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THE POCKET BIBLE

THE FULL SERIES OF
The Mysteries of the People

:: OR ::

History of a Proletarian Family
Across the Ages

B y E U G E N E S U E

Consisting of the Following Works:

THE GOLD SICKLE; or, *Hena the Virgin of the Isle of Sen.*

THE BRASS BELL; or, *The Chariot of Death.*

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THE POCKET BIBLE

:: :: OR :: ::

CHRISTIAN THE PRINTER

A Tale of the Sixteenth Century

By EUGENE SUE

In Two Volumes

Vol. II.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH

By DANIEL DE LEON

NEW YORK LABOR NEWS COMPANY. 1910

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PART II.
THE HUGUENOTS.

INTRODUCTION.

Thirty-four years have elapsed since the martyrdom of Hena Lebrenn, Ernest Rennepont and the other heretics who were burned alive before the parvise of Notre Dame, in the presence of King Francis I and his court on January 21, 1535. To-day, I, Antonicq Lebrenn, son of Odelin and grandson of Christian the printer, proceed with the narrative broken off above.

Safely established at La Rochelle, Christian was joined in that city by his son Odelin and Josephin, the Franc-Taupin. Already shattered in body on account of the profound sorrow caused by the death of his wife Bridget and the revelation concerning the incestuous attempt made by his son Hervé, the news of the frightful death of his daughter Hena overwhelmed my grandfather. He did not long survive that last blow. He languished about a year longer, wrote the narrative of which the following one is the sequel, and died on December 17 of the same year at La Rochelle, where he exercised his printer's trade at the establishment of Master Auger, a friend of Robert Estienne. The latter himself ended his days in exile at Geneva.

Odelin Lebrenn, my father, devoted himself, as in his youth, to the armorer's trade. He worked in the establishment of Master Raimbaud, who also settled down in

La Rochelle in 1535. The old armorer drove a lucrative trade in his beautiful arms, with England. Thanks to their energy and their municipal franchises, the Rochelois, partisans of the Reformation by an overwhelming majority, and protected by the well-nigh impregnable position of their city, experienced but slightly the persecutions that dyed red the other provinces of Gaul until the day when the Protestants took up arms against their oppressors. The hour of revolt having sounded, the Rochelois were bound to be the first to take the field. Having married in 1545 Marcienne, the sister of Captain Mirant, one of the ablest and most daring sailors of La Rochelle, my father had three children from this marriage—Theresa, born in 1546; me, Antonicq, born in 1549; and Marguerite, born in 1551. I embraced the profession of my father, who, upon the death of Master Raimbaud, deceased without heirs, succeeded to the latter's business.

About four years ago, the hardship of the times brought to La Rochelle, where, together with other Protestants he sought refuge, Louis Rennepont, a nephew of Brother St. Ernest-Martyr, the bridegroom of Hena, who was burned together with her. Informed by his father of the tragic death of the Augustinian monk, Louis Rennepont conceived a horror for the creed of Rome, in whose name such atrocities were committed, and after his father's death he entered the Evangelical church. An advocate in the parliament of Paris, and indicted for heresy, he escaped the stake by his flight to La Rochelle. One day, as he strolled along the quay before our house, my father's sign—*Odelin Lebrenn, Armorer*—caught his eye. He

stepped in to inquire into our relationship with Hena Le-brenn. From us he gathered the information that Hena was his uncle's wife, married to him by a Reformed pastor. Louis Rennepont, from that time almost a relative of ours, continued to visit the house. He soon seemed smitten with the grace and virtues of my sister Theresa. His love was reciprocated. He was a young man of noble heart, and of a modest and industrious disposition. Stripped of his patrimony by the sentence of heresy, he earned his living at La Rochelle with his profession of advocate. My father appreciated the merits of Louis Rennepont, and granted him my sister Theresa. They were married in 1568. Their happiness justifies my father's hopes.

My youngest sister Marguerite disappeared from the paternal home at the age of eight, under rather mysterious circumstances which I shall here state.

Since his establishment at La Rochelle, my father was animated by a lively desire to take us all—mother, sisters and myself—to Brittany, on a kind of pious pilgrimage to the scene of our family's origin, near the sacred stones of Karnak. The journey by land was short, but the religious war included in those days Brittany also in its ravages. My father feared to risk himself and family among the warring factions. His brother-in-law Mirant, the sailor, having to cross from La Rochelle to Dover, proposed that my father take ship with him on his brigantine. The vessel was to touch at Vannes, the port nearest Karnak. Our pilgrimage accomplished, we were to set sail for Dover, whither my father frequently consigned

arms, and where he would have the opportunity of a personal interview with his correspondent in that place. After that, my uncle Mirant was to return to France with a cargo of merchandise. Our absence would not exceed three weeks. My father accepted the proposition with joy. Shortly before the day of our departure my sister Marguerite was taken sick. The distemper was not dangerous, but it prevented her from joining in the trip, the day for which was set and could not be postponed. My parents left her behind in the charge of her god-mother, an excellent woman, the wife of John Barbot, a master copper-smith. We departed for Vannes on board the brigantine of Captain Mirant. My sister Marguerite recovered soon after. Her god-mother frequently took her out for a walk beyond the ramparts. One day the child was playing with other little girls near a clump of trees, and strayed away from Dame Barbot. When her god-mother looked for her to take her home, the child was nowhere to be found. The most diligent searches, instituted for weeks and months after the occurrence, were all in vain. The child had been abducted; the kidnappers remained undiscovered. Marguerite was wept and her loss grieved over by us all.

Our pilgrimage to Karnak, the cradle of the family of Joel, left a profound, an indelible impression upon me. I shall later return to some of the consequences of that trip. Captain Mirant, my mother's brother, a widower after only a few years' marriage, had a daughter named Cornelia. I loved her from early infancy as a sister. As we grew up our affection for each other waxed warmer. Our parents

expected to see us man and wife. Cornelia gave promise by her virtue and bravery of resembling one of those women belonging to the heroic age of Gaul, and of approving herself worthy of her ancestry. Having lost her mother when still a child, my cousin occasionally accompanied her father on his rough sea voyages. The character of the young girl, like her beauty, presented a mixture of virility, grace and strength. At the time when this narrative commences, Cornelia was sixteen years of age, myself twenty. We were betrothed, and our families had decided that we were to be united in wedlock three or four years later.

My grand-uncle the Franc-Taupin yielded, shortly after his arrival at La Rochelle, to the solicitations of my grandfather Christian, who, feeling his approaching dissolution, entreated the brave soldier of adventure not to separate himself from his nephew, soon surely to be an orphan. The Franc-Taupin adjourned the execution of his resolution to avenge the death of Bridget and Hena. He remained near my father Odelin and enrolled himself with the archers of the city. As a consequence of our family sorrows, he gave up his former disorderly life. The guardianship of his nephew, then still a lad, brought him new duties. He earned by his merit the post of sergeant of the city militia. But when the massacre of Vassy caused the Protestants to rise from one end of Gaul to the other, and these finally ran to arms, the Franc-Taupin departed to join the insurgents. He was elected the chief of his band, and proved himself pitiless in his acts of reprisal. He had sworn to revenge the papist atrocities committed upon his

sister and niece. The provinces of Anjou and Saintonge took a large part in the religious wars that broke out. My father, although married several years before, left his establishment to enlist himself among the volunteers of the Protestant army, and departed himself bravely under the orders of Coligny, Condé, Lanoüe and Dandelot. He was twice wounded. I accompanied him in the second armed uprising of 1568, when, alas! I had the misfortune of losing him. I took the field at his side as a volunteer, leaving in La Rochelle my mother, my sister Theresa, then the wife of Louis Rennepont, and my cousin Cornelia, who desired to join her father, Captain Mirant, on a cruise against the royal ships, while I was to combat on land in the army of Coligny.

CHAPTER I.

THE QUEEN'S "FLYING SQUADRON."

The Abbey of St. Severin, situated on the Limoges road not far from the town of Malraye, belonged to the Order of St. Bernard. Before the beginning of the religious wars, the abbey was a splendid monument, built by the hands of *Jacques Bonhomme*,¹ like so many other monasteries that dot the soil of France. As a church vassal, Jacques Bonhomme transported either upon his own back, or, to the still greater injury of field agriculture, with the help of oxen, the stones, the lumber, the sand and the lime requisite for the erection of these pretentious monastic residences. He thereupon carried to the idling monks the tithes on his corn, on his cattle, on his poultry, on his eggs, on his butter, on his wine, on his oil, on the fleece of his sheep, on his honey, on his linen, in short, the prime of all that he produced with the sweat of his brow. Then came the corvee²—to till the convent lands, to sow, weed and gather the crops thereon; to keep the convent roads in repair; to irrigate its meadows; to dredge its ponds; to serve as watchman; and finally to lay down his life in its defense against the roving bands of vagabonds and rob-

¹ "Jacques Bonhomme," literally Goodman Jack, or Jack Drudge.

² Contribution in forced labor.

bers. In return for all these services—when either old, or sick, or exhausted with toil, Jacques Bonhomme could work no more—he was allowed to hold out his bowl at the gate of the monastery, when the monks would occasionally deign to fill it with greasy water from their kitchen. When the church vassal was at his last breath, stretched upon the straw in his hut, the good Fathers came to assist and solace him with their *Oremus*.¹ “God created man for sorrow and poverty,” they would say to him; “you have suffered—God is pleased; you shall enjoy a famous seat in Paradise. Yours will be the delights of the celestial mansion.”

When the spirit of the Reformation penetrated some of the provinces, Jacques Bonhomme began to lend an ear to a new theory. “Poor, ignorant people, poor duped and defrauded people,” said the pastors of the new church; “offerings to saints, masses, and purgatory are idolatries, tricks, frauds, sacrilegious inventions with the aid of which the priests and monks appropriate to themselves the silver laid by fools upon the altars and at the feet of wooden and stone images. Good men! Read the sacred Book. You will discover that God forbids the traffic on which thousands of frocked and tonsured idlers grow fat.” In sight of such a revelation, based as it was upon the texts of Holy Writ, Jacques Bonhomme said to himself in his own rustic common sense: “’Tis so! I have been cheated, duped and robbed all these centuries by the Church of Rome!” Thereupon Jacques Bonhomme turned himself

¹ Latin: “Let us pray.”

loose upon the convents and churches; he overthrew, broke and profaned the altars, the relics and the statues of saints that had so long been the objects of his veneration.

On the other hand, in the provinces where the population remained under the mental domination of the clergy, Jacques Bonhomme turned himself loose upon the houses of Huguenots, set them on fire, slaughtered the men, violated the women, and dashed the brains of old men and children against the walls.

Occupied before the religious wars by the Bernardine monks, the Abbey of St. Severin had been repeatedly sacked, like so many other monastic resorts in the districts of Poitou, Berri and Limousin. Reared on an admirable site—the slope of a hill shaded by a thick forest—the convent clearly revealed the traces of a sack, freshly undergone: shattered windows, doors broken open or torn from their hinges, portions of the walls blackened by fire, and the capitals of the columns mutilated by the discharge of arquebuses and the fury of the devastators.

One day, towards the middle of the month of June, 1569, as the sun drew near the western horizon, the silence around the ruins of the Abbey of St. Severin was disturbed by the arrival of two squadrons of light cavalry belonging to the Catholic army. The cavalcade escorted a long convoy of pack-mules, the men in charge of whom wore the colors and arms of the royal house of France and of the house of Lorraine. The convoy entered the yard of the cloister. The lackeys unloaded the mules and took possession of the deserted abbey. True to their name, the

horsemen were armed in the lightest manner, with Burgundian helmets and breastplates, together with armlets and gauntlets, besides thigh-pieces partly covered by their boots; small arquebuses, only three feet long and well polished, hung from their saddle pommels, and short swords and iron maces completed their outfit.

The armed corps had for its commandant Count Neroweg of Plouernel, a man beyond sixty years of age, of rough, haughty and martial mien. From head to foot he was covered with armor damascened in gold. His Turkish silver-grey horse was cased at the neck, chest and crupper in light flexible sheets of chiseled and richly gilt steel. Its orange-colored velvet housings and saddle were ornamented with green and silver lace, the heraldic colors of the house of Plouernel. The jacket or floating coat that the Count wore above his armor was also of orange-colored velvet, and likewise embroidered with green and silver thread. The commandant of the detachment alighted from his horse; ordered the monastery to be searched; set up watches and sent out pickets over the principal roads that led to the place. He then remounted and rode away in the direction of Limoges, escorted by only one of the two squadrons.

Immediately after the departure of the Count, the quartermasters of Queen Catherine De Medici, assisted by her serving-men and those of Charles of Guise, Cardinal of Lorraine, fell to work on the task of imparting to the devastated halls of the abbey the most presentable appearance possible, with the view of lodging the Queen and the pre-

late whose arrival they expected. The mules, to the number of more than sixty, carried a complete traveling equipment on their pack-saddles, or in large trunks strapped to their backs—tent cloths, lambrequins, tapestry, easels, dismantled beds, curtains, mattresses, silver vessels, besides an abundance of eatables and wines with the necessary kitchen utensils, and even ice, in leather bags. The valets set to work with a will, and with a promptitude truly marvelous they tapestried the apartments destined for the Queen and for the Cardinal by hanging rich cloths, provided in advance with gilt hooks, from nails that they deftly drove along the upper edges of the walls. They then fitted out the two rooms with the necessary furniture brought by the mules. A chamber, separated from that of the Queen by a small passage was likewise prepared for the reception of the sovereign's four maids of honor. The pages, the knights, the chamberlains, the officers and the equerries were all quartered, as in time of war, in the out-houses of the abbey, the vast kitchen of which was invaded by the master cook and his aides, who prepared supper, while the stewards spread the royal table in the refectory of the monastery. Shortly before sunset forerunners announced the approach of the Queen. Upon the heels of the forerunners came a vanguard, and immediately after, several armed squadrons, in the center of which was the royal litter, enclosed with hangings of gold-embroidered violet velvet and carried by two mules, likewise in trappings of violet velvet. A second litter, not so richly decorated and empty at the time, was reserved for those maids of

honor who might tire of riding. These maids, however, together with their governess, had preferred to cover the distance on the backs of their richly caparisoned palfreys, the necks, flanks and cruppers of which were decked in embroidered velvet emblazoned with the arms of the royal house of France. Pages and equerries followed the maids of honor. The rear was brought up by the litter of the Cardinal of Lorraine, wrapped in purple taffeta hangings and surrounded by several leading dignitaries and Princes of the Church.

Before entering the yard of the abbey the prelate put his head out of his litter, and ordered one of his gentlemen-in-waiting to summon before him the commandant of the escort. Charles of Guise, Cardinal of Lorraine, was at that time forty-six years of age. His otherwise handsome features, now marred by debauchery, reflected shrewdness, craft, and above all haughtiness, these being the dominant traits of his character. Count Neroweg of Plouernel, who was summoned by the prelate, approached the litter.

“Monsieur,” said the Cardinal in an imperious tone, “do you answer for the safety of the Queen and myself?”

“Yes, Monsieur Cardinal.”

“Have you taken sufficient precautions against any surprise on the part of the Huguenot band known by the name of the ‘Avengers of Israel’ and captained by a felon nicknamed the ‘One-Eyed’?”

“Monsieur Cardinal, I answer with my life for the safety of the Queen. The Huguenot forces need not alarm us. His Majesty’s army covers our escort. Marshal

Tavannes is notified of the Queen's arrival; he has undoubtedly kept clear the route followed by her Majesty. I told your Eminence before that it would have been better to push straight ahead until we joined the army of Marshal Tavannes, instead of spending the night at this abbey."

"Do you imagine the Queen and I can travel like a couple of troopers, without alighting for rest?"

"Monsieur Cardinal," replied Count Neroweg of Plouernel haughtily, "it is not for others to remind me of the respect I owe her Majesty."

"Monsieur!" exclaimed the Cardinal angrily, "you seem to forget that you are addressing a Prince of the house of Lorraine. Be more respectful!"

"Monsieur Cardinal, if you know the history of your house, I know the history of mine. Pepin of Heristal, the grandfather of Charlemagne, from whom you pretend to descend, was but a rather insignificant specimen when the house of Neroweg, illustrious in Germany long before the Frankish conquest, was already established in Gaul for two centuries on its Salic domains of Auvergne, which it held from the sword of one of its own ancestors, a leude of Clovis—"

"Lower your tone, monsieur! Do not oblige me to remind you that Colonel Plouernel, your brother, is one of the military chiefs of the rebels who have risen in arms against the Church and the Crown."

The colloquy was interrupted at this point by the arrival of a page who hurried to announce to the Cardinal the entry of the Queen into the cloister.

Leaving Count Neroweg under the stigma of insinuated treason, the prelate stepped down from his litter in order to hasten to the Queen's side and render her his homage. Catherine De Medici was then in her fiftieth year. Not now was she, as on that fateful January 21, 1535, merely a Princess, and the young butt of the arrows of the Duchess of Etampes. Since then, Francis I had died and had been succeeded to the throne by her husband as Henry II, who, dying later from the consequences of an accident at a tourney, left her Queen Regent—absolute monarch. In point of appearance also Catherine De Medici was now her complete self. She preserved the traces of her youthful beauty. A slight corpulence impaired in nothing the majesty of her stature. Her shoulders, arms and hands—all of a dazzling whiteness—would, thanks to the perfection of their lines, have presented a noble model for a sculptor. Her hair preserved its pristine blackness, and was on this evening covered by the hood of a damask mantle, violet like her trailing robe, which exposed a front of brass. Cunning, perfidy, cruelty, were stamped upon her striking countenance. Catherine De Medici leaned upon the arm of her lover, the Cardinal of Lorraine, and entered the abbey, followed by her maids of honor, a bevy of ravishing young girls.

The maids of honor of Catherine De Medici indulged in these days, and by express orders of their mistress, in the strangest of doings. The ironical title was given them of the "Queen's Flying Squadron." Indeed, according as her policy might require, Catherine De Medici commanded her

maids of honor to prostitute themselves and take for their lovers the young seigneurs whom she wished to attract to her party, or whose secrets she wished to fathom. Occasionally the Queen even pointed out to her nymphs such court folks as she wished to be rid of. In such instances, René, the court perfumer, prepared the most subtle poisons and the surest to boot, wherewith the young maids impregnated the gloves of their lovers, or the petals of a flower, or smelling boxes, or the sugar plums which they offered to the victims designated to them. It was a customary saying of Catherine De Medici to her new female recruits: "My little one, you are free to worship at the shrine of Diana, or at that of Venus, but if you sacrifice to the little god Cupid, have an eye to the breadth of your waist."¹

After supper the Cardinal of Lorraine remained alone with the Queen. The maids of honor entertained themselves in a chamber adjoining the royal apartment. There were four of them, each of a different type of beauty. The youngest was eighteen years of age. A veneer of grace and elegance concealed the precocious degradation of the four beauties. They were superbly dressed. Catherine De Medici loved luxury; on their travels the members of her suite took with them, laden in trunks strapped to the backs of mules, complete outfits of splendid apparel. One of the maids of honor, Blanche of Verceil, was temporarily absent. Diana of Sauveterre, the senior of the Queen's squadron, was a white and pink beauty of the blonde type. She wore a blue waist ornamented with open gold lace-

¹ Brantoiné, *Illustrious Women*, vol. IX, p. 171.

work; her coif, made of white taffeta and surmounted with little curled feathers of blue and silver, marked with its point the middle of her forehead, whence, widening in two rounded wings to either side over her temples, it exposed an opulent growth of blonde hair combed back from the roots. Clorinde of Vaucernay, a dainty little creature with black hair and blue eyes, was clad in a waist and skirt of pale yellow damask threaded with silver; her bonnet, made of the same material, was embroidered with pearls. Finally, Anna Bell, the youngest and most beautiful of all, seemed to unite in her single person the different charms of the other maids of honor. Elegant of stature and with a skin of dazzling white, her thick light-brown hair contrasted marvelously with her eye-brows, jet-black like the long eyelashes which partly veiled her large, soft, brown eyes. The maid's rose-colored satin coat fell in graceful folds upon her robe of white satin. Her pink bonnet was surmounted by little white frizzled feathers. Anna Bell seemed to be in a mood of profound melancholy. Seated slightly apart from her companions, with her elbows leaning on a window that opened upon the enclosure of the abbey, she dreamily contemplated the starry sky, lending but an absentminded attention to the conversation of her sister maids of honor.

“Did I understand you to say there were philters that could make men amorous?” asked Clorinde of Vaucernay.

“Yes, indeed,” replied Diana of Sauveterre. “The effectiveness of certain philters is indisputable. In support of what I say I shall quote Madam Noirmoutier. She

succeeded in pouring a few drops of a certain liquid **into** Monsieur Langeais's glass. Before the repast was over, the young seigneur was crazy in love with her."

"And yet there are people who remain incredulous concerning the efficacy of love potions," returned the first speaker. "What about you, Anna Bell, are you among the unbelievers?"

"Sincere love is the only philter that can effect prodigies," Anna Bell sighed as she answered.

At that moment Blanche of Verceil joined her companions. Hers was a masculine, brown-complexioned and tall type of beauty. The maid's abundant black hair and thick eyebrows would have imparted the stamp of harshness to her face were it not for the smile of merry raillery that habitually flitted over her cherry-red lips, which were accentuated by a light-brown down. She held in her hand several sheets of paper, and said gaily to her companions:

"I have come to share with you, my darlings, a bit of good luck that has befallen me."

"Good! Distribute your good things," cried Diana of Sauveterre.

"This morning, just as we were mounting our horses," began Blanche of Verceil, "a page arrived from Paris, sent to me by my dear Brissac. The page brought me sugar plums, fresh flowers wonderfully preserved, and a letter full of love. But that is not all. The letter, which I could not read until a few minutes ago, contained a treasure—an inestimable treasure—the newest *pasquils*,

the most daring and most biting that have yet appeared! They are a true intellectual treat."

"What a windfall! And against whom are they directed?" asked Diana of Sauveterre.

"Innocent creature that you are!" Blanche of Verceil returned. "Against whom can they be written if not against the Queen, against the Cardinal, against the court, and against the maids of honor of the Queen's 'Flying Squadron'? It is all of us who are the butts of the satirists."

"Those vicious people treat us with scant courtesy," exclaimed the black-haired Clorinde of Vaucernay. "But, at any rate, we are sung in superb and royal company. By Venus and Cupid, we should feel proud."

"Come, Blanche, read us the verses," Diana of Sauveterre suggested. "The Queen may send for us any moment before she retires."

Instead of complying at once with Diana's request, Blanche of Verceil pointed to Anna Bell, who remained in silent abstraction, and in a low voice said to her companions: "Decidedly, the little one is in love. Her ears do not prick up at the sound of that tickling word *pasquil*—a divine tid-bit of wit and wickedness the salt of which is worth a hundred fold, a thousand fold more than all the sugar of the candies."

"I wager she is dreaming awake of the German Prince of whom she speaks in her slumbers. How indiscreet sleep is! Poor thing, she thinks her secret is well kept," rejoined Clorinde of Vaucernay.

"Blanche, the pasquils," again cried Diana, impatiently. "I burn with curiosity to hear them."

"Honor to whom honor is due. We shall commence with our good dame the Queen;" and with these words Blanche read:

"People ask, What's the resemblance
 'Tween Catherine and Jezebel:
 One, the latter, ruined Israel,
 And the former ruins France;
 Extreme malice marked the latter,
 Malice's self the former is;
 Finally, the judgment fell
 Of a Providence divine
 Caused the dogs to eat up Jezebel,
 While the carcass rank of Catherine
 In this point doth differ much:
 It not even the dogs will munch."

The maids of honor broke out into peals of laughter. Anna Bell, still pensively seated apart at the open casement, let her eyes wander over space, a stranger to the hilarity of her companions. She paid no attention to the reading of the verses.

"You will yet see, in the event of our good Dame Catherine's being taken unawares and swallowing some of the sugar plums destined for her victims, that the rascally dogs may fear the remains of our venerable sovereign are poisoned—and will run away from her carcass," said Clorinde of Vaucernay.

"That pasquil should be read to the Queen. If she is in a good humor she will have a good laugh over it," put in Diana of Sauveterre.

¹ *Register Journal of L'Etoile*, p. 28.

“Indeed, few things amuse her more than bold and witty verses,” acquiesced Blanche. “Do you remember how, when she read the ‘Marvelous Discourses’ from the satirical pen of the famous printer Robert Estienne, the good dame laughed heartily and said: ‘There is some truth in that! But they do not know it all—how would it be if they were more fully posted!’¹ Now, listen. After the Queen, Monsieur the Cardinal, that is a matter of course. He is supposed to be dead—they wish he were—that also is natural. Here is his epitaph written in advance:

“The Cardinal, who, in his hours of life
Kept heaven, sea and earth all seething o’er,
In hell now carries on his furious strife,
And ’mong the damned, as erst ’mong us makes war.

“Why is it that upon his tomb is showered
The holy water in such rare profusion?
It is that there the torch of war lies lowered,
And all fear lest it flare to new confusion.”²

“Poor Monsieur Cardinal!” exclaimed Diana of Sauvetterre. “What a villainous calumny! He, such a poltroon as he, for a Guise—he is the most craven of all cravens—to compare him with a bolt of war!”

“No, not a bolt, but a torch,” Blanche corrected. “He rests satisfied with holding the torch of war, like Madam Gondi, the governess of the royal Princes and Princesses, held the torch of Venus to light the amours of the late

¹ The queen’s words are historical. The book was *Marvelous Discourses on Catherine De Medici*, by Robert Estienne, Ge-

neva, 1565.

² *Register Journal of L’Etoile*, p. 30.

King Henry II, whose worthy go-between, or, to speak more plainly, whose Cyprian, she was."

"As for me," said Clorinde of Vaucernay, "I highly commend the Queen for having placed, as governess over her children, her own husband's go-between. It is a sort of hereditary office which can not be entrusted to hands too worthy, and should be perpetuated in titled families."

"Accordingly," said Blanche, "Gondi, faithful to the duties of her Cyprian employment, took charge of carrying the first love letter from Mademoiselle Margot¹ to young Henry of Guise, whom we are about to meet in the army of Marshal Tavannes. Hence evil tongues are saying: 'In these days, it is not the men who fall on their knees before the women, but the women who fall on their knees before the men and entreat them for amorous mercy.'"²

"Nothing wonderful in that!" replied Clorinde. "Is it not for a Queen to take the first step towards her subjects? What are we? Queens. What are the men? Our subjects. Besides that, Henry of Guise is so handsome, so brave, so amorous! Although he is barely eighteen years old, all the women are crazy over him—I first of all. My arms are open to him."

"Oh, Clorinde! If Biron were to hear you!" cried Diana of Sauveterre.

"He has heard me," answered Clorinde. "He knows

¹That was the familiar appellation at court of Princess Marguerite, the daughter of Catherine of Medici and Henry II, so famous for her excesses. She mar-

ried Henry IV, who later divorced her.

²De Thou, *History of France*, book LXXIV, p. 240.

that in pledging constancy, exception is always implied for an encounter with Henry of Guise. But let us hear the other pasquils, Blanche!"

"The next one," announced Blanche, "is piquant. It alludes to the new custom that the Queen has borrowed from Spain. It alludes to the title of *Majesty* that she wishes to be addressed by, as well as her children:

"The Kingdom of France, to perdition while lagging,
Has seized from the Spaniard his heathenish bragging:
It rigs up a mortal in godhead's travesty,
And when his estate with hypocrisy's smelling,
I plainly can see, and without any telling,
Our Majesty's booked—to be stript of majesty."

"That last line is humorous," laughed Clorinde. "'Our Majesty's booked—to be stript of majesty.'"

"For want of the thing we take the name—that is enough to impose upon the fools," said Diana of Sauveterre.

Blanche pointed to their companion who was still seated by the window, now with her forehead resting on her hands, and said: "Look at Anna Bell. In what black melancholy is she plunged?"

"To the devil with melancholy!" answered Diana. "One has to fall in love with some German Prince in order to look so pitiful!"

"Who may the Prince Charming be?" Blanche inquired. "We know nothing of the secrets of that languishing maid, except a few words uttered by her in her sleep—'Prince—"

¹ *Reglater Journal of L'Étoile*, supplement, p. 57.

Germany!—Germany!—My heart is all yours. Alas, my love can not be shared.' ”

“Can Anna Bell be German?” asked Clorinde.

“Ask our good Dame Catherine about that. She is no doubt acquainted with the mystery of Anna Bell's birth, and may enlighten you on what you want to know. As for me, I know nothing about it.”

“The German Prince has turned her head and made her forget poor Solange altogether,” said Clorinde.

“The most famous preachers, among them Burning-Fire and Fra Hervé the Cordelier, failed to draw the Marquis of Solange back to the fold of the Church. Anna Bell undertook his conversion, and, by grace from above—or from below—by virtue of her blue eyes or of her charming hips, the Huguenot became an ardent Catholic.”

“But to whom does he render his devotions?” asked Clorinde, meaningly. “To the Church, or to the chapel of our little friend?” The maids of honor laughed uproariously and Clorinde continued: “But let us return to our pasquils.”

“This one,” resumed Blanche of Verceil, “is odd on account of its form—and the climax is droll. Judge for yourselves:

“The poor people endure everything;
The men-at-arms ravage everything;
The Holy Church pensions everything;
The favorites demand everything;
The Cardinal grants everything;
The Parliament registers everything;

The Chancellor seals everything;
The Queen-Mother runs everything;
And only the Devil laughs at everything;
Because the Devil will take everything."¹

The loud hilarity of the maids of honor, whom the wind-up of the last pasquil amused intensely, finally attracted the attention of Anna Bell. Her face bore the impress of profound sadness; her eyes were moist. Fearing that she was the object of her companions' jests, the maid furtively wiped away her tears, stepped slowly towards the other young women, and let herself down beside Blanche of Verceil.

"We are somewhat after the fashion of the devil—we laugh about everything," said Clorinde to her. "You alone, Anna Bell, among us all, are as sad as a wife who sees her husband return from a long voyage, or beholds her gallant depart for the wars. What is the reason of your despondency?"

Anna Bell forced a smile, and answered: "Forget me, as the wife forgets her husband. To-day I feel in a sad humor."

"The remembrance, perhaps, of a bad dream?" suggested Blanche of Verceil, ironically. "Or perhaps bad news from a handsome and absent friend?"

"No, dear Blanche," replied Anna Bell, blushing, "I am affected only by a vague sorrow—without cause or object. Besides, as you are aware, I am not of a gay disposition."

¹ *Register Journal of L'Etoile*, supplement, p. 198.

"Oh, God!" broke in Diana of Sauveterre, excitedly. "By the way of dreams, I must tell you I had a most frightful one last night. I saw our escort attacked by the Huguenot bandits called the Avengers of Israel."

"Their chief is said to be a devilish one-eyed man, who attacks monks and priests by choice," said Blanche, "and, when he takes them prisoner, flays their skulls. He calls that raising them to the cardinalate, coifing them with the red cap!"

"It is enough to make one shiver with terror. One hears nothing but reports of such atrocities," exclaimed Clorinde.

"We need not fear that we shall fall into the hands of that reprobate," said Diana reassuringly. "We have attended a special mass for the success of our journey."

"I place but slight reliance upon the mass, my dear Diana, but a very strong one upon Count Neroweg of Plouernel, who commands our escort," replied Blanche. "The Huguenot bandits will not dare to approach our armed squadrons and light cavalry. The saber is a better protection to us than the priest's cowl."

"May God preserve us!" laughed Diana. "All the same, I would not regret undergoing a scare, or even running a certain degree of risk of being carried off, together with the accessory consequences—anything to see the frightened face of the Cardinal, who is as lily-livered as a hare."

"To tell the truth, I do not understand these charges of cowardice that you fling at the Cardinal, after so many proofs of valor given by him," said Blanche.

Diana of Sauveterre burst out laughing again. "You must be joking," she said, "when you speak of the 'bravery' of the Cardinal, and of the 'proofs of valor' given by him."

"No, indeed, my dear Diana," replied Blanche. "I am talking seriously. First of all, did he not carry bravery to the point of charging old Diana of Poitiers, as he would have done a citadel? Did he not accomplish another exploit in passing from the arms of Diana into those of our good Queen Catherine, though she be loaded with years and corpulence? Besides, we know," she added with a sinister smile, "that to play the gallant with Catherine is at times to court death. These are the reasons why I look upon the Cardinal as a Caesar."

"You would be talking to the point, my dear, if, instead of braving the one-eyed man, who has such a reputation for ferocity, the Cardinal were now to turn to the assault of some one-eyed woman," said Clorinde of Vaucernay.

"If heaven is just," said Diana, "it will yet place the Huguenot bandit face to face with the Cordelier Hervé. Then would we see terrible things. The monk commands a company of Catholics, all desperate men. For arms he has a chaplet, the beads of which are arquebus balls, and a heavy iron crucifix which he uses for a mace. All heretics who fall into the hands of the troop of Fra Hervé are put to death with all manner of refined tortures, whether they be men or women, old men or children. But do let us return to our pasquils."

"The best are still to come. They are the cleverest and drollest, but they are in prose;" and Blanche continued reading:

"NEW WORKS BELONGING TO THE COURT LIBRARY.

"The *Pot-pourri of the Affairs of France*, translated from the Italian into French by the Queen of France.

"The *General Goslings' Record*, by the Cardinal of Bourbon. A collection of racy stories.

"The *History of Ganymede*, by the Duke of Anjou, the Queen's favorite son."

"The dear Prince surely did not write that book without a collaborator," cried Diana of Sauveterre, laughing. "I wager the lovely Odet, the son of Count Neroweg of Plouernel, his aide-de-camp, must have helped the Duke of Anjou in his work. The two youngsters have become inseparable, day—and night!"

"O, *Italiam! Italiam!* O, Italy, the rival of Gomorrah and of Lesbos!" exclaimed Clorinde, laughing boisterously.

"You speak Latin, my dear?" asked Diana, amused.

"Simply out of shame," replied Clorinde, "in order not to frighten the modesty of the maids of honor, my pretty chickens."

"I have a horror of the little hermaphrodites," agreed Blanche. "They are decked out like women—gaudy ruffles, jewelry in their ears, fans in their hands! May Venus protect us from the reign of those favorites! May the fires of hell consume the popinjays! But to proceed with the *pasquil*. Attention, my dears:

“*Singular Treatise on Incest*, by Monsignor the Archbishop of Lyons, recently published and dedicated to Mademoiselle Grisolles, his sister. A pretty couple!

“Monsignor Archbishop studies reserved cases—in the confessional, in order to put them into practice.

“*Sermons*, by the reverend Father Burning-Fire, faithfully compiled by the street-porters of Paris.

“*The Perfect Pig*, by Monsieur Villequier, revised, corrected and considerably enlarged by Madam Villequier. Boar and sow!”

The maids of honor roared out aloud as they heard the burlesque title, and they repeated in chorus—“The Perfect Pig!”¹

“Now comes the last and best,” proceeded Blanche. “We are again the theme, together with our good Dame Catherine. Ours the honors, as ever. Meditate upon these dainties:

“MANIFESTO OF THE COURT LADIES.

“*Be it known to all by these presents that the Court Ladies have no less repentance than sins, as appears from the following lamentations.*

“CATHERINE DE MEDICI, THE KING’S MOTHER.

“My God, my heart, feeling the approach of death, apprehends Thy wrath and my eternal damnation when I consider how many sins I have committed, as well with my body as through the violent death of others, even of near relatives—all in order to reign. How I have raised my children in vice, blasphemy and perfidy, and my daughters in unchaste licence, to the point of

¹ *Register Journal of L’Etoile*, p. 234. It is impossible to cite in full this all too true satire on

the abominable morals of the court of France in the sixteenth century.

tolerating and even authorizing a brothel at my Court. France made me what I am. I unmake her all I can. With the good King David I say—*Tibi soli peccavi.*"

"That is carrying fiction to great lengths," laughed Diana of Sauveterre. "I do not believe our good Dame Catherine is capable of repenting any of the things laid to her door by the malignant pasquil—neither her debaucheries nor any of her other evil deeds—unchastities or assassinations."

"The word 'brothel' is rather impertinent when applied to us!" Clorinde exclaimed. "They should have said, like our dear Rabelais, 'an Abbey of Thalamia,' or 'a Monastery of Cyprus, of which the Queen is the Mother Abbess.' That would have been elegant—without doing violence to the truth. A 'brothel'—fie! fie! Nasty word! We are the priestesses of Venus—only that!"

"I was not aware, dearest, that you had become a model of prudishness!" returned Blanche of Verceil with exquisite mockery. "When you ply a trade you must be willing to accept its name, and be indifferent to the word with which it is designated;" and she proceeded to read:

"MANIFESTO OF THE MAIDS OF HONOR.

"Oh! Oh! Oh! My God! What is to become of us, Lord! Oh, what will be of us, if Thou dost not extend to us Thy vast, very vast mercy! We cry out to Thee in a loud voice that it may please Thee to forgive us the many carnal sins we have committed with Kings, Cardinals, Princes, knights, abbots, preachers, poets, musicians and all manner of other folks of all conditions, trades and quality, down to muleteers, pages and lackeys, and even

¹ *Register Journal of L'Etoile*, supplement, pp. 236, 239.

further down—people corroded with disease and soaked in preservatives! Therefore do we say with the good Madam Villequier: ‘Oh, Lord, mercy! Grant us mercy! And if we can not find a husband, let us join the Order of the Magdalens!’

“Done at Chercheau, voyage to Nerac.

“Signed, CUCUFIN.

“(With the permission of Monsignor the Archbishop of Lyons.)”¹

Such was the cynicism and moral turpitude of the wretched girls, corrupted and gangrened to the core as they were since early childhood by the perversions of an infamous court and the example as well as the advice of Catherine De Medici, that this scorching satire, more than any of the other pasquils, provoked the boundless hilarity of the “Flying Squadron.” All sense of decorum was blotted out. Anna Bell alone blushed and dropped her eyes.

The gay guffaws of the beautiful sinners were interrupted by the solemn entrance of their governess.

“Silence!” she commanded. “Silence, young ladies! Her Majesty is close by, in confereñcè with Monseigneur the Cardinal.”

“Oh, dear Countess!” answered Blanche of Verceil, endeavoring to smother the outbursts of her laughter. “If you only knew what a wicked pasquil we have just read! According to the author it would seem that we emerge from our dormitory like the goddess Truth out of her fountain, or with as scant clothing on our limbs as Madam Eve in her paradise.”

¹ *Register Journal of L'Etoile*, supplement, p. 239.

"Less noise, you crazy lasses! Less noise!" ordered the governess; and addressing Anna Bell: "Come, dearest, the Queen wishes to have a talk with you after her conference with his Excellency the Cardinal. You are to wait for her summons in a cabinet, which is separated from the Queen's apartment by the little corridor. When you hear her bell ring three times, the usual summons, you are to go in."

Anna Bell went out with the governess, leaving her lightheaded and lighthearted companions in the room laughing and exchanging witticisms upon the pasquils.

CHAPTER II.

ANNA BELL.

Catherine De Medici and Cardinal Charles of Lorraine were in the midst of a conversation that started immediately after supper. The prelate, complaisant, sly and attentive to the slightest word of the Italian woman, showed himself alternately reserved and familiar, according to the turn that the conversation took. The Queen, on the other hand, intent, not so much upon what the retainer of the Guises said, as upon fathoming what he suppressed, at once hated and feared him, and sought to surprise upon his face the hidden secrets of his thoughts. Both the one and the other stood on their guard, the two accomplices in intrigue and crime vying with each other in dissimulation and perfidy, the Italian woman crafty, the prelate cautious.

“Monsignor Cardinal,” remarked Catherine De Medici with a touch of irony in her tone, “you remind me at this moment—you must excuse the comparison, I am a huntress you know—”

“Your Majesty unites all the deities—Juno on her

throne, Diana in the woods, Venus in her temple of Cytheria—”

“Mercy, Monsignor Cardinal, let us drop those mythological queens. They are old, they have lived their time—Diana, with the rest of them; they now inhabit the empyrean.”

The pointed allusion to his amours with old Diana of Poitiers, Duchess of Valentinois, stung the haughty prelate to the quick. He meant to give tit for tat, and, in his turn hinting at his present amours with the Queen herself, he replied:

“I perceive, madam, that the death of the Duchess of Valentinois has not yet disarmed your jealousy. And yet, I feel hope re-rising in my heart—”

Catherine De Medici had yielded herself to the prelate out of political calculation, the same as he himself had laid siege to her out of political ambition. The Italian woman affected not to have understood the Cardinal's hint at their intimate relations, and darting upon him her viper's glance, proceeded:

“As I was saying, monsignor, when I begged you to excuse a comparison which I borrow from falconry, your oratorical circumlocutions remind me of a falcon's evolutions when he rises in the air to swoop down upon his prey. I have been searching through the mists of your discourse for the prey you are in pursuit of, and am unable to discover it. You induced me to join my son of Anjou in the army with the view of reviving the spirits of the Catholic chiefs. Meseems my faithful subjects should be suffi-

ciently encouraged by the deaths of the Duke of Deux-Ponts, of Monsieur Condé, and of Dandelot, the brother of Coligny,—three of the most prominent chiefs of the Huguenot party, and all three carried off within a month. These are all fortunate events.”¹

“We see God’s hand in that, madam,” observed the Cardinal. “These three sudden deaths are providential. They are utterances from God.”

“‘Providential,’ as you say Monsignor Cardinal,” pursued the Queen. “Nevertheless, the Huguenots are pushing the campaign with great vigor, while the Catholic chiefs are flagging. You thought my presence at the camp of Roche-la-Belle would exert a favorable influence upon the fate of the campaign. Accordingly, I am on the way to join our army. Now, however, you indicate to me that this journey might lead to unexpected discoveries. You even dropped the word ‘treason.’ Once more I must say to you, Monsignor Cardinal, I see in all this the evolutions of the falcon, but not yet the prey that it threatens. In short, if there is treason, tell me where it lies. If there is a traitor, name him. Speak out plainly.”

“Very well, madam. There is a plot concocted by Marshal Tavannes. The revelation seems to cause your Majesty to start. I beg your leave to go into the details of the affair. You will then be instructed upon its purpose.”

¹ “Driven thereto by the Cardinal of Lorraine, who blamed the conduct of the Duke of Anjou, the Queen came to the army in person in order to enlighten herself upon the mistake of not having engaged battle before the enemy’s forces had effected a junction, that is, after the death

of the Duke of Deux-Ponts, who was poisoned by some wine presented to him by a wine merchant of Avallon. Her Majesty wished to take the field with Marshal Tavannes.”—*Memoirs of Gaspard of Sault, Seigneur of Tavannes*, pp. 322-323.

“Monsignor Cardinal, no act of treason can surprise me. All I care to understand is the cause that brings the treason about. Please continue your revelations.”

“I have it from good authority that Marshal Tavannes is negotiating with Monsieur Coligny. In present circumstances, negotiations smack of treason.”

“And what do you presume, Monsignor Cardinal, is the purpose of the negotiations between Tavannes and Coligny?”

“To induce your Majesty’s son, the Duke of Anjou, to embrace the Reformation and join the Huguenots.”

“Is my son of Anjou supposed to be implicated in the plot? That, indeed, would mightily surprise me.”

“Yes, madam. The Emperor of Germany and Monsieur Coligny have promised to the Duke of Anjou, in case he consents to go over to the reformers, the sovereignty of the Low Countries, of Saintonge and of Poitou. They hope to drive the young Prince into open revolt against his reigning brother, his Majesty Charles IX.”

“Monsignor Cardinal, your insinuations, affecting as they do a son of the royal house of France, are of so grave a nature that I am bound to presume you have, ready at hand, the proofs of the plot which you are revealing to me. I demand that you produce the proofs instantly.”

“I am at the orders of my Queen. I now hasten to spread before your Majesty’s eyes the correspondence relating to the plot. Here is a letter from his Majesty Philip II of Spain, who was the first to get wind of the scheme, through one of his agents in the Low Countries. Further-

more, here are the written propositions from his Catholic Majesty and the Holy Father for common action with your Majesty against the Huguenot rebellion and heresy."

"What are the propositions of his Catholic Majesty and venerated Pontiff?"

"King Philip II and our Holy Father Pius V offer to your Majesty, besides the five thousand Walloon and Italian soldiers that now reinforce our army, a new corps of six thousand men—under the condition that your Majesty remove Marshal Tavannes and place the supreme command of the troops in the hands of the Duke of Alva."

"Accordingly," replied Catherine De Medici, fixing her eyes upon the Cardinal, "our two allies, His Holiness and King Philip II demand that the Duke of Alva, a Spanish general, be the commandant in chief of the French forces?"

"That is their condition, madam. But it is also agreed that the Duke of Alva is to exercise a nominal command only, and that the military operations shall be conducted by my brother of Aumale and my nephew Henry of Guise, who are to be his immediate subalterns."

Catherine De Medici remained impassive, betraying neither astonishment nor anger at the proposition to deliver the command of the French royal troops to the Duke of Alva, the pestiferous menial of Philip II, and to strengthen the Duke's hand with the support of the brother and the nephew of the prelate. The Queen seemed to reflect. After a short pause she said to the Cardinal:

"The proposition is not unacceptable. It may serve as the basis for some combination that we may offer later."

Despite his self-control, the Cardinal's face betrayed his secret joy. The Queen seemed not to notice it, and proceeded:

“The first thing to do would then be to withdraw my son of Anjou from the command of the army.”

“The principal thing to do, madam, would be to remonstrate with the young Prince, and to separate him from his present evil advisers.”

“That, indeed, would be the wisest course to pursue, if that plot exists, as I very much fear it can not be doubted in sight of the proofs you have presented to me. And yet, I must be frank to confess, I feel some repugnance against placing the Duke of Alva at the head of our army. I would be afraid, above all, of displeasing the other military chiefs and high dignitaries of our court. The measure will seem an outrage to them.”

“I have the honor of reminding your Majesty that, in that case, my brother and my nephew will be joined to the Duke of Alva.”

“You may feel certain, Monsignor Cardinal, that, without the express condition of Messieurs of Aumale and Guise being joined to the Spanish generalissimo, I would not for a moment have lent an ear to the scheme.”

Thrown off the scent by the Queen, the prelate answered enthusiastically:

“Oh, madam, I swear to God the throne has not a more faithful supporter than the house of Guise.”

“The fraud! The scamp!” said the Italian woman to herself. “I have probed his thoughts! I scent his trea-

son! But I am compelled to conceal my feelings and to humor his family, however heartily I abhor it."

One of the Queen's pages, posted outside the door of the apartment and authorized at certain emergencies of the service to enter the Queen's cabinet without being called, parted the portieres, and bowing respectfully, said:

"Madam, the Count of La Rivière, captain of the guards of the Duke of Anjou, has just arrived from camp, and requests to be introduced to your Majesty immediately."

"Bring him in," answered Catherine De Medici. And as the page was about to withdraw, she added: "Should Monsieur Gondi arrive this evening, or even later in the night, let me be notified without delay."

The page bowed a second time, and withdrew. The Queen's last words seemed to cause the Cardinal some uneasiness. He asked with surprise:

"Does madam expect Monsieur Gondi?"

"Gondi must have received a letter from me at Poitiers, in which I ordered him to meet me at the camp of my son, instead of pursuing his route to Paris."

The Guisard had not quite recovered from his surprise when the Count of La Riviere, captain of the guards of the Duke of Anjou, was ushered in by the page. Catherine De Medici said to the prelate with a sweet smile:

"We shall see each other again to-night, Monsignor Cardinal. I shall need the advice of my friends in these sad complications. I shall want yours."

Charles of Lorraine understood that he was expected to withdraw; he bowed respectfully to the Queen and left the apartment, a prey to racking apprehensions.

The captain of the guards of the Duke of Anjou stepped forward, and presenting a letter to Catherine De Medici, said:

“Madam, my master ordered me to place this letter in your Majesty’s own hands.”

“Is my son’s health good?” inquired the Queen, taking the missive. “What is the news in the army?”

“My master is in admirable health, madam. Yesterday there was a skirmish of vanguards between us and the Huguenots. The affair was of little importance—only a few men killed on either side.”

Catherine broke the seal on the letter. As her eyes ran over its contents, her face, which at first was rigid with apprehension, gradually relaxed, and reflected gladness and profound satisfaction.

“The Guisard,” she muttered to herself, “dared accuse my son of negotiating with Admiral Coligny. The infamous calumniator!” And turning to her son’s ambassador: “My son informs me of your plan, monsieur. You wish to serve God, the King and France. Your arm and your heart are at our disposal?”

“Madam, I am anxious to emulate Monsieur Montesquiou—and to rid the King of one of his most dangerous enemies.”

“You will surpass Monsieur Montesquiou if you succeed! One Coligny is worth ten Condés. But are you sure of the man whom my son mentions?”

“The man swore by his soul that he would not falter. He received six thousand livres on account of the fifty thou-

sand promised to him. The rest is not to be paid until the thing is done. That is our guarantee."

"Provided he is not assailed with some silly qualms of conscience. But how did you become acquainted with the fellow?"

"Yesterday, as I just had the honor of advising your Majesty, there was a skirmish at our outposts. Admiral Coligny charged in person, and Dominic, that is the name of the man in question, led one of his master's relay horses by the reins—"

"He is, then, in the service of Monsieur Coligny?"

"Yes, madam; since infancy he has been attached to the Admiral's house. During the engagement he was separated from him. Two of our armed men were on the point of despatching Dominic, as we despatch all Huguenots, when, seeing me, he cried out 'Quarter!' 'Who are you?' I asked him. 'I am a servant of Monsieur the Admiral,' he answered. It suddenly flashed through my mind what profit we could draw from the man. Relying upon attaching him to me by the bonds of gratitude, I granted him his life. Later the proposition was made to him of causing the Admiral to drink a potion that we would furnish him with, and of a rich reward for himself."

"If your prisoner agreed readily to all," said the Queen, raising her head, "there is reason to suspect him."

"On the contrary, madam, he hesitated long. It was the magnitude of the promised sum that silenced his scruples. My master placed a certain powder in his hands and in-

structed him how to use it. The thing may be considered done.”

“How is our man to explain his return to the heretic camp?”

“Very easily, madam. He will say that he was made a prisoner by us and escaped. The Admiral will not suspect a servant who was raised in his house.”

“I hardly dare hope for success! In one month we have been rid of three enemies—the Duke of Deux-Ponts, Condé and Dandelot. Now it will be Coligny’s turn! When is the man to leave our camp and rejoin the Huguenots?”

“This very night.”

“Accordingly—to-morrow—”

“If it shall please God, madam, our holy Church and the kingdom will have triumphed over a redoubtable enemy.”

“How I wish it were to-morrow!” exclaimed Catherine De Medici in a hollow voice, as the page, reappearing at the portiere, announced:

“Madam, Monsieur Gondi and another rider are alighting from their horses. Obedient to your Majesty’s orders I have hastened to give you the news, and await your orders.”

“Summon Gondi to me,” said the Italian woman; and addressing the Count of La Riviere: “Go and take rest, monsieur; you may depart early in the morning; you shall have a letter from me for my son. Whether the scheme succeed or not, we shall reward your zeal for the triumph

of the Catholic faith and the service of the King—two sacred interests.”

“Will your Majesty allow me to remind her that Mauververt has just received the necklace of the Order of St. Michael for having put the Huguenot captain, Monsieur Mouy to death, after having penetrated into the camp of the reformers under the pretext that he renounced the Catholic faith and embraced the Reformation? I would wish to be the object of a like distinction.”

“Monsieur La Riviere, you shall be as satisfied with us as we are with you. Assassination, committed in the service of the King, deserves to be rewarded. You shall be decorated Knight of the Order of St. Michael.”

The captain of the guards of the Duke of Anjou saluted the Queen and withdrew as Monsieur Gondi entered in traveling costume. This Italian shared with his countryman Birago the confidence of Catherine De Medici. Delighted, the Queen took two steps towards Gondi, saying with impatient curiosity:

“What tidings from Bayonne?”

“Madam, I do not come alone. I bring with me the reverend Father Lefevre, one of the luminaries of the faith, a pupil and disciple of the celebrated Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Order of Jesuits.”

“But what is the result of your particular mission?”

“At the very first words with which I broached the matter to the Duke of Alva, he stopped me, saying: ‘Monsieur Gondi, the reverend Father Lefevre is just about to proceed to the Queen for the purpose of considering with

her the matter that brings you here. He has received the instructions of my master and of the Holy Father. He will disclose those instructions to the Queen.' It was impossible for me to draw anything further from the Duke of Alva. Accordingly, I had no choice but to return, madam, and to bring Father Lefevre to you."

"This is strange. What sort of a man is the Jesuit?"

"An impenetrable man. You can neither divine his thoughts, nor pick the lock of his secrets. You may judge for yourself when you shall have him before you. He requests an audience this very evening."

"And my daughter? What news from my poor Elizabeth?"

"The health of the Queen of Spain declines steadily, madam. She no longer leaves her bed."

"Alas, Gondi, we one of these days shall hear that Philip II has poisoned my daughter, as we learned last year that he caused his own son, Don Carlos, to be put to death. Oh, Philip! Thou crowned monk! Thou vampire that feedst on human blood!" And after a short pause: "Fetch me the Jesuit."

Gondi left and returned almost immediately, accompanied by the one-time friend of Christian the printer. The Queen made a sign to Gondi to be left alone with the Jesuit.

"You are Father Lefevre, and belong to the Society of Jesus? I understand that our Holy Father and the King of Spain have charged you with a mission to me. Speak, I am listening."

“Madam, the Holy Father and his Majesty Philip II are very much displeased—with you. Deign to acquaint yourself with this letter from his Holiness.”

The Jesuit extracted from a silk wallet a schedule sealed with the pontifical seal, carried it respectfully to his lips, and handed it over to Catherine De Medici. The Queen broke the seal and read:

Madam and dearly beloved daughter:

In no way and for no reason whatever should you spare the enemies of God. I have issued orders to the commander of my troops, the Count of Santa Fiore, that *he cause all the Huguenots that may fall into the hands of his soldiers to be KILLED ON THE SPOT.* Accordingly, no human considerations for persons or things should induce you to spare the enemies of God, they never having spared either God or yourself. Only through the complete extermination of the heretics will the King be able to restore his noble kingdom to the old religion. The felons must be put to just torture and death.

Receive, madam, our apostolic benediction.

PIUS.¹

After reading the apostolic schedule, Catherine De Medici placed it upon a table and proceeded:

“I see, reverend Father, that both at Rome and Madrid I am charged with tolerance towards the Huguenots. I am blame¹ with prolonging the war. The two courts see in all this a political calculation on my part, whence it follows that if I continue to displease Rome and Madrid measures will be taken—”

“The Holy Father, the vicar of God on earth, has the power to release subjects from obedience, to their sover-

¹ Letters of Pius V, March 23-April 13, 1569, at Catena—*Life of Pius V*, p. 85.

eign, if he falls into heresy, deals with the same, or tolerates it."

"Proceed, reverend Father."

"The confirmatory bull of his Holiness Paul IV is formal—the Pope of Rome, by virtue of his divine right, is vested with power to excommunicate, suspend and depose all Kings guilty of divine *lese majesté*, or tolerant toward that irremissible crime. After which, the throne being declared vacant, it devolves upon the first good Catholic—who make take possession."

"That sounds like a threat, directed at my son Charles IX and at myself."

"It is a paternal warning, madam."

"In plain words, my son runs the risk of seeing himself deposed by the Pope."

"A disagreeable possibility, madam."

"Reverend Father, assuming the throne is declared vacant—by whom will our Holy Father have it filled? Surely not by a Bourbon, seeing the house of Bourbon is heretical. Consequently, the good Catholic Rome and Spain have in view probably is young Henry of Guise, the descendant of Charlemagne, according to the theory of the house of Lorraine."

"That is a temporal question which does not concern me, madam. It is, however, a notable fact that young Henry of Guise, son of the martyr of Orleans, carries a name that is dear to all Catholics."

"Accordingly, the purpose of your mission, reverend Father, is to convey a threat to me? But why blame me,

a woman, with the slowness of the military operations against the Huguenots?"

"It is believed, madam, that you would look with too much disfavor upon a chief who would insure speedy triumph to the Catholic armies, and that you deliberately hamper the military operations by inciting rivalry among the several captains and setting them at odds. The strategic mistake of allowing the Duke of Deux-Ponts to penetrate into the very heart of France and carry a reinforcement of troops to the Huguenots is laid to your door. The junction of the two army corps is now an accomplished fact."

"The Duke of Deux-Ponts!" exclaimed Catherine De Medici with a sinister smile. "You do not seem to know what has befallen that heretic chief. But, before speaking of the miscreant, I wish to put you in condition to appreciate the facts concerning myself. I shall be frank—my interests command it."

"Madam, I am ready to hear."

"In order that you may have the key to my falsely interpreted conduct, I shall begin by making the following declaration to you—I have no religion! Does such an introduction, perchance, astonish or shock you?"

"By no means."

"Then, my reverend Father, we shall be able to understand each other. You justify—according to what is reported of your Order—tolerance for vice, provided appearances are saved. Now, then, I have no religion. It

follows that I concern myself only with promoting my own ambition.”

“Frankness can not be carried further.”

“With the same outspokenness I shall add that I love power—to rule is life to me. I have been compared to Queen Brunhild. It is said I wink at precocious debauchery among my children with the view of unnerving and stupefying them. It is claimed I sow the seed of jealousy, intrigue and lechery among them.”

“Those things are said—and many more, and more grave, madam.”

“Some credence must be accorded to *hear say*, reverend Father. At least, in what concerns myself, people are rarely wide of the mark. But let me proceed. The religious wars have furnished me with the means of alternately cropping the crests, now with the aid of the ones, then with the aid of the others, of both the Catholic and the Protestant seigneurs, who, during my husband’s reign, conceived the design of restoring their old feudal sovereignties. I still have the house of Guise to contend with, as Brunhild of old had the stewards of the palace on her hands. Thus I combated the Reformation, or gave comfort to the Huguenots against the Catholics, according as political exigencies dictated. At present I am well acquainted with the purposes of the Protestants, and I know how to conduct myself in order to annihilate them—when the moment shall have come to strike the decisive blow.”

“You have unfolded to me your theories, madam, but you have recited not a single act in support of your pre-

dilection for our holy Church. We require proofs.”

“Now let us pass to acts, reverend Father. A few minutes ago you mentioned the name of the Duke of Deux-Ponts, who hurried from Germany in aid of the Huguenots Condé, Coligny and his brother Dandelot.”

“The hydra-heads of the heresy, madam.”

“Well, reverend Father, already the hydra has three heads less. The Duke of Deux-Ponts is dead; Monsieur Dandelot is dead; the Prince of Condé is dead!”

The Jesuit, though stupefied, contemplated Catherine De Medici challengingly.

“Perhaps you would like to have some details concerning these great events,” the imperturbable Queen pursued. “I shall satisfy your curiosity. The day following his junction with the Protestant army, the Duke of Deux-Ponts was poisoned. That is the word which is current. But you, reverend Father, and myself, look to facts, not words. The Duke of Deux-Ponts was poisoned with a cup of Spanish wine, that was poured out to him by a young beauty. Two days later, Dandelot, who suffered of a slow fever, was coaxed by another young beauty to swallow a pharmaceutical potion that quickly carried away both the disease and the patient. At the battle of Jarnac, the Prince of Condé, who had surrendered his sword to D’Argence under promise that his life would be safe, was shot down dead with a pistol by Montesquiou, a captain of my son of Anjou’s guards. The occurrence came near turning my son crazy, such was his joy! When notified of what had happened, he hastened to the spot to see the

corpse with his own eyes. He kicked it, and danced over and around it. It was a delirium! Finally, for fun, the thought struck him of placing the corpse across a she-ass, with the head dangling down on one side, the legs on the other. On that distinguished mount he returned the defunct general to the Protestant army, amid the hootings and cat-calls of our own soldiers.¹ That is the way my children treat their heretical relatives. Will his Holiness still insist that we deal with the Huguenots, or that we have any consideration for the enemies of the Church?"

"Oh, madam!" cried the Jesuit, almost choking with glee. "I lack words to express to you my admiration."

"And yet you claimed," proceeded Catherine De Medici with a hyena-like smirk, "that I favored the Huguenots! Would the Guisards, the Holy Father or Philip II do better than I? Hardly has the campaign opened when Condé, the soul of the French Protestant party, has ceased to breathe; the Duke of Deux-Ponts, the soul of the German party, has ceased to live; and Dandelot, one of the ablest Protestant generals, is also dead. Nor is that all!" added the Italian woman, taking from the table the letter of the Duke of Anjou, freshly brought to her by the captain of her son's guards, and passing it over to Lefèvre, "Read this!"

The Jesuit took the letter, and, after informing himself of its contents, cried, contemplating the Queen with ecstasy:

"So that we may expect, to-morrow, to see Coligny effect a junction with his brother Dandelot!"

¹ De Thou, *History of France*, LXXXV, p. 129.

“Well, now, do you not think I have done a good deal of work?”

“Oh, you have accomplished and even exceeded all that the Holy Father and the King of Spain could have asked!”

“And yet, I still have information for you.” Saying this, the Queen rang twice the bell near her. A page appeared. “Bring me,” ordered Catherine, “the ebony casket that you will find in my chamber, on the table near my bed.”

The page went out and Catherine turned again to the Jesuit:

“You surely know Prince Franz of Gerolstein by name and reputation?”

“I know, madam, that the principality of that heretical family is a hot-bed of pestilence. We keep our eyes open upon that nest of miscreants.”

“The Duke of Deux-Ponts appointed as commander of his troops the aged general Wolfgang of Mansfeld, but did so with the recommendation that the active direction of operations be entrusted to the Prince of Gerolstein, a young, but one of the ablest German generals. This very night one of my maids of honor is to depart—”

The re-entrance of the page broke off the Queen’s sentence. He deposited the casket beside Catherine and withdrew.

“You were saying, madam,” observed Father Lefevre, “that one of your maids of honor was to depart this very night—”

“You seem to relish deeply my communications, rev-

erend Father, and yet it was only a few minutes ago that you almost treated me like a Huguenot woman."

"Mercy, madam, a truce of raillery. The unexpected and happy tidings you have imparted to me were not known by the Holy Father and the King of Spain when I left them. I declare to you, madam, that these events modify profoundly my mission to your court."

"Well, reverend Father, I am constantly saying to the Spanish ambassador and the papal legate in France: 'Wait—let me do—have patience.' But all to no avail. The Holy Father yields to the inspirations of the agents of the Cardinal of Lorraine, while Philip II dreams of the dismemberment of France and desires to place Henry of Guise on the throne. In that Philip II plays a risky game, reverend Father! To overthrow the reigning dynasty of France would be to set a bad example to the people, and to deal a mortal blow to monarchy itself. We are living in frightful times. Everything conspires against royalty. The Huguenots, at least some of them who style themselves the most advanced in politics, proclaim the people's right to federate in a republic after the fashion of the Swiss cantons. And even you, my reverend Fathers, you also attack royal authority by preaching the doctrine of regicide."

"That is true, madam; we maintain that the Kings who do not labor for the greater glory of the Church must be smitten from the throne."

"Neither my sons nor I refuse to labor for the greater glory of the Church. It must be a matter of indifference

to the Holy Father whether the Huguenots are exterminated by us or by the Guises, or by Spain. What advantage could the court of Rome derive from suppressing the dynasty of Valois?"

"His Holiness sees clearly through the game of the King of Spain. He will never favor Philip's ambitious designs to the injury of your dynasty—unless obliged thereto by your resistance to the court of Rome. We aim at the extirpation of heresy by the extermination of the Huguenots; and I have been commissioned, madam, to urge you to prosecute the war with vigor—"

"The war!" broke in the Queen impatiently, and with marked contempt and irony. "How come you, a Jesuit, a man of keenness and science, to make yourself the echo of the Pope and of Philip II, two nearsighted intellects? Let us reason together, my reverend Father. Would you, if you want to kill your enemy, choose the time when he is on his guard and armed? Would you not wait for when he sheathed his sword and was peacefully asleep in his house? And in order to lead him to that state of apparent security, would you not approach him with a smile on your lips, your hand outstretched, and with the words: 'Let us forget our enmity'?"

"But for the success of such tactics our enemy must have confidence in us."

"Protestations of friendship are supported by oaths."

"Oh! Oh! Vain hope! Your Majesty errs if you believe you can lull the suspicions of the Huguenots with oaths."

“I am of the school of Machiavelli, reverend Father; as such I have faith in the efficacy of oaths. Listen to this passage from the volume entitled *The Prince*. I learned it by heart; it deals upon this very subject: ‘The animals whose appearance a Prince must know how to assume are the *fox* and the *lion*. The former defends himself but poorly against the wolf, while the latter readily falls into the snares laid for him. From the fox a Prince will learn how to be adroit, from the lion how to be strong. Whoever disdains the method of the fox knows nothing of governing men. In other words, a Prince neither can nor should keep his word, except when he can do so without injury to himself. The thing is to play his part well, and to know when to feign and dissimulate. To cite but one instance: Pope Alexander VI made deception his life-work. This notwithstanding, despite his well known faithlessness, he succeeded in all his artifices, protestations and oaths.’ Did you hear, reverend Father,” added the Italian woman interrupting her recitation and laying stress upon the word *oaths*, and she proceeded: “‘Never before did any Prince break his word more frequently, or respect his pledges less, because he was master of the art of governing.’¹ Alexander VI was an incestuous Pope; he committed murder and sacrilege, yet there were those who believed they could rely upon his oath. I am said to be an incestuous mother; I am said to have caused blood to flow in streams; I am said to have caused my enemies to be poisoned; all these and many more misdeeds are imputed to me. Very well! Now, all this notwithstand-

¹ Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chap. 18.

ing, they will place faith in my oaths. Judge the future by the past. Remember that after the revocation of the Edict of Amboise, the Huguenot party allowed itself to be trepanned by the Edict of Longjumeau, confirmed by our royal word. But let us now pass to another line of argument, my reverend Father. Please hand me yonder casket—not the one the page just brought in, the other.”

The Jesuit placed on the table before the Queen the casket that she pointed out. She opened it with a little key suspended from her waist, and took out of it a scroll of paper which she handed to Father Lefevre.

“Inform yourself on this document, reverend Father,” she said.

Father Lefevre read as follows:

“Summary of the matters primarily agreed upon between the Duke of Montmorency, Constable; the Duke of Guise, Grand Master and Peer of France; and Marshal St. Andre, for the conspiracy of the triumvirate, and subsequently discussed at the entrance of the sacred and holy Council of Trent, and agreed upon by the parties herein concerned at their private council held against the heretics and the King of Navarre, because of his maladministration of the affairs of Charles IX, minor King of France, the which King of Navarre is a partisan of the new sect which now infests France.”

The Jesuit looked surprised. Deeply interested, he asked: “How is your Majesty in possession of this secret pact?”

“It matters not how.”

The Jesuit proceeded to read:

“In order that the affair be conducted under the highest authority, it is agreed to vest the superintendence of the whole plan in the Very Catholic King of all the Spains, Philip II, who shall conduct the enterprize. He is to remonstrate with the King of Navarre on the score of the support that he affords to the new religion; and if the said Navarrais proves intractable, the said King Philip II is to endeavor to draw him over to him with the promise of the restitution of Navarre, or some other gift of great profit or emolument. By these means the said King Philip II is to soften him, to the end of inducing him to conspire against the heretical sect. If he still resists, King Philip II shall raise the necessary forces in Spain, and fall unexpectedly upon the territory of Navarre, which he will be easily able to be overrun, while the Duke of Guise, declaring himself at the same time *chief of the Catholic confession*, shall from his side gather armed men, and, thus pressed from two sides, the territory of Navarre can be easily seized.”

“So you see, reverend Father, the pact dates back to 1651—eight years ago—and already then did Francis of Guise declare himself *chief of the Catholic confession*, under the protection of the King of Spain. Neither myself, the Regent, nor my son, the King of France, although then a minor, is at all taken into consideration.”

The Jesuit proceeded to read aloud:

“The Emperor of Germany and other Princes who have remained Catholic shall block the passages to France during the war in that country, in order to prevent the Protestant Princes from coming to the aid of the Navarrais, and they will also see to it that the Swiss cantons remain quiet. To that end it will be necessary that the Catholic cantons declare war upon the Protestant ones, and that the Pope give all the assistance in his

power to the said Catholic cantons, and that he subsidize them with money and other necessaries for the war.

“While war is thus keeping France and Switzerland busy, the Duke of Savoy shall fall unexpectedly upon Geneva and Lausanne, shall seize the two cities, *and shall put all the inhabitants who resist to the sword, and all the others shall be thrown into the lake,* WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF AGE OR SEX, to the end that all may be made to feel that divine Providence has compensated for the postponement of punishment with its grandeur, and wills that the children suffer for the heresy of their parents, obedient to the Biblical text.”

“Oh, we must all admit, madam,” exclaimed the Jesuit, interrupting his reading, “Duke Francis of Guise is nourished with the marrow of Catholicism—”

“We of the house of Valois will suck the identical bone, and we will verify the dream of the Guisard, who was assassinated the very day after he signed this pact—”

Again the Jesuit proceeded to read:

“The same in France. For good and just reasons *all the heretics, without distinction, must be massacred at one blow.* THE PEACE SHALL BE PUT TO THAT USE. And this mission of exterminating all the members of the new religion shall be entrusted to the Duke of Guise, who shall, moreover, be charged with entirely effacing the name and stock of the lineage of the Navarrian Bourbons, lest from them there may arise some one to undertake the revenge of these acts, or the restoration of the new religion. All these matters are to be kept in mind.

“Matters being thus disposed of in France, it will be well to invade Protestant Germany with the aid of the Emperor and the bishops, and to restore that country to the holy apostolic See. To this end, the Duke of Guise *shall lend the Emperor and*

other Catholic Princes all the moneys proceeding from the confiscations and spoils of so many nobles and rich bourgeois, KILLED in France as HERETICS. The Duke of Guise shall be later reimbursed from the spoils of the Lutherans, who, by reason of the same taint of heresy shall have been killed in Germany.

“The Cardinals of the Sacred College have no doubt that, in the same manner, all the other kingdoms can be turned into the flocks of the apostolic shepherd. But, first of all, may it please God to help and favor these purposes, they being HOLY AND FULL OF PIETY.”¹

“Holy and full of piety were these Catholic purposes!” exclaimed the reverend Father Lefevre laying the pact of the triumvirate upon the table. “Alas, death palsied the hand of the Duke of Guise at the very beginning of his great work!”

“The Lord evidently wished, my reverend Father, to reserve for us, the Valois, the execution of the project that the Guisard organized with a motive of purely personal ambition. I shall hatch the bloody egg that the Lorrainian laid. But the chick can not break the egg except during peace. Then the Huguenots will have ceased to be on their guard; then they will be dozing in false security. The work of extermination will be accomplished with the help of a peace that we shall have brought about. All will be killed—men and women, children and the aged. Not one heretic will escape the avenging sword. Let Rome and Madrid give me time to move! Let Pius V and Philip II give over harassing me continually with their threats on

¹ *Journal and Memoirs of Francis of Lorraine, Duke of Aumale and of Guise, containing the af-*

airs of France and the negotiations with Scotland, Italy and Germany, pp. 664-665.

the ground that the war is dragging along! Are hostilities to be suddenly stopped? No, indeed! I must profit, as I have already profited, by all opportunities to destroy as many Huguenots as possible, especially their leaders. The Duke of Alva is right: 'One salmon is worth more than a thousand minnows.' At the first favorable juncture I shall negotiate peace with the Protestants, and grant them all they may demand. The more favorable the treaty shall be to the Huguenots, all the smoother will the rope run that is to strangle them. When the edict is promulgated it shall be scrupulously carried out, in order to induce our adversaries to disarm. At the right moment we shall organize the general massacre, for one day, all over France."

"The Holy Father and the King of Spain shall be posted on your Majesty's project. They will be notified that it is thanks to you, the Duke of Deux-Ponts, Dandelot and the Prince of Condé *have been dismissed to appear before their natural Judge.*"

"People of your cloth, my reverend Father," replied the Queen, "know how to impart an ingenious and peculiar turn to the description of events."

"Madam, seeing we are considering those people in whose behalf we simply advance the hour of final judgment, I wish above all to recommend to the attention of your Majesty that most dangerous German Prince—Franz of Gerolstein."

"The young Prince came last year to my court shortly before the reformers took up arms. He is brilliant, dar-

ing and gifted with great military talent. It was due to his influence that the Duke of Deux-Ponts decided to bring to the Protestant army the reinforcement it received of German troops. To-day Franz of Gerolstein is the real head of the forces over which Wolfgang of Mansfeld exercises but titular authority."

"Do you expect to deliver the Church of that pestilential Gerolstein?"

"One of my maids of honor is to take charge of that delicate mission, my reverend Father—" and stopping suddenly short and listening in the direction of a little door that communicated with the apartment, Catherine De Medici asked: "Did you not hear a sound, something like a suppressed cry outside there?"

"No, madam."

"It seems to me I heard a voice behind that door. Throw it open," whispered Catherine to Father Fefevre; "see, I beg you, if there is someone listening!"

The Jesuit rose, pushed open the door, looked out, and returned: "Madam, I can see nobody; the corridor is dark."

"I must have deceived myself. It must have been the moaning of the wind that I heard."

"Madam," said Father Lefevre as he resumed his seat, "once we are considering dangerous persons, I request you to mention to your generals two heretics in particular—Odelin Lebrenn and his son, armorers by trade, who serve in the Admiral's army as volunteers. I would urge you to recommend to your generals that they spare the lives of

both heretics if they are ever taken prisoners.”

“Did I understand you correctly, my reverend Father? The lives of the two miscreants are to be spared?”

“The grace extended to them will be but a short respite, which we would put to profit by wresting from them certain valuable secrets with the aid of the rack—before dismissing them to their supreme Judge.”

“Those are details, my reverend Father, with which I can not burden myself. Upon such matters you must treat with Count Neroweg of Plouernel, the chief of my escort.”

At the name of Neroweg of Plouernel the Jesuit gave a slight start. With a face expressive of gratification he remarked: “Madam, Providence seconds my wishes. There is none fitter than the Count of Plouernel for me to address myself to in this affair.”

“Let us return to more weighty questions, my reverend Father. I have still two words to say to you concerning the Cardinal of Lorraine. This evening the Guisard strove to make me believe that Marshal Tavannes, the commandant of the army of my son of Anjou, was treating secretly with Coligny. According to the Cardinal, the plot is to offer my son the sovereignty of the Low Countries, besides Guyenne and other provinces, upon condition that he embrace the Reformed religion. Have you received any inkling of these projects through your spies? Unless your own interests render it necessary for you to deceive me on this head, answer me truthfully. I know how to hear and bear the full truth on all matters.”

The Jesuit reflected for a moment; he then made answer: "Yes, madam; we are informed on those negotiations—indeed, it is due to that very information that it was decided to send me upon the present mission to your Majesty."

"And, with the view of thwarting the plot, did the Cardinal of Lorraine induce Philip II to propose the Duke of Alva to me for general-in-chief of the Catholic army, with young Henry of Guise, the Cardinal's nephew, and his brother, the Duke of Aumale, as Alva's lieutenants?"

"The proposition was made to the King of Spain. It is true."

"Who, no doubt, received it favorably?"

"Yes, madam. But his Catholic Majesty was not then aware of the latest happenings which you communicated to me, the same as he is still ignorant of your resolution to put an end to the heresy when the moment shall have come to strike the decisive blow, as you explained it."

"You are now informed on the contents of the letter which I showed you from my son of Anjou, regarding the project against Coligny. The Cardinal lied knowingly when he accused my son of dealing with the Admiral. Of course he knows the Marshal and my son will stoutly deny the charge. He merely seeks to arouse doubts and suspicions in my mind, hoping I may be frightened into transferring the command of the French army into the hands of the Duke of Alva and his nephew."

"The Cardinal's falsehood, madam, did not lack skill. It was an adroit diplomatic move."

“Now, my reverend Father, let me sum up our interview—war upon the Huguenots, merciless war, while it lasts; thereupon the offer or acceptance of a peace, which is to be utilized by us in preparing their extermination. That is my line of conduct.”

“My mission to you is ended, madam. To-morrow I shall take my departure and return to inform the King of Spain and the Holy Father of the happy deeds done, and those in contemplation, all of which guarantee the execution of your promises for the future.”

“My reverend Father, is it in my power to bestow any favor upon you, to grant you a present? It is a right enjoyed by all negotiators.”

“Madam, we care but little for the goods and honors of this world. All I shall ask of you is to cause your son, King Charles IX, to change his confessor, and take one from our Society, the reverend Father Auger. He is an able and accommodating man, skilful in understanding everything, permitting everything—and advising everything.”

“I promise you I shall induce my son Charles to take Father Auger for his confessor. Good night, my reverend Father, go and rest. I shall see you to-morrow before your departure and deliver to you a letter for the Holy Father.”

The Queen rang twice the little bell that lay at her elbow. A page entered: “Conduct the reverend Father to Count Neroweg of Plouernel.”

She than rang again, not twice, but three times. After bowing to Catherine De Medici the Jesuit withdrew upon

the steps of the page. Almost immediately Anna Bell stepped into the apartment through the door that opened upon the corridor.

Catherine De Medici was struck by the pallor and the troubled, almost frightened, looks of her maid of honor as she presented herself upon the summons of the bell. Fastening a penetrating look upon Anna Bell, the Queen said:

“You look very pale, dearest; your hands tremble; you seem unable to repress some violent emotion.”

“May your Majesty deign to excuse me—”

“What is the cause of your great agitation?”

“Fear, madam. I was hurrying to answer your summons, and—as I crossed the dark corridor—whether it was an illusion or reality, I know not, madam, I thought I saw a white figure float before me—”

“It must be the ghost of some deceased belle, who, expecting still to find here the sturdy abbot of the monastery, came to pay him a nocturnal visit. But let us leave the dead to themselves, and turn our thoughts to the living. I love you, my pet, above all your companions.”

“Your Majesty has taken pity upon a poor girl.”

“Yes; it is now about eight or nine years ago, that, as Paula, one of my women, was crossing the Chatelet Square, she saw an old Bohemian wench holding a little girl by the hand. Struck by the beauty and comeliness of the little one, Paula offered to buy her. The gypsy quickly closed the bargain. Paula told me the story. I desired to see her protégé. It turned out to be yourself. The Bohemian woman must have kidnapped you from

some Huguenot family, I fear, judging from a little lead medal that hung from your neck and bore the legend—*A Pastor calling the sheep of the Church out of the desert*—a common expression in the cabalistic cant of those depraved people.”

“Alas! madam, I preserve no other memento of my family—you will pardon me for having kept the medal.”

“Well, from the instant that Paula brought you before me I was charmed with your childish gracefulness. I had you carefully trained in the art of pleasing, and placed you among my maids of honor.”

“Your Majesty enjoys my unbounded gratitude. Whenever you commanded I obeyed, even when you exacted a sacrifice—whatever it may have cost me—”

“You are alluding, my pet, to the conversion of the Marquis of Solange! I said to you: ‘Solange is a Huguenot; he is influential in his province; should war break out again, he may become a dangerous enemy to me; he contemplates leaving the court;—make him love you, and be not cruel to him; a handsome lass like you is well worth a mass.’ The bargain was struck. We now have one Catholic more, and one virgin less.”

Anna Bell hid her face, purple with shame.

Without seeming to notice the young girl’s confusion, Catherine De Medici proceeded: “By the virtue of your beautiful eyes Solange has become a fervent Catholic and one of my most faithful servitors. You gave me in that instance proof of your complete devotion. For the rest, it was a sweet sacrifice on your part, my pet; Solange is

an accomplished nobleman, young, handsome, brave and witty. It is not now about that lover that we have business on hand. I have other plans for you. I am thinking of marrying you. I wish to make a Princess of you, and verify the most cherished of your secret wishes—which I have guessed. Anna Bell, you do not love Solange; you never loved him; and you nourish in the recesses of your heart a desperate passion for the young Prince Franz of Gerolstein.”

“Good God! Madam. Have pity upon me! Mercy!”

“There is nothing pitiful in the matter. The Prince is made to be loved. His reputation for bravery, magnificence and gallantry ran ahead of him to my court, where you saw him last year. He often conversed with you tête-à-tête. When other women sought to provoke him with their allurements your face grew somber. Oh, nothing escapes me! Affairs of state do not absorb me to the point that I can not follow, with the corner of my eye, the cooings of my maids of honor. It is my mental relaxation. I love to see beauty in its youth devote itself to the cult of Venus, and put in practice the saying of Rabelais’ Thalamite—‘*Do what you please!*’ How often did I not seat myself among you, my dear girls, to chat about your gallants, your appointments, your infidelities! What delightful tales did we not tell! How you all led the poor youngsters by the nose! Truth to say, they returned you tit for tat, and with usury, to the greater glory of the goddess Aphrodite! And yet, my pet, although I had trained you a true professional of the Abbey of Thalamia, with

Cupid for your god and Voluptuousness for your patron saint, you ever remained out of your element among your companions. Serious and melancholy, you are a sort of nun among my other maids. What you need is devoted and faithful love; a husband whom you can adore without remorse; a brood of children to love. That is the reason, my pet, why I wish to marry you to Franz of Gerolstein."

"It pleases your Majesty to mock me—take pity upon poor Anna."

"No joke! You admit you love the young and handsome German Prince. I can read in your soul better than you could yourself. I shall tell you what your thoughts are at this moment: 'Yes, I love Franz of Gerolstein! But a deep abyss separates us two, and will always separate me from him. He is in the camp opposed to that of the Queen, my benefactress; he is the head of a sovereign house; he is ignorant of my passion, and if he did know, he never could think of wedding me! What am I? A poor girl picked up from the street. I already have had one gallant. Besides, Catherine De Medici's maids of honor enjoy a bad, a deservedly bad, reputation. The satires and the pasquils designate us with the appellation of the Queen's Flying Squadron. I should be crazy to think of marriage with Franz of Gerolstein—'"

"Madam, take pity upon me!" broke in Anna Bell, no longer able to restrain her tears. "Even if what you say is true, even if you read to the very core of my thoughts—please do not sport with my secret sorrows."

"My pet, hand me the little casket of sandal wood,

ribbed in gold, that lies upon yonder table. It contains wonderful things."

Anna Bell obeyed. The Queen selected one of the little keys attached to her girdle and opened the casket. Nothing could be more fascinating to the eyes than the contents of the chest—embroidered and perfumed gloves, smelling apples, dainty-looking vermilion confectionery boxes, filled with sugar plums of all colors, and several vials of gold and crystal. Catherine De Medici picked out one of these, reclosed the casket carefully and returned it to Anna Bell. The maid of honor replaced it upon the table and returned to the Queen. Smiling benignly and holding up the golden, glistening vial before her victim, the Queen said: "Do you see this, my pet? This little vial encloses the love of Franz of Gerolstein."

"What a suspicion!" was the thought that flashed through Anna Bell's mind and froze her to the floor. But the terror-stricken girl quickly regained her self-control at that critical moment. "I must not," was the second thought that flashed through her mind close upon the first, "I must not allow the Queen to notice that I know her purpose."

"Do you believe, my pet, in the potency of love-phil-ters?"

"This evening," answered the young girl with an effort to control her emotions, "this very evening Clorinde of Vaucernay was telling us, madam, that a lady of the court succeeded by means of one of those enchanted potions in

captivating a man who, before then, had a strong dislike for her.”

“You, then, believe in the potency of philters?”

“Certainly, madam,” answered Anna Bell anxious not to awaken the Queen’s suspicions; “I must have full confidence in their efficacy, seeing it is proved by such incontestable facts.”

“The merest doubt on the subject is unallowable, my pet; to doubt would be to shut one’s eyes and deny the light of day. Now, my little beauty, the philter contained in this vial, is put together by Ruggieri, my alchemist, under the conjunction of marvelously favorable planets. It is of such virtue that only a few drops, if poured out by a woman who wishes to be loved by a man, would suffice to turn him permanently amorous of her. Take this philter, my pet—go and find your Prince Charming. Let him drink the contents of this vial—and grant him the gift of an amorous mercy.”

Anna Bell no longer suspected, she comprehended the Queen’s intentions. For a moment she was seized with terror and remained silent, mechanically holding the vial in her hand. The Queen, on her part, attributing the stupor and silence of Anna Bell to an excess of joy, or, perhaps, to the apprehension caused her by the thought of the many and great dangers to overcome in order to approach her Prince, proceeded to allay her fears:

“Poor dear girl, you are as speechless as if, awakened with a start from a dream, you find it a reality. You are surely asking yourself what to do in order to reach Franz?

Nothing easier—provided your courage is abreast of your love.”

Controlling her troubled mind, Anna Bell answered with composure: “I hope, madam, I do not lack courage.”

“Listen to me carefully. We are only a few leagues from the enemy’s army. I shall issue orders to Count Neroweg of Plouernel to furnish you with a safe conduct up to the Huguenot outposts. You shall be carried in one of my own litters, drawn by two mules. By dawn to-morrow morning you can not fail to run against some scout or other making the rounds of the Protestant camp—”

“Great God! madam. I tremble at the bare thought of falling into the hands of the Huguenots!”

“If your courage fail you, all will run to water. But you may be quite certain that you run no risk whatever. The Huguenots do not kill women—especially not such handsome ones as yourself. You will be merely the prisoner of the miscreants.”

“And what am I to do then, madam?”

“You will say to those who will arrest you: ‘Messieurs, I am one of the Queen’s maids of honor; I was on my way to join her Majesty; the leader of my litter struck a wrong road; please take me to Prince Franz of Gerolstein.’ The rest will go of itself. The Huguenots will take you to the Prince. Like the nobleman that he is, my little beauty, he will keep you at his lodgings or in his tent, he will yield you the place of honor at his table—and—in his bed. You will have more than one opportunity to improve Franz’s wine with a few drops of the philter.”

The Queen's instructions were interrupted at this point by the entrance of a page who came to announce that Count Neroweg of Plouernel prayed for admission to the Queen's presence upon pressing and important matters. Catherine ordered the page to introduce the Count, and she bade Anna Bell godspeed, kissing her on the forehead and adding these last instructions:

"Prepare immediately for your journey, my pet. The Count of Plouernel will appoint the guide who is to accompany you. One of my equerries will get a litter ready. I expect to see you again before your departure."

The maid of honor followed the Queen's instructions. Seeing that the interview with the Count of Plouernel lasted longer than she had anticipated, Catherine De Medici was prevented from seeing Anna Bell again, and sent her a note to depart without delay.

Towards one o'clock in the morning the maid of honor, mounted in one of the Queen's litters, left the Abbey of St. Severin.

CHAPTER III.

THE AVENGERS OF ISRAEL.

The sun was rising. Its early rays gilded the crest of a forest about a league distant from St. Yrieix, a large burg that served as the center of the Protestant encampment. A chapel, formerly dedicated to St. Hubert by an inveterate hunter, raised its dilapidated walls on the edge of the wood, the skirts of which were now guarded by mounted scouts, posted at long intervals. The chapel had been devastated during the religious wars. Its belfries, the capitals and the friezes of its portico were broken; its windows were smashed in; the statue of St. Hubert, the patron of hunters, lay decapitated in the midst of other debris, along with that of the seigneur who founded the holy shrine, chosen by him for his sepulcher. The fragments of his marble image, representing him lying prone, with hands joined in prayer, hunting horn slung over his shoulder, his favorite greyhound stretched at his feet—all lay strewn around the mortuary vault, now gaping wide open and cumbered with ruins. The interior of the chapel now served as a stable, and also as guardhouse to a picket squad of the Huguenot army, posted at the spot. The pickets' horses, ready saddled and bridled, stood drawn up

in double row in one of the low-roofed aisles and on either side of a door that communicated with the old vestry. For want of forage the beasts were eating the green leaves of large bunches of branches thrown at their feet. The riders, either standing, or seated, or stretched out at full length, wrapped in their cloaks, were not dressed in uniform. Their offensive and defensive arms, however, dissimilar and worn, were in usable condition.

This band of Huguenot volunteers took the name of the Avengers of Israel. Josephin, the Franc-Taupin, named by the Catholics "The One-Eyed," was their commander. On all occasions the Avengers of Israel approved themselves animated by an intrepidity that was matchless, always claiming for themselves the post of greatest danger, and always found first in battle. The indomitable courage of the Franc-Taupin, his exceptional skill in guerilla warfare, his pitiless hatred for the papists, upon whom he swore to avenge the fate of his sister Bridget and his niece Hena, earned for him the leadership of these resolute men.

On this day, at sunrise, the commander presided at a species of tribunal consisting of several of his companions in arms, all seated in the midst of the ruins of the chapel of St. Hubert. The years had whitened the hair and beard of the Franc-Taupin, without impairing the fiber of his energy. An old rust-covered steel breastplate over his chest answered the purpose of corselet; his wide hose of red cloth were half covered by a pair of high leather boots heavy with dust; at his belt, which also contained his cartridges, hung a short stick suspended from a piece of

pack-thread, and indented with sixteen notches—each tallying the death of a priest or monk. The dagger of fine Milan steel, a present from Odelin, hung on the Franc-Taupin's right side, while at his left he wore a long sword with an iron hilt. The Franc-Taupin's bronzed and haggard features, rendered all the more sinister by the large black patch which covered one eye, were at this moment expressive of sardonic cruelty. He was sitting in judgment upon a Cordelier, a man of tall and robust build, who was captured in the early morning prowling in the forest. Some letters found about his person proved that the tonsured gentleman was a spy of the royalist army, and one of the Avengers of Israel recognized him as one of the monks who took part in the carnage of Mirebeau, where nearly twelve hundred Huguenot prisoners were put to death with frightful refinements of cruelty. Surrounded by several of his companions, who, like himself, were seated upon the ruins of the altar, the Franc-Taupin drew his dagger and was engaged in leisurely sharpening it upon a stone that he held between his knees, without looking at the monk who, livid with rage and terror, and standing a few steps aside with his arms tied behind his back, was uttering maledictions at the top of his voice:

“Accursed and sacrilegious wretches! You abuse your strength! The hand of the Lord will fall heavy upon you! Heretical dogs!”

The Franc-Taupin calmly sharpened his dagger. “Good!” he exclaimed. “Be brave, my reverend! Disgorge your monastic bile! Crack your apostolic hide! It

will not make your fate any worse. Be prepared for the worst, and you will still be far behind what I have in store for you. We care nothing for your threats."

"Neither can anything render your fate worse than it will be, reprobates," howled the Cordelier, "when the whole pack of you, to the very last one, will be hurled into the pit of everlasting flames!"

"By my sister's death!" the Franc-Taupin answered. "You make a mistake to mention 'flames.' You remind me of what I never forget—the fate of my niece, who, poor innocent creature, was plunged twenty-five times into the burning pyre. Brothers, instruct the tonsured fellow upon our reasons for enrolling ourselves in the corps of the Avengers of Israel, and why we are pitiless."

Accordingly, while the Franc-Taupin continued to whet his dagger, one of the Huguenot soldiers thus addressed the monk:

"Monk, listen! In full peace, after the Edict of Orleans, my house was invaded during my absence by a band of fanatics. The vicar of the parish led them. My old and blind father, who remained at home in my house, was strangled to death. It is to avenge my father that I enrolled myself with the militia of the Avengers of Israel. Therefore, death to the papist Church! Death to all the tonsured felons!"

"Marshal Montluc held command in Guyenne," continued a second Huguenot. "Six soldiers, attached to his ordnance company, lodged at our farm-house. One day they forced the cellar door, drank themselves drunk, and violated my brother's wife. Wounded with cutlass

cuts in his endeavor to defend her, he dragged himself bleeding to the headquarters of Marshal Montluc to demand justice. Montluc ordered him to be hanged! Monk, I have sworn to avenge my brother! Death to the papists!"

"I also am from Guyenne, like my companion," came from another Huguenot. "One Sunday, relying upon the Edict of Longjumeau, I attended services with my mother and sister. A company of Marshal Montluc's swash-bucklers, led by a chaplain, invaded the temple, chased out the women, locked up the men in the building, and set it on fire. There were sixty-five of us inside, all without arms. Nine succeeded in making their escape from the flames. The rest, burned, smothered by the smoke, or crushed under the falling roof, all perished. The women and young girls were dragged to a nearby enclosure; they were stripped to the skin; they were then compelled at the point of pikes to dance naked before the papist soldiers; and were finally forced to submit to the lechery of their persecutors. My mother was killed in her endeavor to save my sister from that crowning outrage; nine months later my sister died in childbed of the fruit of her rape. Monk, I swore to avenge my sister! I swore to avenge my mother! Death to the papist seigneurs and nobles!"

"I come from Montaland, near Limoges," a fourth Huguenot proceeded. "Three months after the new edict, I attended services with my young son. A band of peasants, led by two Carmelites and one Dominican, rushed into the temple. My poor boy's head—he was not yet fif-

teen—was cut off with a scythe, and stuck upon a pole. Monk, I swore to avengè my son! Death to the whole monastic vermin!”

“Was it I, perchance, who committed the acts that you are seeking to avenge?” howled the Cordelier. “Cowardly felons!”

At this the Franc-Taupin interrupted the sharpening of his dagger, cast a sardonic look at the monk, and cried: “Oh! Oh! This is the seventeenth time I hear that identical remark—you being the seventeenth tonsured gentleman whom I sentence. Do you see this little stick? I cut a notch in it at each reprisal. When I shall have reached twenty-five the bill will be settled—my sister’s daughter was plunged twenty-five times into the furnace, at the order of the Catholic priests, the agents of the Pope.

“Monk, it stands written in the Bible: ‘Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.’¹ Well, now, instead of burning you, as should be done, I purpose to make you a Cardinal.”

Saying this the soldier of fortune described with the point of his dagger a circle around his head. The monk understood the meaning of the frightful pantomime. The Avengers of Israel threw him down and held him fast at the foot of the altar. The Franc-Taupin passed his thumb along the edge of his weapon, and sat down upon his haunches beside the patient. At that moment one of the riders rushed precipitately into the chapel, shouting:

¹ Exodus 21.23—25.

“A good prize! A good prize! A maid of honor of Jezebel!”

The arrival of the captive girl suspended the torture of the monk who remained pinioned at the feet of Josephin: The Franc-Taupin rose, and cast a look upon the female captive, who was none other than Anna Bell. The features of the hardened soldier relaxed, a tremor ran over his frame, he hid his face in his hands and wept. It seemed to him as if he saw in the young captive Hena, the poor martyr he so deeply mourned! The otherwise inexorable man remained for a moment steeped in desolate thoughts, in the midst of the profound silence of the Avengers of Israel. The maid of honor stood cold with fright. She realized she was in the power of the terrible One-Eyed man, the ferocity of whom spread terror among the Catholics.

The Franc-Taupin passed the back of his hand over his burning and hollow eye, the fierce fire of which seemed kindled into fiercer flame by the tear that had just bathed it. Turning with severity to Anna Bell he ordered her to step nearer:

“You are a maid of honor to the Queen?”

With a trembling voice Anna Bell replied: “Yes, monsieur, I belong to her Majesty the Queen.”

“Where do you come from?”

“From Meilleret. Tired with travel, I stopped for rest at the village. From there I proceeded on my journey to join the Queen.—My guide lost his way. Your riders stopped my litter.—Have pity upon me and order that I

be taken to Monsieur the Prince of Gerolstein. I think I may rely upon his courtesy."

"At what hour did you leave Meilleret?"

"About one this morning."

"You lie! It is hardly five o'clock now—you traveled in a litter—it takes more than eight hours to come from Meilleret to this place on horseback and riding fast."

"Monsieur, I conjure you, have me taken to the Prince of Gerolstein—it is the only favor I entreat of your kindness," cried Anna Bell, trembling and stammering.

Struck by the insistence with which the maid of honor requested to be taken to Prince Franz of Gerolstein, the Franc-Taupin contemplated her with mistrust. Suddenly he ordered:

"Search the woman!"

Two Huguenots executed the order, and extracted from Anna Bell's pockets a purse, a letter and the gold vial. The Franc-Taupin opened the letter, the seal of which was broken; read it; looked puzzled over a passage in the missive and remained for a moment thoughtful. But immediately struck by a sudden inspiration, he darted a fierce glance at the maid of honor, examined the gold vial in silence, and holding it up to Anna Bell, said:

"Woman, what does that vial contain?"

With a great effort, Anna Bell replied, "I—I—know not."

"Oh, you know not!" cried the Franc-Taupin, breaking out in a sardonic guffaw. "Miserable creature. You seem to have the audacity of a criminal."

He stepped slowly towards the young girl, seized her by the arm, and holding the vial to her lips, cried:

“Drink it on the spot, or I stab you to death!”

Anna Bell, terror-stricken and fainting, dropped upon her knees, crying: “Mercy! Mercy! I beg of you, mercy! Pity! Mercy!”

“Poisoner!” exclaimed the Franc-Taupin.

The maid of honor crouched still lower upon her knees, hid her face in her hands, and sobbed aloud. The Huguenots looked at one another stupefied. Again silence reigned.

“Brothers,” said the Franc-Taupin, breaking the silence, “listen to the letter that you have just taken from this woman’s pocket:

“A courier from my son Charles has arrived from Paris, my pet, compelling me to have an immediate conference with the Cardinal. I can not see you before your departure. Adieu, and courage. You will reach your Prince. I forgot one important recommendation to you. The philter must be emptied quickly after the stopper is removed from the vial.

“The letter is signed ‘C. M.’—Catherine De Medici! Here we have it! The Queen sends one of her strumpets to poison Franz of Gerolstein!”

Still under the shock of the cowardly assassination of Condé, and of the recent deaths by poison of the Duke of Deux-Ponts and the Admiral’s brother, the Huguenots broke out into imprecations. The youth and beauty of the maid of honor only rendered her criminal designs all the more execrable in their eyes. The moment was critical.

Anna Bell made a superhuman effort—a last endeavor to escape the fate that threatened her. She rose on her knees and with clasped hands cried:

“Mercy! Listen to me! I shall confess everything!”

“O, Hena,” cried the Franc-Taupin with savage exaltation. “Poor martyr! I shall avenge your death upon this infamous creature—beautiful like yourself—young like yourself! Throw together outside of the chapel the branches that our horses have bared of their leaves. The wood is green—it will burn slowly. We’ll tie the poisoner and the monk back to back upon the pyre the instant I have ordained him a Cardinal.”

In chorus the Huguenots shouted: “To the pyre with the monk and the poisoner!”

Anna Bell’s mind began to wander. Livid and shivering she crouched in a heap upon the ground, her voice choked in her throat, already rigid with terror, and escaped only in convulsive sobs. The Avengers of Israel hurried to heap up the bare branches around a tall oak-tree planted before the portico of the chapel. The Franc-Taupin stepped towards the Cordelier, who muttered in an agonizing voice, “*Miserere mei, Domine—miserere!*”

Again the solemnity of ordaining the monk a Cardinal was suddenly interrupted. The sound of an approaching and numerous cavalcade reached the Avengers of Israel. A moment later Prince Franz of Gerolstein appeared at the head of a mounted troop.

The personage who now stepped upon the scene was the grandson of Charles of Gerolstein, who in 1534 assisted at

the council of the Calvinists in the quarry of Montmartre, together with Christian the printer. The young Prince was twenty-five years of age. The short visor of his helmet exposed his features. Their regularity and symmetry were perfect; they expressed at once benevolence and resolution. Of tall and wiry build, the young man's heavy black cuirass, worn German fashion, and his thick armlets, seemed not to weigh upon him. His wide hose, made of scarlet cloth, were almost overlapped by his long boots of buff leather armed with silver spurs. A wide belt of white taffeta—the Protestants' rallying sign—was fastened with a knot on one side.

Immediately upon entering the chapel the Prince addressed the Franc-Taupin:

“Comrades, I have just learned that your scouts have arrested one of the Queen's maids of honor—”

Before the Franc-Taupin had time to answer the Prince, Anna Bell jumped up, ran to Franz, and threw herself at his feet, crying: “For mercy's sake, monsieur, deign to hear me!”

Franz of Gerolstein recognized the young girl at once. He reached out his hand to her and made her rise, saying: “I remember to have met you, mademoiselle, at the French court, last year. Be comforted. There must be some untoward misunderstanding in regard to you.”

Anna Bell in turn seized the Prince's hands and covered them with kisses and tears. “I am innocent of the horrible crime that they charge me with!” she cried.

“Prince,” broke in the Franc-Taupin, “the woman

must die! The wretch is a poisoner; she is an emissary of Catherine De Medici; and you were singled out for her victim. We are about to do justice to the case."

"No pity for the prostitutes of the Italian woman! None for her messengers of death!" cried several Huguenots.

But Franz of Gerolstein interposed, saying: "My friends, I can not believe in the crime that you charge this young girl with. I knew her at the court of France. I often spoke with her. Whatever the deplorable reputation of her companions, she is a happy exception among them."

"Oh! thank you, monsieur," exclaimed Anna Bell in accents of ineffable gratitude. "Thank you, for testifying so warmly in my favor—"

"Prince, the hypocrite had her mask on when she conversed with you!" insisted the inexorable Franc-Taupin. "Read this letter from the Queen. You will learn from it the reason why her maid of honor threw herself intentionally into the hands of our outposts, and immediately requested to be taken to your tent. As to this vial," he turned to Anna Bell, "does it contain poison, yes or no?"

"Monsieur, do not allow appearances to deceive you—if you only knew!" cried Anna Bell, in distress.

Franz of Gerolstein cast upon the maid of honor a frigid look; then, turning away his head, he stepped towards the door of the chapel. Anna Bell rushed after the Prince, fell again at his feet, clasped his knees and cried: "Monsieur, do not forsake me! In the name of your mother, deign to listen to me! It is not death I fear—what I fear is your contempt—I am innocent!"

The accent of truthfulness often touches the most prejudiced of hearts. Moved, despite himself, Franz of Gerolstein stopped, and looking down upon the maid of honor with pain and pity, said:

“I grant your prayer—I wish still to doubt the crime that you are accused of—explain the mystery of your movements.” He looked around, and noticing the vestry door that led from one of the aisles of the chapel, he added, “Come, mademoiselle, I shall listen to you without witnesses in yonder private place.”

With an effort Anna Bell arose, and with staggering steps she followed Franz of Gerolstein into the vestry. Arrived there, the maid of honor collected her thoughts for a moment, and then addressed the young Huguenot Prince with a trembling voice in these words:

“Monsieur, before God who hears me—here is the truth: Last evening, shortly before midnight, at the Abbey of St. Severin where the Queen halted for rest, she summoned me to her, and after reminding me of all that I owed to her generosity, because,” and Anna Bell broke down weeping, “I am a waif, picked up from the street—out of charity—one of the Queen’s serving-women bought me about ten years ago, as she informed me, from a Bohemian woman who made me beg before the parvise of Notre Dame in Paris—”

“How came you to become a maid of honor to Catherine De Medici?”

“The woman who took me in showed me to the Queen,

and, to my misfortune!—to my disgrace!—the Queen interested herself in me!”

“To your misfortune? To your disgrace?”

“Monsieur,” answered Anna Bell as if the words were wrung from her heart, “Alas! although barely beyond girlhood, two years ago, thanks to the principles and the instructions that I received, and the examples set to me, my education was perfect and complete, I was found worthy of forming part of the Queen’s ‘Flying Squadron’!”

“I understand you! Poor girl!”

“That is not all, monsieur. The day came when I was to prove my gratitude to the Queen. It happened during the truce in the religious wars. The Marquis of Solange, although a Protestant, often came to court. He was to be detached from his cause, monsieur. He had manifested some inclination towards me. The Queen called me apart. ‘The Marquis of Solange loves you,’ she said; ‘he will sacrifice his faith to you—provided you are not cruel towards him.’ I yielded to the pressure from the Queen. I had no consciousness of the indignity of my conduct until the day when—”

Anna Bell could proceed no further; she seemed to strangle with confusion, and was purple with shame. Suddenly frightful cries, proceeding from the interior of the chapel, startled the oppressive silence in the vestry. The cries were speedily smothered, but again, ever and anon, and despite the gag that suppressed them, they escaped in muffled roars of pain. Frightened at these ominous sounds, the maid of honor precipitately took refuge by the Prince’s

side, seeming to implore his protection and muttering amid sobs:

“Monsieur—do *you* hear those cries—do you hear the man’s moans?”

“Oh!” answered Franz of Gerolstein, visibly depressed with grief. “Forever accursed be they, who, through their ferocity, were the first to provoke these acts of cruel reprisal!”

The moans that reached the vestry gradually changed into muffled and convulsive rattles that grew fainter and fainter. Silence prevailed once more. The expiring monk was ordained Cardinal by the Franc-Taupin.

“I arrived in time, mademoiselle, to rescue you from the vengeance of those pitiless men,” resumed the Prince. “The candor of your words would denote the falseness of the accusations raised against you. And yet, this letter from the Queen, this vial, would seem to furnish convincing testimony against you.”

“Last evening,” Anna Bell proceeded, “notified by our governess that the Queen wished to speak to me, I awaited her orders in a dark corridor that separated my chamber from the Queen’s apartments. At the very moment I was about to open the door I heard your name mentioned, monsieur. The Queen was speaking about you with Father Lefevre, a priest of the Society of Jesus, one of the counselors of the King of Spain.”

“To what purpose was my name mentioned by the Queen and the Jesuit?”

“It seems that, in their opinion, monsieur, you are a

redoubtable enemy, and the Queen promised Father Lefevre to rid herself of you. One of her maids of honor was to be commissioned to execute the murder through poison. The maid of honor chosen was myself. Madam Catherine selected me for this horrible deed. Frightened at what I had overheard, an involuntary cry of horror escaped me. Almost immediately I heard footsteps approach the door of the Queen's apartment. Luckily I had time to regain my own chamber without being heard or even suspected of having overheard the Queen's words. Presently she rang for me. The Queen began by reminding me of her acts of kindness to me, and added she decided to fulfil the dearest and most secret wishes of my heart. 'Anna Bell,' she said, 'you no longer love the Marquis of Solange; you have transferred your affections to the Prince of Gerolstein, whom you saw at court last year. Take this vial. It contains a philter that makes one beloved. A guide will take you to the outposts of the Huguenots; you will fall into their hands; you will then ask to be taken to the Prince of Gerolstein. He is a nobleman, he will take pity upon you, he will lodge you in his tent. Love will inspire you. You will find the opportunity to pour a few drops of this philter into Franz of Gerolstein's cup—thus you will reach your Prince'—and these are the words which the Queen repeated to me in her letter."

"And guessing that the philter was poison, and fearing to awaken the Queen's suspicions, you feigned readiness to accept the mission of death? That, I suppose, is the complement of your story?"

“Yes, monsieur. I hoped to warn you to be on guard against the dangers that threaten you!”

Exhausted by so many emotions, and crushed with shame, the poor girl dropped down upon one of the benches in the vestry, hid her face in her hands, and wept convulsively.

The revelation, bearing as it did the stamp of irresistible candor, awakened in the heart of Franz of Gerolstein a deep interest for the ill-starred young woman.

“Mademoiselle,” he said to her in a firm yet kind tone, “I believe in your sincerity—I believe your account of your misfortunes.”

“Now, monsieur, I can die.”

“Dismiss such mournful thoughts—perhaps an unexpected consolation awaits you. Owing to certain details that you mentioned concerning your early years, I am almost certain I know your parents. You must have been born at La Rochelle, and was not your father an armorer?”

“Yes!” cried Anna Bell. “Yes! I remember how the sight of glistening arms delighted my eyes in my childhood.”

“Did you not, at the time you were kidnapped from your family, wear any collar or other trinket that you may have preserved?”

“I wore around my neck, and have preserved ever since, a little lead medal. I have it here attached to this chain.”

Franz of Gerolstein ran to the door of the vestry and called for Josephin. The Franc-Taupin approached, stepping slowly, and engaged in imparting the latest notch to the stick that hung from his cartridge belt: “Seventeen!

There are still eight wanting before we reach twenty-five! Oh! My bill shall be paid, by my sister's death! My bill shall be paid!"

Franz of Gerolstein inquired from the Franc-Taupin: "What was the age of Odelin's child when she was kidnapped!"

With a look of surprise the Franc-Taupin answered: "The poor child was eight years old. It is now ten years since the dear little girl disappeared."

"Did she wear anything by which she might be identified?" pursued Franz.

"She wore from her neck," said the Franc-Taupin with a sigh, "a medal of the Church of the Desert, like all other Protestant children. It was a medal that I presented to her mother the day of the little creature's birth."

Franz of Gerolstein held before the Franc-Taupin the medal that Anna Bell had just given him, and said: "Do you recognize this medal? Josephin, this young girl was kidnapped from her family ten years ago—she carried this medal from her neck—"

"Oh!" cried the Franc-Taupin, looking at Anna Bell with renewed confusion. "She is Odelin's daughter! That accounts for my having been from the first struck with her resemblance to Hena."

"Do you, monsieur, know my parents?" it was now Anna Bell's turn to ask. "Pray tell me where I can find them."

But overcome with emotion, the Franc-Taupin said: "But Oh! what a shame for the family! What a disgrace! A maid of honor to the Queen!"

The Franc-Taupin was quickly drawn from his mixed emotions of sorrow and joy. More important work was soon to be done. An officer entered the vestry, bringing orders from Admiral Coligny for the vanguards and outposts to fall back without delay toward St. Yrieix. Franz of Gerolstein immediately conveyed the Admiral's orders to the Avengers of Israel, who crowded behind the officer, and then turned to Anna Bell, saying:

“Mademoiselle, come; remount your litter. We shall escort you to St. Yrieix. I shall impart to you on the road tidings concerning your family—of which I am a member.”

“What a revelation to Odelin—and to Antonieq!” the Franc-Taupin thought to himself, “when they learn within shortly, at St. Yrieix, that this unfortunate creature—the disgraced and dishonored maid of honor to the Queen is the daughter of the one and the sister of the other!”

The Avengers of Israel and the squadron of German horsemen, with Franz of Gerolstein at their head, completed their reconnoissance about the forest and fell back upon St. Yrieix. The chapel of St. Hubert remained deserted and wrapped in silence. The morning breeze swung the body of the monk as it hung limp from a branch of the oak-tree in front of the portico of the holy place. Horrible to look at were the features of the corpse. They preserved the impress of the Cordelier's last agonies. The skin was ripped from the head. It had the appearance of being covered with a red skull cap.

Abominable reprisals, without a doubt; and yet less abominable than the crimes of which they record the expiatory vengeance,

CHAPTER IV.

GASPARD OF COLIGNY.

The burg of St. Yrieix stood in the center of the staked-in camp occupied by the army of Admiral Coligny. An inflexible disciplinarian, Admiral Coligny maintained rigorous order among his troops. Never was pillage allowed; never marauding. His soldiers always paid for all that they demanded from city folks or peasants. He went even further. Whenever it happened that, scared at the approach of armed forces, the peasants fled from their villages, the officers, executing the express orders of Admiral Coligny, left in the houses the price of the vegetables and forage with which the soldiers provisioned themselves and their beasts in the absence of the masters of the place. Finally, as a necessary and terrible example—thieves caught redhanded were inexorably hanged, and the stolen objects tied to their feet. Finally there never were seen at the Huguenot camps the swarms of women of ill fame that ordinarily encumbered the baggage of the Catholic army, and that, according to the ancient practice, were placed under the supervision of the “King of the Ribalds.”

The habits of the Protestants in the army of Admiral Coligny were pious, austere and upright. This notwith-

standing, the Admiral found it impossible to impose rigid discipline upon the numerous bands that from time to time attached themselves to his main forces, usually conducted a guerilla warfare, and emulated the royalists in rapine and cruelty.

The Admiral, the Princes of Orange, of Nassau and of Gerolstein, the sons of the Prince of Condé who was assassinated upon orders from the Duke of Anjou, young Henry of Bearn, besides many other Protestant chiefs, occupied several houses at St. Yrieix. The ancient priory served as the Admiral's quarters. Early in the morning, as was his wont, Admiral Coligny left his lodgings accompanied by his servants, to attend the prayers held in the Huguenot camp and called the "Prayer of the Guard." The officers and soldiers of the Admiral's post, together with those of some neighboring ones, filled on these occasions the courtyard of the priory, and standing erect, bare-headed, silent, they awaited in meditation the hour of raising their souls to God. Old soldiers grey of beard and seamed with scars; young recruits, barely beyond adolescence; rich noblemen, raised in the spacious halls of castles; field laborers, as well as artisans from the cities, who rallied to the defense of the "Church of the Desert"—all animated with an ardent faith, would there unite upon the level of Evangelical equality. The seigneur, battling side by side with his vassal for the holy cause of freedom of conscience, saw in him only a brother. Thus germinated among the Protestants the tendencies toward fraternity that were later to cause the distinctions of castes and races,

so much prized by royalists, to vanish. A slight murmur, betokening the affection and respect that he inspired, greeted the Admiral's arrival. The rude fatigues of many wars had bent his tall and one-time straight figure. His white hair and beard, together with the pallor of his noble visage, now profoundly changed since the death of his brother, who was treacherously poisoned, imparted to the aspect of the supreme chieftain of the Protestant armies a venerable and touching expression. Encased from his neck down in armor of burnished iron, without any ornament whatever, and half concealed under a flowing cloak of white cloth—the Huguenot color—the Admiral was bareheaded. Beside him stood the brave Francis of Lanoüe, a young Breton nobleman. Courage, honor, kindness, were stamped upon his manly and loyal countenance. A sort of steel arm, artistically forged by Odelin Lebrenn, with the aid of which Monsieur Lanoüe could guide his horse, replaced the arm that the daring captain had lost in battle. When the murmur that greeted the Admiral's arrival subsided, one of the pastors, Feron by name, who attended the army, uttered in a benign voice the following short prayer:

“Our trust lies in God, who made the heavens and the earth.

“Our Father and Savior, since it has pleased You, in the midst of the dangers of war, to preserve us last night and until this day, may it please You to cause us to employ it wholly in Your service. Oh, heavenly Father! Our brothers rely upon our vigilance. They rely upon us, their

defenders. Deign by Your grace to help us in faithfully fulfilling our charge, without negligence, or cowardice. Finally, may it please You, O Lord of Hosts, to change these calamitous times into happy times where justice and religion shall reign! Not then shall we any longer be reduced to the necessity of defending ourselves; then will Your holy name be glorified more and more the world over! All these things, O Lord, our Father! O, good God! we beg of You in the name and by the grace of our Savior Jesus Christ. We pray to You to increase our faith which we now confess, saying: I believe in God the omnipotent Father, and in his Son the Redeemer.

“May the blessing of God the Father, the grace and the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ remain and dwell forevermore among us in the communion of the Holy Ghost.

“Amen!”¹

“Amen!” responded Admiral Coligny devoutly and in a grave voice.

“Amen!” answered the soldiers.

The morning prayer had been said.

While the Admiral was religiously attending morning service in the courtyard at his headquarters, Dominic, the servant of his household who was captured shortly before by the royalists, was engaged in executing the crime plotted by the Duke of Anjou jointly with the captain of his guards.

Dominic stepped into the chamber of Coligny; he moved about cautiously, with eyes and ears alert, watching from

¹ Morning prayer of the guard, 1569.—*Protestant Review*, vol. I, p. 105.

all sides whether he was either seen or heard; he approached a table on which, standing beside several scrolls of paper, was an earthen bowl containing a refreshing drink that Coligny was in the habit of taking every morning, and which his faithful equerry Nicholas Mouche always prepared for him. Mouche was at the moment at prayers with the Admiral, together with the rest of the household servants. Dominic purposely did not join his comrades that morning; he figured upon their absence to carry out his nefarious deed. The poisoner took up the earthen bowl to drop the poison in. For an instant he hesitated. Brought up in the house of Coligny and ever treated by his master with paternal kindness, the thoughts of the wretch for an instant conjured up the past before him. Then cupidity stifled pity in the assassin's breast. He took out of his pocket a scent-bag containing some grey powder, shook the contents into the bowl, and stirred it, in order to mix the poison well with the liquid. Dominic was placing the bowl back from where he took it when he heard steps approaching. Quickly and tremblingly he slid away from the table. It was Odelin Lebrenn, bringing back the Admiral's casque, which was sent to him to repair, it having been bent in the day before by a ball from a large arquebus while the Admiral was on a reconnoitering expedition. Although serving as a volunteer with his son Antonicq in the Protestant army, Odelin exercised his trade with the help of a portable forge. Thirty-three years had elapsed since the day when he returned to Paris with Master Raimbaud. He was now bordering on his forty-

eighth year. His beard and hair were grizzled with grey. His features betokened frankness and resolution. Odelin had not seen Dominic since his capture by the Catholics. He now congratulated him heartily upon his escape from the enemy, but remarking the wretch's pallor, he added:

“What is the matter, my dear Dominic? You look ashy pale.”

“I do not know—what—you mean—” stammered Dominic, saying which the poisoner rushed out precipitately.

The hurry of the man's departure, his pallor and flutter, awakened the armorer's suspicion; but these thoughts were quickly crowded out of his mind by the sudden appearance of his son Antonicq, who ran in with flustered face and tears in his eyes, crying:

“Oh, father! Come quick! In heaven's name come to the Prince of Gerolstein who is just back to camp with uncle Josephin, the Franc-Taupin.”

At this moment, Nicholas Mouche, the Admiral's confidential equerry entered his master's room. Not seeing the face of either Odelin or his son, both having their backs turned to the door, he cried out in surprise and alarm:

“Who are you? What are you doing here?” But instantly recognizing the armorer and his son, for whom he entertained warm esteem, he added: “Excuse me, my dear Lebrenn, I did not recognize you at first. Excuse me. You and your son are really members of the household. Your presence here need not alarm me for my master's safety.”

“I brought back Monsieur Coligny’s casque,” Odelin explained, “and my son came after me. I do not yet know the cause of his excitement. See how flustered his face is! What extraordinary thing has happened, my boy?”

“My sister—Marguerite—whom we thought lost forever—has been found—”

“Great God!”

“Come, father—the Prince—and my uncle—will tell you all about it—they will narrate to you the extraordinary affair—”

“What!” exclaimed Nicholas Moueche, looking at Odelin. “Is the poor child who disappeared so long ago found again! Heaven be praised!”

“Oh, I can not yet believe such a happy thing possible!” said Odelin, his heart beating between doubt and hope.

“Come, father, you will know all!”

“Adieu!” said the armorer to Nicholas, as he followed his son, no less wrought up than the young man.

“Poor father!” mused the old equerry as he followed Odelin with his eyes. “Provided only he is not running after some cruel disappointment!” Approaching his master’s writing table to assure himself that the Admiral was supplied with ink, Nicholas’s eyes fell upon the earthen bowl. He noticed that it was full to the brim—untouched.

“Monsieur the Admiral has not taken a single mouthful of his chicory water! Truth to say, in point of taking care of himself, the dear old hero is as thoughtless as a child! But here he is! He shall not escape a lecture;”

and addressing Coligny, who now returned to his room after prayers, the equerry said in a tone of familiar reproach that his long years of service justified: "Well, Monsieur Admiral; what about your chicory water! The bowl is as full as when I brought it in early this morning—"

"That is so," answered Coligny with a smile. "The trouble lies with you. You make the drink so frightfully bitter that I postpone all I can the hour of gulping it down."

"That is an odd reason, Monsieur Admiral! Is not the bitterness of the drink the very thing that gives it virtue? Monsieur, you are going to drink it now—on the spot—and before me!"

"Come, let us compromise—I promise you that the bowl shall be empty within the next hour. Are the horses saddled and bridled?"

"Yes, monsieur. If we ride out this morning I shall bring along Julien the Basque and Dominic to take charge of your relay horses. The poor fellow Dominic, despite the mishap of the day before yesterday, which might have cost him dear, begged me this morning to choose him as one of the footmen to accompany you to-day, if there is to be any engagement."

"Dominic is a worthy servant."

"What else should he be? Was he not brought up in your house, monsieur, and the son of one of your oldest servants, the worthy forester of the woods of Chatillon?"

"Oh, my dear house of Chatillon, my meadows, my

woods, my vines, my grain fields, my thrifty laborers—am I ever to see you again?” remarked Coligny with a melancholic sigh. “Oh, the country life! The family life!” The Admiral remained in silent meditation for a moment, then he added:

“Leave me alone. I have some writing to do.”

The equerry left the room. Monsieur Coligny stepped slowly towards the table, drew a campstool near, and sat down upon it. With his forehead resting on his hand he remained long lost in revery, musing to himself:

“Why should this thought have come to me to-day, more than any other day? I know not. God inspires me. Let us listen to His warnings. At any rate, it is well to have our accounts clear with heaven. Besides, it is my duty to answer before God and men the accusations that are preferred against me. It is my duty to answer the capital and defaming sentence that has been hurled against me and mine.”

Taking a scroll from the table, the Admiral read:

“As the principal author of and leader in the conspiracy and rebellion gotten up against the King and his State, the said Sieur of Coligny is sentenced to be hanged and strangled upon the Greve Square, and subsequently to be exposed from the gibbet of Montfaucon. His goods revert to and are confiscate by the King. His children are declared forfeit of their noble rank, infamous, and disqualified from holding office or owning any property in the kingdom. Fifty thousand gold ecus are promised to whomsoever will deliver the said Sieur of Coligny, dead or alive. The children of his brother Dandelot are likewise declared infamous.”

Coligny flung back upon the table the scroll containing the extract of the royal decree, registered in the Parliament of Paris on May 27, 1569, and raising his tearful eyes heavenward, exclaimed in accents of profound grief:

“My poor and good brother! They killed you treacherously by poison! Your children are orphans, with none but myself for their support—and now a price is set upon my own life! To-day, to-morrow, in battle, or otherwise, God may call me to Him! Oh, let me at least carry with me the consolation that my own and my brother’s orphans will remain entrusted to worthy hands!”

Coligny remained long absorbed in meditation. He then took a sheet of paper, a pen, and again concentrating his thoughts, proceeded to write his testament:¹

Of all His creatures, God has created man the most worthy. Accordingly, it is man’s duty, during his life, to do all he can to glorify the Lord, render evidence of his faith, set a good example to his fellows, and, to the extent of his powers, leave his children in comfort, if it has pleased God to afford him any.

Although our days are numbered before God, nothing is more uncertain than the hour when it will please Him to call us away. We must keep ourselves so well prepared that we may not be taken by surprise. For this reason I have decided to draw up the present writing, in order that those who may remain behind me, may hear my intentions and know my wishes.

In the first place, after invoking the name of God, I make

¹The document, here reproduced, is the literal testament of Admiral Coligny, taken from the original manuscripts of the National Library, Collection of Puy, vol. LXXXI. This document, of so great a historic value, was first published in full in 1852 by the Historical Society of

French Protestants, vol. I, p. 263. That which, in our estimation, imparts a double interest to the testament, is the circumstance that it was written by the Admiral during the war (June, 1569) after the battle of Jarnac and before the battle of Montcontour.

to Him a summary confession of my faith, imploring Him that the same may serve me at the hour when it shall please Him to call me away, because He knows that I make this confession with my heart and affection, and in the full sincerity of my soul.

I believe in what is contained in the Old and the New Testament, as being the true word of God, to which and from which nothing may be added or taken away, as it orders us. Lastly, I seek in Jesus Christ and through Him alone my salvation and the remission of my sins, according as He has promised. I subscribe to the confession of faith of the Reformed Church in this kingdom. I wish to live and die in this faith, judging myself happy, indeed, if I must suffer on that account.

I know I am accused of having attempted against the life of the King, of the Queen, and of messeigneurs the King's brothers; I protest before God that I never had the wish or the intention of doing so. I am also accused of ambition, on account of my having taken up arms with the Reformers; I protest that only the interest of religion, and the necessity of defending my own life and the lives of my family made me take up arms. Upon this head I confess that my greatest guilt lies in not having resented the injustices and the murders perpetrated upon my brothers. I had to be driven to take up arms by the dangers and the plots of which I myself was the object. But I also say it before God, I have endeavored by all means available to pacify, fearing nothing so much as civil war, and foreseeing that the same would carry in its wake the ruin of this kingdom, whose preservation I have ever desired. I write this because, ignorant of the hour when it will please God to call me away, I do not wish to leave my children with the brand of infamy and rebellion.

I have taken up arms, not against the King, but against those whose tyranny compelled the Reformers to defend their lives. I knew in my heart that they often acted against the wishes of the King, according to several letters and instructions that prove the fact. I know I must appear before the throne of God and there receive judgment. May He condemn me if I lie when I say that my warmest desire is to see the King served in all

purity, obedient to his orders, and that the kingdom of France be preserved. On these conditions I would gladly forget all that concerns me personally—injuries, insults, outrages, confiscation of my estates—provided the glory of God and public tranquility are assured. To that end I am determined to occupy myself to my last breath. I wish this to be known, in order not to leave a wrong impression concerning myself after my death.

I request and order that my children be always brought up to the love and fear of God; that they continue their studies up to the age of fifteen, without interruption. I hold those years to be better employed in that manner than if they are sent to a court, or placed in the suite of some seigneur. Above all do I request their tutors never to allow them to keep bad or vicious company. We are all too much inclined to evil, by our own nature. I request that my children be frequently reminded of this, in order that they may know that such is my desire, as I have often expressed it to them myself.

I request that my children be brought up with those of my brother Dandelot, as he himself expressed in his testament the wish that they should be. That the ones and the others take for their example the warm and fraternal friendship that always existed between my brother and myself.

Loving all my children equally, I expect that each will receive as my successors that which is accorded to them by the usages of the country where my estates are situated (if the confiscation with which they are attainted cease). I request that the jewelry belonging to my deceased wife be equally divided between my two daughters.

I desire that my eldest son take the name of Chatillon; Gaspard, my second son, the name of Dandelot; and Charles, the third, that of La Breteche.

I request Madam Dandelot, my sister-in-law, to keep near her my two daughters, so long as she may remain in widowhood. Should she marry again, I request Madam La Rochefoucauld, my niece, to take charge of them.

Having learned that they burned down the college founded by me at Chatillon, I desire and expect that it be re-built, because

it is a public good with the aid of which God may be honored and glorified.

I order that my servants and pensioners be paid all that may be due to them on the day of my decease, and do grant them, besides, a year's wages. In recognition of my great satisfaction with Lagrele, the preceptor of my children, for the care he has bestowed upon them, I bequeath to him one thousand francs. To Nicholas Mouche and his wife Joan, in reward of their good offices to me and my deceased wife, I bequeath five hundred francs, and an annual stipend of seventeen measures of wheat during their lives, because they have so many children.

When it shall please God to call me away, I desire, if it be possible, that my body be taken to my Chatillon home, to be there interred beside my wife, without any funeral pomp or other ceremony than that of the Reformed religion.

And in order that the above provisions be carried out, I request Monsieur the Count of Chatillon, my brother; Monsieur La Rochefoucauld, my nephew; and Messieurs Lanotte and Saragosse, to be the executors of these my last wishes. Above all do I recommend to them *the education and instruction of my children*. I consecrate them to the service of God, entreating them to cause my children always to deport and guide themselves by His holy spirit, and to so behave that their actions contribute to His glory, to the public welfare, and to the pacification of the kingdom. I pray to God to be pleased with the benediction that I bestow upon my children, to the end of attracting upon them the blessing of heaven.

As to myself, offering to the Lord the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in the redemption of my sins, I pray to Him that He may receive my soul and grant to it the blessed and eternal life that awaits the resurrection of the body.

Finally, I request Messieurs La Rochefoucauld, Saragosse and Lanoüe, to be the tutors and guardians of my children.

Coligny was just finishing this testament, every line of which breathed sincerity, straightforwardness, wisdom,

modesty, the tenderest of domestic virtues, faith in the holiness of his cause, love for France, and horror of civil war, when Monsieur Lanoüe entered the room with indignation stamped upon his features. He held an open letter in his hand, and was about to address Coligny, when the Admiral forestalled him, saying:

“My friend, I have just written your name at the foot of my testament, requesting you and Monsieur La Rochefoucauld kindly to accept the office of guardians to my children, and those of my brother;” and extending his hand to Lanoüe: “You accept, do you not, this mark of my friendship and confidence? Brought up under your eyes, my nephews and my children, if it please God, will be honorable men and women.”

“Monsieur,” answered Lanoüe with profound emotion, “in heart, at least, I shall be worthy of the sacred mission that you honor me with.”

“May people some day be able to say of my children and nephews: ‘They have the virtues of Lanoüe!’ God will then have granted my last prayer. I entrust this testament to your hands, my friend. Keep it safe.”

“It is not sealed, monsieur.”

“Both my friends and my enemies are free to read it. What a man says to God men may hear,” replied the Admiral with ancient loftiness. “Here I am now, settled with myself,” the noble soldier proceeded to say; “now let us consider the military preparations for the day.”

“Oh, what a war!” cried Lanoüe. “No, it is war no longer; it is treachery; it is assassination! I have a letter

from Paris. They send me a copy of a missive to the Duke of Alençon from his brother, in the Maurevert affair."

"The cowardly assassin of Mouy?"

"Yes, the cowardly assassin Maurevert, who came to our camp with the mask of friendship, and who, profiting by the darkness of night and the defenselessness of Mouy asleep, stabbed him to death, and immediately took flight. Listen, Admiral, listen now to this! This is what Charles IX, the present King of France, writes to his brother:

"To my brother the Duke of Alençon.

"My brother, in reward for the signal service rendered to me by Charles of Louvier, Sieur of Maurevert, the bearer of these presents, *IT BEING HE WHO KILLED MOUY, in the way that he will narrate to you*, I request you, my brother, to bestow upon him the collar of my Order, he being chosen and elected by the brothers of the said Order a member of the same; and furthermore to see to it that he, the said Maurevert, be gratified by the denizens and residents of my good city of Paris *with some worthy present* *IN KEEPING WITH HIS DESERTS*, while I pray God, my brother, that He keep you under His holy and worthy protection.

"Done at Plessis-les-Tours, the 1st day of June, 1569.

"Your good brother

"CHARLES."¹

The Admiral listened stupefied.

"Never," observed Lanoüe after reading the royal schedule, "never yet was the glorification of assassination carried further than this! Oh, Monsieur Admiral, you often made the remark—'You, as well as I and so many others,

¹ *Register Journal of L'Etoile*, p. 217. The original of this monstrous letter was deposited among the manuscripts of the National Library of France by decree of

the Convention, the 11th, Ventose, year II of the Republic. The immortal Constitutionals wished thus to nail royalty once more to the pillory of history.

are attached by heart and principle, if not to the King, still to the Crown.' But this house of Valois will yet cover itself with so many crimes that it will inspire hatred for monarchy. Do we not already see springing up the desire for a federal republic, like the federated Swiss cantons? The desire already has spread among many men of honorable purposes, and it gains new supporters every day."

Nicholas Mouche appeared at this moment at the threshold of the door. "I wager," he said to himself, "that the wholesome drink of chicory water still lies forgotten." And approaching his master, he added: "Well, Monsieur Admiral, the hour has elapsed!"

"What hour?" asked Coligny, whose thoughts were absorbed in the painful reminiscences awakened by Lanoüe's words, "what do you mean?"

"Your morning drink!" answered the trusty equerry; and turning from his master: "Monsieur Lanoüe, I entreat you; join me in making the Admiral listen to reason. He knows that his surgeon, Monsieur Ambroise Paré, strongly recommended to him chicory water when in the field, because the Admiral often is twelve and fifteen hours at a stretch on horseback, without once taking off his boots. Well, he refuses to follow the orders of his physician."

"You hear the complaint of your worthy servant, Monsieur Admiral," remarked Lanoüe smiling. "I agree with him; he is right. You should follow the orders of Master Ambroise Paré."

"Come, come—it shall be as Monsieur Nicholas wishes," said Coligny, taking the bowl from the table. He looked

at the greenish color of the decoction with visible repugnance, and carried the bowl to his lips.

At that very instant Odelin Lebrenn rushed into the chamber, dashed the earthen vessel from Coligny's hands and crushed it under his feet, crying:

"Thank God! I arrived in time!"

Lanoüe, Nicholas Mouche and Coligny were stupefied. Breathless with excitement and winded from a long and rapid run, Odelin Lebrenn leaned with one hand against the table. He made a sign that he wished to speak but could not yet. Finally he stammered out:

"A second later—and Monsieur Coligny would have been poisoned—by the potion—he was about—to drink!"

"Great God!" cried Lanoüe, growing pale, while Nicholas Mouche trembled like an aspen leaf as he looked at his master.

"Explain yourself, Monsieur Lebrenn!" commanded the Admiral.

"This morning, when you were away from the room with your servants at prayer, I came in to bring back your casque. I found Dominic here."

"That is so," said Nicholas Mouche; "he did not go to prayer with the rest."

"Without being surprised at finding Dominic in his master's room," Odelin proceeded, "I noticed, notwithstanding, that he was pale and confused. Later, God be blessed, I recalled the circumstance that, as I came in, I saw him quickly step away from the table on which stood the vessel which, as Nicholas afterwards told me, held the

drink you take every morning, Monsieur Admiral. Into that drink, into that chicory water, Dominic dropped the poison."

"He!" exclaimed Coligny, horrified. "Impossible! A servant raised under my own roof since his early childhood!"

"Oh, the wretch!" cried Nicholas Mouche. "This morning, seeing me prepare the potion, Dominic asked me to let him attend to the matter. I saw in that only a warning to be careful."

"My God!" put in Lanoüe, who had remained dumb with horror and indignation. "Providence can allow such crimes, only to inspire the world with execration for their perpetrators. Can such wickedness be, Monsieur Le-brenn?"

"Dominic has confessed all. The instigators of the murder are the Duke of Anjou and the Count of La Riviere, a captain of the Duke's guards. The temptation of a vast sum decided the assassin to undertake the deed."

"Oh, Catherine De Medici, your children approve themselves worthy of you! They emulate the example you have set them!" exclaimed Lanoüe.

"But how did you discover the crime, Monsieur Le-brenn? Tell us."

"What I noticed this morning would have awakened my suspicions on the spot, were it not for the hurried arrival of my son and the tidings he brought me. I followed him in a great hurry. As we were passing by the inn that lies not far from my place and where the horses of Monsieur

Coligny are stabled, I saw Dominic come out, riding bare-back. His nag bore evidence of having been bridled in great haste. Dominic departed at a gallop. The man's frightened looks and his hurry to get off revived my first suspicions. I ran after him calling out: 'Hold him!' 'Hold him!' My uncle, the Franc-Taupin, together with some others of his men, happened to be in the wretch's way. They jumped at the bridle of his horse, and held him fast. As I caught up with them I shouted to him point-blank: 'You poisoned the Admiral!' Surprise, fear and remorse immediately drew from him a full confession of his crime. 'It is true,' he answered. 'I repent it. The Duke of Anjou offered me a large sum to poison my master—I yielded—the poison was handed to me—and I returned to camp in order to commit the murder.' The instant I heard this, I ran hither, leaving Dominic in the care of my son."

"Monsieur Lebrenn," said Coligny, grasping Odelin's hands with warmth, "It is thirty and odd years ago that I met your worthy father at one of the first councils of the reformers on Montmartre. I was then quite young, while your father, an artisan employed at the printing establishment of Robert Estienne already had rendered valiant services to the cause. It is sweet to me to owe my life to you—to you, his worthy son."

"The cannon!" suddenly called out Lanoüe, listening to a muffled and rumbling sound that came from afar, carried into the room by the early morning breeze. "It is the

rumbling sound of approaching cannon wheels. The detonations succeed each other rapidly."

"Nicholas," said Coligny, without indicating any surprise, "look at my pocket-watch. It must now be nearly ten o'clock."

"Yes; monsieur," answered the equerry after consulting the watch; "it is nearly ten."

"La Rochefoucauld has executed my orders punctually. It shall not be long before we shall see one of his officers arrive. Lanoüe, let us be ready to jump on horseback." And turning to his equerry: "Order the horses brought to the door of the priory: Monsieur Lebrenn, I count upon having your son at my side; as usual in action, to carry my orders."

"Here he is, monsieur," answered Odelin as Antonicq entered. "Where is the wretch, my son?"

"Father, he repeated his confession, again accusing the Duke of Anjou and the captain of the Duke's guards with having driven him to the commission of the crime, which he seemed deeply to repent. The exasperated soldiers executed instant justice upon the poisoner. They hanged him. His corpse is now swinging from the branch of an oak."¹

At this moment a Huguenot officer covered with dust

¹While the admiral was in camp, Dominic, one of his chamber valets, convicted of having tried to poison his master, was hanged. . . . Having been captured by La Riviere, captain of the guard of the Duke of Anjou, he was overwhelmed with promises; he was made to expect everything, if he would poison his

master. Dominic yielded, received money and a poisonous powder, and returned to the camp of Monsieur Coligny." — De Thou, *History of France*, vol. V, p. 626-627. See the same historian on the poisoning of the Duke of Deux-Ponts, of Dandolet, and others.

appeared at the threshold of the door. Monsieur Coligny said to him:

“I was waiting for you. Is the skirmish opened? Are all doing their duty well?”

“Yes, monsieur. A few companies of the royal army answered our attack, and have crossed the stream that covered their front.”

“Monsieur La Rochefoucauld must have feigned a retreat towards the hill of Haut Moulin, behind which are massed the twenty cavalry squadrons of the Prince of Gerolstein. Have all my orders been executed?”

“Yes, monsieur. At the very moment that he despatched me to you, Monsieur La Rochefoucauld was executing the retreat. The Prince was in command of his cavalry. All the forces are in line of battle.”

“All goes well,” observed Coligny to Lanoüe; “I ordered the Prince’s squadrons not to dismask and charge until the royal troops, drawn into disorder by their pursuit of our men, shall have arrived at the foot of the hill. We may expect a good result.”

“Monsieur La Rochefoucauld also ordered me to make an important communication to you. From some royalist prisoners we learned this morning that the Queen and the Cardinal arrived in the camp of the Duke of Anjou.”

Upon hearing of Catherine De Medici’s arrival, the Admiral reflected for an instant, then drew near the table, dashed a few words down on a sheet of paper and handed it to the officer, saying:

“Monsieur, return at your fastest, and deliver this order to Monsieur La Rochefoucauld.” And addressing Lanoüe as the officer left on the wings of the wind on his errand: “The presence of the Queen in the royal camp may suggest to Marshal Tavannes the idea of engaging in a decisive action. Come, my friend,” he added, leaving the chamber, “I wish to consult with the Princes of Orange and Nassau before taking horse.”

CHAPTER V.

FAMILY FLOTSAM.

Almost immediately upon the arrival of Monsieur La Rochefoucauld's aide at the Admiral's quarters, Odelin Lebrenn and Antonicq hastened to reach their lodgings, where Anna Bell awaited them. The meeting between father and daughter was delayed through the discovery of the crime that Coligny was to be the victim of.

Odelin Lebrenn had set up his armorer's establishment on the ground floor of a house in St. Yrieix which the inhabitants had abandoned. Franz of Gerolstein, together with several noblemen of his suite and their pages, occupied a set of rooms on the floor above, below them being also the quarters of Odelin, his son and the Franc-Taupin. A straw couch, large enough to accommodate the three, stood at the rear of the apartment. Near a wide, open fireplace lay the hammers, the anvil and the portable forge requisite for the armorer's work. Day was now far advanced. Since morning Anna Bell had not left the lodging. Seated on a wooden bench, and her head reclined upon her hands, she expectantly turned her ears from time to time toward the street. The recent agonizing bustle of the camp was now followed by solitude and silence. All

the troops, a few companies excepted that were left in charge of the baggage, had marched out beyond the burg and its entrenchments, in order to form in battle array about one league from the Admiral's headquarters, he having prepared for a possible general engagement.

Odelin Lebrenn's first interview with Anna Bell was both tender and painful. The father found again his daughter, once dearly beloved and long wept as lost. But he found her soiled with the title of maid of honor of Catherine De Medici! With distressing frankness the wretched girl confessed to her father the disorders of her past life. Anna Bell was just finishing her narrative when the general call to arms resounded. Antonicq went to his post beside Monsieur Coligny, after listening to the revelations of his sister; a few minutes later Odelin also, yielding to the imperious voice of duty, left his weeping daughter, to join the cavalry squadron in which he served as volunteer.

Left alone, Anna Bell fell a prey to cruel anxieties. Her father, her brother and Franz of Gerolstein were about to run the dangers of a battle. The confession wrung from her lips by a terrific necessity seemed to render all the more profound, all the more grievous the love of the young girl for the Prince. Now less than ever did she expect her affection to be returned. Still she experienced a sort of bitter consolation in the thought that Franz of Gerolstein was no longer ignorant of her passionate devotion, and that, in order to save him from poison, she risked her own life. The chaos of distressing thoughts, now rendered all

the more painful by her uneasiness for those whom she loved, plunged Anna Bell into inexpressible agony. She counted the hours with increasing anxiety. Toward night the roll of drums and blare of trumpets resounded from afar. The young girl trembled and listened. Presently she could distinguish the approaching tramp of horses' hoofs, and not long thereafter she heard them stop before the lodging. Running to the door, she opened it in the hope of seeing her brother and father. Instead, she saw a page in the livery of the Prince of Gerolstein holding a second horse by the reins.

"Monsieur," asked Anna Bell anxiously of the lad, "what news of the battle?"

"There was no battle, mademoiselle, only a lively engagement of outposts. The royalists were worsted," and swallowing a sigh, while tears appeared in his eyes, he added, "but unfortunately my poor comrade Wilhelm, one of the Prince of Gerolstein's pages, was killed in the skirmish. I am leading back his horse."

"And the Prince?" inquired Anna Bell, nervously. "He has not been wounded?"

"No, mademoiselle. I am riding ahead of monsieur; he is returning with his squadrons," answered the page, alighting from his horse, and his sighs and sobs redoubled, while the tears rolled down his cheeks.

At ease on the score of Franz of Gerolstein's life, Anna Bell had some words of consolation for the afflicted page. "I am sorry for you," she said; "to lose a friend at your age."

“Oh, mademoiselle. I loved him so dearly—he died so valiantly! An arquebusier was taking aim at the Prince. Wilhelm threw himself in front and received the ball in his chest. He dropped, never to rise again.”

“Generous lad!” exclaimed Anna Bell, and silently she thought: “To die for Franz! Under his own eyes. That is a death to be envied!”

“Poor Wilhelm!” continued the page sadly, “his last words were for his mother. He asked me, if ever I return home again, to carry to her a sash that she embroidered for him, and which he left at our lodging together with his gala suit.”

The lad’s words seemed to have suggested an unexpected line of thought to Anna Bell, when she suddenly saw Odelin from a distance, returning at full gallop in the company of other horsemen. She cried: “There is father! Thank God, he is not wounded. But where is brother?”

Not daring, out of a sense of modesty, to be seen by the strangers who accompanied her father, Anna Bell stepped back into the room. Odelin led his horse to a stable where also the horses of Franz of Gerolstein were kept, and hastened back to join his daughter in the house. The girl ran to him, kissed his hands respectfully several times, and said:

“Thank heaven, father, you are safe and sound—but brother, dear Antonicq, did he also come off scathless?”

“You may feel at ease,” answered Odelin, embracing his daughter, “Antonicq is not wounded. Together with other volunteers he is escorting a number of prisoners to

places of safety in the camp. Poor child, great must have been your anxiety since I left you. Come to your father's arms!"

"Oh, I counted the hours—the minutes—"

"Let me embrace you again—and yet again," said Odelin with tears in his eyes, and fondly holding her in his arms. "Oh, divine power of happiness! It brings with it the balm of forgetfulness of the past! I have found you again—dear child! In one day, years of sorrow are blotted out!"

Hardly able to repress her tears, Anna Bell responded unrestrainedly to Odelin's caresses. His ineffable clemency was not belied.

"Father," she said, "would you have me disarm you while we wait for Antonicq? Your cuirass must tire you. Let me unbuckle it."

"Thank you, child," the armorer answered, as he stepped to a lanthorn that hung from the wall, and lighted the same to dispel the shadows that began to invade the apartment. He then took off his casque, loosened his belt, and returned to his daughter: "But I shall remain armed. The Admiral issued orders that the troops rest a few hours, take supper, and hold themselves ready to march at a minute's notice."

"My God—is there another battle pending?"

"I do not know the projects of Admiral Coligny; all I know—and that is all that is of importance to me—I know we have a few hours to ourselves. Sit down there, dear child, so that the light of the lanthorn may fall upon your

face—I wish to behold you at my leisure. This morning tears darkened my eyes almost continuously.”

And after contemplating Anna Bell for a while with tender and silent curiosity, Odelin resumed:

“Yes, your sweet beauty is such as your charming little girl’s face gave promise of. Oh! how often did I not leave my anvil and drop my hammer to fondle your blonde head! Your hair has grown darker. In your infancy you were as blonde as my sister Hena. Many a line in your face recalls hers. She and I resembled each other. But your beautiful brown and velvety eyes have remained the same—neither in color nor shape have they changed. I find the dimple still on your chin, and the two little ones on your cheeks each time you laughed, they also are still there—and you were always laughing—my dear, dear child!”

“Oh! how happy those days must have been to me!” murmured the young girl, as she recalled with bitter sorrow the hours of her innocent childhood. “I then was near you, father, and near mother—and besides—”

Anna Bell could not finish the sentence. The distressed girl broke down sobbing.

“Heaven and earth!” cried up the armorer, whose features, shortly before illumined with happiness, now were overcast with grief. “To think that you had to beg your bread! My poor child—perhaps beaten by the gypsy woman who kidnapped you from the loving paternal roof!”

“Father,” replied the poor girl with a look of profound

grief, "those days of misery were not my worst days. Oh, that I had always remained a beggar!"

"I understand your thoughts, unhappy child! Let us drop those sad recollections!" And stamping the floor furiously Odelin added: "Oh, infamous Queen! Thou art the monster who debauched my child! A curse upon thee and thy execrable brood!" After a painful silence, Odelin proceeded abruptly: "Do! I conjure you! Let us never again return to the past. Let us endeavor to bury it in everlasting oblivion!"

"Alas, father, even if your clemency were to forget, my conscience will ever remember. It will every day remind me that I am a disgrace to my family. Oh, God! My cheeks tingle with shame at the bare thought of meeting my sister—and mother!"

"Your mother! You know not the depths of a mother's love, indulgence and compassion. You return to her soiled, but repentant, and your mother will forgive. Besides, you are not guilty—you are the victim of, not the accomplice in, your past life. Your heart has remained pure, your instincts honest and lofty; your tears, your remorse, your apprehensions prove it to me. No, no! Be not afraid. Your mother and sister will receive you with joy, with confidence. I am certain henceforth your life will be ours, pure, modest, industrious! Oh, I know it—it is only that that causes my heart to bleed, and my pity for you to redouble; you are never to experience the austere yet sweet joys of a wife—and a mother!"

Odelin remained for a moment steeped in silent rumination. After a pause he proceeded:

“It is the severe punishment for a sin that it is allowed to none but your own family to absolve you of. But your sister’s children will be your own. Your brother also is to marry. Cornelia, his sweetheart, is worthy of our affection. You will silence the cravings of your own heart in loving their children as you would have done your own. They will also love you. You will spend your life near them and us. Come, take a father’s word for it—the domestic hearth is an inexhaustible source of consolation for the sorrowful—an inexhaustible source of sweet joys and healthy pleasures.”

These warm and affectionate words moved Anna Bell so profoundly that, dropping down upon her knees before her father, she covered his hands and face with kisses and tears; and raising her eyes up to him, and contemplating him with a kind of respectful admiration, “Oh, father!” she exclaimed, “living image of God! Your goodness and compassion are like only unto His!”

“Because you suffer, my poor child,” replied Odelin, his eyes moist with tears. And raising his daughter from the floor and placing her beside him, he put his arm around her and covered her with renewed caresses.

“It is because you are to suffer still more—it is because you love—it is because you are bound to love—and without hope!” the armorer proceeded with solemnity. “Only this once, and never again shall I mention this painful love. If I, your father, touch upon such a subject with

you, the reason is that it is impossible for me to blame the choice of your heart. Franz of Gerolstein, by the strength of his character, the generosity of his sentiments, the loftiness of his whole life, deserves to be loved passionately. Alas, but for that unhappy past, your love needed not be hopeless. Only a few hours ago, speaking about you at a halt made by our troops, Franz of Gerolstein remarked to me: 'Oh, that honor, the only barrier I may never leap, should separate me forever from your daughter!' It was not a hollow consolation the Prince was offering me. I know Franz's contempt for distinctions of rank. Moreover we are of the same blood, our family comes from one stock; but that fatal past—that is the unbridgeable abyss that separates us forever from the Prince. That is why you inspire me with so much pity. Yes, you are all the more endeared to me because you suffer, and by reason of your future sufferings, poor dear child, so guiltless of the sins you have committed!" added Odelin with renewed tenderness. "But be brave, be brave, my child! Your hopeless love is at least honorable and pure; you can nourish it without shame, in the secret recesses of your heart. I shall say not another word upon that ill-starred passion. When you are back among us and, although surrounded by our affection, I shall see you at times lost in revery, sad, and moist of eye, believe me, poor distressed soul, your father will sympathize with your grief; each tear you drop will fall upon my heart."

Odelin was uttering these last words when his son hurried into the apartment, looking sad and even bewildered.

Anna Bell jumped up to meet the young man, saying: "Thank God, brother, I see you back safe and sound!"

Such was the preoccupation of Antonicq that, without answering his sister, without taking notice of her, and even gently pushing her aside, he approached his father, and taking him apart to the other end of the room, spoke to him in a low and excited voice. Painfully affected at seeing herself pushed out of the way by her brother, who seemed to have neither a word nor a look for her in response to the gladness that she expressed at his safe return from battle, the young girl imagined herself despised by him.

"Alas!" thought the maid of honor, my brother will not forgive my past life; only a father's heart is capable of indulgence. Great God! If my sister, my mother, were also to receive me with such disdain—perchance aversion! I would rather die than expose myself to such treatment!"

Antonicq continued to speak with his father in a low voice. Suddenly Odelin seemed to shudder, and hid his face in his hands. Profound silence ensued. Anna Bell, more and more the prey of the shyness and mistrust that conscious guilt inspires in a repentant soul, imagined herself the subject of the mysterious conversation between her father and brother. Odelin's features, lowering and angry, betokened disgust and indignation. The words escaped him: "And yet, despite such revolting horrors, I am bound to him by a sacred bond! Oh, a curse upon the day that brought us together again! A curse upon the fatal discovery! But once I shall have fulfilled that last duty, may heaven ever after deliver me of his hated pres-

ence! Listen," added the armorer, and again lowering his voice, he spoke to his son with intense earnestness, closing with the statement: "Such is my plan!"

The conversation was again renewed in undertones between father and son. Anna Bell had caught only fragments of her father's remarks. She was convinced they spoke of her—and yet, only a minute before, Odelin was so lovingly indulgent towards his erring daughter. In vain did the young girl seek to fathom the cause of so sudden a change. What could the fatal discovery be that Antonicq had just imparted to his father, and seemed suddenly to incite his indignation and anger? Did she not lay her past life bare to her father in all sincerity of heart? What could she be accused of that she had not voluntarily confessed? A prey to profound anxiety, the young girl's heart sank within her; her limbs trembled as she saw her father hurriedly take up his sword and casque, and make ready to leave with Antonicq.

The young man stepped to the couch of straw and pulled out of it a long, wide cloak of a brown material with a scarlet hood attached, such as was common among the Rochelois,¹ and helped his father to wrap himself in it over his armor; Odelin then put on his casque, threw the hood over it, and, without either look or word to his daughter, who, trembling and with frightened eyes followed his movements, went out, followed by his son.

Long did Anna Bell weep. When her tears ran dry, the young girl turned her face to the future with sinister res-

¹ Inhabitants of the fortified city of La Rochelle.

olution. She considered herself an object of disgust and aversion to her brother and father. Forsaken by them, an unbridgeable abyss—honor—separated her forever from Franz of Gerolstein. Nothing was left but to die. Suddenly a flash of joy lightened her eyes, red with recent tears. She rose, stood erect, and looking about said: "Yes, to die. But to die under Franz's eyes—to die for him, like the young page killed this very day by throwing himself in the path of the bullet that was to fell his master. The army is to return to battle. The clothes, the horse of the page who was killed to-day are all here!"

As these thoughts seethed in her mind, Anna Bell's eyes fell upon some sheets of paper, a pen and ink in a broken cup lying on the mantelpiece. The girl took them down with a sigh:

"Oh, father! Oh, brother! Despite your contempt and aversion, my last thoughts will be of you!"

Hervé Lebreun, the incestuous wretch who raised a matricidal hand against his mother, Fra Hervé, the Cordelier, as he was called in the royal army, deserved but too well the reputation for a fiery preacher and leader of implacable sectarians. His sermons, lighted by a savage style of eloquence, and coupled to acts of ferocity in battle, inspired the Catholics with fanatic admiration. Wounded and made a prisoner in the course of the engagement of that day, he was taken pinioned to St. Yrieix and locked up in a dark cellar. The cellar door opened. The light of a lanthorn partially dispelled the gloom of the subterranean cell. Seated on the ground with his shoulders

against the wall, Fra Hervé saw a man enter, wrapped in a brown mantle, the scarlet hood of which, being wholly thrown over his head, concealed the face of the nocturnal visitor. The visitor was Odelin Lebrenn. He closed the door behind him, placed the lanthorn on the floor, and almost convulsed with wracking emotions, silently contemplated his brother, who had not yet recognized him. Odelin saw him now for the first time since the day when, still a lad returning from Italy with Master Raimbaud, the armorer, he involuntarily witnessed the torture and death of his sister Hena and Brother St. Ernest-Martyr. Hervé also attended the solemnity of his sister's execution, in the company of Fra Girard, his evil genius.

Odelin Lebrenn looked with mute horror upon his imprisoned brother. The lanthorn, placed upon the floor, threw upward a bright light streaked with hard, black shadows upon the cadaverous, ascetic and haggard features of Hervé. His large, bald forehead, yellow and dirty, was tied in a blood-stained bandage. The blood had flowed down from his wound, dried up on one of his protruding cheek bones, and coagulated in the hairs of his thick and matted beard. His brown and threadbare coat, patched up in a score of places, was held around his waist by a cord from which hung a chaplet of arquebus balls with a small crucifix of lead. Rusty iron spurs were fastened with leather straps to his muddy feet, shod in sandals. Fra Hervé, unable to distinguish his brother's face, shadowed as it was by the hood of the mantle, turned his head slowly

towards the visitor, and kneeling down with an expression of gloomy disdain, said in a hollow voice:

“Is it death? I am ready!”

The Cordelier thereupon bowed down his large bald head, and raising his fettered hands towards the roof of the cellar muttered in a low voice the funeral invocation of the dying. Odelin threw back his hood, took up the lanthorn, and held it so as to throw a clear light upon his face.

“Brother!” he called out to the monk in a voice that betrayed his profound emotion. “I am Odelin Lebrenn!”

Without rising from his knees, Fra Hervé threw himself back, and examined for a moment the face of Odelin. At length he recognized him, and, a sudden flash of hatred illumining his hollow eyes and an infernal smile curling his livid lips, he cried:

“God has sent you! I shall spit out the truth into the face of the apostate! Oh, that your father were also here!”

“Respect his memory—our father is dead!”

“Did he die impenitent?”

“He died in his faith!”

“He died damned!” replied Fra Hervé with a savage guffaw. “Everlastingly damned! The corruptor of my youth! The heretical leper! The sink of pestilence! Damned along with his wife! It was Thy will, Oh, God! In Thy wrath Thou didst so decree it. The flames of hell will be doubly hot to them! Forever and ever will they be face to face with the spectacle of their daughter, damned

through their acts, and damned like themselves, writhing in the midst of everlasting fires!”

“Do not take upon your lips the names of our sister, the poor martyr, or of our mother, you wretched fanatic, author of all their sufferings!”

“‘Our’ mother! ‘Our’ father! ‘Our’ sister!” echoed back the monk, with an outburst of sardonic laughter. “Look at the renegade! He dares invoke bonds that are snapped, and are abhorred! Man—I have no father but the vicar of Christ! No mother but the Church! No brothers but faithful Catholics. Outside of that holy family—holy, thrice holy!—I see only savage beasts, bent in their demoniacal rage upon tearing into shreds the sacred body of my holy mother! And I kill them! I throttle them! I immolate them to God, the avenger! Oh, how I grieve to think that you did not fall, like the likes of you, under my heavy iron crucifix, which the Holy Father blessed! What more beautiful holocaust could I offer to the implacable anger of the Lord, than to say to Him as Abraham did on the mountain: ‘Lord! May the vapor of this blood rise to your nostrils. This blood is twofold expiatory! It is my blood, it is the blood of my family!’”

“Blood! Always blood!” echoed Odelin, shivering with disgust and horror. “Hervé, blood has intoxicated you. Like so many other priests, you are the prey of a savage frenzy. A bloodthirsty dementia has dethroned your reason. I have for you the pity that a furious madman inspires. After a desperate resistance you fell into the power

of a corps of Protestant horsemen. My son was among them; he identified you by the mournful celebrity that surrounds your name. His companions were of a mind to kill you on the spot. He obtained from them a postponement of your execution under the pretext that your death would be more exemplary before the assembled ranks of our soldiers. My son's views prevailed. You were taken to this place, to this cellar belonging to the priory occupied by Admiral Coligny, who, thanks to God, escaped this day being poisoned, escaped the latest abominable crime planned against him. You were taken to this cell. My son just notified me of your capture and of his desire to save you. I share his wishes—seeing that, unfortunately, we are both children of one father. But for that I would have left you to your fate. Your religion commands you to kill me; mine commands me to save you. I shall untie your hands; you shall throw this mantle over your shoulders and lower the hood over your head. My son is the only watchman. He offered to the sentinel placed on guard over you to take his place. The offer was accepted. We shall leave this cell together. The Rochelois mantle will conceal your frock and remove suspicion. You will follow me. I am known to all the people and soldiers whom we may meet in crossing the courtyard of the Admiral's house. I hope to secure your flight with the aid of this disguise. That duty, a sacred one to me, I fulfil in the name of our parents who are no more—in the name of those cherished beings who loved us so dearly.”

“Oh, God, the Avenger!” exclaimed Hervé with savage

exaltation. "Ever does Thy anger strike Thy enemies with blindness! Themselves they break the chains of their immolators! Themselves they deliver themselves defenseless into the hands of their implacable enemies!"

And stretching out his fettered hands to his brother, the monk added:

"Oh, thou vile instrument of the King of Kings! Free these hands from their bonds! There is still work for them to do in cropping the bloody field of heresy! There are still supporters of Satan for these hands to exterminate!"

Calm and sad, Odelin loosed the fetters from Fra Hervé's hands. Hardly did the monk regain the free use of his arms than, darting a tiger's look at his brother, he took two steps back, seized the heavy string of leaden balls that hung from his girdle, swung it like a sling, and, before his liberator, who stood stupefied at the brusque assault, had time to protect himself, smote him several times on the head with the heavy chaplet. Although considerably deadened by Odelin's casque, the violent blows staggered the armorer. For a moment he seemed to reel on his feet, but instantly recovering himself, he drew his sword at the very moment that Fra Hervé returned to the charge. Odelin parried the blows, and, cutting with a back-stroke the string that held the balls, caused them to slip off and roll down at the feet of the monk. Odelin immediately threw his sword aside, but carried away with rage and indignation, he dashed upon his brother, seized him by the throat, threw him to the ground and pinned him down with his knees

upon his chest. In this struggle, Fra Hervé, weakened by his wound, had the disadvantage. He furiously bit Odelin's hand. The pain drew a piercing cry from Odelin. The noise was heard by Antonicq, who stood on guard at the outside of the door. The young man rushed in and saw his father at close quarters with the monk, who, in his rage, kept his teeth in Odelin's flesh and sought, after having penetrated to the bone, to crush his brother's thumb between his teeth. Exasperated at the sight, Antonicq picked up his father's sword and dealing with the handle of the weapon a crushing blow upon Fra Hervé's cheek, knocked in several of his teeth and compelled him to release his prey. Odelin rose. Panting with fury and exhausted by the violence of the struggle, the Cordelier sank upon his knees; tore off the bandage from his head, thereby leaving a deep, gaping wound exposed; and trembling with silent, savage rage, sought to staunch the blood that poured in streams out of his mouth.

"My son, look at that monk," observed Odelin to Antonicq with a broken voice. "There was a time when that man was full of tenderness and respect for my father and mother. He cherished my sister and me. Brought up like myself in the practice of justice, and gifted with exceptional intelligence, he was the joy, the pride, the hope of our family. Look at him now; shudder; there you see him the handiwork of the infamous clergy of the papacy!"

"Oh, it is horrible!" exclaimed Antonicq, hiding his face in his hands. And, suddenly startled by the sound of a distant tumult that reached the depth of the cell across the

profound silence of the night, the young man listened for a moment and said: "Father, do you hear that noise? The troops are on the march. The cavalry is moving."

"Yes," answered Odelin, listening in turn. "The Admiral must have decided to surprise the royalist army before daybreak. The forces will be shortly on the march. You remain on guard at the door of the cellar. This prisoner is the object of so much hatred that they are likely to come for him any moment, to put him to death before we deliver battle. His cell will be found empty. You will answer that the man was my brother and that I wished him to escape punishment. Before mounting your horse, come for me at my lodging. We left your poor sister there. Our sudden departure must have seemed strange to her, and may have caused her anxiety. In my confusion I never thought of giving her a word of comfort. Let us make haste."

And throwing his Rochelois cloak to Fra Hervé, Odelin continued:

"If you care to escape death, put that cloak on and come. Towards you, and despite yourself, I shall act as a brother."

"And I will pursue you with revengeful hatred, apostate!" answered the monk with implacable resentment, rising to his feet and donning the cloak. "The Lord delivers me through your hand. He has His purpose. I shall be the exterminator of your heretical kin! March—lead my way out—save me! God orders it—obey!"

Thanks to the disguise of Fra Hervé, who was wrapped

in a Rochelois cloak like a large number of Protestant volunteers, Odelin succeeded in aiding him to escape from the grounds of the priory where he was a prisoner. The two thereupon crossed the streets of St. Yrieix, these being crowded with soldiers hastening in silence to their several posts. Intending to surprise the enemy in the morning by a forced night march, the Admiral ordered the assembly of the forces to be done without beat of drum. Odelin and Fra Hervé saw not far from them the Franc-Taupin and the Avengers of Israel as they crossed the road on their way to the prison of the Cordelier whom they were to execute. A few minutes later, led by his brother to the furthest end of the camp, Fra Hervé vanished in the dark, taking long strides, and hurling threats of vengeance and anathema at his liberator.

Odelin hastened to return to his own lodging in order to comfort his daughter and embrace her before going to battle. Anna Bell had vanished. The room was empty. There was a letter left by her upon the armorer's anvil.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BATTLE OF ROCHE-LA-BELLE.

The Protestant army, about twenty-five thousand strong, marched out of St. Yrieix in profound silence at about one o'clock in the morning. The black and sinuous line of battalions and squadrons was hardly distinguishable from the surrounding darkness of the night, lighted only by the scintillations of the stars. The column followed the winding of the whitish road which was lost to sight in the distant horizon in the direction towards Roche-la-Belle, the royalist encampment. The measured step of the foot soldiers, the sonorous tramp of the cavalry, the clinking of the armors, the jolting and rumbling of artillery wheels—all these noises merged into one muffled and solemn sound. Scouts, alert with eye and ear, and pistol in hand, preceded the vanguard. At the head of the vanguard rode Admiral Coligny, with two young men, one on either side—Henry of Bearn, the son of the brave Joan of Albert, Queen of Navarre, and Condé, a son of the Prince of Condé, whom Montesquiou assassinated. Other Protestant leaders, among them Lanoüe and Saragosse, followed in the Admiral's suite. On that morning the Admiral rode a superb silver-grey Turkish horse that was

wounded under him at Jarnac, and which he preferred to all other mounts. A light iron mail covered the neck, chest and crupper of the spirited steed. Coligny himself wore his habitual armor of polished iron devoid of ornament. His strong high boots reached up as far as his cuisses. His floating white and wire-sleeved cloak allowed his cuirass to be seen. His old battle sword hung from his belt. The butts of his long pistols peeped from under his saddle-bow. He rode bowed down by years, sorrows and the trials of so many campaigns. His venerable head seemed to bend under the weight of his casque. He guided his horse with his left hand. His right, gloved, reclined upon his cuisse. Suddenly he straightened up in the saddle, reined in his horse, and said in a grave voice:

“Halt, messieurs!”

The order was repeated from rank to rank back to the rearmost of the rear guard. One of the volunteers, who served as aide-de-camp to the Admiral, rode forward at a gallop to carry to the scouts the order to stop. An almost imperceptible shimmer began to whiten the horizon and announced the approach of dawn. A tepid breeze rose from the west, and became strong enough to chase the few clouds before it. These grew denser; at first they veiled the stars; soon they seemed to invade the whole firmament. Coligny attentively examined the aspect of the skies, communicated his opinion to his escort, and said to his lieutenants:

“A west wind, rising at dawn, generally presages a rainy day. Messieurs, we shall have to push the attack in lively

style before the rain comes down upon us, otherwise the fire of our infantry will be almost useless."

And addressing Lanoüe:

"My friend, the chiefs of divisions have my orders; let them be drawn up for battle."

Lanoüe and several other officers rode off to execute the instructions of the Admiral. At this spot the road crossed a vast plateau more than a league wide, upon which the Protestant army deployed its lines and took up its positions. Coligny had Lanoüe and John of Soubise for his lieutenants. Prince Louis of Nassau commanded the right wing; La Rochefoucauld the center, with Henry of Bearn, Condé, the Prince of Orange, Wolfgang of Mansfeld and the Prince of Gerolstein under his orders; finally, the left was in charge of Saragosse. Colonels Piles and Baudine covered the right wing with their regiments; Colonels Rouvray and Pouilly the left. The lancers and the artillery were distributed along the two wings, while a strong cavalry force, consisting of twenty squadrons, held itself in reserve, ready to ride into action supported by several regiments of infantry.

In the measure that the light of dawn rendered the distant horizon more distinct, the belfry of the church of Roche-la-Belle, the fortified town occupied by the royalists, and lying about half a league away, could be discerned from the highest point of the plateau where the Protestant forces were deploying their lines. A black line along the dawn that dimly lighted the horizon marked the royalist entrenchments.

Soon as the army was drawn up in battle formation, Coligny said to Antonicq, one of the volunteers who served as aide-de-camp:

“Monsieur Lebrenn, convey to Colonel Plouernel my orders to push forward with his regiment and six companies of auxiliaries. Recommend to him above all to execute his march in the profoundest silence possible, without either beat of drums or blare of trumpets. The enemy must be taken by surprise. The colonel is to seize the lake road, which is strongly defended. When that post is carried, return and notify me.”

Antonicq left at a gallop for the extreme right wing, the post of Colonel Plouernel, the younger brother of Count Neroweg of Plouernel, who commanded the escort of Queen Catherine De Medici the day of her arrival at the Abbey of St. Severin. The religious feuds threw the two brothers into opposite camps—a not infrequent occurrence in those unhappy days. In the course of the civil wars, the colonel, like so many other Protestants, sought refuge in the city of La Rochelle. Odelin thanks to the family archives left to him by his father Christian, knew that the printer had met and was greatly gratified by the courtesy of Colonel Plouernel on the occasion of one of the first councils held by the reformers in the quarry of Montmartre, when he was known as the Knight of Plouernel. One day, at La Rochelle, Odelin saw the knight, who had become a colonel in the Huguenot army, enter his smithy. He came to purchase arms, and noticing on the shield of the shop the name of Lebrenn, inquired from the armorer whether any rela-

tionship existed between him and the artisan once employed in the printing establishment of Robert Estienne. Odelin answered that he was a son of the artisan, and, agreeably impressed by the cordiality with which the colonel spoke of his father, entered into friendly relations with the nobleman, finding a singular charm in an acquaintance with one of the descendants of that old Frankish family whose path the sons of Joel had so often crossed, arms in hand, across the ages. In short, prizing more and more the noble character, the generous heart and the artless manners of Colonel Plouernel, a man free from all taint of family haughtiness and imbued, as much as any, with the democratic principles of the Reformation, Odelin informed the scion of the ancient house of Plouernel of the accidental circumstance concerning the hereditary feud between the two families both before and since the conquest of Clovis, and communicated to him the passages of the domestic chronicles touching upon those historic facts. By little and little an intimate friendship sprang up between Odelin and Colonel Plouernel. The latter, having married during one of the truces of the civil war a young lady of Vannes, from whom he had two little boys, was forced to seek refuge in La Rochelle with them and his wife when at last war broke out anew. He hired a few vacant rooms from Odelin, being anxious to leave Madam Plouernel with a family the virtues of which he appreciated. For Antonicq, Odelin's son, he felt an almost paternal affection, there being many years' difference between their ages. Being, thanks to his bravery, his reputation, his military talents, and his experience in

the field, greatly esteemed among the Protestants, Colonel Plouernel commanded in this campaign a regiment composed almost exclusively of Bretons. His soldiers, however, although brave and zealous, were, like all other volunteers, unfortunately prone to disregard discipline; being, moreover, but ill broken to the pursuit of arms, they often failed to appreciate the authority of skilful and prudent tactics, preferring to listen to their own blind intrepidity. The Breton regiment, together with the company of auxiliaries, numbered about three thousand men. They stood drawn up for battle at the furthest extremity of the right wing, when Antonicq, the carrier of the Admiral's orders, arrived at a gallop before their front ranks. Some, being field laborers, wore the ancient loose Gallic blouse, with hose fastened around the waist by a belt, and woolen bonnets on their heads; others, being either artisans or bourgeois from the cities, wore wide hose, jackets laced in front in the Burgundian style, or brigandines, or coats of mail or other defensive equipments, according to their several tastes. The men's headgear also offered a varied aspect: casques, morions, bassinets, slouch hats, bonnets ribbed with two iron hoops. Neither were the offensive arms more uniform—lances, pikes, halberds, antique swords, cross-bows, iron maces, cutlasses, hunting arquebuses, field arquebuses, and pistols all being visible. Several wood-cutters and their helpers were armed with hatchets, and some had scythes with the edge turned out. The only uniform, or article common to all, was a belt or shoulder sash of white material. These men, although

presenting a rather unmilitary appearance, displayed spirit and ardor. More than once did it happen that the fury of their onslaught overthrew the best royal troops, both infantry and cavalry, despite the latter's long military training and discipline.

Armed like a German rider, with black casque, black cuirass and white cloak, Colonel Plouernel bestrode a powerful Breton bay mare, caparisoned in scarlet. When Antonicq approached him he was in conversation with several officers of his regiment. Among these was the Pastor Feron, a man gifted with exceptional energy, and of austere and resolute mien. Often did he, like so many other ministers of the Reformed religion, march to battle at the head of a troop, singing psalms like the old bards of Gaul who marched in advance of the warriors singing their heroic chants. More than once wounded, the clergyman Feron inspired the Protestants with as much confidence as veneration. Antonicq transmitted the orders of Admiral Coligny to Colonel Plouernel. The latter immediately faced his troops and said to the captains who surrounded him:

“The Admiral does us the honor of entrusting to us the lead in the attack. We shall prove ourselves worthy of the distinction. We are to take the royal army by surprise. It will soon be day, but the slope of this hill, along the foot of which runs the road that we are to follow, will hide us from the enemy's pickets. We shall be able to reach the edge of the lake without being seen. Foreseeing the attack with which we are charged, I have just commis-

sioned the Franc-Taupin to proceed with a picked body of determined men of his own corps and sound for a ford across the lake. Return to your companies. Order the drummers and trumpeters to remain quiet, and all your men to observe scrupulous silence."

"Brothers," remonstrated Pastor Feron with elation, "why conceal our approach from the Philistines? Does not the Lord lead the children of Israel? Let us place our reliance on Him only, and the proud towers of Zion will crumble before the breath of the Eternal. Let us march to the attack, not like timid and slinking thieves, but openly, bravely, like true soldiers of God! It was under the open sky that David vanquished Goliath!"

"Yes, yes. No underhanded tactics!" cried several officers. "Let us march straight upon the enemy, singing praises to the Lord. He is with us. We shall vanquish."

"My friends," said Colonel Plouernel, "follow my advice. Let us proceed with caution. The royal army is much our superior in numbers. We must make up with tactics for our inferiority. Let us arrive noiselessly before the vanguard of the enemy, you will not then lack for opportunity to prove your valor. Place yourselves at the head of your companies, and forward at the double quick, only in the profoundest silence."

The authority enjoyed by Colonel Plouernel, the wisdom of his orders, the confidence of the volunteers in his bravery and military skill once more carried the day over the seething impatience of his captains, although Pastor Feron looked displeased with a manoeuvre in which he

imagined he saw a weakness and dissimulation unworthy of the children of Israel. The officers took their posts, and the column advanced in silence, with its right covered by the ridge of a long hill that completely masked it on the side of the enemy's entrenchment. The road that the column followed crossed a wide field covered with wild roses, their petals heavy with the dew of night, and spreading an aromatic odor far and wide. Colonel Plouernel inhaled with delight the early morning fragrance, and addressing Antonicq, who rode beside him, said:

"Oh, my boy! This sweet perfume, these wild smells, remind me of the moors of Brittany. I draw them in with full lungs."

"Brittany! It is the dream of my life! When I was still a boy my father took us to Vannes, on a pilgrimage to the sacred stones of Karnak. They rise not far from the spot where stood the cradle of our family at the time of Julius Caesar. I being then too young to understand it, my father only gave me a short account of our family history. Since then I have read it from beginning to end. I now have but one uppermost desire, and my father shares it. It is, should God put an end to these disastrous wars, to leave La Rochelle and settle down in Vannes. We may be able to purchase a patch of land on the seashore, near the stones of Karnak."

"Those sacred stones, the surviving witnesses of the voluntary sacrifice of your ancestress Hena, the virgin of the isle of Sen—that old Armorica, the independence of which

your ancestor Vortigern defended so valiantly against the son of Charlemagne!"

"You may judge, colonel, what memories are awakened within us by that single word—Brittany."

"Well, my boy, it occurred to me quite recently that your and your father's wishes may easily be realized."

"How?"

"By virtue of his primogeniture, my brother is the sole owner of the vast hereditary domains belonging to our family in Auvergne and in Brittany. But the father of my dear wife Jocelyne, a good and honest Breton who resides in Brittany, owns an estate that lies not far from Karnak, along the seashore. Judging from what your father has told me of your family traditions, the estate is bound to consist, partly at least, of the fields once owned by your ancestor Joel the brenn of the tribe of Karnak. Now, then, if God should grant us peace again, nothing would be easier for me than to obtain from my wife's father either the sale or lease of a portion of those fields, and you could then settle down there with your family."

"Oh, colonel! I should be pleased to owe to you the happiness of living in Brittany, near the cradle of my family, together with father and mother, and my sisters, and Cornelia my sweetheart, who will then be my wife!"

"And yet, strange to say, my boy, your ancestors and mine have hated and fought each other across the ages. I must admit the fact—the law of nature justified the terrible reprisals of the conquered upon their conquerors, in those days of frightful oppression. It required the rude

school of the religious wars to join in one common belief the children of Joel the Gaul and of Neroweg the Frank, as your father puts it. That first step in Evangelical fraternity marks an immense progress. Thus will traditional hatreds cool down little by little, and race antagonisms will be wiped out, as they have been wiped out between our two families, once such bitter enemies—”

“And now,” Antonicq completed the sentence, “united by the bonds of firm friendship. May the same be kept ever green among our descendants.”

“It is my fervent hope, my dear Antonicq. I am bringing up my children in that feeling. More than once have I cited to them incidents from your family legends, to the end that their young minds may be penetrated with the sense that the rights, the privileges, the titles of which the nobility boasts so loudly, and which it guards so jealously, have for their principle or origin the abominable acts of violence that conquest brings in its train.”

During the conversation between Colonel Plouernel and Antonicq the regiment pursued its march under shelter of the ridge that it skirted. The further end of the ridge sloped gradually down to the level of the field, watered by the lake and the stream which protected the front of the royal camp. The attacking column, which, obedient to the orders of the Admiral, marched in silence, was expected to reach the open before sunrise, and thus be able to open the assault unexpectedly upon the strongly entrenched outposts, that were planted on the lake road. The execution of the plan was frustrated by the martial impatience of the

volunteers, whom Pastor Feron in his exaltation drove to a fever heat of excitement with his blind faith in the irresistible power of the arm of Israel. The Huguenots were still half an hour's march from the enemy when the pastor, who marched ahead of the silent drummers, suddenly intoned in a ringing voice the psalm well known to the Protestants:

“The Eternal looks down from above,
Night and day from out the skies,
On all men bestowing love,
And nothing escapes His eyes.

“From His throne august,
The holy King and just
Sees below distinctly,
Of man the distant race,
Through th' abyss of space
Sees it all distinctly.

“Nor camps nor yet gendarmes,
Nor all the strong alarms
Can ever save a king!
Nor iron nor courage
Are of a good usage,
Oh, Lord, without Thy aid.

“Yes, God His wings doth spread,
On us His grace doth shed.
And ever mounteth guard
O'er those who Him esteem.
None other worthy deem
But only Him regard.”

No sooner had the pastor struck up the psalm with its biblical poetry, than each couplet was repeated in chorus by the Huguenots. Nothing could be more solemn than that choir of three thousand male and sonorous voices, rising from the silent plain, and seeming to salute with a martial hymn the first rays of that day of battle. Nevertheless, sadly inopportune, the canticle announced to the enemy the approach of the Protestants. Driven to despair by the infraction of the Admiral's orders, Colonel Plouernel sought at first to restore silence by addressing himself to the foremost companies. Vain hope; vain entreaties. The soldiers wrought themselves up with their own voice.

“Oh, this lack of discipline will ever be fatal to us!” observed Colonel Plouernel to Antonicq. “Thus have we almost always either endangered the success of a battle, or even lost the day that otherwise would positively have been ours! But the error is committed. The enemy is informed of our proximity. Let it at least be announced resolutely!”

And addressing the drummers:

“Boys, beat the double-quick!”

The drums immediately resounded without however drowning the voices of the Protestants—an imposing military orchestra. The column hastened its steps. After half an hour's rapid march its front ranks debouched into the open field. Piercing a heavy bank of clouds, the first rays of the sun crimsoned the face of a wide lake into which emptied a stream that itself was fed by a number of streamlets which descended from an elevated plateau, dominated by the burg of Roche-la-Belle. The lake and main stream

were hemmed in on the side of the royal entrenchments, and constituted the enemy's first line of defense. A thick chestnut forest rose to the left of the lake. The lake road ran at right angles, and was fortified by an earthwork, furnished with embrasures, and these armed with falconets. This light artillery could sweep the whole length of the water-courses, which had to be crossed in order to attack a palisaded ground, which, crenelated with loop-holes for the use of arquebusiers, completed the defenses of the Catholic army. Finally, a number of heavy guns, mounted upon a high embankment, could also play upon the water-course. A cross-fire thus rendered the crossing doubly dangerous. This particular peril would have been almost wholly escaped had the Admiral's orders been obeyed. Had the attacking column arrived noiselessly at break of day and taken the royalists by surprise when still rolled in slumbers, and before they could hurry to their light and heavy guns and form their ranks, the Huguenots could have crossed the stream and, soon supported by their whole army corps, could have led a powerful attack upon the enemy's position. It happened otherwise. The reverberations of the hymn sung by the Huguenots sounded the reveille to the enemy, and frustrated the Admiral's plans. From all sides the drums of the Catholics were sounding the call to arms when the first company of the Protestants debouched upon the plain. Colonel Plouernel ordered a halt, alighted from his horse, gathered his captains around him and, in order to avoid further mishaps said to them :

“We can no longer hope to take the enemy by surprise.

I shall now communicate to you my new plan of attack.”

Hardly had Colonel Plouernel uttered these words when they heard a lively rattle of arquebus fire from the lake road. He turned his eyes in that direction, unable at first to conjecture against whom the fire could be directed, seeing that he and his forces were beyond the reach of the shot. Immediately, however, the ricocheting of the balls over the surface of the lake attracted the colonel's attention, and he soon perceived here and there, at a considerable distance from one another, several casqued heads just above the surface of the water, and ever and anon diving below with the view of escaping the fire of the arquebusiers.

“It is the Franc-Taupin and his Avengers of Israel. They have been sounding for a ford across the lake and the stream!” exclaimed the colonel in high glee. “Their information will be of great use to us.” But immediately he cried out: “Oh! one of the brave men has been struck!”

Indeed, one of the Avengers of Israel, who, following the example of the Franc-Taupin, and in order not to offer his full body to the aim of the enemy, crouched lower and lower in the measure that, as he drew nearer to the reed-covered edge of the lake, the water grew shallower—one of the Avengers of Israel was struck by a bullet full in the head. He straightened up with a convulsive movement, threw his arms in the air, reeled, and then dropped, immediately disappearing under the water, whose surface at the spot reddened with his blood. The Franc-Taupin, together with his other companions, continued to drag themselves

up through the reeds as far as the shore of the lake. Once there, the balls could not reach them. They picked up their arms and munitions, which they had left close to the bank, put on their cross-belts, and walked towards the group of officers whom they saw at a distance, standing near the last undulation of the ridge that still masked their column. Antonicq, who had alighted from his horse together with Colonel Plouernel, ran to meet the Franc-Taupin and threw his arms around the brave old soldier, saying: "Heaven be thanked, you have had a narrow escape from death!"

"Good morning, my boy!" answered Josephin. "But quit your embracings—you will get wet; I am streaming water. In my young days I played the mole, now in my old age I play the crawfish—so cease embracing me. Besides, I am angry with you and your father—it was due to you two that the scoundrel Hervé escaped death. We found his prison empty last night. Who but you winked at the demon's escape? I did not know that you were placed on guard over him."

"Uncle, the bonds of blood—"

"By my sister's death! Did he respect the bonds of blood!"

And stepping towards Colonel Plouernel, he said:

"Colonel, this is the result of our explorations: We arrived here before dawn; we left our horses at the ruined farm-house that you see yonder; we then took to the water. The royalists were not on the watch. The lake is fordable by cavalry from the point where the reeds run obliquely

into the water. The stream is fordable in all parts by infantry. The water is not more than four feet deep at its deepest, and the bottom is hard. If you wish to flank the entrenchment on the lake road, you will have to ride up about three thousand feet on the side of the chestnut wood. There you will find, running into the marsh, a long and wide jetty. Ten men can walk abreast on it. It abutts on a palisaded earthwork that can be easily taken. It is the weak side of the enemy's defenses. You may rely upon the accuracy of these facts, colonel. I made the reconnaissance myself."

"I know you are reliable, Josephin, answered Colonel Plouernel. "The information you bring me confirms me in the plan of attack that I have projected."

And stepping back to the group of officers whom Pastor Feron had just joined, the colonel said:

"Gentlemen, the following is my plan—we would incur a useless loss of men were we to make a front attack upon the lake road fortifications, and the palisaded fort. The enemy is up. The stream that we would have to wade is swept from right and left by a cross artillery fire. We will divide our forces into three corps. The first, which I shall command, will attempt to cross the stream, however perilous the feat, to the end of attracting the enemy's fire upon us, while our second corps, masked by the chestnut grove, shall march up to the jetty of the swamp in order to take the road fortifications on the flank. Finally, our third corps will move upon that other entrenchment which you see yonder where the stream crosses. The attack being

thus made upon three points at once, the bulk of the army that comes close behind us will support our action. The engagement will be hot. Let us spare the blood of our men all we can. Courage and prudence."

"Still prudence! Still hesitation! notwithstanding the Lord fights for our rights!" exclaimed Pastor Feron with burning enthusiasm. "We but puff up the pride of the Philistines by not daring to attack them in front! Pusillanimity! Lack of faith in God!"

"To divide our forces instead of overwhelming the enemy by concentrating them upon one point?" put in one of the principal officers. "Did you consider that, Colonel Plou-ernel?"

The exasperated colonel cried: "Rely upon my mature experience—to make a front attack, and in mass, upon the enemy's position is as foolhardy an enterprise as it is fraught with danger."

"Intrepidity is the strength of the children of Israel!" cried the pastor in a louder voice. "United the children of Israel are invincible! Let us all march! Side by side! Like brothers, forward! High our heads and without fear! The finger of God points us the way!"

"Yes, yes! Let us attack in mass and with fury!" echoed most of the officers. "Forward all! Holding close together, nothing can resist us! God is with us!"

Alas, once again, as happened so often before in our wars, and to the greater misfortune of our arms, blind foolhardiness, inexperience, lack of discipline, and an exaggerated faith in the triumph of the cause, prevailed over

the wise counsels of an officer who had grown grey in harness, and whose military science matched his bravery. First the captains, soon the soldiers also, successively informed from rank to rank upon the subject of the deliberation, and wrought up by the burning words of the pastor, objected to a division of the forces, deeming that such a move would weaken them; and, above all, fearing to seem to waver in sight of the foe, they demanded aloud to be led in mass against the enemy. Colonel Plouernel, who had a long experience with Breton volunteers, and was too well acquainted with their proverbial stubbornness, abandoned all thought of winning them over to his views. Seeing the men elated to the point of delirious heroism, he calmly said to the officers:

“Is it your wish? Well, let us march! Drummers, beat to the charge! Forward, at the enemy! Battle, all along the line!”

Colonel Plouernel then drew his sword, clasped Antonicq’s hand, and said:

“My friend, we are marching to slaughter. If you escape the carnage that I foresee, take my last adieus to my wife and little boys, and also to your worthy father.”

“These brave fellows are crazy! We shall be mowed down,” observed the Franc-Taupin in turn to Antonicq. “I would die without first having done my twenty-five Catholic priests to death! The devil still owes me seven of them. Be firm, my boy. Let us not be separated from each other. We shall then at least both have the same

stream for our tomb. To think of it! I who in my young days loved wine so well, now to die in water!"

The column set itself in motion in a compact mass, at a quick pace, and with drums beating at its head. Before the drummers marched Pastor Feron, who again intoned a psalm that was speedily taken up in chorus by the Protestants in the midst of a veritable hailstorm of balls and bullets:

"God ever was both my life and my light!
Death, I defy thee! What have I to fear?
God's my support with His infinite might!
Have I not from Him my title quite clear?"

"When the malignants did fire on me,
When they expected to tear out my heart,
Have I not seen them all thrown down by Thee,
Scattered, and smitten, and struck by Thy dart?"

"Come, let a whole camp surround me on all sides,
Never my heart will be shaken with fright!
Close by my side, Oh! the Lord ever strides,
Need I to fear of a foe any blight?"

The battle raged with fury. Colonel Plouernel's apprehensions were realized. Despite prodigies of intrepidity, his column, as it waded through the stream in serried and compact ranks, was received in front and from the two flanks by a terrific cross-fire of arquebuses and artillery. Three-fourths of the volunteers fell under the torrent of lead, even before reaching the middle of the stream. Wondering at the length of this vanguard attack, the successful

execution of which he considered certain by entrusting it to Colonel Plouernel, Admiral Coligny suddenly saw Antonicq Lebrenn riding back at top speed with his thigh pierced by a bullet. Informed by Antonicq of the reason of the disastrous result of the encounter, the Admiral promptly ordered Colonels Bueil and Piles to proceed at their swiftest with their respective regiments to the jetty, and take the road entrenchment from the flank. Soubise, La Rochefoucauld and Saragosse received and, with their wonted skill, executed another set of orders. Within shortly battle was engaged all along the line, changing the aspect of the conflict. The Huguenots' artillery responded to and silenced the fire from the opposite side. Attacked in front, from the right and the left, the royalists were dislodged from their entrenchments near the lake. They retired behind the palisaded ground, from which they kept up a murderous fire. But the palisade was broken through. First the infantry, then the cavalry of the Protestants rushed through the breaches. A stubborn melee ensued, and was at its height when the muffled rumbling of distant thunder, immediately followed by heavy rain-drops from the blackening sky overhead, announced the approach of the storm that Coligny had that morning predicted.¹

I, Antonicq Lebrenn, who write this account, am overcome with grief in completing it. Its close revives sad memories.

¹ For the details of this battle, see De Thou, vol. V, p. 500; *Memoires of Gaspard of Sault, Seigneur of Tavannes*, vol. I, p.

323 and following. *Memoires of Francis of Lanouë*, vol. I, p. 623, and following.

After I informed Admiral Coligny of the check sustained by the column of Colonel Plouernel, the kindhearted old man insisted that his own surgeon dress my wound. Though painful, the wound did not prevent me from keeping in the saddle. After being attended by the surgeon, I hastened back to the thick of the battle. A large body of cavalry, commanded by Marshal Tavannes, with the Duke of Anjou, brother of Charles IX, and young Henry of Guise at his side, covered the right wing of the royalist camp. Against that armed body of heavy and light troopers Admiral Coligny hurled twenty squadrons of horsemen under the command of Prince Franz of Gerolstein. It was at that moment that I rejoined the battle. The thunder claps, now succeeding one another with increasing frequency and vehemence, drowned the roar of the artillery. The storm was soon to break out in all its fury. The Protestant cavalry was advancing at a gallop three ranks deep upon the Catholic horsemen. Sword in hand, Franz of Gerolstein led, a few paces in advance of his troopers. The Prince was accompanied by his knights and pages. Among the latter was Anna Bell. The dashing sight soon disappeared from before my eyes in the cloud of pistol smoke, and the dust raised by the horses, as the two opposing masses of riders met each other, pistol in hand and exchanged fire. Suddenly I heard my father's voice calling to me:

“God sends you, my son! Come and fight by my side.”

“Father,” I said to him drawing up my horse beside his own, he being on the right wing of our army and at the

end of a line composed of Rochelois volunteer horsemen who followed upon the heels of the charging contingent of the Prince of Gerolstein, "did you have time to see my sister again after you left me last night?"

"Alas, no; but I found a letter that she left behind, and—"

My father could proceed no further. Two regiments of mounted arquebusiers under the command of Count Neroweg of Plouernel, the colonel's brother, made a charge upon us with the object of isolating us from the German troopers. The manoeuvre succeeded. The impetuosity of the charge threw our ranks into disorder. The enemy broke through them. We could no longer fight in line. A general melee ensued. It was a combat of man to man. Despite the disorder I managed to remain at my father's side. Fate drove us, him and me, face to face with Count Neroweg of Plouernel, at whose side rode his son Odet, a lad of sixteen years, and a great favorite with the Duke of Anjou. I heard the Count cry to him:

"Courage, my boy! Strike hard, and kill as many of the enemy as you can! Prove yourself worthy of the house of Neroweg!"

Almost immediately thereupon I saw the Count rise in his stirrups. His sword was on the point of striking my father when the latter crushed the shoulder of Neroweg with a pistol shot fired at close range. The Count dropped his sword and uttered a piercing cry. His son raised his light arquebus and took aim at my father, just then engaged in replacing his pistol in its holster. Instantly,

driven by two digs of my spurs, my horse bounded forward, striking the steed of Odet of Plouernel breast against breast; at the very moment that Odet discharged his arquebus upon my father, I struck the lad so furious a blow with my saber that his casque and skull were cleaved in two. Odet stretched out his arms, and dropped backward bleeding upon the crupper of his horse. In the meantime, my own steed, wounded in the loins by a severe cut, collapsed. In falling, the heavy animal rolled over me, pressing with its full weight upon my wounded thigh. Pain deprived me of the strength to extricate myself. Several combatants trampled me under foot. My corselet was torn open under the iron hoofs of the horses. My morion was knocked in and flattened; pressed by its walls my skull felt as if cramped by a vise. My eyes began to swim; I was about to faint, but a frightful vision so stirred my soul at that moment that I seemed to revive. The melee left in its wake upon the field of carnage the dead, the dying, and the wounded among whom I lay. The spectacle I saw took place not far from my right. A few paces from me, my father, unhorsed by the arquebus of young Odet of Plouernel, raised himself livid, and sank again in a sitting posture, carrying his hands to his cuirass which a bullet had perforated. That same instant the diabolical cry smote my ears:

“Kill all! Kill all!”

And then, in the midst of the roll of thunder overhead, and across the surrounding sheen of lightning flashes, there appeared before my eyes—Fra Hervé, mounted upon a small black horse with long flowing mane, clad in his

brown frock rolled up to his knees, and exposing his fleshless legs, naked like his feet which were strapped in spurred sandals wherewith he kicked his horse's flank and urged it onward. A fresh bandage covered his recent wound and girded his hairless skull. His hollow eyes sparkled with savage fury. Armed with a long cutlass that dripped blood he continued to cry:

“Kill all! Kill all!”

The monk led to carnage a band of gallows-birds, the scum and refuse of the Catholic army, whose duty it was to despatch the wounded with iron maces, axes and knives. Hervé recognized his brother Odelin, who, with one hand upon his wound and the other on the ground, was essaying to rise to his feet. An expression of satanic hatred lighted the face of the Cordelier. He jumped down from his horse, and emitted a roar of ferocious triumph. My father gave himself up for lost. Nevertheless he made an attempt to soften the heart of his executioner, saying:

“Hervé, brother! I have a wife and children. Last night I saved your life!”

“Lord!” cried the priest, gasping for breath and raising his fiery eyes and blood-stained cutlass to the thundering and lightning-lighted heaven above. “God of Vengeance! God of the Catholics! Receive as a holocaust the blood of Cain!”

And Fra Hervé precipitated himself upon his brother, threw him down, squatted upon his chest, seized his hair with one hand and with the other brandished the cutlass. Odelin uttered a cry of horror, closed his eyes and offered

his throat. The fratricide was accomplished. Fra Hervé rose bespattered with his brother's blood, kicked the corpse with his foot, and jumped back upon his horse yelling:

“Kill all! Slaughter all the wounded!”

My senses, until then held in suspense by the very terror of the frightful spectacle, now abandoned me. I completely lost consciousness. The carnage continued.

When I recovered from my swoon, I was lying on the straw in our smithy and lodging at St. Yrieix. The Franc-Taupin and Colonel Plouernel sat beside my couch. From them I learned the issue of the battle of Roche-la-Belle. It was disastrous to the royalists; they were roundly routed. The violent thunder storm, followed by a deluge of rain, did not allow Admiral Coligny to pursue the retreating Catholic army. The victorious Protestants re-entered St. Yrieix. The Franc-Taupin and his Avengers of Israel, happening to pass by the spot where I lay motionless under my horse, not far from my father's corpse, with his throat cut by Fra Hervé, recognized me and laid me upon a wagon used for transporting the munitions of the artillery. The field of battle was ours. With the help of his companions, the Franc-Taupin piously dug a grave in which they buried my father.

Later I learned from the Prince of Gerolstein the sad fate that overtook my sister, and I also found the letter which she wrote to my father. The unfortunate girl, imagining herself despised and forsaken by us, decided, she wrote, to die, and bade us her heartrending adieus. Desirous that my father and his co-religionists be apprized

of the dark and bloody schemes of Catherine De Medici, Anna Bell reported in her letter the secret conversation which the Queen had with Father Lefevre on the subject of the reformers—a conversation that she overheard at the Abbey of St. Severin. After having thus attested her attachment to us to the very end, she obtained the consent of the Prince's page she had spoken with, to don the clothes and ride the horse of the lad who was killed at the skirmish of that morning. She looked forward to meeting death beside Franz of Gerolstein. Alas! Her wish was realized. She joined the Prince. As much surprised as alarmed at the girl's purpose, he vainly entreated her to withdraw until after the shock between the two mounted forces. Neither Anna Bell nor Franz of Gerolstein was wounded at the first encounter. But shortly after, as the German horsemen were re-crossing the stream in pursuit of the enemy's cavalry, my sister was struck in the breast by a stray bullet from the fleeing enemy, and fell from her horse into the river, where she was drowned, without Franz, who was carried along by the impetus of his troopers' charge, being able to return in time to save her.

Finally, informed by my account concerning the double encounter of his brother, Count Neroweg, and Odet his son, with my father and myself, Colonel Plouernel learned later that both had perished in the fight, leaving him the head of the house, and sole heir of its vast domains.

Victorious at Roche-la-Belle, the Protestants were destined to suffer a serious defeat in September of the same year. The royal and Protestant armies met in Poitou,

near the town of Montcontour. Coligny, much the inferior in numbers, manoeuvred his forces with his customary skill, and entrenched himself behind the River Dive. Sheltered by that almost impregnable position, he wished to wait for the reinforcements promised by Montgomery, who was in almost complete possession of Gascony. But, as had happened so many times before, to the misfortune of the cause, and despite all his firmness, Coligny saw himself constrained to yield to the headlong impatience of his army, the greater part of which consisted of volunteers. The campaign had lasted a long time. Captains and soldiers had left their families, their property, their farms, their fields and their homes to fly to the defense of their religion. They were anxious to return to their hearths. Accordingly, hoping by means of a victory to be able once more to impose peace upon Charles IX and reconquer the free exercise of their religion, they were loud in their demand for battle. Coligny yielded. On September 3, 1569, he delivered battle to an army almost twice the size of his own. Despite the prodigies of bravery displayed by the Huguenots, and although the royalists sustained heavy losses, victory remained with the Catholics. Nevertheless, after Montcontour, as after Jarnac, so far from allowing himself to be disheartened by a reverse that he had foreseen and that he had vainly sought to avoid, Coligny executed so threatening a retreat that the Catholic army dared not pursue him. On the very night after the defeat, the Protestant chieftains, assembled at Parthenay, despatched couriers to Scotland, Germany and Switzerland appealing to

their co-religionists for support; collected the shattered fragments of their armies; threw strong garrisons into Niort, St. Jean-d'Angely, Saintes and La Rochelle; crossed the Charente; marched into Gascony to join Montgomery, who was the master of that province; and Coligny renewed hostilities with success, choosing as the basis of his operations the Rivers Tarn and Garonne. Armed bands of intrepid Protestants harassed and tired out the royal forces. Charles IX and his mother took the Huguenots for annihilated after the defeats of Jarnac and Montcontour. It was otherwise. The defeated men reappeared more determined, more numerous, more zealous in the defense of their rights. Catherine De Medici, more and more convinced that peace, and not war, offered the sole means to put an end to the Huguenots, turned her thoughts more resolutely than ever before to the execution of the infernal project that Francis of Guise conceived at the time of the triumvirate, and which she confided to the Jesuit Lefevre. She caused overtures to be made to Coligny looking to a new treaty of peace. The royal advances were met. The Admiral, together with several other Protestant chiefs, deputed as the plenipotentiaries of the Huguenots, held long conferences with the envoys of Charles IX, and finally, on August 10, 1570, a new edict, the most favorable yet granted to the Protestants, was signed at St. Germain.

The document provided in substance:

The memory of all past events is blotted out by both parties. Freedom of conscience is implicitly granted throughout the kingdom. None is henceforth to be constrained to commit any act forbidden by his conscience in religious matters. No distinction exists between Catholics and Protestants in the matter of admission to the colleges, Universities, hospitals, asylums, or any other institution of learning or of public charity. None shall be prosecuted for past actions. Coligny and all other Protestant chiefs are declared good and loyal subjects. Protestants are qualified to hold all royal, seigniorial or municipal offices. All decrees rendered against the Huguenots shall be stricken from the judicial records. Finally, and in order to guarantee the execution of the said edict, Charles IX places, as pledges for the term of two years, the cities of La Rochelle, Cognac, Montauban, and La Charite, in the hands of the Princes of Navarre, of Condé and of twenty other Protestant Princes, the said towns to be places of *refuge* for all those who might not yet venture to return to their own homes.¹

Alas! those who, in the language of the edict, *might not yet venture to return to their own homes*, despite the peace being signed, promulgated and sworn to, justly suspected some new trap concealed under the lying peace. Antonicq Lebrenn did not take his leave of Admiral Coligny and Monsieur Lanoüe until after the close of the war. They were informed by him of the revelations contained in Anna Bell's letter to her father Odelin, the letter wherein the maid of honor of Catherine De Medici reported the conversation which she overheard between the infamous Queen and the Jesuit Lefevre, in the course of which the Queen disclosed to the Jesuit her project of lulling the sus-

¹ *Memoires of the State of France under Charles IX*, vol. 1, pp. 5-12.

pitions of the Huguenots with the false appearance of a peace, to the end of taking them by surprise, unarmed and confiding, and exterminating them on one day throughout the kingdom. The project seemed so monstrous to Coligay that he looked upon it as only a chimera of delirious wickedness, and held it for impracticable, if only on the ground of there not being murderers enough to execute the butchery.

The Admiral deceived himself. There never is a lack of murderers in the Catholic party. These rise by the thousand at the voice of the Roman priests. All priests are potential murderers with a patent from their faith.

CHAPTER VII.

“CONTRE-UN.”¹

Towards the end of the month of August in the year 1572, the Lebrenn family was gathered one evening in the large hall that served for storeroom to the arms turned out by the establishment of Antonicq Lebrenn, who continued his father's trade at La Rochelle. The room had the appearance of an arsenal. On the shelves along the walls lay arms of all sorts in profusion—swords, daggers, sabers, cutlasses, pikes, halberds, battle maces and axes; further off, long and short-barreled arquebuses, pistols and some firearms of a novel fashion. These were light and easy to handle, an invention of the celebrated Gaspard of Milan, who gave them the name of “muskets;” finally, there was a large display of casques, morions, cuirasses, corselets, brigandines, armlets, shields and bucklers, some of the latter made of iron, others of wood inlaid with sheets of steel. The workshop, with its furnaces, anvils and other utensils, was situated behind the storeroom, where, on this day the Lebrenn family, six in number, were congregated—Marcienne, Odelin's widow; Antonicq, her son; Theresa, his sister, married three years before to Louis Rennepont,

¹“Contre-Un” (Against-One) is the title of a book written in the sixteenth century by Estienne of La Boetie against monarchy.

the nephew of Brother St. Ernest-Martyr; Josephin, the Franc-Taupin; Captain Mirant, Marcienne's brother; his daughter Cornelia, the betrothed of Antonieq; and finally John Barbot, a boilermaker, the widower of Jacqueline Barbot, who was the godmother of Anna Bell, and who died two years previously. In the assemblage were also the two artisans of the establishment, Bois-Guillaume and Roland, besides a fifteen-year-old apprentice whom they nicknamed "Serpentin."

Although it was the hour for rest, these different personages were not idle. Marcienne, Odelin's widow, spun at her wheel. Clad in black, she had made up her mind to remain in mourning for the rest of her life in memory of the tragic deaths of her husband and her daughter, Anna Bell. The widow's pronounced features, the cast of her face at once serious, firm and kind, preserved the primitive type of the women of the *Santones*, a race which, according to what historians tell us, preserved itself pure from times immemorial, almost without admixture with foreign strains since the olden days of Gaul. Theresa, Marcienne's eldest daughter, was busy sewing, and from time to time cast a glance of maternal solicitude upon her child, who lay asleep in a cradle that off and on she rocked with her foot. Theresa expected with increasing anxiety the return of her husband, Louis Rennepont, who, several weeks before, left for Paris, whither he was deputed by the Rochelois, owing to the vague yet increasing apprehensions entertained by the Protestants, due to the circumstance that Coligny, together with almost all the Protestant lead-

she, was drawn to Paris on the occasion of the marriage of Henry of Bearn to the King's sister Marguerite. Theresa's headgear was the time-honored and common one of the women of the region—a high, white and pointed coif, adjusted to the coil of her tresses. Her robe, made of grey bolting-cloth, was slashed with a red front-piece, that partly covered her white and starched chemisette. From the belt of her apron hung two long silver chains, at the lower end of which were attached her penknife, scissors, a pin-cushion, some keys, and other utensils inseparable from a good housekeeper. Near Theresa Rennepont and behind her, Cornelia Mirant, her cousin, the betrothed of Antonicq, was ironing some household linen. The face of Cornelia also preserved in all their purity the characteristics of a Santone woman of the heroic days of Gaul. A luxurious head of light chestnut hair with a golden glint, twisted into strands and wound into a thick-topknot on her head; a white and ruddy skin; a small forehead; light eyebrows of a shade less brilliant than her hair and penciled in an almost straight line above her orange-brown, flashing and resolute eyes; a straight nose, prolonged in almost a straight line from the forehead, as seen in the lofty statues of antiquity; a pair of fleshy and cherry-red lips; a pronounced chin;—these features imparted to Cornelia's face a strikingly lofty stamp. The girl's tall stature, her flexible neck, her well rounded shoulders, her white and strong arms, the gentle contour of her bosom, recalled the noble proportions of the Greek Pallas Athene. With this virile appearance, Cornelia united the sportiveness, and

the sweet and coy charms of a maid. Dressed Rochelois fashion like her cousin Theresa, she had, in order to be at greater ease, rolled up the sleeves of her robe, and the strong muscles of her arms, which were white as marble, rose and fell with every impression of the hot iron upon the linen that she was smoothing. Ever and anon, however, the iron remained inactive for a moment. At such moments Cornelia raised her head to listen more attentively to the reading with which Antonicq was entertaining the assembled family; and her eyes would then bend upon him, not with any furtive tenderness, but, on the contrary, endeavoring to meet his own gaze with the serene confidence of a betrothed bride. Cornelia's father, Captain Mirant, one of the most intrepid seamen of La Rochelle, a man still in the full strength of his years, was engaged at sketching some defenses that he deemed requisite to the safety of the port. Near the captain sat his chum, John Barbot, the boilermaker of the isle of Rhe. His wife, Anna Bell's godmother, had died of grief. She never could pardon herself for the loss of her god-child; after long years of weeping over what she deemed her own negligence, the poor woman sank into her grave. Not wishing to sit idly by, John Barbot was furbishing a steel corselet with as much care as he would have done one of the magnificent copper basins with artistic relievos, or one of his tinplated iron sheets, which, set up in his boilermaker's shop, shone with the glitter of gold or silver. A man of exceptional courage, above all of great self-possession in the hour of danger, Barbot had taken part in the late religious wars.

Among other scars he wore one inflicted by a saber cut, dealt so furiously that, after cropping the boilermaker's left ear, it plowed through his cheek and carried away the tip of his nose. Despite the mutilation, John Barbot's face preserved an expression of unalterable good nature. The Franc-Taupin polished the barrel of an arquebus just taken, tarnished and defaced, from the forge. The old leader of the Avengers of Israel, the man to whom circumstances had imparted an implacable ferocity towards papists, still always carried, hanging from a string fastened to the buttonhole of his coat, the little piece of wood on which, by means of notches, he kept tally of the Catholic priests whom he killed in reprisal for the death of his sister and the torture of Hena. The notches had now reached the number of twenty-four. The implacable avenger was seated on the other side of the cradle of Theresa's child, and shared the mother's duties of lightly rocking it. Whenever the child woke up, the Franc-Taupin would drop the barrel of the arquebus on his knees and smile to the baby—at least as hard as the Franc-Taupin could smile. He lived on a small pension granted to him by the municipality of La Rochelle, in reward for the long years of service that he rendered in the capacity of sergeant of the city archers. Josephin transferred to Antonicq, to Antonicq's sister and to their mother the devoted attachment of which he gave so many signal proofs to Christian Lebrenn and his wife Bridget, to their daughter Hena and their son Odelin. Finally, the two artisans employed in the shop, Bois-Guillaume and Roland, as well as Serpentin the ap-

prentice, occupied themselves with something or other connected with their trade, more for the sake of keeping their hands busy than for actual work, while they listened to Antonicq, who was reading aloud.

Antonicq read the *Contre-Un*, a work written by Estienne of La Boétie,¹ who died about nine years before. Never yet did reason, human dignity, the sense of justice, the holy love for freedom, the whole-souled horror for tyranny, speak a language more eloquent and more warm from the heart than the language spoken in that immortal book. It was a cry of execration, an anathema against oppression. The avenging cry, leaping from the indignant soul of a great citizen, caused all noble hearts to vibrate responsively. Those pages, every word of which breathes ardent conviction, steeled the faith of all the honorable people, who finally at the end of their patience with the monstrous crimes that royalty, the accomplice or tool of the Church of Rome, was still soiled with in this century, were seriously considering, the same as the Low Countries were doing, the advisability of following the example of the Swiss can-

¹La Boétie is to-day known mainly through the friendship that united him to Montaigne, and which inspired the latter to write one of his most charming passages.

La Boétie was born in Sarlat, November 1, 1530; he died in Germignat, near Bordeaux, August 18, 1563. He left several works, all of which are to-day almost unknown. Unquestionably the most curious of his productions is the one mentioned by Montaigne in these terms:

"My power of handling not being such that I dare to offer as a fine piece richly painted and set off according to art, I have

therefore thought best to borrow one of Estienne of La Boétie, and such a one as will honor and adorn all the rest of my work: namely, a discourse that he called *Voluntary Servitude*, which others have since further baptized the *Contre-Un*, a piece written in his younger years, by way of essay, in honor of liberty against tyranny, and which has since been in the hands of several men of great learning and judgment, not without singular and merited commendation, for it is finely written and as full as anything can possibly be."—Montaigne, *Essays*, Book I, chap. 27,

tons, which federated themselves in a Republic. The work of Estienne of La Boetie, by calling upon all the oppressed to resistance *Against-One* who oppresses them, laid bare to them, with terse and pitiless logic, the despicable causes of their *Voluntary Servitude*, the original title of that admirable work.

Antonicq Lebrenn continued to read the *Contre-Un* amid the profound silence maintained by the assembled family:

“There are three species of tyrants, I speak of wicked princes: The first have the kingdom by popular election; the second by force of arms; the third by inheritance. Those who acquired it by the right of war deport themselves as on conquered territory; those who are born kings are usually no better; nourished in the blood of tyranny, they take in the tyrant’s nature with their milk, and look upon their people as hereditary serfs. He, to whom the people conferred the State, should (it would seem) be more endurable, and so would he be, I hold, if, seeing himself raised above all others and flattered by the undefinable thing called grandeur, he did not generally bend his energies to preserve the power that the people loaned him, and to transmit the same to his own children.

“Accordingly, to speak truthfully, I do perceive that there is some difference between these different tyrants. But if one is to choose, the difference ceases. The act of reigning remains virtually the same—the elective ones govern as if they had bulls to tame; the conquering ones look upon their people as their prey; hereditary kings see in their subjects natural slaves.

“Speaking intelligently, it is a great misfortune to be subject to a master of whom one can never be certain that he will be good, seeing he ever has it in his power to be bad whenever it should so please him. I do not mean at this point to debate

the question, to wit, Whether Republics are better than monarchy? If I wished to consider that question, I should first wish to know, What rank monarchy is to take among Republics, or if monarchy can at all rank with Republics, considering the difficulty of believing that there could be anything public in a government where *all belongs to one?*

“I wish I could understand how it happens that so many citizens, so many men, so many cities, so many nations often endure only a tyrant, who has no power except that given to him; who has no power to harm them but because of their own power to endure him! What! A million men, miserably held in subjection, their necks under the yoke, not compelled by force, but enchanted and charmed by the word ONE, neither the power of whom they need fear, seeing he stands alone; nor the qualities of whom they should love, seeing that, as to them, he is inhuman and savage! Such is the weakness among us, men!

“Oh, good God! What can that be? What name shall we call the thing by? What peculiar calamity is it? or what vice? or, rather, what calamitous vice? To see a vast number, not obey, but serve! Not governed, but tyrannized! With neither property, nor parents, nor children, nor yet their own lives that they may call their own! Suffer plunderings, pillagings, cruelties, not at the hands of an army, not at the hands of a camp of barbarians, against which one would shed his blood and risk his life—but endure all that from ONLY ONE! Not from a Hercules, or a Sampson, but from a single mannikin, generally the most cowardly, the most effeminate of the nation, at that! Not accustomed to the powder of battles, but even hardly to the dust of tourneys! Can we give to that the name of cowardice? Are we to say that those who remain in subjection are poltroons? That two, that three, that four should fail to defend themselves against ONE, that would be singular enough, yet possible; in which case we could justly say it is faint-heartedness. But when a hundred, when a thousand endure everything from ONLY ONE, can it then be said that they do not want, that they dare

not lay hands upon him, and that it is not a case of cowardice, but rather of disdain and contempt? If so, what monstrous vice is this that deserves not the title of cowardice, that finds no name villainous enough to designate it by, that nature disowns having brought forth, and that the tongue of men refuses to name?”

The eloquent malediction of the blindness of subjugated peoples drew a unanimous cry of admiration from the Le-brenn family. Antonicq interrupted his reading for a moment.

“Oh, the book is right!” gravely observed Odelin’s widow. “What monstrous vice can that be that bends under the yoke of ONLY ONE? It is not cowardice! The most cowardly, when they see they are a thousand against one, will not be afraid to attack him. That book is right. What may be the name of the nameless vice?”

Antonicq proceeded:

“It is the people who subjugate themselves; who cut their own throats; who, having the choice between being subject or free, leave their freedom for a yoke; who give their consent to their own ruin, or rather purchase the same. If the recovery of their freedom would have to cost something, it is not I who would press them to the act, although that which man should hold dearest is the recovery of his natural rights, or, to be accurate, from beast to return to man’s estate.

“But no! I do not demand such boldness from the people. What! If, in order to have its liberty, the people need but to will it, can there be a nation on earth to consider the price too dear, being able to regain the boon by wishing? Who would hesitate to recover a boon that should be redeemed with the

price of his blood, a boon, which if lost, all honorable men must esteem life a burden and death a relief?

“But no! The more do tyrants pillage, the more do they exact, the more do they ruin, the more do they destroy,—all the more are they paid to do it, all the more are they served, and all the more do they fortify themselves.

“And yet, if nothing were to be allowed to them, if no obedience were to be yielded to them, and that without combat, without striking a blow, they would remain naked, undone, and would cease to be anything—like roots, that, lacking nourishment, become a dry, dead branch.”

“Right!” put in the Franc-Taupin. “Again that book is right. There are donkey-men and lion-men. Say to a donkey: ‘Roar, jump, bite your enemy!’ He will not listen. Say to the brute: ‘Donkey you are, donkey you will be, remain donkey. One does not even expect of you that you rise to the Caesarian heroism of a kick! No, you peaceful beast! All that we ask is that you remain quiet, motionless, stubborn, and do not go to the mill! Aye, my donkey friends, what could the millers do, and their helpers, if, despite all their cudgels, the millions of donkeys, having passed the word along the line, refused point blank to march? Will the millers and their helpers shower blows upon you? Perhaps, but are you spared any blows when you do march? Beaten whether you march or stand still, you might as well stand still and ruin the miller.’ Yes,” added the Franc-Taupin, his face assuming a sad expression; “but how was this unhappy people even to conceive the bare thought of such an inert resistance? Have the monks not monkied their brains from the cradle to the

grave: ‘Go, thou beast of burden, lick the hand that smites you—bless the burden that crushes your limbs, and galls your spine to the quick—thy salvation hereafter is to be bought by the torments you endure on earth—to the monks belong thy broad back—they straddle it in order to lead you to paradise!’ And,” proceeded the Franc-Taupin, more and more incensed, “should anyone attempt to wrest the besotted wretches from the grip of the monkery, why, then, quick, and quicker than quick!—the jail, the cutlass, the pyre, and torture! Thus came my sister Bridget to die in prison, and her daughter to be burned alive, and Christian to die of grief, and Odelin, his son, to have his throat cut by his own brother, Fra Hervé, the Cordelier! That is the long and short of it!”

These words, which recalled so many painful losses to the memory of the Lebrenn family, were followed by a mournful silence. Tears rolled down the cheeks of Marcienne, Odelin’s widow; her wheel stopped whirring; her head dropped upon her breast and she muttered:

“My mourning will be like my sorrow, eternal! Oh, my children, there are two places that will ever remain vacant at our hearth—your father’s and your sister’s. The poor girl doubted our indulgence and our love for her!”

“Oh, Catherine De Medici! Infamous Queen! Mother of execrable sons! Will the hour of vengeance ever sound!” exclaimed Captain Mirant. “Even the perversest of people shudder at the crimes of the crowned monsters! Their acts are endured, and yet a breath could throw them down! Oh, well may we ask in the language of La Boetie’s book:

‘What is the nameless vice that causes millions of people to submit voluntarily to a power that is abhorred?’ ”

“We Huguenots, at least, showed our teeth to the monsters,” put in Barbot the boilermaker. “Nevertheless, to talk shop, I must confess our mistake. It was our duty to throw into the furnace and melt once for all that old royal boiler in which for a thousand and odd years the Kings have been boiling Jacques Bonhomme, and serving him up in all manner of sauces for their repasts. Once that boiler is melted, the devil’s kitchen would be done for!”

“Yes, indeed, comrade,” replied Captain Mirant, “we made that mistake, and yet we were the most daring among the oppressed! And we made the mistake notwithstanding we were repeatedly imposed upon and betrayed by treacherous edicts. May it please God that this last edict do not fare like the previous ones, and that Louis Rennepont may speedily bring us tidings from Paris to dispel our apprehensions!”

“Brother,” observed Marcienne, “I can not but mistrust the pledges of Charles IX and his mother. Alas, I can not forget the revelations made in the letter to her father by my poor daughter before she leaped voluntarily to death at the battle of Roche-la-Belle. Catherine and her sons are well capable of scheming the massacre that she confided to the Jesuit Lefevre. At the same time we must not forget that Admiral Coligny, so prudent, so wise, so experienced a man, in short, better qualified than anyone else to appreciate the situation, seeing he is in close touch with the court, reposes full confidence in the peace.

Did he not give us positive proof of his sense of security by inducing the Protestants to restore to the King, before the date fixed by the edict, the fortified towns of asylum that were placed in their power?”

“Oh, sister, sister!” interjected Captain Mirant. “I shall ever congratulate myself upon having been on the Board of Aldermen among those who most decidedly opposed the relinquishing of La Rochelle! Thank God, this fortified place remains to us. Here at least we may feel safe. I very much fear the loyalty of the Admiral may not be a match for the duplicity of the Italian woman.”

“I must say that I am increasingly impatient for my husband’s return home,” observed Theresa. “He will have had an interview with Admiral Coligny; he will have expressed to him the fears and misgivings of the Rochelois. At least we shall know for certain whether we are to feel safe or not.”

“Do you call that living?” cried Captain Mirant. “Why should we, honorable people, be kept ever in suspense as though we were criminals! Mistrust ever sits in our hearts! Our ears ever are on the watch, our hands on our swords! Whence come these mortal alarms? The reason is that, despite our old municipal franchises, despite the ramparts of our town, we are, after all, the subjects of the King, instead of belonging to ourselves, like the Swiss cantons, that are freely federated in a Republic! Oh, liberty! liberty! Shall our eyes ever see your reign among us?”

“Yes!” answered Antonicq. “Yes! We would see that beautiful reign if the admirable sentiments of La Boetie

could be made to penetrate the souls of our people! But listen, I shall read on:

“Oh, liberty! So great, so sweet a boon, that, once lost, misfortune follows inevitably, and even the enjoyments that may remain behind wholly lose their taste and flavor, being tainted with servitude! Liberty is not desired by men for no other reason, it seems to me, than that, if they were to desire it, they would have it! One would think they refuse the priceless conquest only because it is so easily won! The beasts (may God help me!) where men are too deaf to hear, scream in their ears—*Long live Freedom!* Many animals die the moment they are captured. Fishes lose their lives with their element: they die unable to survive their natural franchise! If animals recognized rank in their midst they would turn liberty into—*nobility!* From the largest to the smallest, when caught, they offer so emphatic a resistance with nails, horns, feet, or beaks that they sufficiently declare how highly they prize what they are losing. When caught, they give us so many manifest tokens of how thoroughly they realize their misfortune that, if they continue to live, it is rather to mourn over their lost freedom than to accommodate themselves to servitude.

“Poor, miserable people! Poor senseless beings! Oh, ye nations stubbornly addicted to your own evil! Blind to your weal! You allow yourselves to be carried away, to be ravished of the best that you have, of the prime of your revenue; your fields to be pillaged; your homes to be robbed; your paternal furniture and heirlooms to be taken for spoils! Your life is such that you may say nothing is your own. Would it be that wise unless you are tolerant of the thief who plunders you, and the accomplice of the murderer who slays you? Are you not traitors to yourselves? You sow your fields for him to gorge himself! You furnish your houses in order to furnish matter for his burglaries! You bring up your daughters that there may be food

for his debauches! You bring up your sons that he may lead them to slaughter and turn them into the instruments of his greed and the executors of his revenges. You stint your bodies that he may revel in the delights you are deprived of, and wallow in lecherous and vile pursuits!

“True enough, physicians advise not to lay hands upon wounds that are incurable. Perhaps I act not wisely in seeking to give advice to the people in this matter. They have long lost consciousness; they are no longer aware of their ailment; the disease is mortal!”

“The reproach is severe, and, I think, unmerited,” objected Odelin’s widow. “Did not Estienne of La Boetie himself, who died only nine years ago, see the Protestants thrice run to arms in the defense of their faith?”

“Sister,” asked Captain Mirant, “did the whole people run to arms? Alas, no! The majority, the masses—blind, ignorant, wretched, and dominated by the monks—have they not ever risen at the command of their clerical misleaders, and fallen with fanatical rage upon what they call the ‘heretics’? Even among ourselves, is it not a small majority that realizes the truth of what Christian your husband’s father used to say, when he warned the Protestants that neither religious nor any other freedom could ever be permanently secured so long as royalty, the hereditary accomplice of the Church, was left standing? Do not the majority of Protestants, even Admiral Coligny himself, entertain respect and love, if not for Kings, at least for the monarchy? Do they not seek to place that institution beyond the reach of the religious wars? Sister, Boetie’s book tells the truth: The masses of the people, degraded, bru-

tified, besotted and kept in ignorance by hereditary serfdom no longer feel the gall of servitude. Does it, therefore, follow the disease is incurable, and fatal? No! No! In that respect I look to better things than does La Boetie. History, in accord therein with the chronicles of your husband's family, proves that a slow and mysterious progress is taking its course across the ages. Serfs replaced slaves; vassals replaced serfs; some day, vassalage also will disappear as did slavery and serfdom! The religious wars of our century are another step toward ultimate freedom. The revolt against the throne will closely follow the revolt against the Church. But, alas! how many years are yet to elapse before the arrival of the day foretold by Victoria the Great—as narrated in your family history!"¹

"Oh, the genius of tyranny is so resourceful in infernal plans to protect its empire!" exclaimed Antonicq. "Do you remember, uncle, how surprised you and I were at the account, given us by some travelers who returned from Paris, of the infinite number of public festivities—tourneys, tilts, processions—gotten up to keep the people amused?"

"Yes, and we listened to their report as to a fairy tale," interjected Cornelia. "We wondered how the people could feel so giddyheaded in Paris; how they could crowd to festivities given upon places that were still dyed red with the blood of martyrs, and still warm with the ashes of pyres!"

"Cornelia," replied Antonicq, proud of the noble words of his bride, "tyrants rule less, perhaps, through force that

¹An allusion to the Vision of Victoria, depicted in "The Casque's Lark," the fifth of this series.

terrorizes than through corruption that depraves. Listen to these profound and awful words of La Boetie upon this very subject:

"No better insight can be got into the craftiness of tyrants to brutify their subjects than from the measure that Cyrus adopted towards the Lydians after he took possession of Sardis, the principal city of Lydia, and reduced to his mercy Croesus, the rich King, and carried him off a prisoner of war. Cyrus was notified that the people of Sardis rose in rebellion. He speedily reduced them to order, but unwilling to put so beautiful a place to the sack, and also to be himself put to the trouble of garrisoning the city with a large force in order to keep it safe, he hit upon a master scheme to make sure of his conquest. He set up in Sardis a large number of public houses for debauchery, and issued a decree commanding the people to frequent these brothels. That garrison answered his purpose so well that never after did he have to draw the sword against the Lydians.

"Indeed, no bird is more easily caught with bird-lime, no fish is more securely hooked with an appetizing bait, than the masses of the people are lured to servitude by the tickle of the smallest feather, which, as the saying goes, is passed over their lips. Theaters, games, farces, spectacles, gladiators, strange beasts, medals, pictures and other trifles were, to the peoples of antiquity, the charms of servitude, the price of their freedom, the instruments of tyranny.

"These lures kept the people under the yoke. Thus, mentally unnerved, they found the pastimes pleasant, they were amused by the idle spectacles that were paraded before their eyes, and they were habituated to obedience as fully, but not as usefully to themselves, as little children, who, in order to gladden their eyes with the brilliant pictures of illuminated books insensibly learn to read.

"The tyrant Romans furthermore resorted to the plan of

feasting the populace, which can be led by nothing so readily as by the pleasures of the mouth. The cleverest of them all would not have dropped his bowl of soup to recover the liberty of the Republic of Plato. The tyrants made bountiful donations of wheat, of wine and corn. Whereupon the cry went up lustily—*Long live the King!* The dullards did not realize they were receiving but a small portion of what belonged to them, and that even the portion which they received the tyrant would not have it to give, but for his first having taken it away from themselves."

"The cleverest of them all would not have dropped his bowl of soup to recover the Republic," repeated Captain Mirant. "The fact is shockingly, distressfully true! Men become animals when they sacrifice everything to perverse instincts and vulgar appetites. Nevertheless, a curse upon all tyrants! It is they who incite these very appetites, in order to rule the heart through the stomach, and the mind through the eyes, by attracting the peoples to tourneys, tilts and such other pageants, amusements that are but disgraceful badges of servitude, and must be paid for by the fruit of the labor of the slaves themselves!"

"Go to, poor Jacques Bonhomme!" added the Franc-Taupin. "Fill up your paunch, but bend your back! Pay for the gala! Gnaw at the bones cast to you, and cry 'Thanks!' Oh, if only you knew! If only you wanted to! With one shake of your shoulders, both the tyrants and their cohorts would be thrown to the ground!"

"No! No!" interjected Antonicq. "Do not imagine that our tyrants Catherine De Medici and Charles IX are defended mainly by the arquebusiers of their bodyguards,

their light mounted horse and their footmen in arms! Not at all! Just listen to this passage from La Boetie's book:

"I shall now touch upon a point that is the secret spring of the sway, the support and the foundation of tyranny. He who imagines that the halberdiers of the guard constitute the safety and the bulwark of tyrants is, I hold, greatly in error. No; it is not arms that defend a tyrant. At first blush the point may not be granted, nevertheless it is true. It is only four or five men among his accomplices who uphold a tyrant and who keep the country in servitude to him. It has ever been only five or six who have a tyrant's ear, and are invited by him to be the accomplices of his cruelties, the sharers in his amusements, the go-betweens in his debaucheries, the co-partners in his plunder. these five or six hundred have, in turn, under them five or six who are to them what they themselves are to the tyrant—and these five or six hundred have, in turn, under them five or six thousand thieves among whom they have caused the government of the provinces and the administration of the funds to be distributed, in order that they may cater to the avarice and the cruelty of the tyrant, in order that they may promptly execute his orders, and be ready to do so much mischief that they can hold their places only under the shadow of his authority, nor be able to escape the just punishment of their offences but through him. Wide and long is the train that follows these latter ones. Whoever cares to amuse himself in tracing the threads of this woof will see that, not the six thousand only, but hundreds of thousands, aye millions depend through that cord upon the tyrant, who, with the aid of the same, can (as Jupiter boasts in Homer) pull over to himself all the gods by pulling at the chain."

“Well put! Never before has the centralized power of royalty, that fearful engine of tyranny, been more lucidly laid bare!” cried Captain Mirant. “I am more and more convinced—the federation of the provinces, each independent as to itself, but mutually united by the common bond of their common interests, like the Republic of the Swiss cantons, is the sole guarantee of freedom. COMMUNE AND FEDERATION!”

“Now,” said Antonicq, “do not fail to admire the penetration with which Estienne of La Boetie traces back the secret punishment that is visited upon tyrants, and the awful consequences of tyranny itself. He says:

“From the moment a King has declared himself a tyrant, then, not merely a swarm of thieves and skip-jacks, but all those who are moved by ardent ambition, or overpowering greed, gather around him, and assist him in order to have a share in the booty, and to be, under the great tyrant, petty tyrants themselves. Thus it happens with highwaymen and pirates. One set holds the roads, the other rifles the travelers; one set lies in ambush, the other is on the watch; one set massacres, the other plunders.

“Hence it comes that the tyrant is never loved, and never loves. Friendship is a sacred gift, a holy boon! It never exists but among honorable people, it never arises but through mutual esteem. It is preserved, not so much through gifts as by upright conduct. That which makes one friend feel sure of another is the knowledge he has of the other’s integrity. The security he holds from his friend is the latter’s good character, his faith, his constancy. No friendship can exist where cruelty, disloyalty and injustice hold sway. When malignant people meet, they meet to plot, not for companionship! They do not mutually aid

if they mutually fear one another. They are not friends, they are accomplices in crime and felony.

“This is the reason why, as the saying goes, there is honor among thieves at the distribution of the booty. They supplement one another, and they are unwilling, by falling out, to reduce their strength.

“In that begins the punishment of tyrants. When they die, their execrated name is blackened by the ink of a thousand pens, their reputation is torn to shreds; even their bones, pilloried by posterity, chastise them for their wicked lives. Let us then learn to be upright; let us raise our eyes to heaven; let us implore it to bestow upon us the love of virtue. As to me, meseems nothing is so contrary to God as tyranny, and that He reserves for tyrants some special chastisement.”

“Oh, my children!” exclaimed Odelin’s widow, “that book which breathes such hatred for tyranny and such generous indignation towards cowards that one must doubt divine justice if he can lightly submit to iniquity;—that book, every page of which bears the imprint of the love of virtue and the execration of evil;—that book should be placed in the hands of every lad about to enter manhood. It would be a wholesome and strong nourishment to their souls. From it they would gather a horror for that cowardly and blind voluntary servitude, and then all, in the name of justice, of human dignity, of right, and of honesty, would rise *Against-One*, the title of those sublime pages, and they would proclaim everywhere—Commune and Federation!”

“But, aunt,” timidly suggested Cornelia, “should not

that book be also for girls who reach maturity? They become wives and mothers. Should not they also be nourished in the love of justice and in the abhorrence of tyranny, to the end that they may bring up their children to virile principles, regain for woman equal rights with man, and share both the self-denial and the dangers of their husbands when the hour of battle and of sacrifice shall have come?"

Cornelia looked so beautiful as she gave utterance to these patriotic sentiments that all the members of the Lebrenn family turned their eyes admiringly toward the young girl.

"Oh, my brave one!" exclaimed Antonicq, rising and taking Cornelia's hands in his own with a transport of love. "How proud I am of your love! What generous duties does it not impose upon me! Well, it is to be tomorrow—the happy day for you and me—the day when we are to be joined in wedlock!"

Hardly had Antonicq finished his sentence when the tramp of a horse's hoofs was heard in the street. It stopped at the armorer's door. Theresa Rennepont rose with a start, and ran to the door crying: "My husband!"

CHAPTER VIII.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S NIGHT.

The presentiment of the young wife did not deceive her. The door opened and Theresa fell into the arms of Louis Rennepont.

The joy of the Lebrenn family over the return of one of its members from a distant journey dominated at first all other feelings and thoughts. Immediately after the first outpourings of affection the same question escaped at once from all lips:

“What tidings from Paris, and about Admiral Coligny?”

Alas! it was only then that the members of the Lebrenn family noticed the profound alteration of Louis Rennepont's appearance, and his wife, who had been scrutinizing the young man's face with eager and uneasy curiosity, suddenly cried:

“Great God! Louis, your hair has turned grey!”

Indeed, when Louis Rennepont left La Rochelle towards the end of the previous month, not a thread of silver whitened his raven locks. Now they were streaked with broad bands of grey! He seemed to have aged ten years. Such a change must have been produced by some terrible and sudden emotion. Theresa's exclamation was followed by

a mournful silence. All eyes were fixed upon Louis Rennepont with increasing anxiety. He answered his wife with a trembling voice:

“Yes, Theresa; yes, my friends; my hair turned grey in one night—the night before St. Bartholomew’s day—the night of the 23d of this month of August, of this year, 1572!”

And still shuddering with terror, his chest convulsed with repressed sobs, the young man hid his face in his hands and muttered: “My God! My God!”

Presently the young man recovered sufficient composure to proceed.

“Do you all remember,” he said, solemnly addressing the stupefied members of his family, “the infernal scheme of Catherine De Medici that our poor Anna Bell overheard during the Queen’s conversation with Loyola’s disciple Lefevre at the Abbey of St. Severin?”

“Great God!” cried Antonicq. “The scheme of massacring all the Protestants, disarmed by the peace?”

“The massacre, begun in Paris under my own eyes, during the night before St. Bartholomew,” answered Louis Rennepont with an effort, “that massacre is proceeding at this very hour in almost all the large cities of France!”

“Oh!” exclaimed Captain Mirant. “In sight of such a stupendous crime one’s head is seized with vertigo—one is not certain of himself—one asks himself whether he is awake, or dreams.”

“By my sister’s death! We are not dreaming!” ejaculated the Franc-Taupin. “Friends, if we look down at a stream running under our feet, it often happens that, for

a moment, our head turns. That is what we are now experiencing. We see at our feet a torrent flowing, a torrent of blood—the blood of our brothers!”

“A curse upon my head,” thundered the boilermaker Barbot, raising his clenched fist to the ceiling, “if the blood of the Catholics does not run, if not in torrents, at least drop by drop, before La Rochelle! Let them come and attack us!”

“They will come,” put in Captain Mirant. “They are surely on the march now! Our ramparts shall be our grave! God be thanked, we shall not be slaughtered like cattle in the shambles! We shall die like men!”

Cornelia, pale and motionless like a statue of sorrow, her arms crossed over her palpitating bosom, and her face bathed in tears, remained in mute consternation until this moment. The girl now took two steps towards her betrothed and said to him in a trembling voice:

“Antonicq, to-morrow we were to be married—people in mourning do not marry. From this instant I wear mourning for our brothers, massacred on St. Bartholomew's night! A woman owes obedience to her husband, according to our laws—iniquitous, degrading laws! I wish to remain free until after the war.”

“Cornelia, the hour of sacrifices has sounded,” answered Antonicq with a trembling voice; “my courage shall vie with yours.”

“We have paid our tribute to human weakness,” observed Odelin's widow, smothering a sob; “let us now bravely face the magnitude of the disaster that has smitten

our cause. Louis, we listen to your account of St. Bartholomew's night."

"When a few weeks ago I left for Paris, I concluded I would, in passing through Poitiers, Angers and Orleans, visit several of our pastors in order to ascertain whether they also shared our apprehensions. Some I found completely set at ease by the loyal execution of the last edict, above all by the certainty of the marriage of Henry of Bearn with the sister of Charles IX. They looked upon this as a pledge of the good intentions of the King, and of the end of the religious conflicts. Other pastors, on the contrary, felt vaguely uneasy. Being convinced that Joan of Albert was poisoned by Catherine De Medici, they saw with no little apprehension what they considered the heedless confidence that Admiral Coligny placed in the court. But in short, the vast majority of our brothers felt perfectly at ease.

"Immediately upon my arrival at Paris I proceeded to Bethisy Street, the residence of Admiral Coligny. I expressed to him the fears that agitated the Rochelois concerning his life, so precious to our cause, and their mistrust of Charles IX and his mother. The Admiral's answer was: "The only thing that keeps me back at court is the almost positive prospect of Flanders and the Low Countries rising against the bloodthirsty tyranny of Philip II. Only the support of France could insure the success of the revolt. If those rich industrial provinces secede from Spain, they will be the promised land to our brothers. These will find there a refuge, not as to-day, behind

the ramparts of a very few cities of safety, but either in the Walloon provinces, which will have become French territory under solid guarantees for their freedom, or in the Low Countries, which will be federated upon a republican plan, in imitation of the Swiss cantons, under the protectorate of the Prince of Nassau. By family tradition, and on principle, I am attached to the monarchic form of government. But I am well aware that many of our brothers, you of La Rochelle among them, shocked at the crimes of the reigning house, are strongly inclined towards a republic. To these, the federation of the Low Countries, should the same be established, will offer a form of government to their taste.' 'But, Admiral,' I replied, 'suppose our suspicions prove true, and the help that the King and his mother have so long been holding out the prospect of proves to be but a lure to hide some new trap?' 'I do not think so,' rejoined Admiral Coligny, 'although it may be. One must be ready for anything from Catherine De Medici and her son.' 'But,' I cried, 'Admiral, how can you, despite such doubts entertained by yourself, remain here at court, among your mortal enemies! Do you take no precautions to protect yourself against a possible, if not probable, act of treachery?' 'My friend,' was the Admiral's reply given in a grave and melancholy tone, 'for long years I have conducted that sort of war which, above all others, is the most frightful and atrocious—civil war. It inspires me with insurmountable horror. An uprising in Flanders and the Low Countries offers me the means of putting an end to the shedding of French blood and of

13th of August—and on the night of the 23rd the massacre of our brothers took place!”

“Oh, these Kings!” exclaimed Marcienne, raising her eyes to heaven. “These Kings! The sweat of our brows no longer suffices to slake their thirst. They are glutted with that—they now joke preparatorily to murder!”

“By my sister’s death!” shouted the Franc-Taupin, furiously. “The Admiral must have been smitten with blindness. Acquainted as he was from a long and bitter experience with that tyrant whelp, that tiger cub, how is it he did not take warning from the double sense that the King’s words carried! What imprudence!”

“Alas, far from it!” said Louis Rennepont. “In answer to the remarks I made to him, calling his attention to the suspiciousness of the King’s words, a suspiciousness rendered all the more glaring by reason of the tyrant’s character, the Admiral merely replied: ‘If they are after my life, would they not long ago have killed me, in the course of these six months that I have been at court?’ ‘But monsieur,’ I observed, ‘it is not your life only that is threatened; they probably aim also at the lives of all our Protestant leaders. Our enemies rely upon your example, upon your presence at court, and upon the festivities of the marriage of Henry of Bearn, to attract our principal men to Paris—then to strike them all down at the giving of a signal, and to massacre the rest of our brothers all over France. Do you forget the scheme that Catherine De Medici talked over with the Jesuit Lefevre?’ ‘No, no, my friend,’ he replied serenely, ‘my heart and my judgment

refuse to believe such a monstrous plan possible; it exceeds the bounds of human wickedness. The most reckless tyrants, whose names have caused the earth to grow pale, never dreamed of anything even remotely approaching such a horrible crime—it would be nameless!”

“That crime now has a name—it is called ‘St. Bartholomew’s Night’!” said Cornelia with a shudder. “What will be the name of the vengeance?”

“Mayhap the vengeance will be called the ‘Siege of La Rochelle’!” answered Captain Mirant, the girl’s father. “Our walls are strong, and resolute are our hearts.”

“The war will be a bloody one!” interjected Master Barbot the boilermaker.

Louis Rennepont proceeded with his narrative: “I left Admiral Coligny, unable to awaken his suspicions. He went to his Chatillon home, spent two days in that retreat so beloved of him, and returned to Paris on the 17th of August, the eve of the marriage of Henry of Bearn and Princess Marguerite. The union of a Protestant Prince with a Catholic Princess, in which so many of us saw the end of the religious struggles, drew to Paris almost all the Protestant leaders. I shall mention, among those whom I visited, Monsieur La Rochefoucauld, Monsieur La Force, and brave Colonel Piles. Apprehending no treason, they all shared the expectations of Coligny with respect to the revolt in the Low Countries. The feeling of safety that prevailed among my brothers gained upon me also. The marriage of Henry of Bearn and Princess Marguerite took place on the 18th of this month. From that day to the

21st there was a perpetual round of splendid festivities and general merrymaking at court and in the city. I took up my lodgings at the sign of the Swan, on St. Thomas-of-the-Louvre Street, not far from the residence of Monsieur Coligny. The innkeeper was of our people. On the 22d he came to my room at about nine in the morning and said to me with surprise not unmixed with alarm: 'Something strange is going on. I just learned that the provosts of each quarter of the city are going from house to house inquiring about the religion of the tenants, and noting down the Huguenots. The reason given is that a general census of the population is wanted. Subsequently,' the innkeeper proceeded to say, 'the regiment of the Arquebusiers of the Guard entered Paris. Finally, I learn that last night a large number of arms, especially cutlasses and daggers, were transported to the City Hall. I received this information from my niece. She is a Catholic and a chamber maid of the Duchess of Nevers. The taking of a list of the Huguenots in town, the arrival of a whole regiment of Arquebusiers of the Guard, and finally the conveying of such large stores of arms to the City Hall, seem to me to foreshadow some plot against the Protestants. I wish you would notify the Admiral of these occurrences.' The innkeeper's advice seemed wise to me. I hastened to Bethisy Street and knocked at the Admiral's house. He was not home. As was his habit, he had departed early in the morning to the Louvre. His old equerry Nicholas Mouche, to whom I imparted some of my information, seemed not a little startled. We agreed to proceed to the

entrance of the palace and wait for the Admiral. We were passing by the cloister of St. Germain-L'Auxerois, where several houses were in the course of construction, when we caught sight of Coligny returning on foot and followed by two of his serving men. He was reading a letter, and walked slowly. We hastened our steps to meet him. Suddenly we were blinded by the flash of a firearm, fired from the ground floor window of one of the houses contiguous to the cloister. Nicholas Mouche rushed to his master, screaming: 'Help! The Admiral is assassinated! Help! Help!'

A cry of horror leaped from the lips of all the members of the Lebrenn family, who followed breathlessly the report of Louis Rennepont. Captain Mirant exclaimed:

"Murder and treason! To kill that great man in such a way! Vengeance! Vengeance!"

"No," put in Louis Rennepont with a painful effort. "Monsieur Coligny, killed by a bullet, would at least have met a soldier's death. I followed close upon the heels of Nicholas Mouche and reached him at the moment when Coligny, pale but calm, pointed to the window from which the shot was fired, and said: 'The shot came from there.' The arquebus was loaded with two balls. One carried off the Admiral's left thumb, while the other lodged in his arm near the elbow. Weakened by the loss of blood, that ran profusely, Coligny said to Nicholas Mouche: 'If I leaned upon your arm I could walk to my house—proceed!' In fact, he walked home. Several Protestant officers happened to be not far behind. Upon learning of the crime

that was committed, they forced their way into the house where the would-be assassin had lain in ambush. They were informed that he fled through a rear door, where a saddled horse, held by a page in the Guise livery, stood waiting for him. Their searches proved vain. No trace of the assassin could they find."

"The Guises! Always the Guisards, either directly guilty, or the accomplices of assassins!" exclaimed Odelin's widow with a shudder. "With how much blood have not those Lorraine Princes reddened their hands since the butcheries of Vassy! But did Monsieur Coligny's wound prove fatal?"

"No, unfortunately for the Admiral—because the very next day—" Louis Rennepont broke off suddenly. "Do you want to know, mother, whether the Guises were accomplices in the attempted murder upon the Admiral? Yes, they had their hands in that fresh misdeed, at the instigation of the Queen-mother. And here a plot begins to unroll itself, the deep villainy of which would seem incredible if Catherine De Medici and her son were not known. Presently I shall tell you from whom I have my information; it is reliable. In line with the conversation which she had with the Jesuit Lefevre, and which Anna Bell overheard, Catherine De Medici hated and feared the Guises no less than she did the Admiral. Her scheme was to cause the Admiral to be assassinated by the Guises; then to rid herself of them through the Protestants; and finally to rid herself of the Protestants by the King's soldiers. Does such an infernal combination seem impracticable to

you? Well, it came near succeeding. This was the plot: The Guises continued to slander the Admiral by accusing him of having suborned Poltrot who killed Francis of Guise at the siege of Orleans; the old family hatred burned as implacable as ever. On the day after the marriage of Henry of Bearn, the Queen and her son Charles IX said with much unction to Henry of Guise that, in order to preserve the confidence of the Huguenots and the Admiral, it was necessary to seem to give him a pledge of reconciliation, to request of him that the flames of hatred, so long burning in the breasts of the two families, be extinguished, and to offer him the hand of friendship. All the more reassured by the cordial advance, the Admiral was expected to be thrown still more off his guard, and his assassination was considered all the more certain! The Queen offered for the deed a man after her own and the King's heart—Maurevert, surnamed the 'King's Killer,' since his assassination of brave Mouy, a crime for which the felon received the collar of the Order of St. Michael. The Queen's advice was relished. Young Guise gave his hand to the old Admiral, and two days later Monsieur Coligny, on his return from the Louvre, received a load of arquebus shot from—Maurevert!"

Louis Rennepont stopped for a moment, and then proceeded amid the profound silence of the family:

"By wounding, instead of killing Coligny, the 'King's Killer' ruined the project of the Queen and her son. They had counted upon the murder of the Admiral to incite a great tumult in Paris; their agents were to scatter among

the mob the information that the heinous murder was the work of the Guisards; the exasperated Huguenots were expected to run to arms and avenge Coligny's death with the massacre of the whole Guise family and their partisans; that done, the royal troops were in turn to overwhelm the Protestants, on the pretext of being guilty of a flagrant breach of the edict of pacification. The last massacre was to extend from Paris all over France, under the guise of a vindication of the outraged edict of pacification. Machiavelli could not have plotted better. The arquebus shot of Maurevert would have rid Charles IX at once of Coligny, the Guises and the Protestants. The 'King's Killer' having missed fire, another course had to be pursued, and, above all, the reformers had to be convinced that Maurevert's attempt was merely an act of individual vengeance. Accordingly Charles IX hastened to the Admiral's residence. The tiger-cub wept. He called the old Admiral his 'good father.' He promised, 'upon the word of a King, however high the station of the would-be murderers, they should not escape just punishment.' I was an eye-witness of those tears and royal protestations; many of our brothers, myself among them, remained near the bed where Coligny lay while awaiting the surgeon. We were present at that interview with Charles IX—"

"Then you saw him, Louis, that tiger with the face of a man?" asked Cornelia with a curiosity born of disgust and horror. "How does the monster look?"

"Pale and atrabilious of face, with dull, glassy eyes, and a sleepy look, as if the fervent Catholic and crowned

murderer were ever dreaming of crime," answered Louis Rennepont. "Now watch the sanguinary craftiness of that pupil of Machiavelli's, to whom neither pledge nor oath is aught but a more effective form of perfidy. Would you believe it, that after having expressed sympathy for the wounds of his 'good father,' and after having pledged his royal word to secure justice, the first words of Charles IX were: 'I shall forthwith issue orders to close the gates of Paris, so that none shall leave the city; the murderer will not be able to flee. Moreover, I authorize, or rather I strongly urge the Protestant seigneurs, to whom I have offered the hospitality of the Louvre during the nuptial festivals of my sister Margot, to summon their friends near them for safeguard.'"

"I perceive the trick of the tiger," broke in Captain Mirant. "By closing the gates of Paris he prevented the escape of the Huguenots whom he had consigned to death!"

"No doubt," added Master Barbot the boilermaker, "the same as by inducing the Protestant seigneurs, who were lodged at the Louvre, to summon their friends to them, Charles IX only aimed at having them more ready at hand for his butchers!"

"The issue proved that such were the secret designs of the King," replied Louis Rennepont. "But haste was urgent. If tidings of the attempted murder of the Admiral reached the provinces, the Huguenots would be put on their guard. The Queen assembled her council that very night, and presided at its meeting. These were the members at the council: The King Charles IX; his brother,

the Duke of Anjou; the Bastard of Angouleme; the Duke of Nevers; Birago and Gondi, the Queen's messengers of evil. It was decided that the butchery should start at early dawn. The provosts of the merchants, all exemplary Catholics, had, under pretext of taking a general census, drawn up full lists of all the Huguenots in the city. Their places of residence being thus accurately indicated, the assassins would know exactly where to go. The next question that came up was whether Henry of Bearn also was to be killed. Catherine De Medici and her son, the King, were strongly in favor, and urged the necessity of the murder. The other councillors, however, more scrupulous than their monarchs, objected that the whole world would be shocked at the assassination of a Prince whose throat was cut, so to say, under the very eyes of the mother and brother of his wife. Moreover, the young Prince was lightheaded, unsteady of purpose, they thought, and without any rooted religious belief. It would be easy, they concluded, either by means of promises or threats to cause him to abjure the Reformed religion. The death of the Prince of Condé was also long discussed. Twice the decision was in favor. But his brother-in-law, the Duke of Nevers, saved him by guaranteeing the Prince's abjuration. For the rest, the lad, only the rallying ground of the Huguenots and without personal valor, inspired but little fear, especially if compared with Coligny. Towards one o'clock in the morning, the young Duke of Guise was summoned to the Louvre and introduced to the council. The principal leadership of the carnage was offered to and ac-

cepted by him. A strange thing happened. At the last moment, Charles IX was assailed by some slight qualms of conscience at the thought of the murder of the Admiral, the old man whom that very morning he had addressed with the title of 'my good father.' But the King's hesitance was shortlived. His last words were: 'By the death of God! Seeing you think the Admiral should be killed, I will it, too; but I demand that all the Huguenots be killed, all, to the last one, that there may not be one left alive to reproach me with the Admiral's death!'

"Oh, just God!" exclaimed Odelin's widow, raising her hands to heaven. "Since you consented to the unheard-of deed, Oh, God of Vengeance, You must have reserved some frightful punishment for him! Oh, You gave Your consent to that palace plot! to that nocturnal council! There Charles IX, armed with sovereign power, and certain of the ferocious obedience of his soldiers and his minions, like an assassin in ambush in the edge of a forest, laid in the dark the infamous, bloody and cowardly trap into which, when they awoke, so many of our brothers, who went to sleep confiding in the law, in their right and in the oath of that Prince, fell to their death! How many times did he not swear in the presence of God and man to respect the edict of peace! Yes, You allowed those horrors, O, God of Vengeance, to the end that this Frankish royalty and the Roman Church, its eternal accomplice, soon may fall under the general execration that the massacre of St. Bartholomew will arouse! Death to Kings! Death to their infamous accomplices, the nobles and priests!"

The Lebrenn family joined with hearts and lips in the widow's imprecations. When the excitement again subsided Louis Rennepont proceeded:

“Before retiring that night to my inn, I walked through a large number of streets. At least in appearance they were quiet. I met many of our brothers. Alarmed at the attempted murder of the Admiral, several had tried to leave Paris. They found the gates rigorously closed by orders of Charles IX. Back at night in my inn, I did not find the keeper, upon whom I relied for further information. Broken with fatigue and agitated by vague fears, I threw myself in my clothes upon my bed and fell asleep. At about three in the morning I was awakened by my innkeeper. He was trembling with terror. ‘The death of all the Protestants of Paris is decreed,’ he whispered to me; ‘the massacre is to begin at daybreak. My niece, the chambermaid of the Duchess of Nevers, overheard some words about the plot; she hastened to warn me. I have notified all our brothers who are lodged here. They have all fled. Your only chance to escape the carnage is to join the first gang of the cut-throats whom you may run across; you must pretend to be of them; you may in that way be able to reach some place of safety. For a sign among themselves they have a white paper cross attached to their hats, and a white shirt sleeve slipped like an arm-let over the sleeve of their coats. Their password is: “God and the King!” Flee! Flee! May the Lord protect you! Thanks to my niece I have a safe retreat in the palace of Nevers.’ While the innkeeper was giving me these last

directions, there came through my window, which I had left open on that hot and sultry night of August, the measured tintinnabulation of the large bell in the tower of the palace. The sound seemed to leap strangely from the depths of the silence in which the city was shrouded. 'It is the signal for the massacre!' cried my innkeeper, leaving the room precipitately and whispering his last warnings to me: 'Flee! You have not a minute to spare; my house is marked! It will be instantly assaulted by the butchers!'

"Great God!" cried Theresa, Louis Rennepont's young wife, pressing her child distractedly to her breast, and unable to hold back her tears. And addressing her husband: "You are here, near us, safe and sound, poor friend! and yet I shiver. I weep at the thought of the cruel agonies that you must have undergone. Did you follow the innkeeper's advice, and assume the signs of the Catholics?"

"It was my only safety. I cut a cross of white paper and stuck it in my hat; I cut off a shirt sleeve and thrust my right arm through it; I then sallied out into the street. It was still silent and deserted. But the funeral knell from all the Paris churches had by that time joined the clangor of the tower bell, which then was ringing at its loudest. Windows were thrown open. Little by little lights appeared in them."

"Malediction upon the people of Paris!" cried Odelin's widow. "It seems most of them were accomplices in the butchery!"

"Alas, yes, mother! To their eternal shame, the fact

must be admitted; the people of Paris were the accomplices of Charles IX, and our butchers! The people and a considerable portion of the bourgeoisie, being drugged by the fanaticism of the monks, did take part in the massacre. Some, yielding to the fear of being suspected, obeyed the orders of the provosts, and placed lights at their windows at the sound of the first strokes of the bells that they heard. My first thought was to run to the residence of the Admiral and notify him of the projected butchery. As I entered Bethisy Street I saw men emerging from several houses; all carried white crosses in their hats and their arms in shirt sleeves. They brandished pikes, swords and cutlasses, and cried: 'God and the King! Kill! Kill all the Huguenots!' They then gathered into groups, drew themselves up before certain doors that bore the mark of a cross in white chalk, beat upon and broke them down, and rushed in yelling: 'Kill! Kill the Huguenots!'

'I was rushing towards the residence of the Admiral when I saw a battalion of Arquebusiers of the Guard turn into Bethisy Street. The troop was headed by the young Duke Henry of Guise, accompanied by his uncle Aumale and the Bastard of Angouleme, brother of Charles IX. All three were clad in war armor. Pages carrying lighted torches preceded them. Among the soldiers were interspersed a large number of Catholic cut-throats, recognizable by the signs which I also wore. I mixed with them. The crowd arrived before Coligny's residence. The soldiers knocked at the main door with the butts of their arquebuses. It was instantly opened. Despite the prompt

obedience shown, all the serving-men of Coligny found in the corridor and the yard were promptly done to death. The Guises and the Bastard of Angouleme, surrounded by their pages, remained outside in front of the facade of the house at the foot of the porch, the stairs of which led to the vestibule. Duke Henry of Guise made a sign; instantly his equerry Besmes, followed by Captains Cosseins, Cardillac, Altain and Petrucci, rushed forward with a detachment of soldiers and dashed up the stairs to the first floor, on which the Admiral's room was. I realized the Admiral was lost, and remained unobserved below among the Catholics, where the details of the murder were soon reported. Awakened by the outcry of his servants, and the tumult on the street, the Admiral guessed the fate that awaited him. His faithful Nicholas Mouche and Pastor Merlin were with him. They had watched all night at his bedside. 'Our hour has come; let us commend our souls to God!' said Coligny, with which words he rose from his bed, threw a morning gown over his shoulders and knelt down. The minister and his old servant knelt down beside him. The three began to pray. The door was broken in. Besmes, the equerry of Henry of Guise, was the first to enter, sword in hand, leading in his captains. He walked straight to Coligny, who, having finished his prayer was rising from the floor serene and dignified. 'Is it you who are the Admiral?' shouted Besmes; 'Well, you shall die!' 'The will of God be done! Young man, you shorten my life only a few days,' answered Coligny. These were that great man's last words. Besmes seized him by

the throat with one hand, and with the other thrust his sword through him. The old man sank on his knees. Captain Cardillac threw him down, and opened his throat with one slash of his dagger. The other officers despatched Merlin and Nicholas Mouche.

“I had remained below. There I witnessed an even more execrable scene. Only a minute or two after the murderers had rushed upstairs, the Duke of Guise stepped closer to the facade of the house and called out impatiently in a ringing voice: ‘Well, Besmes! Is it done?’ Thereupon a casement was thrown open on the first floor; the equerry appeared at the window holding his bloody sword in his hand, and answered: ‘Yes, monseigneur! It is done! He is dead!’ ‘Then throw the corpse down to us that we may see it!’ commanded Henry of Guise. Besmes vanished, and reappeared dragging, with the aid of Captain Cosseins, the corpse of Admiral Coligny; the two raised it—meseems I still behold the grey head of the venerable old man, pale and limp, as the body was pushed out of the window, with his lifeless arms swinging in space. Besmes and the captain made a final effort; the corpse was precipitated upon the pavement, where it rolled down at the feet of the Duke of Guise. Coligny was clad only in the morning gown that he had hurriedly put on. Thus half-naked and still warm he was hurled out of the window. The venerable head rebounded upon the cobblestones and reddened them with blood. The victim had fallen on his face. The Duke of Guise stooped down, and, aided by the Bastard of Angouleme, turned the corpse

over on its back, wiped with his sash the blood that covered the Admiral's august visage, contemplated it for a moment with ferocious glee, and then kicked the white head with the tip of his boot, crying: 'At last! Dead at last—thoroughly dead!' The Duke then turned to his henchmen: 'Comrades, let us proceed with our work! The Pope wills it! the King so orders it!' Almost fainting with sickening horror and unable to move, I witnessed this cannibal scene—it was only the prelude for another and still more horrifying one. The Dukes of Guise and of Aumale and the Bastard of Angouleme departed with their soldiers from Monsieur Coligny's courtyard. Almost immediately the same was invaded by a band of men, women and children in rags. They were a troop hideous to look upon, as they brandished their sticks, butcher knives and iron bars, under the leadership of a Cordelier monk who held a jagged cutlass in one hand and a crucifix in the other, yelling at the top of his voice: 'God and the King!' The howlings of the mob kept time to the monk's yells. Two men with hang-dog looks carried torches before the monk. The moment that he recognized the corpse of our martyr, the Cordelier emitted a screech of infernal glee, threw himself upon the lifeless body of the Admiral, squatted down upon its chest, sawed at the neck with his cutlass, severed the head from the trunk, seized it by its grey locks, and held it up to the mob, crying in a resonant, though cracked voice: 'This is the share of the

Holy Father! I shall send him Coligny's head to Rome!"¹—That monk," added Louis Rennepont in a tremulous voice, and answering a cry of execration that leaped from the hearts of his listeners, "that monk, O shame and O misfortune!—that monk was the assassin of Odelin! Oh, may God have pity upon us!"

"Fra Hervé!" exclaimed all the members of the Lebreun family in chorus. A silence of terror and horror reigned in the armorer's hall.

"I wish to come quickly to an end with these monstrosities," proceeded Louis Rennepont, catching his voice. "After the tiger come the jackals, after the ferocious beasts the unclean ones. Hardly had Fra Hervé severed the Admiral's head from his trunk, amid the hideous acclamations of the ragged crew, when they fell upon the corpse. Its feet and hands were cut off. The entrails were torn out of the abdomen and were struggled for by the human jackals. The sacrilegious mutilations seemed to go beyond the boundaries of the horrible, and yet the limit was not reached. Women, veritable furies, pounced upon the bleeding limbs, and—but I dare say no more before mother, or before Cornelia, nor before you, my wife. The stentorian voice of Fra Hervé finally silenced the tumult and quelled the anthropophagous orgie. 'Brothers!' he cried, 'to the Pope I shall send the head of this Huguenot carrion, but let us carry the stripped carcass to the gibbet of Montfau-

¹ It is certain that Admiral Coligny's head departed for Rome; whether it ever arrived there is not known. Mandelot, the Governor of Lyons, acknowledged receipt of a letter from Charles IX

ordering the nobleman "to arrest the carrier of the head, and to take the same away from him."—Extracts from the correspondence of Mandelot, published by M. Paulin, Paris, 1845, p. 119.

con! It is there that should be exposed the remains of the villain who has infested France with his heresy, and lacerated the bosom of our holy mother the Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church!’ ‘To Montfaucon with the Huguenot carrion!’ howled the ferocious band. A procession was improvised. Fra Hervé sheathed his cutlass, planted the Admiral’s head on the point of a pike, and raised the trophy in one hand. In the other he waved aloft his crucifix, and, lighted by his two torch-bearers, headed the procession. The now shapeless remnants of the corpse were tied to a rope, a team of cut-throats harnessed to it, and the bloody lump was dragged through the gutters. The procession marched to the cry of ‘To Montfaucon with the Huguenot carrion! God and the King!’ At that moment, and despite the terror that held me rooted to the ground, my innkeeper’s last suggestions occurred to me. Montfaucon was situated outside of the walls of Paris. No doubt some city gate would be opened to the Cordelier’s band. I joined it, in the hope of escaping from Paris. We left the courtyard of Monsieur Coligny’s house. It was now broad day. Before proceeding to Montfaucon, Fra Hervé wished to exhibit his bloody trophy to the eyes of Charles IX and his mother. We directed our course to the Louvre. Other scenes of carnage were taking place there. The Protestant seigneurs and officers who came in the suite of the Princes of Bearn and Condé to participate in the wedding festivities of the King’s sister, were lodged at the palace. Relying upon the royal hospitality, they were taken by surprise while asleep, dragged half naked to the

courtyard, and there either brained or stabbed to death. Among others whom I recognized at a distance were Morge, Pardillan, St. Martin, besides the brave veterans Piles, Baudine and Puy-Vaud. They struggled in their shirts against the soldiers who beat them down with their halberds, and then stripped the corpses of their last shreds of clothing. The moanings, the imprecations of the victims, the streams of steaming blood through which we tramped, and that often reached our ankles, made my head reel. The butchers laid the corpses out in rows in front of the facade of the Louvre. The bodies were yet warm; many a bloody limb still seemed to palpitate; the corpses lay stripped naked, upon their backs. I counted over four hundred. Suddenly there appeared Catherine De Medici accompanied by her maids of honor and other ladies of the court. She mounted a terrace from which a full sight of the carnage could be had. They came—”

Louis Rennepont stopped short. He hid his face in his hands. “Alas! I have to inform you of something still more horrible than anything I have yet said! The furies who profaned the corpse of Coligny were beings, who, depraved by misery and ignorance, and besotted by a brutish paganism, yielded obedience to fanatic promptings. But Catherine De Medici and the women of her suite were brought up in the splendors of court life, and yet they came to mock and insult the bodies of the dead. And would you believe it—” but again Louis Rennepont found it impossible to proceed. “No!” he cried; “I shall not soil your ears with the nameless infamies of those worse

than harpies.¹ While Catherine De Medici, her maids of honor and a bevy of court ladies were amusing themselves on the terrace, Fra Hervé, still carrying Coligny's head on the point of the pike, addressed to the Queen a few words that I did not hear, my attention being at that moment diverted by the appearance of Charles IX at the balcony of one of the windows of the Louvre. The King held a long arquebus in his hand; a page carried another of identical shape and stood behind his master ready to pass it over to him. Suddenly I saw the King lower the arm, take aim, blow upon the fuse on the cock, approach it to the pan—and the shot departed. Charles IX raised his arquebus, looked into the distance, and started to laugh—pleased as a hunter who has brought down his game. The monster with a human face was firing upon the Huguenots who were fleeing from the butchery in the St. Germain quarter, and were attempting to escape death by swimming across the Seine.

“After haranguing Catherine De Medici, Fra Hervé resumed his march to Montfaucon at the head of his band, dragging behind them the now shapeless remains of the Admiral. I had to cross Paris almost from one end to the other in the wake of Fra Hervé's procession. In the course of the march my eyes encountered fresh horrors. We ran across Marshal Tavannes, the commander of the royal army at the battle of Roche-la-Belle. At the head of a

¹Out of respect for our female readers we dare not here quote the *Register Journal of L'Etoile*, page 81, where is found *in extenso* the conversation, marked by

a savage obscenity, between the Queen and the court ladies who accompanied her. The conversation is confirmed by all contemporaneous historians.

regiment of the guards he was urging his men and the mobs to massacre, shouting to them: 'Kill! Bleed them! Bleed them! A bleeding is good in August as well as in May!' And his men did the bleeding. They bled so well that the gutters ran no longer water but blood. The smoldering hatreds of neighbors against neighbors were now given a loose to, under the pretext of religious fervor. Among a thousand atrocities that I witnessed on that frightful day, I shall mention but one, because it exceeds any other that I have yet mentioned. When I first arrived in Paris, and despite the apprehensions that were uppermost on my mind, I often went to the lectures of the illustrious scientist Remus. The man's renown, he being one of the most celebrated professors at the University, besides enjoying the reputation of a foremost philanthropist of these days, attracted me. I found students, grown-up men and even greyheads crowding around his chair. Well, holding close to Fra Hervé's band, I passed by the house of Remus, which the cut-throats had invaded. A large concourse of people blocked our way, and interrupted our march for awhile. The mob clamored aloud for the life of the celebrated scientist. The most frantic in their cries for the murder were a bunch of pupils, between fourteen and fifteen years of age, whom two monks—a Carmelite and a Dominican—had in lead. The assassins finally pushed Remus, half naked, out of his house. The unhappy man, already wounded in many places, and blinded by the blood that streamed down his face, staggered like a drunken man, and held his hands before him. I see him yet—

he falls to the ground, they despatch him, and thereupon the pupils, boys yet, throw themselves upon the corpse of the scientist, rip his bowels open, tear out the steaming entrails, turn the body around, raise the bloody shirt that barely covered it, and thrash the corpse with its own intestines amid roars of laughter, while they shout: 'Remus has whipped enough of us, it is now our turn to whip him.'

"Fra Hervé's band again resumed its march. It arrived at one of the city gates that leads to the gibbet of Montfaucon. As I had hoped, the gate was thrown open before the Cordelier. I slackened my pace, fell to the rear of the procession, and, at the first practicable turn on the road, I jumped aside and blotted myself out of sight in a wheat field. The tall stalks concealed me completely. I waited till Fra Hervé's band was a safe distance away. I crept to the road that encircles the ramparts and towards sunset I arrived, worn out with fatigue, at an inn where I spent the night, giving myself out for a good Catholic. Early in the morning I started for Etampes. They had just finished the carnage when I arrived! It was still going on in Orleans when I passed that city. At Blois, at Angers, at Poitiers—the same massacres of our brothers. Thus, after long years of hypocrisy and craftiness, the pact of the triumvirate inspired by Francis of Guise, the butcher of Vassy, was finally carried out. Oh, my friends! Not for nothing did Catherine De Medici say to the Jesuit Lefevre: 'Induce the Holy Father and Philip II to be patient; let us lull the reformers with a false sense of safety; I shall hatch the bloody egg that the Guise laid—on one

day, at the same hour, the Huguenots will be exterminated in France.' The Italian woman kept her promise. The shell of the egg, nursed in her bosom, has broken, and the extermination has leaped out full armed."

Odelin's widow rose to her feet pale and stately. She raised one of her venerable hands to heaven, and with a gesture of malediction she uttered these words, solemnly, amidst the profound silence of her family:

"Be they eternally accursed of God and man, who, from this day or in the centuries to come, do not repudiate the Church of Rome, that infamous Church, the only Church that has ever given birth to such misdeeds!"

"By my sister's death!" cried the Franc-Taupin. "Shall the voice of Estienne of La Boetie be hearkened to at last? Shall we at last see *all* leagued *against one*? the oppressed, the artisans, the plebs, finally annihilate the oppressor and crush royalty?"

Hardly had the Franc-Taupin finished speaking when James Henry, the Mayor of La Rochelle, entered precipitately, and addressing Louis Rennepont, said: "My friend, the few words dropped by you to some of the people whom you met on your arrival, have flown from mouth to mouth and thrown the city into a state of alarm! Is it true that Monsieur Coligny has been assassinated?"

"Monsieur Coligny has been assassinated! All the Protestant leaders are murdered!" answered Louis Rennepont. "All the Protestants of Paris were massacred on St. Bartholomew's night! At Etampes, at Orleans, at Blois, at Tours, at Poitiers, the work of extermination is

still in progress. It was expected to steep in blood the rest of France as well. It is a fact!"

"To arms! And may the Lord protect us!" shouted James Henry vigorously. "Let us make ready for a desperate defense. La Rochelle is now the only safe city left to the Huguenots. Charles IX will not be long in laying siege to us. I shall order the belfry to ring. The City Council shall be in session within an hour. It shall proclaim La Rochelle in a state of danger. To arms! War to the knife against the King and his Catholics, against the assassins of our brothers! To arms!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE SIEGE OF LA ROCHELLE.

For the first time in their lives did Charles IX, his mother and her priests discover that there was a limit to endurance. The crime so long elaborated, so skilfully planned, and carried out with incredible audacity, so far from annihilating the Reformation gave it fresh life, steeled its nerves, and rendered it unconquerable. Hardly had two months elapsed since the massacres of St. Bartholomew, when, not Huguenots only, but a considerable portion of the Catholic party itself, in open revolt at the cruel excesses of the court, the fanaticism of the papacy and the subjection of France to the exactions of Philip II, took up arms, and made common cause with the Huguenots in order to bring about the triumph not only of the religious but of a political reformation also. The new adversaries of Charles IX and his mother took the name of the "Politicals." Alarmed at the renewed and more threatening attitude of the now so unexpectedly reinforced Huguenots, the King endeavored once more to beguile them with false promises. He doubled and twisted, sought to deal and compromise. It was too late. A fourth religious

war broke out. Several provinces federated together upon a republican plan. La Rochelle became the fortified center of the Protestants. Against that city Charles IX concentrated and directed all his forces in the course of the last month of the year 1572—less than six months after St. Bartholomew's night.

La Rochelle, situated at the further extremity of a wide and safe bay, presented the aspect of an elongated trapezium, the wide side of which was about three thousand feet in length, while the narrow one was only twelve hundred feet, and faced the sea. The city extended from northeast to southwest, and stretched between the salt marshes of Rompsai, Maubec and Tasdon, on the east, and those of the New Gate, on the west. These marshes, then partly dried or turned into meadows, were intersected by a large number of canals the locks of which enabled the land to be readily inundated, and presented an impassable barrier to any hostile force. The entrance of the port was at the center of the sea frontage, and at the further end of the bay. It was defended by the two large towers of Chainé and St. Nicholas, both built of brick, equipped with cannon, and also used for powder magazines. To the right and left of the two towers, and leaving between them the narrow port entrance, extended a wall made of cut stone which at high tide was washed by the waves. The wall reached, to the east, the St. Nicholas Gate, and, to the west, the Lantern Gate, at the summit of which was a beacon to guide the sailors by night. From that side the city was unapproachable by an armed force except along a narrow

tongue of land which joined the suburb of Tasdon with the St. Nicholas Gate. Furthermore, besides the water-filled fosse, Scipio Vergano, a skilful Italian engineer, employed by us, the Rochelois, had raised an additional protection to this gate by a sort of double counter-guard made of earth, and flanking the entrance of the port. The eastern front which extended from the St. Nicholas Gate to the Congues Gate, was along its whole extent but a poor wall, flanked by two round towers. It was one of the weak sides of our city. The western front ran in a straight line from the Lantern Tower to the bastion that we called the Bastion of the Evangelium. This portion of the fortifications consisted of a wall flanked by a large number of small and closely built towers, with occasional terraces. In the middle of this long line of defenses, which the large number of canals rendered almost unapproachable, Scipio Vergano cut the New Gate, flanked with a solid bastion. Finally the north front extended from the Bastion of the Evangelium to the Congues Gate, a distance of nearly two thousand five hundred feet. The left extremity of that vast and very vulnerable front was defended by the Bastion of the Evangelium, which was itself protected by a terrace of earth. In the center and the highest spot of the line rose the demi-bastion of the Old Fountain. True enough, it commanded the whole plain, but both the slightness of its projection and the insufficiency of its flanks unfitted it for real purposes of defense. This bastion covered the ramparts but imperfectly.

Such, Oh, sons of Joel, was the aspect of the fortifica-

tions of La Rochelle, the bulwark of the Reformation and of freedom, the holy city against which Charles IX was about to hurl his Catholic hordes and the most powerful army ever commanded by his generals.

I, Antonicq Lebrenn, kept a sort of diary of the siege of La Rochelle, and of the defense made by its inhabitants, among whom our own family combated gloriously.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1572.—Informed of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and foreseeing that the Huguenots would once more take up arms, the Rochelois placed their city in a state of defense. James Henry, the Mayor, took an accurate census of the inhabitants. The serviceable part was divided into eight companies, exclusive of the Colonel, the name given to the ninth, in which the Mayor and aldermen, all anxious to share the perils of the other citizens, are enrolled. The respective captains elected over these bodies are: James David, Louis Gargouillaud, Peter Portier, John Colin, Charles Chalemont, Marie Mari, Mathurin the elder, and Bonneaud. These are all made members of the Council of the Commune. The aldermen and other Councilmen who command no company, are charged with inspecting the posts, and shall be on guard, day and night, in the ranks of the Colonel. Besides these, six other companies are formed of volunteer foot-soldiers, each a hundred and twenty men strong. The chiefs of these are: Dessarts, Montalembert, La Riviere, De Lys, Bretin, called the Norman, and Virolet. All these captains, men well known for their bravery, took a glorious part in the last

civil wars. The magistrates are engaged in increasing the food supply of the city, so long as the sea is still open to them. Captain Mirant, the father of Cornelia, my betrothed, is charged with the command of a foraging flotilla. He is to go for wheat to the coast of Brittany, and for ammunitions to England. The daring sailor will know how to elude the royalist corsairs, or to give them battle. Cornelia is to accompany her father on the voyage, and will combat like a true Gallic woman. We bade each other good-bye this morning.

SEPTEMBER 5, 1572.—Yesterday there arrived at La Rochelle Colonel Plouernel, who is now head and heir of that powerful house by the death of Count Neroweg of Plouernel and his son Viscount Odet, both killed at the battle of Roche-la-Belle in the encounter with my father and myself. The colonel left his wife and children with his father-in-law at the manor of Mezlean, situated near the sacred stones of Karnak—a fief which includes among its dependencies a house, a large garden and several fields that once belonged to our ancestor Joel before the conquest of Gaul by Julius Caesar.

SEPTEMBER 9, 1572.—During the last few days a large number of fugitives who escaped the massacre of St. Bartholomew arrived at La Rochelle. There are to-day in our city fifty noblemen of the neighborhood, together with their families, besides sixty ministers of the Reformed religion. Over fifteen hundred soldiers, who deserted the royal army with arms and baggage, have come over to us.

OCTOBER 30, 1572.—Mayor James Henry and the City

Council, who are charged with watching over the safety of the city, display marvelous activity. A military council has been established with Colonel Plouernel and my uncle the Franc-Taupin as members. My uncle is an expert in matters appertaining to siege work, and especially in mining and counter-mining. The military council is strengthening the fortifications, and throwing up fresh ones. New batteries have been set up at all the weak points that might invite an attack between the Congues Gate and the Bastion of the Evangelium. A redoubt is being raised on Notre Dame Church, and upon one of its remaining towers two large cannons, capable of sweeping the surrounding fields far and wide, are being raised and mounted. Other engines of bombardment are mounted upon the platforms of all the belfries that are strong enough to support the weight and shock of artillery. The towers of Aix, of St. Catherine, of Verdierie and of Crique are all armed in this way. Noticing that certain portions of the moat between the Congues Gate and the Evangelium Bastion are poorly flanked, the Franc-Taupin proposed the construction of what he calls *taupinieres*, that is, casemates, the protected embrasures of which are on a level with the ground, and can open an almost subterranean, and therefore destructive fire upon the enemy. The casemates are being constructed. Men, women and children labor at the fortifications with inexpressible enthusiasm.

NOVEMBER 3, 1572.—A heroic decision was taken yesterday. It recalls the decision that our ancestors Albinik the sailor and his wife Meroë saw put into execution when

the Bretons, to the end of famishing the army of Julius Caesar, reduced to ashes their rich and fertile fields, turning the same into a desert that extended from Nantes to Vannes!¹ Yesterday, by order of the Mayor of La Rochelle, all the houses of the suburb of St. Eloi, and of the quarters of Salines, Volliers and Patere, were torn down or burned by their owners. No place is to be left to the enemy under shelter of which they can approach the city, and render the investment more dangerous to us.

NOVEMBER 8, 1572.—Monsieur Biron has received considerable reinforcements and advance supplies of siege material with which to invest our city. He set up his camp before the city with headquarters at St. **André**. Colonel Strozzi, one of the ablest officers of the Catholic army, occupies Puy-Liboreau; Colonel St. Martin occupies Gord with twelve hundred men under him; Colonel Goas is encamped at Rompsai with six companies of artillery; and Monsieur Du Guast, a minion of the Duke of Anjou, the brother of King Charles IX, is at Aytre with two regiments of veterans. We prepared for these dispositions of the enemy. The inhabitants of Aytre left only ruins for Du Guast to house in.

DECEMBER 8, 1572.—The enemy's army is steadily receiving reinforcements, and extending its lines. The land blockade is tightening. Every day there are bloody skirmishes between us and the royalists. They lose heavily at this game. Relying upon their numbers, they venture far into the network of our defenses. These are cut up by

¹ See "The Brass Bell," numbertwo in this series.

moats and protected by walls, where, amid the labyrinth of hardly distinguishable paths across the salt marshes, we find many available places to hide in ambush, and our arquebusiers easily decimate the Catholics. When, surprised, they seek to pursue us, they are swallowed up in the depths of the turf-pits the surface of which is covered by a greenish weed that they have not learned to distinguish from the grass of the prairie. It has so far been a war of ambuscades, similar to the patriotic resistance that the Armoricans offered on their moors, their marshes and their forests, against the soldiers of the son of Charlemagne, in the days of our ancestor Vortigern.¹

DECEMBER 13, 1572.—Yesterday was fought a stubborn encounter at the Font suburb where, led from rich springs, there pours into a reservoir the water that an aqueduct takes into the city. The Catholics took possession of the place for the purpose of turning off the water and depriving La Rochelle of it. They succeeded. My uncle, the Franc-Taupin, and his friend Barbot, the boilermaker of the isle of Rhe, proposed to enter the aqueduct, which had been allowed to run dry, and in that way to arrive under the camp of the enemy's troops at Font, and then blow them up with a mine. Unfortunately their proposition was not favored. An open attack was preferred. It cost us many men, and Font remained in the hands of the Catholics. The canals have been cut. But the village fountains and wells furnish us with enough water.

JANUARY 7, 1573.—In order still more to tighten the

¹See "The Carolingian Coins," the ninth of this series.

land blockade, the enemy has erected two forts at the entrance of the bay, on the roadstead in front of the inside port, thereby compelling our vessels to run the gauntlet of those batteries in order to reach the city.

JANUARY 12, 1573.—Our friend Master Barbot, the boilermaker, achieved day before yesterday a deed, unmatched, I think, in the annals of military exploits. Not far from the counterscarp of the Evangelium Bastion, stands a mill which we call Brande, and where Captain Normand placed a small advanced day guard. At night they returned to the city, leaving at the mill their arms and only one sentinel. Evening before last, Colonel Strozzi, profiting by the moonlight, marched at the head of a strong detachment, supported by two light pieces of artillery, to the attack of the mill, where Master Barbot was alone on guard. Barbot decided to remain firmly at his post, which he did, discharging one after the other upon the assailants the arquebuses which were left loaded on the gunrack of the post. Our friend made simultaneously a great noise, counterfeiting a variety of voices, with the view of causing the enemy to believe that the mill was strongly defended. On hearing the rattle of the arquebus shots, Captain Normand ran to the parapet of the bastion, and shouted to Master Barbot to hold out and that reinforcements were hurrying to his support! The road was circuitous and therefore rather long. As a consequence, before our men could reach the bastion of the mill, which lay on the other side of the moat, and despite all his intrepidity, Master Barbot found himself on the point of

yielding. His ammunition had run out. He parleyed, and demanded quarter for himself and his pretended garrison. Colonel Strozzi granted quarter to our friend, who, stepping out, revealed the fact that his garrison consisted of himself alone. Furious at the discovery, Strozzi was about to hang Master Barbot, when Captain Normand's men arrived at the double quick, routed the royalists and snatched our intrepid boilermaker from their clutches.

JANUARY 15, 1573.—God be blessed! My mother, my sister Theresa Rennepont, Cornelia, my betrothed, and several other brave Rochelois women had a narrow escape last night. The brigantines of Captain Mirant, charged with the duty of provisioning La Rochelle with munitions of war and grain, frequently set sail for the shores of Brittany or for Dover, and re-entered our port with their cargoes of supplies. To the end of blocking these excursions, or rendering them too perilous to be frequently attempted, the royalists brought from the port of Brouage the hull of a large dismantled vessel. They filled the same with sand, and sank it at the entrance of the bay that leads to our port. The water in that spot being shallow, the sunken hull was thus turned into a species of half-submerged pontoon, and was mounted with a number of artillery pieces which, jointly with those on the redoubts raised by the enemy on the opposite sides of the bay, could cross their fires upon any of our ships that either left or entered the roadstead. Yesterday the City Council decided that during the night, at low tide, the vessel, left dry upon the sand banks by the outflowing sea, was to be

set on fire. The audacious stroke—audacious because those who were commissioned to execute it had to leave the city by the Two Mills Gate, and were forced to heap up the combustibles around the hull under the fire of the soldiers on guard—the audacious expedition did not otherwise require military skill. It only required stout hearts; it devolved upon the Rochelois women, at their unanimous and pressing demand. “The blood and lives of the men, already numerically inferior to the besiegers, should,” said they, “be preserved for battle.” The brave woman assembled, about three hundred strong, together with a goodly number of children of about twelve years who insisted upon accompanying their mothers. The troop consisted of bourgeois women, noble ladies, female servants, and wives of artisans, fishermen and merchants. Among these, and foremost among them—I mention it proudly—were my mother, my sister Theresa, and Cornelia Mirant, recently returned from one of her father’s foraging expeditions to Brittany. At about three in the morning they started from the city, carrying bundles of dry kindling wood and packages of hay. A strong wind was blowing. Deep darkness favored their march under the guidance of a fisherman’s wife who bore the nickname of the *Bombarde*, by reason of her having extinguished one of the enemy’s projectiles. Due to her often dragging for oysters and clams, which abounded on our coasts, the *Bombarde* was acquainted with the safe passages between the rocks and the quicksands that strewed the bay. She led the Rochelois women through

the darkness. The following is Cornelia's own and thrilling account of the affair:

"Thanks to the darkness, the whistling wind, and our silent footsteps, we approached within an arquebus shot of the vessel's hull without being noticed by the royalists. Your mother, marching among the front ranks between Theresa and myself, and often, like ourselves, sinking up to her knees in water or mud, steadfastly refused to be relieved of the weight of the bundle of kindlings that she carried. We were a short distance from the vessel, the lights of which guided us from afar through the mist, when the soldier on watch took alarm, and called out: 'Who goes there!' 'Fire! Fire' answered your mother. It was the signal agreed upon. We covered on a run the short distance that separated us from the hull, and rapidly heaped up along its flanks the kindling wood and straw that we brought with us. The soldier fired upon us at haphazard in the dark, and called his companions to arms. They hastened upon the bridge with the cannoniers, but unable to take aim upon us at so short a distance, and from above down, they left the cannons alone and sent us through the darkness a shower of arquebus shots that struck several of us. The bullets whistled. One of them carried off my bonnet. Your mother, sister and myself were close together, but we could not see one another on account of the darkness. 'Cornelia, are you wounded?' they asked. 'No! and you?' 'We neither!' answered your mother; and again she called out: 'Firm, my daughters! Fire!' Thereupon she and the Bombarde, who had just lighted a link dipped

in sulphur set fire to the first bundles of wood and straw. Their example was followed simultaneously at a score of different places, despite fresh arquebus discharges from the royalists. In a minute thick clouds of smoke enveloped the hull. The flaming combustibles cast their reflection upon the puddles of water on the sandbanks, and beyond them upon the two towers of the port. We could see as clearly as by day. The royalists, however, blinded with the smoke which the wind blew upon them, together with wide sheets of flame, could no longer see to fire upon us. Thus protected, we threw three relays of combustibles upon the flames along the flanks of the accursed hull, which was so saturated with salt water and coated with ooze that, despite the heat, it could only be made to sweat by the flames. When our combustibles were exhausted, we were compelled, in order to effect a safe retreat, to profit by the last clouds of smoke that, concealing us from the enemy's eyes, prevented them from aiming upon us. We returned to the city carrying the dead bodies of five of our troop. Among these was Marie Caron, the worthy wife of our neighbor the mercer. She was shot stone dead by a bullet in the left temple. Her son, a lad of thirteen, had his arm broken. We also helped back a number of women and girls of our band who were more or less seriously wounded. There were fifteen of these. Our only sorrow was to have failed in carrying our enterprise to a successful end."¹

Such, sons of Joel, was the intrepidity and courage of

¹ See, on the siege of La Rochelle, the daring manoeuvres of Captain Mirant; the combat sustained by Barbot the boilermaker,

single-handed against two companies; the firing of the stranded ship *L'Ensensoir* by the Rochelais women, and their heroism in the

the Rochelois women during the siege of the city. Do they not approve themselves worthy daughters of the Gallic women of the old heroic times?

FEBRUARY 12, 1573.—The brother of Charles IX, the Duke of Anjou, arrived yesterday at the royal camp to assume the supreme command of the army. He is accompanied by his two cousins, Henry of Bearn and Condé. The two apostates, after seeing their co-religionists and best friends slaughtered under their very eyes on St. Bartholomew's night, gave the kiss of peace and forgetfulness to Charles IX, and now follow his army to the siege of La Rochelle. These degenerate sons of Joan of Albert, and of Condé have come to battle beside the butchers of their families. Among the other seigneurs and captains in the suite of the Duke of Anjou are the Duke of Montpensier, the Dauphin Prince of Auvergne, the Dukes of Guise and Aumale, the Dukes of Longueville and Bouillon, the Marquis of Mayenne, the Duke of Nevers, Anthony and Claude of Bauffremont, René of Voyer, Viscount of Paulmy, the Duke of Uzes, the Bastard of Angouleme, Marshal Cossé, the Count of Retz, and many other illustrious seigneurs. Among the most noted captains is old Marshal Montluc, a tiger with a human face. The presence of the experienced general, with whom age has not softened his proverbial ferocity, sufficiently announces that, if La Rochelle should fall into the power of the enemy, we shall be put to the sword, to the very last one of us.

combats in which they took part, *History of La Rochelle and of the Country of Aunis*, by Arcère, 1756. 2 vols. in quarto. I refer my readers to that excellent work in

order that those who would wish to certify the facts may see that all the episodes herein narrated concerning the siege of La Rochelle are strictly historic.

FEBRUARY 14, 1573.—The brave Francis of Lanoüe joined us at La Rochelle, thanks to a curious agreement with Charles IX. The revolt of the Low Countries, so ardently wished for by Coligny, miscarried through the treachery of the French court, whose anxiety to please the Pope and Philip II was so thoroughly attested by the massacres of St. Bartholomew's night, that all expectation of seeing it give serious support to a republican insurrection in one of the provinces of the Spanish monarchy had to be abandoned. Lanoüe, deceived by the same hopes that deceived the Admiral, whom the lying promises of Catherine De Medici and her son had kept in Paris, went to Mons in order to concert measures with the chiefs of the proposed uprising; made an unsuccessful effort to call the people to arms; was taken prisoner, and thus escaped St. Bartholomew's night by the merest accident. Every day more alarmed at the indomitable attitude of the Huguenots, and aware of the influence Lanoüe enjoyed among them, Charles IX demanded his liberation at the hands of Philip II, obtained it, summoned the Huguenot leader to the Louvre, and said to him: "I place confidence in your word. Go to La Rochelle. Induce the Protestants to surrender and submit. Should they refuse, I want you to promise me that you will return, and surrender yourself to me at discretion." "I consent," was Lanoüe's answer; "I shall go to La Rochelle. Should it appear to me, in all conscience, that the resistance of the Huguenots is hopeless, I shall do all in my power to induce them to capitulate. But should it appear to me that the chances are fa-

vorable to them, I shall induce them to persevere, shall tender them my services. If they decline my offer I shall return and surrender myself to you." Such is the confidence that an upright man inspires even in hardened criminals, that Charles IX accepted Lanoüe's word. Lanoüe sent ahead a courier to the Mayor of La Rochelle to inform him of his compact with the King and request admittance to the city. The City Council assembled. Some of the members severely condemned Lanoüe for lowering himself to the point of dealing with Charles IX; others, a considerable majority, realized the value of Lanoüe's assistance, and favored the acceptance of his services. He was introduced into the city. His patriotic words brought all dissidents over to his side. He inspected the defensive works of the place, and being convinced that it could repel the royalist attack, was invested with the supreme command of the troops, under the surveillance of the aldermen.

FEBRUARY 23, 1573.—The presence of Lanoüe among us already bears magnificent fruit. He introduces discipline among our troops. No longer are the murderous skirmishes tolerated in which so many of our men ran foolishly to death. He curbs the ardor of the hotheads; drills the volunteers in the handling of their arms and in the precision of military evolutions, and he substitutes the tactics of prudence for the rashness of blind bravery and unthinking enthusiasm that have been the bane of the Protestant arms.

MARCH 27, 1573.—Faithful to his word, Lanoüe yesterday left La Rochelle and returned to the camp of Charles IX where he surrendered himself a prisoner. From the

moment that he took command, our sallies caused great damage to the enemy, but also cost us dearly. We were not able to repair our losses, seeing that our communications by land are cut off, while the enemy is constantly receiving strong reinforcements. We now number only 4,500 men able to carry arms. The enemy, on the other hand, has today 28,000 men in line, and sixty cannon. The siege is conducted with consummate skill by Scipio Vergano, the identical engineer who fortified La Rochelle. The traitor knows the strong and the weak points of the place. Accordingly he has concentrated all the attacking forces of the Catholics upon the Bastion of the Evangelium. Their batteries keep up an incessant fire upon that side of our city. Finally we begin to lack for munitions of war. The works raised by the enemy at the mouth of the bay render difficult the entrance of the ships upon which we depend for provisions. Both powder and grain are running low. Captain Mirant's flotilla sailed to England for munitions of war, and to Brittany for food. The vessels are daily expected. If unfavorable winds should delay their return, or if they fail to run the gauntlet of the enemy's outer harbor fortifications, a fearful dirth will soon set in. Having considered the grave difficulties of our situation, Lanoüe was of the opinion that we could not long resist the pressure of forces five or six times stronger than our own. He endeavored to induce the City Council to parliamentarize with the Duke of Anjou, with the end in view of obtaining an honorable capitulation and favorable terms of peace, adding that he, Lanoüe had pledged his word as

a man to encourage and aid the Rochelois to resistance so long as he believed resistance to be effective; but that, so soon as he considered resistance futile, he would urge the besieged to capitulate, promising, should his advice not be accepted, to surrender himself a prisoner to the King. After a solemn session, under the presidency of Mayor James Henry, who, worn out and almost dying with fatigue and in consequence of his wounds, but steeled by his republican energy, administered his office, the City Council declared by a large majority that the Rochelois would resist the Catholics to the death. Lanoüe thereupon left the city.

Oh, sons of Joel! Fail not to admire the resolute posture of the Mayor, aldermen and heads of the civic military forces of La Rochelle! Those generous citizens did not take up arms out of ambition, or cupidity, as was the case with the majority of the captains in the army of Charles IX—faithless mercenaries; swordsmen, who sell their skins and kill as a trade by which to live; fighters by profession; men to whom war, for whatever cause, whether just or otherwise, holy or unhallowed, is a lucrative pursuit. No; the Rochelois fought in defense of their freedom, their rights, their hearths. Only the consciousness that the struggle is in behalf of the most sacred of causes can beget prodigies of heroism. All honor to those brave men! Shame and execration upon professional men of war.

The above fragments on the siege of La Rochelle, written by me, Antonicq Lebrenn, take us down to the middle of the month of May, 1573, when the following events occurred.

CHAPTER X.

THE LAMBKINS' DANCE.

The City Hall of La Rochelle, an edifice that was almost wholly rebuilt nearly a century ago, in the year 1486, is one of the most beautiful monuments that patriotism and the love for one's city can boast. Catholic faith has raised up as high as the clouds the spired cathedrals where the priests, Oh, Christ! exalt the assassination of the Huguenots, and preach the extermination of heretics. The cult of the communal franchises has reared City Halls, the cradles of our liberties, the civic sanctuaries, where, upon the banner of the commune, oath is taken to die for freedom—as did the communiers, at whose side our ancestor Fergan the Quarryman fought in the days of Louis the Lusty.¹ The municipal monument that we, Rochelois, are so justly proud of, consists of a vast central building, flanked by two pavilions with pointed roofs. Its principal facade—ornamented with twenty-seven lofty arches, the triple entablature of which disappears under garlands of leaves and fruits chiseled in the stone—is surmounted by a crenelated terrace festooned with thick wreaths of acanthus leaves. From the top of each of the two pavilions a

¹ As thrillingly recounted in "The Pilgrim's Shell," the twelfth work of this series.

belfry of marvelous architectural beauty pierces the air. The one to the left presents to the wondering eye the sight of a gilt iron cage, that is no less admirably constructed than its dome, carved on the outside as delicately as a piece of lace-work, and held up by three stone figures of colossal stature. One must renounce the task of describing the profusion of crockets that jut out from the walls, and represent sphinxes and chimeras executed with boldness and grace. One must renounce the task of describing the stone festoons that embellish the edifice from its base to its pinnacles, or the infinite wreaths of fruit or flowers that clamber up the ogive moldings, doors and windows, that weave their lintels together, wind themselves around the pillars and columns, and finally crown the capitals. The aspect is that of a mass of verdure—flowers and leaves in bud and full bloom—suddenly petrified by some magic power. This imperfect description can only impart a partial idea of the material beauty of the City Hall of La Rochelle. But the edifice had, if the word may be used, a soul, a breath, a voice! It was the daring soul, the powerful breath, the patriotic voice of the Commune that seemed to animate the mass of stone of which the antique edifice was built. There, especially since the war, and as life centers in the heart, centered the pulsations of the city. All energy started there and rushed back thither. It was there that the sovereign power of the urban republic, represented by the Mayor and aldermen whom the citizens

elected, had its seat.¹ Assembled night and day at the City Hall in sufficient number to meet all emergencies, the valiant ediles never left the hall of the council but to mount the ramparts, or join in sallies against the enemy's redoubts. Not infrequently theirs was also the task of calming, controlling or even suppressing popular tumults, engendered by the sufferings of these days. Such was the complex and arduous task reserved for Morrisson, the successor of James Henry, who died in consequence of his wounds and overexertion. Glorify the Commune, sons of Joel, and its heroic defenders.

Well, on that day, towards the middle of May, 1573, a tumultuous mob, made up exclusively of women and children—the able-bodied men were on the ramparts, or taking a few hours' rest—invaded the square of the City Hall of La Rochelle, crying with the heartrending fury that hunger inspires: "Bread!" "Bread!" No less haggard, no less pinched with hunger than their children, a considerable number of these women, having combatted beside the men of La Rochelle in repelling the royalist attacks, had heads bandaged in blood-stained handkerchiefs, or carried their arms in slings. Several children, of ten or twelve years of age, also bore the marks of wounds received in battle whither they accompanied their mothers. The mob, embittered and exhausted by the trials and all manner of pri-

¹ As an instance of the proud and noble bearing of the staunch republicans in this Council, the story is told that when it was found that in the passport issued by the Duke of Anjou the Roche-

lois were designated as "rebels," they refused to accept it, and Anjou was forced to send another passport.—*History of La Rochelle*, by Arcere, p. 417.

vations that resulted from the long siege, saw with terror the approach of famine. Since the day before the baker shops had been closed for want of flour. The supply of food was nearly exhausted. The wretched crowd clamored aloud for bread; they also clamored for Morrisson, the new Mayor, and head of the commune.

Morrisson appeared at the portico of the City Hall and stepped towards the mob. He was at once beloved, feared and respected. Still at the age of vigorous manhood, he wore an iron corselet and arm-pieces, while a heavy sword hung from his side. He jumped upon one of the stone balustrades placed at either side of the door, motioned for silence, and addressed the crowd in a sonorous, firm and yet paternal voice:

“My children! The Council is in session. I have no time to lose in speechmaking. Delegate to me one from among you. Let her inform me what it is that you want. I shall answer.”

The Bombarde, acclaimed with one voice as the delegate of her companions, pushed her way forward and approached the Mayor: “Mayor, we are hungry, and want bread! The bakers have neither corn nor flour. The butchers’ stalls are closed. Two days ago only a few handfuls of beans and peas were distributed. Since then nothing more has come. Before the siege most of us lived off our fisheries, and we asked help from nobody. To-day every fisherman’s boat that ventures out of port is sunk under the cannon balls of the royalist redoubts. What are we to do? We

cannot remain without food; we are hungry; we want bread for our children and ourselves!"

"Yes!" echoed the Rochelois women with loud cries. "Bread! Bread! Morrisson, we must have bread!"

After this explosion of outcries and complaints, silence was restored, and the Mayor resumed in a moved voice:

"Poor dear women! You want bread, and how do you expect me to give you any? There is not a single grain of wheat in the city granary. But we are hourly expecting Captain Mirant's brigantines. They bring from England a cargo of powder, and from Brittany a cargo of wheat. They are anchored only eight leagues from here, near the coast, at the port of Redon. They cannot, in the absence of a favorable wind, run into La Rochelle. The chances are a hundred to one that the adverse wind, which has been blowing all these days, will change. It may change almost at any moment. It may be changing now. If it does, the city will again be supplied for several months. For the present, there is left to us a precious resource, so far neglected—the clams and oysters. We must turn our hands to that. You understand me?"

"Mayor! Do you know that it is now as dangerous to go out for clams as to march upon a battery?" answered the Bombarde. "To go out for clams is to run into the jaws of death!"

"I know it—and if the brigantines of Captain Mirant do not run into port to-day, my wife and two daughters will go out with you to-night, at one in the morning, when

the tide will be low, and dig for clams," was Morrisson's stoic reply.

"It will be done! Count upon us, Mayor!" replied the Bombarde. "If the brigantines of Captain Mirant do not arrive before night, we shall put up with hunger until night—and then we shall go out and dig for clams. Those of us who will be killed on the banks will no longer need anything. That is agreed upon, in God's name!"

As the Bombarde was uttering these last words, the detonations of several discharges of artillery that shattered the window panes in the City Hall announced the enemy was about to renew the cannonade which it had suspended in the morning. Almost at the same instant the sonorous sound of clarion blasts was heard drawing nearer and nearer, and presently a large number of women of all conditions, marching at the heels of a pastor on a white horse, ahead of which marched the clarion-blower, turned into Caille Square.

"To the ramparts, my sisters! To the ramparts!" shouted the pastor with martial exaltation. "The Lord of Hosts will steel your arms! Your husbands, your fathers, your brothers and your sons are battling for the triumph of liberty. Come to their help! To the ramparts! To the ramparts! The enemy is about to storm the Bastion of the Evangelium! Long live the Commune!"

"To the ramparts, my brave women! And to-night, after clams on the banks, as perilous an expedition as battle itself!" cried Morrisson, while the Bombarde and her companions, joining the other crowd of Rochelois women,

repeated in chorus the following psalm, led by the pastor:

“O, Lord do guide these feeble women,
 With souls ablaze, inflamed as strong men!
 Break our foes like Oreb!
 Break them like proud Zeeb!
 Throw down those wicked kings and princes,
 Who in their fury, and their ire,
 Laugh at our tears and distress dire,
 Who devastate our glad provinces!
 Who are as a torrent wildly boiling,
 A tempest, wildly rushing, rolling,
 A hurricane, impetuous driven,
 The tops of haughty mountains lashes,
 A hellish flame that turns to ashes,
 The rocks by lightning struck and riven!

“May, Oh, Lord! the storm of Thy wrath
 Strew Thy foes away from our path!
 May, Oh, Lord! Thy thunders and fire,
 Smite Thy foes! Oh, smite with Thy ire!”

The Bastion of the Evangelium, upon which the enemy had long been concentrating all their forces, formed a sharply protruding angle. Its flanks were not sufficiently protected by other works of defense. Accordingly, by directing against the left flank of the bastion the fire of their principal batteries, the enemy had opened a breach in the rampart by the repeated pounding of their shots. At the place where the breach was effected, the upper part of the earthworks, to a width of about fifty feet, crumbled down into the moat, filling it up so fully as to render an assault practicable. Thanks to this mass of debris which

answered the purpose of a bridge, the assailants could cross the fosse on a run, could scale the last steps of the last wall already laid in ruins, and could enter the city, provided they could bear down the defenders who stood in the breach. From the top of the bastion the eye swept the plain far and wide. A cannon-shot off, the long line of the enemy's trenches could be seen, stretching from the suburb of St. Eloi on the edge of the salt marshes, to the suburb of Colombier. That line bounded the field from end to end; it intercepted the roads to Limoges and Nantes at the crossings of which the batteries were erected which broke a breach through the bastion. The whole stretch between the trenches of the besiegers and the fortifications of the city—one time covered with trees and houses—now lay bare, exposed, devastated, and deeply furrowed by the projectiles. Beyond the desert waste, lay the enemy's entrenchments—earthworks strengthened with gabions and trunks of trees, and here and there crenelated with the embrasures for their batteries. Behind that line of earthworks, the tops of the officers' tents, surmounted with bannerets and floating pennants, could be seen. Finally, on the extreme horizon rose the undulating and woody hills. The breach once made, the Catholics suspended their fire in order to open it again shortly before marching to the assault. It was in answer to the thunder of the cannonade, which announced an imminent and decisive attack, that the old pastor crossed the square of the City Hall at the head of his bevy of Rochelois women, recruited the Bombarde and her companions, and

wended his course to the Bastion of the Evangelium. At that place about one-half of the defenders of La Rochelle were gathered, ready for a stubborn conflict. The other troops, distributed in other places, were to be on the alert to repel other attacks. The Council of defense foresaw that the enemy, while hurling one column against the breach, would undoubtedly attempt a simultaneous assault upon other places; consequently women were commissioned to close up the breach as best they might with logs of wood and other material. Colonel Plouernel, upon whom the defense of the bastion that day devolved, and Captain Gargouillaud, in charge of the artillery, gave their last orders. The bourgeois cannoniers were pointing their pieces in advance upon the open and absolutely exposed ground which the royalists had to cross when they sallied from their trenches in order to reach the opposite side of the fosse where the breach was effected. The breach was wide; nevertheless, before they could reach the parapet, the besiegers would have to clamber over a heap of debris ten or eleven feet high, on the top of which a redoubtable engine of defense was mounted, and placed in charge of the women of La Rochelle. This engine of war, an invention of Master Barbot the boilermaker, received the name of the *censer*. It consisted of a huge copper basin, holding a ton, suspended from iron chains at the end of a long beam that revolved upon an axis, and was so adjusted to a post firmly set in the ground, that by means of a slight motion imparted to the beam, the huge caldron would empty upon the heads of the assailants the deadly fluid

that it was filled with, to wit, a mixture of boiling tar, sulphur and oil. A number of Rochelois women, Theresa Rennepont and Cornelia my betrothed among them, were busy either keeping up the fire under the copper basin, or pouring into it the oil, tar and sulphur from little kegs that lay near at hand. With her sleeves rolled back above her elbows, and leaving her strong white arms exposed, Cornelia stirred the steaming mixture with an iron rod supplied with a wooden handle. Master Barbot—his head covered with an iron morion, his chest protected with a brigandine, and his cutlass and dagger by his side—leaned upon the barrel of his arquebus and smiled complacently upon his invention. From time to time he would address the women and girls at work.

“Courage, my brave girl!” he said to Cornelia. “Mix up the oil well with the tar and sulphur. Make the mixture thick, soft, and toothsome, like those omelettes made of eggs, flour and cheese that you are so skilled in dishing up, and which your good father and myself relish so much! But the devil take those dainty thoughts! In these days of dearth one may deem himself happy if he but have a handful of beans. By the way of famine and of your father—the heavy clouds that are rising yonder in the south almost always announce a change of wind. Mayhap we shall see this very day the brigantines of Captain Mirant, loaded with wheat and powder, sailing before the wind into port, every inch of sail spread to the breeze, and successfully running the gauntlet of the royalist guns. Long live the Commune!”

“May God hear you, Master Barbot! I would then embrace my father this very day, and the threatened famine would be at end,” answered Cornelia without interrupting her work of stirring the mixture, into which Theresa Renepont just emptied a bucketful of sulphur—on account of which Master Barbot called out to her:

“No more sulphur, my dear Theresa. The tar and oil must predominate in the infernal broth. The sulphur is thrown in only to improve the taste by pleasing the eye with the pretty bluish flame, that gambols on the surface of the incandescent fluid. Now, my little girls, turn the beam just a little to one side in order to remove the basin from the fire without cooling off the broth. We shall swing it back over the fire the instant the Catholics run to the assault—then we shall dish up the broth to them, hot and nice.”

While these Rochelois women were thus engaged in preparing the censer, others rolled enormous blocks of stone—the debris of the bastion that was shattered by the enemy’s cannonade—and placed them in such positions over the breach that a child’s finger could hurl them down upon the assaulting column. Others rolled barrels of sand, which after having served for protection to the arquebusiers on the ramparts, were likewise to be rolled down the steep declivity which the enemy had to climb. Finally, a large number of women were busy preparing stretchers for the wounded. These women worked under the direction of Marcienne, Odelin’s widow. Theresa and Cornelia, left for a moment at leisure from their work on the censer,

came over to the widow, and were presently joined by Louis Rennepont and Antonicq.

“Mother,” said Antonicq, tenderly addressing Marcienne, “when I left the house this morning at dawn you were asleep; I could not tell you good-bye—embrace me!”

Marcienne understood what her son meant. A murderous assault was about to be engaged. Perhaps they were not to meet again alive. She took Antonicq in her arms, and pressing him to her breast she said in a moved yet firm voice: “Blessings upon you, my son, who never caused me any grief! If, like your father, you should die in battle against the papists, you will have acted like an upright man to the very end. Should I succumb, you will carry with you my last blessing. And you also, Cornelia,” added Marcienne, “I bless you, my child. I shall die happy in the knowledge that Antonicq found in you a heart worthy of his own in virtue and bravery. You have been the best of daughters to your parents—you will likewise be a tender wife to your husband.”

Odelin’s widow was giving expression to these sentiments when Louis Rennepont, after exchanging in a low voice a few words with his wife Theresa, words such as the solemnity of the occasion prompted, cried out aloud: “Look yonder! there, under us—among the debris of the breach—is not that the Franc-Taupin? Your uncle seems to be emerging from underground. He must be preparing some trick of his trade.”

“It is he, indeed!” exclaimed Antonicq, no less surprised than his brother-in-law. “And there is my appren-

tice Serpentin also—who is following the Franc-Taupin out of the hole.”

These words drew the attention of Cornelia, Theresa and Odelin's widow. They looked down the steep slope formed by the ruins of that portion of the bastion that the enemy had demolished. The Franc-Taupin had emerged from a narrow and deep excavation, dug under the ruins. A lad of thirteen or fourteen years followed him. They covered up the opening that had given them egress. After doing so, Serpentin, the apprentice of the armorer Antonicq, went down upon his knees, and moving backward on all fours, uncoiled, under the directions of the Franc-Taupin, a long thin fuse, the other end of which was deep down the excavation which they had just covered. Still moving towards the parapet, Serpentin continued to uncoil the fuse, and, upon orders from the Franc-Taupin, stopped at about twenty paces from the wall and sat down on a stone.

“Halloa, uncle!” cried Antonicq, leaning over the edge of one of the embrasures. “Here we are; come and join us.”

Hearing his nephew's voice, the Franc-Taupin raised his head, made him a sign to wait, and after giving Serpentin some further directions, the aged soldier clambered over the ruins with remarkable agility for a man of his years, and walked over to where Antonicq stood waiting for him.

“Where do you come from, uncle?”

“Well, my boy, what do you expect of me? A *taupin*

I was in my young days, and now in my old days I relapse into my old trade. I come from underground, through a shaft that I dug through the ruins with the aid of Serpentin, about a hundred paces from here. There I laid a mine, right in the middle of the breach where the good Catholics will soon be running to the assault. The moment I see them there I shall lovingly set the fuse on fire—and, triple petard! the St. Bartholomew lambkins will leap up in the air yelling and spitting fire like five hundred devils, their heads down, their legs skyward. The dance will end with a shower of shattered limbs.”

“Well schemed, my old mole!” said Master Barbot. “Fire below, fire above, like the beautiful sheets that I hammer on the anvil. The burning lava of my censer will blaze over the skulls of the royalists, your fuse will blaze under the soles of their feet, and hurl the miscreants into the air capering, turning somersaults, whirling, cavorting, and—” but suddenly breaking off, Master Barbot let himself down upon the ground, and joining the word to the deed, called out:

“Down upon your faces, everybody! Look out for the bullets!”

Master Barbot’s advice was quickly followed. Everybody near him threw himself down flat at the very moment that a volley of bullets whistled overhead or struck the parapet, some ricocheting and upturning gabions and logs of wood, others plowing their way through the debris where the imperturbable Serpentin was seated near the fuse that led down to the mine. Despite the danger, the brave lad

did not budge from his post. A lucky accident willed it that none of the besieged was wounded by this first salvo of artillery. Master Barbot, the first one to rise to his feet, cast his eyes upon the enemy's batteries, which were still partly wrapped in the clouds of smoke from the first discharge, perceived the first ranks of the assaulting column sallying from its trenches, and instantly gave the signal:

"Everyone to his post! The enemy is advancing!"

"To arms! Rochelois, to arms!"

Master Barbot's call was answered by a long roll of drums, ordered by Colonel Plouernel. His strong and penetrating voice rose above the din, and his words were heard:

"Soldiers, to the ramparts! Cannoniers, to your pieces! Fire, all along the line!"

"May God guard you, mother, sister, Cornelia!" said Antonicq.

"May God guard you, my wife!" said Louis Rennepont.

"So long, comrade Barbot!" cried the Franc-Taupin, pulling a tinder box from his pocket and sliding down the slope of the breach to rejoin Serpentin. "I shall get myself ready to make the limbs of those St. Bartholomew lambkins scamper through the air."

"And you, my brave girls, to the censer!" cried Master Barbot to the Rochelois women. "Replace the caldron over the fire, and, when you hear me give the order: 'Serve it hot!' turn it and empty it over the heads of the assailants. You others, hold your levers ready near those stones and

hogsheads of sand. When you hear me say: 'Roll!' push hard and let it all come down upon them."

Suddenly, fresh but more distant and redoubling detonations of artillery in the direction of the Congues Gate announced the enemy's intention of making a diversion by attempting two simultaneous attacks upon the city. The pastor arrived at that moment upon the ramparts at the head of his troop of women whom the Bombarde and her companions had joined. Some reinforced the women charged with rolling the stones upon the assailants; others organized themselves to transport the wounded; finally a third set, armed with cutlasses, pikes and axes, made ready to resist the assailants at close quarters. At the head of these the Bombarde brandished a harpoon.

His best marksmen had been placed by Colonel Plouernel in the underground casemates, thereby forming, on the other side of the circumvallation, a second line of defense, the loop-holes of which, bearing a strong resemblance to the airholes of a cavern, allowed a murderous fire to be directed upon the enemy. Finally, the companies of arquebusiers were massed upon the breach, which was defended by heaped-up beams and gabions that the Rochelois women assisted in bringing together. A solemn silence reigned among the besieged during the short interval of time that the royalists occupied in rushing through the distance that separated them from the outer edge of our moat. All of us felt that the fate of La Rochelle depended upon the issue of the assault.

Old Marshal Montluc was in chief command of the

Catholics. Monsieur Du Guast, at the head of six battalions of veteran Swiss troops, led the column, with Marshal Montluc in the center, and in the rear Colonel Strozzi, one of the best officers of the Catholic army. His task was to reinforce and sustain the attack in case the first companies wavered, or were repulsed. These troops advanced in good order, drums beating, trumpets blaring, colors flying, and captained by the flower of the nobility—the Dukes of Guise and Aumale, the Bastard of Angouleme, Henry of Bearn, who was now the King's brother-in-law, and Henry of Condé. The two renegates now were in arms against our cause. Finally, there were also Mayenne, Biron, Cosseins, D'O, Chateau-Vieux, and innumerable other noble captains, all crowding near the King's brother, the Duke of Anjou, who marched in the center at the side of Marshal Montluc. The moment that the front ranks of the vanguard reached the thither side of the fosse, Alderman Gargouillaud considered the enemy to be within reach of his cannoniers, and gave the order for a plunging and ricocheting fire. The effect of the salvo was deadly. The thunder-struck vanguard wavered and recoiled. The Rochelois gained time to reload their pieces. A second discharge, fully as deadly as the first, mowed down as many as before, and increased the indecision of the assailants. Old Marshal Montluc, Biron and Cosseins revived the shaken courage of their troops, held them, and forced them back. The dash was made. Leaving the dead and wounded behind, the column crossed the moat; it answered with its arquebuses those of the besieged as it pushed up the slope

of the breach, receiving the cross fire from the casemates upon both its flanks, while, from the companies ranged upon the ramparts, its front was met with a hailstorm of bullets. Despite severe losses, the royalists steadily climbed up the slope of the breach. The Franc-Taupin and his aide, who until that instant lay flat upon their faces behind a heap of debris, suddenly rose and ran towards the circumvallation as fast as their legs could carry them. They had fired the fuse. Hardly were they at a safe distance, when the mine took fire under the feet of the enemy. A frightful explosion threw up a spout of earth, dust and rocks, interspersed with jets of fire, fulgent like lightning through thick clouds of smoke. The smoke slowly dissipated. The slope of the breach reappeared to view. It was torn up and cut through by a deep and wide cleft, the sides of which were strewn with the dismembered bodies of the dead and dying. The soldiers of the vanguard who escaped the disaster were seized with terror, turned upon their heels, rushed back upon their center, trampled it down, threw it into a panic, and spread consternation, crying that the passage of the breach was mined under the feet of the besiegers. The ranks were broken; confusion reigned, the rout commenced. The Rochelois cannoniers now worked their pieces in quick succession, and plowed wide gaps into the compact mass of the fleeing invaders, while the Franc-Taupin, standing beside one of the embrasures and calmly crossing his hands behind his back, remarked to Master Barbot:

“Well, comrade, there they are—heads, arms, trunks,

legs. They have danced the saraband to the tune of my mine. I have given a ball to the Catholics, to the defenders of the throne and the altar!"

"Ha! Ha!" replied the boilermaker. "The St. Bartholomew lambkins are going back faster than they came. Should they come back again I shall dish up to them my steaming basin in order to comfort the lacerated feelings of those cut-throats whom the Pope has blessed."

The royalist soldiers could not be rallied by their officers until they were beyond the reach of our guns. They were then re-formed into a new column. The most daring of their captains placed themselves resolutely at their head in order to lead them back to the assault. Preceding this phalanx of intrepid men by several paces, a Cordelier monk, holding a crucifix in one hand and a cutlass in the other, rushed forward to be the first to storm the breach, shouting in a piercing voice the ominous slogan of St. Bartholomew's night: "God and the King!" The monk's example and the enthusiasm of the captains carried the assailants away. They forgot their recent panic, and turned about face to renew the struggle, shouting in chorus "God and the King!" In vain did the fire of the besieged make havoc among them. They closed ranks; they rushed forward at the double quick; they ran up the slope of the breach; they even passed beyond the chasm produced by the late mine explosion. At that moment Master Barbot called out to the Rochelois women in charge of the censer: "Quick! Quick! my daughters! Pour it down hot upon

the Catholic vermin! Anoint the devout papists with our holy and consecrated oil!"

And immediately turning to the other set of women charged with rolling stones down upon the enemy's heads, "To work, my brave women!" shouted the boilermaker. "Crush the infamous pack to dust! Exterminate the brood of Satan!"

Instantly a flood of incandescent oil, bitumen and sulphur poured down like a wide sheet of flame upon the front ranks of the besiegers. They recoiled, trampled down the ranks behind them, and emitted hideous cries of anguish. Every drop of the molten liquid bored a hole through the flesh to the bone. At the same moment enormous blocks of stone and masses of sand rolled, rapid and irresistible, down the slope of the breach, overthrowing, breaking, crushing, smashing whatever stood in their way. Joined to this murderous defense was the frightfully effective fire of our arquebusiers, who shot unerringly, at close range, themselves safe, upon a foe in disorder. And yet, however decimated and broken, the royalists stuck to the assault until they finally reached the circumvallation. The exchange of arquebus shots then ceased and a furious hand-to-hand struggle ensued with swords, cutlasses and pikes. No quarter was given. The conflict was pitiless. The Rochelois women, among them Cornelia, armed with the iron rod of the censer, and the Bombarde, brandishing her harpoon, vied with the men in deeds of daring. These Rochelois women were everywhere among the male combatants, and cut a wide swath with their weapons, wielded

by their white yet nervy arms, after the fashion of the Gallic women who made a front to the legions of Caesar. Twice did Colonel Plouernel, Captain Normand, Alderman Gargouillaud, Master Barbot, Antonicq Lebrenn, Louis Rennepont and their fellow defenders drive the Catholics back beyond the breach; twice did the Catholics, superior in numbers, drive the Rochelois back to the terrace of the rampart. Thus did the battle fluctuate, when Mayor Morrisson came to the aid of the Protestants with a fresh troop of citizens. The timely reinforcement changed the face of the struggle. For a third time rolled back beyond the breach, the assailants were precipitated into the pits or whipped down the slope. Their rout then became complete, wild, disordered. Our arquebusiers, whose fire had stopped during the hand-to-hand conflict, now took aim again, and decimated the fleeing, while our artillery mowed them down. This time the royalist rout was complete—final. Those of them who escaped the carnage, made haste to place themselves behind the shelter of their own lines.

Victory to the Rochelois! Oh, sons of Joel, victory!
Long live the Commune!

CHAPTER XI.

CAPTURE OF CORNELIA.

The victory of the Rochelois was a bloody one, and dearly did we pay for it. We numbered over eleven hundred of our people killed or disabled, men and women. Cornelia Mirant received a wound upon the neck; the Bombarde perished in the breach. Marcienne, Odelin's widow, was struck by a bullet and killed near the rampart as she was bringing aid to a wounded soldier; Antonicq's arm was run through by a pike; Colonel Plouernel was carried to his house in a nearly dying condition with two arquebus shots in his chest. Louis Rennepont, his wife Theresa, Master Barbot, the Franc-Taupin and Serpentin, his assistant in mining, came safe and sound out of the engagement. The Rochelois gathered in the dead and wounded. The Lebrenn family carried to their house the corpse of Odelin's widow. A sad funeral march! But, alas, in these distressful times the exigencies of the public weal have precedence over the holiest of sorrows. One enjoys leisure to weep over his dead only after having avenged them. The triumph of a day does not remove the apprehensions for the morrow. The royalist assault, so valiantly repelled by the people of La Rochelle, might be renewed

the very next day, due to the large reserve forces of the Catholic army, only a small portion of which took part in the attack upon the Bastion of the Evangelium. The City Council urged all the remaining able-bodied citizens to proceed without delay to repair the breach, seeing that the moon, then at her full, would light them at their work during the whole night. Fresh defenses were to be immediately raised upon the side of the assaulted bastion. Then, also, famine was staring the city in the face. Precautions were needed against that emergency. Captain Mirant's ships, which were to revictual the city and replenish its magazines of war, still failed to be despatched at sea, notwithstanding a strong wind rose from the southwest towards sunset. The last bags of beans were distributed among the combatants, whose exhaustion demanded immediate attention after the day's conflict. The supply barely sufficed to allay the pangs of hunger. Consequently, in order to insure food for the next day, the women and children were summoned by the aldermen to be at the Two Mills Gate by one o'clock in the morning, the hour of low tide, and favorable for the digging of clams. The gathering of these mollusks offered a precious resource to the besieged, but it was as perilous as battle itself. The Bay-head redoubt, raised by the royalists at the extremity of the tongue of land that ran deep into the offing, could sweep with its cannon the beach on which the clams were to be dug. Towards one in the morning the City Hall bell rang the summons. Upon hearing the agreed-upon signal, the Rochelois women of all conditions issued forth with those

of their children who were considered strong enough to join the expedition. Each was equipped with a basket. They met at the Two Mills Gate where they found the wife and two daughters of Morrisson the Mayor. They set the example of public spirit. Accordingly, while the male population of La Rochelle was busily engaged in repairing the breach, the women and children sallied forth from the city in search of provisions for all. Although smarting from her wound, and despite the protests of Antonicq, Cornelia Mirant determined to share with Theresa Rennepont the risks of the nocturnal expedition after clams. She joined the troop of women and children.

About four or five hundred Rochelois women issued forth from the Two Mills Gate, situated near the Lantern Tower, in search of clams to feed the population. They were soon upon the beach. Bounded on the right by a ledge of rocks, the beach extended to the left as far as the roadstead in front of the inner port of La Rochelle, a roadstead narrowed towards its entrance by two tongues of land, each of which was armed with a hostile redoubt. The Bayhead redoubt could at once cover with its fire the narrow entrance of the bay, and sweep the full length and breadth of the beach upon which the Rochelois women now scattered and were actively engaged in picking up at the foot of the rocks, aided by the light of the moon, the mollusks that they came in search of. At the start the Bayhead redoubt gave them no trouble, although the enemy's attention must undoubtedly have been attracted by the large number of white head-covers and scarlet skirts, the

time-honored costume of the Rochelois women. Already the baskets were handsomely filling with clams—the “celestial manna” as Mayor Morrisson called them—when suddenly a bright flash of light threw its reflection upon the small puddles of water on the beach, a detonation was heard, and a light cloud of smoke rose above the redoubt. A shiver ran over the clam-digging Rochelois women, and profound silence took the place of their previous chatter.

“The royalists have seen us!” said Theresa Rennepont to Cornelia. “They have begun firing upon us.”

“No!” cried Cornelia with mixed joy and alarm as she looked in the direction of the battery. “The enemy is firing upon my father’s brigantines! There they are! There they are, at last! God be praised! If they enter port, La Rochelle is saved from famine! Do you see them, Theresa? Do you see, yonder, their white sails glistening in the moonlight? The ships are drawing near. They come laden with victory to us!”

And the young maid, moved with a joy that overcame her alarm, raised her beautiful face to heaven, and in a voice quivering with enthusiasm exclaimed: “Oh, Lord! Guard my father’s life! Grant victory to the sacred cause of freedom!”

All thought of the clams was instantly dropped. The women pressed close to the water’s edge; with eyes fixed upon the ships, they awaited anxiously the issue of the combat upon which depended the victualing of their city. It was a solemn moment; an imposing spectacle. The further extremities of the two tongues of land that enclosed

the outer bay and left but a narrow entrance to the port, threw their black profiles upon the waves, silvered by the moon. The four brigantines were sailing in single file before the wind with a full spread of canvas, towards the dangerous passage which they had to enter under the cross fire of the enemy's redoubts. A rapid and frightful cannonade followed upon the first shot which had startled the women. Already the first one of the four vessels had entered the passage, when, despite the firmness of her nature, Cornelia emitted a cry of distress and said in consternation to Theresa :

"Look, the mast of the forward brigantine is down! It must have been struck by a ball! Good God, my father is lost if he should be on that vessel—dismantled—unable to move—exposed to the fire of the enemy!"

"All is lost! Alas, all is lost!"

"The brigantines are returning to the open sea!"

"Captain Mirant flees without giving battle! without answering the enemy's fire! without giving back a single shot!"

"Come, let us return to our clams—henceforth the only resource of La Rochelle! Let us continue picking up clams!"

"No! My father is not fleeing from battle," answered Cornelia. "By sailing back he means to tow the dismantled ship out of harm's way. No, Captain Mirant is not fleeing from battle! Do you not see that his vessels are now lying to? They are not sailing away!"

The words of Cornelia, who was long familiar with nau-

tical manoeuvres, thanks to the many voyages she made on board her father's vessels, revived the hopes of the Rochelois women. Their eyes returned with renewed anxiety to the entrance of the port. But, alas, as they did so, none perceived that soldiers of the royal army were coming out of the Bayhead redoubt, and, screened by the shadows cast by the rocks that were strewn to the right of the beach, were silently creeping nearer behind the massive blocks.

"What did I tell you?" Cornelia proceeded to explain. "The brigantines are sailing back again into the passage. The forward one, with the dismantled vessel in tow, is opening fire upon the royalist redoubt. No! Captain Mirant's cannons have not lost their speech!"

And so it was. The brigantine that had the dismantled vessel in tow sailed intrepidly into the passage, returning the enemy's fire from both broadsides. The enemy's redoubts, especially the Bayhead, being the better equipped, replied to the brigantine. Suddenly, however, a cry of terror escaped from all breasts. The brigantine that led was enveloped in a thick smoke which here and there was reddened by the ruddy glow of flames.

The agony of the women of La Rochelle redoubled. Their attention, held captive by the spectacle in the bay, prevented their noticing the Catholic soldiers, who, in increasing numbers, were approaching, hidden behind the last rocks of the ledge. Suddenly the echoes around the rocks repeated, like the reverberations of thunder, the roar of a tremendous explosion. The dismantled vessel, which carried a full load of powder, was blown into the air after

being set on fire, not by the enemy, but by Captain Mirant himself; and, as it blew up, it partly dismantled the Bay-head redoubt. The manoeuvre was successful. Not only was the redoubt crippled, but a large number of the soldiers and cannoniers who manned it perished under the ruins of their own batteries. So soon as the intrepid mariner saw one of his vessels disabled from proceeding on its voyage, he had taken her in tow; veered about with the end in view of withdrawing his flotilla from the enemy's fire long enough to enable him to perfect his newly conceived strategy; heaped inflammable materials upon the disabled ship; left the powder in her hold; transferred the sailors to his own bottom; veered again; sailed under full canvas before the wind straight into the passage; and leading in tow the floating incendiary machine which he had just improvised, set it on fire, and cut the cable just before arriving in front of the redoubt, convinced, by his intimate acquaintance with the currents along the coast, that they would drive ashore and against the redoubt the floating firebrand loaded with powder, which, when exploding, would shake the royalist battery to pieces. It happened as Captain Mirant calculated. Once the redoubt was in ruins, Captain Mirant had nothing to fear except from the inferior battery raised on the opposite tongue of land. The bold mariner now proceeded on his course followed by his remaining vessels, deliberately answering the inoffensive shots from the opposite side. Finally, with only the perforation of some of their sails, and a few bullets lodged in their sides, the three ves-

sels steered straight towards the entrance of the interior port of La Rochelle, which they were to save from famine, and re-supply with munitions of war.

“God be praised! The city is saved! May my father have come off safe and sound from the combat!” cried Cornelia, while the other Rochelois women loudly acclaimed with shouts of joy and hope the brilliant triumph of the captain.

The last of the three brigantines had just entered the port when the rattle of arquebus shots resounded from behind the rocks which bordered the beach to the right of where the Rochelois women were assembled. It rained bullets. Women and children, mortally wounded, dropped dead around Theresa and Cornelia. The unexpected attack of the royalist soldiers in ambush threw the unfortunate women into a panic. They had come wholly unarmed, bent upon gathering clams along the beach, and not looking for danger except from the batteries of Bay-head. It happened that a part of that garrison consisted of troops of the guard of the Duke of Anjou, under the command of the Marquis of Montbar, one of the Prince's favorites, and the most noted debauchee of the whole royalist army. So soon as he perceived the Rochelois women spread along the beach, the Marquis set his soldiers in motion, ordered them to slide out of the redoubt, and to creep noiselessly, under cover of the rocks and of the shadows that they projected, with the object in view of massacring a large number of the heroic women, whose intrepidity the royalists had more than once tasted to their

sorrow, and of seizing several of them for the orgies of the Duke of Anjou's tent. Accordingly, after unmasking his ambuscade by the first round of arquebus shots, the Marquis of Montbar rushed with his soldiers upon the startled and panic-stricken women, crying: "Kill all the old ones! Take the handsomest and youngest prisoners! God's blood! You can easily distinguish the pretty girls from the old and ugly! The moon is bright!"

The scene that followed was frightful to behold. Many of the "old" ones were ruthlessly butchered, as ordered by the Catholic captain. Others, having escaped the fire of the arquebuses and the ensuing carnage, finding themselves unarmed, and unable to resist the soldiers, sought safety in flight in the direction of the Two Mills Gate. Still others stood their ground and defended themselves with the energy of despair against the guards who sought to seize them. Among the latter was Cornelia, who, in the turmoil, was separated from Theresa Rennepont as both sought to reach the city. The Marquis of Montbar, happening to be near where Cornelia was struggling in the hands of several soldiers, and struck by the beauty of the girl, called out to his men: "Take care you do not hurt her—keep her alive! God's blood, she is a royal morsel! I reserve her for Monseigneur the Duke of Anjou."

Cornelia, whose wound was reopened in her struggle with the soldiers, felt herself losing strength and consciousness through loss of blood. She fell in a faint at the feet of Montbar. By his orders two of his guards raised her by her feet and shoulders, and carried her away

like a corpse. Several other Rochelois women, who were likewise carried off captive to the Bayhead redoubt, now lying in ruins through Captain Mirant's manoeuvre, were that night victims of the brutality of both captains and soldiers. Finally many others succeeded in reaching the Two Mills Gate at the moment that a company of Protestants, attracted by the sound of arquebus shots, sallied from the city and were hastening to the beach. Alas, it was too late! Already the intrushing tide was submerging the dead and the dying victims of the royalist ambush. Already the water reached the foot of the rocks and intercepted the progress of the Rochelois. They could not pursue the enemy who, among other prisoners, carried away the inanimate body of Captain Mirant's daughter at the very hour that the daring mariner weighed anchor in the port of La Rochelle amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DUKE OF ANJOU.

The headquarters of the royal army were at the suburb of Font, now in ruins. The Duke of Anjou, brother of King Charles IX, occupied at Font, in the center of the royal encampment, a house that went by the name of the "Reservoir," since within its yard lay the reservoir into which the waters were gathered that the now destroyed aqueduct conducted into La Rochelle. The Prince's headquarters, although wrecked by the war, were repaired, and made fit for the royal guest, thanks to the industry of his valets, who upholstered and equipped the ruins with a mass of tapestries and furniture which the pack-mules carried in the wake of the army. The Prince's oratory, where, either in sacrilegious derision, or perhaps yielding to a mixture of fanaticism and lewdness, he both performed his orisons and indulged his debaucheries, was tapestried in violet velvet, garlanded with fringes that were gathered up by gold and silver tassels. Daylight never penetrated the voluptuous retreat, which only a vermillion chandelier illumined with its candles of perfumed wax. On one side of the apartment stood a prayer-stool surmounted with an ivory crucifix; on the opposite side was a thickly cush-

ioned lounge. A Turkish carpet covered the floor. A velvet portiere, closed at this moment, communicated with an inside room.

It was about eight in the evening. Cornelia Mirant, captured on the beach of La Rochelle the night before by the Marquis of Montbar, had just been introduced by him into the oratory of the Duke of Anjou. A feverish agitation imparted an unwonted glow to the countenance of the young girl. Her eyes glistened; her beauty was particularly radiant; a certain coquetish touch was noticeable in the arrangement of her hair; her Rochelois clothing, torn to shreds during the previous night's encounter, had been changed for a robe of poppy-red brocade. A broad embroidered scarf supported and concealed her right hand. The wound she received the day before on the neck had been dressed with care by one of the Duke's own surgeons. Monsieur Montbar—a youth barely twenty years of age, but whose delicate features were prematurely blighted by incontinence—had exchanged his war armor for the apparel of the court. His hair was artistically curled. From his ears hung a pair of earrings encrusted with precious stones; jet black frills hung down from his wrists and encased his hands; a short mantle was thrown over his shoulders; tight-fitting hose and a toque garnished with a brooch of rubies completed his dainty outfit. The Marquis had just brought Cornelia into the oratory, and was saying to her: “My pretty saucebox, you are now in the oratory of the Prince of Anjou, brother of our well-beloved King Charles IX.”

“One feels as if in a palace of fairies!” answered Cornelia looking around with feigned and childish wonderment. “Oh, what splendid tapestries! What gorgeous ornaments! It seems I must be dreaming, monseigneur! Can it be possible that the Prince, so great a Prince, deigns to cast his eyes upon so poor a girl as I?”

“Come, my pretty lassy, do not cast down your eyes. Be sincere—you shall ever after feel the glory of having been, but for one day, the mistress of the King of France’s brother. But what are you thinking about?”

“Monseigneur, all this that is happening to me seems a dream. No! You are making sport of a poor girl. Monseigneur the Duke of Anjou does not think of me.”

“You will see him in a minute, I assure you; he is just now in conference with Fra Hervé, his confessor.” And turning towards the still closed portiere, he proceeded: “I hear the curtains drawn back, and steps in the neighboring room—it is monseigneur.”

Hardly had the Marquis pronounced these last words when the drapery was raised, giving passage to the Duke of Anjou. The Prince was then twenty-eight years of age; overindulgence had weakened his gait, and imparted to his effeminate physiognomy a wily aspect, and a suggestion of cruelty and hypocrisy to his smile; added to this, excessive ornamentation rendered his appearance trivial and even sinister. Monsieur Montbar took a few steps towards the Duke, whispered in his ear and pointed to Cornelia. The girl thrilled with suppressed emotion; her right hand, hidden in the wide folds of her scarf, seemed

to twitch convulsively and involuntarily to rise to her bosom. She contemplated the Prince with mixed horror and curiosity. Her eyes glistened, but she quickly lowered them before the libidinous glance of the Prince, who, while speaking with the Marquis, regarded her covetously. He said to his favorite: "You are right, my pet; her beauty gives promise of great delight; leave us alone; I may call you in again."

The Marquis of Montbar withdrew. Left alone with Cornelia, the Duke of Anjou stepped to the lounge, stretched himself out upon it nonchalantly with his head resting on the cushion, pulled a gold comfit-holder from his pocket, took a pastille out of it, masticated it, and after a few minutes of silent revery said to the Rochelois:

"Approach, my pretty girl!"

Cornelia raised her eyes heavenward. Her countenance became inspired. A slight pallor overcast it. Her glistening eyes grew moist. Distress was stamped on her features as she muttered to herself: "Adieu, father! Adieu, Antonicq! The hour of self-sacrifice has sounded for me!"

Surprised at the immobility of Cornelia, whose face he could not see distinctly, the Duke of Anjou sat up and repeated impatiently: "Approach! You seem to be deaf, as well as mute. I told you to approach. By God's death, hurry up! Come and lie down beside me!"

Cornelia, without the Prince's noticing her motions, disengaged her arm from the folds of the scarf, and stepped deliberately towards the lounge on which he had again stretched himself out. Again he motioned her to approach,

saying: "Come here, I tell you. I would fear to damn myself forever by contact with such a satanic heretic as you, but for Fra Hervé's promise to give me absolution after our amorous encounter."

And rising from his soft lounge, the Prince opened his arms to Cornelia. The girl approached; she bowed down; then, quick as thought she seized the Duke by the hair with her left hand, at the same time drawing out of the folds of her scarf her right hand armed with a short sharp steel dagger with which she struck the Prince several blows in the region of the heart, crying: "Die, butcher of my brothers! Die, cowardly assassin of women and children!"

The Duke of Anjou wore under his jacket a coat of mail of steel so close meshed and well tempered that Cornelia's dagger broke under the blows that she dealt, while the frightened Prince called out for help, gasping: "Murder! She assassinates me! Murder!"

At the Prince's cries and the noise of the struggle between them the Marquis of Montbar, together with several domestics of the royal household, hurried into the oratory, from the contiguous room where they always stood in waiting; they flung themselves upon Cornelia and seized her by the wrists, while the Prince, freed from the grasp of the brave maid, ran livid and demented to his prayer-stool, where he threw himself down upon his knees, and, with lips white with terror, shivering in every part of his body, and with his teeth clattering in his head, he stammered: "Almighty God, thanks be to Thee! Thou hast protected Thy unworthy servitor!" And bending low, till

his forehead touched the ground, the terrified libertine smote his chest exclaiming: "*Mea culpa! mea culpa! mea maxima culpa!*"¹

While the Duke of Anjou was thus giving thanks to his God for having escaped the dagger of the young Protestant girl, she, held firmly by the seigneurs and retainers who heaped upon her insults and threats of death, stood erect with proud front, defied them with steady eyes, and preserved a disdainful silence. Holding himself responsible for the conduct of the Huguenot girl, whom he had taken to his master's bed, the Marquis of Montbar drew his sword and was about to run her through, when the Prince, rising from his prayer-stool cried out: "Do not kill her, my pet! Oh, no, she must not die so soon!"

The favorite re-sheathed his sword. The Duke of Anjou, now pale with rage, staggered to his lounge and sat down. He wiped the perspiration from his forehead, cast a look of implacable hatred upon Cornelia, and after regarding her in silence for a moment, said: "Well, my pretty lass—so you meant to assassinate me!"

"Yes—because you are the worthy son of Catherine De Medici, the worthy brother of Charles IX; because you suborned an assassin to poison Coligny!"

The Duke of Anjou remained unmoved, and remarked with a cruel smile: "You are a resolute girl, resolute in word and deed. I came near learning as much at my cost! What is your name?"

"Cornelia Mirant."

¹ "I am gully, I am gully, I am very gully."

“What! You are the daughter of the mariner who last night almost threw into utter ruins our Bayhead redoubt? You are the daughter of the devilish Huguenot who has just revictualled La Rochelle?”

The Cordelier Fra Hervé had just raised the portiere and was about to step into the oratory, when he heard the young girl declare her name to be Cornelia Mirant. The monk immediately stopped. Half-hidden by the tapestry, he remained on the threshold of the room and listened to the rest of the dialogue between the Huguenot girl and the Prince.

“You must be a girl of honorable habits. How came you to yield so readily to the propositions of the Marquis?”

“In the hope of being able to strike you dead with the dagger that I found in the tent of your officer,” boldly answered Cornelia.

“A new Judith, you seem to see in me a modern Holofernes! Everything about you breathes courage, honor, chastity. By God! I am becoming interested in you. You have wished my death—well, I wish that you live. So brave a girl should not die.”

“What, monseigneur! Shall this wretch escape punishment!” cried the Marquis of Montbar, while Cornelia thought to herself with a shudder: “I dread the clemency of the son of Catherine De Medici more than I do his ire.”

“Yes, my pet,” answered the Duke of Anjou to his minion; “to-day I am in a merciful mood. I shall practice the evangelical morality of Jesus our Savior; I shall

return good for evil! I wish well to this haughty republican girl, worthy of the days of Sparta and Rome! I wish the brave girl so well that—here is my sentence: Pinion the virgin's arms firmly; have her watched carefully in order that she may not do away with herself; and then throw her to the common soldiers of the camp. By God's death! The gay fellows will have a dainty repast! Take away from my sight the immaculate virgin, who will not be a virgin much longer!"

"Oh! Mercy! Mercy! Death sooner! The most horrible death! Mercy!" stammered Cornelia, aroused from her stupor; and dropping upon her knees at the feet of the Duke of Anjou, she raised to him her hands in supplication, and implored in heartrending accents: "Martyrdom! For mercy's sake, martyrdom!"

The Prince turned to his favorites: "Let the pretty heretic be taken to the garrison on the spot—on the spot, my pets. We shall follow and witness the sport of our soldiers."

Already was Cornelia being dragged away when Fra Hervé suddenly interposed. The courtiers bowed low before the confessor of the Duke of Anjou.

"My son," said the Cordelier, stepping straight towards the Prince, "revoke the order you have given. The heretic should not be thrown to the soldiers."

"Father," broke in the Duke of Anjou with exasperation, "are you aware the girl tried to assassinate me?"

"I know it all—both the attempted crime and its failure. You shall revoke your order."

“God’s blood! Reverend Father, seeing you know it all, I declare, notwithstanding my profound respect for you, that I insist upon my revenge. My orders shall be executed.”

“My son, you are but a child,” answered Fra Hervé in a tone of disdainful superiority; and leaning towards the Prince the monk whispered in his ear, while Cornelia, now recognizing Fra Hervé, shuddered from head to foot.

“I dreaded the clemency of the Prince—the monk’s mercy terrifies me. Oh, Lord God, my only hope lies in You!”

“As God lives, my reverend Father, you are right! I am but a child!” cried the Duke of Anjou, beaming with infernal joy after listening to the confidential remarks whispered to him by the monk. He then again addressed his favorites: “Take the heretic girl to the reverend Father’s cell. But, good Father, keep a watchful eye upon her. Her life is now as precious to you as to me.”

Cornelia was led away upon the steps of the fratricidal monk.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BILL IS PAID.

Fra Hervé lived in the house of the Reservoir of the Font suburb in a sort of cellar that was vaulted, somber and damp as a cave, and which one time served as the direct communication to the aqueduct by means of a stone staircase, closed from above by a trap door. The monk's gloomy lodging was reached through a corridor that opened into one of the rooms situated on the ground floor, and, since the siege, transformed into a hall reserved for the officers of the Duke of Anjou.

The interior of Fra Hervé's retreat revealed the austerity of the man's cenobitic habits. A wooden box, filled with ashes and resembling a coffin, served him for bed. A stool stood before a rough hewn table on which were an hour-glass, a breviary, a skull and an iron lamp. The latter cast a pale light over the cave, in a corner of which a heavy trap door masked the now disused stone staircase, the entrance to which had been walled from within by the royalists, in order to prevent a surprise from that quarter, seeing the water was turned off.

Taken to the gloomy cell, Cornelia found herself alone with the monk. She was aware there was no hope of es-

cape or of mercy for her. The cell had no issue other than the corridor that connected with the hall of the Prince's officers of the guard, which was constantly crowded with the Prince's retinue. Fra Hervé's face was emaciated. His forehead, over which a few locks of grey hair tumbled in disorder, was bony and lustrous as the skull upon his table. Except for the somber luster of his hollow eyes, one would at first sight take the scarred and fleshless head of the monk for that of a corpse. He was seated on the stool. Cornelia, standing before him, shuddered with horror. She found herself alone with the monster who, at the battle of Roche-la-Belle, cut the throat of Odelin, the father of Antonicq, her betrothed. Fra Hervé remained meditative for a moment, and then addressed the young girl in a hollow voice:

"You are aware of the fate that Monseigneur the Duke of Anjou reserved for you in punishment for your attempted murder? You were to be thrown to the soldiers of the garrison—"

"I am in your power—what do you want of me?" interrupted Cornelia.

"The salvation of your soul."

"My soul belongs to God. I have lived and I shall die in my faith, and in execration for the Catholic church."

"This is but another evidence of the impiety of the Lebrenn family, a family of reprobates, of accursed people, to whom this poor creature was soon to be joined by even closer bonds than those that already join her to them!"

"What! You know—?"

“A Rochelois prisoner informed me that you were the betrothed of Antonicq, the son of him who was my brother.”

“Monk, I shall not invoke to you the bonds of family—you have reddened your hands with your brother’s blood. I shall not invoke your pity—you are pitiless. But, seeing that no heretics have been burnt for quite a while, I hope you will consent to cause me to be condemned to the pyre for a hardened heretic. I abhor the Pope, his Church and his priests! I abhor them as I do Kings. I execrate all monks, and the whole tonsured fraternity.”

Cornelia calculated upon exasperating the Cordelier to fury, and thus to wrest from him the order to be taken to immediate execution—her only refuge from the threats of the Duke of Anjou. But the unfortunate girl deceived herself. Fra Hervé listened to her impassively, and resumed:

“You are cunning. You aspire to martyrdom because death will protect you from the outrage that you fear. I am not your dupe. There will be no pyre for you!”

“Woe is me!” murmured the young girl, seeing her last hope dashed. “Woe is me! I am lost!”

“You are saved—if you will!” Fra Hervé proceeded to say.

“What do I hear?” cried Cornelia perceiving a new glimmer of hope. “What must I do? Speak!”

“Publicly abjure your heresy! Renounce Satan and your father! Humbly implore our holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church to receive you into her bosom at her

mercy and discretion. The soilure, now upon you, being washed off, you shall take the eternal vows and shall bury in the shadow of the cloister the criminal life you have led in the past. Choose: either immediate abjuration, or—to the soldiers. These pious Catholics will slake their amorousness upon you.”

“Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord!” exclaimed Cornelia, seized with terror, and her head reeling. “Am I awake? Am I dreaming? Can a man, a priest, outrage a woman’s modesty to such an extent? A curse upon you, wretch!”

“What audacity! ‘Outrage’ a ‘woman’!” put in Fra Hervé with a wild and diabolical guffaw. “Is there such a thing as a heretic being a ‘woman’? No! A heretic is a female, like the she-wolf in the jungle. Is there such a thing as outrage with a she-wolf?”

“Mercy!” stammered Cornelia in despair. “Have mercy upon me!”

“No mercy!” answered Fra Hervé sententiously. “You shall enter a cloister, or—you shall be given over to the lust of the soldiers. It shall be so! And now, keep your eyes upon this hour-glass,” added the monk, pointing to the instrument for marking time that stood near the dead man’s skull. “Should you, when the water is run down, not have decided instantly to abjure and to depart this very night to a convent, you shall be delivered to the Catholic soldiers!”

And the monk, resting his elbow on the table and his chin on his hand, remained silent as he looked with fixed eyes at the running of the water from the upper into the

lower bulb of the clepsydra, while fondling his heavy chaplet with the hand that remained free.

“What am I to do?” the Protestant girl asked herself. “What am I to do in this extremity? Almighty God, have mercy upon me!”

“One-half of the water has run down!” observed Fra Hervé in his sepulchral voice. “Decide! There is still time!”

At the lugubrious announcement Cornelia’s mind began to wander; still, one lucid thought rose clear above the growing vertigo that obsessed the young girl’s thoughts—the thought of putting an end to her life. Her bewildered eyes sought to penetrate here and there the dark recesses of the cell, which the dim light of the lamp threw heavily into the shade. They sought mechanically for some article that she might use as a weapon with which to inflict death upon herself. Suddenly Cornelia’s eyes bulged out in amazement. She held her breath and remained petrified, thinking herself the sport of a vision. Fra Hervé, because of his eyes being fixed upon the hour-glass and his back turned to the trap door that masked the stone stairs leading to the aqueduct, could not take in what was happening. But Cornelia saw the trap door rise noiselessly, inexplicably; presently, in the measure that it rose, the two hands and then the two arms that raised it heaved in sight; simultaneously there appeared the top of an iron casque, and an instant later the face under the casque—and Cornelia recognized Antonicq—her betrothed, Antonicq Lebrenn!

“The water will run out before you have time to say an

Ave," warned the Cordelier in a hollow voice, without removing his eyes from the clepsydra, and he added: "Heretic! Heretic! Make haste! Abjure your idolatry! If not you shall be thrown to the soldiers, you shall be given to the good Catholics of the whole army!"

The imminence of the danger and the prospect of safety restored the young girl's presence of mind. The instant her eyes discovered her betrothed she became silent, motionless, watchful. The last threats of the monk reached Antonicq's ears at the moment when he had completely raised the trap door, and wrung from him despite himself an exclamation of fury. Fra Hervé turned sharply around and bounded from his seat in bewilderment at the sight of the young man leaping into the room from underground. Cornelia, in full control of herself, and remembering that the monk's cell was separated from the hall of the officers of the guard by a short corridor of only about twenty paces, ran back to the door that opened on the corridor intending to close it, and bolt it from within. Fra Hervé divined the young girl's purpose, and, meaning to prevent it, precipitated himself upon her. That instant Antonicq reached his betrothed, disengaged her from the clutches of the monk, seized him by the shoulders and flung him back violently. Free once more, Cornelia quickly carried out her purpose. She closed the door gently, and bolted and barred it from within, thus shielding herself and Antonicq behind a barrier that the officers of the Duke of Anjou would consume considerable time before they could succeed in breaking down. At the very moment that Cornelia closed

the door Fra Hervé sounded the alarm in a sufficiently penetrating voice to be heard in the hall of the guards:

“Help! Treason! To arms! Help! The Huguenots!”

But instantly the Cordelier’s voice expired upon his lips. A vigorous hand seized him by the throat, the blade of a dagger shone in the air and twice plunged into the fratricide’s breast. He fell over backward, bathed in his own blood, straightened himself for an instant, foamed at the mouth, and breathed his last;—and a muffled voice cried “*Twenty-five*—the bill is paid. Now I can die in peace. My sister and her daughter are avenged! The ransom of the crime is paid in full.”

The Franc-Taupin had emerged from under ground after Antonicq, and preceded Captain Mirant, who rushed to his daughter’s embrace while the Franc-Taupin stabbed the fratricidal monk to death.

“Let us flee!” said Cornelia to her father and her betrothed, after responding to their demonstrations of tenderness. “The monk’s cries reached the hall of the guards at the head of the corridor. I hear them coming. Do you hear those steps? The sound of those approaching voices?”

“We have nothing to fear. Your presence of mind, my dear girl, has insured our safe retreat. They will find it no easy task to enter the cell. The door is thick, the bolt solid,” remarked the Franc-Taupin, examining and fastening more tightly the bolt with imperturbable calmness. “Cornelia, Antonicq, and you, Captain Mirant, descend to the aqueduct quickly, and wait for me just this side of the mine that I planted in the underground passage, and near

which Master Barbot and the sailors are waiting for our signal.”

Turning to Serpentin, the apprentice, who also came in after Captain Mirant the Franc-Taupin said:

“Come here, my gay fellow—bring me the little machine and implements. We shall serve up a peppery broth to the royalists.”

Cornelia, her father and Antonicq hastened to descend the stairs of the underground passage that the trap door masked. Hardly had they disappeared, leaving the Franc-Taupin and the apprentice behind in Fra Hervé’s cell, when they heard violent knocks given at the door, and a confused noise of voices calling out:

“Fra Hervé! Fra Hervé!”

The Marquis of Montbar was heard saying: “A minute ago he cried: ‘Help! Treason!’ He now makes no answer. The witch may have strangled the reverend Father!”

And the voices outside continued to cry tumultuously: “Fra Hervé! Fra Hervé! We can not get in! The door is bolted from within. The devil take it! Open to us, Fra Hervé! We come to help you!”

“Quick! Bring levers and an axe—or, better yet, let us break in the door!” the voice of the Marquis of Montbar was again heard to say. “Run for a company of my soldiers! We shall wait here. Hurry up!”

“Oh! Oh!” observed the Franc-Taupin, after silently listening to the observations from the other side of the door, to which he had glued his ears. “The royalists are inviting themselves in large numbers to the banquet that

I am preparing for them! And why not? When there is broth for five guests, there is enough for ten, if the house-keeper is economical. Just wait, my friends! My broth is cooking! It is so toothsome that a single spoonful will do the work for twenty or thirty persons."

"Master Josephin, here are the implements and the little machine," said Serpentin in a low voice, as he drew out of a bag that he brought suspended from his shoulders and handed over to the Franc-Taupin a heavy iron box about one foot long and six inches high and wide. The box, filled full with powder, was pierced in the center by a narrow slit through which a sulphured fuse was inserted. The Franc-Taupin took in his hands the redoubtable petard, examined the structure of the door minutely, and after a moment's reflection inserted the iron box with no little difficulty under the lower hinge. The Franc-Taupin then rose, and patting the apprentice upon the cheek said to him in a low voice:

"Tell me, my lad, why do I place the little machine so tightly between the floor and the hinge?"

Serpentin reflected for a moment, scratched his ear, and then reeled off his answer after the fashion of a boy who recites his lesson:

"Master, you place the little machine in that way in order that, when it blows up, it may tear up the door along with the hinge; the torn up hinge will tear up the masonry in which it is fastened; the torn up masonry will tear up a part of the wall; and the torn up wall will bring down the ceiling. As a result of all this the debris will roll down

upon the St. Bartholomew lambkins, whose flesh will have been scratched by the flying fragments of the little machine which will have been hurled in all directions, and will have whistled and ricocheted like artillery balls."

"Wise—wise answer, my lad," observed the Franc-Taupin pinching the apprentice's ear with a satisfied look. "Continue to profit by my lessons in this manner, and you will become an accomplished miner, and you then will be able to contribute handsomely towards the scattering into fragments of a goodly number of papists and royalists. Now, off with you, hurry down the stone steps, and wait for me at the bottom."

Serpentin obeyed. The Franc-Taupin knelt down at the threshold of the door, took from his belt a horn of powder and spilt along the floor a sufficient quantity to quite cover up the fuse. Thereupon, retreating on his knees, he laid down a long train of powder. The train skirted Fra Hervé's corpse and ended at the opening of the trap door, down which he descended. Josephin stopped on the stair so that only his head appeared above the level of the flooring. Listening in the direction of the door, behind which he could hear a confused noise of voices, he said to himself: "The Catholic vermin is swarming behind the door, but I still have time to cut my *twenty-fifth* notch."

He took the little stick which he habitually carried hung on a string from a buttonhole of his jacket, pulled out his dagger, and cutting into the wood, the aged soldier said:

"Hena, my sister's daughter, was plunged *twenty-five* times into the flames by the priests of the Church of Rome.

I have just put to death my twenty-fifth Roman Catholic and Apostolic priest!"

As he murmured these words to himself, Josephin contemplated the corpse of Fra Hervé, stretched out upon his back in a pool of blood, with stiffened arms, clenched fists and half bent knees. The light from the lamp shed its pale luster upon the monk's face upon which the agony of death was still stamped. The jaws were close set; foam oozed out at the lips; the corpse's glassy and fixed eyes still seemed to preserve their threatening aspect from the depth of their cavities.

"Oh!" exclaimed the Franc-Taupin with a terrible sigh, "How many times, alas! how very many times, seated at the hearth of my poor sister, when the unfortunate being who lies there dead and still foaming at his mouth with rage was a little boy, how often I took him and his younger brother Odelin upon my knees! caressed their little blonde heads! kissed their plump cheeks! Joining in their infantine amusements, I entertained them, I gladdened them with my Franc-Taupin songs! In those days Hervé equalled his brother in the gentleness of his character and the kindness of his heart. The two were the joy, the pride, the hope of my sister and of Christian! But one day a monk, a demon, Fra Girard, took possession of the mind of unhappy Hervé, dominated it, led it astray, corrupted it, and debased it forever! Oh! priests of Rome! priests of Rome! A curse upon you! Alas! out of the sweet boy, whom I loved so dearly, you made a bloodthirsty fanatic, a wrathful madman, a fratricide—and it became my duty

to smite him with my dagger—him—him—my own sister's child!"

The Franc-Taupin was drawn from his reverie by the ringing sound of blows struck with maces and the butts of arquebuses against the door from without, and splintering its woodwork, while, rising above the tumult, the voice of the Marquis of Montbar was heard crying: "To work! Strike hard! Harder still! Break in the door!"

"Well! The hour has come for the St. Bartholomew lambkins to dance in the air!" said the Franc-Taupin. Without hurrying, without losing his calmness, he pulled from his pocket a tinder box, a wick and a flint and steel. Striking upon the flint with the iron, he hummed between his teeth the old song that the memories of Odelin's and Hervé's infancy had recalled to his mind:

"A Franc-Taupin had an ash-tree bow,
All eaten with worms, and all knotted its cord;
His arrow was made out of paper, and plumed,
And tipped at the end with a capon's spur.
Derideron, vignette on vignon! Derideron!"

During the song of the old soldier, who calmly continued to strike at the flint, the blows aimed at the door redoubled in violence. Presently it was heard to crack, yield, break, and one of its fragments fell inside the apartment. Immediately thereupon Josephin applied the lighted wick to the train of powder and vanished underground letting down the heavy trap door over his head. The train of powder took fire, shot along its course as rapid as a flash

of lightning, and reached the fuse of the petard, which exploded with a great crash at the very moment when the door, finally broken through, offered a passage to the Marquis of Montbar, closely followed by his henchmen. Like himself, they were blown up, mutilated or killed by the fragments of the iron box which flew into pieces. The masonry of the door, being torn down by the explosion, ripped the rest of the wall after it, bringing down the ceiling which fell in a heap upon the heads of the royalists.

Cornelia, Antonicq, Master Barbot, Captain Mirant and six resolute mariners who accompanied him but whose help was not needed, were soon joined at the bottom of the aqueduct by the apprentice and the Franc-Taupin. Josephin forthwith blew up the mine that he had laid at that place in order completely to obstruct the passage of the royalists in case they attempted to pursue the fugitives. The whole party soon arrived safe and sound at La Rochelle, where they met Louis Rennepont and his wife, a prey to mortal anxiety upon the issue of the enterprise, which had that morning been planned, upon Theresa's bringing back from the beach the news of Cornelia's capture and reservation for the Duke of Anjou.

The bloody defeat, sustained by the royalists at the assault of the Bastion of the Evangelium, was the presage of the raising of the siege of La Rochelle. After two other stubbornly contested encounters, at which the royalist forces were again repulsed, the Duke of Anjou commissioned several seigneurs as parliamentarians to the Roch-

elois with propositions of peace. The majority of the City Council took the stand that the Huguenots refused to lay down arms until a new royal edict consecrated their rights and their liberty. The minority of the City Council, aware of the worthlessness of all royal edicts, favored breaking with royalty for all time. The view of the majority prevailed. Commissioners were appointed by both sides, to agree upon the bases of a new edict. The Catholic commissioners were the Seigneur of La Vauguyon, René of Villequier, Francis of La Baume, the Count of Suze, the Seigneur of Malicorne, Marshal Montluc, Armand of Gontaut-Biron, and the Count of Retz. The Rochelois commissioners were two bourgeois, Morrisson the Mayor, and Captain Gargouillaud. The reformers stoutly maintained their position, and stipulated for the same, not in the name of their own city only, but in the name of all the reformers of the Protestant Republican Union. These stipulations were subsequently rejected by the Union, so soon as they became known, upon the just ground of the rest of the Union's not having been consulted, and of its declining to recognize the royal authority. Thus, thanks to their bold insurrection and their heroic resistance the Rochelois imposed upon Charles IX the new edict of July 15, 1573. This edict consecrated and extended all the rights previously conquered by the reformers. A clause in this edict, which was a crushing document to the Catholic party, provided: "That all armed insurrections which took place AFTER THE NIGHT OF AUGUST 23, 1572, are amnes-tied." Thus Charles IX was made to admit that the re-

formers had justly drawn the sword to avenge the crime of St. Bartholomew's night!

Thus the siege of La Rochelle was disgracefully raised by the Catholic army. This expedition cost the King immense sums of money, and he lost in the course of the several assaults upon the city, and also from sickness, about twenty-two thousand men. Among the seigneurs and captains killed during the siege were the Duke of Aumale, Clermont, Tallard, Cosseins, Du Guast, etc., besides over three hundred subaltern officers.

Thus you see, Oh, sons of Joel! the glorious issue to the Rochelois of the siege of their city once more consecrates this truth, so often inscribed in the annals of our plebeian family: "Never falter! Let us struggle, let us battle without flagging. It is fatedly decreed that, only and ever through force, arms in hand, through INSURRECTION, we can conquer our freedom and our rights, which are ever denied to us, ignored and violated by our eternal foes—ROYALTY AND THE CHURCH OF ROME."

EPILOGUE.

On this day, the 29th of September, 1609, I, Antonicq Lebrenn, now in my sixty-first year, close, on our farm of Karnak, this legend of our family, which is the continuation of the narrative written and bequeathed to us by my grandfather Christian the printer and friend of Robert Estienne.

Immediately upon the raising of the siege of La Rochelle I married Cornelia Mirant. Shortly after I put into execution a project that I had long been fondly nursing—that of moving to Brittany and establishing myself in the neighborhood of the cradle of my family. Before leaving La Rochelle, Colonel Plouernel, who recovered from his wounds sustained in the siege, renewed his offer of leasing out to me a farm belonging to the seigniorial estate of Mezlean, a patrimony of his wife's father, and known as the Karnak farm by reason of its being in the close neighborhood of the druid stones that bear that name. These stones are still extant, ranged in wide avenues, as they stood in the days of Julius Caesar, when our ancestress Hena, the Virgin of the Isle of Sen, offered herself to the gods as a holocaust, in the hope of causing them to render the arms of the Gauls victorious in their impending struggle for independence. I accepted Colonel Plouernel's

offer, an offer that also pleased Cornelia and her father, who, as he continued almost constantly to travel by water between La Rochelle and Vannes, a port located near Karnak, foresaw, as happened in fact, that he would spend near us all the time that he did not spend aboard ship. I sold my armorer's shop. Leaving my sister Theresa and her husband Louis Rennepont at La Rochelle, where the latter practiced the profession of law, and taking with us my uncle the Franc-Taupin, who promised to himself the pleasure of rocking our children on his knees and singing to them his Franc-Taupin songs, as he had done to my father Odelin, my ill-starred aunt Hena, and my uncle Hervé of sad memory, we departed from La Rochelle and settled down on our farm of Karnak on October 20 of the year 1573.

My sister Theresa and her husband Louis Rennepont still reside in the old Protestant city. Every year they come to see us. Thanks to the numerous trips that his profession compelled him to make to Paris, my brother-in-law came in contact with several Huguenots who were well informed on current events. His conversations with them, together with extracts from several books that were published concerning leading public men and important occurrences, furnished him with copious materials which he left with me. These materials enable me here to make a summary sketch of the leading events since the siege of La Rochelle was raised:

The edict of pacification of La Rochelle was not wholly satisfactory to the Huguenots of the other provinces. The

example of the Low Countries, then in successful revolt against the monarchic-clerical power of Spain, and organized upon the republican pattern, inspired their brothers in France to renewed efforts. The "Politicals" gained new recruits every day. The Prince of Condé, ashamed of his act of desertion, fled the court and issued a manifesto from Strasburg repudiating his abjuration. Measures were in train to renew the war, and to overthrow Charles IX, when his death gave a new turn to affairs.

The monster expired in 1574, barely twenty-four years of age and haunted by his bloody deeds. "Oh! nurse, nurse!" he would cry in agonies of terror; "Oh! nurse, how much blood—it is St. Bartholomew's blood! Oh! how many murders—how many victims struggling to escape under the sword. I see them—Oh! what wicked councillors I had! Oh, God! Oh, God! have mercy upon me!"¹

Charles IX was followed by his brother the Duke of Anjou, who, in the meantime, had been elected King of Poland. Apprized by his mother of his brother's decease, he fled his Polish kingdom, and mounted the French throne under the name of Henry III. True to his family traditions, Henry III sought at first to violate the Edict of La Rochelle. Finding this act of treachery unfeasible, he vacillated between extreme reaction and progress. This course earned for him the suspicion of the Catholic clergy and he was assassinated by a Dominican monk, James Clement, in 1589.

¹ *Register Journal of L'Etoile*, p. 34.

War again broke out, with Henry of Bearn now at the head of the Huguenots, to whom he returned during the reign of Henry III. Henry of Bearn now claimed the crown by inheritance as Henry IV, besieged Paris, and was finally crowned, but not until he once more abjured Protestantism. His reign was benign and favorable to the Reformation. In 1598 the Edict of Nantes was signed, granting the Huguenots absolute freedom of conscience. The policy of Henry IV enraged the priesthood, and he also fell a victim to the assassin's knife. The assassin's name was Francis Ravailac. "Nine days after the death of Henry IV, on Tuesday, May 23, 1610, an altercation took place between Monsieur Leomenie and Father Cotton in full council. Leomenie said to the Jesuit that it was he *and his Society of Jesus that murdered the King*. On that same day, Ravailac, being interrogated by the commission, answered *in accordance with the maxims of the Jesuits Mariana, Becanus and others, whose writings recommend the killing of a tyrant.*"

The death of Henry IV conjured away the danger that Rome, the Empire and Spain saw themselves threatened with—the Christian Republic and the perpetual peace of Europe. The fresh murder, also committed at the instigation of the disciples of Loyola, had fatal consequences. But sooner or later Right triumphs over Wrong, Justice over Iniquity. Therefore, Oh, sons of Joel! no faltering. Some day the Universal Republic will unfurl the red banner of freedom, and will break the yoke both of the Roman

Church and of this royalty that has oppressed Gaul for so many centuries.

As to our own family, Cornelia Mirant with whom I have now been married thirty-seven years, gave me after twenty years of our wedded life, a son whom I have named Stephan. We have lived on our farm near the sacred stones of Karnak, and not far from Craigh, the high hill upon which, according to our family traditions, stood the house of our ancestor Joel in the days of Julius Caesar. My uncle the Franc-Taupin remained with us to the end of his long and eventful life. He died on the 12th of November, 1589.

My brother-in-law Louis Rennepont continues to exercise his profession at La Rochelle. The youngest of his sons, Marius Rennepont, embraced the career of merchant mariner and sailed away, when still very young, on board a merchant vessel commanded by one of Captain Mirant's friends. Captain Mirant died in 1593. That same year we lost our old friend Master Barbot, the boilermaker of the isle of Rhe.

I preserved amicable relations to the end with Colonel Plouernel, since the battle of Roche-la-Belle the head of his house. Shortly before his death we visited upon his invitation the old Castle of Plouernel, where our ancestor Den-Brao the mason was buried alive together with other serfs in the donjon constructed by themselves, and out of which Fergan the Quarryman, Den-Brao's son, rescued his own child, a poor boy whose blood was to assist the incantations of Azenor the Pale, the mistress of Neroweg VI.

Nothing is left to-day of that feudal edifice but imposing ruins. Its place is now taken by a magnificent castle built in the style of the Renaissance, and raised at the foot of the mountain. Colonel Plouernel's son remained faithful to the Reformed religion, but, after his death, his son abjured Protestantism and took up his residence at the court of Louis XIII, the successor of Henry IV, with whom he became a favorite. The new head of the family never returned to his own castle, which, together with the vast domains attached to it, is ruled by the bailiffs of the seignories of Plouernel and Mezlean.

Once, on the occasion of a trip to the port of Vannes, I met a traveler just arrived from Germany, who informed me of the death of Prince Charles of Gerolstein, a descendant of one of the branches of our plebeian family whose ancestor was Gaëlo, one of the companions of old Rolf, the chief of the Northman pirates. Prince Charles left a son behind, heir of his principality, who remains faithful to the Reformed religion.

Our life has run peaceful and happy at this place. We cultivate our fields, and they satisfy our wants. My son Stephan, now sixteen years of age, helps me in my field labors. He is of a kind, timid and diffident disposition, although born of so intrepid a mother as Cornelia. He will, I hope, live peacefully here, unless the civil discords, which already begin to threaten the minority of Louis XIII, should extend into Brittany.

I shall here close this narrative which my grandfather Christian the printer began under the reign of Francis I.

I shall join it to the archives and relics of our family together with the pocket Bible printed by my grandfather, and which his daughter Hena, baptized in religion Sister St. Frances-in-the-Tomb, held in her hands before she was plunged twenty-five times into the flames on the 21st of January, 1535, under the eyes of King Francis I, to the greater glory of the Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church.

THE END.

JUL 16 1910

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