What can he do,' said Aubert, 'that he has not been doing for twenty years? Whatever he does, you may make your mind easy, for we will not go about the second time to give him the girl.'

'No. But we ought to pay the ransom of the prisoners in good Genevan crowns, like honourable men.'

Aubert did not see matters exactly in this light; but he held his peace, unwilling to excite his patient by an argument. There was reason for his caution, for Berthelier was very ill. As time passed on there was no improvement, but the contrary. Inflammation of the wound set in, bringing with it a constant fever, which, though it never ran very high, never quite left him, and gradually exhausted his small reserve of strength. All that the tenderest care could do for him was done. Marguerite and Gabrielle nursed him devotedly, aided by Sister Claudine as far as her strength permitted. The best medical skill of the town was at his command. Benôit Dexter, Calvin's own physician and devoted friend, was in constant attendance, and often took counsel with his colleagues. Aubert supplied the medicines, which were much more severe, and given in much larger quantities than would now be tolerated.

Under Calvin's Spell

Often his mind wandered, and his unconscious utterances showed his bitter sense of isolation, on the one hand from the mass of his fellow-citizens, on the other, from his own relatives and early friends. One thing which gave him keen distress was the refusal of Dame Amblarde Berthelier, while in Geneva, to see him, since she looked upon him as the betrayer of her sons.

'Do not grieve over this,' had De Caulaincourt said to him. 'You have now every man in Geneva for your friend.'

It was no wonder, when the Genevans had so much to think of, that the affairs of a person so unimportant as Norbert de Caulaincourt should stand over indefinitely. He was 'bound over' to appear when called upon, but otherwise not interfered with. By his father's desire he resumed his attendance at school. It did him no good. He had never accommodated himself very well to 'the trivial round, the common task' of the schoolboy, and the taste he had had of peril and adventure completed his disdain, not to say his detestation. He did little, and probably would have done nothing at all, but for his determination to avoid punishment. He felt and considered himself a man, though he sometimes behaved like a froward child.

It was his greatest grievance that Gabrielle, more than any one else, made him feel that she thought him a child. He had meant to be, and had considered himself, all through his strange adventure for Gabrielle's sake, thoroughly loyal to Louis de Marsac. Yet all the while there had slipped into his heart an unbidden, unacknowledged hope that he would be a hero in the

The 'Egregious' Ami Berthelier

eyes of Gabrielle—and who knew what might happen next?

But instead of being a hero, a knight-errant, a victorious paladin, he found himself regarded as a brave boy, a kind, unselfish young brother, who had cared for her and helped her as a brother might. In the sixteenth century, far more than now, a boy was a child until, early enough indeed, he became a man. Perhaps it was not wonderful that Norbert resented being sent back to the slate, the satchel, and the rod, after personating fair ladies and confronting Savoyard knights in their own domains.

At last a gleam of notoriety came to him, but in a form with which he could very well have dispensed. His 'affair' had been relegated to the consistory, which had in charge, as well as the religion, the manners and morals of the community. For a while that reverend body had abundant occupation in 'dealing with' the condemned Libertines and arranging their concerns; but at last it found time, in a kind of parenthesis, to remember young Norbert de Caulaincourt, not greatly to his advantage.

The syndics were always represented at the consistory by one of their number, who happened at this time to be Aubert. On the day Norbert's affair came up he visited Berthelier, and brought the news to De Caulaincourt, whom he told with his friend.

'You may as well be prepared,' he said (not, however, in the chamber of Berthelier), 'though I do not think, for my own part, anything serious will come of it. In fact, I know to the contrary. Pastor Michel Cop introduced the matter, saying that the young man

Under Calvin's Spell

Norbert de Caulaincourt ought to be severely punished, both for his own amendment and as an example to others. Though as to the latter, I do not see much reason, as no one else is like to do the same trick, there being no incitement thereto. Most of those present agreed with him, the lay elders dwelling much on the fact that he had brought the honourable council, and the whole city, into contempt, making them appear as parties to a fraud and imposture. But the pastors—three at least out of the five who were present—insisted warmly that this was not the worst of the young man's offences. He was guilty of a manifest breach of the Law of God, as given us in Holy Scripture—and plainly written in the fifth book of Moses, commonly called Deuteronomy, and the two and twentieth chapter of the same,—concerning the garments made and appropriated to the use respectively of the man and of the woman.'

'That never for one moment occurred to me,' said De Caulaincourt, dismayed. Then, after a pause, 'But go on, Master Syndic. Was there no one to take the part of the poor boy, and suggest that, if he sinned, it was done in ignorance?'

'I did. I ventured to observe that in all probability the young man had never even heard of the prohibition, so far from intending to disregard it. But the pastors insisted that he ought to have heard of it, and one of them made bold to add that you, sir, should have taught him better.'

'Perhaps I ought,' admitted De Caulaincourt, humbly. 'Though I never dreamed of his taking such a thing into his head, so how could I think of forbidding him?'

The 'Egregious' Ami Berthelier

Aubert went on. 'There followed a lively discussion. The pastors—I mean the three of them who took part in it—thought this the worst of your son's misdoings, and some of the laymen agreed with them; but the major part opined that the contempt of the council, and the hurt done to the honour of the city, was a more serious affair. But at length all agreed that he should make the *amende honorable* bareheaded and barefooted, in the apparel of a penitent and carrying a lighted candle, and thus beg pardon of God Almighty, of the honorable council, and of the citizens in general, for the harm and scandal he had caused.'

De Caulaincourt grew visibly pale. This was terrible! Norbert would never endure it. He would run away, he would kill himself even—anything to avoid the disgrace. He scarcely heard Aubert's words, as he added that some were for giving him in addition a term of imprisonment. 'I will go to them myself; I will plead for mercy,' he said.

'Well—no, Monsieur de Caulaincourt. Such a step as that will not, in my opinion, be necessary, because of an intervention, to all of us who were present very unexpected. Master Calvin, who during all the time had sat in silence, as one whose thoughts were elsewhere, suddenly took up the word. "There hath been too much ado about this matter, to my thinking," he said. "Certes, the boy hath done wrong; still, it is but a boy's offence, more meet for fatherly rebuke and chastisement than for public process of judgment. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that the maiden hath been saved." Master Calvin's words of course commanded a respectful hearing, and most of those

Under Calvin's Spell

present went with him. One layman, however—but I will not divulge his name, lest it should injure him in his business—was malapert enough to say that Master Calvin had good reason for not bearing hard upon young Caulaincourt, since his own brother was mixed up with the matter. Two or three others made bold to agree with him, and to say that the conduct of Master Antoine Calvin required investigation. To these things Master Calvin made no answer, as his use and wont is with regard to personal accusations. But Pastor Abel Poupin spoke out, saying that Antoine Calvin was like unto the men that followed Absalom in their simplicity, for he knew nothing of the plan. There were a few gibes, not ill-natured, at that same simplicity of Master Antoine's, who certainly has not got his brother's keen eyes in that honest head of his. And I ventured to remind the consistory that my own colleague, respectable Master Corne, had been deceived also, and led into swearing falsely. Then Master Poupin went on to say, that the Count of Lormayeur ought to receive from the city the fair ransom, in gold or silver, of the three captives, out of which he had undoubtedly been cheated. As saith the Holy Scripture, "Provide things honest in the sight of all men!"

'But my son?' interrupted De Caulaincourt, anxiously. 'Tell me, I pray thee, what is determined concerning him?'

'I am coming to him. But I must explain first that respectable Master Baudichon, of Maisonneuve, who is kin to one of the prisoners, took up seriously the subject of the ransom, offering to open his own

The 'Egregious' Ami Berthelier

purse, unto which, to do him justice, he is ever ready. Then said that skilled doctor and good friend of mine, Benôit Dexter—and 'twas the first word we heard from him: "But what about young De Caulaincourt?" Meanwhile most of us were thinking of our dinners, for it was past eleven of the clock. I own I was sharp-set myself, for my morning soup I could not drink. Our cook is in distraction about her betrothed, a fisherman who took part in the riots, and is like to suffer for it, so she emptied the salt-box into the *pot au feu*.'

De Caulaincourt's impatience at these irrelevant details nearly overcame his courtesy, but, mastering himself with a strong effort, he only asked: 'What then did they do?'

'Some said one thing, and some another. But Master Calvin cut short the debate, and—I doubt not to every one's relief—settled the matter in a few words. "It is not well," he said, "to give this thing public importance and notoriety. As I have observed before, it calls rather for private admonition, with fatherly rebuke and correction, which, if our brethren here present so desire, I am willing myself to administer. With the leave of the honourable consistory, I will undertake so to deal with the young man that he shall truly humble himself, ask forgiveness for his transgression, and promise to observe for the future the laws of the commonwealth, and the Commandments of Holy Scripture." That was his purport, though I cannot stand over each of the words, as to their order and fashion. All agreed to leave the matter in his hands,—and there, Monsieur de Caulaincourt, it rests at this present. Your son will get off with a lecture from

Under Calvin's Spell

Master Calvin, and a promise of modest and orderly behaviour for the future. And allow me to say that I think he is very fortunate.'

De Caulaincourt thought so too ; but Norbert, when told what had passed, did not at all share his opinion.

CHAPTER XX

A GENTLEMAN OF THE SPOON AGAIN

THAT very day Norbert, on his way home from school, was accosted by a stranger, an elderly man, dressed respectably in grey homespun, and leading a mule laden with merchandise. This, though he did not know it, was Muscaut, the Savoyard, dealer in peltry, who had a permit from the magistrates to enter the town for the purposes of trade. He it was who, on a former visit, had seen Gabrielle, and recognized her by her likeness to her mother. Some one, apparently, had pointed Norbert out to him, for, leaving his mule to the care of a bystander, he hastened after him, and spoke—

‘I have a letter for you, young master.’

‘I think,’ said Norbert, ‘you must be mistaken. Who would write to me?’

‘I am not mistaken. You are the young gentleman who went masquerading as a young lady. Then this is for you.’ He gave him a small piece of paper, folded but not sealed, and with no superscription.

‘From whom is it?’

‘From one whom you know, and who knows you, yet could not set down your name in writing, since he had never heard it.’

Under Calvin's Spell

Norbert opened the paper, and read: 'Will you meet me as a friend, just before sunset, at the Savoyard side of the Plain-palais, under the clump of trees behind the wine-shop of Amos the Jew? You may bring one friend with you as a precaution, if you will. Your sincere well-wisher—VICTOR DE LORMAYEUR.'

Norbert, with his usual daring, at once decided to go, and to go alone. He would not tell his father or any of his friends, lest they should try to prevent him, suspecting, not unnaturally, a plot of the Savoyards to get hold of him, and take vengeance for his trick. But, for his own part, he trusted absolutely to the honour of the young count, who had so generously given him his life. It might have occurred to an older and more wary person that the letter might not be from Victor de Lormayeur, whose handwriting he had never seen, but from some enemy using his name. But Norbert never thought of this; in his present uneventful life he was glad of anything to happen, and awaited the evening with lively curiosity.

He reached the place of rendezvous a good half-hour before sunset. But the man he sought, or who sought him, was already there, on horseback, in a plain green hunting-suit, with a silver horn by his side. On seeing Norbert he dismounted, throwing the reins to the single attendant he had brought with him. 'Good even, brave lad or fair lady,' he said. 'Come with me under the trees, and sit, for I would talk with thee.'

Norbert looked at the bright young face with the good forehead, the soft eyes, the weak mouth and chin. He knew no harm would come to him from this man.

A Gentleman of the Spoon again

But he preferred to stand, while Victor sat or lounged with his back against a tree.

'You Genevans have made precious fools of us,' he said.

'Not the Genevans, who knew nothing,' Norbert answered promptly. 'It was my doing, as I told you.'

'Still, no doubt they were glad enough to get their men back without ransom. I hope they rewarded you well, my brave enemy?'

Norbert laughed. 'They were near rewarding me with bread and water and a dungeon, if not worse,' he said. 'And I may tell you, Sir Count, 'tis the general opinion that your father should be sent, in good silver crowns, the fair ransom of the three prisoners.'

'Do they think, then, to disarm his wrath? They ought to know him better.'

'They do not think of his wrath at all. They think of what is just and right,' Norbert said, proudly.

'They must be stronger than we wot of, if they can afford to disregard the wrath of a Lormayeur,' answered Victor, rather nettled.

''Tis a lesson they have had to learn. How many years is it since you Gentlemen of the Spoon have been moving earth and heaven to compass their destruction? Have you done it yet? Can you do worse in the future than you have done in the past? If not, why should they trouble themselves?' asked Norbert, who to this Savoyard talked like a Genevan, while to the Genevans he often talked like a Frenchman.

'Thou art a bold rascal. But that is just what I

Under Calvin's Spell

like thee for, and why I have come in search of thee. Know, however, that my father would have demanded reparation, sword in hand, at the gates of Geneva long ere this, but for the mischance which laid him helpless on a bed of sickness. When I told him of the black arts of those wicked heretics, whereby the fair lady and the steed she rode on had been transformed into hares, he at first refused to believe me, though the men of the escort bore out the story. True, they had not seen the change—such things are never seen in the happening, the devil takes care of that; but the very same day two hares were found by the huntsman in a snare, and one of them cried piteously with the very voice of a young girl, while the other was just the colour of your palfrey;—and so the thing was quite clear to all persons of sense and reflection. In the end he changed his mind, and believed it all; but the fiercer was his wrath against the sorcerers of Geneva, which was reasonable, and also against me, which was not reasonable at all, for how could any man fight with sorcery? So terrible was his rage, that at last he fell into a fit.' Here Victor threw into his voice a decent amount of regret, and paused a little, ere he continued. 'The leeches say he is better now, and like to live; but in no state to go to war—and never will be, as I fear, again. Still, he is more gentle and easy to entreat. Thus it is that I have got from him the leave he long denied me—to go to Spain and lay my sword at the feet of my rightful sovereign, the Duke of Savoy—now fighting for the King of Spain, for whom he has just gained a great victory, at a place called St. Quentin. As soon as he has done their business for them he will get the Spaniards

A Gentleman of the Spoon again

to help him in his, and come back with an army to recover his own proper domains from the French. I want to strike with him in that quarrel,' said Victor de Lormayeur, the light of a manly purpose kindling in his eyes.

'Then, Sir Count, may God go with you, and deal with you as you have dealt with me!' said Norbert, heartily.

Victor looked away from him, and plucked up a handful of grass and weeds. 'The truth is,' he said, with evident embarrassment, 'I am leaving behind a young lady whom I—whose favour I am wearing.'

Norbert looked amazed. Certainly the count had consoled himself very quickly for the loss of the Genevan bride! He knew not what to say, and therefore wisely said nothing. At last Victor went on, though still with evident confusion. 'Thou wilt marvel, and indeed it is hard to explain. I had to yield to my father's will, and sacrifice my own. But now all that is over. And I needs must tell thee, because 'twould suit me well to have thee go with me to Spain.'

'Me! Go with you to Spain!' Norbert repeated, in great astonishment.

'I have said it. Never saw I a lad I would like so well for a comrade, despite thine audacity, perhaps because of it. Boy, I will make thy fortune, or rather the duke and I between us will do it. You may begin as my page—no, you are too good for that. I think you have grown in the few weeks since I saw you. You are more of a man.'

'That's the dress,' Norbert put in.

'You shall begin, then, as my trusted squire. I

Under Calvin's Spell

want you for many things, most of all, perhaps, to keep up my communications with a certain castle I wot of.'

'But,' said Norbert, 'you forget the question of religion.'

'What of that? We are not all of us saints and monks. I don't want thy prayers, boy, I want thy nimble wit, thy daring, thy staunchness to thy friends. With thee for squire and true brother-in-arms, I think I could carve out something of a fortune and a name, fit to lay at the feet of the lady of my dreams.'

Norbert forgot even the bewildering rapidity with which the young count seemed to change the objects of his devotion, in gazing at the prospect thus suddenly stretched out before him. A part in brave deeds, a work to do, a name to make in the great world—the brilliant world where men fought and conquered, wooed and won fair ladies, and lived half in mirth and joyaunce, half in wild adventure and high emprise—that was what was offered him. The brimming cup of life was borne to his lips ; in one long eager draught he might drain it, if he would. His cheeks flamed, his eyes sparkled, his boyish form dilated ; he seemed in that one moment to grow up to manhood.

He knelt on one knee, and stretched out his hand to lay it in the count's, like a vassal who swears allegiance to his lord. And with his hand his heart went out to him. Yet, an instant after, he withdrew it, and a dark shadow crossed his face.

'But——' he said.

'No "buts" for me,' said Victor gaily. The weak



HE KNELT ON ONE KNEE, AND STRETCHED
OUT HIS HAND.

A Gentleman of the Spoon again

face looked into the strong one, and so kindly, so winning was that look, that weakness had almost conquered strength.

Norbert's eyes fell. 'But France?' he said at last. 'I am a Frenchman. I bear no sword against France.'

'That may be arranged,' said Victor.

'But—my father?'

'If he is a man of sense—and of that I may not doubt—he will be glad to have thee so well provided for.'

'No. He will say, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself?"'

'Lose himself?' Victor repeated, with something like the wistful look of a very intelligent dog who is trying in vain to make out his master's meaning. Just then a red ray of the setting sun stole through the trees, striking the silver buckle of Norbert's belt, and making Victor's diamond ring flash out into a many-coloured glory. He stood up, and moving aside a little, pointed significantly to the great ball of fire now just touching the horizon.

'I pray you, let me think,' Norbert said.

'Yes,' the count answered; 'until the sun sinks.'

Norbert turned his face towards the glowing western sky. The time was short. If he had never thought before in all his life, he must think now. Yet, try as he would, he could think of nothing but the young count, his face, his dress, his accoutrements, and, above all, the oddity of his talking to him of another lady-love, after the assiduous court he had paid so lately to the supposed Lady of Castelar. That, no doubt, was how

Under Calvin's Spell

people acted in the great world, a place full of surprises and adventures, and chances of every kind. So different from cold, commonplace, monotonous Geneva. And yet, in Geneva men kept troth, and were staunch to their friends. Witness their dealings with his father and himself since they came amongst them. All this time the sun was sinking—oh, how quickly!—still he had not thought, was not able to think. He only felt that he too, perhaps, had a troth to keep. Had he not said, 'Thy people shall be my people, and thy God shall be my God'? 'I am the son of Germain de Caulaincourt, gentleman of France,' he said proudly, to himself. Better that than squire to the Count of Lormayeur. But now of the great sun only a rim remained, a narrow line of red fire. In a moment it would be gone. So would all his past, if he went thus—his father, his faith, his home, ay, even this Genevan home, which, after all, held some he cared for. To abandon all these would be to lose himself. He could not do it.

A hand was laid upon his shoulder. The young count stood beside him. 'Come, my squire,' he said, smiling.

Norbert, with a sudden impulse, threw himself at his feet.

'Not your squire, Sir Count,' he said. 'That may not be. But always your grateful servitor, whose life you saved, and who holds himself bound to you, in all lawful ways, so long as that life shall last.'

'If so—do what I want you. Why not?'

'There is my father. I am mansworn to him, and he to Geneva.'

A Gentleman of the Spoon again

‘The Genevan heretics may hang, as they very well deserve! I warrant me you like them none so well yourself. Nor the life you lead among them.’

Norbert was loyal to the core. Not for worlds would he say to this foe of Geneva what yet he had often said to himself. He made answer stoutly—

‘I have eaten their bread and salt, and they have dealt well with me and mine.’

‘Are they worth your chance of a merry life, and, after it, a good end in the true Church, to make your salvation?’

‘I know not what they be worth, Sir Count. But I think that I would not be worth your trust and favour if I left them now. For it would be leaving my father, and my father’s faith.’

Victor knew he was beaten. His hand dropped by his side, and his bright face clouded over.

‘All my life long,’ said he, ‘I have never got yet one single thing I wanted.’

‘Sir Count,’ said Norbert, and his voice was ominous of a break, ‘I beseech you to let me go. It makes it too hard for me, when I look in your eyes and hear your voice. For I fain would do what you ask me—and I cannot. But if ever I can serve you, even at the cost of my life——’

‘You are an obstinate young spark!’ the count interrupted, with sudden anger, which passed as suddenly. ‘But there—it is just my luck. I say no more. After all, you are French. Go your ways. Go back to your Geneva, since you must, and God go with you. Stay, though.’ He drew from his finger the diamond ring

Under Calvin's Spell

the setting sun had glorified. 'Take this in token of my liking for a brave lad. If ever you need a friend, bring it, or send it, to me, and you will find I have not forgotten—the fair lady of Castelar.'

And so they parted.

CHAPTER XXI

RENUNCIATION

‘Doubt of any sort cannot be resolved except in action.’—
CARLYLE.

THERE is no greater help towards decision than to decide. Many a long spiritual conflict is ended once for all by the putting forth of a hand or foot, by the smallest pledge which commits to action. Norbert walked back to town with his head high, and his heart strong within him. For two years he had been kicking against the pricks of the hard, austere Genevan life, and longing for the gaiety, the adventure, the risks even, that should have been his portion as the son and heir of a gentleman of France. And yet now, when all these were offered to him freely, he had turned his back upon them all, and cast in his lot with Geneva.

Was it only through love and loyalty to his father, which was what he called it to himself? Was there another reason, never named by him even in thought, but of which he yet was conscious to his very finger-tips—that in Geneva he walked the same streets, he breathed the same air, as Gabrielle Berthelier? No doubt this drew him unawares, but so did many other unconfessed impulses, likings, attachments. As he crossed the Plain-

Under Calvin's Spell

palais he remembered that only last Saturday he had distinguished himself at the arquebus practice there; if he kept his place in two more trials, he would have a prize. Then, as he entered the Porte-Neuve, and trod the familiar streets, he knew that to him these indeed represented 'home.' For the old life at Gourgolles had faded in the distance, while the new life of Geneva was—well, it was very far from perfection, it might easily be better, but it might also be worse. These Genevans, so stern in word, were kindly in act, after all. He had lacked for nothing, nor his father, since they came friendless and penniless to their gates. And when his father was in peril and a prisoner, had they not made his case their own? Had not Master Berthelier been willing to give up—ah, too much!—to save him? Master Berthelier was a fine fellow—if all were like him!

Now he was passing the church of St. Gervais, and he owned to himself that, while he had no special love for pastors in general, he did not altogether detest kindly Master Poupin, whose turn it had been to preach there last Sunday. Still, it was best to go to the cathedral, for there one heard Master Calvin. *He* was a man! King of Geneva, King of the Reformed all over the world—he, the exile, the son of the advocate of Noyon, whose brother bound books. Norbert did not love John Calvin, rather the contrary; but undeniably he was proud of him, both as a Frenchman and a Genevan. With all his soul he revered strength, wherever he found it.

If only he might look at him and listen to him from a safe, respectful distance! If only that terrible prospect—of which his father had told him the day before—of a personal interview and admonition, was not hanging

Renunciation

over him! He almost wondered at himself for not having gone away with the young count, solely to escape it. But that would have been a very cowardly proceeding, quite unworthy of a gentleman of France. Indeed, while talking to the count, he had half forgotten it. Now it came back upon him with a feeling of dismay. He wished, with all his heart, that Master Calvin would let him compound for the lecture by three days on bread and water in the darkest dungeon of the Evêché.

By this time the stars were shining over his head, and the city watchmen were hanging their lanterns at the street corners; many of the shops had also lanterns hung outside them, or were lighted from within. Norbert, being hungry, thought that of his favourite confectioner looked very tempting; he could see plainly within it some delicious cheese-cakes, of a kind he had once made bold to offer Gabrielle. Ah, Gabrielle! 'Does she ever think,' he wondered, 'that I risked as much for her as Louis and the others who went to France are risking for their faith?'

His home, as he approached it, showed more light than usual. Some one must have come to sup with Master Antoine. He lifted the latch, entered, and went at once to the supper-room.

All were seated at table, the men as usual with their hats on, and Jeanette, the servant, at the bottom. De Caulaincourt looked up, and said, 'You are late, my son;' and Jacques, the youngest of the Calvins, rose to get a stool for him, placing it in the only available spot, between his father's seat at the head of the table, and that of a guest who sat beside him. In him Norbert recognized the person who had given him the young

Under Calvin's Spell

count's note. Master Muscaut also recognized him, and expressed his gratification at meeting a young gentleman of such remarkable courage and address. 'Although,' he added, 'to be frank with you, young sir, you have left a very ill savour of the Genevese behind you in our country. 'Twas a horrible trick you played off upon our seigneur; and so wroth did it make him that he fell into a fit, and is never like to be his own man again. But I warrant you, he had enough of his senses about him to forbid any one of us going near your city, which is hard upon poor men who have their bread to earn, and who know very well that, whatever may be said of Genevan heretics, Genevan crowns are good money, and pass current with the best. I have ventured here, so to speak, under the rose; for a man cannot eat and drink chamois' skins, and I have enough on my hands to make a covering for your big cathedral—and very little else besides.'

Honest Master Muscaut earned his livelihood by purchasing skins from the shepherds and the hunters on the mountains of Savoy, and selling them again at a good profit, chiefly to the leather-dressers of Geneva. He had, like a few others, a safe conduct from the council, in virtue of which he came and went at his pleasure, even when the internecine conflict between the lords of Savoy and the citizens of Geneva was in the most active of its stages. It was during a former visit that he saw Gabrielle Berthelier, inquired into her parentage, and by his report to the old Count of Lormayeur, set him upon that business of reclaiming her. Until Norbert's adventure he had been rather a favourite with the count; but he had since been

Renunciation

careful to keep well out of his way. He had no fear's however, about returning to Geneva; since he reasoned that the Genevans, having been successful in their roguery (as he thought it), would probably be in good humour. Antoine Calvin was an old acquaintance; being in his own line a true artist, who aimed ever at perfection, he liked himself to select the skins which he needed for his work, though they were afterwards prepared for him by an expert leather-dresser. Muscaut knew the particular kinds he affected, and used to keep them on purpose for him; quite regardless of the fact that they were destined for the covering of abominably heretical books.

After supper, young Jacques Calvin, lantern in hand, escorted him to his inn, the Black Swan. Norbert meanwhile told his father, without reserve, all about his interview with the young count, and showed him the ring he had given him.

De Caulaincourt was much moved. So his wayward boy, after all, had been faithful to his father, and his father's God! He had been tried, and had *not* failed, though the trial was no small one. And yet, in truth, he little guessed how great it had actually been. He did not say much. It was an age of strong deeds rather than of many words. Yet his quiet, 'Thou hast done well, my son,' quite satisfied the heart of Norbert.

There followed between them one of those silences which are sometimes better than words. Norbert broke it.

'Father,' he said, 'I think I ought to tell Master Berthelier. Think you, is he well enough to-night?'

'He is certainly better to-day; has been free from fever, and with little pain. Let us go and see.'

Under Calvin's Spell

Which they did. Berthelier, very pale, and propped with pillows on his couch, listened to their story with much interest. When they had ended, he said, 'All this confirms me in a purpose which I have had in my mind, when I could think at all. Gabrielle ought to execute, with all legal formality which can be devised, a formal transfer of all her claims upon the Castelar estate to her kinsman, Count Victor de Lormayeur.'

'But would any document we of Geneva could execute here be accepted in the Courts of Savoy?' asked De Caulaincourt.

Berthelier smiled. 'If we were claiming an estate, I should give little for our chance of a hearing,' he said. 'But since we are renouncing one, that makes all the difference. I think this document may well be of use. The young count is sure to gain the ear of the duke, and if he comes to his own he will see the matter through for his sake. Then I think, also,' he added, after a pause, 'that Master Muscaut should see the syndics, and take some sort of a promise from them to the young count that this should be done. Also, something should be arranged about the ransom of the prisoners, for which, undeniably, the town is in debt.'

'That concerns me most nearly,' said De Caulaincourt. 'But what am I to do? I am myself a pensioner on the bounty of my brethren here.'

'Father,' broke in Norbert, suddenly, 'there is that ring the young count gave me. See—the diamond is large—how it shines too! It must be worth much money.'

'You cannot part with that, my son,' said Berthelier, from his couch.

Renunciation

‘I cannot give or sell it, but surely I may pledge it,’ returned Norbert.

‘It may not be needed,’ said Berthelier. ‘The Maisonneuves are rich ; and there are others, too, who will help. My counsel is, that we send to-morrow to the young count, by the hand of Master Muscaut, a letter stating what we propose to do. Then, if he accepts, we can act—promptly.’

‘Yes, promptly,’ Norbert said. ‘For I understand the young count is immediately going to Spain.’

‘For more than one reason,’ Berthelier said, ‘I want Gabrielle’s affair settled as soon as may be. For it is even more for her protection than for the count’s advantage. As long as she remains heiress of Castelar, she remains in danger. She may be claimed, she may be entrapped—or seized even by violence, by those who seek to make their profit of her right. But the deed of renunciation will make her in law, what she has always been in heart, a true child of Geneva, nothing else, and nothing more.’

De Caulaincourt assented. ‘But I see that you are weary,’ he added. ‘Let us talk no more, but wish you quiet rest, and go.’

‘Good night, friend. Stay, though, one moment. The letter should be signed by the four syndics, on behalf of the town. And early, to-morrow morning. See to it all, I pray of you.’

‘I will. Do not be anxious.’

‘Ah, here comes Gabrielle. Child, do thou salute Monsieur de Caulaincourt and Norbert, my good friends, who even now are doing thee better service than thou wottest of.’

Under Calvin's Spell

They saluted her with the courtesy of their nation, and the three went together to the street door. When she returned, she found Berthelie already half asleep.

She paused a moment, doubting what to do, but her light footstep had roused him; he looked up at her—

‘Yolande?’ he murmured. Then, recovering full consciousness, ‘I think I was dreaming— Gabrielle, thou wilt be glad, wilt thou not, to belong wholly to Geneva and me?’

‘My father, that I have ever done. Except, of course, as I—as we all—belong to God.’

‘We belong to God? Then let the owner take, and use that which is His. So be it. I ask no more.’

CHAPTER XXII

A DREADED INTERVIEW

ONE bright afternoon, a few days later, Germain de Caulaincourt might have been seen walking about the Court of St. Pierre, and up and down the Rue des Chanoines, as Norbert had done, months before, when waiting for Louis de Marsac. His usually calm face wore an anxious and troubled expression; and ever and anon, as he passed and repassed No. 123, he would pause and look earnestly at the closed door and the narrow windows that told him nothing. He was waiting for his boy; when would the dreaded interview be over, and Norbert come forth to tell him all about it? Late the night before Master Calvin had returned from a fortnight's absence, and that morning he had sent his secretary, the young Frenchman, De Joinvilliers, to desire Norbert to come to him after school. The 'desire' was a royal mandate. De Caulaincourt accompanied his son to the door, but not all the boy's entreaties could induce him to enter. 'It would be in no way right,' he said. 'Be a man, my son. What dost thou fear? Master Calvin will neither slay nor smite thee.'

Under Calvin's Spell

'For all that, I would rather go to old Sangsoue, and let him drag out a double tooth for me,' said Norbert.

De Caulaincourt had long to wait. The servant who admitted Norbert did not know that her master had been summoned to the sick bed of a friend, for happening himself to open the door to the messenger (as, on a historic occasion, he actually did to no less a person than Cardinal Sadoletto), he had gone back with him at once. So Norbert was shown into the small, plainly furnished room where Calvin usually read, and saw his visitors, and was left there for an indefinite time to his own not very cheering reflections.

Those of his father were scarcely more satisfactory. Being in the cathedral court when Calvin re-entered the house, he did not know what would have partly accounted for the long delay. There was perhaps a touch of superstitious awe in the way in which even able and intelligent men like De Caulaincourt regarded John Calvin. Yet in the present instance he had some cause, slight perhaps, but real, for uneasiness. He knew the singular and daring character of his son, a character he himself, as he was well aware, but partially understood. Could it be possible that the malapert boy would fail to receive Master Calvin's 'godly admonitions' with proper meekness and humility? That he would have the audacity to answer again, to defend himself, or even—unheard-of effrontery!—to argue? No one could ever tell beforehand just what Norbert would do. And if he misbehaved thus, what would happen? De Caulaincourt's foreboding soul gave him back the celebrated answer of Mr. Speaker Onslow, when asked

A Dreaded Interview

what would happen if he 'named' an unruly Member of Parliament, 'The Lord only knows!'

But here was Norbert at last! It was time; the great clock of St. Pierre was on the stroke of five. Ah, surely it had gone ill with the lad, very ill! His face was pale and tear-stained, his lips trembling, as if he could scarcely keep from sobbing aloud.

His father hurried towards him, in genuine alarm. Norbert, from a child, had held tears in manly scorn, nor would reproof or punishment have ever drawn them from him.

'Oh, father,' he said, 'father!'—the word was almost a cry.

'What is it, my son?' Then, full of dismay, as a sudden thought occurred to him, 'You are not to leave Geneva?'

(Genevan air was somewhat apt to disagree with those who opposed Master John Calvin.)

'Me? oh no! There's nought of me. It is—it is—Louis de Marsac.'

'Louis!'

'He and Peloquin. They are in prison at Lyons—like to die.'

De Caulaincourt was much moved. Better even than Norbert he knew what those tidings meant. He sat down on one of the stone seats in the court, and covered his face with his hands. For some time he could not speak.

Norbert spoke at last; and the silence once broken, he was glad to pour all his story into his father's ears.

'Twas this way,' he said. 'I stood waiting there,

Under Calvin's Spell

in that room of his, all lined with books round the sides and up to the ceiling; I scarce thought there were so many books in the world, and of course all different, for who would have two of the same in his house? On the table were pens, an ink-horn, and many papers, some set together orderly, others lying about. Beside the master's carved chair there was a stool or two, and presently I sat down, and tried to think what it was like he should say to me, and what I should answer. But the time was long, and I grew mortal weary. At last I nodded, and would have fallen asleep, but I thought that if he came and found me thus, it would look unmannerly, and make him the more wroth with me. So I stood up and went to the window, which was at the back of the house, and looked out upon a fair garden full of flowers. They were good to see, and reminded me of France; though I did marvel somewhat that Master Calvin should take thought of the like.'

'He does, and more than most. But go on.'

'I was still standing there, hidden, I suppose, by the tapestry that curtained the window, when he came in. I looked round, but he did not see me, and presently turned his back, seeking somewhat amongst the papers on the table. I stood still, not knowing what to do, and fearing to disturb him.'

'Thou shouldest have waited till he made a pause, or lifted his head, and then coughed discreetly, to attract his attention.'

'But he made no pause, father, nor ever lifted his head. Till at last, methinks, he found what he sought, under a pile of papers. It was an unopened letter——'

A Dreaded Interview

‘Ah! Overlooked perhaps last night, and to-day some one may have told him of its coming.’

‘I dare say. He cut the string with his girdle-knife, broke the seals and began to read. Then, father, then’—Norbert’s voice faltered—‘the strangest thing I ever saw——’

‘What?’

‘He said, as if unwittingly, “De Marsac—Peloquin!” and a moment after, “My God!” But,’ added the young Frenchman, accustomed to the careless use of the great Name, ‘not as other men say it. Rather as if he cried out in agony, and cried to One who hears. And his face—it was grey with pain, and there were tears—real tears. Father, I know now that Master Calvin cares.

‘But I thought of Louis, and—I suppose I must have made moan or cried out—for he looked up, with those eyes of his that go through you like a sword. And then a sort of mask seemed to fall over his face, as when a soldier drops his vizor for the fight. He looked as he always does in the pulpit or the school, and he asked quite calmly, “Who art thou, boy, and how camest here?”

““Sir,” I made answer, “I am Norbert de Caulaincourt, and I come at your own command.”

““Go,” he said, “and return to-morrow at the same hour.”

‘But not for Master Calvin himself could I do that, with the sound of that “De Marsac!” in my ears. I said to him, “Sir, I crave your forgiveness; but Louis de Marsac was a brother to me. Tell me, I pray of you, what has befallen him.” He looked at me a

Under Calvin's Spell

moment in silence, then said, "Wait." I waited while he read the letter, scarcely breathing, my eyes upon his face. At last he spoke. "Louis de Marsac and Denis Peloquin are in prison at Lyons, for the Word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. They are full of faith and courage, trusting in God. De Marsac has written. Tell his friends." I thought he meant me to go, so I made my reverence and turned to do it. But he called me back. "As for thy matters, Norbert de Caulaincourt——"

'Well, Norbert?' his father questioned, for Norbert had come to a full stop.

'I can't get back his words—not as he said them,' faltered he. 'But the sense was, that I had been indiscreet, and—I know not what else, but I promise you I felt it all.'

'And what is to be done?'

'Nothing. As for the prisoners' ransom, the city will pay it. Only, I was to remember that we are not sent into the world to serve ourselves, or even to serve our friends after our own pleasure, but to do the Will of God—like Louis de Marsac. He bade me pray for him, and follow his example, that if—if suffering came, or death—oh, father, you know.'

'Was that all?'

'Yes—no—he laid his hand on my head—and I shall never say again that Master Calvin does not feel.'

De Caulaincourt sighed. 'Whose, think you, is the hardest part in the campaign, the general's or the soldier's?' he asked. 'Norbert, these are heavy tidings—very heavy.' Then, after a pause, 'Methinks Louis hath no relations in the town.'

A Dreaded Interview

‘No; but—there is Gabrielle.’ Norbert’s voice sank very low as he said the name.

De Caulaincourt did not immediately understand; for there had been no formal betrothal. But Norbert understood only too well. In that very place had Louis given him the charge that changed his life. His father saw that in his face which made him say, after a pause—

‘Ah, there are matters wherein the young know each other better than the old can do.’

‘Father, *you* must tell them. Perhaps Master Berthelier, ill though he is, had better know the first. He will tell her.’

‘Meeter it seems to me that thou shouldest thyself deliver the message Master Calvin gave thee.’

‘Oh, but I cannot! It is Louis, my friend, my brother!’ Here quite suddenly and to his own amazement the boy broke down, and wept and sobbed aloud. Happily, there was no one within sight or hearing; the cathedral court was deserted, as it was the hour of the evening meal. De Caulaincourt laid his hand kindly on his son’s shoulder, but did not seek to check his tears. Norbert, however, soon recovered himself. ‘We must go home,’ he said. ‘And you will tell the Bertheliers.’

Moved by his distress, De Caulaincourt made no further objection, and they went home together in silence.

As they trod the familiar streets, young Norbert’s soul, moved to its depths by what he had heard and seen, caught upon its troubled waters a gleam of light. ‘Cold, strong, passionless, like a dead man’s clasp,’ had

Under Calvin's Spell

seemed to him the will of John Calvin, when he sent forth his father, Louis de Marsac, Denis Peloquin and a hundred others to suffer and to die. But now Norbert knew—for he had seen the anguish of his soul—knew well that the strong man felt and suffered, ay, in proportion to his very strength. Never would he think again it was easy for Master Calvin—never would he doubt again that it was harder far for him in his safe Geneva than for them in the dungeon or at the stake.

He raised his head, and looked up at the cloudless evening sky. All that strong, earnest life which since his coming to Geneva he had perforce been breathing in, was saturated with intense belief in One who dwelt above that sky, and did as He willed in the heavens and on the earth. There was no resisting His will. He slew, and He saved alive; He had mercy on whom He would have mercy, and whom He would He dealt with according to his transgressions. He sat silent in His heaven while everything went wrong upon earth, while men, even good men who trusted Him—like Louis—were imprisoned, tortured, burned. But perhaps, after all, and if one only understood all, He felt, He cared, He loved. Like Master Calvin—only infinitely more. And then there was Christ, and the cross, and the 'love of Christ' men talked about. He thought of a verse somewhere that said, 'In all their afflictions He was afflicted.' Oh, if it might be true!

Not that Norbert's dim and groping thoughts framed themselves into such words as these. Rather, the moment's illumination that came to him meant just simply, 'I know now that the man I thought hard as adamant, feels, loves, suffers. Perhaps some time I

A Dreaded Interview

shall know that One far greater feels, loves—dare one say suffers? Only so much the more, in that He *is* far greater.'

The flash faded, but the thought remained, never wholly, so long as he lived, to leave him again.

CHAPTER XXIII

ROBERT'S VISIT

THEY WERE

about three miles from the

town when they were met by

the

young man who had been

sent to meet them by the

doctor. He had a message

from the doctor to say

that he was waiting for

them at the house.

They went on for some

time, but the young man

was very nervous and

kept looking back over

his shoulder as if he

was afraid of something

would happen. They

did not speak a word

until they were within

half a mile of the house.

Then the young man

spoke and said that the

doctor was waiting for

CHAPTER XXIII

NORBERT'S ERRAND

‘Better youth
Should strive through acts uncouth
Towards making, than repose on aught found made.’

R. BROWNING.

NORBERT watched anxiously for his father's return from his sad errand next door. So also did Antoine Calvin, to whom all had been told. At last De Caulaincourt came.

‘I feel,’ he said, ‘as one who has spoken a death sentence.’

‘Does Berthelier know?’ asked Antoine.

‘Not yet; but they will not be able to keep it from him. Sister Claudine weeps, old Marguerite prays with white lips.’

‘But Gabrielle, father—Gabrielle?’ said Norbert.

‘A dumb thing shot through the heart does not cry or moan. Nor does she.’

‘We will pray,’ said Antoine Calvin.

‘Ay, with all our hearts. ’Tis all we can.’

‘Is it?’ asked Norbert, very low.

‘My brother will go to them, and pray, and speak words of comfort,’ said Antoine, as if to such consolation as this any sorrow must yield.

Norbert's Errand

There was a pause, broken by Norbert. 'Father,' he said abruptly, 'with your good leave I am going to Lyons.'

'Nay, now, my son,' De Caulaincourt returned, with a touch of impatience, ''tis no time for idle talk.'

'I never talked less idly. I mean it, and I pray of you not to hinder me. Master Antoine, you have influence with Master Calvin. He will write them a letter. Get him to let me take it.'

'At the peril of your life?'

'Am I the one man in Geneva who would not peril his life in such a cause?'

'Wait at least till thou *art* a man.'

'I am—at all events to-day.'

'Do not heed him,' De Caulaincourt interposed. 'He is a boy, a child.'

'I am in my seventeenth year,' said Norbert. 'And whatever you may think of the lawfulness of my last enterprise, it was surely no child's play,' he added boldly.

'My brother, probably, will write by the messenger who brought the letter.'

'Who is sure to be gone, since the letter lay awaiting him for days.'

''Tis a mad scheme,' said De Caulaincourt. 'Master Calvin, or any other man of sense, is sure to say so.'

'That shall I find out, the first thing to-morrow morning.'

'Norbert,' said his father, with grave anxiety, 'thou hast hitherto, with all thy faults, been a good, obedient son to me. Am I now to find thee froward and rebellious?'

Under Calvin's Spell

Norbert turned on him with passionate, beseeching eyes.

'Father, I pray thee, let this thing be!' he said. 'There is something in my heart that drives me forth. Of the life here I am weary—weary! The lessons I detest. The school, since Louis left, is a horror. The prayers and the preaching—no, I do not *think* I hate them. Sometimes I do, but sometimes I could almost love them, as to-day, when Master Calvin—sometimes I think there is something in it all, and that I may end by being "mortified," "regenerate," and so forth, like the rest. But then the weariness and disgust come back. And if I stay here, and walk through the dull grey streets, and listen to the droning voices, I shall hate it out and out. Let me go away and do something, something to help Louis—my friend.'

'But,' said his father, amazed at this outburst, 'I do not understand. But a day or two ago thou didst refuse the Savoyard's tempting offers, thou didst tell me Geneva was thy home, and let me think thou lovedst it. What has changed thee so strangely?'

'Nothing,—and everything. Or rather, I am not changed, I was always so. There are two hearts in me, and one of them spoke then, the other speaks now. But I am not going to give up Geneva. Father, if you trust me, and let me go to Lyons, with your blessing, I will come back faithfully, bringing that for which I went. But if you trust me not, still I must go, though of my return in that case I say not anything.' There was in his face a look of determination, new even to his father.

Here Antoine Calvin left the room quietly. 'Alone with his father, whom he loves, the lad's heart will melt,'

Norbert's Errand

thought he. 'The presence of another would freeze it hard.'

When the door had closed upon him, De Caulaincourt said gravely—

'I fear, my son, thou hast given place to the devil.'

'Nay, father,' Norbert protested eagerly. 'I am fighting him all the time, trying to hold him down. Or is it perchance *myself* I am holding down? All I know is, I want to go away—to go out into the world, to live, to work, to fight. The other day, when I said a steadfast "No" to the brave young count who would have given me all I wanted, I thought I had conquered. But it was not so easy. I no sooner had my foe under my feet than he sprang up again and smote me like a giant. But which is *he*, and which am *I*?'

'Oh, my son, pray God to guide thee, for I cannot! There is more here than I can understand.'

'There is more, father. And if I go to Lyons, it will be to serve Master Calvin and the cause you all love here, so that therein I may content every one—and myself too. Father, if thou lovest me, let me go! There is something that drives me forth.'

'My son, to-day and to-morrow, I will fast and pray.'

'Ay, father, to-day. To-morrow you will give me your blessing, and let me go.'

* * * * *

Next morning, between ten and eleven of the clock, Norbert knocked at the door of the Bertheliers, and asked Marguerite, who opened it, if he could see Damoiselle Gabrielle.

'I suppose so,' said the old servant. 'The child goes about her work as usual. She has not shed a tear.'

Under Calvin's Spell

'Does Master Berthelier know?'

'He does. How could we keep it from him, when his whole heart is in the child, and hers is broken? Come in, Master Norbert; I will fetch her.'

The door of the room on the ground floor, where the dealer in foreign fruit kept his stores, happened to be open. Norbert turned in, thinking his chance of seeing Gabrielle alone would be better if he waited for her there. As he waited, his eyes rested vaguely on a great pile of oranges, *aigre-douces*, the Genevans called them, and prized them highly. It was only the other day he had chattered for one himself in the fruit-shop on the bridge; but oh, how long ago it seemed! Then he looked up. Gabrielle had glided in, and stood before him, white and shadowy, with dark rings round her eyes.

Norbert had seen her high courage when the thing she greatly feared seemed about to come upon herself. But he was man enough to know that even *that* was small compared with this one; while he was boy enough still to be struck dumb with the knowledge, and unable to find one word of comfort for her.

He pointed silently to a box where she might sit, but she stood still, with a look in her dry, wide-opened eyes that seemed to ask: 'Why have you disquieted me to bring me up out of the depths of my sorrow?'

He did not speak, but took a letter out of his sleeve and showed it to her. The superscription, written in a strong, clear, irregular hand, full of twists and turns, was this:—

*To Master Jean Lyne, of St. Gall,
Merchant in Silks and Velvets,
At Lyons.*

Norbert's Errand

'Lyons?' she said, with a sort of shiver.

'I am going thither. With that.'

'You? A boy!'

'A boy can go safely where a man could not venture,' returned Norbert, too much moved to resent the slighting word. 'At all events,' he added, with the air of one who settles for ever a disputed point, 'Master Calvin has given me his letter.'

'How came he?'

''Twas my luck; but 'twas a touch of kindness too, I well believe. Master Antoine came and spoke for me; and, moreover, Master Lyne's messenger had gone home to Berne, where he was taking up a business of his own, and would not return. No one else who might fitly go was at hand.'

'You peril your life, Norbert.'

He almost laughed. 'So one does every day, one way or another. But indeed the peril is slight. I am to go first to Gex, where I shall get a pass from the Bernese, who are friends with the French, to bring letters to Master Lyne of St. Gall, at Lyons. Being French myself, I shall do famously. Talk of that for a risk! It is nothing to——' He caught himself up, just in time not to recall the far greater risk he had run for her sake.

But even in her sorrow Gabrielle understood. She quietly finished his sentence—'Nothing to what you dared for me.'

'Will you let this also be for you, Gabrielle? Give me your message, your letter, if you will—for Louis.'

Gabrielle shook her head. 'I cannot write to him. But——' Suddenly her sad face changed, glowed, like

Under Calvin's Spell

an alabaster lamp when the light is kindled within, turning the pale whiteness into soft rose fire—'tell him, God is with him. And he will soon be with God, in His joy and glory.'

'Shall I tell him also that you bade him be steadfast?' asked Norbert, speaking in the best light of his age and surroundings, and 'white highest light' it was, austere and pure.

But Gabrielle answered, '*No*. Should I tell the sun to keep his path in the sky, and rise duly to-morrow morn? Nor need you say we pray for him; he knows it. But you may tell him—for we are standing by the grave—that I love—have loved—will love. And that I think God will soon let me come where he is.'

There was in face or voice no touch of maiden shyness; these are among the things that death, when it comes near enough, burns away.

'Give me a token for him.'

'What shall I give?'

'Anything—one of these even, if you will,' taking an orange from the heap beside him.

'That perishing thing were no fit token of what cannot die,' said Gabrielle, and paused, thinking. Presently she took from her girdle the little ivory tablet which hung there with her keys, her scissors, and her knife. 'His gift,' she said. 'Stay—I will write—just a word.'

Pen or pencil she had not; but with the point of the scissors she scratched upon the smooth polished surface—*jusqu'à l'aurore*—'Till the day break.' Only that. She gave the tablet to Norbert, who said, 'I will come back as soon as I can, and tell you all.'

Norbert's Errand

'Do not come until—the day breaks—for him.'

'I understand,' he said. 'Farewell, Gabrielle.'

'Stay. Do you need money?'

'Oh no, that is provided.' He wondered she could think of it at such a time, and, to say the truth, felt a little disappointed. Would she let him go without a word of recognition, of thanks? She did not.

'Good-bye, dear Norbert. God bless—and reward you!' she said, giving him her hand, cold as death in the July sunshine.

More in reverence than in tenderness he pressed his lips upon it, and was gone.

On returning home he found, much to his relief, that Antoine Calvin had persuaded his father it was right and wise for him to go to Lyons. In any case, De Caulaincourt would not have refused his consent when Master John Calvin had approved, and entrusted Norbert with his letters. But Antoine argued farther, that it was a good thing the lad should absent himself from Geneva for a little while, until the talk about his late escapade had died away; and also that this errand, well performed, would win him the respect and approbation of the best men in the city. The danger was slight; he had already shown himself adroit and resourceful, and in Lyons he would be under the guardianship of Master Lyne, the well-known and trusted friend of Calvin and of the martyrs. Norbert himself added, as an additional inducement—

'If I find I can travel safely in France, I shall go on another occasion to Gourgolles, and bring you tidings of our people there.'

So he went forth, bearing to the imprisoned

Under Calvin's Spell

confessors the prayers and the sympathy of all Geneva. That her children should lie in foreign prisons awaiting death for their faith was too everyday an occurrence to ruffle the surface of her life, but in the depths beneath the feeling was true and deep. Perhaps there never was a time in her churches when the public prayer for all prisoners and captives was not followed by dear, familiar names, breathed low and with trembling lips by many of the worshippers.

But the internal affairs of the city were still at this time very engrossing. She was like a goodly ship just righting herself after a storm, and resuming, under better and safer auspices, her interrupted course. She had escaped a great danger. She had crushed the Libertines; showing thus to them and to the world that by freedom she did not mean anarchy, nor in throwing off the yoke of Rome would she discard the restraints of morality and religion. Thenceforward the fair City of the Lake was to be indeed, if her children could make her so, the City of the Saints.

CHAPTER XXIV

LYONS

NORBERT'S journey was almost too safe, and quite too uneventful, to please him. What should happen to a young clerk travelling from the territory of Berne with business communications for his master, an honest citizen of St. Gall, domiciled in Lyons? Unless, indeed, it occurred to some one to think he had money with him, and to murder him for the sake of it. But this was not likely, as he went by frequented roads, lodged at respectable inns, and, when he could, kept company with other travellers.

On reaching Lyons, he put up at an inn recommended by no less a person than the Maire of Bellay, who was coming to the town with his wife and daughters to attend the wedding of a relative, and had obligingly allowed him to ride in his company for a stage or two. He saw his horse well bestowed in the stable of the Green Dragon, for he had some pride in the animal, the first—save a pony at Gourgolles—that he had ever called his own. Then he had his supper, and asked the *garçon* who waited on him where dwelt Maître Jean Lyne, the silk-merchant of St. Gall. The lad did not know, and every one else was too busy to listen to him,

Under Calvin's Spell

a party of the maire's kinsfolk having come to welcome him and to sup with him. Rashly confident in his own ability to find whatever he wanted, and to ask for whatever he did not know, he went out gaily to explore.

But knowing, as he did, no town except Geneva (which was not nearly so large), he found Lyons difficult and bewildering. Not one of the citizens whom he asked knew anything about Maître Jean Lyne, merchant of St. Gall. At last, however, some one directed him to the quarter where the silk-merchants lived. But he mistook the name of a street which he was to pass through, Lyonnese French sounding different from Genevan. Growing perplexed, he wandered on aimlessly, and came at last to a wide place with large and handsome houses, each in its own courtyard.

'Ah,' thought he, 'this is where the great and noble dwell. Were I to knock at one of these gates and ask for a silk-merchant, the porter would take it for an insult, and kick me into the street. Well, at all events, I am seeing the town. I wonder how these places look inside. I wish the gate of one of them might stand open.'

His wish was gratified. He came presently to an open gate, which allowed him to look into a pleasant court, with a fountain in the midst and flowers growing around it. He stood a moment enjoying the sight, and enjoying still more the sweet sounds of a mandoline, which was being played, and with unusual skill, by some one he could not see. It was marvellous, indeed, that such sounds could be evoked from an instrument so poor and narrow in its range. Norbert loved music



NORBERT DREW NEARER, AND STOOD LISTENING.

Lyons

with all his soul, and his taste had been well cultivated in Geneva, where, though dance music and profane songs were forbidden, all the graver kinds, which could minister to devotion, were much esteemed. This music was delicious! He told himself it must come from a soul attuned to harmony. Drawn unawares by its charm, he stepped inside the gate, and advanced cautiously, hoping to see the musician.

He was successful. On a seat, so placed as to catch the full benefit of the evening breeze, sat a young man, dressed fashionably in lace and velvet, his sword at his side, and his short cloak hanging on the back of the bench. He seemed too much absorbed in his playing to notice the intruder.

Thus emboldened, Norbert drew nearer, and stood listening, until the cessation of the sweet sounds surprised him with a sudden pang.

The musician laid down his quill, raised his eyes, and looked, not at Norbert, but straight before him. Norbert thought it strange, but fortunate, that he did not notice him, and quietly turned to go.

‘Whose step is that?’ asked the musician.

‘I am a stranger. Will it please you, sir, to excuse me? The gate was open, and drawn by the music, I ventured to come in and listen.’

‘There is nought to excuse. But, I pray thee, who is it that speaks to me? lad or lady? You see—I am blind.’

‘I am sorry for you, sir,’ said Norbert. ‘I am a young man from Switzerland, clerk and servitor of one Master Lyne, a merchant of St. Gall. I only arrived this evening, and am now in search of his dwelling. I

Under Calvin's Spell

was passing by with this intent when the music drew me, and I came.'

The blind man laid down his mandoline, and said, with the air of one much surprised, 'You are looking for Master Lyne? Strange—strange! Surely you were sent to me.'

'No, sir, pardon me. No one has sent me to you. I have not even the honour of knowing to whom I speak.'

'You would rather know your way to the dwelling of Master Lyne? That which meseemeth passing strange is that thither I want to go, I also. Come, we will help each other. I will name the streets to you in their proper order, and you shall lead me. Give me thine hand.' And he rose from his seat.

Norbert acquiesced, well pleased, though he could not help wondering that a young gentleman, evidently so wealthy, had not attendants at hand ready to do his bidding, in place of depending on the chance kindness of a stranger. 'Which of us is the guide?' he thought, as he took the hand of the blind youth, which was soft and white as a girl's. "'Tis surely a case of the blind leading, though happily not leading the blind, which might be awkward.'

'To the right,' said his companion, when they passed out of the gate. Then, a little later, 'To the left, down that street with the Madonna at the corner.'

As they turned into the street, two gentlemen passed by. One of them saluted, and cried out, 'Ho là, De Marsac, what brings you out so late?'

'De Marsac!' Norbert had almost cried the name out loud in his amazement. He did not listen to the

Lyons

answer, 'I am taking a walk for my pleasure, this fine evening.' Nor to the rejoinder, 'But what has become of your shadow, Grillet?' But he heard his new friend say, 'He is ill,' and felt a touch on his arm that meant evidently, 'Pass on.'

He obeyed, walking on mechanically, absorbed in thought. What should he say—what do? How could he find out if this gentleman were, or were not, a kinsman of his friend? Still more important, was he of one mind with him? At last he hazarded a remark. 'I think, noble sir, my master hath much regard for some one of your name.'

'How know you that, being but new in his service, and, as I understood you to say, never here before?'

'Where I come from there be many Frenchmen who have friends here,' Norbert said cautiously.

'Not many Frenchmen, I think, in St. Gall, a few more perhaps in Berne. Now, if haply thou wert from Geneva——'

'If I were from Geneva, noble sir, I would scarce proclaim it on the housetops. Not here, at least, where the Genevese, on account of their religion, are well hated.'

"Ye shall be hated of all men, for My Name's sake," the blind youth quoted softly.

Norbert, whose verbal acquaintance with Scripture left little to be desired (no thanks to himself!), made haste to add—

"But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved."

'Ah, that enduring to the end!' his companion sighed. Then, not certain yet whether he might

Under Calvin's Spell

wholly trust, he added: 'You of Berne, or the other "praiseworthy cantons," need not be much afraid here, even on the score of religion. Berne is a good friend to France, and if the folk she sends us are a little lax at Mass and Confession, the clearest-sighted Lyonnese will show themselves nearly as blind as I am.'

'But it is far otherwise,' said Norbert, 'with the men of Geneva. Especially with the French exiles, if they dare to return.'

'I know it. Unhappily for me, one such bears my name. Two that bear my name are suffering.'

'Two?' cried Norbert.

'Not so loud—remember the passers-by. Yes, it is true, and one of them is my own brother.' His voice sank low, and there was in it a thrill of pain.

'Louis De Marsac, who is my best friend,' said Norbert, with emotion, 'had never sister nor brother.'

'I speak not of him, my cousin—but of Henri de Marsac, my dear brother.'

'And Louis, sir—your cousin—know you aught of him now?'

'I know he is in the dungeon, like to be doomed to die. There, too, and in like case—that I should say it!—is my dear brother, the light and joy of my life.'

'Is there no hope for them?' asked Norbert. He could not help asking, though he knew the answer too well.

'None—save on the terms they will not accept.' There was a pause, then he added: 'You say my cousin was your best friend?'

'Is my best friend,' said Norbert. 'Sir, I see that I may tell you all the truth. I am a child of Geneva,

Lyons

though I came hither from Gex, which is in Bernese territory, and with a Bernese passport. I have come hoping to see, though it be for the last time, the face of Louis de Marsac.'

'As I also, with the help of Master Lyne, desire to see my brother.'

'I should have thought, sir, that a noble gentleman, such as you——'

'I am powerless without my father, who will do nothing, for he hates the religion, and with hate intensified a hundred-fold, now that it is costing him, as he thinks, his first-born son. Yet he still hopes that loneliness and suffering, and the lack of all things, joined with the terrors of the death of fire, will so work upon the soul of Henri that he may yield, and be saved Ah me, I know better!'

'Are they together in the dungeon?'

'Even that comfort is denied them. But they will be together soon—in heaven, while I—unhappy——' There were tears in the blind eyes, but he drove them back with an effort. Presently he resumed: 'I ought to tell you how it all came about. Louis came here, and was preaching in secret to the little congregation of heretics. But he did not show himself to us, his kinsfolk, lest it should make trouble. However, my brother found him out, and must needs bring him home with him. My father, though he is so devout and though he knew Louis came from Geneva, winked at it at first, for his brother, the father of Louis, had been very dear to him. We De Marsacs have our faults like other men, but we are good brothers always. So Louis came in and out, and spoke much to Henri and to me.

Under Calvin's Spell

Also, he gave Henri the New Testament in French. Henri was used to read to me—romances, books of chivalry, and such like ; now, instead of these, he read the words of our Lord and of His apostles. They are good words, and we learned to love them, I as well as he. O God, why should he be taken, and I—the blind and useless—left ?’

Norbert had no answer to give. For some minutes they walked on in silence ; then Ambrose de Marsac asked—

‘Where are we ?’

Norbert described the place.

‘We are almost there,’ described the other. ‘This is the street. Look at the third door from the corner.’

Over that door hung a sign bearing the arms of the Canton of St. Gall, and the name of Jean Lyne, dealer in silk and velvet.

‘You are right, sir,’ said Norbert.

‘The shop is shut, of course. Knock thou at the door, and when one answers, give my name, “The Sieur Ambrose de Marsac.”’

Norbert obeyed, and both were presently invited to enter. They were brought into a matted chamber on the ground floor, and had hardly three minutes to wait ere the honest citizen of St. Gall made his appearance, a man of middle age, with a shrewd, kindly face. Without looking at Norbert, whom he thought a mere attendant, he addressed himself to De Marsac in a tone of much concern.

‘I have tidings for you, sir,’ he said. ‘Shall I send your boy to the hall to drink a cup of wine with my servitors ?’

Lyons

'He *is* your servitor, Master Lyne. A new clerk—and something more, if I mistake not. I am thankful for his help in bringing me here, the one man in our household I can trust being ill. You may speak freely before him. And I pray of you to tell me all.'

But, seeing that the merchant hesitated to speak (as he well might do, since a blind man might be easily imposed upon), Norbert, anxious as he was, had the sense to withdraw unbidden, closing the door behind him.

Some time elapsed, during which he thought he heard the sound of weeping.

At last the door opened, and Master Lyne called aloud: 'Sylvester!' A grey-haired serving-man appeared, and was desired to get a lantern, and wait at the door for the Sieur Ambrose de Marsac.

As the blind man passed through the entry with Master Lyne's hand in his, he asked—

'Is my guide here?'

Norbert noticed the trembling of his voice. 'Here, sir,' he answered.

'I thank you,' said Ambrose. 'We shall meet again. But I can say no more now, for—I have heard heavy tidings.'

When he was gone, the merchant brought Norbert into the matted parlour.

'Now, my lad,' he said, 'who are you, and what is your errand?'

'I am Norbert de Caulaincourt, from Geneva; and as for my errand, this will explain it.' He took from its hiding-place beneath his inner vest, and gave to Master Lyne, the letter of John Calvin.

The merchant knew the writing, and with an

Under Calvin's Spell

involuntary gesture of respect, bowed his head. It was a royal despatch. He took out his side-knife, cut the silk that bound it, and broke the seals. An enclosure fell out, of which Norbert could read the superscription, 'A Messieurs Louis de Marsac et Denis Peloquin.'

It took the worthy merchant some time to decipher Master Calvin's letter, though it was not long. At last he looked up and spoke—

'Master Calvin says you have come here at your own request, and that you can be trusted.'

Norbert felt a glow of pride and pleasure, but also a thrill of surprise. 'How could he say it?' he asked himself. 'Hitherto he has only known me as a froward, ill-guided boy.' True; but the great general of the armies of Reform was, like other great generals, a keen judge of character. He knew, when he saw him, the man to send on a forlorn hope.

'Why did you want to come?' pursued the merchant.

'Partly because I must be doing something. But more because—I must see Louis again.'

'If you can. You are just in time; their sentence was pronounced to-day.'

The two looked in silence at each other; the merchant sad, but calm, Norbert's young heart burning with a passion of wrath and pity and sorrow. But he did not ask, 'What?'—only 'When?'

'The day is not fixed. Denis Peloquin, who does not belong to this province, is to be sent elsewhere. The two De Marsacs and a brother in the Faith, one Stephen Gynet die here.'

Lyons

'Oh, master, I pray of you, get leave for me to see Louis. He is my dearest friend. Besides, I have a message for him, and a token.'

'From a relative?'

'No; from a young maiden. They were not betrothed, but—— Oh! I pray of you, get leave for me to see him.'

'I cannot get leave for thee; we manage things otherwise here. But see him thou shalt, if I can do anything. The head jailor is my very good friend, for reasons of his own. I will send you to him as my servitor, with alms for the prisoners, and at my request he will manage the rest. Let me see. To-morrow being Sunday, we might—but no—Rondel goes to-morrow to see his friends, and without him we are powerless. Then, poor Monsieur Ambrose pleads also, and must not be denied. But, perhaps, now the sentence is actually pronounced, the father will interfere, and my help will not be needed there. And we must think of Monsieur Louis, as well as of his cousin.' Then, in a different tone, 'Monsieur, have you supped?' (He said 'Monsieur,' for the visitor's name showed he was of noble birth and his own social superior.)

'Yes,' said Norbert; 'I put up at the Green Dragon.'

'I hope you will honour me by putting up here? When Sylvester comes back, with your leave, I will send him for your baggage.'

Norbert thanked him. 'I have only a saddle-bag,' he said.

'And a horse? Since it is late, we may leave that till the morning.'

Under Calvin's Spell

So Norbert was comfortably settled under the hospitable roof of the merchant of St. Gall.

'Go to-morrow,' said his host, 'and see the town. For the present you are nothing but a young Swiss, a merchant's clerk, newly come to Lyons.'

CHAPTER XXV

IN THE PRISON

‘He prayed, and from a happy place
God’s glory smote him on the face!’

TENNYSON.

ON the following evening, Lyne accosted Norbert, who was lingering fascinated about the cathedral. Beckoning him to walk on with him towards his home, he said—

‘It has been a terrible day for the De Marsacs. The stern old father is broken down at last, and would give all his wealth to save his son from the fire. He and the blind gentleman have both been with the poor lad, the father imploring him with tears to recant, the brother trying between whiles to speak a word of comfort, though beyond all comfort himself. For you I have been able as yet to do nothing, but I have got Master Calvin’s letter safe into the hands of Poquelin, and he will contrive to pass it on before he is taken away.’

One more day of weary watching passed; but on Tuesday morning Master Lyne called Norbert, and asked if he would mind changing clothes with his apprentice.

Under Calvin's Spell

'I would change clothes with the hangman to get my will,' said Norbert.

'Then will it please you to go with Renaud, who will give you the things, and hold his tongue about it afterwards?'

So Norbert went; to reappear shortly in a blouse, and bareheaded. Jean Lyne put into his hand a large basket, full of food and wine.

'Alms for the poor prisoners,' he said; 'you carry them for me;' and they set off together to the prison, Norbert walking modestly behind his master. It was not a long walk. They soon came to the gloomy gateway; and Norbert, as in a dream, saw Master Lyne ring the bell, and heard him tell the porter that answered it that he wanted to see Master Rondel. The porter opened the wicket with apparent readiness. A head-jailer is still a man; and, like other men, he has his friends, who naturally visit him sometimes. Master Jean Lyne was well-known to all the officials, and, with his companion, might have passed in unquestioned. But he himself said lightly, with a smile and a glance at the basket, 'Don't forget your duty, Jacques;' so the porter, for form's sake, thrust his hand among the loaves and the flasks, drew it out again, and uttered the magic word, 'Passez!' with an air of authority and satisfaction, increased perhaps by the pleasant sensation of something which had been slipped into his palm.

Master Lyne and Norbert crossed the courtyard, and knocked at a small private door. Here too the merchant was well-known, and ushered without question into a comfortable parlour. Norbert, in spite of his anxiety, noticed that there were pictures on the walls, a



THEY SOON CAME TO THE GLOOMY GATEWAY.

In the Prison

Virgin and Child, St. John the Baptist with the infant Christ, St. Jerome in the Desert. While he was looking at these the head-jailer entered, a small, spare, nervous-looking man, quite different from what Norbert expected. He and Master Lyne greeted like old friends, and fell at once into a conversation Norbert did not understand, only that it seemed to be about merchandise and money. He picked up a hazy idea that Rondel was in some sort a partner of Master Lyne's, and had a share in his profits. But as, in his assumed character, he stood at a respectful distance, he did not hear very distinctly, and had no care to listen. At last, however, his wandering attention came back with a bound. Master Lyne was saying—

‘That wherein you can particularly oblige me, the which I shall not fail to remember, is by permitting this young man to see, and to hold a few minutes’ conversation with his friend, M. Louis de Marsac.’

‘You know, Maître Jean, that I can refuse you nothing in reason—nor some things, it may be, a little out of reason. Your lad shall speak with the poor young gentleman, but to *see* him, ah!’ he shrugged his shoulders expressively. ‘I do not go there myself. It is not necessary to the due discharge of my office, and there are some things which, to a man of sensibility——’ Here he looked up, and his eyes rested, it may have been by chance, on the picture of the infant Christ. ‘’Tis a pity those friends of yours do not see their way to a recantation,’ he said. Then he sounded a silver whistle that hung at his girdle, and presently a warder appeared, who took possession of Norbert.

He was brought first to a large public room, where a

Under Calvin's Spell

number of prisoners, some of them in fetters, and nearly all with the stamp of 'habitual criminal' on their brazen faces and 'foreheads villainously low,' lounged, gambled, fought and swore. They would speedily have torn the basket out of Norbert's hand but for the protection of the warder, who summoned one that seemed to exercise some kind of authority over the rest.

'Here, sir,' he said to Norbert, 'give this man anything you please, and he will share it with the rest.'

Norbert, glad to escape, gave him three bottles of wine and some bread and meat out of his basket, adding some small coins; then he turned to the warder.

'You were to bring me *au secret*,' he whispered.

Now Norbert had not only seen the *secret*, or underground dungeon, in the Evêché, but much to his disgust had once occupied it for four and twenty hours—the longest hours in his life. He thought, therefore, that he knew 'the horror of great darkness' as well as any one. But when, after having groped, or slipped, or stumbled down long flights of steep, winding, broken stairs, he was guided into an empty room, or rather hole, he thought it was a lower deep than he had ever reached before. In the dim light of the warder's torch, he saw nothing, at first, but a filthy floor and a section of clammy wall, though when he looked up higher, something like bars betrayed the presence of a narrow window, looking doubtless into a fosse, or ditch. The cell seemed empty.

'Ah,' said the warder, 'I forgot. The prisoner who was here has been removed; for there is a hole in the

In the Prison

corner, through which it was found that he could communicate with the cell underneath.'

'*Underneath?*' repeated Norbert, with a shiver.

'Of course. As I understand, it is M. Louis de Marsac you want to see, not the other gentleman of the name, who is better off, being put in a good room, out of favour to his father. Come on. And take care of the rats.'

The warning was not unneeded, for Norbert's legs were in some peril. Not without furious kicking and stamping did he follow the warder out in safety. Then he had to descend more broken, winding stairs, leading down, as he thought, to the very bowels of the earth. He seemed to be no longer breathing air, but damp—the very chill of death, tainted with the foulness of corruption.

But all things have an end, so at last he heard the warder say, quite cheerfully, 'Here we are.' There was the grating sound of a heavy key, and the groan of reluctance with which, after much pressure, it consented to turn. Then the door opened, and the warder bade him enter. The torchlight showed him a figure that sat or crouched on the floor; then torchlight and figure vanished together, as the warder shut the door and stationed himself outside. He had promised that the friends should converse alone, and he was a man of his word.

'Louis!' Norbert faltered, 'Louis!'

'Whose—whose voice is that?' the tones were thin and weak, but the voice, unmistakably, was Louis de Marsac's.

'Louis, I am Norbert de Caulaincourt, thy friend.'

Under Calvin's Spell

First, in the darkness, a thin cold hand sought his, then two wasted arms stole round him, and the friends were locked in a close embrace.

There was a moment of tense, throbbing silence, then a sound. Louis de Marsac, the steadfast, the dauntless confessor, who feared neither sword nor dungeon, neither rack nor flame, was sobbing on the neck of his friend.

What could Norbert do but weep with him, even as David and Jonathan of old, 'until David exceeded'?

Here Louis was the first to recover. 'I did not know I was so weak,' he said. 'Tis a strange greeting to give thee. Dear Norbert, how camest thou here?'

'I came to Lyons as Master Calvin's messenger, with the letter which—Master Lyne says you had it?'

'Ay, it was read to me, and I have written to him. Think of that, Norbert!'

His voice now was quite natural, and even cheerful. Save for its weakness and the 'echo of the dungeon stone' in it, he might have been talking as of old, at Geneva, in the schools or on the Plain-palais.

'They let me have a light sometimes, while I eat, and Master Lyne had sent me paper and pen and ink concealed in a loaf of bread; so I wrote this, which I will give thee when thou goest. Master Calvin's words go down to the depths of the heart. But that which is in mine I cannot write, even to him. More and more do words seem poor to me as I lie here, and think how soon I shall be where they are not wanted, since we shall know and be known without them. But you can tell him, when you return, that I—that I—thank him in

In the Prison

dying for many good things, and most of all for sending me here.'

'Oh, Louis! You mean that you *forgive* him.'

'No, no. Not forgiveness. Do men forgive those who give them thrones and crowns?'

'A crown in very deed, of thorns,' said Norbert, thinking only of the sharp pain, not of the sacred memory.

'And a communion sweet, secret, unutterable, with Him who wore that crown for me.'

'What does it mean, Louis? What does it all mean? I cannot understand!' cried Norbert, in a passion of perplexed, admiring wonder. 'You, so young, so full of life, with so much to love and live for, you give all up without a murmur. You endure all things, you expect death itself, and such a death—yet you not only look for joy hereafter, which a man can understand, but you seem to have some joy here and now which outweighs all——'

'An exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'

'Yes. When the battle is fought and the victory won. But here, but now——'

'Here. Now. For I have with me what makes the glory, its very heart and centre—Himself.'

Norbert was silent, in great awe; as if he too felt a Presence in that dungeon.

'I have come to love the darkness of this place,' Louis went on. 'It is a veil that He puts on, lest the glory should overpower me. He dwells in the thick darkness, though He is the Light, because it is but slowly, by degrees, that we can learn to bear the sight of Him without it. Though I cannot see you, yet your

Under Calvin's Spell

hand touches me, and I know that you are there. So with Him.'

'Have you never a doubt at all, nor a fear?' Norbert asked.

'Never a doubt of Him. Doubts of myself I have had sometimes, and fears. Oh, I have been through the flood on foot, and it was deep. But even there He was with me, and did not let me go. The bitterest thing of all—Norbert, you know all my heart. You remember the words we spake ere we parted in Geneva.'

'I do. Louis, I have something to tell thee.'

'Speak then, for I long to hear.' Days there had been when Louis de Marsac could not have uttered the name dearest to his heart without yearning and agonizing pain, almost too great to be borne. Now that was passed for ever. Now the sound was sweet to him, so sweet that he used oftentimes to say it aloud over and over again. 'It is of Gabrielle Berthelier,' he said softly, with a voice that lingered lovingly on the name. 'For her also God has given me peace. He will accept and bless her sacrifice—as mine. Yea, more than mine, since it is greater.'

'Louis, I have a message from her, and a token.'

'Ah!' said Louis, with a ring of genuine gladness in his voice.

'Here is the token.' Norbert put into his hands the little ivory tablet. He knew it by the feel, and remembered. 'Thou canst not see what she wrote upon it,' said Norbert. 'It is this, *jusqu'à l'aurore*; and the words she said were these, "Tell him God is with him, and he will soon be with God, in His joy and glory."''

In the Prison

‘True heart!’ Louis murmured. ‘Brave, true heart!’ Tears once more were perilously near. But they passed, as if dried up with sunshine. He was done with tears for ever. ‘Tell her He that has comforted me will comfort her also. She will have the stronger consolation, because she has the greater need, and the harder part. But God knows all about that, and He will make no mistakes by-and-by, when He comes to adjudge the crowns and the palms.’

There was a moment’s silence, yet both felt the moments were too precious to be spent even in such silences. Norbert said—

‘Is there anything I can do for thee, Louis?’

‘When you go back to Geneva, tell them how it is with me. If you can stay here to the end, I shall be glad; for the sense of human nearness and human fellowship is sweet. But if not, regard it not. Nor will I. For One is with me always. I have no fear the Guide will leave me ere I am through the river.’ He paused a moment, then added, ‘And tell her that she has part in every thought, as in every deed of mine. That I take that love with me where I go; and since *I* can never perish, that which is a very part of me cannot perish—must go on for ever. Tell her not to sorrow overmuch, for this is but a passage, not an ending. And tell—but our time is past, and I have still a thousand things to say.’

For now the door opened, and the torch flashed in. ‘Gentlemen,’ said the warder, ‘the time is up. And you cannot but say I gave you good measure.’

Norbert took hastily out of his basket the things he had brought for Louis, who, as he did so, slipped his

Under Calvin's Spell

letter for Calvin unperceived into his hand. Then the friends embraced, clinging to each other as the drowning cling to a spar for life.

'So much to say,' Louis murmured. 'A thousand greetings from me, and love—love to—no, I must name no names, lest some dear ones should be left unsaid.'

'We shall meet again,' said Norbert.

'Yes,' said Louis. 'Here or elsewhere.'

CHAPTER XXVI

IN THE CATHEDRAL

‘For the vision, that was true, I wist,
True as that heaven and earth exist.’

BROWNING.

AS soon as Norbert had acquainted Master Lyne with the success of his mission, and given into his keeping the precious letter for Calvin, he went out again, and turned his steps towards the cathedral. Its grandeur and solemnity, its majestic space and silence, had impressed him greatly, and since he came to Lyons he had haunted it. But to-day he was not thinking of its glories. His soul was so full already of wonder and of awe that he had none to spare for stately arch or fretted roof, or painted window kindled by the sun into a mass of many coloured jewels. He had seen greater things than these. He went to a quiet side chapel, perhaps the same where, long ago, in his gentle, hallowed old age, John Gerson—who had helped to slay John Huss for the testimony of the Lord they both loved—used to teach his little scholars to pray. Norbert knew nothing of this, nor if he had, would he have greatly cared: it belonged to the past, and for the struggling, agonizing heart of humanity

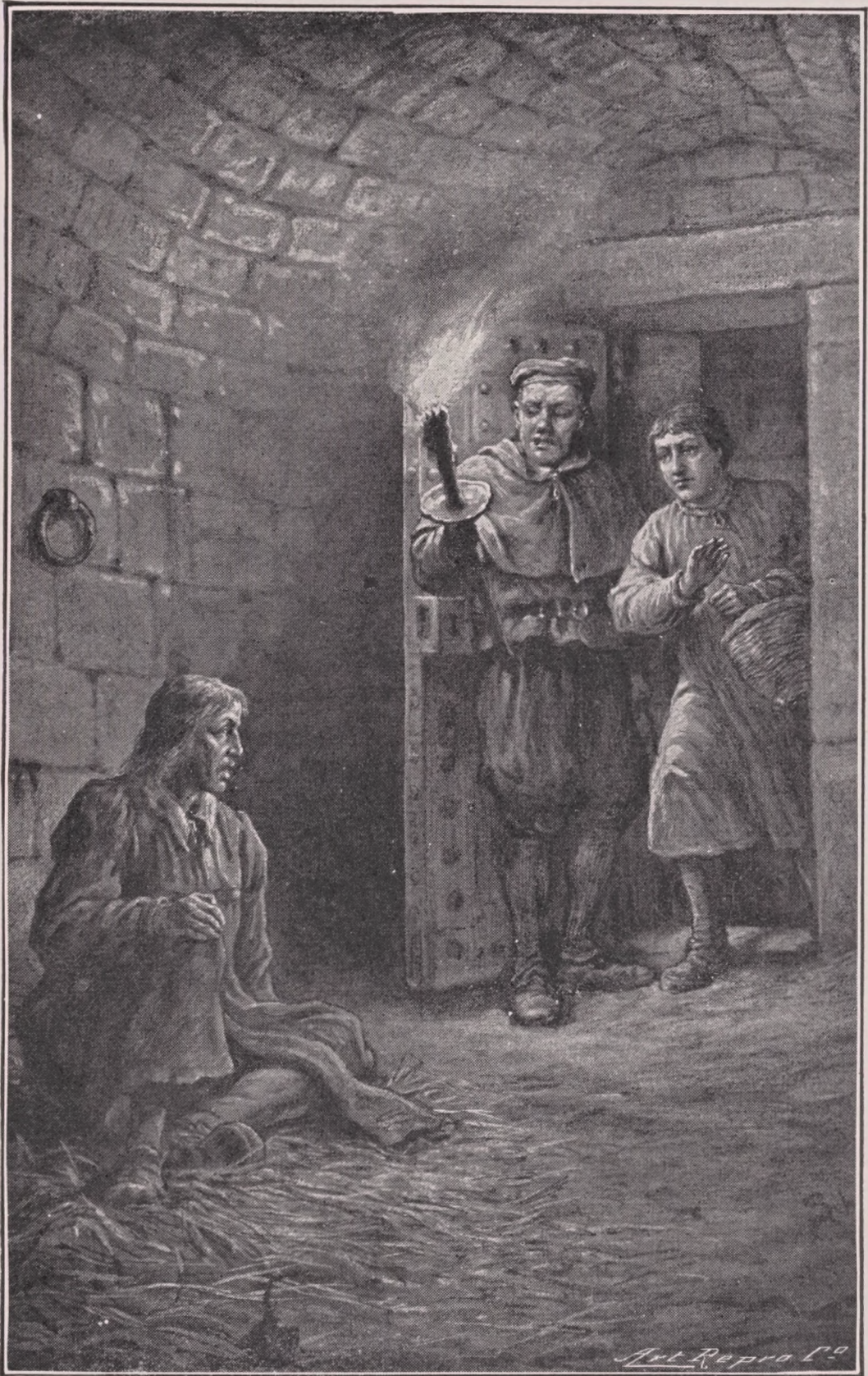
Under Calvin's Spell

the present is enough, 'the matter of a day in his day.' He threw himself on his knees on the steps of the altar; heeding the noble picture above it as little as the tawdry, artificial flowers, the guttering, half-burned wax candles upon it. It was the first time in his life that he, who had knelt so often, knelt before his God because he really wanted to be there,—because there seemed to him no other p'ace to be.

'Then it is true—true—true!' his heart was saying within him. 'The truest thing in heaven or on earth. There is, in that dungeon with Louis, something which is stronger than the whole world, something which neither pain, nor fear, nor death can conquer. Nor love even. Something which makes him not only strong, but glad, filling him with peace and joy, peace that passes understanding, joy unspeakable and full of glory. Something? No; some One. Some One, who is with him now in the dungeon, and will be with him by-and-by at the stake, in the fire. It is no dream—no pious talk of good men like my father and Master Calvin, because they are religious. It is real. He does come so—to some. I wish He would come to me!'

He looked up. The sun had caught a window above him, and sent down through the vast space a shaft of glory at his feet. 'Let the light come to me,' he cried, 'even as it has come to him!' He said no more words, but, perhaps for the first time, he had prayed.

At length he became aware of some one who had entered the little chapel, and stood watching him. He rose, and confronted an elderly man, in the dress of



THE TORCHLIGHT SHOWED HIM A FIGURE
THAT CROUCHED ON THE FLOOR.

In the Cathedral

a gentleman's personal servant. He looked ill and sorrowful, but greeted Norbert with a respectful bow, which showed that he quite understood that his present dress was a mere disguise, since had he been really a tradesman's apprentice, the valet would have considered him his own social inferior.

'Do you want me?' asked Norbert, surprised.

'Yes, sir, I do. I am the servant of M. Ambrose de Marsac.'

'Have you a message from him?'

'I have a message from his father, the Sieur de Marsac.'

Knowing what he did, Norbert felt rather alarmed. 'I cannot think what the Sieur de Marsac can have to say to me,' he answered coldly.

'Nothing to hurt you, sir, nor any one you care for, said the man. 'Were it so, I would do him no service in the matter. For, indeed, I am not his servant, but M. Ambrose's, having been with him since his infancy.'

'Is your name Grillet?' asked Norbert, as a light began to break on him.

'Baptiste Grillet, to serve you, sir. I had the *migraine* on Saturday, and could not lift my head from the pillow, else would I not have left my master to the charity of a stranger for his guidance. Still, it was fortunate, since the stranger happened to be you.'

'Can I do anything for him now?' asked Norbert. 'Say all that is in your mind, I know he trusts you.'

'You can do a great deal for him, monsieur, though at present he thinks not of it, nor desires it. M. de

Under Calvin's Spell

Marsac, heretofore so stern and wrathful, and so bitter against the heretics, has broken down utterly now. It has come upon him like a thunderbolt that his son, his firstborn, is to die. Hitherto he would not believe it, say what we might to move him into doing something for the poor young gentleman. He would have it always that when death came close to him, M. Henri would recant. He little knew him, though he was his son.' Here Grillet paused, probably to crush down emotions that would have disturbed the staid decorum of his demeanour. 'Now he knows the truth,' resumed the valet, 'he is in despair. He dreads the loss, not of one son, but of both, and as it were almost in a day; for M. Ambrose thinks as M. Henri does, and in his anguish at losing the brother he adores, is sure to betray himself somehow, and bring the priests upon us.'

'Surely,' said Norbert, 'his infirmity would protect him.'

Grillet shook his head. 'Nothing protects the heretic,' he said, lowering his voice cautiously at the fateful word.

'But how does M. de Marsac think I can help him?' asked Norbert.

'By taking M. Ambrose with you to Geneva,' said Grillet, drawing nearer, and still speaking in an undertone.

'Would he come?'

'M. Ambrose? Next to following in his brother's footsteps, which is the thing he would like best, he would like to go to that nest of heretics—forgive me the word, monsieur.'

In the Cathedral

‘I thought, perhaps, you were of your master’s way of thinking,’ said Norbert.

‘I don’t know what to think ; and truly, in my place as a servant, I have no right to think at all, but to do as my betters tell me.’

‘Every one has a right to think,’ said the child of Geneva.

‘On the whole,’ continued Grillet, ‘I incline to take my chance in the next world, as I do in this, with M. Ambrose. I have served him since he left his nurse’s arms ; and if the good God seemed to do a hard thing in sending him into the world without his eyesight, at least He did His best to make it up to him by the good heart and the fine wit He gave him.’

‘Then, if he comes to Geneva, you will come too?’

‘Certainly, monsieur. What else? But it is there we want your help. You can answer for my master, that he is truly one of your sort ; and for me, that at least I am no enemy. They need not go about to burn me for a—a—what is it, monsieur, that your people call Catholics?’

‘A Papist. But we do not burn Papists in Geneva. It is true, however, that we do not let them come into the town—when we can help it, which is not always. You need not fear any violence, Grillet. But you will have to do without Mass and Confession, and the rest.’

‘I dare say I shall manage,’ Grillet said drily. ‘Well then, M. Norbert (I think that is your honourable name?), in return for your good word in Geneva, and your good company for his son by the way, my master will be at

Under Calvin's Spell

all charges, and do his utmost to secure your safety and comfort. Of course he will provide handsomely for M. Ambrose in Geneva, so that we shall not be burdensome to those who receive us there. I make no doubt there will be good hostelries, or lodgments, to be had for hire or purchase ?'

'Certainly,' said Norbert. 'But I ought to tell you, that if you and your master came to us friendless and penniless, as did my father and I, and many another, still every house in Geneva would be open to receive you, and every citizen would be ready to give you food and shelter, as good as he had for himself and his own children.'

'You are strange people, monsieur. And I quite see,' he added, with extraordinary candour, 'the falsehood of all the popular reports about you. I do not for a moment believe—not I!—that you worship the devil, or practise horrible vices in secret, or—but forgive me, monsieur, for naming such things——' He broke off, warned by the look on Norbert's young face, though the thought of Louis kept him patient. 'When do you wish to go?' he asked at last, quietly enough.

'M. de Marsac would fain send us off at once, in his terror lest M. Ambrose should compromise himself; but I know that no power on earth will prevail on M. Ambrose to stir until all is over.'

'Nor will I,' Norbert said briefly.

'But that will be—next Saturday,' Grillet added sorrowfully.

Norbert started. 'Are you sure?' he asked, in a breathless whisper.

In the Cathedral

Grillet bowed his head, and there was silence between them.

The servant broke in. 'We can start on Sunday,' he said.

'Or better, on Monday,' said the child of Geneva, where the day of rest was kept far more strictly than in Romanist, or even in other Protestant communities.

But Grillet objected, 'Sunday were the better day, when folk are keeping holiday, and we could go forth as if to visit friends in the country. Moreover, every day is an added danger, and M. de Marsac will grow impatient.'

'If there be sufficient reason for going on Sunday, we may go,' Norbert agreed. 'But on all the details of our plan we must consult Master Lyne, for to him was I recommended, that he should guide me in all things.'

And to none better could you have been sent, M. Norbert. What we would have done without him, in all this trouble, assuredly I know not. He has wonderful influence with the jailor, and with all his underlings. No doubt he has paid well for it.'

'Come this evening, and hear what he says,' said Norbert. They had come out of the side chapel, and were walking down the nave, conversing in low tones, when the great voice of the organ, rising suddenly to heaven, filled their ears and silenced their lips.

Grillet paused. 'Some function is beginning,' he said. 'I will stay for it. M. Ambrose will not want me yet.'

'So will not I,' said Norbert, parting from him, and

Under Calvin's Spell

walking on resolutely to the great door, out from the tempered gloom into the free sunshine of heaven. 'I am done with all that,' he said to himself. 'It can never tempt me more. Its spell was broken for ever in the dungeon of Louis.'

CHAPTER XXVII

DARK DAYS

'Oh, ye lifted up your head,
And it seemed as if ye read,
That this death then should be found
A Valhalla for the crowned,
The heroic who prevail ;
None, be sure, could enter in
Far below a Paladin
Of a noble, noble tale.—
So awfully, ye thought upon the dead.'

E. B. BROWNING.

MEANWHILE, to some in Geneva, the days dragged on very heavily. No one realized more fully than Berthelier the peril of the prisoners of Lyons. But its effect upon him was contrary to what might have been expected. He said very little ; to Gabrielle scarcely anything, but his manner to her, always gentle, acquired an added tenderness. What was more strange, his health, from the hour he heard of it, seemed actually to improve. He ate his food with determination, if not with appetite ; and he made every day a little more exertion. With the help of De Caulaincourt's arm, he could soon walk a street or two, though very weary afterwards. In those days he

Under Calvin's Spell

was always weary, and the longing for rest was strong. 'But not yet,' he would say to himself, 'not yet. Not while Gabrielle needs me.'

Little indeed could he, or any one, do for Gabrielle now. There is a loneliness in great sorrow, like the loneliness of death, of which it is the shadow. Well-meant words of consolation simply passed over her without making any impression. Many such were spoken; for it was not an age of reticence, and in a community so closely knit together as that of Geneva, it could not now be anything but an open secret that the young missionary Louis de Marsac might have been 'troth-plight' to Gabrielle Berthelier, but for that new law of the consistory which obliged marriage to follow betrothal within the space of six weeks. But she heard all with the same courteous indifference. Only once was she known to grow angry, and that was with her mild, inoffensive aunt.

'I think, my dear,' Claudine said to her one day, 'we ought not yet to give up hope.'

Gabrielle looked at her with great, sad eyes, like those of some gentle animal who suffers without hope, but also without fear or anger.

'You know, my child, if so be they recant, they will be saved—for earth, and the way to heaven is ever open.'

'You know not what you say!' flashed the girl. 'The very utterance of the word is insult—to God's blessed martyrs.' And she left the room in wrath, the white, still wrath of a broken heart.

All this time the earth was iron and the heavens were brass to Gabrielle Berthelier. Hitherto, her short life

Dark Days

had only one dark hour, the hour when she anticipated a terrible separation from all she loved, and a lonely lot amongst strangers and enemies. She had borne herself right bravely then. For, at the worst, she could die, and to one who knew herself 'a daughter of the Lord Almighty,' what was death, that she should fear it? Death could be borne, suffering could be borne—for herself. It was when they touched a dearer life that her heart sank, and 'there was no more spirit left in' her. Louis was the very self of self, the very soul of soul to her. During the dreary days since she heard the tidings of his imprisonment, her body was in Geneva, but her true life all the time was lived in that dungeon in Lyons. Every pang of weariness, of hunger, of pain, every natural shrinking from the doom of fire, her shuddering soul passed through, not once but a hundred times. She bore the suffering vicariously, and she bore it by herself. She never dreamed that its bitter waters, as they broke over her hour by hour, were amongst those of which the promise holds good: 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee.' That promise belonged to Louis, and for him she pleaded it with agonized earnestness, wrestling sore with the Lord through the silent, wakeful watches of the night. But even for him she could not *feel* that she was heard. A dark cloud encompassed her, and there was no rift in it through which the light could pierce. 'Why did God let this thing happen?' was the cry of her heart continually. With her training—narrow, intense, and above all things *true*—in absolute, unquestioning submission to the will of God, there was but one source to which she could ascribe such questionings. She

Under Calvin's Spell

had not the relief of the old prophet's pathetic: 'Yet let me talk with Thee concerning Thy judgments;' there was set before her only the lesson—sublime, but oh how stern! "It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good.'

She said His will must be done, but she did not say, 'Thy will be done;' and underneath all other pain she was profoundly conscious of the fact. It lay on her heart like a stone, heavy, cold, unmoving. Although not because of this did He cease to bless her, yet because of this she ceased to know that He was blessing her. She lost the unutterable comfort of feeling, in the darkness, the touch of His hand.

'She is like a dead person walking about,' said Claudine and Marguerite to each other. Possibly she would have really died, had not a little help come to her, as our help in trouble so often does, in the guise of a new misfortune.

One morning she sat as usual, distaff in hand, at the mechanical task which left her thoughts free to dwell in the dungeon with Louis de Marsac. Berthelier sat in the room apparently reading, but really sharing in silence her sorrowful thoughts; Claudine was attending to some household matter, and Marguerite had gone to the market.

There were steps and voices at the street door, then a cry from Claudine that brought Gabrielle downstairs in a moment, whilst Berthelier followed her slowly.

It was Marguerite, borne back to them on a stretcher, groaning with pain. The old woman, though very vigorous for her years, had been for some time growing

Dark Days

unfit for these marketing excursions, yet she would by no means depute them to Claudine or Gabrielle, or even to both of them together.

‘The damoiselle would faint if she saw a chicken’s neck twisted,’ she said ; ‘ while Gabrielle would give those thieving Grey-feet every blessed denier they chose to ask ; and ’tis a mercy Master Calvin has put his foot down, and will let no stale vegetables or rotting fruit be sold in the market, or any fool might take the two of them in.’

So she went once too often. Returning with her heavy basket on her arm, she slipped and fell, to be taken up by the market-women, and carried home by the market men with a broken leg. She entreated them, amidst her groans, to bring her at once to the hospital, but this they would not do without the leave of her master, who dismissed the proposal with scorn, and begged the bearers to lay his servant on her own bed. The nearest barber-surgeon was sent for at once, and, with Gabrielle waiting upon him, set the injured limb. He said the old woman’s life was in no danger ; but it would be weeks before she was able to put her foot to the ground ; if indeed, at her age, she could expect ever to do so again.

Here was a prospect ;—for Berthelier in all worldly matters as simple as a child ; for Claudine, helpless from her convent life, and more than half an invalid ; and for Gabrielle, engulfed in the depths of her sorrow. The neighbours, especially the Calvins next door, were kind and helpful, and a temporary servant was found in the grand-daughter of their faithful Jeannette. But she was a girl younger than Gabrielle, with plenty of goodwill

Under Calvin's Spell

but little sense, and a prodigious talent for forgetting. Any one who has been in a household deprived suddenly of its one practically executive member, will be able to pity the Bertheliers. It added to their difficulties that Marguerite not only left work, but made work for every one; for she required careful tendance, and it is but fair to say that she had it.

She was not a model patient: she bore pain with fortitude, but helplessness galled and fretted her. She not only could not believe that others could do her work as well as she did, which perhaps was true, but she could not believe that they could do it at all, which was not true. Her impatience, and the sharp words she would use to Gabrielle, and still more to the unfortunate little Benoîte, provoked Claudine to say to her one day—

‘If I were so sure as you seem to be that I was elected by the good God before the foundation of the world to everlasting glory, I should not think it worth my while to be so wroth because the morning soup is just a little burned.’

‘Elected?’ Marguerite repeated. ‘At all events, I was elected to see that the master’s food is fit for him to eat.’

Perhaps her theology was better than she knew. Election to glory means also election to duty, or it means nothing at all.

Notwithstanding the many delinquencies which Marguerite noted and reprovèd, Gabrielle in this emergency did well. She learned the secret of the double life; she could make the soup after Marguerite’s notions and her father’s tastes; she could wash, sweep,

Dark Days

and dust, with enough of her mind in these things to guide her hands aright, but with her heart elsewhere. Yet, as division must always weaken, the strain upon her slackened, just enough to let her live. Work was not a cure for her pain, but it was an anodyne; it did not lessen the cause, but it dulled the nerves of suffering.

One day Claudine and Gabrielle went together to the market; for, as Marguerite reflected with grim satisfaction, it took two people now to do badly what it had taken one to do well. As they returned, they met a small party of horsemen, who had just entered the town by the Pont de l'Arve. They were two or three Swiss, who looked like substantial burghers from Berne; there was a young gentleman, dressed after the French fashion, whose bridle was held by a servant who rode beside him, and there was—Norbert. He bowed in silence to his two friends, looking, as Claudine thought, manly, grave, and sad. Gabrielle did not think at all; a mist swam before her eyes, and but for Claudine she would have fallen.

Quickly and silently they went home. As they drew near Claudine whispered—

‘Shall we go next door?’

‘No,’ Gabrielle answered, ‘he will come.’

When they came in, she began at once, with feverish energy, to prepare the vegetables they had brought for their meal. But Claudine soon observed that she could not see; her hands were moving vaguely without guidance from her eyes.

‘Go to thy chamber, child,’ she said. ‘I will call thee when he comes.’

Under Calvin's Spell

So Gabrielle went, and knelt beside her bed, not praying—what was there to pray for?—yet sending up out of the depths of her agony humanity's unconscious, inarticulate cry to the great Father. She knew not whether moments had passed or hours before she heard Berthelier's voice, that voice which

‘Aye for (her)
Its tenderest tones were keeping,’

calling softly, ‘Gabrielle!’

They were all in the living-room: Berthelier in the easy-chair, which he seldom now left; De Caulaincourt leaning over it; Claudine seated near him; Norbert standing up, straight and tall, his young face touched with a gentle, reverent solemnity. As Gabrielle entered, he turned and looked at her. Henceforward he saw only her, as she saw only him. But they spoke no word of greeting.

‘He is with God,’ he said.

It seemed to Gabrielle that she had known it for years—for all her life—even though that very morning she had thought of him as suffering still in the dungeon. Something in her face made De Caulaincourt place a chair for her, and draw her gently into it.

‘Best tell all,’ he said to his son.

‘As I can, since I have seen all,’ said Norbert. ‘I saw the martyrs as they heard their sentences. Our brother, Denis Peloquin, was not with them; he was taken thence, and has glorified God elsewhere. But there were three, Etienne Gynet, Henri de Marsac—and Louis. Others were there also, doomed to lesser



AS GABRIELLE ENTERED HE TURNED AND
LOOKED AT HER.

Dark Days

punishments. After the sentence, the hangman came with halters of rope, which he put on the necks of the condemned. But when he came to Louis, the last save his cousin Henri, he paused, and the judge who presided said that point was excused him, seeing he was of noble birth. Thereat spake Louis with a smile: "By what right, sir, do you deny me the collar of the most excellent Order of Martyrs?" Thus in joy and gladness he went forth to die.' Norbert paused, but presently went on with an effort: 'God was with him to the end. But I cannot talk of it—yet. Only, there was no sign of fear or pain. While he could speak he prayed. And he threw this to me from the fire.'

It was the little ivory tablet. He gave it into the hand of Gabrielle, saying, as he bent over her—

'There is a message—another time.'

'No,' said Gabrielle, looking up with a strange light in her tearless eyes; 'all are friends here.'

'He said, "Tell her He that has comforted me will comfort her also; she will have the stronger consolation, because she has the greater need."'

A quiver ran through her frame as she heard; but otherwise she made no sign. Yet there was something in her face that moved De Caulaincourt to say—

'Come away, my son; thou hast said enough.'

Norbert felt the touch of an ice-cold hand, and heard a voice which seemed to be miles away, saying, 'Thank you.' Then he followed his father out. Claudine went also, with the word—

'I must tell Marguerite.'

There was a great silence in the room. 'Come hither, my child,' Berthelier said at last.

Under Calvin's Spell

She came, and knelt down beside his chair. He laid his hand on her head, and said softly—

‘God comfort thee!’

Then at last

‘Like summer tempest came the tears,’

and with them there mingled presently the slow, reluctant drops of age.

Gabrielle's tears brought healing with them; or rather they were themselves the token of the healing that had come to her. It was not long before she rose, and stood upon her feet. In her face there was a strange calm, in her eyes a light—the light that comes from beyond sun or star. Her voice was clear, and did not fail or falter, as she said—

“Thanks be unto God that giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord!” For the battle is over now, and the victory is won.’

Thus for Gabrielle the darkness passed, and the light shone out again. At first every thought of sorrow for herself was swallowed up in the wonder and the joy for another. Louis was safe—was free—was with Christ for ever. Should she not be glad of this, she who loved him so? If she had drunk of the cup of anguish with him, could she not also drink of the cup of joy? In thought, she went in where he had gone; in thought, she stood with him upon the crystal sea, where there is no more sorrow, nor crying, neither is there any more pain, but the harpers sound upon their harps of gold the praises of God and of the Lamb.

But this mood could not last for ever. These glimpses of glory are of their very nature evanescent,

Dark Days

and must needs pass from us, else would they destroy the balance and the continuity of our earthly life. But one who has once had them, who has once, even faint and far, 'seen the gates of Eden gleam,' can never quite forget—can never be quite the same afterwards. And perhaps to no one are the visions ever given—or rather, no one is able to receive them—who has not first gone down to the depths of a great agony.

CHAPTER XXVIII

OLD THINGS PASS AWAY

‘I know thee, who has kept my path, and made
Light for me in the darkness, tempering sorrow
So that it reached me like a sudden joy.’

R. BROWNING.

‘FATHER,’ Gabrielle asked the next day, ‘wilt thou
give thy child a boon?’

What could he refuse her now? The answer
came promptly without pause or condition—

‘Thou hast it.’

‘Next Sunday is the day of the Holy Supper. I
want to thank God for His martyr, who eats and drinks
now in His Kingdom. Come with me, dear father.’

The old man bowed his head. ‘Child, I am not
worthy,’ he said.

‘With Him there is no worthiness, save love. And
you love.’

He thought a moment, then said: ‘But it is not
possible. If ’twere only confessing Him before the
world, and any one were free to do it—— But the
pastors have to be satisfied, and the consistory. I
should be debarred, like my kinsfolk.’

‘I do not think so, father. They know you now.
Pastor Poupin, who esteems you, would speak for you.’

Old Things pass away

Sister Claudine was present, and, much to her brother's astonishment, spoke out bravely—

‘If I am allowed, I will bear you company. I may as well be really what I have been in seeming. Standing between two steps, with a foot on each, is neither safe nor pleasant. If I can save my soul in Geneva—and more and more I incline to think I can—it must be in the way of Geneva. So let us lose no time in sending for that pastor, whom we know for a devout and kindly person, and getting him to shrive us, or whatever else you call the necessary preparation.’

‘Norbert passes his door,’ said Gabrielle, ‘on his way to school.’

Norbert went to school no longer now; the rest of his education he was to get in another way. But he had an errand of his own to the pastor. He had already, like others of his age, been under preparation for his first communion, but at Christmas, and again at Easter (for these great Christian festivals were observed in Calvin's Geneva, and by his desire), he had been rejected as unfit. It appeared, however, from what followed, that now he was able at least to satisfy Pastor Poupin; who also took upon him, at Berthelier's request, to answer for him and for his sister. He had paid him, since his illness, several visits, of which he reported his impressions to Master John Calvin in these words—

‘I believe he is a branch of the True Vine, though peradventure a branch running over the wall.’

The morning of the first Sunday in September rose clear and fair over the towers and houses of Geneva. Berthelier, Claudine, and Gabrielle set out betimes for their parish church of St. Gervais, and were joined, ere

Under Calvin's Spell

they had gone many steps, by De Caulaincourt and Norbert.

'The Calvins go to St. Peter's, as is meet and right,' said De Caulaincourt. 'But Norbert and I desire to come with you.'

In spite of the sorrow that weighed on every heart, there was in De Caulaincourt's face a look of sweet peace and satisfied desire, and the tones in which he said, 'Norbert and I,' were good to hear.

The pastor who preached in St. Gervais that day was no renowned champion of the Faith whose voice still echoes down the ages. He preached no grand 'historic sermon,' leaving tones that linger with us yet. He was only a simple, faithful Christian man, and a true pastor, who loved his work, his people, and above all, his Lord. Yet in his plain and quiet words there was something that drew every heart, and made it beat in unison with his own. And the secret of his power is not lost yet, nor ever will be, until the end shall come, and the last earthly lover of the Name of Jesus shall be gathered in, to be with Him where He is for ever. Pastor Poupin 'spake of Him.' He made every one present feel that he, or she, had in Him an ever-living, ever-loving Friend, who knew every thought, shared every sorrow, helped in every danger. This Friend had died for each—and would not each be willing joyfully to die for Him, as some, well-known to them all, had just now been called to do? Then let them draw near, and eat of His Bread and drink of His Cup, the Cup of fellowship with Him in His suffering and His glory, the Cup also of fellowship in Him with those who had gone before. Surely they might believe that these, their fellow-guests, were

Old Things pass away

partaking with them now, even though they sat at another Table, and a veil, or curtain, concealed them from their view. Present here with us, as there with them, was the Master of the Feast. And here, as of old, would He make Himself known to each, 'in the breaking of bread.'

The solemn service over, the congregation dispersed, all going quietly to their homes. But even the strict Genevan customs allowed, after the second *prêche*, which was at two o'clock, a pleasant afternoon walk on the Crêts, or in the Plain-palais. Norbert and his father enjoyed it to the full, and talked much about many things. On their homeward way they visited Norbert's blind friend, Ambrose de Marsac, who, with his servant Grillet, was domiciled in a printer's family. M. de Maisonneuve had offered to receive him; but since, through his father's liberality, he was well able to pay his own charges, it was judged best that the wealthy Maisonneuves should keep their hospitality for the many destitute who required it.

The Bertheliers stayed at home; and Claudine and Gabrielle told Marguerite all that passed, and condoled with her upon her absence.

'The only one of us wanting,' said Claudine.

'And,' said Marguerite, 'the only Holy Supper I have missed since Master Calvin began to give it.'

'But I hope you will be with us next time,' Gabrielle added kindly.

After supper, Marguerite was helped to bed, and Berthelier, Claudine, and Gabrielle sat together. Berthelier had been very silent all day, but now he seemed inclined to talk. 'Claudine,' he said, 'dost

Under Calvin's Spell

remember the old days, how on Sundays we used often to sup with M. Lévrier?'

'Yes, indeed, I remember well. Some of your friends of that time, Ami, were what one might call mad-cap, or, to put it mildly, and use your own word, *coquard*. Do you remember your Cousin Philibert's song, which we used all of us to sing—in fact, every one sang it then, even the *gamins* in the streets?

“Vivent ces Huguenots gentils,
Frisques, prompts à tout faire.
Ils sont coquards et beaux-fils,
Chaqu'un d'eux est pour nous plaire.”

Ah, well!—now we sing psalms and hymns, which no doubt are better, especially for the young. Brother, do you know that a few days ago, in clearing out that old painted chest in your chamber, I found your cock's feather, laid carefully aside, and wrapped in a piece of silk?'

'Ah, the badge of liberty! Well, I never shrank from wearing it, even in the face of tyrants. Nor did Philibert. He was a great man—was Philibert Berthelier—something like Master Calvin in his power over the people, though a strange contrast in other things. Both were born to rule. Prithee, sister, indulge my folly, and bring me hither that old adornment of my cap.'

She brought it to him. He took it, looked at it lovingly, and passed his fingers over it with a caressing touch.

After a pause he spoke, but dreamily, as if to himself. 'All my youth is in it. It tells me of lost hopes, lost dreams, lost causes. But most of all it minds me whose

Old Things pass away

fingers touched it, whose hand placed it in my cap. A dearer hand than thine, Claudine, and,'—he added, with a kindly look at her—'that is much to say.'

She answered the look. 'I know,' she said gently. 'Yolande. But, Ami, I never heard what became of her?'

'When the noble Lévrier was foully slain by cruel tyrants, she lost a dear father by adoption, and a home. And two years later, God called her to Himself from a world she did not love. That is all I know, or have ever known. But of late I have sometimes thought—we may meet yet. Eternity is a great word. It is not time, and certainly it is not space, yet I always think of it as a vast pillared hall, of which no man can come to the end, nor even see it, though he go on and on for a thousand years. But, as he goes, old well-known faces, faces he loves, may peradventure look at him from between the pillars.'

'But I,' said Gabrielle, softly, 'I think of Eternity as Home.'

Here Norbert came, to ask after Master Berthelier, and to hope the fatigue of the long service had not hurt him.

Berthelier said he had not felt so well since his illness, adding, as he looked at the tall, handsome lad standing in the doorway—

'How you are grown, Norbert! You are a man now. But come in, and sit down with us.'

Norbert was nothing loth, and Berthelier went on, 'Twere time, methinks, thou didst choose an honest calling for thyself, especially as thy heart, so far as I can tell, goes not much with the schools.'

Under Calvin's Spell

'I have chosen,' said Norbert, in a low voice. 'Or rather, my calling has chosen me.'

It was Gabrielle who spoke next, with a flush on her pale face, and an animation in her tone that surprised every one.

'Are you going to preach the Gospel? Oh, Norbert——'

'No. I could not preach. I have no words, nor skill, nor learning. But I can serve those who preach.' After a pause, he added, 'I am ambitious, yet not so greatly as to want God's best. That is for "the noble army of martyrs." I will content me with the second best—to spend my life as the servant and the friend of the martyrs.'

'Tis a grand calling,' said Berthelier.

'I am vowed,' Norbert went on, the feeling the day's services had evoked overcoming all his reserve. 'In the Cathedral of Lyons, after—after I had been in that prison—I took my oath in God's sight. And you know there is work that wants doing. There are always some of *ours* in peril or in prison. Master Calvin cares for them—oh, *he cares*—but there needs some one—a link between him and them—to bring letters and do errands. That link means me.'

'And your father. Have you told him?' the question was Berthelier's.

'I have; and he is glad beyond words.' Then, turning to Gabrielle, and speaking with sudden hesitation and timidity, 'Damoiselle, you approve?'

'With all my heart. May you comfort in his need many another servant of God.' Then she added softly, 'God bless you.'

Old Things pass away

‘Take my blessing too,’ said Berthelier.

When Norbert was gone, Berthelier still sat musing, the feather in his hand.

‘Yes,’ he said, looking at it, ‘it has brought back the old life. That old life had good in it, for perhaps the new Geneva would not have been possible without it. And yet I say not, “the old is better.” No! For I, even I, have come to drink of the new wine at last, and I bear witness that it is good. The Geneva of Master Calvin is not the Geneva of the Huguenots, of Philibert Berthelier, of Ami Lévrier, of gay Prior Bonivard, it is not the Geneva of which we dreamt in our hot, passionate youth. But it is more. It is the Geneva of the new Faith, the new World, the new Life. It is the home of truth and constancy, of strong, high thought and brave doing. It is the shelter of the unfortunate, the refuge of the oppressed from every land under heaven. God hath spoken, “Let Mine outcasts dwell with thee, Geneva,” and she hath answered, “Yes.” Therefore He will bless her. And I—I also—I bless her, yea, and she shall be blessed!’

‘Bless God for all, brother!’ said Claudine. ‘That must be the best thing always.’

The words of a psalm, which had been read during the services of the day, came to the lips of Berthelier. He rose slowly, leaning on his staff, and spoke with upraised, kindling eyes—

“Blessed be His holy Name for ever and ever: and let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen, and Amen.”’

Then he went to rest. And that night he rested

Under Calvin's Spell

well. So well, that when Gabrielle came to his side in the morning it was plain even to her young eyes that some one else—a King, yet no King of Terrors—had been there before her, and had set upon the quiet face his royal seal, the inscription upon which is 'Peace.'

CHAPTER XXIX

BEARING THE BURDEN OF THE YEARS

‘He works his work, I mine.’—TENNYSON.

NO one would have called Ami Berthelier a particularly fortunate man. Yet in his death he was more fortunate than many of the great and famous of earth. Such do not always leave behind them those to whom the world will never be the same again. To Claudine and to Marguerite the old Huguenot was the very centre of all things; and if to Gabrielle he could not be just that, he was not the less, but even the more, intensely beloved. It was some consolation that all Geneva shared their sorrow, and paid every token of respect and affection to the citizen she had learned so late to respect and love. So great was the crowd that followed him to his resting-place in the Plain-palais, that Marguerite averred Master Calvin himself could not have a finer funeral.

‘If it *had* been his,’ sighed poor Claudine, ‘how much better for *us!*’

‘Ay, damoiselle; but not for Geneva. Nor for the Church, nor for the world, as the dear master himself would have been the first to say.’

Under Calvin's Spell

Amongst the numerous visits of consolation paid to the mourners, they were honoured with one from the uncrowned King of Geneva himself. He brought Gabrielle a very real comfort, in the brief note written by Louis de Marsac in his dungeon, which he put into her hand, saying, 'I believe you have the right to read it.'

At the first words a thrill passed through her: 'I could not tell you, sir and brother——' Gabrielle looked up into the strong, worn face that was bending over her compassionately. So Louis called *him* 'brother!' No more a great gulf between them, no more son and father, no more young, unknown student and great, renowned master! Nay, even now, as she read, the young had outstripped the old, and was older than he in eternity! After a time she went on. The words were these: 'I could not tell you, sir and brother, the great comfort I received from the letters which you sent to my brother Denis Poquelin, who found means of passing them to one of our brethren who was in an underground cell above me, and read them to me, inasmuch as I can see nothing in my dungeon. I pray you therefore to persevere in aiding us always with the like consolation, which moves us to weep and pray.'

'They weep no more now,' said Calvin, 'and if still they pray, it is as the souls under the altar, of whom we read in the Apocalypse.' Something more he added, which, like much else in those days, passed over the mind of Gabrielle, and left no trace. But her thoughts came back, when he called that which happened at Lyons for himself also 'a most crushing sorrow.' 'Yet,'

Bearing the Burden of the Years

he added, 'I would not now desire to be free from all that sorrow at the price of not having known Louis de Marsac. To the end of my days his memory will be ever sacred unto me, and I am persuaded that it will be also sweet and comforting.' Then he spoke of the newer sorrow, giving thanks that her adopted father had been left with them until he could declare himself in the sight of all a member of the body of Christ. 'There can be no doubt,' he said, 'that Christ will bind together both them and us in the same inseparable society, and in the incomparable participation of His own glory.'

Then, with a kindly, almost a tender, 'God bless thee, my child,' the great man departed; leaving in Gabrielle's mind a glad wonder that he and Louis were 'brethren' now, that to him also the fate of Louis was 'a crushing sorrow,' and yet that this sorrow was a thing he would by no means forego. Evidently he too understood the 'open secret,' that secret, so strange and yet so dear to those who love and mourn, that our deepest sorrows are at the same time our most precious treasures.¹

It was well that she had strong consolation, for as the days went on she needed it. 'The angels' that at first had borne her messages of comfort, 'went away from her into heaven.' Or, more truly, at first she followed those she loved into that heaven itself, and the door by which they entered seemed still to stand ajar. But afterwards 'the door was shut,' and she was left on the other side—alone.

¹ This thought appears strongly in one of Calvin's letters, from which the words given above are quoted.

Under Calvin's Spell

Yet not quite alone. That is what loving hearts need seldom be, in a world where there is so much need for love. Still, it happened to her as it does to many a woman; the lot is a very common one. She saw her 'dearest ones depart without' her, while they left behind them others, dear indeed, and loved with faithful household love, but far less—oh, how far less!—than those who 'were not.' We all know when the sun has set, though the moon may be at the full, and there are many stars.

Henceforward Gabrielle Berthelier was the faithful, loving guardian of two frail and failing lives. Claudine was stricken to the earth by the loss of her brother, and Marguerite's stronger soul suffered even more deeply. A terrible added trial, to one of her temperament, was the sense of weakness and helplessness. The broken limb knit again, but she was never able to do more than move slowly and feebly about the house. After various efforts, ending in misery to herself and discomfort to every one else, she was at last convinced that there was no more active work for her, that henceforward she must sit by the hearth, and spin. It is true that while she twirled her distaff she favoured Gabrielle with much good advice, with which often the young girl could have willingly dispensed.

In those gloomy days the friendship of the De Caulaincourts was a great solace to Gabrielle. But, after a time, the father resumed those evangelistic excursions into Savoy which had so nearly cost him his life; whilst the son, entering upon the work to which he had vowed himself, became the messenger of Calvin

Bearing the Burden of the Years

to the persecuted Churches in France, Belgium, and Italy.

Gabrielle had another friend who, once domiciled in Geneva, never left it again. It was natural that the cousin of Louis de Marsac should be an object of interest to her, if only because he had so much to tell her of those last days in Lyons. And since to this interest was added compassion for a great infirmity, it was not surprising that a strong bond should spring up between them.

Gabrielle, it is true, had little time for the cultivation of friendship; but she would not have been the child of Geneva she was if she had not made time, even by rising early and late taking rest, for attendance on the numerous religious services which were the very breath of the new Genevan life. It was at once a pleasure and a charity to bring M. Ambrose to these; and the rather as Grillet, otherwise invaluable, failed to develop a taste for sermons. He was not particular, he said, about keeping the old Faith; what was good enough for M. Ambrose was good enough for him, and he did not doubt he could make his salvation very well after Master Calvin's fashion. Still, he did not see the need of such a fuss, and of working harder at prayers and preaching than one used to do at Mass and Confession. But, on the other hand, he was more than willing to repay the damoiselle's kindnesses to his master by doing little services for her, such as fetching her provisions from the market. To this, however, Gabrielle soon objected, as she used to find in her basket on these occasions rare flowers and costly fruit which she certainly had not purchased. But declining the services

Under Calvin's Spell

of Grillet did not stop the arrival of these tributes ; he only brought them more openly to the house in the Rue Cornavin, 'with the most respectful homage of M. Ambrose de Marsac.' These luxuries Gabrielle shared with the poor and sick ; to whom she was a welcome visitor, whenever she could snatch an hour from the pressing duties of home.

Her part in the general life of the city was now so small, that she scarcely recognized the fact that Geneva had reached the very zenith of her glory. After the final defeat of the Libertines there was peace. The theocracy, with Calvin as prime minister, and interpreter of the will of the unseen Monarch, had triumphed : scarce a tongue was heard to move against it. Henceforward every citizen was bound to live as in the sight of God Himself. With moral rectitude, and piety almost unexampled in history, came a wonderful development of intellectual activity. Four and twenty printing presses poured the writings of Calvin and other Reformers in a continuous stream into every country of Europe ; and in return, every Catholic country sent into Geneva its fugitives and exiles for the Faith, whilst the Protestant communities, who did not need it as a refuge, prized it as a school, sending thither their sons for an excellent secular education, and a theological training which, if austere and narrow, was still as profound and lofty as the thought of the age could reach.

Norbert de Caulaincourt, when he happened to be in Geneva, which was not often, or for long together, was glad enough, as he grew older, to frequent the school he had despised in his boyhood. But then,

Bearing the Burden of the Years

there is such a difference between what we must do and what we would like to do! Moreover, the genial and enlightened Dr. Theodore Beza was now the Rector of the Academy, and there was that in his lectures which drew intelligent and enquiring youth around him.

Norbert shot up very suddenly from boy to man. Until his seventeenth year even his physical development had been tardy, while his boyish heedlessness and recklessness were a care to his father, and a trial to his pastors and masters. But the crowded events of a few brief months—from that day in early spring when he heard of his father's arrest, to the August morning when he stood in the square at Lyons and saw Louis de Marsac die—had ripened him suddenly into manhood. The boy's restlessness was transformed into the man's energy; the boy's headlong passion for adventure into the man's resolute daring. Mind and body kept pace together. Ere those about him knew, or he himself took account of the change, it was a stalwart youth, with the down of manhood on his lip, who brought Master Calvin news of the Churches. But there was one thing in which, boy or man, he never changed at all.

Usually, when at home—that is to say in Geneva—he saw little of Gabrielle. For a while he positively avoided her; not strong enough to see her face, to touch her hand, knowing all the time that she belonged still to his dead friend. He told himself, sometimes, that he was willing it should be so; but that did not help him. No whit the less did he thrill through and through with the pain of hopeless longing,

Under Calvin's Spell

and the agonizing sense of that which might have been.

'It is not that I would wrong Louis in heaven,' he said, 'any more than I would have wronged him on earth. But still—I had better keep away, until I can think and act like a wise man, not like a fool.'

At length, however, impelled by the claims of gratitude and friendship, he broke his resolution. Once more it was springtide in Geneva, the fifth since that well-remembered season of the elder De Caulaincourt's captivity. Norbert had just returned over the mountains from a very dangerous journey into Italy. He reported himself to Calvin; and then, after visiting the Antoine Calvins, and finding that his father was absent, he went to see Sister Claudine and Gabrielle Berthelier.

The first thing he heard on entering was the sound of a lute. Sister Claudine sat in their usual living room, busy with her embroidery, Marguerite was spinning, and Gabrielle making a blouse for a poor child, whilst Ambrose de Marsac discoursed sweet music upon the richer and sweeter instrument for which he had discarded his mandoline.

Norbert greeted them all, and was greeted in return with equal—indeed with greater warmth; for an unexplained something, perhaps it was the presence of Ambrose, had given him a kind of chill. They talked first of his mission to Italy, and the progress of the Gospel there; but after some time spent in this way, Norbert plucked up courage to ask Gabrielle if she would come and breathe the air with him this fine afternoon; he had something to say to her.

Gabrielle acquiesced very readily. Was he not an

Bearing the Burden of the Years

accredited messenger of the Church? What he had to say no doubt referred to its concerns, or to the fate of some of its confessors; no selfish interest could have part in it. And in truth it had not.

‘Where would you like to go?’ Norbert asked, as they passed out.

She answered promptly. ‘To the New College. I hear it is quite finished now, and I want to see it.’

‘So do I.’

As they trod the familiar streets on their way to the Rue Verdaine, Norbert resumed, ‘Gabrielle, I am in a strait, wherein I think none but you can help me. Have you a mind to do it?’

With an utter simplicity and absence of self-consciousness which made her mood a great contrast to his own, Gabrielle answered, ‘Dear Norbert, I will do anything I can for you, as indeed I ought.’

‘You remember how generously the young Count of Lormayeur dealt with me when I was in his power, and expecting nothing but death?’

‘Yes; and the peril was for my sake. Norbert, I should be ungrateful indeed if I forgot.’

‘Nay, Gabrielle, you should forget all, save the young count and his kindness. Now he is really Count of Lormayeur, for his father died a year ago. But he is still occupied about the duke’s affairs, who has sent him on some errand to Turin—and there, to my surprise, I chanced to meet him. He recognized me—and with any other I should have felt alarmed, but I knew well I might trust him, and need fear no betrayal. We had a long talk; and he confided to me

Under Calvin's Spell

the great anxiety in which he is about the lady he loves, and meant to espouse as soon as the duke will let him go home and attend to his own affairs. She used to live with an old kinsman, a certain Sieur de Mayne, in the wild district which belongs to Mont Blanc. But the old man being dead, she could not stay, and has had to take refuge with another kinsman, M. Claude de Senanclair.'

'M. de Senanclair! But he lives within our Franchises, and besides, is a zealous Protestant, and a great friend of Master Calvin.'

'That is so; and the very reason I want your help. There came with her an attached old waiting woman, like your Marguerite; but, whether spent with the fatigues of the journey or from some other cause, she took ill immediately upon their coming, and is dead. Now this young lady is alone amongst strangers, and has written to the count a very mournful letter, saying she will pine away and die, and such other things as, I suppose, ladies say when they are sorrowful.'

'But M. de Senanclair is a good man; surely he would be kind to her.'

'As kind as he knows how, seeing he *is* a man,' said Norbert, with a slight smile. 'But she needs a woman—*not* a serving woman, of whom are plenty there, but one who understands—who knows the heart of a young maiden—and who can talk to her and comfort her.'

'Norbert, what is it you want me to do?'

'I want you to go to her, to speak to her heart, to be to her as a sister might.'

It was on Gabrielle's lips to say, 'I think you are

Bearing the Burden of the Years

asking a good deal ;' but she only said, 'And why should *I* do this work, Norbert?'

Norbert hesitated. He did not choose to say, 'Because to him who loves her I owe my life ;' as that would seem to be setting up a claim for *himself*. At last he said, 'Because Count Victor behaved so well to us.'

'But would M. de Senanclair be willing to receive me into his house?'

'Most willing. I went there yesterday, ere coming to the town. I saw him, and the damoiselle also. In truth, he is perplexed by his guest, and knows not how to order matters for her comfort, seeing there is no lady in his household. He bade me say that any gentlewoman of my friends would be very welcome at Senanclair.'

Gabrielle thought rapidly. She would be glad, *very* glad, to do this thing for Norbert. There was always in the depths of her heart an unacknowledged feeling that she had not been grateful enough for all he had done for her. Moreover, during his absences from Geneva, she had certainly missed him.

'If it would please you, Norbert,' she said.

'It would please me very much,' he answered frankly. 'Still, you must not do it if it troubles you. Perhaps, indeed, you cannot leave your aunt and Marguerite.'

'That might be managed. Bénéoîte is very useful now ; and I have a friend who might come for a little while. Besides, there are the Calvins, next door. They would do all they could.'

'Ambrose de Marsac also seems to be very

Under Calvin's Spell

attentive,' said Norbert, with just a faint suspicion of displeasure in his tone. He would have been comforted, had he known that he was furnishing Gabrielle with a strong reason for a temporary absence from the town.

'Now you have come, Norbert,' she answered, rather hurriedly, 'you may perchance be able to find him some occupation, in which, without hindrance from his blindness, he may serve God and man. As it is, he has nothing to do but to go to the Preaching or the *Cercle*, to visit his friends, and to play upon that lute of his, which sometimes, when one chances to be busy—— But at best 'tis a sad life, and we who have the gift of sight, which he is denied, should not grudge our efforts to cheer and console him.'

'True,' thought Norbert; 'but he seems to want a good deal of consolation, especially from Gabrielle.' He said aloud, 'Then, Gabrielle, I may hope you will go to Senanclair? With all my heart I thank you. I was bound to serve Count Victor in all ways I could; and now he will know I am not ungrateful. But here we are at the college. Ah, it is quite finished! A noble work! God bless it, and our Geneva!'

They stood still, looking with great admiration at the new building, in their eyes beautiful and glorious, though perhaps in ours only commonplace and gloomy. The space around, with its great trees, was silent and deserted, save for one dark, solitary figure, also standing motionless, and as if absorbed in thought. There was no mistaking that figure. Norbert and Gabrielle drew near with reverence, and saluted Master John Calvin.

Bearing the Burden of the Years

He looked old and frail ; his dark hair and beard were whitening fast, and he leaned heavily on his staff. He had scarce seen more than fifty years ; but into those years what toil of mind and body, what anxieties and sufferings had been crowded ! If time be indeed the life of the soul, they might well have counted for centuries.

He returned the salutation with a word of blessing ; after which he favoured them with a very scrutinizing look from his keen and piercing black eyes.

‘I had rather see her walking with Ambrose de Marsac,’ was his thought. ‘A young messenger of the Churches should not be entangling himself in the affairs of this life.’

John Calvin was not too entirely absorbed in the care of all the Churches to feel a personal interest in the life-story of every Genevan. It was scarcely in accordance with the ideas of the time that a young and beautiful maiden should live so long unwedded, and with no better guardianship than that of two old women. And close at hand was a good man and true, an earnest professor of the Reformed Faith, only longing to undertake that guardianship. True, there was one drawback : a grievous physical infirmity. But on the other hand were ample means, noble birth, and many graces of mind and person. Moreover, Gabrielle was known to be zealous of good works, and here was a good work ready to her hand. She might make a darkened life happy and useful.

Hints of the post of usefulness thus awaiting her occupation, had come from other quarters to the ears of Gabrielle herself ; nor could she misunderstand, though

Under Calvin's Spell

she tried hard to do so, the tone and bearing of Ambrose de Marsac. These things made her the more willing to grant the request of Norbert de Caulaincourt, and go to Senanclair.

CHAPTER XXX

'GO IN PEACE'

I would not change my buried love,
For any heart of living mould.'

T. CAMPBELL.

IT was not merely in a 'bower' by courtesy, as ladies' apartments were styled in those days, but in the real garden bower of a fair pleasance, that two maidens sat together, their fingers busy with the embroidery in which both were skilful, and their tongues by no means idle. Both were beautiful; both were daughters of the South, young, but in the full bloom of womanhood, as such was accounted then, for each had passed her twentieth year. Yet they were very different. The Lady Arletta de Mayne was small and slight; a dark beauty of the sparkling, scintillating type, full of life to the finger-tips. She was full of pride too, but it was a generous pride, with no taint of meanness. Passion slumbered in her dark eyes; they could flash with wrath and hate as well as kindle with animation, but they could soften, too, very easily, under the spell of gentler and tenderer moods.

Gabrielle Berthelier quite equalled her companion

Under Calvin's Spell

in beauty and regularity of feature, though she lacked the vivacity, the brightness, the *verve* which lent her a special charm. But in her face there was something far better, the sweet calm of one who has loved and suffered, and left behind, not the love but the suffering, over-lived yet unforgotten.

The two were good friends, though just now the 'sweet bells' were jangling a little.

'I cannot think,' said the Lady Arletta, 'why you should refuse and deny your proper name, style, and title. It is like denying "Cream and Baptism," which, indeed, you Genevans do also after a fashion. And still, in spite of all, you are no less the Lady Olive de Castelar.'

'Pardon me, lady, I am nothing of the kind.'

'Pardon me, lady,' mimicked Arletta, making what the French call a *moue*. 'No, I will *not* pardon this misplaced ceremony. Olive de Castelar is more than the equal in rank of Arletta de Mayne, and much her superior in all else, very notably in learning. You argue like a priest—nay, for God knows *they* often argue ill enough—like a bishop, shall I say? And you know all the Holy Scriptures by heart, I verily believe.'

'Indeed, no,' said Gabrielle, smiling. 'But if I did, it would not make me Lady of Castelar, seeing I have renounced my inheritance, and all claims attaching thereto. And that in favour of a gentleman who holds you in the highest esteem.'

Two very pretty and becoming roses appeared on the cheeks of Arletta, hitherto a trifle pale.

'Do you know,' she said, 'that once I hated bitterly the very sound of your name?'

‘Go in Peace’

‘How could I know it, when I did not know of your existence?’

‘How could you, indeed? And how could *I* know you would do all you could for—for that gentleman you spoke of, by so generously renouncing your rights? Though whether any good will come of it, is more than I can say. The lawyers are like snails—or rather, like crabs that walk backward. And His Grace of Savoy, though he wishes well to *that person*, is still afraid—being scarcely steady in his own seat yet—to come to extremities with Santona, who keeps a tight grip on the lands. Well, then, let them go. Lands and gold are not the best things, after all. True love is more and better. What says thy Book, Gabrielle? “Many waters cannot quench love, neither can fire burn it.”’

‘My Book says many good things, Arletta.’

‘It does, and I love it better every day. When I go home, I mean to get the priests to let me read it. Home!’ she repeated, with a sigh. ‘Where is “home,” I wonder? Not the old Tower—never, never any more. Where, then?’

‘Where those are whom one loves best,’ said Gabrielle. ‘*That* is home.’

‘You, at least, have chosen yours, and with full purpose,’ Arletta returned. ‘In your beloved Geneva.’

‘No,’ answered Gabrielle, quietly. ‘Geneva is not my home.’

As she spoke, some one came towards them, guided to their retreat by a little foot-page. It was a tall, martial figure, a soldier every inch, though dressed now

Under Calvin's Spell

in peaceful fashion, not belied by the costly sword at his side, which was part of a gentleman's ordinary dress. He removed his plumed cap from a well-bronzed forehead, and made respectful obeisance to both the ladies.

Whilst Gabrielle calmly wondered who it was, Arletta's cheek paled and flushed, flushed and paled again. She said only one word—'*Victor!*'—but she knew in that moment what 'Home' meant for her. Gabrielle knew also; and murmuring some slight excuse, she withdrew, leaving the lovers to themselves, or rather to each other.

'I hope all will go smoothly with them now,' she thought. 'They deserve it. Norbert says they have been so faithful to each other all these years.'

Then, all unbidden, there rushed over her the contrast between their lot and hers. They were two; she was one. Oh, the desolateness of being *one*, one only, in this great world 'so full of other people!' But was she indeed one *only*? Presently there came to her out of the past a face, a look, a smile. That face was no new visitant, it was with her so often that it had become a part of her very life. It was with her usually to help, to comfort, to sustain—a spiritual companionship over which, in the silence of her inner life, she rejoiced and was glad. Her grief had seemed to be 'changed to something else,' to that dear remembrance which is not grief, nor joy, but sweeter than the one, and calmer than the other. But now suddenly, like a flood, the agony came back. She was used to think herself very old, as old as love or sorrow could make her; but that sight of the two young lovers had sent somehow,



SHE ONLY SAID ONE WORD—'VICTOR!'

‘Go in Peace’

through heart and brain, a thrill of conscious youth. In truth, the crown of life had come to her too soon, before her childhood was well over. She was like one who rises at daybreak, and gets through the day's work while others are asleep, only by-and-by to sink down exhausted, thinking night must be come, when the town clock is but striking noon. So much of the day had to be lived through yet! Others, for the day's work had the day's food, deep home affections, household joys, and cares which are sometimes dearer to us than joys. She had these too—oh yes! her thoughts turned tenderly to the two dear ones at home, all the dearer for their helplessness. Yet how small a part of her life her cares for these could fill! Beneath the surface life of daily occupation, of kindly services, ached the great empty human heart, crying out for its human love, its human joy.

But, could she forget that all the time she had something, which she would not barter for the living love of a hundred lords of Lormayeur? She took from its place next her heart the little ivory tablet, scorched on one side, where a spark had struck it as it was flung to Norbert over burning faggots. She pressed to her lips, as one who seals a solemn vow, that slightest and most trivial of things seen, which yet, being the sign and sacrament of things not seen, but eternal, partook of their glory and preciousness.

She had *that*, and was it not enough? And yet—and yet—the human heart within her sent up its moan.

Arletta came in softly, and laid her hand on her shoulder. Her eyes were misty, and her voice was very gentle.

Under Calvin's Spell

'Wish me joy, dear Gabrielle,' she said. 'All is well, at last. The duke has promised to do justice. Victor is to have the lands of Lormayeur. For which, moreover, we thank you.'

'No, indeed,' returned Gabrielle, warmly. 'Why thank me for giving away what I could by no means keep?'

'You could have kept them, easily enough. You had only to turn Catholic.'

'*Only?* But I think that even this is not the best you have to tell me, Arletta?'

'No,' said Arletta, blushing and hesitating. 'Our lord the duke is good enough to say, that since I have no living relative other than M. de Senanclair, and he, of course, is out of the question on account of the Religion—he will send for me to Chambery, where her grace the duchess will receive me, and do for me all that is right and fitting, as for a betrothed maiden who was a ward and kinswoman of their own.'

'That is very kind of the duke and duchess.'

'But only think,' pursued Arletta, 'what good service and contentment he must have given to the duke, to win such favour at his hands, and to me, too, for his sake.'

Gabrielle was quite content that Arletta should sound the praises of Count Victor, but she could not hear her next words without protest, for they were a proposal, warmly and lovingly urged, that she should cast in her lot with them, come and live with them—'when we are settled, you know'—and be always, to her and to Victor as a dear and honoured sister.

‘Go in Peace’

‘But you forget the Religion,’ interposed Gabrielle. ‘I am sure you do not want to make me a martyr.’

‘Oh, we could arrange all that! Trust Victor to keep the priests in their own place.’

‘That is not so easily done,’ said Gabrielle.

But Arletta thought she showed signs of yielding, so she went on piling up—not the agony, but—the allurements of a life in Savoy, crowning the pyramid with a splendid marriage to a great count or baron, perhaps even a duke.

Gabrielle smiled, and glanced unawares at the little tablet, still in her hand. Arletta’s eyes followed hers.

‘Ah, your poor little tablet!’ she said. ‘It has got burned or something. Never mind, I will give you a better.’

She was one of those people who, whenever they feel particularly happy, always want to give something to some one.

But Gabrielle’s fingers closed over her treasure. There was a look in her face Arletta had never seen before.

‘You have Count Victor de Lormayeur, and I have *this*,’ she said.

Over Arletta’s happy face there came a shade of awe, with just the faintest touch of pique, that in all their intimate intercourse Gabrielle had never told her.

‘Ah!’ she said. ‘A love-token? I see. I did not know.’

‘You could not know,’ Gabrielle said gently. ‘All is ended, for me, that *can* end. Yet end there is none;

Under Calvin's Spell

for he is with God, and has taken our love with him in there, where nothing can fade or die. But I am glad for *you*, dear Arletta, and with all my heart I wish you joy.'

Here, in no unkindly mood, we may see the figures of Victor de Lormayeur and Arletta de Mayne fade away from our view. Their place was with the many whose names are writ in water, not with the few who leave enduring footprints on the sands of time. Still Victor de Lormayeur did leave, in his native valleys, a remembrance that lingered long of a Count of Lormayeur who was just, kind, and charitable, the friend of the poor. Even 'They of Geneva' knew there was one estate in Savoy into which they might venture without fear of the dungeon and the stake. When some of his tenants embraced Protestantism, they were allowed to sell their lands, take their movable possessions with them, and go whither they would. It was rumoured that the Lady of Lormayeur had once gone so far as to turn a priest out of doors for objecting in strong terms to these proceedings of her lord's.

'But then,' said one who knew, 'my lady had ever a sharp tongue. She was mightily learned moreover. 'Tis said she used to read the Holy Scriptures in private with the count, and puzzle the priests and monks with hard questions out of them. But what would you have? The count and countess were free of hand, and kept a good table, as none knew better than those same priests and monks. From their gates no poor man was ever sent empty away. And we know that charity covereth a multitude of sins.'

'Go in Peace'

At least, to give that ill-used text for once its true meaning, our charity shall cover the sins, whatever they may have been, of the Lord and Lady of Lormayeur, as we take a friendly leave of them, with a cordial, 'Go in peace.'

CHAPTER XXXI

THE PASSING OF CALVIN

'That God shall take thee to His heart,
Unto His heart, be sure! and here on earth
Shall splendour sit upon thy name for ever.'

R. BROWNING.

MORE years yet have passed away, and have brought at last, for Geneva, a year of sorrow and of darkness. That curse of Old Europe, the plague, was devastating Switzerland, and Geneva had her full share of the awful visitation. Yet her citizens did not think *that* the heaviest sorrow God had sent them. For in their midst one life was fading slowly, for which thousands amongst them would have very willingly given their own. John Calvin lay on his death-bed.

Better would it have been—incomparably better!—for his fame in after ages, if he had died, like Louis de Marsac, on the burning pile. It was no fault of his that he did not.—No fault, but a virtue; a grand, calm faithfulness to duty, and to God's appointment for him. He knew that the general must not volunteer for the forlorn hope. That would be a sublime selfishness,

The Passing of Calvin

perhaps—but selfishness still. And to the tremendous interests committed to him it would have meant irretrievable disaster.

Nevertheless, God did not deny His servant the opportunity of witnessing for Him in suffering. Long months of pain and weakness were appointed him, during which his faith and patience never failed. No murmur passed his lips, though sometimes he was heard to breathe the words that showed a longing for release, 'How long, O Lord?'

There is something, not pathetic only but ennobling, in the loving watch kept thus by a nation or community around the death-bed of a great and honoured son. A common love and sorrow bind all together; strife and conflict are suspended, the passions and controversies of the past grow dim and disappear. Then the things not seen, which are eternal, rise before us in their solemn majesty; and the thoughts of all are turned, not to the incidents and vicissitudes of the career that is closing, but to the destiny of the great soul going forth alone to meet the Infinite. The time has not come to ask—What has this man done? what is the result and outcome of his work in the world? We ask, instead, Is the Rock of Ages beneath those solitary spirit feet, as they step out into that darkness where none of us as yet has trod, but where each one of us must tread one day?

None could doubt that the feet of John Calvin were fixed upon that Rock. All the strength of his strong soul rested upon his God; and therefore, up to the last, his heart was at 'leisure from itself' to pursue calmly the work of his life—to write, to teach, to counsel, to

Under Calvin's Spell

command—as long as physical strength remained to him to hold a pen or to utter a word.

But events affect us, not in proportion to their importance, but to their nearness, which, nevertheless, is really their importance *for us*. It was not long after Calvin's last sermon, which was preached in St. Peter's, on February 6, 1562, that, first Marguerite and then Claudine, sickened of the plague. Neither showed the more violent symptoms of the terrible malady; in Marguerite's case there was little delirium, in Claudine's none at all. Yet Gabrielle, knowing the weakness of both, looked upon both from the first as doomed. With the good help of Bénéôte, now a very capable servant, she set herself resolutely to the task of tending them, in the dreary isolation the circumstances demanded. She gave due information to the *dizenier* of the quarter, placed upon the door the sign required by the law, and made all the other necessary arrangements. The dealer in fruit withdrew his stores to another place, so the house was left to her entirely. She knew that their friend and pastor, Master Poupin (who seemed now to have no fear whatever of the malady), would not abandon them, and she calculated on the professional services of the Apothecary Aubert; but she would by no means allow their kind neighbours next door to render any help, on account of the danger of infection.

The morning after the sickness declared itself Bénéôte heard a knocking at the street door, and put her head out of an upper window to answer. An animated colloquy followed, and more than ten minutes elapsed before the young servant stole to the door of

The Passing of Calvin

Marguerite's room, where Gabrielle was, and beckoned her out.

'Never was there such a gentleman,' she said, evidently much excited. 'My damoiselle, I have had a world of trouble with him. But determined I was that he should not disturb you, whatever he chose to say. Think of any one in his senses wanting us to let him into the house, to abide downstairs in the empty rooms! I told him it was clean against the law, and we might be fined, and made to ask pardon on our knees of God and the city; but I might as well have spoken to the fish in the lake.'

'But, Bénéôte—who—who was it?'

'Who should it be, my damoiselle, but the blind gentleman himself, and his servant too? They faced me down, both of them together, that the servant would help us in all manner of ways, and that we would need a man's strength, ere all was over. But I stuck to my text, for I knew what you would say, damoiselle, and that it would be harder for you to say it than for me. I said *we* were good Christians, and law-abiding, whatever Frenchmen might think of the matter. Then they argued, it was no breaking of the law on our side, if we warned them fairly; nor on theirs, if they did not go forth again. But I would hear no more; I said I had my business to attend to, and must go.'

'You did right, Bénéôte—quite right. Only, it was such a kind thought—though an utter madness! I would you had told me, and I would have spoken to him and thanked him.'

'Thanked him? Surely, damoiselle, you know that he worships——'

Under Calvin's Spell

'Oh, Bénéôte, I can't stay for more words. Go you to Marguerite now, for I must attend to my aunt. I think she too is very ill, God help us!'

'And He will, my damoiselle. One thing more I must tell you. To pacify that poor gentleman in his sore distress, I promised to let down every day a basket, which they will fill with such things as may help or solace you.'

After that, over Gabrielle the shadow deepened slowly and surely. The long days passed, as days pass everywhere, with watchers by the sick and dying. They were sad days, yet too full of 'thronging duties' to be altogether dreary: mind and body were too busy for much grieving, and when afterwards Gabrielle looked back upon the time, it seemed more like a long, troubled dream than one of actual suffering.

Sister Claudine was the first to go, and with her God's messenger dealt very tenderly. There was little pain, and no fear. The weak, gentle spirit had long been treading the pathway of life as one walks in a dense fog, where old landmarks are obliterated, and all is doubt and dimness. Which was right, the Old Faith or the New? For years she clung to the Old, but of late her grasp on it had loosened, and her feeble, trembling feet scarce knew where to go. Only always, through the fog, a light had been shining faintly. It was there from the first, and to the last she never ceased to see it. Nay, at the last it burned brighter than it had ever done; the mists around it cleared, vanished, and she saw it, and rejoiced. For it came from the face of Him who said, 'Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'

The Passing of Calvin

With old Marguerite's vigorous, untrained mind and strong energetic character all was different. No fogs of any kind troubled her, no uncertainties beset her. Before her the Eternal Future lay clear and plain, mapped out like the streets of Geneva, only, unlike them, in uncompromising squares of blackest black and whitest white. One went forth into that world elect, regenerate, sanctified—or reprobate, impenitent, 'dead in trespasses and sins.' And as for her, she belonged to the Regenerate; having received the Truth in the love of it many years ago from the lips of Master Calvin himself. But no 'system' ever yet devised can save strong souls from the conflict which is their birthright, and their necessary training. In the hours of sickness, weariness, and pain, Marguerite began to doubt her 'calling and election,' and to think that all these years she had been self-deceived, or a hypocrite. Then was Gabrielle strong to sustain and comfort, and to breathe words of heavenly hope and trust into the failing ear. For some hours before the end old Marguerite was unconscious, but peace was in the worn, aged face; and it was with a thankful though sorrowing heart that Gabrielle closed the eyes of her faithful servant and friend.

Then she sat solitary in the silent house. She was very tired, so tired that she would gladly have welcomed God's messenger Death, if he had come for her also. But she did not grieve much—at least not consciously. Rather she felt as one whose day's work is done, and who is well content to have it so. She had come to the last page of the story, and was ready now to shut the book and to go to sleep. But we have often to learn,

Under Calvin's Spell

even on earth, that what we think endings are really fresh beginnings. And, after all, she was only six and twenty.

One day, just when the danger of infection was considered quite over, Bénéôte came to her with an earnest petition. 'Grandmother is not so strong as she used to be,' said the girl. 'And there are all those men-folk next door to be done for, and Mistress Calvin ever in the Rue des Chanoines, so taken up with tending Master Calvin in his sickness that she scarcely knows whether there is meat in the house to eat, or a billet of wood to cook it with. I think, damoiselle, that if you would give me good leave for an hour or two, I might help her a little.'

'You could help her a great deal, Bénéôte,' said Gabrielle, rousing herself. 'And perhaps I can help also. There is nought to do that need keep us here.'

Gabrielle soon found her hands full, and recognized with thankfulness that God had sent her, in her loneliness, a very definite work to do, and one well worth the doing. For though the dying Reformer was surrounded with attached and faithful friends—stern, strong men, who to him were tender as women—there would have been, but for his brother's wife, no woman's hand to supply that which has been in all ages woman's special gift and ministry. And Gabrielle, by attending for the time to the wants of Mistress Calvin's large household, was setting her free for this ministry, thus giving much more than a cup of cold water to a prophet in the name of a prophet.

One forenoon, Mistress Calvin came back early from the Rue des Chanoines, and told Gabrielle she would

The Passing of Calvin

stay and prepare the dinner, 'For,' she added, 'you must go at once to my brother. He has asked for you—to say farewell.'

There was nothing strange in this. Gabrielle's sorrows, her consistent Christian character, and her helpfulness in all good works, had long since won for her the esteem of the great Reformer, to whom also she was dear for the sake of his young favourite, Louis de Marsac. Gabrielle Berthelier and Ambrose de Marsac were the joint heirs of his love for Louis ; and he always thought of the two together.

Gabrielle threw on her hood and cloak, and went with rapid steps to the Rue des Chanoines. Calvin's young secretary, Charles de Joinvilliers, opened the door for her, and led her in silence to the chamber of sickness, soon to be the chamber of death.

John Calvin lay, or rather reclined, upon the pillows that supported him. He was very weak, and breathed with evident difficulty. His face, always pale, was deathlike now, the cheeks sunken, the lips a greyish white. Only the great luminous eyes burned with their wonted fire ; and as he bent them on the sorrowful face of Gabrielle, she felt her whole being subdued and dominated by his. Never was he more a king than when he lay there frail and faint, in the very shadow of the grave.

She sank on her knees beside him, and in a broken voice asked for his blessing, as for a father's.

Calvin raised, with effort, his thin transparent hand, signing to his secretary to leave them alone.

Then he said—his voice was low and weak and often interrupted—'Rise, my daughter. I know thy

Under Calvin's Spell

sorrows. I would speak with thee, ere I speak for thee to God.'

She obeyed. He motioned her to take the seat Joinvilliers had placed for her, following her with those eyes that seemed to read the very heart. 'Here,' he said, "'have we no continuing city.'"

Did she not know it already? She bowed her head in silence.

"'But we seek one to come.'" And while we seek it let us be found doing the will of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.'

'My father,' said Gabrielle softly, 'I fain would do it.'

'My daughter, I know it. And therefore, partly, I have sent for thee.'

Gabrielle's heart beat more quickly at the words. Could it be that he had some special work of faith or love to commend to her, now he knew she was left alone, without home ties or home claims? How gladly she would do it! Such a mission from such lips would be as new life throbbing through her veins. She answered in low, pleading tones. 'Father, tell me His will for me, that I may do it.'

'Each of us has to find it for himself.'

'But you, sir, you know so much——'

'Perhaps I do, *now*. Standing on the hill-top we see not only the land we go to, but the land we leave. If I be not mistaken, I think I see a work which only you can do.'

'*Only I?*'

'Yes. One true, noble heart which only you can help and comfort.'

The Passing of Calvin

Gabrielle's own heart dropped down with a sudden shock. She waited, trembling, for the rest.

It came. 'There is one darkened life of which you can be the light. Ambrose de Marsac desires you for his wife.'

Gabrielle's face grew almost as white as that upon the pillow. She did not speak, but rose to her feet, stood for a moment in silence, then sank down on her knees again.

The hand whose touch was a consecration rested gently on her head. 'A good man's love is no gift to be lightly put away,' said John Calvin.

'But—if—I—*cannot*—' Gabrielle said slowly.

'We can always do the will of God.'

'Not this thing—oh, not this! My father, you know all.'

'Yes; I know.' There was a long pause, during which Gabrielle's heart made passionate outcry, though her lips were silent. Then he said, and his tones had in them a strange tenderness, 'My daughter, the best and noblest woman I ever knew had laid in the grave the husband of her youth. She sorrowed; yet at the call of duty she turned back to life, and took up its burdens again—to be for nine years the help-meet and comforter of one—most unworthy—whose days were full of pain and peril.' Then, for a moment, Gabrielle's presence seemed forgotten, as the earnest eyes turned heavenward, and the pale lips murmured, "'Them also that sleep in Jesus.'"

Gabrielle was moved to the very depths. That the most reticent of men should have broken down, for her sake, his habitual reserve, and spoken to her of his lost

Under Calvin's Spell

Idelette, drew her to him with a force she could not resist. Surely *now* she could refuse him nothing. *Now?* At what time could a faithful daughter of Geneva have refused the urgent personal request of Master John Calvin? Surely one who lived so near to God must know always what was best—what was right—for every one. A fateful word was quivering on her lips when, in the adjoining room, the well-known voice of Dr. Theodore Beza was heard speaking to the secretary. 'Important news'—'If Master Calvin is able'—'see him at once'—so the words came to her brokenly.

They came also to the ears which, until death should seal them, must be ever open to the cares of all the Churches.

'Remember,' he said to Gabrielle, 'I do not enjoin, I only *request*. Consider my words, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.'

Then followed the solemn words of blessing, not the blessing of the Old Covenant but of the New—Grace, Love, Communion. Then, as Beza and the secretary entered, Gabrielle kissed the wasted hand, took her last reverent look at the face of the man who had swayed her life, and the lives of all she loved, and passed out in silence.

She went back to the Rue Cornavin with a heart like lead. She had said farewell to him who was to her, as to every true Genevan, truly 'the anointed of the Lord, the breath of their nostrils;' yet her chief thought was not that Master Calvin was dying, but that Master Calvin had asked of her something which it would break her heart to grant. Yet the possibility of refusing was not for a moment to be contemplated—did not even

The Passing of Calvin

enter into her thoughts. Should Master Calvin die with a wish unfulfilled—and through her?

She returned that night to her solitary home, leaving Bénoîte with the Calvins.

The whole bent of her nature was towards self-sacrifice, and all her training had strengthened and developed it. She was one of those people who are apt to think the most repugnant course must needs be the right one. That, against this thing she was asked to do her whole soul was one outcry of passionate pain, was no reason why she should not do it, rather a reason why she should. If she had learned anything in the austere school of Genevan thought, it was the lesson of self-abnegation. She had not rebelled against the destiny that sent her as a victim to Savoy; she had bowed in meek submission to the martyrdom of Louis—why not bow to *this*, which seemed the lot marked out for him? M. Ambrose de Marsac was indeed what Master Calvin had called him, a good man and true, and she had not to learn now that he loved her. It had long been a haunting care to her, a perplexity she knew she must one day deal with, though, while she possibly could, she kept it in the background of her thoughts. Now it had come to the front; it stood right across her path. There was but one thing to do with it. She would ask the grace of God that she might do that thing well and rightly. And for the rest, what did it matter? Life was short, and would be soon over.

In the old home, where that night she fought her battle out alone, all was still, very silent. Sometimes a board creaked, or a mouse stirred behind the wainscot.

Under Calvin's Spell

That was all. Gabrielle had no thought of fear, although the supernatural world was nearer to her than to us, and—

‘Voices and visions from the sphere of those
That have to die no more,’

would have been far more easily credible. Why should she fear, when all she knew in that world beyond the grave were the beloved and the loving? If her will could have summoned them to her side, she would have welcomed their presence, and rejoiced in it with exceeding joy.

But the only presence that came to her in the watches of the night was the remembered face of the venerated teacher, with the seal of death upon it, which yet could not hide that look of thought and care, even of tenderness, for her. His words sounded in her ears, ‘I do not enjoin, I only request.’ In that they were no command, they came to her with a strength more irresistible than the most imperative of commands.

Why then these long hours of conflict? She told herself it was not conflict at all; where duty was plain, conflict could not enter. Yet, for all that, in that torn heart of hers there was an agonizing struggle, and a sore wrestling with the Spirit until the breaking of the day.

In the darkness just before that breaking of the day, a cry came up to her from the silent street. It was nothing more than the old familiar cry, telling of household tasks, ‘*La four chauffe.*’ Yet, in an instant, it brought her back to that winter morning long ago, when she came forth trembling, a timid child, bent upon a formidable and unaccustomed errand. Two brave

The Passing of Calvin

young servitors stepped out of the darkness, as if by magic, to contend for the joy of helping her then—ah, where were they now? With the familiar image of Louis, so cherished through long years, there came to her also, as of necessity, the thought of Norbert. The two were bound together, therefore *both* were bound to her as none else could be. Perhaps even there rested on Norbert a little of the sacredness of him whose last earthly sorrow he had comforted, whose last earthly wish he had fulfilled.

Then a new thought came to her, suddenly, as if not from within, but from without, perhaps from Above. 'If I do this thing, shall I indeed be *true*—true to Ambrose de Marsac, and true to myself?' It was a strange thought to come to a woman of the sixteenth century, trained as Gabrielle had been to unquestioning submission. On the other hand, it was the special training of the woman of Geneva—the woman of the New Religion—which caused her to put 'truth in the inward parts' before everything else. That training did something more. It gave a tremendous impetus to the development of individuality. It took her out of all shelter of delegated responsibility, and set her, a solitary human soul, burdened with the inalienable right and the awful duty of 'private judgment,' before the bar of conscience and of God. Calvin's teaching would not have been wholly successful for her, if to Calvin himself she could submit the issues of her life, as to one who might answer for her there.

She had no thought of sleep. That short May night seemed to her a lifetime; and yet she was surprised when the morning sun shone into her uncurtained

Under Calvin's Spell

window. In these transports of the soul, time is not long or short ; it is non-existent.

At an hour in Genevan estimation by no means early, she heard Bénévoite knocking at the street door, and went down to admit her. She saw at once that the girl had been weeping, and only one possible cause for tears occurring to her mind, asked anxiously, 'Is he gone?'

'Master Calvin? On the contrary, my damoiselle, Mistress Calvin has just come in, and says he had a good night, But oh, there is sad news! Sad—sad——'

'What news?' asked Gabrielle, with the composure of one who has learned to look for sorrow. In those days of blood and fire, the friends of the New Faith had acquired through much suffering the grace of not being 'soon disturbed or shaken in mind.'

'A Grey-foot told it, who came late, after lights were out last night. Oh, damoiselle, the best and bravest of them all! I only hope they will have sense to keep it from Master Calvin, who loves him as a son. But he hears everything—worse luck!'

'But *who* is it? Dr. Beza? M. Viret? No; for they are here——'

'Who but Master Norbert, the "friend of the martyrs," as they call him? Every one's friend he was, the noble, grand, young gentleman, just like a prince! God help us all, and his father above all! Sure, it will break his heart.' Bénévoite broke down again, and stood upon the doorstep weeping bitterly.

Gabrielle trembled from head to foot. 'Has he been—*martyred*?' she asked at last, and the words came out with difficulty.

The Passing of Calvin

‘Well—no,’ Bénoîte answered, when she could speak. ‘If ’tis comfort to know he died in his bed, we may—we may——’

Gabrielle motioned to her to come in, holding the door open for her. When she had closed it again behind her she said faintly, ‘Tell me all.’

‘’Twas the Sickness. ’Tis worse, it seems, in Savoy than even here. He came to Lormayeur with it on him, already struck for death. But the Count of Lormayeur and his lady, being friendly to our people, took him in and cared for him; which, considering they are Papists, seems an act of Christian charity hard to believe. And then—’ she finished with a sob, ‘there, on the third day—he died.’

‘But I don’t understand. He was not in Savoy, but in France,’ faltered Gabrielle, bewildered. More than once, during the watches of that strange night, she had prayed for him, and for the faithful in Besançon to whom Master Calvin, just before his illness, had sent him on some mission. How little she knew! How little any one knew! And how infinitely little anything mattered, save to do the will of God!

But that will was not to be done by sitting solitary, and weeping for the dead—who were not *her* dead, even. It demanded, not resignation only, but action. So Gabrielle presently girded her soul with strength, and went to the house of her friends, to perform the daily round of necessary homely duties, and thus to set the burdened wife and mother free for the weightier task that had devolved upon her.

As she worked on, ‘toiling still with busy hand,’ some things she had not understood before grew clear

Under Calvin's Spell

and plain to her. A sudden sorrow, like a lightning flash in the darkness, is a great revealer. She could not have put these things into words to save her very life, yet there they stood, not to be ignored or mistaken. *Now* she knew what was right, could recognize and name it, as she 'called her hand her own.' And that thing for her was revealed to herself alone, not to any other being on earth, not even to Master John Calvin. That was what the text meant that bade her call no man her father on earth, for One was her Father, even God. She could never be the wife of Ambrose de Marsac. For, while it is *sometimes* God's will that we should sacrifice ourselves to others, it is *always* His will that we should be just and true—to others, and no less to ourselves also. If she were to do this thing, she would be just and true neither to Ambrose de Marsac, nor yet to another person, one Gabrielle Berthelier, who also had rights and claims, whom God had redeemed, for whom He cared, and for whom He would reckon with her at the Last Day.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE END

A FEW days later, two wayfarers from Switzerland to Geneva drew near the Porte de Rive. One was of low stature, bent still lower by age and weakness. Dusty and travel-worn, he leant heavily on the arm of his companion, a tall young man of six or seven and twenty, with a well-knit, athletic frame and handsome face. Norbert de Caulaincourt was doing his work well in the Church and in the world: every feature, every movement showed the brave and capable man, prompt to serve, fit to rule, and ready for either as God willed. His face, at once powerful and refined, was just now shaded with sorrow. His fellow-traveller, the aged Reformer, William Farel, had been repeating to him word for word—for he knew every word by heart—Master Calvin's last letter to himself.

'Farewell, my best and most faithful brother, since it is God's will that you should survive; live in the constant recollection of our union, which, in so far as it was useful to the Church of God, will still bear for us abiding fruit in heaven. I wish you not to fatigue yourself on my account. My breath is weak, and I continually expect it to leave me. It is enough for me

Under Calvin's Spell

that I live and die in Christ, who is gain to His people both in life and death. Once more farewell to thee, and to all the brethren thy colleagues.'

'And yet, father,' Norbert said, 'you come.'

'What would you have? We are brothers. And remember, it was I that gave him to Geneva. He said he wanted quiet to study and to write. And I—I invoked the curse of God upon his studies and his writings, if for them he refused the call to this city. When, for all answer, he laid his hand in mine, I knew that Geneva was saved. But I did *not* know then that so was the cause of Truth throughout the world. Young man, I am no prophet, but this I can tell you—so long as the world lasts neither the name of John Calvin nor the work he has done will be forgotten.'

A sigh of weariness interrupted the eager words. The old man of fourscore had toiled on foot all the weary way from Neufchatel to Geneva, for this farewell visit to the friend and brother of his heart.

'Here we are, father,' said Norbert, as they approached the gate. 'God grant we be in time!'

'He *will* grant it,' said the sanguine Farel.

In fact, a day and a night of sweet communion were given to these friends of thirty years, as they waited together on the borders of the river, not dark to either, and bright indeed to him whose footsteps were to cross it first.

When Norbert and Farel passed together through the gate, Norbert of course supposed that the aged Reformer, whom no one in Geneva had expected ever to see again, would be the centre of universal interest. What was his amazement when, scarcely noticing his

The End

venerable companion, every one crowded round *him*, cheering, congratulating, welcoming—some even weeping for joy! His fellow-townsmen all knew him, and nearly all loved him—but what had he done to deserve from them such a reception as this? People he scarcely recognized pressed about him, eager to touch his hand, to embrace him even, if they could; and he could hear the cry that ran along the street, bringing the women and children out of the houses—‘Norbert de Caulaincourt is here! Norbert de Caulaincourt has come back!’

It was really some minutes before he understood, so bewildered was he by the unexpected ovation. At last it was the cry of a poor crippled lad whom he had befriended that brought him illumination. ‘Thank God, Master Norbert, you were dead, and are alive again!’

‘If I was, I never heard of it,’ said Norbert. ‘Who told you?’

‘A grey-foot; said you died in Savoy, of the Sickness.’

‘I have not been in Savoy since you saw me,’ said Norbert. Then, observing the fatigue of his aged companion, ‘Stay us not, dear friends,’ he added. ‘Master Farel is very weary, having travelled on foot from Neufchatel. Let me bring him without delay to Master Calvin. And tell us, I pray you, how it goes with him?’

‘No change, M. Norbert, save that he grows weaker every day. But the news of your safety will do him good.’

Half an hour afterwards, Norbert was knocking at the door of the bookbinder in the Rue Cornavin. It was opened to him by Gabrielle Berthelier—and the news of his return had not reached her yet.

Under Calvin's Spell

She had kept a long and weary watch beside two sick beds, followed by hard work in the household of her friends, and ending in the supreme emotion of her interview with Calvin, the night of anguish afterwards, and the next morning's shock and horror. Her soul had been strong to suffer, but her frame was not strong enough to bear the revulsion of a sudden joy. Never having swooned before, her amazement was great when she found herself presently in Norbert's arms, while half the household stood around them with frightened faces. The first thing she heard was Antoine Calvin's kind voice. 'She is coming to herself,' he said; and then he helped Norbert to lay her comfortably upon a settle in the living-room. 'Poor child!' he added, as he placed a pillow under her head, 'she is worn out. She needs comfort. Comfort her thou, Master Norbert.'

Later, Ambrose de Marsac came, full of joy, to congratulate Norbert, having heard of his safe return. He was well acquainted with the house of the Calvins, so he asked Grillet to leave him at the door, which chanced to be open, and to come back for him in an hour. Guided by the voice of Norbert, he went on boldly, and turned into the room from which the sound came. Perhaps it was well for him then that the gift of sight was denied. For Norbert and Gabrielle stood together, and on both their faces was a look that would have gone to his heart like a dagger.

Norbert was instantly at his side, grasping his hand. But Ambrose, after the French manner, embraced him heartily, saying in the gladness of his heart, "This my brother was dead, and is alive again."

The End

‘Ay ; my good friends have had a vain alarm about me. But I am still very anxious on my father’s account. The story, I fear, may be true of him. He has been in Savoy.’

‘I don’t think it. There is no depending on these grey-feet, they tell so many lies. Besides, our man was confident it was you. “The young gentleman,” he said.’ Here he paused, ‘Norbert, there is some one else in the room. Who is it?’

‘It is I,’ said Gabrielle, coming forward, and laying her hand gently on his arm.

The face with the darkened windows seemed to glow with some inner light. ‘It needed not to speak,’ he said, ‘the step, the touch told.’

‘And you will be yet more glad for me,’ Norbert began ; but Gabrielle withdrew her hand from Ambrose to place it warningly on his.

‘More glad for you?’ repeated Ambrose. ‘Why?’

Gabrielle’s gesture of warning was lost upon Norbert. He answered simply, though his voice had in it an under-thrill of feeling, ‘Because, not five minutes ago, Gabrielle Berthelier promised to be my wife.’

There was a long silence. Many changes passed over the blind man’s face, revealing nothing new to Gabrielle, but to Norbert, much. At last, Ambrose de Marsac, gentleman of France, with a calm and self-repression worthy of his race, made courteous answer to Norbert de Caulaincourt—

‘Brother, thou art no prodigal ; though, like him, thou comest back to a joyful welcome. Nor will I be the elder son. Take the best robe and the ring—yea, take the crown also, and God bless thee!’

Under Calvin's Spell

He turned to go. Norbert sprang forward, offering his arm, but he put it aside. 'Grillet will come,' he said. 'Stay thou with mademoiselle.'

How it had all come about, neither Norbert nor Gabrielle ever told; although neither then nor after had either the smallest doubt that it was the thing that 'had to be.'

A few days afterwards, on the evening of the 19th of May, Germain de Caulaincourt returned in safety, to the great joy and relief of his son, who had been vainly trying to get tidings of him. It was true that he had been ill, though not of the plague; and true, also, that he had been hospitably received and tended at Lormayeur, from whence he had hastened, hoping to be in time to see Master Calvin once more. He was not disappointed.

The day following, the 20th of May, the pastors of Geneva used to meet together every year for what we should call a 'clerical dinner,' though they called it 'the Censures,' because they were supposed to use the opportunity for 'fraternally admonishing' one another. On this occasion it was Calvin's particular desire to have the entertainment at his house, so as to meet once more with his dear brethren. The two Caulaincourts were among the invited guests; since, though not ordained pastors, they were recognized and honoured servants of the Church.

Strengthened by an adamantine will, perhaps also by the last flicker of the failing lamp of life, Calvin took his seat at the table, and offered a short prayer. He even ate a little, 'endeavouring to enliven us,' as Beza, his friend and biographer, said afterwards. Those around him sought to keep up the appearance of

The End

cheerfulness by at least a semblance of ordinary talk. Presently, in a momentary lull of voices, Pastor Poupin was heard saying to some one who sat near, 'We shall meet on Monday at the betrothal of Norbert de Caulaincourt and Gabrielle Berthelier.' The words caught that keen and eager ear which was so soon to be closed to all earthly sounds. The dying man, with something like a start, raised himself slightly, and looked full at Norbert, as one surprised. Then, in a moment, the surprised look passed, the searching eyes softened, and the pale face relaxed into a smile of content and acquiescence. For now the ruler had laid down his sceptre, the steward had given up his charge into the Master's own hand, where it was safer far than it had been in his. Norbert never forgot that look, although he did not then know its full significance. It was a benediction without words.

Soon afterwards it became evident to the guests that their host was utterly exhausted, and Beza and the others entreated him to rest; so he was borne by loving hands to the adjoining room, and laid upon the couch he was never to leave again.

After that day he spoke with men scarce at all, but with God continually. The week that remained to him on earth seemed but one long impassioned prayer. At last, on the evening of the 27th of May, the watchers around him heard him saying, 'The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory——' Here his voice failed, and in another moment that glory was 'revealed' to him. After his name in the Consistorial registry were inscribed the simple words, 'Went to God, Saturday the 27th.'

Under Calvin's Spell

There was a grave in the Plain-palais, undistinguished by name, or mark, or monument. But the mark was upon the history of the Church and the world, and the monument was Geneva, the city of his creation. She continued long what he made her, the refuge of the oppressed, and the stronghold of Protestantism. Many children she had who rose up to call her blessed, and amongst them none nobler, more loving, and more beloved than Norbert de Caulaincourt and his wife, Gabrielle Berthelier. For some years Norbert continued, through much peril, to pursue the calling he had chosen for himself; and he was known in more lands than one by the honourable title of 'the friend of the martyrs.' Eventually he was ordained, and accepted a pastorate in Genevan territory, though he still made frequent journeys into foreign lands on the business of the Churches. During one of the brief breathing times, when the Huguenots of France enjoyed peace and toleration, he went with his father to Gourgolles; and there, to the intense satisfaction of the elder De Caulaincourt, the ties of affection were re-knit once more. All the family were friendly; Norbert even found a promising young nephew willing to embrace Protestantism, and to come to Geneva to complete his education at the celebrated academy.

For himself, he ever returned with joy and gladness to the happy home of which Gabrielle was the centre. A group of merry children grew around them. Louis, the first-born, was the pride and treasure of his blind godfather, Ambrose de Marsac; whilst Ami, the next in age, gave all the love he could spare from home to their frequent visitor, the stately, learned, and gracious Dr.

The End

Theodore Beza. The three little sisters who made the household band complete were Claudine, Arletta, and—so called at the special request of Gabrielle—*Yolande*. All entered early upon their traditional inheritance of high thought and noble living; and all held it unproved, and passed it on undimmed and untarnished, to those that should come after.

THE END

OCT 7 1910

BRENTANO'S
Booksellers & Stationers,
Washington, D. C.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00022335005

