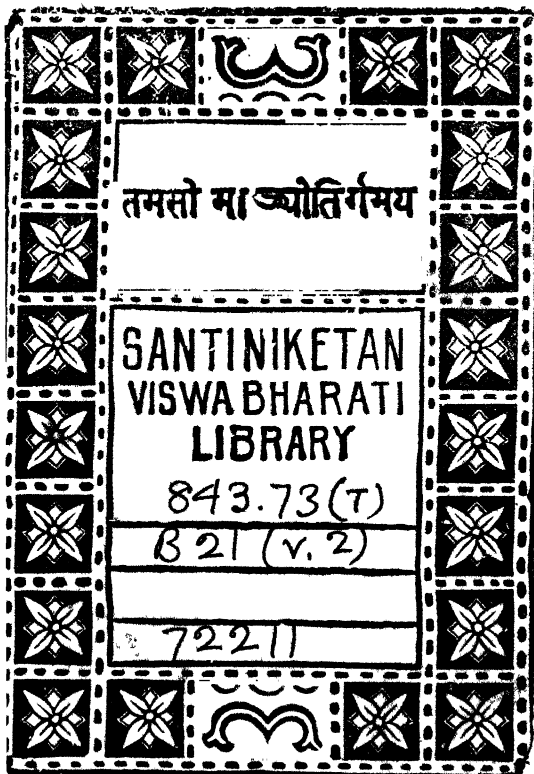
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From his window he looked out on the Loire

THE WORKS OF

HONORÉ DE BALZAC

WITH INTRODUCTIONS BY

GEORGE SAINTSBURY

IN EIGHTEEN VOLUMES

VOLUME II

CATHERINE DE' MEDICI
FAREWELL
SERAPHITA
LOUIS LAMBERT
GAMBARA

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ABOUT CATHERINE DE' MEDICI

PREFACE

THIS book (as to which it is important to remember the *Sur* if injustice is not to be done to the intentions of the author) has plenty of interest of more kinds than one; but it is perhaps more interesting because of the place it holds in Balzac's works than for itself. He had always considerable hankerings after the historical novel: his early and lifelong devotion to Scott would sufficiently account for that. More than one of the *Œuvres de Jeunesse* attempts the form in a more or less conscious way; *The Chouans*, the first successful book, definitely attempts it; but by far the most ambitious attempt is to be found in the book before us. It is most probable that it was of this, if of anything of his own, that Balzac was thinking when, in 1846, he wrote disdainfully to Mme. Hanska about Dumas, and expressed himself towards *Les Trois Mousquetaires* (which had whiled him through a day of cold and inability to work) nearly as ungratefully as Carlyle did towards Captain Marryat. And though it is, let it be repeated, a mistake, and a rather unfair mistake, to give such a title to the book as might induce readers to regard it as a single and definite novel, of which Catherine is the heroine, though it is made up of three parts written at very different times, it has a unity which the introduction shows to some extent, and which a rejected preface given by M. de Lovenjoul shows still better.

To understand this, we must remember that Balzac, though not exactly an historical scholar, was a considerable student of history; and that, although rather an amateur politician, he was a constant thinker and writer on political subjects. We must add to these remembrances the fact of his intense interest in all such matters as Alchemy, the Elixir of Life, and so forth, to which the sixteenth century in general, and Catherine de' Medici in particular, were known to be devoted. All these interests of his met in the present book, the parts of which appeared in inverse order, and the genesis

of which is important enough to make it desirable to incorporate some of the usual bibliographical matter in the substance of this preface. The third and shortest, *Les Deux Rêves*, a piece partly suggestive of the famous *Prophecy of Cazotte* and other legends of the Revolution (but with more retrospective than prospective view), is dated as early as 1828 (before the turning-point), and was actually published in a periodical in 1830. *La Confidence des Ruggieri*, written in 1836 (and, as I have noted in the general introduction, according to its author, in a single night) followed, and *Le Martyr Calviniste*, which had several titles, and was advertised as in preparation for a long time, did not come till 1841.

It is unnecessary to say that all are interesting. The personages, both imaginary and historical, appear at times in a manner worthy of Balzac; many separate scenes are excellent; and, to those who care to perceive them, the various occupations of the author appear in the most interesting manner. Politically, his object was, at least by his own account, to defend the maxim that private and public morality are different; that the policy of a state cannot be, and ought not to be, governed by the same considerations of duty to its neighbors as those which ought to govern the conduct of an individual. The very best men—those least liable to the slightest imputation of corrupt morals and motives—have indorsed this principle; though it has been screamed at by a few fanatics, a somewhat larger number of persons who found their account in so doing, and a great multitude of hasty, dense, or foolish folk. But it was something of a mark of that amateurishness which spoilt Balzac's dealing with the subject to choose the sixteenth century for his text. For every cool-headed student of history and ethics will admit that it was precisely the abuse of this principle at this time, and by persons of whom Catherine de' Medici, if not the most blamable, has had the most blame put on her, that brought the principle itself into discredit. Between the assertion that the strictest morality of the Sermon on the Mount must obtain between nation and nation, between governor and governed, and the maxim that in

politics the end of public safety justifies *any* means whatever, there is a perfectly immense gulf fixed.

If, however, we turn from this somewhat academic point, and do not dwell very much on the occult and magical sides of the matter, interesting as they are, we shall be brought at once face to face with the question, Is the handling of this book the right and proper one for an historical novel? Can we in virtue of it rank Balzac (this is the test which he would himself, beyond all question, have accepted) a long way above Dumas and near Scott?

I must say that I can see no possibility of answer except, "Certainly not." For the historical novel depends almost more than any other division of the kind upon interest of story. Interest of story is not, as has been several times pointed out, at any time Balzac's main appeal, and he has succeeded in it here less than in most other places. He has discussed too much; he has brought in too many personages without sufficient interest of plot; but, above all, he exhibits throughout an incapacity to handle his materials in the peculiar way required. How long he was before he grasped "the way to do it," even on his own special lines, is the commonplace and refrain of all writing about him. Now, to this special kind he gave comparatively little attention, and the result is that he mastered it less than any other. In the best stories of Dumas (and the best number some fifteen or twenty at least) the interest of narrative, of adventure, of what will happen to the personages, takes you by the throat at once, and never lets you go till the end. There is little or nothing of this sort here. The three stories are excellently well-informed studies, very curious and interesting in divers ways. The *Ruggieri* is perhaps something more; but it is, as its author no doubt honestly entitled it, much more an *Étude Philosophique* than an historical novelette. In short, this was not Balzac's way. We need not be sorry—it is very rarely necessary to be that—that he tried it; we may easily forgive him for not recognizing the ease and certainty with which Dumas trod the path. But we should be most of all thankful that he did not himself enter it frequently, or ever pursue it far.

The most important part of the bibliography of the book has been given above. The rest is a little complicated, and for its ins and outs reference must be made to the usual authority. It should be enough to say that the *Martyr*, under the title of *Les Lecamus*, first appeared in the *Siècle* during the spring of 1841. Souverain published it as a book two years later with the other two, as *Catherine de Medicis Expliquée*. The second part, entitled, not *La Confidence*, but *Le Secret des Ruggieri*, had appeared much earlier in the *Chronique de Paris* during the winter of 1836-37, and had been published as a book in the latter year; it was joined to *Catherine de Medicis Expliquée* as above. The third part, after appearing in the *Monde* as early as May 1830, also appeared in the *Deux Mondes* for December of the same year, then became one of the *Romans et Contes Philosophiques*, then an *Étude Philosophique*, and in 1843 joined *Catherine de Medicis Expliquée*. The whole was inserted in the *Comédie* in 1846.

G. S.

ABOUT CATHERINE DE' MEDICI

To M. le Marquis de Pastoret,
Member of the Académie des Beaux-Arts.

When we consider the amazing number of volumes written to ascertain the spot where Hannibal crossed the Alps, without our knowing to this day whether it was, as Whitaker and Rivaz say, by Lyons, Geneva, the Saint-Bernard, and the Valley of Aosta; or, as we are told by Letronne, Follard, Saint-Simon, and Fortia d'Urban, by the Isère, Grenoble, Saint-Bonnet, Mont Genèvre, Fenestrella, and the Pass of Susa; or, according to Larauza, by the Mont Cenis and Susa; or, as Strabo, Polybius, and de Luc tell us, by the Rhône, Vienne, Yenne, and the Mont du Chat; or, as certain clever people opine, by Genoa, la Bochetta, and la Scrivia—the view I hold, and which Napoleon had adopted—to say nothing of the vinegar with which some learned men have dressed the Alpine rocks, can we wonder, M. le Marquis, to find modern history so much neglected that some most important points remain obscure, and that the most odious calumnies still weigh on names which ought to be revered?—And it may be noted incidentally that by dint of explanations it has become problematical whether Hannibal ever crossed the Alps at all. Father Ménestrier believes that the Scoras spoken of by Polybius was the Saône; Letronne, Larauza, and Schweighauser believe it to be the Isère; Cochard, a learned man of Lyons, identifies it with the Drôme. But to anyone who has eyes, are there not striking geographical and linguistic affinities between Scoras and Scrivia, to say nothing of the almost certain fact that the Carthaginian fleet lay at la Spezzia or in the Gulf of Genoa?

I could understand all this patient research if the battle of Cannæ could be doubted; but since its consequences are well known, what is the use of blackening so much paper with theories that are but the Arabesque of hypothesis, so to speak; while the most important history of later times, that of the Reformation, is so full of obscurities that the name remains unknown of the man[1] *who was making a boat move by steam at Barcelona at the time when Luther and Calvin were inventing the revolt of mind?*

We, I believe, after having made, each in his own way, the same investigations as to the great and noble character of Catherine de' Medici, have come to the same opinion. So I thought that my historical studies on the subject might be suitably dedicated to a writer who has labored so long on the history of the Reformation; and that I should thus do public homage, precious perhaps for its rarity, to the character and fidelity of a man true to the Monarchy.

PARIS, *January* 1842.

[1] The inventor of this experiment was probably Salomon of Caux, not of Caus. This great man was always unlucky; after his death even his name was misspelt. Salomon, whose original portrait, at the age of forty-six, was discovered by the author of the *Human Comedy*, was born at Caux, in Normandy.

INTRODUCTION

WHEN men of learning are struck by a historical blunder, and try to correct it, "Paradox!" is generally the cry; but to those who thoroughly examine the history of modern times, it is evident that historians are privileged liars, who lend their pen to popular beliefs, exactly as most of the newspapers of the day express nothing but the opinions of their readers.

Historical independence of thought has been far less conspicuous among lay writers than among the priesthood. The purest light thrown on history has come from the Benedictines, one of the glories of France—so long, that is to say, as the interests of the monastic orders are not in question. Since the middle of the eighteenth century, some great and learned controversialists have arisen who, struck by the need for rectifying certain popular errors to which historians have lent credit, have published some remarkable works. Thus M. Launoy, nicknamed the Evicter of Saints, made ruthless war on certain saints who have sneaked into the Church Calendar. Thus the rivals of the Benedictines, the too little known members of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres, began their *mémoires*, their studious notes, full of patience, erudition, and logic, on certain obscure passages of history. Thus Voltaire, with an unfortunate bias, and sadly perverted passions, often brought the light of his intellect to bear on historical prejudices. Diderot, with this end in view, began a book—much too long—on a period of the history of Imperial Rome. But for the French Revolution, criticism, as applied to history, might perhaps have laid up the materials for a good and true history of France, for which evidence had long been amassed by the great French Benedictines. Louis XVI., a man of clear mind, himself translated the English work, which so much agitated the last century, in which Walpole tried to explain the career of Richard III.

How is it that persons so famous as kings and queens, so

important as generals of great armies, become objects of aversion or derision? Half the world hesitates between the song of Marlborough and the history of England, as they do between popular tradition .and history as concerning Charles IX.

At all periods when great battles are fought between the masses and the authorities, the populace creates an *ogresque* figure—to coin a word for the sake of its exactitude. Thus in our own time, but for the *Memorials of Saint-Helena*, and the controversies of Royalists and Bonapartists, there was scarcely a chance but that Napoleon would have been misunderstood. Another Abbé de Pradt or two, a few more newspaper articles, and Napoleon from an Emperor would have become an Ogre.

How is error propagated and accredited? The mystery is accomplished under our eyes without our discerning the process. No one suspects how greatly printing has helped to give body both to the envy which attends persons in high places, and to the popular irony which sums up the converse view of every great historical fact. For instance, every bad horse in France that needs flogging is called after the Prince de Polignac; and so who knows what opinion the future may hold as to the Prince de Polignac's *coup-d'état?* In consequence of a caprice of Shakespeare's—a stroke of revenge perhaps, like that of Beaumarchais on Bergasse (Begearss)—Falstaff, in England, is a type of the grotesque; his name raises a laugh, he is the King of Buffoons. Now, instead of being enormously fat, ridiculously amorous, vain, old, drunken, and a corrupter of youth, Falstaff was one of the most important figures of his time, a Knight of the Garter, holding high command. At the date of Henry V.'s accession, Falstaff was at most four-and-thirty. This General, who distinguished himself at the battle of Agincourt, where he took the Duc d'Alençon prisoner, in 1420 took the town of Montereau, which was stoutly defended. Finally, under Henry VI., he beat ten thousand Frenchmen with fifteen hundred men who were dropping with fatigue and hunger. So much for valor!

If we turn to literature, Rabelais, among the French, a

sober man who drank nothing but water, is thought of as a lover of good cheer and a persistent sot. Hundreds of absurd stories have been coined concerning the author of one of the finest books in French literature, *Pantagruel.*

Aretino, Titian's friend, and the Voltaire of his day, is now credited with a reputation, in complete antagonism with his works and character, which he acquired by his over free wit, characteristic of the writings of an age when gross jests were held in honor, and queens and cardinals indited tales which are now considered licentious. Instances might be infinitely multiplied.

In France, and at the most important period of our history, Catherine de' Medici has suffered more from popular error than any other woman, unless it be Brunehaut or Frédégonde; while Marie de' Medici, whose every action was prejudicial to France, has escaped the disgrace that should cover her name. Marie dissipated the treasure amassed by Henri IV.; she never purged herself of the suspicion that she was cognizant of his murder; Epernon, who had long known Ravaillac, and who did not parry his blow, was *intimate* with the Queen; she compelled her son to banish her from France, where she was fostering the rebellion of her other son, Gaston; and Richelieu's triumph over her on the *Journée des Dupes* was due solely to the Cardinal's revealing to Louis XIII. certain documents secreted after the death of Henri IV.

Catherine de' Medici, on the contrary, saved the throne of France, she maintained the Royal authority under circumstances to which more than one great prince would have succumbed. Face to face with such leaders of the factions and ambitions of the houses of Guise and of Bourbon as the two Cardinals de Lorraine and the two "Balafrés," the two Princes de Condé, Queen Jeanne d'Albret, Henri IV., the Connétable de Montmorency, Calvin, the Colignys, and Théodore de Bèze, she was forced to put forth the rarest fine qualities, the most essential gifts of statesmanship, under the fire of the Calvinist press. These, at any rate, are indisputable facts. And to the student who digs deep into the history of the sixteenth century in France, the figure

of Catherine de' Medici stands out as that of a great king.

When once calumnies are undermined by facts laboriously brought to light from under the contradictions of pamphlets and false anecdotes, everything is explained to the glory of this wonderful woman, who had none of the weakness of her sex, who lived chaste in the midst of the gallantries of the most licentious Court in Europe, and who, notwithstanding her lack of money, erected noble buildings, as if to make good the losses caused by the destructive Calvinists, who injured Art as deeply as they did the body politic.

Hemmed in between a race of princes who proclaimed themselves the heirs of Charlemagne, and a factious younger branch that was eager to bury the Connétable de Bourbon's treason under the throne; obliged, too, to fight down a heresy on the verge of devouring the Monarchy, without friends, and aware of treachery in the chiefs of the Catholic party and of republicanism in the Calvinists, Catherine used the most dangerous but the surest of political weapons—Craft. She determined to deceive by turns the party that was anxious to secure the downfall of the House of Valois, the Bourbons who aimed at the Crown, and the Reformers—the Radicals of that day, who dreamed of an impossible republic, like those of our own day, who, however, have nothing to reform. Indeed, so long as she lived, the Valois sat on the throne. The great de Thou understood the worth of this woman when he exclaimed, on hearing of her death—

"It is not a woman, it is Royalty that dies in her!"

Catherine had, in fact, the sense of Royalty in the highest degree, and she defended it with admirable courage and persistency. The reproaches flung at her by Calvinist writers are indeed her glory; she earned them solely by her triumphs. And how was she to triumph but by cunning? Here lies the whole question.

As to violence—that method bears on one of the most hotly disputed points of policy, which, in recent days, has been answered here, on the spot where a big stone from Egypt has been placed to wipe out the memory of regicide, and to stand as an emblem of the materialistic policy which

now rules us; it was answered at Les Carmes and at the Abbaye; it was answered on the steps of Saint-Roch; it was answered in front of the Louvre in 1830, and again by the people against the King, as it has since been answered once more by la Fayette's "best of all republics" against the republican rebellion, at Saint-Merri and the Rue Transnonnain.

Every power, whether legitimate or illegitimate, must defend itself when it is attacked; but, strange to say, while the people is heroic when it triumphs over the nobility, the authorities are murderers when they oppose the people! And, finally, if after their appeal to force they succumb, they are regarded as effete idiots. The present Government (1840) will try to save itself, by two laws, from the same evil as attacked Charles X., and which he tried to scotch by two decrees. Is not this a bitter mockery? May those in power meet cunning with cunning? Ought they to kill those who try to kill them?

The massacres of the Revolution are the reply to the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew. The People, being King, did by the nobility and the King as the King and the nobility did by the rebels in the sixteenth century. And popular writers, who know full well that, under similar conditions, the people would do the same again, are inexcusable when they blame Catherine de' Medici and Charles IX.

"All power is a permanent conspiracy," said Casimir Périer, when teaching what power ought to be. We admire the anti-social maxims published by audacious writers; why, then, are social truths received in France with such disfavor when they are boldly stated? This question alone sufficiently accounts for historical mistakes. Apply the solution of this problem to the devastating doctrines which flatter popular passion, and to the conservative doctrines which would repress the ferocious or foolish attempts of the populace, and you will see the reason why certain personages are popular or unpopular. Laubardemont and Laffemas, like some people now living, were devoted to the maintenance of the power they believed in. Soldiers and judges, they obeyed a Royal authority. D'Orthez, in our day, would be discharged from

office for misinterpreting orders from the Ministry, but Charles X. left him to govern his province. The power of the masses is accountable to no one; the power of one is obliged to account to its subjects, great and small alike.

Catherine, like Philip II. and the Duke of Alva, like the Guises and Cardinal Granvelle, foresaw the future to which the Reformation was dooming Europe. They saw monarchies, religion, and power, all overthrown. Catherine, from the Cabinet of the French kings, forthwith issued sentence of death on that inquiring spirit which threatened modern society—a sentence which Louis XIV. finally carried out. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes was a measure that proved unfortunate, simply in consequence of the irritation Louis XIV. had aroused in Europe. At any other time England, Holland, and the German Empire would not have encouraged on their territory French exiles and French rebels.

Why, in these days, refuse to recognize the greatness which the majestic adversary of that most barren heresy derived from the struggle itself? Calvinists have written strongly against Charles IX.'s stratagems; but travel through France: as you see the ruins of so many fine churches destroyed, and consider the vast breaches made by religious fanatics in the social body; when you learn the revenges they took, while deploring the mischief of individualism—the plague of France to-day, of which the germ lay in the questions of liberty of conscience which they stirred up—you will ask yourself on which side were the barbarians. There are always, as Catherine says in the third part of this Study, "unluckily, in all ages, hypocritical writers ready to bewail two hundred scoundrels killed in due season." Cæsar, who tried to incite the Senate to pity for Catiline's party, would very likely have conquered Cicero if he had had newspapers and an Opposition at his service.

Another consideration accounts for Catherine's historical and popular disfavor. In France the Opposition has always been Protestant, because its policy has never been anything but negative; it has inherited the theories of the Lutherans, the Calvinists, and the Protestants on the terrible texts of

liberty, tolerance, progress, and philanthropy. The opponents of power spent two centuries in establishing the very doubtful doctrine of free will. Two more were spent in working out the first corollary of free will—liberty of conscience. Our age is striving to prove the second—political liberty.

Standing between the fields already traversed and the fields as yet untrodden, Catherine and the Church proclaimed the salutary principle of modern communities, *Una fides, unus Dominus*, but asserting their right of life and death over all innovators. Even if she had been conquered, succeeding times have shown that Catherine was right. The outcome of free will, religious liberty, and political liberty (note, this does not mean *civil* liberty) is France as we now see it.

And what is France in 1840? A country exclusively absorbed in material interests, devoid of patriotism, devoid of conscience; where authority is powerless; where electoral rights, the fruit of free will and political liberty, raise none but mediocrities; where brute force is necessary to oppose the violence of the populace; where discussion, brought to bear on the smallest matter, checks every action of the body politic; and where individualism—the odious result of the indefinite subdivision of property, which destroys family cohesion—will devour everything, even the nation, which sheer selfishness will some day lay open to invasion. Men will say, "Why not the Tsar?" as they now say, "Why not the Duc d'Orléans?" We do not care for many things even now; fifty years hence we shall care for nothing.

Therefore, according to Catherine—and according to all who wish to see Society soundly organized—man as a social unit, as a subject, has no free will, has no right to accept the dogma of liberty of conscience, or to have political liberty. Still, as no community can subsist without some guarantee given to the subject against the sovereign, the subject derives from that certain liberties under restrictions. Liberty—no, but liberties—yes; well defined and circumscribed liberties. This is in the nature of things. For instance it is beyond human power to fetter freedom of thought; and no sovereign may ever tamper with money.

The great politicians who have failed in this long contest—it has gone on for five centuries—have allowed their subjects wide liberties; but they never recognize their liberty to publish anti-social opinions, nor the unlimited freedom of the subject. To them the words *subject* and *free* are, politically speaking, a contradiction in terms; and, in the same way, the statement that all citizens are equal is pure nonsense, and contradicted by Nature every hour. To acknowledge the need for religion, the need for authority, and at the same time to leave all men at liberty to deny religion, to attack its services, to oppose the exercise of authority by the public and published expression of opinion, is an impossibility such as the Catholics of the sixteenth century would have nothing to say to. Alas! the triumph of Calvinism will cost France more yet than it has ever done; for the sects of to-day—religious, political, humanitarian, and leveling—are the train of Calvinism; and when we see the blunders of those in power, their contempt for intelligence, their devotion to those material interests in which they seek support, and which are the most delusive of all props, unless by the special aid of Providence the genius of destruction must certainly win the day from the genius of conservatism. The attacking forces, who have nothing to lose, and everything to win, are thoroughly in agreement; whereas their wealthy opponents refuse to make any sacrifice of money or of self-conceit to secure defenders.

Printing came to the aid of the resistance inaugurated by the Vaudois and the Albigenses. As soon as human thought—no longer condensed, as it had necessarily been in order to preserve the most communicable form—had assumed a multitude of garbs and become the very people, instead of remaining in some sense divinely axiomatic, there were two vast armies to contend with—that of ideas and that of men. Royal power perished in the struggle, and we, in France, at this day are looking on at its last coalition with elements which make it difficult, not to say impossible.

Power is action; the electoral principle is discussion. No political action is possible when discussion is permanently established. So we ought to regard the woman as truly

great who foresaw that future, and fought it so bravely. The House of Bourbon was able to succeed to the House of Valois, and owed it to Catherine de' Medici that it found that crown to wear. If the second Balafré had been alive, it is very doubtful that the Béarnais, strong as he was, could have seized the throne, seeing how dearly it was sold by the Duc de Mayenne and the remnant of the Guise faction. The necessary steps taken by Catherine, who had the deaths of François II. and Charles IX. on her soul—both dying opportunely for her safety—are not, it must be noted, what the Calvinist and modern writers blame her for! Though there was no poisoning, as some serious authors have asserted, there were other not less criminal plots. It is beyond question that she hindered Paré from saving one, and murdered the other morally by inches.

But the swift death of François II. and the skillfully contrived end of Charles IX. did no injury to Calvinist interests. The causes of these two events concerned only the uppermost sphere, and were never suspected by writers or by the lower orders at the time; they were guessed only by de Thou, by l'Hôpital, by men of the highest talents, or the chiefs of the two parties who coveted and clung to the Crown, and who thought such means indispensable.

Popular songs, strange to say, fell foul of Catherine's morality. The anecdote is known of a soldier who was roasting a goose in the guardroom of the Château of Tours while Catherine and Henri IV. were holding a conference there, and who sang a ballad in which the Queen was insultingly compared to the largest cannon in the hands of the Calvinists. Henri IV. drew his sword to go out and kill the man; Catherine stopped him, and only shouted out—

"It is Catherine who provides the goose!"

Though the executions at Amboise were attributed to Catherine, and the Calvinists made that able woman responsible for all the inevitable disasters of the struggle, she must be judged by posterity, like Robespierre at a future date.

And Catherine was cruelly punished for her preference for the Duc d'Anjou, which made her hold her two elder sons so

cheap. Henri III. having ceased, like all spoilt children, to care for his mother, rushed voluntarily into such debauchery as made him, what the mother had made Charles IX., a childless husband, a king without an heir. Unhappily, Catherine's youngest son, the Duc d'Alençon, died—a natural death. The Queen-mother made every effort to control her son's passions. History preserves the tradition of a supper to nude women given in the banqueting-hall at Chenonceaux on his return from Poland, but it did not cure Henri III. of his bad habits.

This great Queen's last words summed up her policy, which was indeed so governed by good sense that we see the Cabinets of every country putting it into practice in similar circumstances.

"Well cut, my son," said she, when Henri III. came to her, on her deathbed, to announce that the enemy of the throne had been put to death. "Now you must sew up again."

She thus expressed her opinion that the sovereign must make friends with the House of Lorraine, and make it useful, as the only way to hinder the effects of the Guises' hatred, by giving them a hope of circumventing the King. But this indefatigable cunning of the Italian and the woman was incompatible with Henri III.'s life of debauchery. When once the Great Mother was dead, the Mother of Armies (*Mater castrorum*), the policy of the Valois died too.

Before attempting to write this picture of manners in action, the author patiently and minutely studied the principal reigns of French history, the quarrels of the Burgundians and the Armagnacs, and those of the Guises and the Valois, each in the forefront of a century. His purpose was to write a picturesque history of France. Isabella of Bavaria, Catherine and Marie de' Medici, each fills a conspicuous place, dominating from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, and leading up to Louis XIV.

Of these three queens, Catherine was the most interesting and the most beautiful. Hers was a manly rule, not disgraced by the terrible amours of Isabella, nor those, even

more terrible though less known, of Marie de' Medici. Isabella brought the English into France to oppose her son, was in love with her brother-in-law, the Duc d'Orléans, and with Boisbourdon. Marie de' Medici's account is still heavier. Neither of them had any political genius.

In the course of these studies and comparisons, the author became convinced of Catherine's greatness; by initiating himself into the peculiar difficulties of her position, he discerned how unjust historians, biased by Protestantism, had been to this Queen; and the outcome was the three sketches here presented, in which some erroneous opinions of her, of those who were about her, and of the aspect of the times, are combated.

The work is placed among my Philosophical Studies, because it illustrates the spirit of a period, and plainly shows the influence of opinions.

But before depicting the political arena on which Catherine comes into collision with the two great obstacles in her career, it is necessary to give a short account of her previous life from the point of view of an impartial critic, so that the reader may form a general idea of this large and royal life up to the time when the first part of this narrative opens.

Never at any period, in any country, or in any ruling family was there more contempt felt for legitimacy than by the famous race of the Medici (in French commonly written and pronounced Medicis). They held the same opinion of monarchy as is now professed in Russia: The ruler on whom the crown devolves is the real and legitimate monarch. Mirabeau was justified in saying, "There has been but one mésalliance in my family—that with the Medici"; for, notwithstanding the exertions of well-paid genealogists, it is certain that the Medici, till the time of Avérardo de' Medici, gonfaloniere of Florence in 1314, were no more than Florentine merchants of great wealth. The first personage of the family who filled a conspicuous place in the history of the great Tuscan Republic was Salvestro de' Medici, gonfaloniere in 1378. This Salvestro had two sons—Cosmo and Lorenzo de' Medici.

From Cosmo descended Lorenzo the Magnificent, the Duc de Nemours, the Duke of Urbino (Catherine's father), Pope Leo X., Pope Clement VII., and Alessandro, not indeed Duke of Florence, as he is sometimes called, but Duke *della città di Penna,* a title created by Pope Clement VII. as a step towards that of Grand Duke of Tuscany.

Lorenzo's descendants were Lorenzino—the Brutus of Florence—who killed Duke Alessandro; Cosmo, the first Grand Duke, and all the rulers of Florence till 1737, when the family became extinct.

But neither of the two branches—that of Cosmo or that of Lorenzo—succeeded in a direct line, till the time when Marie de' Medici's father subjugated Tuscany, and the Grand Dukes inherited in regular succession. Thus Alessandro de' Medici, who assumed the title of Duke *della città di Penna,* and whom Lorenzino assassinated, was the son of the Duke of Urbino, Catherine's father, by a Moorish slave. Hence Lorenzino, the legitimate son of Lorenzo, had a double right to kill Alessandro, both as a usurper in the family and as an oppressor of the city. Some historians have indeed supposed that Alessandro was the son of Clement VII. The event that led to the recognition of this bastard as head of the Republic was his marriage with Margaret of Austria, the natural daughter of Charles V.

Francesco de' Medici, the husband of Bianca Capello, recognized as his son a child of low birth bought by that notorious Venetian lady; and, strange to say, Fernando, succeeding Francesco, upheld the hypothetical rights of this boy. Indeed, this youth, known as Don Antonio de' Medici, was recognized by the family during four ducal reigns; he won the affection of all, did them important service, and was universally regretted.

Almost all the early Medici had natural children, whose lot was in every case splendid. The Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, Pope Clement VII., was the illegitimate son of Giuliano I. Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici was also a bastard, and he was within an ace of being Pope and head of the family.

Certain inventors of anecdote have a story that the Duke

of Urbino, Catherine's father, told her: "*A figlia d'inganno non manca mai figliuolanza*" (A clever woman can always have children, *à propos* to some natural defect in Henri, the second son of François I., to whom she was betrothed). This Lorenzo de' Medici, Catherine's father, had married, for the second time, in 1518, Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne, and died in 1519, a few days after his wife, who died in giving birth to Catherine. Catherine was thus fatherless and motherless as soon as she saw the light. Hence the strange events of her childhood, checkered by the violent struggles of the Florentines, in the attempt to recover their liberty, against the Medici who were determined to govern Florence, but who were so circumspect in their policy that Catherine's father took the title of Duke of Urbino.

At his death, the legitimate head of the House of the Medici was Pope Leo X., who appointed Giuliano's illegitimate son, Giulio de' Medici, then Cardinal, Governor of Florence. Leo X. was Catherine's grand-uncle, and this Cardinal Giulio, afterwards Clement VII., was her *left-handed* uncle only. This it was which made Brantôme so wittily speak of that Pope as an "uncle in Our Lady."

During the siege by the Medici to regain possession of Florence, the Republican party, not satisfied with having shut up Catherine, then nine years old, in a convent, after stripping her of all her possessions, proposed to expose her to the fire of the artillery, between two battlements—the suggestion of a certain Battista Cei. Bernardo Castiglione went even further in a council held to determine on some conclusion to the business; he advised that, rather than surrender Catherine to the Pope who demanded it, she should be handed over to the tender mercies of the soldiers. All revolutions of the populace are alike. Catherine's policy, always in favor of Royal authority, may have been fostered by such scenes, which an Italian girl of nine could not fail to understand.

Alessandro's promotion, to which Clement VII., himself a bastard, largely contributed, was no doubt owing partly to the fact of his being illegitimate, and to Charles V.'s affection

for his famous natural daughter Margaret. Thus the Pope and the Emperor were moved by similar feelings. At this period Venice was mistress of the commerce of the world; Rome governed its morals; Italy was still supreme, by the poets, the generals, and the statesmen who were her sons. At no other time has any one country had so curious or so various a multitude of men of genius. There were so many, that the smallest princelings were superior men. Italy was overflowing with talent, daring, science, poetry, wealth, and gallantry, though rent by constant internal wars, and at all times the arena on which conquerors met to fight for her fairest provinces.

When men are so great, they are not afraid to confess their weakness; hence, no doubt, this golden age for bastards. And it is but justice to declare that these illegitimate sons of the Medici were ardent for the glory and the advancement of the family, alike in possessions and in power. And as soon as the Duke *della città di Penna*, the Moorish slave's son, was established as Tyrant of Florence, he took up the interest shown by Pope Clement VII. for Lorenzo II.'s daughter, now eleven years of age.

As we study the march of events and of men in that strange sixteenth century, we must never forget that the chief element of political conduct was unremitting craft, destroying in every nature the upright conduct, the *squareness* which imagination looks for in eminent men. In this, especially, lies Catherine's absolution. This observation, in fact, disposes of all the mean and foolish accusations brought against her by the writers of the reformed faith. It was indeed the golden age of this type of policy, of which Machiavelli and Spinoza formulated the code, and Hobbes and Montesquieu; for the Dialogue of "Sylla and Eucrates" expresses Montesquieu's real mind, which he could not set forth in any other form in consequence of his connection with the Encyclopedists. These principles are to this day the unconfessed morality of every Cabinet where schemes of vast dominion are worked out. In France we were severe on Napoleon when he exerted this Italian genius which was in his blood, and its plots did not always succeed; but Charles

V., Catherine, Philip II., Giulio II., would have done just as he did in the affairs of Spain.

At the time when Catherine was born, history, if related from the point of view of honesty, would seem an impossible romance. Charles V., while forced to uphold the Catholic Church against the attacks of Luther, who by threatening the tiara threatened his throne, allowed Rome to be besieged, and kept Pope Clement VII. in prison. This same Pope, who had no more bitter foe than Charles V., cringed to him that he might place Alessandro de' Medici at Florence, and the Emperor gave his daughter in marriage to the bastard Duke. No sooner was he firmly settled there than Alessandro, in concert with the Pope, attempted to injure Charles V. by an alliance, through Catherine de' Medici, with Francis I., and both promised to assist the French king to conquer Italy.

Lorenzino de' Medici became Alessandro's boon companion, and pandered to him to get an opportunity of killing him; and Filippo Strozzi, one of the loftiest spirits of that age, regarded this murder with such high esteem that he vowed that each of his sons should marry one of the assasssin's daughters. The sons religiously fulfilled the father's pledge at a time when each of them, under Catherine's protection, could have made a splendid alliance; for one was Doria's rival, and the other Marshal of France.

Cosmo de' Medici, Alessandro's successor, avenged the death of the Tyrant with great cruelty, and persistently for twelve years, during which his hatred never flagged against the people who had, after all, placed him in power. He was eighteen years of age when he succeeded to the government; his first act was to annul the rights of Alessandro's legitimate sons, at the time when he was avenging Alessandro! Charles V. confirmed the dispossession of his grandson, and recognized Cosmo instead of Alessandro's son.

Cosmo, raised to the throne by Cardinal Cibo, at once sent the prelate into exile. Then Cardinal Cibo accused his creature, Cosmo, the first Grand Duke, of having tried to poison Alessandro's son. The Grand Duke, as jealous of his authority as Charles V. was of his, abdicated, like the Emperor, in favor of his son Francesco, after ordering the death of

Don Garcias, his other son, in revenge for that of Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici, whom Garcias had assassinated.

Cosmo I. and his son Francesco, who ought to have been devoted, soul and body, to the Royal House of France, the only power able to lend them support, were the humble servants of Charles V. and Philip II., and consequently the secret, perfidious, and cowardly foes of Catherine de' Medici, one of the glories of their race.

Such are the more important features—contradictory and illogical indeed—the dishonest acts, the dark intrigues of the House of the Medici alone. From this sketch some idea may be formed of the other princes of Italy and Europe. Every envoy from Cosmo I. to the Court of France had secret instructions to poison Strozzi, Queen Catherine's relation, when he should find him there. Charles V. had three ambassadors from Francis I. murdered.

It was early in October 1533 that the Duke *della città di Penna* left Florence for Leghorn, accompanied by Catherine de' Medici, sole heiress of Lorenzo II. The Duke and the Princess of Florence, for this was the title borne by the girl, now fourteen years of age, left the city with a large following of servants, officials, and secretaries, preceded by men-at-arms, and escorted by a mounted guard. The young Princess as yet knew nothing of her fate, excepting that the Pope and Duke Alessandro were to have an interview at Leghorn; but her uncle, Filippo Strozzi, soon told her of the future that lay before her.

Filippo Strozzi had married Clarissa de' Medici, whole sister to Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, Catherine's father; but this union, arranged quite as much with a view to converting one of the stoutest champions of the popular cause to the support of Medici as to secure the recall of that then exiled family, never shook the tenets of the rough soldier who was persecuted by his party for having consented to it. In spite of some superficial change of conduct, somewhat overruled by this alliance, he remained faithful to the popular side, and declared against the Mèdici as soon as he perceived their scheme of subjugating Florence. This great man even

refused the offer of a principality from Leo X. At that time Filippo Strozzi was a victim to the policy of the Medici, so shifty in its means, so unvarying in its aim.

After sharing the Pope's misfortunes and captivity, when, surprised by Colonna, he took refuge in the castle of Saint-Angelo, he was given up by Clement VII. as a hostage and carried to Naples. As soon as the Pope was free, he fell upon his foes, and Strozzi was then near being killed; he was forced to pay an enormous bribe to get out of the prison, where he was closely guarded. As soon as he was at liberty, with the natural trustfulness of an honest man, he was simple enough to appear before Clement VII., who perhaps had flattered himself that he was rid of him. The Pope had so much to be ashamed of that he received Strozzi very ungraciously. Thus Strozzi had very early begun his apprenticeship to the life of disaster, which is that of a man who is honest in politics, and whose conscience will not lend itself to the caprices of opportunity, whose actions are pleasing only to virtue, which is persecuted by all—by the populace, because it withstands their blind passions; by authority, because it resists its usurpations.

The life of these great citizens is a martyrdom, through which they have nothing to support them but the strong voice of conscience, and the sense of social duty, which in all cases dictates their conduct.

There were many such men in the Republic of Florence, all as great as Strozzi and as masterly as their adversaries on the Medici side, though beaten by Florentine cunning. In the conspiracy of the Pazzi, what can be finer than the attitude of the head of that house? His trade was immense, and he settled all his accounts with Asia, the Levant, and Europe before carrying out that great plot, to the end that his correspondents should not be the losers if he should fail.

And the history of the rise of the Medici family in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is one of the finest that remains unwritten, though men of great genius have attempted it. It is not the history of a republic, or of any particular community or phase of civilization; it is the history of political

man, and the eternal history of political developments, that of usurpers and conquerors.

On his return to Florence, Filippo Strozzi restored the ancient form of government, and banished Ippolito de' Medici, another bastard, as well as Alessandro, with whom he was now acting. But he then was afraid of the inconstancy of the populace; and as he dreaded Pope Clement's vengeance, he went to take charge of a large commercial house he had at Lyons in correspondence with his bankers at Venice and Rome, in France, and in Spain. A strange fact! These men, who bore the burden of public affairs as well as that of a perennial struggle with the Medici, to say nothing of their squabbles with their own party, could also endure the cares of commerce and speculation, of banking with all its complications, which the vast multiplicity of coinages and frequent forgeries made far more difficult then than now. The word banker is derived from the bench on which they sat, and which served also to ring the gold and silver pieces on. Strozzi found in his adored wife's death a pretext to offer to the Republican party, whose police is always all the more terrible because everybody is a voluntary spy in the name of Liberty, which justifies all things.

Filippo's return to Florence happened just at the time when the city was compelled to bow to Alessandro's yoke; but he had previously been to see Pope Clement, with whom matters were so promising that his feelings towards Strozzi had changed. In the moment of triumph the Medici so badly needed such a man as Strozzi, were it only to lend a grace to Alessandro's assumption of dignity, that Clement persuaded him to sit on the bastard's council, which was about to take oppressive measures, and Filippo had accepted a diploma as senator. But for the last two years and a half—like Seneca and Burrhus with Nero—he had noted the beginnings of tyranny. He found himself the object of distrust to the populace, and so little in favor with the Medici, whom he opposed, that he foresaw a catastrophe. And as soon as he heard from Alessandro of the negotiations for the marriage of Catherine with a French prince, which were perhaps to be concluded at Leghorn, where the contracting powers had

agreed to meet, he resolved to go to France and follow the fortunes of his niece, who would need a guardian. Alessandro, delighted to be quit of a man so difficult to manage in what concerned Florence, applauded this decision, which spared him a murder, and advised Strozzi to place himself at the head of Catherine's household.

In point of fact, to dazzle the French Court, the Medici had constituted a brilliant suite for the young girl whom they quite incorrectly styled the Princess of Florence, and who was also called the Duchess of Urbino. The procession, at the head of it Duke Alessandro, Catherine, and Strozzi, consisted of more than a thousand persons, exclusive of the escort and serving-men; and when the last of them were still at the gate of Florence, the foremost had already got beyond the first village outside the town—where straw plait for hats is now made.

It was beginning to be generally known that Catherine was to marry a son of Francis the First, but as yet it was no more than a rumor which found confirmation in the country from this triumphant progress from Florence to Leghorn. From the preparations required, Catherine suspected that her marriage was in question, and her uncle revealed to her the abortive scheme of her ambitious family, who had aspired to the hand of the Dauphin. Duke Alessandro still hoped that the Duke of Albany might succeed in changing the determination of the French King, who, though anxious to secure the aid of the Medici in Italy, would only give them the Duc d'Orléans. This narrowness lost Italy to France, and did not hinder Catherine from being Queen.

This Duke of Albany, the son of Alexander Stewart, brother of James III. of Scotland, had married Anne de la Tour de Boulogne, sister to Madeleine, Catherine's mother; he was thus her maternal uncle. It was through her mother that Catherine was so rich and connected with so many families; for, strangely enough, Diane de Poitiers, her rival, was also her cousin. Jean de Poitiers, Diane's father, was son of Jeanne de la Tour de Boulogne, the Duchess of Urbino's aunt. Catherine was also related to Mary Stewart, her daughter-in-law.

Catherine was now informed that her dower in money would amount to a hundred thousand ducats. The ducat was a gold piece as large as one of our old louis-d'or, but only half as thick. Thus a hundred thousand ducats in those days represented, in consequence of the high value of gold, six millions of francs at the present time, the ducat being worth about twelve francs. The importance of the banking-house of Strozzi, at Lyons, may be imagined from this, as it was his factor there who paid over the twelve hundred thousand livres in gold. The counties of Auvergne and Lauraguais also formed part of Catherine's portion, and the Pope Clement VII. made her a gift of a hundred thousand ducats more in jewels, precious stones, and other wedding gifts, to which Duke Alessandro contributed.

On reaching Leghorn, Catherine, still so young, must have been flattered by the extraordinary magnificence displayed by Pope Clement VII., her "uncle in Our Lady," then the head of the House of Medici, to crush the Court of France. He had arrived at the port in one of his galleys hung with crimson satin trimmed with gold fringe, and covered with an awning of cloth of gold. This barge, of which the decorations had cost nearly twenty thousand ducats, contained several rooms for the use of Henri de France's future bride, furnished with the choicest curiosities the Medici had been able to collect. The oarsmen, magnificently dressed, and the seamen were under the captaincy of a prior of the Order of the Knights of Rhodes. The Pope's household filled three more barges.

The Duke of Albany's galleys, moored by the side of the Pope's, formed, with these, a considerable flotilla.

Duke Alessandro presented the officers of Catherine's household to the Pope, with whom he held a secret conference, introducing to him, as seems probable, Count Sebastian Montecuculi, who had just left the Emperor's service—rather suddenly, it was said—and the two generals, Antonio de Leyva and Fernando Gonzaga. Was there a premeditated plan between these two bastards to make the Duc d'Orléans the Dauphin? What was the reward promised to Count Sebastian Montecuculi, who, before entering the service of

Charles V., had studied medicine? History is silent on these points. We shall see indeed in what obscurity the subject is wrapped. It is so great that some serious and conscientious historians have recently recognized Montecuculi's innocence.

Catherine was now officially informed by the Pope himself of the alliance proposed for her. The Duke of Albany had had great difficulty in keeping the King of France to his promise of giving even his second son to Catherine de' Medici; and Clement's impatience was so great, he was so much afraid of seeing his schemes upset either by some intrigue on the part of the Emperor, or by the haughtiness of France, where the great nobles cast an evil eye on this union, that he embarked forthwith and made for Marseilles. He arrived there at the end of October 1533.

In spite of his splendor, the House of the Medici was eclipsed by the sovereign of France. To show to what a pitch these great bankers carried their magnificence, the dozen pieces given by the Pope in the bride's wedding purse consisted of gold medals of inestimable historical interest, for they were at that time unique. But Francis I., who loved festivity and display, distinguished himself on this occasion. The wedding feasts for Henri de Valois and Catherine went on for thirty-four days. It is useless to repeat here details which may be read in every history of Provence and Marseilles as to this famous meeting between the Pope and the King of France, which was the occasion of a jest of the Duke of Albany's as to the duty of fasting; a retort recorded by Brantôme which vastly amused the Court, and shows the tone of manners at that time.

Though Henri de Valois was but three weeks older than Catherine, the Pope insisted on the immediate consummation of the marriage between these two children, so greatly did he dread the subterfuges of diplomacy and the trickery commonly practiced at that period. Clement, indeed, anxious for proof, remained thirty-four days at Marseilles, in the hope, it is said, of some visible evidence in his young relation, who at fourteen was marriageable. And it was, no doubt, when questioning Catherine before his departure, that he tried to

console her by the famous speech ascribed to Catherine's father: "*A figlia d'inganno, non manca mai la figliuolanza.*"

The strangest conjectures have been given to the world as to the causes of Catherine's barrenness during ten years. Few persons nowadays are aware that various medical works contain suppositions as to this matter, so grossly indecent that they could not be repeated.[1] This gives some clew to the strange calumnies which still blacken this Queen, whose every action was distorted to her injury. The reason lay simply with her husband. It is sufficient evidence that at a time when no prince was shy of having natural children, Diane de Poitiers, far more highly favored than his wife, had no children; and nothing is commoner in surgical experience than such a malformation as this prince's, which gave rise to a jest of the ladies of the Court, who would have made him Abbé de Saint-Victor, at a time when the French language was as free as the Latin tongue. After the prince was operated on, Catherine had ten children.

The delay was a happy thing for France. If Henri II. had had children by Diane de Poitiers, it would have caused serious political complications. At the time of his treatment, the Duchesse de Valentinois was in the second youth of womanhood. These facts alone show that the history of Catherine de' Medici remains to be entirely rewritten; and that, as Napoleon very shrewdly remarked, the history of France should be in one volume only, or in a thousand.

When we compare the conduct of Charles V. with that of the King of France during the Pope's stay at Marseilles, it is greatly to the advantage of Francis—as indeed in every instance. Here is a brief report of this meeting as given by a contemporary:—

"His Holiness the Pope, having been conducted to the Palace prepared for him, as I have said, outside the port, each one withdrew to his chamber until the morrow, when his said Holiness prepared to make his entry. Which was done with great sumptuousness and magnificence, he being set on a throne borne on the shoulders of two men in his pontifical habit, saving only the tiara, while before him went a white

[1] See *Bayle*. Art. *Fernel*.

palfrey bearing the Holy Sacrament, the said palfrey being led by two men on foot in very fine raiment holding a bridle of white silk. After him came all the cardinals in their habit, riding their pontifical mules, and Madame the Duchess of Urbino in great magnificence, with a goodly company of ladies and gentlemen alike of France and of Italy. And the Pope, with all this company, being come to the place prepared where they should lodge, each one withdrew; and all this was ordered and done without any disorder or tumult. Now, while as the Pope was making his entry, the King crossed the water in his frigate and went to lodge there whence the Pope had come, to the end that on the morrow he might come from thence to pay homage to the Holy Father, as beseemed a most Christian King.

"The King being then ready, set forth to go to the Palace where the Pope was, accompanied by the Princes of his blood, Monseigneur the Duc de Vendosmois (father of the Vidame de Chartres), the Comte de Saint-Pol, M. de Montmorency, and M. de la Roche-sur-Yon, the Duc de Nemours (brother to the Duke of Savoy, who died at that place), the Duke of Albany, and many others, counts, barons, and nobles, the Duc de Montmorency being at all times about the King's person. The King, being come to the Palace, was received by the Pope and all the College of Cardinals assembled in consistory, with much civility (*fort humainement*). This done, each one went to the place appointed to him, and the King took with him many cardinals to feast them, and among them Cardinal de' Medici, the Pope's nephew, a very magnificent lord with a fine escort. On the morrow, those deputed by His Holiness and by the King began to treat of those matters whereon they had met to agree. First of all, they treated of the question of faith, and a bull was read for the repression of heresy, and to hinder things from coming to a greater combustion (*une plus grande combustion*) than they are in already. Then was performed the marriage ceremony between the Duc d'Orléans, the King's second son, and Catherine de' Medici, Duchess of Urbino, His Holiness' niece, under conditions the same, or nearly the same, as had been formerly proposed to the Duke of Albany.

The said marriage was concluded with great magnificence, and our Holy Father married them.[1] This marriage being thus concluded, the Holy Father held a consistory, wherein he created four cardinals to wait on the King, to wit: Cardinal le Veneur, heretofore Bishop of Lisieux and High Almoner; Cardinal de Boulogne, of the family of la Chambre, half-brother on his mother's side to the Duke of Albany; Cardinal de Châtillon of the family of Coligny, nephew to the Sire de Montmorency; and Cardinal de Givry."

When Strozzi paid down the marriage portion in the presence of the Court, he observed some surprise on the part of the French nobles; they said pretty loudly that it was a small price for such a mésalliance—what would they say to-day? Cardinal Ippolito replied—

"Then you are not informed as to your King's secrets. His Holiness consents to bestow on France three pearls of inestimable price—Genoa, Milan, and Naples."

The Pope left Count Sebastian Montecuculi to present himself at the French Court, where he made an offer of his services, complaining of Antonio de Leyva and Fernando Gonzaga, for which reason he was accepted. Montecuculi was not one of Catherine's household, which was composed entirely of French ladies and gentlemen; for, by a law of the realm which the Pope was rejoiced to see carried out, Catherine was naturalized by letters patent before her marriage. Montecuculi was at first attached to the household of the Queen, Charles V.'s sister. Then, not long after, he entered the Dauphin's service in the capacity of cupbearer.

The Duchesse d'Orléans found herself entirely swamped at the Court of Francis I. Her young husband was in love with Diane de Poitiers, who was certainly her equal in point of birth, and a far greater lady. The daughter of the Medici took rank below Queen Eleanor, Charles V.'s sister, and the Duchesse d'Étampes, whose marriage to the head of the family of de Brosse had given her one of the most powerful positions and highest titles in France. Her aunt, the

[1] At that time in French, as in Italian, the words *marry* and *espouse* were used in a contrary sense to their present meaning. *Marier* was the fact of being married, *épouser* was the priestly function.

Duchess of Albany, the Queen of Navarre, the Duchesse de Guise, the Duchesse de Vendôme, the wife of the Connétable, and many other women, by their birth and privileges as well as by their influence in the most sumptuous Court ever held by a French king—not excepting Louis XIV.—wholly eclipsed the daughter of the Florentine merchants, who was indeed more illustrious and richer through the Tour de Boulogne family than through her descent from the Medici.

Filippo Strozzi, a republican at heart, regarded his niece's position as so critical and difficult, that he felt himself incapable of directing her in the midst of conflicting interests, and deserted her at the end of a year, being indeed recalled to Italy by the death of Clement VII. Catherine's conduct, when we remember that she was but just fifteen, was a marvel of prudence. She very adroitly attached herself to the King, her father-in-law, leaving him as rarely as possible; she was with him on horseback, in hunting, and in war.

Her adoration of Francis I. saved the House of Medici from all suspicion when the Dauphin died poisoned. At that time Catherine and the Duc d'Orléans were at the King's headquarters in Provence, for France had already been invaded by Charles V., the King's brother-in-law. The whole Court had remained on the scene of the wedding festivities, now the theater of the most barbarous war. Just as Charles V., compelled to retreat, had fled, leaving the bones of his army in Provence, the Dauphin was returning to Lyons by the Rhone. Stopping at Tournon for the night, to amuse himself, he went through some athletic exercises, such as formed almost the sole education he or his brother received, in consequence of their long detention as hostages. The Prince being very hot—it was in the month of August—was so rash as to ask for a glass of water, which was given to him, iced, by Montecuculi. The Dauphin died almost instantaneously.

The King idolized his son. The Dauphin was indeed, as historians are agreed, a very accomplished prince. His father, in despair, gave the utmost publicity to the proceedings against Montecuculi, and placed the matter in the hands of the most learned judges of the day.

After heroically enduring the first tests of torture without confessing anything, the Count made an avowal by which he fully implicated the Emperor and his two generals, Antonio de Leyva and Fernando Gonzago. This, however, did not satisfy Francis I. Never was a case more solemnly thrashed out than this. An eye-witness gives the following account of what the King did:—

"The King called all the Princes of the Blood, and all the Knights of his Order, and many other high personages of the realm, to meet at Lyons; the Pope's Legate and Nuncio, the cardinals who were of his Court, and the ambassadors of England, Scotland, Portugal, Venice, Ferrara, and others; together with all the princes and great nobles of foreign countries, both of Italy and of Germany, who were at that time residing at his Court, to wit: The Duke of Wittemberg, in Allemaigne; the Dukes of Somma, of Arianna, and of Atria; the Princes of Melphe [Malfi?] (who had desired to marry Catherine), and of Stilliano, Neapolitan; the Marquis di Vigevo, of the House of Trivulzio, Milanese; the Signor Giovanni Paolo di Ceri, Roman; the Signor Césare Fregose, Genoese; the Signor Annibale Gonzaga, Mantuan, and many more. Who being assembled, he caused to be read in their presence, from the beginning to the end, the trial of that wretched man who had poisoned his late Highness the Dauphin, with all the interrogations, confessions, confrontings, and other proceedings usual in criminal trials, not choosing that the sentence should be carried out until all those present had given their opinion on this monstrous and miserable matter."

Count Montecuculi's fidelity and devotion may seem extraordinary in our day of universal indiscretion, when everybody, and even ministers, talk over the most trivial incidents in which they have put a finger; but in those times princes could command devoted servants, or knew how to choose them. There were monarchical Moreys then, because there was faith. Never look for great things from self-interest: interests may change; but look for anything from feeling, from religious faith, monarchical faith, patriotic faith. These three beliefs alone can produce a Berthereau of Geneva, a

Sydney or a Strafford in England, assassins to murder Thomas à Becket, or a Montecuculi; Jacques Cœur and Jeanne d'Arc, or Richelieu and Danton; a Bonchamp, a Talmont, or a Clément, a Chabot.

Charles V. made use of the highest personages to carry out the murder of three ambassadors from Francis I. A year later Lorenzino, Catherine's cousin, assassinated Duke Alessandro after three years of dissimulation, and in circumstances which gained him the surname of the Florentine Brutus. The rank of the victim was so little a check on such undertakings that neither Leo X. nor Clement VII. seems to have died a natural death. Mariana, the historian of Philip II., almost jests in speaking of the death of the Queen of Spain, a princess of France, saying that "for the greater glory of the Spanish throne God suffered the blindness of the doctors who treated the Queen for dropsy." When King Henri II. allowed himself to utter a scandal which deserved a sword-thrust, he could find La Châtaignerie willing to take it. At that time royal personages had their meals served to them in padlocked boxes of which they had the key. Hence the *droit de cadenas*, the *right of the padlock*, an honor which ceased to exist in the reign of Louis XIV.

The Dauphin died of poison, the same perhaps as caused the death of MADAME, under Louis XIV. Pope Clement had been dead two years; Duke Alessandro, steeped in debauchery, seemed to have no interest in the Duc d'Orléans' elevation. Catherine, now seventeen years old, was with her father-in-law, whom she devotedly admired; Charles V. alone seemed to have an interest in the Dauphin's death, because Francis I. intended his son to form an alliance which would have extended the power of France. Thus the Count's confession was very ingeniously based on the passions and policy of the day. Charles V. had fled after seeing his troops overwhelmed in Provence, and with them his good fortune, his reputation, and his hopes of aggrandizement. And note, that even if an innocent man had confessed under torture, the King afterwards gave him freedom of speech before an august assembly, and in the presence of men with whom innocence had a fair

chance of a hearing. The King wanted the truth, and sought it in good faith.

In spite of her now brilliant prospects, Catherine's position at court was unchanged by the Dauphin's death; her childlessness made a divorce seem probable when her husband should become king. The Dauphin was now enslaved by Diane de Poitiers, who had dared to be the rival of Mme. d'Étampes. Catherine was therefore doubly attentive and insinuating to her father-in-law, understanding that he was her sole mainstay.

Thus the first ten years of Catherine's married life were spent in the unceasing regrets caused by repeated disappointments when she hoped to have a child, and the vexations of her rivalry with Diane. Imagine what the life must be of a princess constantly spied on by a jealous mistress who was favored by the Catholic party, and by the strong support the Sénéchale had acquired through the marriage of her daughters—one to Robert de la Mark, Duc de Bouillon, Prince de Sédan; the other to Claude de Lorraine, Duc d'Aumale.

Swamped between the party of the Duchesse d'Étampes and that of the Sénéchale (the title borne by Diane de Poitiers during the reign of Francis I.), who divided the Court and political feeling between the two mortal foes, Catherine tried to be the friend of both the Duchess and Diane de Poitiers. She, who was to become so great a queen, played the part of a subaltern. Thus she served her apprenticeship to the double-faced policy which afterwards was the secret clew to her life. At a later date the Queen found herself between the Catholics and the Calvinists, as the woman had been, for ten years, between Mme. d'Étampes and Mme. de Poitiers.

She studied the contradictions of French policy. Francis upheld Calvin and the Lutherans, to annoy Charles V. Then, after having covertly and patiently fostered the Reformation in Germany, after tolerating Calvin's presence at the Court of Navarre, he turned against it with undisguised severity. So Catherine could see the Court and the women of the Court playing with the fire of heresy; Diane at the head of the Catholic party with the Guises, only because the Duchesse d'Étampes was on the side of Calvin and the Protestants.

This was Catherine's political education; and in the King's private circle she could study the mistakes made by the Medici. The Dauphin was antagonistic to his father on every point; he was a bad son. He forgot the hardest but the truest axiom of Royalty, namely, that the throne is a responsible entity, and that a son who may oppose his father during his lifetime must carry out his policy on succeeding to the throne. Spinoza, who was as deep a politician as he was a great philosopher, says, in treating of the case of a king who has succeeded to another by a revolution or by treason: "If the new king hopes to secure his throne and protect his life, he must display so much zeal in avenging his predecessor's death that no one shall feel tempted to repeat such a crime. But to avenge him worthily it is not enough that he should shed the blood of his subjects; he must confirm the maxims of him whose place he fills, and walk in the same ways of government."

It was the application of this principle which gave the Medici to Florence. Cosmo I., Alessandro's successor, eleven years later instigated the murder, at Venice, of the Florentine Brutus, and, as has been said, persecuted the Strozzi without mercy. It was the neglect of this principle that overthrew Louis XVI. That king was false to every principle of government when he reinstated the Parlements suppressed by his grandfather. Louis XV. had been clear-sighted; the Parlements, and especially that of Paris, were quite half to blame for the disorders that necessitated the assembling of the States-General. Louis XV.'s mistake was that when he threw down that barrier between the throne and the people, he did not erect a stronger one, that he did not substitute for the Parlements a strong constitutional rule in the provinces. There lay the remedy for the evils of the monarchy, the voting power for taxation and the incidence of the taxes, with consent gradually won to the reforms needed in the monarchical rule.

Henri II.'s first act was to give all his confidence to the Connétable de Montmorency, whom his father had desired him to leave in banishment. The Connétable de Montmo-

rency, with Diane de Poitiers, to whom he was closely attached, was master of the kingdom. Hence Catherine was even less powerful and happy as Queen of France than she had been as the Dauphiness.

At first, from the year 1543, she had a child every year for ten years, and was fully taken up by her maternal functions during that time, which included the last years of Francis I.'s reign, and almost the whole of her husband's. It is impossible not to detect in this constant child-bearing the malicious influence of a rival who thus kept the legitimate wife out of the way. This feminine and barbarous policy was no doubt one of Catherine's grievances against Diane. Being thus kept out of the tide of affairs, this clever woman spent her time in observing all the interests of the persons at Court, and all the parties formed there. The Italians who had followed her excited violent suspicions. After the execution of Montecuculi, the Connétable de Montmorency, Diane, and most of the crafty politicians at Court were racked with doubts of the Medici; but Francis I. always scouted them. Still the Gondi, the Biraguas, the Strozzi, the Ruggieri, the Sardini, in short, all who were classed as the Italians who had arrived in Catherine's wake, were compelled to exercise every faculty of wit, policy, and courage to enable them to remain at Court under the burden of disfavor that weighed on them. During the supremacy of Diane de Poitiers, Catherine's obligingness went so far that some clever folks have seen in it an evidence of the profound dissimulation to which she was compelled by men and circumstances, and by the conduct of Henri II. But it is going too far to say that she never asserted her rights as a wife and a queen. Her ten children (besides one miscarriage) were a sufficient explanation of the King's conduct, who was thus set free to spend his time with Diane de Poitiers. But the King certainly never fell short of what he owed to himself; he gave the Queen an entry worthy of any that had previously taken place, on the occasion of her coronation. The records of the Parlement and of the Exchequer prove that these two important bodies went to meet Catherine outside Paris, as far as Saint-Lazare. Here, indeed, is a passage from du Tillet's narrative:—

"A scaffolding had been erected at Saint-Lazare, whereon was a throne (which du Tillet calls a chair of state, *chaire de parment*). Catherine seated herself on this, dressed in a surcoat, or sort of cape of ermine, covered with jewels; beneath it a bodice, with a court train, and on her head a crown of pearls and diamonds; she was supported by the Maréchale de la Mark, her lady of honor. Around her, standing, were the princes of the Blood and other princes and noblemen richly dressed, with the Chancellor of France in a robe of cloth of gold in a pattern on a ground of red cramoisy.[1] In front of the Queen and on the same scaffolding were seated, in two rows, twelve duchesses and countesses, dressed in surcoats of ermine, stomachers, train, and fillets, that is to say, coronets, whether duchesses or countesses. There were the Duchesses d'Estouteville, de Montpensier—the elder and the younger—the Princesse de la Roche-sur-Yon; the Duchesses de Guise, de Nivernois, d'Aumale, de Valentinois (Diane de Poitiers); Mademoiselle the legitimized bastard 'of France' (a title given to the King's daughter Diane, who became Duchesse de Castro-Farnese, and afterwards Duchesse de Montmorency-Damville), Mme. la Connétable, and Mlle. de Nemours, not to mention the other ladies who could find no room. The four *capped* presidents (*à mortier*), with some other members of the Court and the chief clerk, du Tillet, went up on to the platform and did their service, and the First President Lizet, kneeling on one knee, addressed the Queen. The Chancellor, likewise on one knee, made a response. She made her entrance into Paris at about three in the afternoon, riding in an open litter, Mme. Marguerite de France sitting opposite to her, and by the side of the litter came the Cardinals d'Amboise, de Châtillon, de Boulogne, and de Lenoncourt, in their rochets. She got out at the Church of Notre-Dame, and was received by the clergy. After she had made her prayer, she was carried along the Rue de la Calandre to the Palace, where the royal supper was spread in the great hall. She sat there in the

[1] The old French word *cramoisi* did not mean merely a crimson red, but denoted a special excellence of the dye. (See *Rabelais*.)

middle at a marble table, under a canopy of velvet powdered with gold fleurs de lys."

It will here be fitting to controvert a popular error which some persons have perpetuated, following Sauval in the mistake. It has been said that Henri II. carried his oblivion of decency so far as to place his mistress's initials even on the buildings which Catherine had advised him to undertake or to carry on at such lavish expense. But the cipher, which is to be seen at the Louvre, amply refutes those who have so little comprehension as to lend credit to such nonsense, a gratuitous slur on the honor of our kings and queens. The H for Henri and the two C's, face to face, for Catherine seem indeed to make two Ds for Diane; and this coincidence was no doubt pleasing to the King. But it is not the less certain that the royal cipher was officially constructed of the initials of the King and the Queen. And this is so true, that the same cipher is still to be seen on the corn-market in Paris which Catherine herself had built. It may also be found in the crypt of Saint-Denis on Catherine's tomb, which she caused to be constructed during her lifetime by the side of that of Henry II., and on which she is represented from life by the sculptor to whom she sat.

On a solemn occasion, when he was setting out on an expedition to Germany, Henri II. proclaimed Catherine Regent during his absence, as also in the event of his death—on March 25, 1552. Catherine's bitterest enemy, the author of the *Discours Merveilleux sur les Déportements de Catherine II.*, admits that she acquitted herself of these functions to the general approbation, and that the King was satisfied with her administration. Henri II. had men and money at the right moment. And after the disastrous day of Saint-Quentin, Catherine obtained from the Parisians considerable sums, which she forwarded to Compiègne, whither the King had come.

In politics Catherine made immense efforts to acquire some little influence. She was clever enough to gain over to her interests the Connétable de Montmorency, who was all-powerful under Henri II. The King's terrible reply to Montmorency's insistency is well known. This answer was the

result of the good advice given by Catherine in the rare moments when she was alone with the King, and could explain to him the policy of the Florentines, which was to set the magnates of a kingdom by the ears and build up the sovereign authority on the ruins—Louis XI.'s system, subsequently carried out by Richelieu. Henri II., who saw only through the eyes of Diane and the Connétable, was quite a feudal King, and on friendly terms with the great Houses of the realm.

After an ineffectual effort in her favor made by the Connétable, probably in the year 1556, Catherine paid great court to the Guises, and schemed to detach them from Diane's party so as to set them in opposition to Montmorency. But, unfortunately, Diane and the Connétable were as virulent against the Protestants as the Guises were. Hence their antagonism lacked the virus which religious feeling would have given it. Besides, Diane boldly defied the Queen's plans by coquetting with the Guises and giving her daughter to the Duc d'Aumale. She went so far that she has been accused by some writers of granting more than smiles to the gallant Cardinal de Lorraine.[1]

The signs of grief and the ostentatious regret displayed by Catherine on the King's death cannot be regarded as genuine. The fact that Henri II. had been so passionately and faithfully attached to Diane de Poitiers made it incumbent on Catherine that she should play the part of a neglected wife who idolized her husband; but, like every clever woman, she carried on her dissimulation, and never ceased to speak with tender regret of Henri II. Diane herself, it is well known, wore mourning all her life for her husband, M. de Brézé. Her colors were black and white, and the King was wearing them at the tournament where he was fatally

[1] Some satirist of the time has left the following lines on Henri II. [in which the pun on the words Sire and Cire (wax) would be lost in translation]:—

> "Sire, si vous laissez, comme Charles désire,
> Comme Diane veut, par trop vous gouverner,
> Fondre, pétrir, mollir, refondre, retourner,
> Sire, vous n'êtes plus, vous n'êtes plus que cire."

Charles was the Cardinal de Lorraine.

wounded. Catherine, in imitation no doubt of her rival, wore mourning for the King to the end of her life.

On the King's death, the Duchesse de Valentinois was shamelessly deserted and dishonored by the Connétable de Montmorency, a man in every respect beneath his reputation. Diane sent to offer her estate and Château of Chenonceaux to the Queen. Catherine then replied in the presence of witnesses, "I can never forget that she was all the joy of my dear Henri; I should be ashamed to accept, I will give her an estate in exchange. I would propose that of Chaumont-on-the-Loire." The deed of exchange was, in fact, signed at Blois in 1559. Diane, whose sons-in-law were the Duc d'Aumale and the Duc de Bouillon, kept her whole fortune and died peacefully in 1566 at the age of sixty-six. She was thus nineteen years older than Henri II. These dates, copied from the epitaph on her tomb by an historian who studied the question at the end of the last century, clear up many historical difficulties; for many writers have said she was forty when her father was sentenced in 1523, while others have said she was but sixteen. She was, in fact, four-and-twenty.

After reading everything both for and against her conduct with Francis I., at a time when the House of Poitiers was in the greatest danger, we can neither confirm nor deny anything. It is a passage of history that still remains obscure. We can see by what happens in our own day how history is falsified, as it were, in the making.

Catherine, who founded great hopes on her rival's age, several times made an attempt to overthrow her. On one occasion she was very near the accomplishment of her hopes. In 1554, Mme. Diane, being ill, begged the King to go to Saint-Germain pending her recovery. This sovereign coquette would not be seen in the midst of the paraphernalia of doctors, nor bereft of the adjuncts of dress. To receive the King on his return, Catherine arranged a splendid *ballet*, in which five or six young ladies were to address him in verse. She selected for the purpose Miss Fleming, related to her uncle, the Duke of Albany, and one of the loveliest girls imaginable, fair and golden-haired; then a young connection of her own, Clarissa Strozzi, with magnificent black hair and

rarely fine hands; Miss Lewiston, maid of honor to Mary Stewart; Mary Stewart herself; Mme. Elisabeth de France, the unhappy Queen of Spain; and Mme. Claude. Elisabeth was nine years old, Claude eight, and Mary Stewart twelve. Obviously, the Queen aimed at showing off Clarissa Strozzi and Miss Fleming without other rivals in the King's eyes. The King succumbed: he fell in love with Miss Fleming, and she bore him a son, Henri de Valois, Comte d'Angoulême, Grand Prior of France.

But Diane's influence and position remained unshaken. Like Mme. de Pompadour later with Louis XV., the Duchesse de Valentinois was forgiving. But to what sort of love are we to ascribe this scheme on Catherine's part? Love of power or love of her husband? Women must decide.

A great deal is said in these days as to the license of the Press; but it is difficult to imagine to what a pitch it was carried when printing was a new thing. Aretino, the Voltaire of his time, as is well known, made monarchs tremble, and foremost of them all Charles V. But few people know perhaps how far the audacity of pamphleteers could go. This Château of Chenonceaux had been given to Diane, nay, she was entreated to accept it, to induce her to overlook one of the most horrible publications ever hurled at a woman, one which shows how violent was the animosity between her and Mme. d'Étampes. In 1537, when she was eight-and-thirty, a poet of Champagne, named Jean Voûté, published a collection of Latin verses, and among them three epigrams aimed at her. We must conclude that the poet was under high patronage from the fact that his volume is introduced by an *eulogium* written by Simon Macrin, the King's first Gentleman of the Bedchamber. Here is the only passage quotable to-day from these epigrams, which bear the title: *In Pictaviam, anum aulicam.* (Against *La Poitiers,* an old woman of the Court.)

"Non trahit esca ficta prædam."

"A painted bait catches no game," says the poet, after telling her that she paints her face and buys her teeth and

hair; and he goes on: "Even if you could buy the finest essence that makes a woman, you would not get what you want of your lover, for you would need to be living, and you are dead."

This volume, printed by Simon de Colines, was dedicated "To a Bishop!"—To François Bohier, the brother of the man who, to save his credit at Court and atone for his crime, made an offering on the accession of Henri II. of the Château of Chenonceaux, built by his father, Thomas Bohier, Councillor of State under four Kings: Louis XI., Charles VIII., Louis XII., and Francis I. What were the pamphlets published against Mme. de Pompadour and Marie Antoinette in comparison with verses that might have been written by Martial! Voûté must have come to a bad end. Thus the estate and Château of Chenonceaux cost Diane nothing but the forgiveness of an offense—a duty enjoined by the Gospel. Not being assessed by a jury, the penalties inflicted on the Press were rather severer then than they are now.

The widowed Queens of France were required to remain for forty days in the King's bedchamber, seeing no light but that of the tapers; they might not come out till after the funeral. This inviolable custom annoyed Catherine greatly; she was afraid of cabals. She found a way to evade it. The Cardinal de Lorraine coming out one morning—at such a time! at such a juncture!—from the house of "the Fair Roman," a famous courtesan of that day, who lived in the Rue Culture-Sainte-Catherine, was roughly handled by a party of roisterers. "Whereat his Holiness was much amazed," says Henri Estienne, "and gave it out that heretics were lying in wait for him."—And on this account the Court moved from Paris to Saint-Germain. The Queen would not leave the King her son behind, but took him with her.

The accession of Francis II., the moment when Catherine proposed to seize the reins of power, was a disappointment that formed a cruel climax to the twenty-six years of endurance she had already spent at the French Court. The Guises, with incredible audacity, at once usurped the sovereign power. The Duc de Guise was placed in command of the

army, and the Connétable de Montmorency was shelved. The Cardinal took the control of the finances and the clergy.

Catherine's political career opened with one of those dramas which, though it was less notorious than some others, was not the less horrible, and initiated her no doubt into the agitating shocks of her life. Whether it was that Catherine, after vainly trying the most violent remedies, had thought she might bring the King back to her through jealousy; whether on coming to her second youth she had felt it hard never to have known love, she had shown a warm interest in a gentleman of royal blood, François de Vendôme, son of Louis de Vendôme—the parent House of the Bourbons—the Vidame de Chartres, the name by which he is known to history. Catherine's covert hatred of Diane betrayed itself in many ways, which historians, studying only political developments, have failed to note with due attention. Catherine's attachment to the Vidame arose from an insult offered by the young man to the favorite. Diane looked for the most splendid matches for her daughters, who were indeed of the best blood in the kingdom. Above all, she was ambitious of an alliance with the Royal family. And her second daughter, who became the Duchess d'Aumale, was proposed in marriage to the Vidame, whom Francis I., with sage policy, kept in poverty. For, in fact, when the Vidame de Chartres and the Prince de Condé first came to Court, Francis I. gave them appointments! What? the office of chamberlains in ordinary, with twelve hundred crowns a year, as much as he bestowed on the humblest of his gentlemen. And yet, though Diane offered him immense wealth, some high office under the Crown, and the King's personal favor, the Vidame refused. And then this Bourbon, factious as he was, married Jeanne, daughter of the Baron d'Estissac, by whom he had no children.

This proud demeanor naturally commended the Vidame to Catherine, who received him with marked favor, and made him her devoted friend. Historians have compared the last Duc de Montmorency, who was beheaded at Toulouse, with the Vidame de Chartres for his power of charming, his merits, and his talents.

Henri II. was not jealous; he did not apparently think it possible that a Queen of France could fail in her duty, or that a Medici could forget the honor done her by a Valois. When the Queen was said to be flirting with the Vidame de Chartres, she had been almost deserted by the King since the birth of her last child. So this attempt came to nothing—as the King died wearing the colors of Diane de Poitiers.

So, at the King's death, Catherine was on terms of gallant familiarity with the Vidame, a state of things in no way out of harmony with the manners of the time, when love was at once so chivalrous and so licentious that the finest actions seemed as natural as the most blamable. But, as usual, historians have blundered by regarding exceptional cases as the rule.

Henri II.'s four sons nullified every pretension of the Bourbons, who were all miserably poor, and crushed under the scorn brought upon them by the Connétable de Montmorency's treason, in spite of the reasons which had led him to quit the country. The Vidame de Chartres, who was to the first Prince de Condé what Richelieu was to Mazarin, a father in politics, a model, and yet more a master in gallantry, hid the vast ambition of his family under a semblance of levity. Being unable to contend with the Guises, the Montmorencys, the Princes of Scotland, the Cardinals, and the Bouillons, he aimed at distinction by his gracious manners, his elegance, and his wit, which won him the favors of the most charming women, and the heart of many he never thought about. He was a man privileged by nature, whose fascinations were irresistible, and who owed to his love affairs the means of keeping up his rank. The Bourbons would not have taken offense, like Jarnac, at La Châtaignerie's scandal; they were very ready to accept lands and houses from their mistresses—witness the Prince de Condé, who had the estate of Saint-Valery from Mme. la Maréchale de Saint-André.

During the first twenty days of mourning for Henri II., a sudden change came over the Vidame's prospects. Courted by the Queen-mother, and courting her as a man may court a queen, in the utmost secrecy, he seemed fated to play an

important part; and Catherine, in fact, resolved to make him useful. The Prince received letters from her to the Prince de Condé, in which she pointed out the necessity for a coalition against the Guises. The Guises, informed of this intrigue, made their way into the Queen's chamber to compel her to sign an order consigning the Vidame to the Bastille, and Catherine found herself under the cruel necessity of submitting. The Vidame died after a few months' captivity, on the day when he came out of prison, a short time before the Amboise conspiracy.

This was the end of Catherine de' Medici's first and only love affair. Protestant writers declared that the Queen had him poisoned to bury the secret of her gallantries in the tomb.

Such was this woman's apprenticeship to the exercise of royal power.

PART I

THE CALVINIST MARTYR

FEW persons in these days know how artless were the dwellings of the citizens of Paris in the sixteenth century, and how simple their lives. This very simplicity of habits and thought perhaps was the cause of the greatness of this primitive citizen class—for they were certainly great, free, and noble, more so perhaps than the citizens of our time. Their history remains to be written; it requires and awaits a man of genius. Inspired by an incident which, though little known, forms the basis of this narrative, and is one of the most remarkable in the history of the citizen class, this reflection will no doubt occur to everyone who shall read it to the end. Is it the first time in history that the conclusion has come before the facts?

In 1560, the houses of the Rue de la Vieille-Pelleterie lay close to the left bank of the Seine, between the Pont Notre-Dame and the Pont au Change. The public way and the houses occupied the ground now given up to the single path of the present quay. Each house, rising from the river, had a way down to it by stone or wooden steps, defended by strong iron gates, or doors of nail-studded timber. These houses, like those of Venice, had a door to the land and one to the water. At the moment of writing this sketch, only one house remains of this kind as a reminiscence of old Paris, and that is doomed soon to disappear; it stands at the corner of the Petit-Pont, the little bridge facing the guard-house of the Hôtel-Dieu.

Of old each dwelling presented, on the river side, the peculiar physiognomy stamped on it either by the trade and the habits of its owners, or by the eccentricity of the constructions devised by them for utilizing or defiling the Seine. The bridges being built, and almost all choked up by more mills than were convenient for the requirements of navigation, the Seine in Paris was divided into as many pools as there were bridges. Some of these old Paris basins would have afforded

delightful studies of color for the painter. What a forest of timbers was built into the cross-beams that supported the mills, with their immense sails and wheels! What curious effects were to be found in the joists that shored up the houses from the river. Genre painting as yet, unfortunately, was not, and engraving in its infancy; so we have no record of the curious scenes which may still be found, on a small scale, in some provincial towns where the rivers are fringed with wooden houses, and where, as at Vendôme, for instance, the pools, overgrown with tall grasses, are divided by railings to separate the various properties on each bank.

The name of this street, which has now vanished from the map, sufficiently indicates the kind of business carried on there. At that time the merchants engaged in any particular trade, far from dispersing themselves about the city, gathered together for mutual protection. Being socially bound by the guild which limited their increase, they were also united into a brotherhood by the Church. This kept up prices. And then the masters were not at the mercy of their workmen, and did not yield, as they do now, to all their vagaries; on the contrary, they took charge of them, treated them as their children, and taught them the finer mysteries of their craft. A workman, to become a master, was required to produce a masterpiece—always an offering to the patron saint of the guild. And will you venture to assert that the absence of competition diminished their sense of perfection, or hindered beauty of workmanship, when your admiration of the work of the older craftsmen has created the new trade of dealers in bric-à-brac?

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the fur trade was one of the most flourishing industries. The difficulty of obtaining furs, which, coming from the North, necessitated long and dangerous voyages, gave a high value to skins and furriers' work. Then, as now, high prices led to demand, for vanity knows no obstacles.

In France, and in other kingdoms, not only was the use of furs restricted by law to the great nobility, as is proved by the part played by ermine in ancient coats-of-arms; but certain rare furs, such as *vair*, which was beyond doubt imperial

sable, might be worn only by kings, dukes, and men of high rank holding certain offices. *Vair* (a name still used in heraldry, *vair* and *counter vair*) was subdivided into *grand vair* and *menu vair*. The word has within the last hundred years fallen so completely into disuse, that in hundreds of editions of Perrault's fairy tales, Cinderella's famous slipper, probably of fur, *menu vair*, has become a glass slipper, *pantoufle de verre*. Not long since a distinguished French poet was obliged to restore and explain the original spelling of this word, for the edification of his brethren of the Press, when giving an account of the "Cenerentola," in which a ring is substituted for the symbolical slipper—an unmeaning change.

The laws against the use of fur were, of course, perpetually transgressed, to the great advantage of the furriers. The high price of textiles and of furs made a garment in those days a durable thing, in keeping with the furniture, armor, and general details of the sturdy life of the time. A nobleman or lady, every rich man as well as every citizen, possessed at most two dresses for each season, and they lasted a lifetime or more. These articles were bequeathed to their children. Indeed, the clauses relating to weapons and raiment in marriage contracts, in these days unimportant by reason of the small value of clothes that are constantly renewed, were at that period of great interest. High prices had led to durability.

A lady's outfit represented a vast sum of money; it was included in her fortune, and safely bestowed in those enormous chests which endanger the ceilings of modern houses. The full dress of a lady in 1840 would have been the *déshabillé* of a fine lady of 1540. The discovery of America, the facility of transport, the destruction of social distinctions, which has led to the effacement of visible distinctions, have all contributed to reduce the furrier's craft to the low ebb at which it stands, almost to nothing. The article sold by a furrier at the same price as of old—say twenty livres—has fallen in value with the money: the livre or franc was then worth twenty of our present money. The citizen's wife or the courtesan who, in our day, trims her cloak with sable, does not know that in 1440 a malignant constable of the watch

would have taken her forthwith into custody, and hailed her before the judge at Le Châtelet. The English ladies who are so fond of ermine are unconscious of the fact that formerly none but queens, duchesses, and the Chancellor of France were permitted to wear this royal fur. There are at this day various ennobled families bearing the name of Pelletier or Lepelletier, whose forebears were obviously wealthy furriers; for most of our citizen names were originally surnames of that kind.

This digression not only explains the long squabbles as to precedence which the Drapers' Guild carried on for two centuries with the Mercers and the Furriers, each insisting on marching first, as being the most important, but also accounts for the consequence of one Master Lecamus, a furrier honored with the patronage of the two Queens, Catherine de' Medici and Mary Stewart, as well as that of the legal profession, who for twenty years had been the Syndic of his Corporation, and who lived in this street. The house occupied by Lecamus was one of the three forming the three corners of the cross-roads at the end of the Pont au Change, where only the tower now remains that formed the fourth corner. At the angle of this house, forming the corner of the bridge and of the quay, now called the Quai aux Fleurs, the architect had placed a niche for a Madonna, before whom tapers constantly burned, with posies of real flowers in their season, and artificial flowers in the winter.

On the side towards the Rue du Pont, as well as on that to the Rue de la Vieille-Pelleterie, the house was supported on wooden pillars. All the houses of the trading quarters were thus constructed, with an arcade beneath, where foot passengers walked under cover on a floor hardened by the mud they brought in, which made it a rather rough pavement. In all the towns of France these arcades have been called *piliers*—in England *rows*—a general term to which the name of a trade is commonly added, "Piliers des Halles," "Piliers de la Boucherie." These covered ways, required by the changeable and rainy climate of Paris, gave the town a highly characteristic feature, but they have entirely disappeared. Just as there now remains one house only on the river-bank,

so no more than about a hundred feet are left of the old *Piliers* in the market, the last that have survived till now; and in a few days this remnant of the gloomy labyrinth of old Paris will also be destroyed. The existence of these relics of the Middle Ages is, no doubt, incompatible with the splendor of modern Paris. And these remarks are not intended as a lament over those fragments of the old city, but as a verification of this picture by the last surviving examples now falling into dust, and to win forgiveness for such descriptions, which will be precious in the future which is following hard on the heels of this age.

The walls were of timber covered with slates. The spaces between the timbers had been filled up with bricks, in a way that may still be seen in some provincial towns, laid in a zigzag pattern known as *Point de Hongrie*. The window-sills and lintels, also of wood, were handsomely carved, as were the corner tabernacle above the Madonna, and the pillars in front of the shop. Every window, every beam dividing the stories, was graced with arabesques of fantastic figures and animals wreathed in scrolls of foliage. On the street side, as on the river side, the house was crowned with a high-pitched roof having a gable to the river and one to the street. This roof, like that of a Swiss châlet, projected far enough to cover a balcony on the second floor, with an ornamental balustrade; here the mistress might walk under shelter and command a view of the street, or of the pool shut in between two bridges and two rows of houses.

Houses by the river were at that time highly valued. The system of drainage and water supply was not yet invented; the only main drain was one round Paris, constructed by Aubriot, the first man of genius and determination who—in the time of Charles V.—thought of sanitation for Paris. Houses situated like this of the Sieur Lecamus found in the river a necessary water supply, and a natural outlet for rain water and waste. The vast works of this kind under the direction of the Trade Provosts are only now disappearing. None but octogenarians can still remember having seen the pits which swallowed up the surface waters, in the Rue Montmartre, Rue du Temple, etc. These hideous yawning culverts

were in their day of inestimable utility. Their place will probably be forever marked by the sudden rising of the roadway over what was their open channel—another archæological detail which, in a couple of centuries, the historian will find inexplicable.

One day, in 1816, a little girl, who had been sent to an actress at the Ambigu with some diamonds for the part of a queen, was caught in a storm, and so irresistibly swept away by the waters to the opening of the drain in the Rue du Temple, that she would have been drowned in it but for the help of a passer-by, who was touched by her cries. But she had dropped the jewels, which were found in a man-hole. This accident made a great commotion, and gave weight to the demands for the closing of these gulfs for swallowing water and little girls. These curious structures, five feet high, had more or less movable gratings, which led to the flooding of cellars when the stream produced by heavy rain was checked by the grating being choked with rubbish, which the residents often forgot to remove.

The front of Master Lecamus's shop was a large window, but filled in with small panes of leaded glass, which made the place very dark. The furs for wealthy purchasers were carried to them for inspection. To those who came to buy in the shop, the goods were displayed outside between the pillars, which, during the day, were always more or less blocked by tables and salesmen sitting on stools, as they could still be seen doing under the arcade of the Halles some fifteen years since. From these outposts the clerks, apprentices, and sewing girls could chat, question, and answer each other, and hail the passer-by in a way which Walter Scott has depicted in the *Fortunes of Nigel*. The signboard, representing an ermine, was hung out as we still see those of village inns, swinging from a handsome arm of pierced and gilt ironwork. Over the ermine were these words:—

LECAMUS
Furrier
To Her Majesty the Queen and the King our
Sovereign Lord

on one side, and on the other:—

To Her Majesty the Queen Mother
And to the Gentlemen of the Parlement.

The words "To Her Majesty the Queen" had been lately added; the gilt letters were new. This addition was a consequence of the recent changes produced by Henri II.'s sudden and violent death, which overthrew many fortunes at Court, and began that of the Guises.

The back shop looked over the river. In this room sat the worthy citizen and his wife, Mlle. Lecamus. The wife of a man who was not noble had not at that time any right to the title of Dame, or lady; but the wives of the citizens of Paris were allowed to call themselves Demoiselle (as we might say mistress), as part of the privileges granted and confirmed to their husbands by many kings to whom they had rendered great services. Between this back room and the front shop was a spiral ladder or staircase of wood, a sort of cork-screw leading up to the next story, where the furs were stored, to the old couple's bedroom, and again to the attics, lighted by dormer windows, where their children slept, the maid-servant, the clerks, and the apprentices.

This herding of families, servants, and apprentices, and the small space allotted to each in the dwelling, where the apprentices all slept in one large room under the tiles, accounts for the enormous population at that time crowded together in Paris on a tenth of the ground now occupied by the city, and also for the many curious details of mediæval life, and the cunning love affairs, though these, *pace* the grave historian, are nowhere recorded but by the story writers, and without them would have been lost.

At this time a grand gentleman—such as the Admiral de Coligny, for instance—had three rooms for himself in Paris, and his people lived in a neighboring hostelry. There were not fifty mansions in all Paris, not fifty palaces, that is to say, belonging to the sovereign princes or great vassals, whose existence was far superior to that of the greatest German rulers, such as the Duke of Bavaria or the Elector of Saxony.

The kitchen in the Lecamus' house was on the river side

below the back shop. It had a glass door opening on to an ironwork balcony, where the cook could stand to draw up water in a pail and to wash the household linen. Thus the back shop was at once the sitting-room, the dining-room, and the counting-house. It was in this important room—always fitted with richly carved wood, and adorned by some chest or artistic article of furniture—that the merchant spent most of his life; there he had jolly suppers after his day's work; there were held secret debates on the political interests of the citizens and the royal family. The formidable guilds of Paris could at that time arm a hundred thousand men. Their resolutions were stoutly upheld by their serving-men, their clerks, their apprentices, and their workmen. Their provost was their commander-in-chief, and they had, in the Hôtel de Ville, a palace where they had a right to assemble.

In that famous "citizens' parlor" (*parlouer aux bourgeois*) very solemn decisions were taken. But for the continual sacrifices which had made war unendurable to the guilds, wearied out with losses and famine, Henri IV., a rebel-made king, might never have entered Paris.

Every reader may now imagine for himself the characteristic appearance of this corner of Paris where the bridge and the quay now open out, where the trees rise from the Quai aux Fleurs, and where nothing is left of the past but the lofty and famous clock-tower whence the signal was tolled for the Massacre of Saint-Bartholomew. Strange coincidence! One of the houses built round the foot of that tower—at that time surrounded by wooden shops—the house of the Lecamus, was to be the scene of one of the incidents that led to that night of horrors, which proved, unfortunately, propitious rather than fatal to Calvinism.

At the moment when this story begins, the audacity of the new religious teaching was setting Paris by the ears. A Scotchman, named Stewart, had just assassinated President Minard, that member of the Parlement to whom public opinion attributed a principal share in the execution of Anne du Bourg, a councilor burnt on the Place de Grève after the

tailor of the late King, who had been tortured in the presence of Henri II. and Diane de Poitiers. Paris was so closely watched, that the archers on guard compelled every passer-by to pray to the Virgin, in order to detect heretics, who yielded unwillingly, or even refused to perform an act opposed to their convictions.

The two archers on guard at the corner of the Lecamus' house had just gone off duty; thus Christophe, the furrier's son, strongly suspected of deserting the Catholic faith, had been able to go out without fear of being compelled to adore the Virgin's image. At seven in the evening of an April day, 1560, night was falling, and the apprentices, seeing only a few persons walking along the arcades on each side of the street, were carrying in the goods laid out for inspection preparatory to closing the house and the shop. Christophe Lecamus, an ardent youth of two-and-twenty, was standing in the door, apparently engaged in looking after the apprentices.

"Monsieur," said one of these lads to Christophe, pointing out a man who was pacing to and fro under the arcade with a doubtful expression, "that is probably a spy or a thief, but whatever he is, such a lean wretch cannot be an honest man. If he wanted to speak to us on business, he would come up boldly instead of creeping up and down as he is doing.—And what a face!" he went on, mimicking the stranger, "with his nose hidden in his cloak! What a jaundiced eye, and what a starved complexion!"

As soon as the stranger thus described saw Christophe standing alone in the doorway, he hastily crossed from the opposite arcade where he was walking, came under the pillars of the Lecamus' house, and passing along by the shop before the apprentices had come out again to close the shutters, he went up to the young man.

"I am Chaudieu!" he said in a low voice.

On hearing the name of one of the most famous ministers, and one of the most heroic actors in the terrible drama called the Reformation, Christophe felt such a thrill as a faithful peasant would have felt on recognizing his king under a disguise.

"Would you like to see some furs?" said Christophe, to deceive the apprentices whom he heard behind him. "Though it is almost dark, I can show you some myself."

He invited the minister to enter, but the man replied that he would rather speak to him out of doors. Christophe fetched his cap and followed the Calvinist.

Chaudieu, though banished by an edict, as secret plenipotentiary of Théodore de Bèze and Calvin—who directed the Reformation in France from Geneva—went and came, defying the risk of the horrible death inflicted by the Parlement, in concert with the Church and the Monarch, on a leading reformer, the famous Anne du Bourg. This man, whose brother was a captain in the army, and one of Admiral Coligny's best warriors, was the arm used by Calvin to stir up France at the beginning of the twenty-two years of religious wars which were on the eve of an outbreak. This preacher of the reformed faith was one of those secret wheels which may best explain the immense spread of the Reformation.

Chaudieu led Christophe down to the edge of the water by an underground passage like that of the Arche Marion, filled in some ten years since. This tunnel between the house of Lecamus and that next it ran under the Rue de la Vieille-Pelleterie, and was known as Le Pont aux Fourreurs. It was used by the dyers of the Cité as a way down to the river to wash their thread, silk, and materials. A little boat lay there, held and rowed by one man. In the bows sat a stranger, a small man, and very simply dressed. In an instant the boat was in the middle of the river, and the boatman steered it under one of the wooden arches of the Pont au Change, where he quickly secured it to an iron ring. No one had said a word.

"Here we may talk in safety, there are neither spies nor traitors," said Chaudieu to the two others. "Are you filled with the spirit of self-sacrifice that should animate a martyr? Are you ready to suffer all things for our holy Cause? Do you fear the torments endured by the late King's tailor, and the Councilor du Bourg, which of a truth await us all?" He spoke to Christophe, looking at him with a radiant face.

"I will testify to the Gospel," replied Christophe simply, looking up at the windows of the back shop.

The familiar lamp standing on a table, where his father was no doubt balancing his books, reminded him by its mild beam of the peaceful life and family joys he was renouncing. It was a brief but complete vision. The young man's fancy took in the homely harmony of the whole scene—the places where he had spent his happy childhood, where Babette Lallier lived, his future wife, where everything promised him a calm and busy life; he saw the past, he saw the future, and he sacrificed it all. At any rate, he staked it.

Such were men in those days.

"We need say no more," cried the impetuous boatman. "We know him for one of the saints. If the Scotchman had not dealt the blow, he would have killed the infamous Minard."

"Yes," said Lecamus, "my life is in the hands of the brethren, and I devote it with joy for the success of the Reformation. I have thought of it all seriously. I know what we are doing for the joy of the nations. In two words, the Papacy makes for celibacy, the Reformation makes for the family. It is time to purge France of its monks, to restore their possessions to the Crown, which will sell them sooner or later to the middle classes. Let us show that we can die for our children, and to make our families free and happy!"

The young enthusiast's face, with Chaudieu's, the boatman's, and that of the stranger seated in the bows, formed a picture that deserves to be described, all the more so because such a description entails the whole history of that epoch, if it be true that it is given to some men to sum up in themselves the spirit of their age.

Religious reform, attempted in Germany by Luther, in Scotland by John Knox, and in France by Calvin, found partisans chiefly among those of the lower classes who had begun to think. The great nobles encouraged the movement only to serve other interests quite foreign to the religious question. These parties were joined by adventurers, by gentlemen who had lost all, by youngsters to whom every form of excitement was acceptable. But among the artisans and men employed in trade, faith was genuine, and founded on

intelligent interests. The poorer nations at once gave their adherence to a religion which brought the property of the Church back to the State, which suppressed the convents, and deprived the dignitaries of the Church of their enormous revenues. Everybody in trade calculated the profits from this religious transaction, and devoted themselves to it body, soul, and purse; and among the youth of the French citizen class, the new preaching met that noble disposition for self-sacrifice of every kind which animates the young to whom egoism is unknown.

Eminent men, penetrating minds, such as are always to be found among the masses, foresaw the Republic in the Reformation, and hoped to establish throughout Europe a form of government like that of the United Netherlands, which at last triumphed over the greatest power of the time—Spain, ruled by Philip II., and represented in the Low Countries by the Duke of Alva. Jean Hotoman was at that time planning the famous book in which this scheme is set forth, which diffused through France the leaven of these ideas, stirred up once more by the League, subdued by Richelieu, and afterwards by Louis XIV., to reappear with the Economists and the Encyclopedists under Louis XV., and burst into life under Louis XVI.; ideas which were always approved by the younger branches, by the House of Orléans in 1789, as by the House of Bourbon in 1589.

The questioning spirit is the rebellious spirit. A rebellion is always either a cloak to hide a prince, or the swaddling wrapper of a new rule. The House of Bourbon, a younger branch than the Valois, was busy at the bottom of the Reformation. At the moment when the little boat lay moored under the arch of the Pont au Change, the question was further complicated by the ambition of the Guises, the rivals of the Bourbons. Indeed, the Crown as represented by Catherine de' Medici could, for thirty years, hold its own in the strife by setting these two factions against each other; whereas later, instead of being clutched at by many hands, the Crown stood face to face with the people without a barrier between; for Richelieu and Louis XIV. had broken down the nobility, and Louis XV. had overthrown the Parlements.

Now a king alone face to face with a nation, as Louis XVI. was, must inevitably succumb.

Christophe Lecamus was very typical of the ardent and devoted sons of the people. His pale complexion had that warm burnt hue which is seen in some fair people; his hair was of a coppery yellow; his eyes were bluish-gray, and sparkled brightly. In them alone was his noble soul visible, for his clumsy features did not disguise the somewhat triangular shape of a plain face by lending it the look of dignity which a man of rank can assume, and his forehead was low, and characteristic only of great energy. His vitality seemed to be seated no lower down than his chest, which was somewhat hollow. Sinewy, rather than muscular, Christophe was of tough texture, lean but wiry. His sharp nose showed homely cunning, and his countenance revealed intelligence of the kind that acts wisely on one point of a circle, but that has not the power of commanding the whole circumference. His eyes, set under brows that projected like a penthouse, and faintly outlined with light down, were surrounded with broad light-blue circles, with a sheeny white patch at the root of the nose, almost always a sign of great excitability. Christophe was of the people—the race that fights and allows itself to be deceived; intelligent enough to understand and to serve an idea, too noble to take advantage of it, too magnanimous to sell himself.

By the side of old Lecamus's only son, Chaudieu, the ardent minister, lean from watchfulness, with brown hair, a yellow skin, a contumacious brow, an eloquent mouth, fiery hazel eyes, and a short rounded chin, symbolized that Christian zeal which gave the Reformation so many fanatical and earnest preachers, whose spirit and boldness fired whole communities. This aid-de-camp of Calvin and Théodore de Bèze contrasted well with the furrier's son. He represented the living cause of which Christophe was the effect. You could not have conceived of the active firebrand of the popular machine under any other aspect.

The boatman, an impetuous creature, tanned by the open air, the dews of night, and the heats of the day, with firmly set lips, quick motions, a hungry, tawny eye like a

vulture's, and crisp black hair, was the characteristic adventurer who risks his all in an undertaking as a gambler stakes his whole fortune on a card. Everything in the man spoke of terrible passions and a daring that would flinch at nothing. His quivering muscles were as able to keep silence as to speak. His look was assertive rather than noble. His nose, upturned but narrow, scented battle. He seemed active and adroit. In any age you would have known him for a party leader. He might have been Pizarro, Hernando Cortez, or Morgan the Destroyer if there had been no Reformation—a doer of violent deeds.

The stranger who sat on a seat, wrapped in his cloak, evidently belonged to the highest social rank. The fineness of his linen, the cut, material, and perfume of his raiment, the make and texture of his gloves, showed a man of the Court, as his attitude, his haughtiness, his cool demeanor, and his flashing eye revealed a man of war. His appearance was at first somewhat alarming, and inspired respect. We respect a man who respects himself. Though short and hunchbacked, his manner made good all the defects of his figure. The ice once broken, he had the cheerfulness of decisiveness and an indescribable spirit of energy which made him attractive. He had the blue eyes and the hooked nose of the House of Navarre, and the Spanish look of the marked physiognomy that was characteristic of the Bourbon kings.

With three words the scene became of the greatest interest.

"Well, then," said Chaudieu, as Christophe Lecamus made his profession of faith, "this boatman is la Renaudie; and this is Monseigneur the Prince de Condé," he added, turning to the hunchback.

Thus the four men were representative of the faith of the people, the intellect of eloquence, the arm of the soldier, and Royalty cast into the shade.

"You will hear what we require of you," the minister went on, after allowing a pause for the young man's astonishment. "To the end that you may make no mistakes, we are compelled to initiate you into the most important secrets of the Reformation."

The Prince and la Renaudie assented by a gesture, when

the minister ceased speaking, to allow the Prince to say something, if he should wish it. Like all men of rank engaged in conspiracies, who make it a principle not to appear before some critical moment, the Prince kept silence. Not from cowardice: at such junctures he was the soul of the scheme, shrank from no danger, and risked his head; but with a sort of royal dignity, he left the explanation of the enterprise to the preacher, and was content to study the new instrument he was compelled to make use of.

"My son," said Chaudieu in Huguenot phraseology, "we are about to fight the first battle against the Roman whore. In a few days our soldiers must perish at the stake, or the Guises must be dead. So, ere long, the King and the two Queens will be in our power. This is the first appeal to arms by our religion in France, and France will not lay them down till she has conquered—it is of the nation that I speak, and not of the kingdom. Most of the nobles of the kingdom see what the Cardinal de Lorraine and the Duke his brother are driving at. Under pretense of defending the Catholic faith, the House of Lorraine claims the Crown of France as its inheritance. It leans on the Church, and has made it a formidable ally; the monks are its supporters, its acolytes and spies. It asserts itself as a protector of the throne it hopes to usurp, of the Valois whom it hopes to destroy.

"We have decided to rise up in arms, and it is because the liberties of the people are threatened as well as the interests of the nobility. We must stifle in its infancy a faction as atrocious as that of the Bourguignons, who of old put Paris and France to fire and sword. A Louis XI. was needed to end the quarrel between the Burgundians and the Crown, but now a Prince of Condé will prevent the Lorrains from going too far. This is not a civil war; it is a duel between the Guises and the Reformation—a duel to the death! We will see their heads laid low, or they shall crush ours!"

"Well spoken!" said the Prince.

"In these circumstances, Christophe," la Renaudie put in, "we must neglect no means of strengthening our party—for there is a party on the side of the Reformation, the party of offended rights, of the nobles who are sacrificed to the

Guises, of the old army leaders so shamefully tricked at Fontainebleau, whence the Cardinal banished them by erecting gibbets to hang those who should ask the King for the price of their outfit and arrears of pay."

"Yes, my son," said Chaudieu, seeing some signs of terror in Christophe, "that is what requires us to triumph by fighting instead of triumphing by conviction and martyrdom. The Queen-mother is ready to enter into our views; not that she is prepared to abjure the Catholic faith—she has not got so far as that, but she may perhaps be driven to it by our success. Be that as it may, humiliated and desperate as she is at seeing the power she had hoped to wield at the King's death in the grasp of the Guises, and alarmed by the influence exerted by the young Queen Marie, who is their niece and partisan, Queen Catherine will be inclined to lend her support to the princes and nobles who are about to strike a blow for her deliverance. At this moment, though apparently devoted to the Guises, she hates them, longs for their ruin, and will make use of us to oppose them; but Monseigneur can make use of her to oppose all the others. The Queen-mother will consent to all we propose. We have the Connétable on our side—Monseigneur has just seen him at Chantilly, but he will not stir without orders from his superiors. Being Monseigneur's uncle, he will not leave us in the lurch, and our generous Prince will not hesitate to rush into danger to enlist Anne de Montmorency.

"Everything is ready; and we have cast our eyes on you to communicate to Queen Catherine our treaty of alliance, our schemes for edicts, and the basis of the new rule. The Court is at Blois. Many of our friends are there; but those are our future chiefs—and, like Monseigneur," and he bowed to the Prince, "they must never be suspected; we must sacrifice ourselves for them. The Queen-mother and our friends are under such close espionage, that it is impossible to communicate with them through anyone who is known, or of any consequence. Such a person would at once be suspected, and would never be admitted to speak with Mme. Catherine. God should indeed give us at this moment the shepherd David with his sling to attack Goliath de Guise.

Your father—a good Catholic, more's the pity—is furrier to the two Queens; he always has some garment or trimming in hand for them; persuade him to send you to the Court. You will arouse no suspicions, and will not compromise Queen Catherine. Any one of our leaders might lose his head for an imprudence which should give rise to a suspicion of the Queen-mother's connivance with us. But where a man of importance, once caught out, gives a clew to suspicions, a nobody like you escapes scot-free.—You see! The Guises have so many spies, that nowhere but in the middle of the river can we talk without fear. So you, my son, are like a man on guard, doomed to die at his post. Understand, if you are taken, you are abandoned by us all. If need be, we shall cast opprobrium and disgrace on you. If we should be forced to it, we should declare that you were a creature of the Guises whom they sent to play a part to implicate us. So what we ask of you is entire self-sacrifice."

"If you perish," said the Prince de Condé, "I pledge my word as a gentleman that your family shall be a sacred trust to the House of Navarre; I will bear it in my heart and serve it in every way."

"That word, my Lord, is enough," replied Christophe, forgetting that this leader of faction was a Gascon. "We live in times when every man, prince or citizen, must do his duty."

"That is a true Huguenot! If all our men were like him," said la Renaudie, laying his hand on Christophe's shoulder, "we should have won by to-morrow."

"Young man," said the Prince, "I meant to show you that while Chaudieu preaches and the gentleman bears arms, the Prince fights. Thus, in so fierce a game every stake has its value."

"Listen," said la Renaudie; "I will not give you the papers till we reach Beaugency, for we must run no risks on the road. You will find me on the quay there; my face, voice, and clothes will be so different, that you may not recognize me. But I will say to you, 'Are you a *Guépin?*' and you must reply, 'At your service.'—As to the manner of proceeding, I will tell you. You will find a horse at *La Pinte fleurie*,

near Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois. Ask there for Jean le Breton, who will take you to the stable and mount you on a nag of mine known to cover thirty leagues in eight hours. Leave Paris by the Bussy Gate. Breton has a pass for me; take it for yourself and be off, riding round outside the towns. You should reach Orleans by daybreak."

"And the horse?" asked Lecamus.

"He will hold out till you get to Orleans," replied la Renaudie. "Leave him outside the suburb of Bannier, for the gates are well guarded; we must not arouse suspicion. You, my friend, must play your part well. You must make up any story that may seem to you best to enable you to go to the third house on your left on entering Orleans; it is that of one Tourillon, a glover. Knock three raps on the door and call out, 'In the service of MM. de Guise!' The man affects to be a fanatical *Guisard;* we four only know that he is on our side. He will find you a boatman, such another as himself of course, but devoted to our cause. Go down to the river at once, get into a boat painted green with a white border. You ought to be at Beaugency by noonday to-morrow. There I will put you in the way of getting a boat to carry you down to Blois without running any danger. Our enemies the Guises do not command the Loire, only the river-ports.

"You may thus see the Queen in the course of to-morrow or of the next day."

"Your words are graven here," said Christophe, touching his forehead.

Chaudieu embraced his son with religious fervency; he was proud of him.

"The Lord protect you!" he said, pointing to the sunset which crimsoned the old roofs covered with shingles, and shot fiery gleams among the forest of beams round which the waters foamed.

"You are of the stock of old Jacques Bonhomme," said la Renaudie to Christophe, wringing his hand.

"We shall meet again, *Monsieur,*" said the Prince, with a gesture of infinite graciousness, almost of friendliness.

With a stroke of the oar, la Renaudie carried the young

conspirator back to the steps leading up to the house, and the boat vanished at once under the arches of the Pont au Change.

Christophe shook the iron gate that closed the entrance from the river side and called out; Mlle. Lecamus heard him, opened one of the windows of the back shop, and asked how he came there. Christophe replied that he was half-frozen, and that she must first let him in.

"Young master," said la Bourguignonne, "you went out by the street door and come in by the river-gate? Your father will be in a pretty rage."

Christophe, bewildered by the secret conference which had brought him into contact with the Prince de Condé, la Renaudie, and Chaudieu, and even more agitated by the expected turmoil of an imminent civil war, made no reply; he hurried up from the kitchen to the back shop. There, on seeing him, his mother, who was a bigoted old Catholic, could not contain herself.

"I will wager," she broke out, "that the three men you were talking to were ref——"

"Silence, wife," said the prudent old man, whose white head was bent over a book. "Now, you lazy oafs," he went on to three boys who had long since finished supper, "what are you waiting for to take you to bed? It is eight o'clock. You must be up by five in the morning. And first you have the Président de Thou's robes and cap to carry home. Go all three together, and carry sticks and rapiers. If you meet any more ne'er-do-weels of your own kidney, at any rate there will be three of you."

"And are we to carry the ermine surcoat ordered by the young Queen, which is to be delivered at the Hôtel de Soissons, from whence there is an express to Blois and to the Queen-mother?" asked one of the lads.

"No," said the Syndic; "Queen Catherine's account amounts to three thousand crowns, and I must get the money. I think I will go to Blois myself."

"I should not think of allowing you, at your age, father, and in such times as these, to expose yourself on the high-roads. I am two-and-twenty; you may send me on this er-

rand," said Christophe, with an eye on a box which he had no doubt contained the surcoat.

"Are you glued to the bench?" cried the old man to the apprentices, who hastily took up their rapiers and capes, and M. de Thou's fur gown.

This illustrious man was to be received on the morrow by the Parlement as their president; he had just signed the death-warrant of the Councilor du Bourg, and was fated, before the year was out, to sit in judgment on the Prince de Condé.

"La Bourguignonne," said the old man, "go and ask my neighbor Lallier if he will sup with us this evening, furnishing the wine; we will give the meal.—And, above all, tell him to bring his daughter."

The Syndic of the Guild of Furriers was a handsome old man of sixty, with white hair and a broad high forehead. As furrier to the Court for forty years past, he had witnessed all the revolutions in the reign of Francis I., and had retained his royal patent in spite of feminine rivalries. He had seen the arrival at Court of Catherine de' Medici, then but just fifteen; he had seen her succumb to the Duchesse d'Étampes, her father-in-law's mistress, and to the Duchesse de Valentinois, mistress to the late King, her husband. But through all these changes the furrier had got into no difficulties, though the Court purveyors often fell into disgrace with the ladies they served. His prudence was as great as his wealth. He maintained an attitude of excessive humility. Pride had never caught him in its snares. The man was so modest, so meek, so obliging, so poor—at Court and in the presence of queens, princesses, and favorites—that his servility had saved his shop-sign.

Such a line of policy betrayed, of course, a cunning and clear-sighted man. Humble as he was to the outer world, at home he was a despot. He was the unquestioned master in his own house. He was highly respected by his fellow merchants, and derived immense consideration from his long tenure of the first place in business. Indeed, he was gladly helpful to others; and among the services he had done, the

most important perhaps was the support he had long afforded to the most famous surgeon of the sixteenth century—Ambroise Paré, who owed it to Lecamus that he could pursue his studies. In all the disputes that arose between the merchants of the guild, Lecamus was for conciliatory measures. Thus general esteem had confirmed his supremacy among his equals, while his assumed character had preserved him in the favor of the Court.

Having, for political reasons, maneuvered in his parish for the glory of his trade, he did what was needful to keep himself in a sufficient odor of sanctity with the priest of the Church of Saint-Pierre aux Bœufs, who regarded him as one of the men most devoted in all Paris to the Catholic faith. Consequently, when the States-General were convoked, Lecamus was unanimously elected to represent the third estate by the influence of the priests, which was at that time enormous in Paris.

This old man was one of those deep and silent ambitious men who for fifty years are submissive to everybody in turn, creeping up from place to place, no one knowing how, till they are seen peacefully seated in a position which no one, not even the boldest, would have dared to admit was the goal of his ambition at the beginning of his life—so long was the climb, so many gulfs were there to leap, into which he might fall! Lecamus, who had hidden away a large fortune, would run no risks, and was planning a splendid future for his son. Instead of that personal ambition which often sacrifices the future to the present, he had family ambition, a feeling that seems lost in these days, smothered by the stupid regulation of inheritance by law. Lecamus foresaw himself president of the Paris Parlement in the person of his grandson.

Christophe, the godson of the great historian de Thou, had received an excellent education, but it had led him to skepticism and inquiry, which indeed were increasing apace among the students and Faculties of the University. Christophe was at present studying for the bar, the first step to a judgeship. The old furrier pretended to be undecided as to his son's career; sometimes he would make Christophe his successor, and sometimes he would have him a pleader;

but in his heart he longed to see this son in the seat of a councilor of the Parlement. The furrier longed to place the house of Lecamus on a par with the old and honored families of Paris citizens which had produced a Pasquier, a Molé, a Miron, a Séguier, Lamoignon, du Tillet, Lecoigneux, Lescalopier, the Goix, the Arnaulds,—all the famous sheriffs and high-provosts of corporations who had rallied to defend the throne.

To the end that Christophe might in that day do credit to his rank, he wanted him to marry the daughter of the richest goldsmith in the Cité, his neighbor Lallier, whose nephew, at a later day, presented the keys of Paris to Henri IV. The most deeply rooted purpose in the good man's heart was to spend half his own fortune and half of Lallier's in the purchase of a lordly estate, a long and difficult matter in those days.

But he was too deep a schemer, and knew the times too well, to overlook the great movements that were being hatched; he saw plainly, and saw truly, when he looked forward to the division of the kingdom into two camps. The useless executions on the Place de l'Estrapade, that of Henry II.'s tailor, and that, still more recent, of the Councilor Anne du Bourg, besides the connivance of the reigning favorite in the time of Francis I., and of many nobles now, at the progress of reform, all were alarming indications. The furrier was determined, come what might, to remain faithful to the Church, the Monarchy, and the Parlement, but he was secretly well content that his son should join the Reformation. He knew that he had wealth enough to ransom Christophe if the lad should ever compromise himself seriously; and then, if France should turn Calvinist, his son could save the family in any furious outbreaks in the capital such as the citizens could vividly remember, and as would recur again and again through four reigns.

Like Louis XI., the old furrier never confessed these thoughts even to himself; his cunning completely deceived his wife and his son. For many a day this solemn personage had been the recognized head of the most populous quarter of Paris—the heart of the city—bearing the title of Quar-

tenier, which became notorious fifteen years later. Clothed in cloth, like every prudent citizen who obeyed the sumptuary laws, Master Lecamus—the Sieur Lecamus, a title he held in virtue of an edict of Charles V. permitting the citizens of Paris to purchase *seigneuries*, and their wives to assume the fine title of *demoiselle* or mistress—wore no gold chain, no silk; only a stout doublet with large buttons of blackened silver, wrinkled hose drawn up above his knee, and leather shoes with buckles. His shirt, of fine linen, was pulled out, in the fashion of the time, into full puffs through his half-buttoned waistcoat and slashed trunks.

Though the full light of the lamp fell on the old man's broad and handsome head, Christophe had no inkling of the thoughts hidden behind that rich Dutch-looking complexion; still he understood that his old father meant to take some advantage of his affection for pretty Babette Lallier. And Christophe, as a man who has laid his own schemes, smiled sadly when he heard the invitation sent to his fair mistress.

As soon as la Bourguignonne and the apprentices were gone, old Lecamus looked at his wife with an expression that fully showed his firm and resolute temper.

"You will never rest till you have got the boy hanged with your damned tongue!" said he in stern tones.

"I would rather see him hanged, but saved, than alive and a Huguenot," was the gloomy reply. "To think that the child I bore within me for nine months should not be a good Catholic, but hanker after the heresies of Colas—that he must spend all eternity in hell——!" and she began to cry.

"You old fool!" said the furrier, "then give him a chance of life, if only to convert him! Why, you said a thing, before the apprentices, which might set our house on fire, and roast us all in it like fleas in straw."

The mother crossed herself, but said nothing.

"As for you," said the good man, with a scrutinizing look at his son, "tell me what you were doing out there on the water with—— Come close to me while I speak to you," he added, seizing his son by the arm, and drawing him close to him while he whispered in the lad's ear—"with the Prince de

Condé." Christophe started. "Do you suppose that the Court furrier does not know all their faces? And do you fancy that I am not aware of what is going on? Monseigneur the Grand Master has ordered out troops to Amboise. And when troops are removed from Paris to Amboise while the Court is at Blois, when they are marched by way of Chartres and Vendôme instead of by Orleans, the meaning is pretty clear, heh? Trouble is brewing.

"If the Queens want their surcoats, they will send for them. The Prince de Condé may be intending to kill Messieurs de Guise, who on their part mean to get rid of him perhaps. Of what use can a furrier's son be in such a broil? When you are married, when you are a pleader in the Parlement, you will be as cautious as your father. A furrier's son has no business to be of the new religion till all the rest of the world is. I say nothing against the Reformers; it is no business of mine; but the Court is Catholic, the two Queens are Catholic, the Parlement is Catholic: we serve them with furs, and we must be Catholic.

"You do not stir from here, Christophe, or I will place you with your godfather the Président de Thou, who will keep you at it, blackening paper night and day, instead of leaving you to blacken your soul in the hell-broth of these damned Genevese."

"Father," said Christophe, leaning on the back of the old man's chair, "send me off to Blois with Queen Marie's surcoat, and to ask for the money, or I am a lost man. And you love me——"

"Lost!" echoed his father, without any sign of surprise. "If you stay here, you will not be lost. I shall know where to find you."

"I shall be killed."

"Why?"

"The most zealous Huguenots have cast their eyes on me to serve them in a certain matter, and if I fail to do what I have just promised, they will kill me in the street, in the face of day, here, as Minard was killed. But if you send me to the Court on business of your own, I shall probably be able to justify my action to both parties. Either I shall succeed for

them without running any risk, and so gain a good position in the party; or, if the danger is too great, I can do your business only."

The old man started to his feet as if his seat were of red-hot iron.

"Wife," said he, "leave us, and see that no one intrudes on Christophe and me."

When Mistress Lecamus had left the room, the furrier took his son by a button and led him to the corner of the room which formed the angle towards the bridge.

"Christophe," said he, quite into his son's ear, as he had just now spoken of the Prince de Condé, "be a Huguenot if that is your pet vice, but with prudence, in your secret heart, and not in such a way as to be pointed at by everyone in the neighborhood. What you have just told me shows me what confidence the leaders have in you.—What are you to do at the Court?"

"I cannot tell you," said Christophe; "I do not quite know that myself yet."

"H'm, h'm," said the old man, looking at the lad, "the young rascal wants to hoodwink his father. He will go far! —Well, well," he went on, in an undertone, "you are not going to Blois to make overtures to the Guises, nor to the little King our Sovereign, nor to little Queen Mary. All these are Catholics; but I could swear that the Italian Queen owes the Scotch woman and the Lorraines some grudge: I know her. She has been dying to put a finger in the pie. The late King was so much afraid of her that, like the jewelers, he used diamond to cut diamond, one woman against another. Hence Queen Catherine's hatred of the poor Duchesse de Valentinois, from whom she took the fine Château of Chenonceaux. But for M. le Connétable, the Duchess would have had her neck wrung at least——

"Hands off, my boy! Do not trust yourself within reach of the Italian woman, whose only passions are in her head; a bad sort that.—Ay, the business you are sent to the Court to do will give you a bad headache, I fear," cried the father, seeing that Christophe was about to speak. "My boy, I have two schemes for your future life; you will not spoil them

by being of service to Queen Catherine. But, for God's sake, keep your head on your shoulders! And the Guises would cut it off as la Bourguignonne cuts off a turnip, for the people who are employing you would throw you over at once."

"I know that, father," said Christophe.

"And you are so bold as that! You know it, and you will risk it?"

"Yes, father."

"Why, the Devil's in it!" cried the old man, hugging his son, "we may understand each other; you are your father's son.—My boy, you will be a credit to the family, and your old father may be plain with you, I see.—But do not be more of a Huguenot than the Messieurs de Coligny; and do not draw your sword. You are to be a man of the pen; stick to your part as a sucking lawyer.—Well, tell me no more till you have succeeded. If I hear nothing of you for four days after you reach Blois, that silence will tell me that you are in danger. Then the old man will follow to save the young one. I have not sold furs for thirty years without knowing the seamy side of a Court robe. I can find means of opening doors."

Christophe stared with amazement at hearing his father speak thus; but he feared some parental snare, and held his tongue.

Then he said—

"Very well, make up the account; write a letter to the Queen. I must be off this moment, or dreadful things will happen."

"Be off? But how?"

"I will buy a horse.—Write, for God's sake!"

"Here! Mother! Give your boy some money," the furrier called out to his wife.

She came in, flew to her chest, and gave a purse to Christophe, who excitedly kissed her.

"The account was ready," said his father; "here it is. I will write the letter."

Christophe took the bill and put it in his pocket.

"But at any rate you will sup with us," said the good man.

"In this extremity you and the Lallier girl must exchange rings."

"Well, I will go to fetch her," cried Christophe.

The young man feared some indecision in his father, whose character he did not thoroughly appreciate; he went up to his room, dressed, took out a small trunk, stole downstairs, and placed it with his cloak and rapier under a counter in the shop.

"What the devil are you about?" asked his father, hearing him there.

"I do not want anyone to see my preparations for leaving; I have put everything under the counter," he whispered in reply.

"And here is the letter," said his father.

Christophe took the paper, and went out as if to fetch their neighbor.

A few moments after Christophe had gone out, old Lallier and his daughter came in, preceded by a woman-servant carrying three bottles of old wine.

"Well, and where is Christophe?" asked the furrier and his wife.

"Christophe?" said Babette; "we have not seen him."

"A pretty rogue is my son!" cried Lecamus. "He tricks me as if I had no beard. Why, old gossip, what will come to us? We live in times when the children are all too clever for their fathers!"

"But he has long been regarded by all the neighbors as a mad follower of Colas," said Lallier.

"Defend him stoutly on that score," said the furrier to the goldsmith. "Youth is foolish, and runs after anything new; but Babette will keep him quiet, she is even newer than Calvin."

Babette smiled. She truly loved Christophe, was affronted by everything that was ever said against him. She was a girl of the good old middle-class type, brought up under her mother's eye, for she had never left her; her demeanor was as gentle and precise as her features; she was dressed in stuff of harmonious tones of gray; her ruff, plainly pleated, was a contrast by its whiteness to her sober gown; on her head was

a black velvet cap, like a child's hood in shape, but trimmed, on each side of her face, with frills and ends of tan-colored gauze. Though she was fair-haired, with a white skin, she seemed cunning and crafty, though trying to hide her wiliness under the expression of a simple and honest girl.

As long as the two women remained in the room, coming to and fro to lay the cloth, and place the jugs, the large pewter dishes, and the knives and forks, the goldsmith and his daughter, the furrier and his wife, sat in front of the high chimney-place, hung with red serge and black fringes, talking of nothing. It was in vain that Babette asked where Christophe could be; the young Huguenot's father and mother made ambiguous replies; but as soon as the party had sat down to their meal, and the two maids were in the kitchen, Lecamus said to his future daughter-in-law—

"Christophe is gone to the Court."

"To Blois! What a journey to take without saying good-by to me!" said Babette.

"He was in a great hurry," said his old mother.

"Old friend," said the furrier to Lallier, taking up the thread of the conversation, "we are going to see hot work in France; the Reformers are astir."

"If they win the day, it will only be after long fighting, which will be very bad for trade," said Lallier, incapable of looking higher than the commercial point of view.

"My father, who had seen the end of the wars between the Bourguignons and the Armagnacs, told me that our family would never have lived through them if one of his grandfathers—his mother's father—had not been one of the Goix, the famous butchers at the Halle, who were attached to the Bourguignons, while the other, a Lecamus, was on the side of the Armagnacs; they pretended to be ready to flay each other before the outer world, but at home they were very good friends. So we will try to save Christophe. Perhaps a time may come when he will save us."

"You are a cunning dog, neighbor," said the goldsmith.

"No," replied Lecamus. "The citizen class must take care of itself, the populace and the nobility alike owe it a

grudge. Everybody is afraid of the middle class in Paris excepting the King, who knows us to be his friends."

"You who know so much, and who have seen so much," said Babette timidly, "pray tell me what it is that the Reformers want."

"Ay, tell us that, neighbor!" cried the goldsmith. "I knew the late King's tailor, and I always took him to be a simple soul, with no great genius; he was much such another as you are, they would have given him the Host without requiring him to confess, and all the time he was up to his eyes in this new religion.—He! a man whose ears were worth many hundred thousand crowns. He must have known some secrets worth hearing for the King and Mme. de Valentinois to be present when he was tortured."

"Ay! and terrible secrets too," said the furrier. "The Reformation, my friends," he went on, in a low voice, "will give the Church lands back to the citizen class. When ecclesiastical privileges are annulled, the Reformers mean to claim equality of taxation for the nobles and the middle class, and to have only the King above all alike—if indeed they have a king at all."

"What, do away with the Throne?" cried Lallier.

"Well, neighbor," said Lecamus, "in the Low Countries the citizens govern themselves by provosts over them, who elect a temporary chief."

"God bless me! Neighbor, we might do all these fine things, and still be Catholics," said the goldsmith.

"We are too old to see the triumph of the middle class in Paris, but it will triumph, neighbor, all in good time, all in good time! Why, the King is bound to rely on us to hold his own, and we have always been well paid for our support. And the last time all the citizens were ennobled, and they had leave to buy manors, and take the name of their estates without any special letters patent from the King. You and I, for instance, grandsons of the Goix in the female line, are we not as good as many a nobleman?"

This speech was so alarming to the goldsmith and the two women, that it was followed by a long silence. The leaven of 1789 was already germinating in the blood of Lecamus,

who was not yet so old but that he lived to see the daring of his class under the Ligue.

"Is business pretty firm in spite of all this turmoil?" Lallier asked the furrier's wife.

"It always upsets trade a little," said she.

"Yes, and so I have a great mind to make a lawyer of my son," added Lecamus. "People are always going to law."

The conversation then dwelt on the commonplace, to the goldsmith's great satisfaction, for he did not like political disturbances or over-boldness of thought.

The banks of the Loire, from Blois as far as Angers, were always greatly favored by the two last branches of the Royal Family who occupied the throne before the advent of the Bourbons. This beautiful valley so well deserves the preference of kings, that one of our most elegant writers describes it as follows:—"There is a province in France which is never sufficiently admired. As fragrant as Italy, as flowery as the banks of the Guadalquivir, beautiful besides with its own peculiar beauty. Wholly French, it has always been French, unlike our Northern provinces, debased by Teutonic influence, or our Southern provinces, which have been the concubines of the Moors, of the Spaniards, of every nation that has covered them—this pure, chaste, brave, and loyal tract is Touraine! There is the seat of historic France. Auvergne is Auvergne, Languedoc is Languedoc and nothing more; but Touraine is France, and the truly national river to us is the Loire which waters Touraine. We need not, therefore, be surprised to find such a quantity of monuments in the departments which have taken their names from that of the Loire and its derivations. At every step in that land of enchantment we come upon a picture of which the foreground is the river, or some calm reach, in whose liquid depths are mirrored a château, with its turrets, its woods, and its dancing springs. It was only natural that large fortunes should center round spots where Royalty preferred to live, and where it so long held its Court, and that distinguished birth and merit should crowd thither and build palaces on a par with Royalty itself."

Is it not strange, indeed, that our sovereigns should never have taken the advice indirectly given them by Louis XI., and have made Tours the capital of the kingdom? Without any very great expenditure, the Loire might have been navigable so far for trading vessels and light ships of war. There the seat of Government would have been safe from surprise and high-handed invasion. There the strongholds of the north would not have needed such sums for their fortifications, which alone have cost as much money as all the splendors of Versailles. If Louis XIV. had listened to Vauban's advice, and had his palace built at Mont-Louis, between the Loire and the Cher, perhaps the Revolution of 1789 would never have taken place.

So these fair banks bear, at various spots, clear marks of royal favor. The châteaux of Chambord, Blois, Amboise, Chenonceaux, Chaumont, Plessis-les-Tours, all the residences built by kings' mistresses, by financiers, and noblemen, at Véretz, Azay-le-Rideau, Ussé, Villandri, Valençay, Chanteloup, and Duretal, some of which have disappeared, though most are still standing, are splendid buildings, full of the wonders of the period that has been so little appreciated by the literary sect of Mediævalists.

Of all these châteaux, that of Blois, where the Court was then residing, is the one on which the magnificence of the Houses of Orleans and of Valois has most splendidly set its stamp; and it is the most curious to historians, archæologists, and Catholics. At that time it stood quite alone. The town, inclosed in strong walls with towers, lay below the stronghold, for at that time the château served both as a citadel and as a country residence. Overlooking the town, of which the houses, then as now, climbed the hill on the right bank of the river, their blue slate roofs in close array, there is a triangular plateau, divided by a stream, now unimportant since it runs underground, but in the fifteenth century, as historians tell us, flowing at the bottom of a rather deep ravine, part of which remains as a deep hollow-way, almost a precipice, between the suburb and the château.

It was on this plateau, with a slope to the north and south, that the Comtes de Blois built themselves a "castel" in the

architecture of the twelfth century, where the notorious Thibault le Tricheur, Thibault le Vieux, and many more held a court that became famous. In those days of pure feudal rule, when the King was no more than *inter pares primus* (the first among equals), as a King of Poland finely expressed it, the Counts of Champagne, of Blois, and of Anjou, the mere Barons of Normandy, and the Dukes of Brittany lived in the style of sovereigns and gave kings to the proudest kingdoms. The Plantagenets of Anjou, the Lusignans of Poitou, the Roberts and Williams of Normandy, by their audacious courage mingled their blood with royal races, and sometimes a simple knight, like du Glaicquin (or du Guesclin), refused royal purple and preferred the Constable's sword.

When the Crown had secured Blois as a royal demesne, Louis XII., who took a fancy to the place, perhaps to get away from Plessis and its sinister associations, built on to the château, at an angle, so as to face east and west, a wing connecting the residence of the Counts of Blois with the older structure, of which nothing now remains but the immense hall where the States-General sat under Henri III. Francis I., before he fell in love with Chambord, intended to finish the château by building on the other two sides of a square; but he abandoned Blois for Chambord, and erected only one wing, which in his time and in that of his grandsons practically constituted the château.

This third building of Francis I.'s is much more extensive and more highly decorated than the Louvre *de Henri II.*, as it is called. It is one of the most fantastic efforts of the architecture of the Renaissance. Indeed, at a time when a more reserved style of building prevailed, and no one cared for the Middle Ages, a time when literature was not so intimately allied with art as it now is, la Fontaine wrote of the Château of Blois in his characteristically artless language: "Looking at it from outside, the part done by order of Francis I. pleased me more than all the rest; there are a number of little windows, little balconies, little colonnades, little ornaments, not regularly ordered, which make up something great which I found very pleasing."

Thus the Château of Blois had the attraction of representing three different kinds of architecture—three periods, three systems, three dynasties. And there is not, perhaps, any other royal residence which in this respect can compare with it. The vast building shows, in one inclosure, in one courtyard, a complete picture of that great product of national life and manners which Architecture always is.

At the time when Christophe was bound for the Court, that portion of the precincts on which a fourth palace now stands—the wing added seventy years later, during his exile, by Gaston, Louis XIII.'s rebellious brother—was laid out in pastures and terraced gardens, picturesquely scattered among the foundation stones and unfinished towers begun by Francis I. These gardens were joined by a bold flying bridge —which some old inhabitants still alive saw destroyed—to a garden on the other side of the château, which by the slope of the ground lay on the same level. The gentlemen attached to Queen Anne de Bretagne, or those who approached her with petitions from her native province, to discuss, or to inform her of the state of affairs there, were wont to await her pleasure here, her *lever*, or the hour of her walking out. Hence history has handed down to us as the name of this pleasaunce *Le Perchoir aux Bretons* (the Bretons' Perch); it now is an orchard belonging to some private citizen, projecting beyond the Place des Jésuites. That square also was then included in the domain of this noble residence which had its upper and its lower gardens. At some distance from the Place des Jésuites, a summer-house may still be seen built by Catherine de' Medici, as local historians tell us, to accommodate her hot baths. This statement enables us to trace the very irregular arrangement of the gardens which went up and down hill, following the undulations of the soil; the land about the château is indeed very uneven, a fact which added to its strength, and, as we shall see, caused the difficulties of the Duc de Guise.

The gardens were reached by corridors and terraces; the chief corridor was known as the Galerie des Cerfs (or stags), on account of its decorations. This passage led to a magnificent staircase, which undoubtedly suggested the famous

double staircase at Chambord, and which led to the apartments on each floor.

Though la Fontaine preferred the château of Francis I. to that of Louis XII., the simplicity of the *Père du Peuple* may perhaps charm the genuine artist, much as he may admire the splendor of the more chivalrous king. The elegance of the two staircases which lie at the two extremities of Louis XII.'s building, the quantity of fine and original carving, of which, though time has damaged them, the remains are still the delight of antiquaries; everything, to the almost cloister-like arrangement of the rooms, points to very simple habits. As yet the Court was evidently non-existent, or had not attained such development as Francis I. and Catherine de' Medici subsequently gave it, to the great detriment of feudal manners. As we admire the brackets, the capitals of some of the columns, and some little figures of exquisite delicacy, it is impossible not to fancy that Michel Colomb, the great sculptor, the Michael Angelo of Brittany, must have passed that way to do his Queen Anne a pleasure, before immortalizing her on her father's tomb—the last Duke of Brittany.

Whatever la Fontaine may say, nothing can be more stately than the residence of Francis, the magnificent King. Thanks to I know not what coarse indifference, perhaps to utter forgetfulness, the rooms occupied by Catherine de' Medici and her son Francis II. still remain almost in their original state. The historian may reanimate them with the tragical scenes of the Reformation, of which the struggle of the Guises and the Bourbons against the House of Valois formed a complicated drama played out on this spot.

The buildings of Francis I. quite crush the simpler residence of Louis XII. by sheer mass. From the side of the lower gardens, that is to say, from the modern Place des Jésuites, the château is twice as lofty as from the side towards the inner court. The ground floor, in which are the famous corridors, is the second floor in the garden front. Thus the first floor, where Queen Catherine resided, is in fact the third, and the royal apartments are on the fourth above the lower garden, which at that time was divided from the foundations by a very deep moat. Thus the château, imposing as it

is from the court, seems quite gigantic when seen from the Place as la Fontaine saw it, for he owns that he never had been into the court or the rooms. From the Place des Jésuites every detail looks small. The balconies you can walk along, the colonnades of exquisite workmanship, the sculptured windows—their recesses within, as large as small rooms, and used, in fact, at that time as boudoirs—have a general effect resembling the painted fancies of operatic scenery when the artist represents a fairy palace. But once inside the court, the infinite delicacy of this architectural ornamentation is displayed, to the joy of the amazed spectator, though the stories above the ground floor are, even there, as high as the Pavillon de l'Horloge at the Tuileries.

This part of the building, where Catherine and Mary Stewart held magnificent court, had in the middle of the façade a hexagonal hollow tower, up which winds a staircase in stone, an arabesque device invented by giants and executed by dwarfs to give this front the effect of a dream. The balustrade of the stair rises in a spiral of rectangular panels composing the five walls of the tower, enriched outside and in with florid carvings in stone. This bewildering creation, full of delicate and ingenious details and marvels of workmanship, by which these stones speak to us, can only be compared to the overcharged and deeply cut ivory carvings that come from China, or are made at Dieppe. In short, the stone is like lace. Flowers and figures of men and animals creep down the ribs, multiply at every step, and crown the vault with a pendant, in which the chisels of sixteenth century sculptors have outdone the artless stonecarvers who, fifty years before, had made the pendants for two staircases in Louis XII.'s building. Though we may be dazzled as we note these varied forms repeated with infinite prolixity, we nevertheless perceive that Francis I. lacked money for Blois, just as Louis XIV. did for Versailles. In more than one instance a graceful head looks out from a block of stone almost in the rough. More than one fanciful boss is but sketched with a few strokes of the chisel, and then abandoned to the damp, which has overgrown it with green mold. On the façade, by the side of one window carved like lace,

another shows us the massive frame eaten into by time, which has carved it after a manner of its own.

The least artistic, the least experienced eye finds here a delightful contrast between this front, rippling with marvels of design, and the inner front of Louis XII.'s château, consisting on the ground floor of arches of the airiest lightness, upheld by slender columns, resting on elegant balustrades, and two stories above with windows wrought with charming severity. Under the arches runs a gallery, of which the walls were painted in fresco; the vaulting too must have been painted, for some traces are still visible of that magnificence, imitated from Italian architecture—a reminiscence of our Kings' journeys thither when the Milanese belonged to them.

Opposite the residence of Francis I. there was at that time the chapel of the Counts of Blois, its façade almost harmonizing with the architecture of Louis XII.'s building. No figure of speech can give an adequate idea of the solid dignity of these three masses of building. In spite of the varieties of style, a certain imposing royalty, showing the extent of its fear by the magnitude of its defenses, held the three buildings together, different as they were; two of them flanking the immense hall of the States-General, as vast and lofty as a church.

And certainly neither the simplicity nor the solidity of those citizen lives which were described at the beginning of this narrative—lives in which Art was always represented—was lacking to this royal residence. Blois was the fertile and brilliant example which found a living response from citizens and nobles, from money and rank, alike in towns and in the country. You could not have wished that the home of the King who ruled Paris as it was in the sixteenth century should be other than this. The splendid raiment of the upper classes, the luxury of feminine attire, must have seemed singularly suited to the elaborate dress of these curiously wrought stones.

From floor to floor, as he mounted the wonderful stairs of his castle of Blois, the King of France could see further and further over the beautiful Loire, which brought him news of all his realm, which it parts into two confronted and almost

rival halves. If, instead of placing Chambord in a dead and gloomy plain two leagues away, Francis I. had built a Chambord to complete Blois on the site of the gardens, where Gaston subsequently erected his palace, Versailles would never have existed, and Blois would inevitably have become the capital of France.

Four Valois and Catherine de' Medici lavished their wealth on the Château of Blois, but anyone can guess how prodigal the sovereigns were, only from seeing the thick dividing wall, the spinal column of the building, with deep alcoves cut into its substance, secret stairs and closets contrived within it, surrounding such vast rooms as the council hall, the guardroom, and the royal apartments, in which a company of infantry now finds ample quarters. Even if the visitor should fail to understand at a first glance that the marvels of the interior are worthy of those of the exterior, the remains of Catherine de' Medici's room—into which Christophe was presently admitted—are sufficient evidence of the elegant art which peopled these rooms with lively fancies, with salamanders sparkling among flowers, with all the most brilliant hues of the palette of the sixteenth century decorating the darkest staircase. In that room the observer may still see the traces of that love of gilding which Catherine had brought from Italy, for the princesses of her country loved (as the author above quoted delightfully expresses it) to overlay the châteaux of France with the gold gained in trade by their ancestors, and to stamp the walls of royal rooms with the sign of their wealth.

The Queen-mother occupied the rooms on the first floor that had formerly been those of Queen Claude de France, Francis I.'s wife; and the delicate sculpture is still to be seen of double C's, with a device in pure white of swans and lilies, signifying *Candidior candidis*, the whitest of the white, the badge of that Queen whose name, like Catherine's, began with C, and equally appropriate to Louis XII.'s daughter and to the mother of the Valois; for notwithstanding the violence of Calvinist slander, no doubt was ever thrown on Catherine de' Medici's enduring fidelity to Henri II.

The Queen-mother, with two young children still on her

hands—a boy, afterwards the Duc-d'Alençon, and Marguerite, who became the wife of Henri IV., and whom Charles IX. called Margot—needed the whole of this first floor.

King Francis II. and his Queen Mary Stewart had the royal apartments on the second floor that Francis I. had occupied, and which were also those of Henri III. The royal apartments, and those of the Queen-mother, are divided from end to end of the château into two parts by the famous party wall, four feet thick, which supports the thrust of the immensely thick walls of the rooms. Thus on the lower as well as on the upper floor the rooms are in two distinct suites. That half which, facing to the south, is lighted from the court, held the rooms for state receptions and public business; while, to escape the heat, the private rooms had a north aspect, where there is a splendid frontage with arcades and balconies, and a view over the county of the Vendômois, the Perchoir aux Bretons, and the moats of the town—the only town mentioned by the great fable writer, the admirable la Fontaine.

Francis I.'s château at that time ended at an enormous tower, only begun, but intended to mark the vast angle the palace would have formed in turning a flank; Gaston subsequently demolished part of its walls to attach his palace to the tower; but he never finished the work, and the tower remains a ruin. This royal keep was used as a prison, or, according to popular tradition, as *oubliettes*. What poet would not feel deep regret or weep for France as he wanders now through the hall of this magnificent château, and sees the exquisite arabesques of Catherine de Medici's room, whitewashed and almost smothered by order of the governor of the barracks at the time of the cholera—for this royal residence is now a barrack.

The paneling of Catherine de' Medici's closet, of which more particular mention will presently be made, is the last relic of the rich furnishing collected by five artistic kings.

As we make our way through this labyrinth of rooms, halls, staircases, and turrets, we can say with horrible certainty, "Here Mary Stewart cajoled her husband in favor of the Guises. There those Guises insulted Catherine. Later, on

this very spot, the younger *Balafré* fell under the swords of the avengers of the Crown. A century earlier Louis XII. signaled from that window to invite the advance of his friend the Cardinal d'Amboise. From this balcony, d'Épernon, Ravaillac's accomplice, welcomed Queen Marie de' Medici, who, it is said, knew of the intended regicide and left things to take their course!"

In the chapel where Henri IV. and Marguerite de Valois were betrothed—the last remnant of the old château of the Counts of Blois—the regimental boots are made. This wonderful structure, where so many styles are combined, where such great events have been accomplished, is in a state of ruin which is a disgrace to France. How grievous it is to those who love the memorial buildings of old France, to feel that erelong these eloquent stones will have gone the way of the house at the corner of the Rue de la Vieille-Pelleterie; they will survive, perhaps, only in these pages.

It is necessary to observe that, in order to keep a keener eye on the Court, the Guises, though they had a mansion in the town, which is still to be seen, had obtained permission to reside above the rooms of Louis XII. in the apartments since used by the Duchesse de Nemours, in the upper story on the second floor.

Francis II. and his young queen, Mary Stewart, in love like two children of sixteen, as they were, had been suddenly transferred, one cold winter's day, from Saint-Germain, which the Duc de Guise thought too open to surprise, to the stronghold, as it then was, of Blois, isolated on three sides by precipitous slopes, while its gates were strictly guarded. The Guises, the Queen's uncles, had the strongest reasons for not living in Paris, and for detaining the Court in a place which could be easily guarded and defended.

A struggle for the throne was being carried on, which was not ended till twenty-eight years later, in 1588, when, in this same Château of Blois, Henri III., bitterly humiliated by the House of Lorraine, under his mother's very eyes, planned the death of the boldest of the Guises, the second Balafré (or scarred), son of the first Balafré, by whom

Catherine de' Medici was tricked, imprisoned, spied on, and threatened.

Indeed, the fine Château of Blois was to Catherine the strictest prison. On the death of her husband, who had always kept her in leading-strings, she had hoped to rule; but, on the contrary, she found herself a slave to strangers, whose politeness was infinitely more cruel than the brutality of jailers. She could do nothing that was not known. Those of her ladies who were attached to her either had lovers devoted to the Guises, or Argus eyes watching over them. Indeed, at that time the conflict of passions had the capricious vagaries which they always derive from the powerful antagonism of two hostile interests in the State. Love-making, which served Catherine well, was also an instrument in the hands of the Guises. Thus the Prince de Condé, the leader of the Reformed party, was attached to the Maréchale de Saint-André, whose husband was the Grand Master's tool. The Cardinal, who had learnt from the affair of the Vidame de Chartres that Catherine was unconquered rather than unconquerable, was paying court to her. Thus the play of passions brought strange complications into that of politics, making a double game of chess, as it were, in which it was necessary to read both the heart and brain of a man, and to judge, on occasion, whether one would not belie the other.

Though she lived constantly under the eye of the Cardinal de Lorraine or of his brother, the Duc François de Guise, who both distrusted her, Catherine's most immediate and shrewdest enemy was her daughter-in-law, Queen Mary, a little fair girl as mischievous as a waiting-maid, as proud as a Stewart might be who wore three crowns, as learned as an ancient scholar, as tricky as a schoolgirl, as much in love with her husband as a courtesan with her lover, devoted to her uncles, whom she admired, and delighted to find that King Francis, by her persuasion, shared her high opinion of them. A mother-in-law is always a person disliked by her daughter-in-law, especially when she has won the crown and would like to keep it—as Catherine had imprudently too plainly shown. Her former position, when Diane de Poitiers ruled

King Henri II., had been more endurable; at least she had enjoyed the homage due to a queen, and the respect of the Court; whereas, now, the Duke and the Cardinal, having none about them but their own creatures, seemed to take pleasure in humiliating her. Catherine, a prisoner among courtiers, was the object, not every day, but every hour, of blows offensive to her dignity; for the Guises persisted in carrying on the same system as the late King had employed to thwart her.

The six-and-thirty years of disaster which devastated France may be said to have begun with the scene in which the most perilous part had been allotted to the son of the Queen's furrier—a part which makes him the leading figure in this narrative. The danger into which this zealous reformer was falling became evident in the course of the morning when he set out from the river-port of Beaugency, carrying precious documents which compromised the loftiest heads of the nobility, and embarked for Blois in company with a crafty partisan, the indefatigable la Renaudie, who had arrived on the quay before him.

While the bark conveying Christophe was being wafted down the Loire before a light easterly breeze, the famous Cardinal de Lorraine, and the second Duc de Guise, one of the greatest war captains of the time, were considering their position, like two eagles on a rocky peak, and looking cautiously round before striking the first great blow by which they tried to kill the Reformation in France. This was to be struck at Amboise, and it was repeated in Paris twelve years later, on the 24th August, 1572.

In the course of the previous night, three gentlemen, who played an important part in the twelve years' drama that arose from this double plot laid by the Guises on one hand and the Reformers on the other, had arrived at the château at a furious gallop, leaving their horses half dead at the postern gate, held by captains and men who were wholly devoted to the Duc de Guise, the idol of the soldiery.

A word must be said as to this great man, and first of all a word to explain his present position.

His mother was Antoinette de Bourbon, great-aunt of

Henri IV. But of what account are alliances! At this moment he aimed at nothing less than his cousin de Condé's head. Mary Stewart was his niece. His wife was Anne, daughter of the Duke of Ferrara. The Grand Connétable Anne de Montmorency addressed the Duc de Guise as "Monseigneur," as he wrote to the King, and signed himself "Your very humble servant." Guise, the Grand Master of the King's household, wrote in reply, "Monsieur le Connétable," and signed, as in writing to the Parlement, "Your faithful friend."

As for the Cardinal, nicknamed the Transalpine Pope, and spoken of by Estienne as "his Holiness," the whole Monastic Church of France was on his side, and he treated with the Pope as his equal. He was vain of his eloquence, and one of the ablest theologians of his time, while he kept watch over France and Italy by the instrumentality of three religious Orders entirely devoted to him, who were on foot for him day and night, serving him as spies and reporters.

These few words are enough to show to what a height of power the Cardinal and the Duke had risen. In spite of their wealth and the revenues of their officers, they were so entirely disinterested, or so much carried away by the tide of politics, and so generous too, that both were in debt—no doubt after the manner of Cæsar. Hence, when Henri III. had seen his threatening foe murdered, the second Balafré, the House of Guise was inevitably ruined. Their vast outlay for above a century, in hope of seizing the Crown, accounts for the decay of this great House under Louis XIII. and Louis XIV., when the sudden end of MADAME revealed to all Europe how low a Chevalier de Lorraine had fallen.

So the Cardinal and the Duke, proclaiming themselves the heirs of the deposed Carlovingian kings, behaved very insolently to Catherine de' Medici, their niece's mother-in-law. The Duchesse de Guise spared Catherine no mortification; she was an Este, and Catherine de' Medici was the daughter of self-made Florentine merchants, whom the sovereigns of Europe had not yet admitted to their royal fraternity. Francis I. had regarded his son's marriage with a Medici as a mésalliance, and had only allowed it in the belief that this

son would never be the Dauphin. Hence his fury when the Dauphin died, poisoned by the Florentine Montecuculi.

The Estes refused to recognize the Medici as Italian princes. These time-honored merchants were, in fact, struggling with the impossible problem of maintaining a throne in the midst of republican institutions. The title of Grand Duke was not bestowed on the Medici till much later by Philip II., King of Spain; and they earned it by treason to France, their benefactress, and by a servile attachment to the Court of Spain, which was covertly thwarting them in Italy.

"Flatter none but your enemies!" This great axiom, uttered by Catherine, would seem to have ruled all the policy of this merchant race, which never lacked great men till its destinies had grown great, and which broke down a little too soon under the degeneracy which is always the end of royal dynasties and great families.

For three generations there was a prelate and a warrior of the House of Lorraine; but, which is perhaps not less remarkable, the Churchman had always shown—as did the present Cardinal—a singular likeness to Cardinal Ximenes, whom the Cardinal de Richelieu also resembled. These five prelates all had faces that were at once mean and terrifying; while the warrior's face was of that Basque and mountain type which reappears in the features of Henri IV. In both the father and the son it was seamed by a scar, which did not destroy the grace and affability that bewitched their soldiers as much as their bravery.

The way and the occasion of the Grand Master's being wounded is not without interest here, for it was healed by the daring of one of the personages of this drama, Ambroise Paré, who was under obligation to the Syndic of the furriers. At the siege of Calais the Duke's head was pierced by a lance which, entering below the right eye, went through to the neck below the left ear, the end broke off and remained in the wound. The Duke was lying in his tent in the midst of the general woe, and would have died but for the bold promptitude and devotion of Ambroise Paré.

"The Duke is not dead, gentlemen," said Paré, turning to

the bystanders, who were dissolved in tears. "But he soon will be," he added, "unless I treat him as if he were, and I will try it at the risk of the worst that can befall me. . . . You see!"

He set his left foot on the Duke's breast, took the stump of the lance with his nails, loosened it by degrees, and at last drew the spear-head out of the wound, as if it had been from some senseless object instead of a man's head. Though he cured the Prince he had handled so boldly, he could not hinder him from bearing to his grave the terrible scar from which he had his name. His son also had the same nickname for a similar reason.

Having gained entire mastery over the King, who was ruled by his wife, as a result of the passionate and mutual affection which the Guises knew how to turn to account, the two great Princes of Lorraine reigned over France, and had not an enemy at Court but Catherine de' Medici. And no great politician ever played a closer game. The respective attitudes of Henri II.'s ambitious widow, and of the no less ambitious House of Lorraine, were symbolized, as it were, by the positions they held on the terrace of the château on the very morning when Christophe was about to arrive there. The Queen-mother, feigning extreme affection for the Guises, had asked to be informed as to the news brought by the three gentlemen who had arrived from different parts of the kingdom; but she had been mortified by a polite dismissal from the Cardinal. She was walking at the further end of the pleasaunce above the Loire, where she was having an observatory erected for her astrologer, Ruggieri; the building may still be seen, and from it a wide view is to be had over the beautiful valley. The two Guises were on the opposite side overlooking the Vendômois, the upper part of the town, the Perchoir aux Bretons, and the postern gate of the château.

Catherine had deceived the brothers, tricking them by an assumption of dissatisfaction; for she was really very glad to be able to speak with one of the gentlemen who had come in hot haste, and who was in her secret confidence; who boldly played a double game, but who was, to be sure, well paid for

it. This gentleman was Chiverni, who affected to be the mere tool of the Cardinal de Lorraine, but who was in reality in Catherine's service. Catherine had two other devoted allies in the two Gondi, creatures of her own; but they, as Florentines, were too open to the suspicions of the Guises to be sent into the country; she kept them at the Court, where their every word and action was closely watched, but where they, on their side, watched the Guises and reported to Catherine. These two Italians kept a third adherent to the Queen-mother's faction, Birague, a clever Piedmontese who, like Chiverni, pretended to have abandoned Catherine to attach himself to the Guises, and who encouraged them in their undertakings while spying for Catherine.

Chiverni had arrived from Écouen and Paris. The last to ride in was Saint-André, Marshal of France, who rose to be such an important personage that the Guises adopted him as the third of the triumvirate they formed against Catherine in the following year. But earlier than either of these, Vieilleville, the builder of the Château of Duretal, who had also by his devotion to the Guises earned the rank of Marshal, had secretly come and more secretly gone, without anyone knowing what the mission might be that the Grand Master had given him. Saint-André, it was known, had been instructed to take military measures to entice all the reformers who were under arms to Amboise, as the result of a council held by the Cardinal de Lorraine, the Duc de Guise, Birague, Chiverni, Vieilleville, and Saint-André. As the heads of the House of Lorraine thus employed Birague, it is to be supposed that they trusted to their strength, for they knew that he was attached to the Queen-mother; but it is possible that they kept him about them with a view to discovering their rival's secret designs, as she allowed him to attend them. In those strange times the double part played by some political intriguers was known to both the parties who employed them; they were like cards in the hands of players, and the craftiest won the game.

All through this sitting the brothers had been impenetrably guarded. Catherine's conversation with her friends will, however, fully explain the purpose of this meeting, con-

vened by the Guises in the open air, at break of day, in the terraced garden, as though everyone feared to speak within the walls full of ears of the Château of Blois.

The Queen-mother, who had been walking about all the morning with the two Gondi, under pretense of examining the observatory that was being built, but, in fact, anxiously watching the hostile party, was presently joined by Chiverni. She was standing at the angle of the terrace opposite the Church of Saint-Nicholas, and there feared no listeners. The wall is as high as the church-towers, and the Guises always held council at the other corner of the terrace, below the dungeon then begun, walking to and from the Perchoir aux Bretons and the arcade by the bridge which joined the gardens to the Perchoir. There was nobody at the bottom of the ravine.

Chiverni took the Queen's hand to kiss it, and slipped into her fingers a tiny letter without being seen by the Italians. Catherine quickly turned away, walked to the corner of the parapet, and read as follows: —

"You are powerful enough to keep the balance true between the great ones, and to make them contend as to which shall serve you best; you have your house full of kings, and need not fear either Lorraines or Bourbons so long as you set them against each other; for both sides aim at snatching the crown from your children. Be your advisers' mistress, and not their slave; keep up each side by the other; otherwise the kingdom will go from bad to worse, and great wars may ensue. L'Hôpital."

The Queen placed this letter in the bosom of her stomacher, reminding herself to burn it as soon as she should be alone.

"When did you see him?" she asked Chiverni.

"On returning from seeing the Connétable at Melun; he was going through with the Duchesse de Berri, whom he was most anxious to convey in safety to Savoy, so as to return here and enlighten the Chancellor Olivier, who is, in fact, the dupe of the Lorraines. M. de l'Hôpital is resolved to adhere to your cause, seeing the aims that MM. de Guise have in view.

And he will hasten back as fast as possible to give you his vote in the Council."

"Is he sincere?" said Catherine. "For you know that when the Lorrains admitted him to the Council, it was to enable them to rule."

"L'Hôpital is a Frenchman of too good a stock not to be honest," said Chiverni; "besides, that letter is a sufficient pledge."

"And what answer does the Connétable send to these gentlemen?"

"He says the King is his master, and he awaits his orders. On this reply, the Cardinal, to prevent any resistance, will propose to appoint his brother Lieutenant-General of the realm."

"So soon!" cried Catherine in dismay. "Well, and did M. de l'Hôpital give you any further message for me?"

"He told me, Madame, that you alone can stand between the throne and MM. de Guise."

"But does he suppose that I will use the Huguenots as a means of defense?"

"Oh, Madame," cried Chiverni, surprised by her perspicacity, "we never thought of placing you in such a difficult position."

"Did he know what a position I am in?" asked the Queen calmly.

"Pretty nearly. He thinks you made a dupe's bargain when, on the death of the late King, you accepted for your share the fragments saved from the ruin of Mme. Diane. MM. de Guise thought they had paid their debt to the Queen by gratifying the woman."

"Yes," said Catherine, looking at the two Gondi, "I made a great mistake there."

"A mistake the gods might make!" replied Charles de Gondi.

"Gentlemen," said the Queen, "if I openly take up the cause of the Reformers, I shall be the slave of a party."

"Madame," said Chiverni eagerly, "I entirely agree with you. You must make use of them, but not let them make use of you."

"Although, for the moment, your strength lies there," said Charles de Gondi, "we must not deceive ourselves; success and failure are equally dangerous!"

"I know it," said the Queen. "One false move will be a pretext eagerly seized by the Guises to sweep me off the board!"

"A Pope's niece, the mother of four Valois, the Queen of France, the widow of the most ardent persecutor of the Huguenots, an Italian and a Catholic, the aunt of Leo X.,—can you form an alliance with the Reformation?" asked Charles de Gondi.

"On the other hand," Albert replied, "is not seconding the Guises consenting to usurpation? You have to deal with a race that looks to the struggle between the Church and the Reformation to give them a crown for the taking. You may avail yourself of Huguenot help without abjuring the Faith."

"Remember, Madame, that your family, which ought to be wholly devoted to the King of France, is at this moment in the service of the King of Spain," said Chiverni. "And it would go over to the Reformation to-morrow if the Reformation could make the Duke of Florence King!"

"I am very well inclined to give the Huguenots a helping hand for a time," said Catherine, "were it only to be revenged on that soldier, that priest, and that woman!"

And with an Italian glance, her eye turned on the Duke and the Cardinal, and then to the upper rooms of the château where her son lived and Mary Stewart. "Those three snatched the reins of government from my hands," she went on, "when I had waited for them long enough while that old woman held them in my place."

She jerked her head in the direction of Chenonceaux, the château she had just exchanged for Chaumont with Diane de Poitiers. "*Ma,*" she said in Italian, "it would seem that these gentry of the Geneva bands have not wit enough to apply to me!—On my honor, I cannot go to meet them! And not one of you would dare to carry them a message." She stamped her foot. "I hoped you might have met the

hunchback at Écouen," she said to Chiverni. "He has brains."

"He was there, Madame," replied Chiverni, "but he could not induce the Connétable to join him. M. de Montmorency would be glad enough to overthrow the Guises, who obtained his dismissal; but he will have nothing to do with heresy."

"And who, gentlemen, is to crush these private whims that are an offense to Royalty? By Heaven! these nobles must be made to destroy each other—as Louis XI. made them, the greatest of your kings. In this kingdom there are four or five parties, and my son's is the weakest of them all."

"The Reformation is an idea," remarked Charles de Gondi, "and the parties crushed by Louis XI. were based only on interest."

"There is always an idea to back up interest," replied Chiverni. "In Louis XI.'s time the idea was called the Great Fief!"

"Use heresy as an ax," said Albert de Gondi. "You will not incur the odium of executions."

"Ha!" said the Queen, "but I know nothing of the strength or the schemes of these folks, and I cannot communicate with them through any safe channel. If I were found out in any such conspiracy, either by the Queen, who watches me as if I were an infant in arms, or by my two jailers, who let no one come in to the château, I should be banished from the country, and taken back to Florence under a formidable escort captained by some ruffianly Guisard! Thank you, friends!—Oh, daughter-in-law! I hope you may some day be a prisoner in your own house; then you will know what you have inflicted on me!"

"Their schemes!" exclaimed Chiverni. "The Grand Master and the Cardinal know them; but those two foxes will not tell. If you, Madame, can make them tell, I will devote myself to you, and come to an understanding with the Prince de Condé."

"Which of their plans have they failed to conceal from you?" asked the Queen, glancing towards the brothers de Guise.

"M. de Vieilleville and M. de Saint-André have just had

their orders, of which we know nothing; but the Grand Master is concentrating his best troops on the left bank, it would seem. Within a few days you will find yourself at Amboise. The Grand Master came to this terrace to study the position, and he does not think Blois favorable to his private schemes. Well, then, what does he want?" said Chiverni, indicating the steep cliffs that surround the château. "The Court could nowhere be safer from sudden attack than it is here."

"Abdicate or govern," said Albert de Gondi in the Queen's ear as she stood thinking.

A fearful expression of suppressed rage flashed across the Queen's handsome ivory-pale face.—She was not yet forty, and she had lived for twenty-six years in the French Court, absolutely powerless, she who, ever since she had come there, had longed to play the leading part.

"Never so long as this son lives! His wife has bewitched him!"

After a short pause these terrible words broke from her in the language of Dante.

Catherine's exclamation had its inspiration in a strange prediction, spoken a few days before at the Château of Chaumont, on the opposite bank of the Loire, whither she had gone with her astrologer Ruggieri to consult a famous soothsayer. This woman was brought to meet her by Nostradamus, the chief of those physicians who in that great sixteenth century believed in the occult sciences, with Ruggieri, Cardan, Paracelsus, and many more. This fortune-teller, of whose life history has no record, had fixed the reign of Francis II. at one year's duration.

"And what is your opinion of all this?" Catherine asked Chiverni.

"There will be fighting," said the cautious gentleman. "The King of Navarre——"

"Oh! say the Queen!" Catherine put in.

"Very true, the Queen," said Chiverni, smiling, "has made the Prince de Condé the chief of the reformed party; he, as a younger son, may dare much; and M. le Cardinal talks of sending for him to come here."

"If only he comes!" cried the Queen, "I am saved!"

So it will be seen that the leaders of the great Reforming movement had been right in thinking of Catherine as an ally.

"This is the jest of it," said the Queen; "the Bourbons are tricking the Huguenots, and Master Calvin, de Bèze, and the rest are cheating the Bourbons; but shall we be strong enough to take in the Huguenots, the Bourbons, and the Guises? In front of three such foes we are justified in feeling our pulse," said she.

"They have not the King," replied Albert. "You must always win, having the King on your side."

"*Maladetta Maria!*" said Catherine, between her teeth.

"The Guises are already thinking of diverting the affections of the middle class," said Birague.

The hope of snatching the Crown had not been premeditated by the two heads of the refractory House of Guise; there was nothing to justify the project or the hope; circumstances suggested such audacity. The two Cardinals and the two Balafrés were, as it happened, four ambitious men, superior in political gifts to any of the men about them. Indeed, the family was only subdued at last by Henri IV., himself a leader of faction, brought up in the great school of which Catherine and the Guises were the teachers—and he had profited by their lessons.

At this time these two brothers were the arbiters of the greatest revolution attempted in Europe since that carried through in England under Henry VIII., which had resulted from the invention of printing. They were the enemies of the Reformation, the power was in their hands, and they meant to stamp out heresy; but Calvin, their opponent, though less famous than Luther, was a stronger man. Calvin saw Government where Luther had only seen Dogma. Where the burly, beer-drinking, uxorious German fought with the Devil, flinging his inkstand at the fiend, the man of Picardy, frail and unmarried, dreamed of plans of campaign, of directing battles, of arming princes, and of raising whole nations by disseminating republican doctrines in the hearts of the middle

classes, so as to make up, by increased progress in the Spirit of Nations, for his constant defeats on the battlefield.

The Cardinal de Lorraine and the Duc de Guise knew quite as well as Philip II. and the Duke of Alva where the Monarchy was aimed at, and how close the connection was between Catholicism and sovereignty. Charles V., intoxicated with having drunk too deeply of Charlemagne's cup, and trusting too much in the strength of his rule, for he believed that he and Soliman might divide the world between them, was not at first conscious that his front was attacked; as soon as Cardinal Granvelle showed him the extent of the festering sore, he abdicated.

The Guises had a startling conception: they would extinguish heresy with a single blow. They tried to strike that blow for the first time at Amboise, and they made a second attempt on Saint-Bartholomew's Day; this time they were in accord with Catherine de' Medici, enlightened as she was by the flames of twelve years' wars, and yet more by the ominous word "Republic" spoken and even published at a later date by the writers of the Reformation, whose ideas Lecamus, the typical citizen of Paris, had already understood. The two Princes, on the eve of striking a fatal blow to the heart of the nobility, in order to cut it off from the first from a religious party whose triumph would be its ruin, were now discussing the means of announcing their *coup-d'état* to the King, while Catherine was conversing with her four counselors.

"Jeanne d'Albret knew what she was doing when she proclaimed herself the protectress of the Huguenots! She has in the Reformation a battering-ram which she makes good play with!" said the Grand Master, who had measured the depth of the Queen of Navarre's scheming.

Jeanne d'Albret was, in point of fact, one of the cleverest personages of her time.

"Théodore de Bèze is at Nérac, having taken Calvin's orders."

"What men those common folk can lay their hands on!" cried the Duke.

"Ay, we have not a man on our side to match that

fellow la Renaudie," said the Cardinal. "He is a perfect Catiline."

"Men like him always act on their own account," replied the Duke. "Did not I see la Renaudie's value? I loaded him with favors, I helped him to get away when he was condemned by the Bourgogne Parlement, I got him back into France by obtaining a revision of his trial, and I intended to do all I could for him, while he was plotting a diabolical conspiracy against us. The rascal has effected an alliance between the German Protestants and the heretics in France by smoothing over the discrepancies of dogma between Luther and Calvin. He has won over the disaffected nobles to the cause of the Reformation without asking them to abjure Catholicism. So long ago as last year he had thirty commanders on his side! He was everywhere at once: at Lyons, in Languedoc, at Nantes. Finally, he drew up the articles settled in Council and distributed throughout Germany, in which theologians declare that it is justifiable to use force to get the King out of our hands, and this is being disseminated in every town. Look for him where you will, you will nowhere find him!

"Hitherto I have shown him nothing but kindness! We shall have to kill him like a dog, or to make a bridge of gold for him to cross and come into our house."

"Brittany and Languedoc, the whole kingdom indeed, is being worked upon to give us a deadly shock," said the Cardinal. "After yesterday's festival, I spent the rest of the night in reading all the information sent me by my priesthood; but no one is involved but some impoverished gentlemen and artisans, people who may be either hanged or left alive, it matters not which. The Colignys and the Condés are not yet visible, though they hold the threads of the conspiracy."

"Ay," said the Duke; "and as soon as that lawyer Avenelles had let the cat out of the bag, I told Braguelonne to give the conspirators their head: they have no suspicions, they think they can surprise us, and then perhaps the leaders will show themselves. My advice would be that we should allow ourselves to be beaten for forty-eight hours——"

"That would be half an hour too long," said the Cardinal in alarm.

"How brave you are!" retorted le Balafré.

The Cardinal went on with calm indifference—

"Whether the Prince de Condé be implicated or no, if we are assured that he is the leader, cut off his head. What we want for that business is judges rather than soldiers, and there will never be any lack of judges! Victory in the Supreme Court is always more certain than on the field of battle, and costs less."

"I am quite willing," replied the Duke. "But do you believe that the Prince de Condé is powerful enough to inspire such audacity in those who are sent on first to attack us? Is there not——?"

"The King of Navarre," said the Cardinal.

"A gaby who bows low in my presence," replied the Duke. "That Florentine woman's graces have blinded you, I think——"

"Oh, I have thought of that already," said the prelate. "If I aim at a gallant intimacy with her, is it not that I may read to the bottom of her heart?"

"She has no heart," said his brother sharply. "She is even more ambitious than we are."

"You are a brave commander," said the Cardinal; "but take my word for it, our skirts are very near touching, and I made Mary Stewart watch her narrowly before you ever suspected her. Catherine has no more religion in her than my shoes. If she is not the soul of the conspiracy, it is not for lack of goodwill; but we will draw her out and see how far she will support us. Till now I know for certain that she has not held any communication with the heretics."

"It is time that we should lay everything before the King, and the Queen-mother, who knows nothing," said the Duke, "and that is the only proof of her innocence. La Renaudie will understand from my arrangements that we are warned. Last night Nemours must have been following up the detachments of the Reformed party, who were coming in by the cross-roads, and the conspirators will be compelled to attack us at Amboise; I will let them all in.—Here," and he pointed

to the three steep slopes of rock on which the Château de Blois is built, just as Chiverni had done a moment since, "we should have a fight with no result; the Huguenots could come and go at will. Blois is a hall with four doors, while Amboise is a sack."

"I will not leave the Florentine Queen," said the Cardinal.

"We have made one mistake," remarked the Duke, playing with his dagger, tossing it in the air, and catching it again by the handle; "we ought to have behaved to her as to the Reformers, giving her liberty to move, so as to take her in the act."

The Cardinal looked at his brother for a minute, shaking his head.

"What does Pardaillan want?" the Duke exclaimed, seeing this young gentleman coming along the terrace. Pardaillan was to become famous for his fight with la Renaudie, in which both were killed.

"Monseigneur, a youth sent here by the Queen's furrier is at the gate, and says that he has a set of ermine to deliver to her Majesty. Is he to be admitted?"

"To be sure; an ermine surcoat she spoke of but yesterday," said the Cardinal. "Let the shop-clerk in. She will need the mantle for her journey by the Loire."

"Which way did he come, that he was not stopped before reaching the gate?" asked the Grand Master.

"I do not know," said Pardaillan.

"I will go to see him in the Queen's rooms," said le Balafré. "Tell him to await her *lever* in the guardroom. But, Pardaillan, is he young?"

"Yes, Monseigneur; he says he is Lecamus's son."

"Lecamus is a good Catholic," said the Cardinal, who, like the Duke, was gifted with a memory like Cæsar's. "The priest of Saint-Pierre aux Bœufs trusts him, for he is officer of the peace for the Palace."

"Make this youth chat with the captain of the Scotch Guard, all the same," said the Grand Master, with an emphasis which gave the words a very pointed meaning. "But Ambroise is at the château; through him we shall know at

once if he really is the son of Leçamus, who was formerly his very good friend. Ask for Ambroise Paré."

At this moment the Queen came towards the brothers, who hurried to meet her with marks of respect, in which Catherine never failed to discern deep irony.

"Gentlemen," said she, "will you condescend to inform me of what is going on? Is the widow of your late sovereign of less account in your esteem than MM. de Vieilleville, Birague, and Chiverni?"

"Madame," said the Cardinal, with an air of gallantry, "our first duty as men, before all matters of politics, is not to alarm ladies by false rumors. This morning, indeed, we have had occasion to confer on State affairs. You will pardon my brother for having in the first instance given orders on purely military matters which must be indifferent to you—the really important points remain to be discussed. If you approve, we will all attend the *lever* of the King and Queen; it is close on the hour."

"Why, what is happening, M. le Grand Maître?" asked Catherine, affecting terror.

"The Reformation, Madame, is no longer a mere heresy; it is a party which is about to take up arms and seize the King."

Catherine, with the Cardinal, the Duke, and the gentlemen, made their way towards the staircase by the corridor, which was crowded with courtiers who had not the right of *entrée*, and who ranged themselves against the wall.

Gondi, who had been studying the Princes of Lorraine while Catherine was conversing with them, said in good Tuscan and in Catherine's ear these two words, which became bywords, and which express one aspect of that royally powerful nature—

"*Odiate e aspettate!*" Hate and wait.

Pardaillan, who had delivered to the officer on guard at the gatehouse the order to admit the messenger from the Queen's furrier, found Christophe standing outside the portico and staring at the façade built by good King Louis XII., whereon there was at that time an even more numerous array of sculptured figures of the coarsest buffoonery—if we may

judge by what has survived. The curious will detect, for instance, a figure of a woman carved on the capital of one of the columns of the gateway holding up her skirts, and saucily exhibiting "what Brunel displayed to Marphise" to a burly monk crouching in the capital of the corresponding column at the other jamb of this gate, above which once stood a statue of Louis XII. Several of the windows of this front, ornamented in this grotesque taste, and now unfortunately destroyed, amused, or seemed to amuse, Christophe, whom the gunners of the Guard were already pelting with their pleasantries.

"He would like to be lodged there, he would," said the sergeant-at-arms, patting his store of charges for his musket, which hung from his belt in the sugar-loaf-shaped cartridges.

"Hallo, you from Paris, you never saw so much before!" said a soldier.

"He recognizes good King Louis!" said another.

Christophe affected not to hear them, and tried to look even more helplessly amazed, so that his look of blank stupidity was an excellent recommendation to Pardaillan.

"The Queen is not yet risen," said the young officer. "Come and wait in the guardroom."

Christophe slowly followed Pardaillan. He purposely lingered to admire the pretty covered balcony with an arched front, where, in the reign of Louis XII., the courtiers could wait under cover till the hour of reception if the weather was bad, and where at this moment some of the gentlemen attached to the Guises were grouped; for the staircase, still so well preserved, which led to their apartments is at the end of that gallery, in a tower of which the architecture is greatly admired by the curious.

"Now, then! have you come here to study graven images?" cried Pardaillan, seeing Lecamus riveted in front of the elegant stonework of the outer parapet which unites—or, if you will, separates—the columns of each archway.

Christophe followed the young captain to the grand staircase, not without glancing at this almost Moorish-looking structure from top to bottom with an expression of ecstasy. On this fine morning the court was full of captains-at-arms

and of courtiers chatting in groups; and their brilliant costumes gave life to the scene, in itself so bright, for the marvels of architecture that decorated the façade were still quite new.

"Come in here," said Pardaillan to Lecamus, signing to him to follow him through the carved door on the second floor, which was thrown open by a sentry on his recognizing Pardaillan.

Christophe's amazement may easily be imagined on entering this guardroom, so vast that the military genius of our day has cut it across by a partition to form two rooms. It extends, in fact, both on the second floor, where the king lived, and on the first, occupied by the Queen-mother, for a third of the length of the front towards the court, and is lighted by two windows to the left and two to the right of the famous staircase. The young captain made his way toward the door leading to the King's room, which opened out of this hall, and desired one of the pages-in-waiting to tell Mme. Dayelle, one of the Queen's ladies, that the furrier was in the guardroom with her surcoats.

At a sign from Pardaillan, Christophe went to stand by the side of an officer seated on a low stool in the corner of a chimney-place as large as his father's shop, at one end of this vast hall opposite another exactly like it at the other end. In talking with this gentleman, Christophe succeeded in interesting him by telling him the trivial details of his trade; and he seemed so completely the craftsman, that the officer volunteered this opinion to the captain of the Scotch Guard, who came in to cross-question the lad while scrutinizing him closely out of the corner of his eye.

Though Christophe Lecamus had had ample warning, he still did not understand the cold ferocity of the interested parties between whom Chaudieu had bid him stand. To an observer who should have mastered the secrets of the drama, as the historian knows them now, it would have seemed terrible to see this young fellow, the hope of two families, risking his life between two such powerful and pitiless machines as Catherine and the Guises. But how few brave hearts ever know the extent of their danger! From the way in which

the quays of the city and the château were guarded, Christophe had expected to find snares and spies at every step, so he determined to conceal the importance of his errand and the agitation of his mind under the stupid tradesman's stare, which he had put on before Pardaillan, the officer of the Guard, and the captain.

The stir which in a royal residence attends the rising of the King began to be perceptible. The nobles, leaving their horses with their pages or grooms in the outer court, for no one but the King and Queen was allowed to enter the inner court on horseback, were mounting the splendid stairs in twos and threes and filling the guardroom, a large room with two fireplaces—where the huge mantels are now bereft of adornment, where squalid red tiles have taken the place of the fine mosaic flooring, where royal hangings covered the rough walls now daubed with whitewash, and where every art of an age unique in its splendor was displayed at its best.

Catholics and Protestants poured in as much to hear the news and study each other's faces as to pay their court to the King. His passionate affection for Mary Stewart, which neither the Queen-mother nor the Guises attempted to check, and Mary's politic submissiveness in yielding to it, deprived the King of all power; indeed, though he was now seventeen, he knew nothing of Royalty but its indulgences, and of marriage nothing but the raptures of first love. In point of fact, everybody tried to ingratiate himself with Queen Mary and her uncles, the Cardinal de Lorraine and the Grand Master of the Household.

All this bustle went on under the eyes of Christophe, who watched each fresh arrival with very natural excitement. A magnificent curtain, on each side of it a page and a yeoman of the Scotch Guard then on duty, showed him the entrance to that royal chamber, destined to be fatal to the son of the Grand Master, for the younger Balafré fell dead at the foot of the bed now occupied by Mary Stewart and Francis II. The Queen's ladies occupied the chimney-place opposite to that where Christophe was still chatting with the captain of the Guard. This fireplace, by its position, was the seat of honor, for it is built into the thick wall of the council-room,

between the door into the royal chamber and that into the council-room, so that the ladies and gentlemen who had a right to sit there were close to where the King and the Queens must pass. The courtiers were certain to see Catherine; for her maids of honor, in mourning, like the rest of the Court, came up from her rooms conducted by the Countess Fieschi, and took their place on the side next the council-room, facing those of the young Queen, who, led by the Duchesse de Guise, took the opposite angle next the royal bedchamber.

Between the courtiers and these young ladies, all belonging to the first families in the kingdom, a space was kept of some few paces, which none but the greatest nobles were permitted to cross. The Countess Fieschi and the Duchesse de Guise were allowed by right of office to be seated in the midst of their noble charges, who all remained standing.

One of the first to mingle with these dangerous bevies was the Duc d'Orléans, the King's brother, who came down from his rooms above, attended by his tutor, M. de Cypierre. This young Prince, who was destined to reign before the end of the year, under the name of Charles IX., at the age of ten was excessively shy. The Duc d'Anjou and the Duc d'Alençon, his two brothers, and the infant Princess Marguerite, who became the wife of Henri IV., were still too young to appear at Court, and remained in their mother's apartments. The Duc d'Orléans, richly dressed in the fashion of the time, in silk trunk hose, a doublet of cloth of gold, brocaded with flowers in black, and a short cloak of embroidered velvet, all black, for he was still in mourning for the late King his father, bowed to the two elder ladies, and joined the group of his mother's maids of honor. Strongly disliking the Guisards (the adherents of the Guises), he replied coldly to the Duchess's greeting, and went to lean his elbow on the back of the Countess Fieschi's tall chair.

His tutor, M. de Cypierre, one of the finest characters of that age, stood behind him as a shield. Amyot, in a simple abbé's gown, also attended the Prince; he was his instructor

as well as being the teacher of the three other royal children, whose favor was afterwards so advantageous to him.

Between this chimney-place "of honor" and that at the further end of the hall—where the Guards stood in groups with their captain, a few courtiers, and Christophe carrying his box—the Chancellor Olivier, l'Hôpital's patron and predecessor, in the costume worn ever since by the Chancellors of France, was walking to and fro with Cardinal de Tournon, who had just arrived from Rome, and with whom he exchanged a few phrases in murmurs. On them was centered the general attention of the gentlemen packed against the wall dividing the hall from the King's bedroom, standing like a living tapestry against the rich figured hangings. In spite of the serious state of affairs, the Court presented the same appearance as every Court must, in every country, at every time, and in the midst of the greatest perils. Courtiers always talk of the most trivial subjects while thinking of the gravest, jesting while watching every physiognomy, and considering questions of love and marriage with heiresses in the midst of the most sanguinary catastrophes.

"What did you think of yesterday's fête?" asked Bourdeilles, the Lord of Brantôme, going up to Mlle. de Piennes, one of the elder Queen's maids of honor

"M. du Baïf and M. du Bellay had had the most charming ideas," said she, pointing to the two gentlemen who had arranged everything, and who were standing close at hand. "I thought it in atrocious taste," she added in a whisper.

"You had no part in it?" said Miss Lewiston from the other side.

"What are you reading, Madame?" said Amyot to Mme. Fieschi.

"*Amadis de Gaule*, by the Seigneur des Essarts, purveyor-in-ordinary to the King's Artillery."

"A delightful work," said the handsome girl, who became famous as La Fosseuse, when she was lady-in-waiting to Queen Margaret of Navarre.

"The style is quite new," remarked Amyot. "Shall you adopt such barbarisms?" he asked, turning to Brantôme.

"The ladies like it! What is to be said?" cried Bran-

tôme, going forward to bow to Mme. de Guise, who had in her hand Boccaccio's *Famous Ladies*. "There must be some ladies of your House there, Madame," said he. "But Master Boccaccio's mistake was that he did not live in these days; he would have found ample matter to enlarge his volumes."

"How clever M. de Brantôme is!" said the beautiful Mlle. de Limeuil to the Countess Fieschi. "He came first to us, but he will stay with the Guises."

"Hush!" said Mme. Fieschi, looking at the fair Limeuil. "Attend to what concerns you——"

The young lady turned to the door. She was expecting Sardini, an Italian nobleman, whom, subsequently, she made marry her after a little accident that overtook her in the Queen's dressing-room, and which procured her the honor of having a queen for her midwife.

"By Saint Alipantin, Mlle. Davila seems to grow prettier every morning," said M. de Robertet, Secretary of State, as he bowed to the Queen-mother's ladies.

The advent of the Secretary of State, though he was exactly as important as a Cabinet Minister in these days, made no sensation whatever.

"If you think that, Monsieur, do lend me the epigram against MM. de Guise; I know you have it," said Mlle. Davila to Robertet.

"I have it no longer," replied the Secretary, going across to speak to Mme. de Guise.

"I have it," said the Comte de Grammont to Mlle. Davila; "but I will lend it you on only one condition."

"On condition——? For shame!" said Mme. Fieschi.

"You do not know what I want," replied Grammont.

"Oh, that is easy to guess," said la Limeuil.

The Italian custom of calling ladies, as French peasants call their wives, *la* Such-an-one, was at that time the fashion at the Court of France.

"You are mistaken," the Count replied eagerly; "what I ask is, that a letter should be delivered to Mlle. de Matha, one of the maids on the other side—a letter from my cousin de Jarnac."

"Do not compromise my maids; I will give it her myself," said the Countess Fieschi. "Have you heard any news of what is going on in Flanders?" she asked Cardinal de Tournon. "M. d'Egmont is at some new pranks, it would seem."

"He and the Prince of Orange," said Cypierre, with a highly expressive shrug.

"The Duke of Alva and Cardinal de Granvelle are going there, are they not, Monsieur?" asked Amyot of Cardinal de Tournon, who stood, uneasy and gloomy, between the two groups after his conversation with the Chancellor.

"We, happily, are quiet, and have to defy heresy only on the stage," said the young Duke, alluding to the part he had played the day before, that of a Knight subduing a Hydra with the word "Reformation" on its brow.

Catherine de' Medici, agreeing on this point with her daughter-in-law, had allowed a theater to be constructed in the great hall, which was subsequently used for the meetings of the States at Blois, the hall between the buildings of Louis XII. and those of Francis I.

The Cardinal made no reply, and resumed his walk in the middle of the hall, talking in a low voice to M. de Robertet and the Chancellor. Many persons know nothing of the difficulties that Secretaryships of State, now transformed into Cabinet Ministries, met with in the course of their establishment, and how hard the Kings of France found it to create them. At that period a Secretary like Robertet was merely a clerk, of hardly any account among the princes and magnates who settled the affairs of State. There were at that time no ministerial functionaries but the Superintendent of Finance, the Chancellor, and the Keeper of the King's Seals. The King granted a seat in the Council, by letters patent, to such of his subjects as might, in his opinion, give useful advice in the conduct of public affairs. A seat in the Council might be given to a president of a law court in the Parlement, to a bishop, to an untitled favorite. Once admitted to the Council, the subject strengthened his position by getting himself appointed to one of the Crown offices to which a salary was attached—the government of a province, a constable's sword,

a marshal's baton, the command of the Artillery, the post of High Admiral, the colonelcy of some military corps, the captaincy of the galleys—or often some function at Court, such as that of Grand Master of the Household, then held by the Duc de Guise.

"Do you believe that the Duc de Nemours will marry Françoise?" asked Mme. de Guise of the Duc d'Orléans' instructor.

"Indeed, Madame, I know nothing but Latin," was the reply.

This made those smile who were near enough to hear it. Just then the seduction of Françoise de Rohan by the Duc de Nemours was the theme of every conversation; but as the Duc de Nemours was cousin to the King, and also allied to the House of Valois through his mother, the Guises regarded him as seduced rather than as a seducer. The influence of the House of Rohan was, however, so great, that after Francis II.'s death the Duc de Nemours was obliged to quit France in consequence of the lawsuit brought against him by the Rohans, which was compromised by the offices of the Guises. His marriage to the Duchesse de Guise, after Poltrot's assassination, may account for the Duchess's question to Amyot, by explaining some rivalry, no doubt, between her and Mlle. de Rohan.

"Look, pray, at that party of malcontents," said the Comte de Grammont, pointing to MM. de Coligny, Cardinal de Châtillon, Danville, Thoré, Moret, and several other gentlemen suspected of meddling in the Reformation, who were standing all together between two windows at the lower end of the hall.

"The Huguenots are on the move," said Cypierre. "We know that Théodore de Bèze is at Nérac to persuade the Queen of Navarre to declare herself on their side by publicly renouncing the Catholic faith," he added, with a glance at the Bailli d'Orléans, who was Chancellor to the Queen of Navarre, and a keen observer of the Court.

"She will do it," said the Bailli d'Orléans dryly.

This personage, the Jacques Cœur of his day, and one of the richest middle-class men of his time, was named

Groslot, and was envoy from Jeanne d'Albret to the French Court.

"Do you think so?" said the Chancellor of France to the Chancellor of Navarre, quite understanding the full import of Groslot's remark.

"Don't you know," said the rich provincial, "that the Queen of Navarre has nothing of the woman in her but her sex? She is devoted to none but manly things; her mind is strong in important matters, and her heart undaunted by the greatest adversities."

"M. le Cardinal," said the Chancellor Olivier to M. de Tournon, who had heard Groslot, "what do you think of such boldness?"

"The Queen of Navarre does well to choose for her Chancellor a man from whom the House of Lorraine will need to borrow, and who offers the King his house when there is a talk of moving to Orleans," replied the Cardinal.

The Chancellor and the Cardinal looked at each other, not daring to speak their thoughts; but Robertet expressed them, for he thought it necessary to make a greater display of devotion to the Guises than these great men, since he was so far beneath them.

"It is most unfortunate that the House of Navarre, instead of abjuring the faith of their fathers, do not abjure the spirit of revenge and rebellion inspired by the Connétable de Bourbon. We shall see a repetition of the wars of the Armagnacs and the Bourguignons."

"No," said Groslot, "for there is something of Louis XI. in the Cardinal de Lorraine."

"And in Queen Catherine too," observed Robertet.

At this moment Mme. Dayelle, Mary Stewart's favorite waiting-woman, crossed the room to the Queen's chamber. The appearance of the waiting-woman made a little stir.

"We shall be admitted directly," said Mme. Fieschi.

"I do not think so," said the Duchesse de Guise. "Their Majesties will come out, for a State Council is to be held."

La Dayelle slipped into the royal chamber after scratching at the door, a deferential custom introduced by Catherine de' Medici, and adopted by the French Court.

"What is the weather like, my dear Dayelle?" asked Queen Mary, putting her fair fresh face out between the curtains.

"Oh! Madame——"

"What is the matter, Dayelle? You might have the bowmen at your heels——"

"Oh! Madame—is the King still sleeping?"

"Yes."

"We are to leave the castle, and M. le Cardinal desired me to tell you so, that you might suggest it to the King."

"Do you know why, my good Dayelle?"

"The Reformers mean to carry you off."

"Oh, this new religion leaves me no peace! I dreamed last night that I was in prison—I who shall wear the united crowns of the three finest kingdoms in the world."

"Indeed; but, Madame, it was only a dream."

"Carried off! That would be rather amusing.—But for the sake of religion, and by heretics—horrible!"

The Queen sprang out of bed and seated herself in front of the fireplace in a large chair covered with red velvet, after wrapping herself in a loose black velvet gown handed to her by Dayelle, which she tied about the waist like a silken cord. Dayelle lighted the fire, for the early May mornings are cool on the banks of the Loire.

"Then did my uncles get this news in the course of the night?" the Queen inquired of Dayelle, with whom she was on familiar terms.

"Early this morning MM. de Guise were walking on the terrace to avoid being overheard, and received there some messengers arriving in hot haste from various parts of the kingdom where the Reformers are busy. Her Highness the Queen-mother went out with her Italians hoping to be consulted, but she was not invited to join the little council."

"She must be furious."

"All the more so because she had a little wrath left over from yesterday," replied Dayelle. "They say she was far from rejoiced by the sight of your Majesty in your dress of woven gold and your pretty veil of tan-colored crape——"

"Leave us now, my good Dayelle; the King is waking.

Do not let anyone in, not even those who have an *entrée*. There are matters of State in hand, and my uncles will not disturb us."

"Why, my dear Mary, are you out of bed already? Is it daylight?" said the young King, rousing himself.

"My dear love, while we were sleeping, malignants have been wide awake, and compel us to leave this pleasant home."

"What do you mean by malignants, my sweetheart? Did we not have the most delightful festival last evening but for the Latin which those gentlemen insisted on dropping into our good French?"

"Oh!" said Mary, "that is in the best taste, and Rabelais brought Latin into fashion."

"Ah! you are so learned, and I am only sorry not to be able to do you honor in verse. If I were not King, I would take back Master Amyot from my brother, who is being made so wise——"

"You have nothing to envy your brother for; he writes verses and shows them to me, begging me to show him mine. Be content, you are by far the best of the four, and will be as good a king as you are a charming lover. Indeed, that perhaps is the reason your mother loves you so little. But be easy; I, dear heart, will love you for all the world."

"It is no great merit in me to love such a perfect queen," said the young King. "I do not know what hindered me from embracing you before the whole Court last night, when you danced the *branle* with tapers. I could see how all the women looked serving-wenches by you, my sweet Marie!"

"For plain prose your language is charming, my dear heart: it is love that speaks, to be sure. And, you know, my dear, that if you were but a poor little page, I should still love you just as much as I now do, and yet it is a good thing to be able to say, 'My sweetheart is a king!'"

"Such a pretty arm! Why must we get dressed? I like to push my fingers through your soft hair and tangle your golden curls. Listen, pretty one; I will not allow you to let your women kiss your fair neck and your pretty shoulders

any more! I am jealous of the Scotch mists for having touched them."

"Will you not come to see my beloved country? The Scotch would love you, and there would be no rebellions, as there are here."

"Who rebels in our kingdom?" said François de Valois, wrapping himself in his gown, and drawing his wife on to his knee.

"Yes, this is very pretty play," said she, withdrawing her cheek from his kiss. "But you have to reign, if you please, my liege."

"Who talks of reigning?—This morning I want to——"

"Need you say 'I want to,' when you can do what you will?—That is the language of neither king nor lover. However, that is not the matter on hand—we have important business to attend to."

"Oh!" said the King, "it is a long time since we have had any business to do.—Is it amusing?"

"Not at all," said Mary; "we must make a move."

"I will wager, my pretty one, that you have seen one of your uncles, who manage matters so well that, at seventeen, I am a king only in name. I really know not why, since the first Council, I have ever sat at one; they could do everything quite as well by setting a crown on my chair; I see everything through their eyes, and settle matters blindfold."

"Indeed, Monsieur," said the Queen, standing up and assuming an air of annoyance, "you had agreed never again to give me the smallest trouble on that score, but to leave my uncles to exercise your royal power for the happiness of your people. A nice people they are! Why, if you tried to govern them unaided, they would swallow you whole like a strawberry. They need warriors to rule them—a stern master gloved with iron; while you—you are a charmer whom I love just as you are, and should not love if you were different—do you hear, my lord?" she added, bending down to kiss the boy, who seemed inclined to rebel against this speech, but who was mollified by the caress.

"Oh, if only they were not your uncles!" cried Francis. "I cannot endure that Cardinal; and when he puts on his

insinuating air and his submissive ways, and says to me with a bow, 'Sire, the honor of the Crown and the faith of your fathers are at stake, your Majesty will never allow——' and this and that—I am certain he toils for nothing but his cursed House of Lorraine."

"How well you mimic him!" cried the Queen. "But why do you not make these Guises inform you of what is going forward, so as to govern by and by on your own account when you are of full age? I am your wife, and your honor is mine. We will reign, sweetheart—never fear! But all will not be roses for us till we are free to please ourselves. There is nothing so hard for a king as to govern!

"Am I the Queen now, I ask you? Do you think that your mother ever fails to repay me in evil for what good my uncles may do for the glory of your throne? And mark the difference! My uncles are great princes, descendants of Charlemagne, full of good will, and ready to die for you; while this daughter of a leech, or a merchant, Queen of France by a mere chance, is as shrewish as a citizen's wife who is not mistress in her house. The Italian woman is provoked that she cannot set everyone by the ears, and she is always coming to me with her pale, solemn face, and then with her pinched lips she begins: 'Daughter, you are the Queen; I am only the second lady in the kingdom'—she is furious, you see, dear heart—'but if I were in your place, I would not wear crimson velvet while the Court is in mourning, and I would appear in public with my hair plainly dressed and with no jewels, for what is unseemly in any lady is even more so in a queen. Nor would I dance myself; I would only see others dance!' That is the kind of thing she says to me."

"Oh, dear Heaven!" cried the King, "I can hear her! Mercy, if she only knew——"

"Why, you still quake before her. She wearies you—say so? We will send her away. By my faith, that she should deceive you might be endured, but to be so tedious——"

"In Heaven's name, be silent, Marie," said the King, at once alarmed and delighted. "I would not have you lose her favor."

"Never fear that she will quarrel with me, with the three finest crowns in the world on my head, my little King," said Mary Stewart. "Even though she hates me for a thousand reasons, she flatters me, to win me from my uncles."

"Hates you?"

"Yes, my angel! And if I had not a thousand such proofs as women can give each other, and such as women only can understand, her persistent opposition to our happy love-making would be enough. Now, is it my fault if your father could never endure Mlle. de' Medici? In short, she likes me so little, that you had to be quite in a rage to prevent our having separate sets of rooms here and at Saint-Germain. She declared that it was customary for the Kings and Queens of France. Customary!—It was your father's custom; that is quite intelligible. As to your grandfather, Francis, the good man established the practice for the convenience of his love affairs. So be on your guard; if we are obliged to leave this place, do not let the Grand Master divide us."

"If we leave? But I do not intend to leave this pretty château, whence we see the Loire and all the country around—a town at our feet, the brightest sky in the world above us, and these lovely gardens. Or if I go, it will be to travel with you in Italy and see Raphael's pictures and Saint-Peter's at Rome."

"And the orange-trees. Ah, sweet little King, if you could know how your Mary longs to walk under orange-trees in flower and fruit! Alas! I may never see one! Oh! to hear an Italian song under those fragrant groves, on the shore of a blue sea, under a cloudless sky, and to clasp each other thus!——"

"Let us be off," said the King.

"Be off!" cried the Grand Master, coming in. "Yes, Sire, you must be off from Blois. Pardon my boldness; but circumstances overrule etiquette, and I have come to beg you to call a Council."

Mary and Francis had started apart on being thus taken by surprise, and they both wore the same expression of offended sovereign Majesty.

"You are too much the Grand Master, M. de Guise," said the young King, suppressing his wrath.

"Devil take lovers!" muttered the Cardinal in Catherine's ear.

"My son," replied the Queen-mother, appearing behind the Cardinal, "the safety of your person is at stake as well as of your kingdom."

"Heresy was awake while you slept, Sire," said the Cardinal.

"Withdraw into the hall," said the little King; "we will hold a Council."

"Madame," said the Duke to the Queen, "your furrier's son has come with some furs which are seasonable for your journey, as we shall probably ride by the Loire.—But he also wishes to speak with Madame," he added, turning to the Queen-mother. "While the King is dressing, would you and Her Majesty dismiss him forthwith, so that this trifle may no further trouble us."

"With pleasure," replied Catherine; adding to herself, "If he thinks to be rid of me by such tricks, he little knows me."

The Cardinal and the Duke retired, leaving the two Queens with the King. As he went through the guardroom to go to the council-chamber, the Grand Master desired the usher to bring up the Queen's furrier.

When Christophe saw this official coming towards him from one end of the room to the other, he took him, from his dress, to be someone of importance, and his heart sank within him; but this sensation, natural enough at the approach of a critical moment, became sheer terror when the usher, whose advance had the effect of directing the eyes of the whole splendid assembly to Christophe with his bundles and his abject looks, said to him—

"Their Highnesses the Cardinal de Lorraine and the Grand Master desire to speak to you in the council-room."

"Has anyone betrayed me?" was the thought of this hapless envoy of the Reformers.

Christophe followed the usher, his eyes bent on the ground, and never looked up till he found himself in the spacious council-room—as large almost as the guardroom.

The two Guises were alone, standing in front of the splendid chimney-place that backed against that in the guardroom, where the maids of honor were grouped.

"You have come from Paris? Which road did you take?" the Cardinal said to Christophe.

"I came by water, Monseigneur," replied the lad.

"And how did you get into Blois?" said the Grand Master.

"By the river port, Monseigneur."

"And no one interfered with you?" said the Duke, who was examining the young man closely.

"No, Monseigneur. I told the first soldier, who made as though he would stop me, that I had come on duty to wait on the two Queens, and that my father is furrier to their Majesties."

"What is doing in Paris?" asked the Cardinal.

"They are still trying to discover the murderer who killed President Minard."

"Are not you the son of my surgeon's greatest friend?" asked the Duc de Guise, deceived by Christophe's expression of candor, now that his fears were allayed.

"Yes, Monseigneur."

The Grand Master went out, hastily lifted the curtain which screened the double doors of the council-chamber, and showed his face to the crowd, among whom he looked for the King's surgeon-in-chief. Ambroise Paré, standing in a corner, was aware of a glance shot at him by the Duke, and went to him. Ambroise, already inclined to the Reformed religion, ended by adopting it; but the friendship of the Guises and of the French kings preserved him from the various disasters that befell the heretics. The Duke, who felt that he owed his life to Ambroise Paré, had appointed him surgeon-in-chief to the King within a few days past.

"What is it, Monseigneur," said the leech. "Is the King ill? I should not be surprised."

"Why?"

"The Queen is too fascinating," said the surgeon.

"Ah!" replied the Duke, surprised. "However, that is not the case," he went on after a pause. "Ambroise, I want

you to see a friend of yours," and he led him on to the threshold of the council-chamber door and pointed to Christophe.

"Ah, to be sure," cried the surgeon, holding out his hand to the youth. "How is your father, my boy?"

"Very well, Master Ambroise," Christophe replied.

"And what are you doing at Court?" Paré went on. "It is not your business to carry parcels; your father wants to make a lawyer of you. Do you want the protection of these two great Princes to become a pleader?"

"Why, yes, indeed," replied Christophe, "but for my father's sake; and if you can intercede for us, add your entreaties," he went on, with a piteous air, "to obtain an order from Monseigneur the Grand Master for the payment of the moneys due to my father, for he does not know which way to turn——"

The Cardinal and his brother looked at each other, and seemed to be satisfied.

"Leave us now," said the Grand Master to Ambroise with a nod.—"And you, my friend," he added to Christophe, "settle your business quickly, and get back to Paris. My secretary will give you a pass, for, by Heaven, the roads will not be pleasant to travel on!"

Neither of the brothers had the slightest suspicion of the important interests that lay in Christophe's hands, being now quite assured that he was certainly the son of Lecamus, a good Catholic, purveyor to the Court, and that he had come solely to get his money.

"Take him round to be near the door of the Queen's chamber; she will ask for him, no doubt," said the Cardinal to the surgeon.

While the furrier's son was being thus cross-questioned in the council-room, the King had left his mother and the Queen together, having gone into his dressing-room, which was beyond a room adjoining the bedroom.

Catherine, standing in the recess of the deep window, was looking out on the gardens lost in melancholy thought. She foresaw that one of the greatest commanders of the age, in

the course of that morning, in the very next hour, would take the place of her son the King, under the terrible title of Lieutenant-General of the kingdom. In the face of such peril she was alone, without a plan, without defense. Indeed, as she stood there in her mourning, which she had not ceased to wear since the death of Henri II., she might have been compared to a phantom, so still were her pale features as she stood absorbed in thought. Her black eye seemed to wander in the indecision for which great politicians are so often blamed, which in them is the result of the breadth of sight which enables them to see every difficulty, and to balance one against the other, adding up the sum-total of risk before taking a part. There was a ringing in her ears, a turmoil in her blood; but she stood there, nevertheless, calm and dignified, while gauging the depths of the political abyss beyond the real gulf that lay at her feet.

Since the day when the Vidame de Chartres had been arrested, this was the second of those terrible days of which there were henceforth to be so many in the course of her royal career; but she never again made a mistake in the school of power. Though the scepter seemed always to fly from her grasp, she meant to seize it, and, in fact, did seize it, by that sheer force of will which had never given way to the scorn of her father-in-law, Francis I., and his Court—by whom, though Dauphiness, she had been so little thought of—nor to the constant denials of Henri II., nor to the unresting antagonism of her rival, Diane de Poitiers. A man would not have understood this Queen in check; but Mary Stewart, so fair, so crafty, so clever, so girlish, and yet so omniscient, watched her out of the corner of her eye while affecting to warble an Italian air with an indifferent countenance. Without understanding the tempest of ambition which brought a cold moisture to the Florentine Queen's brow, the pretty Scotch girl, with her saucy face, knew that the high position of her uncle the Duc de Guise was filling Catherine with suppressed fury. Now, nothing amused her so much as watching her mother-in-law, whom she regarded as an intriguing adventuress, who, having been humbled, was always prepared for revenge. The face of the elder was grave and gloomy,

little cadaverous,' by reason of the livid complexion of the Italians, which by daylight looks like yellow ivory, though by candle-light it is dazzling; while the younger face was bright and fresh. At sixteen Mary Stewart had that creamy fairness for which she was so famous. Her bright, rosy face, with clearly-cut features, sparkled with childish mischief, very frankly expressed in the regular arch of her brows, the brightness of her eyes, and the pert smile of her pretty mouth. She had then in perfection that kittenish grace which nothing—neither captivity nor the sight of the horrible block—ever completely quelled.

Thus these two Queens, one in the morning, the other in the summer of life, were at this time a perfect contrast. Catherine was an imposing sovereign, an impenetrable widow, with no passion but the love of power. Mary was a feather-brained and light-hearted wife, who thought of her crowns as playthings. One looked forward to impending misfortunes; she even had a glimpse of the murder of the Guises, guessing that this would be the only way to strike down men who were capable of raising themselves above the throne and the Parlement; she saw rivers of blood in a long struggle—the other little dreamed that she would herself be murdered by form of law.

A curious reflection brought a little calm to the Italian Queen.

"According to the soothsayer and to Ruggieri's forecast, this reign is soon to end. My difficulties will not last," thought she.

And thus, strange to say, an occult science, now forgotten—judicial astrology—was a support to Catherine at this juncture, as it was throughout her life; for the belief grew constantly from seeing the predictions of those who practiced it realized with the greatest exactitude.

"You are very serious, Madame," said Mary Stewart, taking from Dayelle's hands her little cap, pinched down over the parting of her hair with two frilled wings of handsome lace beyond the puffs of wavy yellow hair that shadowed the temples.

The painters of the time have so amply perpetuated this

cap, that it now belongs essentially to the Queen of Scots, though it was Catherine who invented it when she went into mourning for Henri II.; but she could not wear it with such good effect as her daughter-in-law, to whom it was infinitely more becoming. And this was not the smallest of the grievances harbored by the Queen-mother against the young Queen.

"Does your Majesty mean that for a reproof?" said Catherine, turning to her daughter-in-law.

"I owe respect, and should not dare——" said the Scotchwoman meaningly, with a glance at Dayelle.

Between the two Queens the favorite waiting-woman stood like the figure-head on a fire-dog; an approving smile might cost her her life.

"How can I be as gay as you after losing the late King, and when I see my son's kingdom on the eve of a conflagration?"

"Politics do not much concern women," replied Mary Stewart. "Besides, my uncles are there."

These two sentences, in the circumstances, were two poisoned arrows.

"Let us see our furs then," the Italian replied, "and so turn our minds to our own business, while your uncles settle that of the kingdom."

"Oh, but we shall attend the Council, Madame; we are of more use there than you suppose."

"We?" said Catherine, with feigned astonishment. "I, for my part, do not know Latin!"

"You fancy me so learned?" said Mary Stewart, with a laugh. "Nay, Madame, I swear to you that at this moment I am studying in the hope of rivaling the Medici and of knowing some day how to heal the wounds of the country."

This sharp shaft pierced Catherine to the heart, for it was an allusion to the origin of the Medici, who were descended, as some said, from a leech, or, as others had it, from a rich drug merchant. She had no reply ready. Dayelle colored when her mistress looked to her for the applause which everybody, and even queens, expect from their inferiors when they have no better audience.

"Your witticisms, Madame, cannot, unfortunately, heal either the maladies of the State or those of the Church," said Catherine, with calm and dignified coldness. "My forefathers' knowledge of such matters won them thrones; while you, if you persist in jesting in the midst of danger, are like enough to lose yours."

At this juncture Dayelle opened the door to Christophe, shown in by the chief physician himself after scratching at the door.

The young Reformer wanted to study Catherine's countenance, and affected a shyness, which was natural enough on finding himself in this place; but he was surprised by Mary's eagerness. She rushed at the boxes to look at her surcoat.

"Madame," said Christophe, addressing Catherine.

He turned his back on the other Queen and Dayelle, promptly taking advantage of the attention the two were devoting to the furs to strike a bold blow.

"What do you want of me?" asked Catherine, looking keenly at him.

Christophe had placed the agreement proposed by the Prince de Condé, with the Reformer's plan of action and an account of their forces, over his heart, between his cloth jerkin and his shirt, wrapped inside the furrier's bill of what Queen Catherine owed him.

"Madame," said he, "my father is in dreadful want of money, and if you would condescend to look through the accounts," he added, unfolding the paper and slipping the agreement under it, "you will see that your Majesty owes him six thousand crowns. May your goodness have pity on us! See, Madame."

And he held out the document.

"Read it. This dates so far back as the accession of the late King."

Catherine was bewildered by the preamble to the address, but she did not lose her presence of mind; she hastily rolled up the paper, admiring the young man's readiness and daring. She saw from these masterly tactics that he would understand her, so she tapped him on the head with the

roll of paper, and said:—"You are very ill advised, m young friend, in handing the bill in before the furs. Learn some knowledge of women! You must never ask for your money till we are perfectly satisfied."

"Is that the tradition?" said the young Queen to her mother-in-law, who made no reply.

"Ah, Mesdames, excuse my father," said Christophe. "If he had not wanted the money, you would not have your furs. The country is up in arms, and there is so much danger on the roads, that only our great need induced me to come. No one else would risk his life."

"This lad is quite fresh," said Mary Stewart, smiling.

It is not superfluous to the better understanding of this important little scene to remark that a surcoat was, as the name implies, a sort of close-fitting jacket or spencer which ladies wore over their dress, and which wrapped them closely, shaped down to the hips. This garment protected the back, chest, and throat from the cold. Surcoats were lined with fur which turned up over the stuff, forming a more or less wide border. Mary Stewart while trying on her surcoat was looking at herself in a large Venetian mirror, to see the effect of it at the back; thus she had left her mother-in-law liberty to glance at the packet of papers, of which the volume might otherwise have excited her suspicions.

"Does a man ever speak to a lady of the dangers he has incurred when he is safe and sound in her presence?" said she, turning round on Christophe.

"Oh, Madame, I have your account too," said he, looking at her with well-acted simplicity.

The young Queen looked at him from head to foot without taking the paper; but she observed, without drawing any conclusions at the moment, that he had taken Queen Catherine's bill out of his breast, and drew hers out of his pocket. Nor did she see in the lad's eyes the admiration that her beauty won her from all the world; but she was thinking so much of her surcoat, that she did not at once wonder what could be the cause of his indifference.

"Take it, Dayelle," said she to the waiting-woman. "You

can give the account to M. de Versailles (Loménie), and desire him, from me, to pay it."

"Indeed, Madame, but if you do not give me an order signed by the King, or by his Highness the Grand Master, who is at hand, your gracious promise will have no effect."

"You are rather hastier than beseems a subject, my friend," said Mary Stewart. "So you do not believe in royal promises?"

The King came in dressed in his long silk hose and trunks, the breeches of the time, but wore neither doublet nor cloak; he had only a rich wrapper of velvet lined throughout with fur; for wrapper, a word of modern use, can alone describe the *négligé* of his apparel.

"Who is the rascal that doubts your word?" said the young King, who, though at a distance, had heard his wife's speech.

The door of the King's closet was hidden by the bed. This closet was subsequently called the old closet (*le Cabinet vieux*) to distinguish it from the splendid painted closet constructed for Henri III. on the other side of the room adjoining the hall of the States-General. Henri III. hid the assassins in the old closet, and sent to desire the Duc de Guise to attend him there; while he, during the murder, remained concealed in the new closet, whence he emerged only to see this overweening subject die—a subject for whom there could be no prison, no tribunal, no judges, no laws in the kingdom. But for these dreadful events, the historian could now hardly identify the former uses of these rooms and halls filled with soldiers. A sergeant writes to his sweetheart on the spot where Catherine gravely considered her struggle with parties.

"Come, my boy," said the Queen-mother; "I will see that you are paid. Trade must flourish, and money is its main sinew."

"Ay, go, my good youth," said the young Queen, laughing; "my august mother understands matters of trade better than I do."

Catherine was about to leave the room without replying to this innuendo; but it struck her that her indifference

might arouse suspicions, and she retorted on her daughter-in-law—

"And you, my dear, trade in love."

Then she went downstairs.

"Put all those things away, Dayelle.—And come to the council-room, Sire," said the young Queen to the King enchanted at having to decide the important question of the lieutenancy of the kingdom in her mother-in-law's absence.

Mary Stewart took the King's arm. Dayelle went out first, speaking a word to the pages, and one of them—young Téligny, fated to perish miserably on the night of Saint-Bartholomew—shouted out—

"The King."

On hearing the cry, the two musketeers carried arms, and the two pages led the way towards the council-chamber between the line of courtiers on one side and the line formed by the maids of honor to the two Queens on the other. All the members of the Council then gathered round the door of the hall, which was at no great distance from the staircase. The Grand Master, the Cardinal, and the Chancellor advanced to meet the two young sovereigns, who smiled to some of the maids, or answered the inquiries of some of the Court favorites more intimate than the rest.

The Queen, however, evidently impatient, dragged Francis II. on towards the vast council-room. As soon as the heavy thud of the arquebuses dropping on the floor again announced that the royal pair had gone in, the pages put on their caps, and the conversations in the various groups took their course again on the gravity of the business about to be discussed.

"Chiverni was sent to fetch the Connétable, and he has not come," said one.

"There is no Prince of the Blood present," remarked another.

The Chancellor and M. de Tournon looked anxious.

"The Grand Master has sent word to the Keeper of the Seals to be sure not to fail to attend this Council; a good many letters patent will be issued, no doubt."

"How is it that the Queen-mother remains below, in her own rooms, at such a juncture?"

"They are going to make things hot for us," said Groslot to Cardinal de Chatillon.

In short, everyone had something to say. Some were pacing the room from end to end, others were flitting round the maids of honor, as though it could be possible to catch a few words through a wall three feet thick, or two doors and the heavy curtains that screened them.

The King, seated at one end of the long table covered with blue velvet, which stood in the middle of the room, his young Queen in an armchair, at his side, was waiting for his mother. Robertet was mending his pens. The two Cardinals, the Grand Master, the Chancellor, the Keeper of the Seals—in short, the whole assembly, looked at the little King, wondering why he did not give the word for them all to be seated.

"Are we to sit in council in the absence of the Queen-mother?" the Chancellor asked, addressing the young King.

The two Guises ascribed Catherine's absence to some cunning trick of their niece's. Then, spurred by a significant look, the much daring Cardinal said to the King—

"Is it your Majesty's good will that we should proceed without Madame your mother?"

Francis, not daring to have an opinion of his own, replied—

"Gentlemen, be seated."

The Cardinal briefly pointed out the dangers of the situation. This great politician, who showed astounding skill in this business, broached the question of the lieutenancy amid utter silence. The young King was, no doubt, conscious of an awkwardness, and guessed that his mother had a real sense of the rights of the Crown, and a knowledge of the danger that threatened his power, for he replied to a direct question on the Cardinal's part—

"We will wait for my mother."

Enlightened by this inexplicable delay on Queen Catherine's part, Mary Stewart suddenly recalled in a single flash of thought three incidents which were clear in her memory.

In the first place, the bulk of the packet presented to her mother-in-law, which she had seen, though so inattentive at the moment (for a woman who seems to see nothing is still a lynx), then the place where Christophe had carried them to separate them from hers.

"Why?" she said to herself. And then she remembered the boy's cold look, which she at once ascribed to the Reformers' hatred of the Guises' niece. A voice within her cried, "Is he not an envoy from the Huguenots?"

Acting, as all hasty persons do, on the first impulse, she exclaimed—

"I myself will go and fetch my mother."

She rushed away and down the stairs, to the great amazement of the gentlemen and ladies of the Court. She went down to her mother-in-law's rooms, crossed the guardroom, opened the door of the bedroom as stealthily as a thief, crept noiselessly over the carpet as silently as a shadow, and could see her nowhere. Then she thought she could surprise her in the splendid private room between the bedroom and the oratory. The arrangement of this oratory is perfectly recognizable to this day; the fashion of the time then allowed it to serve all the purposes in private life which are now served by a boudoir.

By a piece of good-fortune, quite unaccountable when we see in how squalid a state the Crown has left this château, the beautiful paneling of Catherine's closet exists to this day; in the fine carving the curious may still discern traces of Italian magnificence, and discover the hiding-places the Queen-mother had contrived there.

A somewhat exact description of these curiosities is indeed indispensable to a comprehension of the scene that took place there. The woodwork at that time consisted of about a hundred and eighty small oblong panels, of which a hundred or so still remain, each carved with a different design, obviously suggested by the most elegant Italian arabesques. The wood is holm-oak; the red ground which is found under the coat of limewash, applied at the time of the cholera—a quite useless precaution—shows plainly that these panels were gilt; and in spots where the whitewash has rubbed off

we see that some portions of the design were in color, blue, red, or green against the gold background. The number of these panels shows an evident intention to cheat investigation; but if there could be a doubt, the keeper of the château, while holding up Catherine's memory to the execration of all living men, shows to visitors, at the bottom of the paneling, and on a level with the floor, a somewhat heavy skirting which can be raised, and under which there are a number of ingenious springs. By pressing a knob thus concealed, the Queen could open certain of these panels, known to her alone, behind which lay a hiding-place of the same oblong shape as the panels, but of varying depth. To this day a practiced hand would find it difficult to detect which of these panels would open on its invisible hinges; and when the eye was diverted by the skillfully combined colors and gilding that covered the cracks, it is easy to imagine that it was impossible to discover one or two panels among nearly two hundred.

At the moment when Mary Stewart laid her hand on the somewhat elaborate latch of the door to the closet, the Italian Queen, having convinced herself already of the importance of the Prince de Condé's schemes, had just pressed the spring hidden by the skirting, one of the panels had fallen open, and Catherine had turned to the table to take up the papers and hide them, to turn her attention to the safeguard of the devoted messenger who had brought them to her. When she heard the door open, she at once guessed that no one but Queen Mary would venture to come in unannounced.

"You are lost," she said to Christophe, seeing that she could neither hide the papers nor close the panel promptly enough to preserve the secret of her hiding-place.

Christophe's only reply was a sublime look.

"*Povero mio!*" said Catherine, before turning to her daughter-in-law. "Treason, Madame!" she exclaimed. "I have them fast! Send for the Cardinal and the Duke. And be sure," she added, pointing to Christophe, "that this fellow does not escape!"

Thus in an instant this masterful woman saw that it would be necessary to give up the hapless young man; she could

not hide him, it was impossible to help him to escape; and besides, though a week ago he might have been saved, now the Guises had, since that morning, been aware of the conspiracy, and they too must have the lists which she held in her hand, and were drawing all the Reformers into a trap. And so, pleased at finding her adversaries in the mind she had hoped for, now that the plot had become known, policy required her to assume the merit of discovering it.

These dreadful considerations flashed through her mind in the brief moment while the young Queen was opening the door. Mary Stewart stood silent for an instant. Her expression lost its brightness and assumed that keenness which suspicion always gives the eye, and which in her was terrible by the sudden contrast. She looked from Christophe to the Queen-mother, and from the Queen-mother to Christophe, with a glance of malignant doubt. Then she snatched up a bell, which brought in one of Catherine's maids of honor.

"Mlle. du Rouet, send in the captain of the Guard," said Mary Stewart, in breach of every law of etiquette, necessarily set aside in such circumstances. While the young Queen gave her order, Catherine stood looking at Christophe as much as to say, "Courage!" The young Reformer understood, and replied by an expression which conveyed, "Sacrifice me, as they have sacrificed me!"

"Put your trust in me," Catherine answered by a gesture. Then when her daughter-in-law turned upon her, she was deeply engaged in examining the papers.

"You are of the Reformed religion?" said Mary Stewart to Christophe.

"Yes, Madame."

"Then I was not mistaken," she muttered to herself, as she read in the young man's eyes the same expression in which coldness and aversion lurked behind a look of humility.

Pardaillan appeared at once, sent down by the two Princes of Lorraine and the King. The captain sent for by Mary Stewart followed this young man—a most devoted adherent to the Guises.

"Go from me to the King, beg him, with the Cardinal and the Grand Master, to come here at once, and tell them I would

not take such a liberty but that something of serious importance has occurred.—Go, Pardaillan.—And you, Lewiston, keep guard over this Reformed traitor," she added to the Scotchman in their native tongue, pointing to Christophe.

The two Queens did not speak till the King came. It was a terrible pause. Mary Stewart had shown her mother-in-law the whole extent of the part her uncles made her play; her unsleeping and habitual distrust stood revealed; and her youthful conscience felt how disgraceful such a part must be to a great queen. Catherine, on her side, had betrayed herself in her alarm, and feared that she had been understood; she was trembling for the future. The two women, one ashamed and furious, the other vicious but calm, withdrew into the window bay, one leaning on the right side, the other on the left; but their looks were so expressive, that each turned away, and with a common instinct looked out of the window at the sky. These two women, clever as they were, at that moment had no more wit than the commonest. Perhaps it is always so when circumstances overpower men. There is always a moment when even genius is conscious of its smallness in the presence of a great catastrophe.

As for Christophe, he felt like a man falling into an abyss. Lewiston, the Scotch captain, listened to the silence, looking at the furrier's son and the two Queens with a soldier's curiosity. The King's entrance put an end to this painful situation.

The Cardinal went straight up to Queen Catherine.

"I have in my hand all the threads of the plot hatched by the heretics; they sent this boy to me carrying this treaty and these documents," said Catherine in an undertone.

While Catherine was explaining matters to the Cardinal, Queen Mary was speaking a few words in the Grand Master's ear.

"What is this all about?" asked the young King, standing alone amid this conflict of violent interests.

"The proofs of what I was telling your Majesty are already to hand," said the Cardinal, seizing the papers.

The Duc de Guise, unmindful of the fact that he was interrupting him, drew his brother aside and said in a whisper—

"This then makes me Lieutenant-General without any opposition."

A keen glance was the Cardinal's only reply, by which he conveyed to his brother that he had already appreciated the advantages to be derived from Catherine's false position.

"Who sent you?" asked the Duke of Christophe.

"Chaudieu the preacher," he replied.

"Young man, you lie," said the Duke roughly. "It was the Prince de Condé."

"The Prince de Condé, Monseigneur," replied Christophe, with a look of surprise. "I never saw him. I belong to the Palais. I am working under M. de Thou. I am his clerk, and he does not know that I have joined the religion. I only submitted to the preacher's entreaties."

"That will do," said the Cardinal.—"Call M. de Robertet," he added to Lewiston, "for this young villain is craftier than old politicians. He has taken us in, my brother and me, when we should have given him the Host without confession."

"You are no child, by Heaven!" cried the Duke, "and you shall be treated as a man."

"They hoped to win over your august mother," said the Cardinal, turning to the King, and trying to lead him aside to bring him to his way of thinking.

"Alas!" replied Catherine, speaking to her son with a reproachful air, and stopping him just as the Cardinal was taking him into the oratory to subjugate him with dangerous eloquence, "you here see the effect of the position I am placed in. I am supposed to rebel against my lack of influence in public affairs—I, the mother of four princes of the House of Valois."

The young King prepared to listen. Mary Stewart, seeing his brow knit, led him off into the window recess, where she cajoled him with gentle speeches in a low voice; much the same, no doubt, as those she had lavished on him when he rose.

The two brothers meanwhile read the papers handed over to them by the Queen-mother. Finding in them much information of which their spies and M. de Braguelonne, the

governor of the Châtelet, knew nothing, they were inclined to believe in Catherine's good faith. Robertet came in and had private instructions with regard to Christophe. The hapless tool of the leaders of the Reformation was led away by four men of the Scotch Guard, who took him downstairs and handed him over to M. de Montrésor, the Provost of the château. This terrible personage himself escorted Christophe with five or six sergeants to the prison situated in the vaulted cellars of the now ruined tower, which the verger of the Château of Blois shows the visitor, and says that these were the *oubliettes*.

After such an event the Council could only be an empty form: the King, the young Queen, the Grand Master, and the Cardinal de Lorraine went back to the council-room, taking with them Catherine, quite conquered, who only spoke to approve the measures demanded by the Guises. In spite of some slight opposition on the part of the Chancellor Olivier, the only person to utter a word suggesting the independence needful to the exercise of his functions, the Duc de Guise was appointed Lieutenant-General of the kingdom. Robertet carried the motions with a promptitude arguing such devotion as might be well called complicity.

The King, with his mother on his arm, once more crossed the guardroom, and announced to the Court that he proposed to move to Amboise on the following day. This royal residence had been unused since Charles VIII. had very involuntarily killed himself there by striking his head against the pediment of a door that was being carved for him, believing that he could pass under the scaffolding without bending his head. Catherine, to mask the schemes of the Guises, had announced her intention of finishing the Château of Chenonceaux. But no one was deceived by this pretense, and the Court anticipated strange events.

After spending about two hours in accustoming himself to the darkness of his dungeon, Christophe found that it was lined with boards, clumsy indeed, but thick enough to make the square box healthy and habitable. The door, like that into a pig-sty, had compelled him to bend double to get into

it. On one side of this trap a strong iron grating admitted a little air and light from the passage. This arrangement, exactly like that of the crypts at Venice, showed very plainly that the architect of the Château of Blois belonged to the Venetian school, which gave so many builders to Europe in the Middle Ages. By sounding the walls above the woodwork, Christophe discovered that the two walls which divided this cell from two others, to the right and left, were built of brick; and as he knocked, to estimate the thickness of the wall, he was not a little surprised to hear someone knocking on the other side.

"Who are you?" asked his neighbor, speaking into the corridor.

"I am Christophe Lecamus."

"And I," said the other voice, "am Captain Chaudieu. I was caught this evening at Beaugency; but, happily, there is nothing against me."

"Everything is discovered," said Christophe; "so you are saved from the worst of it."

"We have three thousand men at this present time in the forests of Vendômois, all men determined enough to seize the Queen-mother and the King on their journey. Happily, la Renaudie was cleverer than I; he escaped. You had just set out when the Guisards caught us."

"But I know nothing of la Renaudie."

"Pooh! my brother told me everything," replied the captain.

On hearing this, Christophe went back to his bench and made no further reply to anything the so-called captain could say to him, for he had had enough experience of the law to know how necessary it was to be cautious in prison.

In the middle of the night he saw the pale gleam of a lantern in the passage, after hearing the unlocking of the ponderous bolts that closed the iron door of the cellar. The provost himself had come to fetch Christophe. This attention to a man who had been left in the dungeon without food struck Christophe as strange; but the upset at Court had, no doubt, led to his being forgotten. One of the provost's sergeants bound his hands with a cord, which he held till they

had reached one of the low rooms in Louis XII.'s part of the château, which evidently was the anteroom to the apartments of some person of importance. The sergeant and the provost bid him be seated on a bench, where the sergeant tied his feet as he had already tied his hands. At a sign from M. de Montrésor, the sergeant then left them.

"Now listen to me, my young friend," said the provost to Christophe, and the lad observed that he was in full dress at that hour of the night, for his fingers fidgeted with the collar of his Order. This circumstance made the furrier's son thoughtful; he saw that there was more to come. At this moment, certainly, they could not be going either to try him or to hang him.

"My young friend, you may spare yourself much suffering by telling me here and now all you know of the communications between Queen Catherine and M. de Condé. Not only will you not be hurt, but you will be taken into the service of Monseigneur, the Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, who likes intelligent people, and who was favorably impressed by your looks. The Queen-mother is to be packed off to Florence, and M. de Condé will no doubt stand his trial. So, take my word for it, small men will do well to attach themselves to the great men in power.—Tell me everything, and it will be to your advantage."

"Alas, Monsieur," replied Christophe, "I have nothing to say. I have confessed all I know to MM. de Guise in the Queen's room. Chaudieu persuaded me to place those papers in the hands of the Queen-mother, by making me believe that the peace of the country was involved."

"You never saw the Prince de Condé?"

"Never," said Christophe.

Thereupon M. de Montrésor left Christophe and went into an adjoining room.

Christophe was not long left to himself. The door by which he had entered soon opened for several men to pass in, who did not shut it, letting various far from pleasant sounds come in from the courtyard. Blocks of wood and instruments were brought in, evidently intended to torture the Reformers' messenger. Christophe's curiosity soon found mat-

ter for reflection in the preparations the newcomers were making under his very eyes. Two coarse and poorly-clad varlets obeyed the orders of a powerful and thickset man, who, on coming in, had a look at Christophe like that of a cannibal at his victim; he had scrutinized him from head to foot, taking stock of his sinews, of their strength and power of resistance, with the calculating eye of a connoisseur. This man was the Blois executioner. Backwards and forwards several times, his men brought in a mattress, wooden wedges, planks, and other objects, of which the use seemed neither obvious nor hopeful to the unhappy boy for whom the preparations were being made, and whose blood ran cold in his veins with apprehension, which though vague was appalling. Two other men came in when M. de Montrésor reappeared.

"What, is nothing ready yet?" said the chief provost, to whom the two newcomers bowed respectfully. "Do you know," he went on to the big man and his two satellites, "that M. le Cardinal supposes you to be getting on with your work?—Doctor," he added, turning to one of the newcomers, "here is your man," and he pointed to Christophe.

The doctor went up to the prisoner, untied his hands, and sounded his back and chest. Science quite seriously repeated the torturer's investigation. Meanwhile, a servant in the livery of the House of Guise brought in several chairs, a table, and all the materials for writing.

"Begin your report," said M. de Montrésor to the second person who had come in, dressed in black, who was a clerk.

Then he came back to stand by Christophe, to whom he said very mildly—

"My boy, the Chancellor, having learnt that you refuse to give satisfactory replies to my questions, has decided that you must be put to the torture—ordinary and extraordinary."

"Is he in good health, and can he bear it?" the clerk asked of the doctor.

"Yes," said the man of medicine, a physician attached to the House of Lorraine.

"Well, then, retire to the adjoining room; we will send for you if it is necessary to consult you."

The physician left the room.

His first panic past, Christophe collected all his courage. The hour of his martyrdom was come. He now looked on with cold curiosity at the arrangements made by the executioner and his varlets. After hastily making up a bed, they proceeded to prepare a machine called the boot, consisting of boards, between which each leg of the victim was placed, surrounded with pads. The machinery used by bookbinders to press the volumes between two boards, which they tighten with cords, will give a very exact idea of the way in which each leg was incased. It is easy, then, to imagine the effect of a wedge driven home by a mallet between the two cases in which the legs were confined, and which, being tightly bound with rope, could not yield. The wedges were driven in at the knees and ankles, as if to split a log of wood. The choice of these two spots where there is least flesh, and where, in consequence, the wedge found room at the expense of the bones, made this form of torture horribly painful. In ordinary torture four wedges were driven in—two at the knees and two at the ankles; in extraordinary torture as many as eight were employed, if the physician pronounced that the victim's powers of endurance were not exhausted.

At this period the boots were also applied to the hands; but as time pressed, the Cardinal, the Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, and the Chancellor spared Christophe this.

The preamble to the examination was written; the provost himself had dictated a few sentences, walking about the room with a meditative air, and requiring Christophe to tell him his name—Christian name—age, and profession; then he asked him from whom he had received the papers he had delivered to the Queen.

"From Chaudieu the minister," said he.

"Where did he give them to you?"

"At my own home in Paris."

"When he handed them to you, he must have told you whether the Queen-mother would receive you well."

"He told me nothing of the kind," replied Christophe.

"He only desired me to give them secretly to Queen Catherine."

"Then have you often seen Chaudieu, that he knew that you were coming here?"

"It was not from me that he heard that I was to carry the furs to the two Queens, and at the same time to ask in my father's behalf for the money owed him by the Queen-mother; nor had I time to ask him who had told him."

"But those papers, given to you without any wrapper or seal, contain a treaty between the rebels and Queen Catherine. You must have known that they exposed you to the risk of suffering the punishment dealt out to those who are implicated in a rebellion."

"Yes."

"The persons who induced you to commit an act of high treason must have promised you some reward and the Queen-mother's patronage."

"I did it out of attachment to Chaudieu, the only person I saw."

"Then you persist in declaring that you did not see the Prince de Condé?"

"Yes."

"Did not the Prince de Condé tell you that the Queen-mother was inclined to enter into his views in antagonism to the Guises?"

"I did not see him."

"Take care. One of your accomplices, la Renaudie, is arrested. Strong as he is, he could not resist the torture that awaits you, and at last confessed that he, as well as the Prince, had had speech with you. If you wish to escape the anguish of torture, I beg you to tell the simple truth. Then perhaps you may win your pardon."

Christophe replied that he could not tell anything of which he had no knowledge, nor betray accomplices, when he had none. On hearing this, the provost nodded to the executioner, and went back into the adjoining room.

On seeing this, Christophe knit his brows, wrinkling his forehead with a nervous spasm, and preparing to endure. He clenched his fists with such a rigid clutch that the nails

ran into the flesh without his feeling it. The three men took him up, carried him to the camp bed, and laid him there, his legs hanging down. While the executioner tied him fast with stout ropes, his two men each fitted a leg into a boot; the cords were tightened by means of a wrench without giving the victim any great pain. When each leg was thus held in a vice, the executioner took up his mallet and his wedges, and looked alternately at the sufferer and the clerk.

"Do you persist in your denial?" said the clerk.

"I have told the truth," replied Christophe.

"Then go on," said the clerk, shutting his eyes.

The cords were tightened to the utmost, and this moment, perhaps, was the most agonizing of all the torture; the flesh was so suddenly compressed that the blood was violently thrown back into the trunk. The poor boy could not help screaming terribly; he seemed about to faint. The doctor was called back. He felt Christophe's pulse, and desired the executioner to wait for a quarter of an hour before driving in the wedges, to give time for the blood to recover its circulation and sensation to return.

The clerk charitably told Christophe that if he could not better endure even the beginnings of the suffering he could not escape, he would do better to reveal all he knew; but Christophe's only reply was—

"The King's tailor! the King's tailor!"

"What do you mean by saying that?" asked the clerk.

"Foreseeing the torments I shall go through," said Christophe, slowly, to gain time and to rest, "I am summoning all my strength, and trying to re-enforce it by remembering the martyrdom endured for the sacred cause of the Reformation by the late King's tailor, who was tortured in the presence of the King and of Mme. de Valentinois; I will try to be worthy of him!"

While the physician was advising the hapless man not to drive his torturers to extremities, the Cardinal and the Duke, impatient to know the results of this examination, came in and desired Christophe to reveal the truth at once. The furrier's son repeated the only confession he would allow himself to make, implicating nobody but Chaudieu.

The Princes nodded. On this, the executioner and his foreman seized their mallets, each took a wedge and drove it home between the boots, one standing on the right and the other on the left. The executioner stood at the knees, the assistant at the ankles, opposite. The eyes of the witnesses of this hideous act were fixed on Christophe's, who, excited no doubt by the presence of these grand personages, flashed such a look at them that his eyes sparkled like flame.

At the two next wedges a horrible groan escaped him. Then when he saw the men take up the wedges for the severer torture, he remained silent; but his gaze assumed such dreadful fixity, and flashed at the two Princes such a piercing magnetic fluid, that the Duke and the Cardinal were both obliged to look down. Philippe le Bel had experienced the same defeat when he presided at the torture by hammer, inflicted in his presence on the Templars. This consisted in hitting the victim on the chest with one arm of the balance hammer used to coin money, which was covered with a leather pad. There was one knight whose eyes were so fixed on the King that he was fascinated, and could not take his gaze off the sufferer. At the third blow the King rose and went away, after hearing himself called upon to appear before the judgment of God within a year—as he did.

At the fifth wedge, the first of the greater torture, Christophe said to the Cardinal—

"Cut my misery short, Monseigneur; it is useless."

The Cardinal and the Duke withdrew, and Christophe could hear from the next room these words, spoken by Queen Catherine—

"Go on, go on; after all, he is only a heretic!"

She thought it prudent to appear more severe to her accomplice than his executioners were.

The sixth and seventh wedges were driven in, and Christophe complained no more; his face shone with a strange radiance, due, no doubt, to the immense strength he derived from fanatical excitement. In what else but in feeling can we hope to find the fulcrum enabling a man to endure such anguish? At last, when the executioner was about to insert

the eighth wedge, Christophe smiled. This dreadful torment had lasted one hour.

The clerk went to fetch the leech, to know whether the eighth wedge could be driven in without endangering the sufferer's life. The Duke meanwhile came in again to see Christophe.

"By our Lady! you are a fine fellow," said he, leaning down to speak in his ear. "I like a brave man. Enter my service, you shall be happy and rich, my favors will heal your bruised limbs; I will ask you to do nothing cowardly, like rejoining your own party to betray their plans; there are always plenty of traitors, and the proof is to be found in the prisons of Blois. Only tell me on what terms are the Queen-mother and the Prince de Condé."

"I know nothing about it, Monseigneur," cried Lecamus.

The doctor came in, examined the victim, and pronounced that he could bear the eighth wedge.

"Drive it in," said the Cardinal. "After all, as the Queen says, he is only a heretic," he added, with a hideous smile at Christophe.

Catherine herself slowly came in from the adjoining room, stood in front of Christophe, and gazed at him coldly. She was the object of attentive scrutiny to the two brothers, who looked alternately at the Queen-mother and her accomplice. The whole future life of this ambitious woman depended on this solemn scrutiny; she felt the greatest admiration for Christophe's courage, and she looked at him sternly; she hated the Guises, and she smiled upon them.

"Come," said she, "young man, confess that you saw the Prince de Condé; you will be well rewarded."

"Oh, Madame, what a part you are playing!" cried Christophe, in pity for her.

The Queen started.

"He is insulting me! Is he not to be hanged?" said she to the two brothers, who stood lost in thought.

"What a woman!" cried the Grand Master, who was consulting his brother in the window recess.

"I will stay in France and be revenged," thought the

Queen. "Proceed, he must confess or let him die!" she exclaimed, addressing M. de Montrésor.

The provost turned away, the executioners were busy, Catherine had an opportunity of giving the martyr a look, which no one else saw, and which fell like dew on Christophe. The great Queen's eyes seemed to glisten with moisture; they were, in fact, full of tears, two tears at once repressed and dry. The wedge was driven home, one of the boards between which it was inserted split. Christophe uttered a piercing cry; then his face became radiant; he thought he was dying.

"Let him die," said the Cardinal, echoing Queen Catherine's words with a sort of irony. "No, no," he added to the provost; "do not let us lose this clew."

The Duke and the Cardinal held a consultation in a low voice.

"What is to be done with him?" asked the executioner.

"Send him to prison at Orleans," said the Duke.—"And, above all," he said to M. de Montrésor, "do not hang him without orders from me."

The excessive sensitiveness of every internal organ, strung to the highest pitch by the endurance which worked upon every nerve in his frame, no less affected every sense in Christophe. He alone heard these words spoken by the Duc de Guise in the Cardinal's ear—

"I have not given up all hope of hearing the truth from this little man."

As soon as the two Princes had left the room, the executioners unpacked the victim's legs, with no attempt at gentle handling.

"Did you ever see a criminal with such fortitude?" said the head man to his assistants. "The rogue has lived through the infliction of the eighth wedge; he ought to have died. I am the loser of the price of his body."

"Untie me without hurting me, my good friends," said poor Christophe. "Some day I will reward you."

"Come, show some humanity," said the doctor. "Monseigneur the Duke esteems the young man, and commended him to my care," cried the leech.

"I am off to Amboise with my men," said the executioner roughly. "Take care of him yourself. And here is the jailer."

The executioner went off, leaving Christophe in the hands of the smooth-spoken doctor, who, with the help of Christophe's warder, lifted him on to a bed, gave him some broth, which he made him swallow, sat down by his side, felt his pulse, and tried to comfort him.

"You are not dying," he said, "and you must feel a comfort to your mind when you reflect that you have done your duty. The Queen charged me to take good care of you," he added, in a low voice.

"The Queen is very good," said Christophe, in whom acute anguish had developed wonderful lucidity of mind, and who, after enduring so much, was determined not to spoil the result of his devotion. "But she might have saved me so much suffering by not delivering me to my tormentors, and by telling them herself the secrets, of which I know nothing."

On hearing this reply, the doctor put on his cap and cloak and left Christophe to his fate, thinking it vain to hope to gain anything from a man of that temper. The jailer had the poor boy carried on a litter by four men to the town prison, where Christophe fell asleep, in that deep slumber which, it is said, comes upon almost every mother after the dreadful pains of childbirth.

The two Princes of Lorraine, when they transferred the Court to Amboise, had no hope of finding there the leader of the Reformed party, the Prince de Condé, whom they had ordered to appear in the King's name to take him in a snare. As a vassal of the Crown, and as a Prince of the Blood, Condé was bound to obey the behest of the King. Not to come to Amboise would be a felony; but, by coming, he would place himself in the power of the Crown. Now, at this moment, the Crown, the Council, the Court, and every kind of power, were in the hands of the Duc de Guise and the Cardinal de Lorraine.

In this difficult dilemma, the Prince de Condé showed the

spirit of decisiveness and astuteness which made him a worthy representative of Jeanne d'Albret and the brave General of the Reformers' forces. He traveled at the heels of the last conspirators to Vendôme to support them in case of success. But when this first rush to arms ended in the brief skirmish in which the flower of the nobility whom Calvin had misled all perished, the Prince, and a following of fifty gentlemen, arrived at the Château d'Amboise the very day after this affair, which the Guises, with crafty policy, spoke of as the riots at Amboise. On hearing of the Prince's advance, the Duke sent out the Maréchal de Saint-André to receive him with an escort of a hundred men-at-arms. When the Béarnais came to the gate of the château, the marshal in command refused to admit the Prince's suite.

"You must come in alone, Sir," said the Chancellor Olivier, Cardinal de Tournon, and Birague, who awaited him outside the portcullis.

"And why?"

"You are suspected of felony," replied the Chancellor.

The Prince, who saw that his party was being cut off by the Duc de Nemours, quietly replied—

"If that is the case, I will go in to my cousin alone and prove my innocence."

He dismounted and conversed with perfect freedom with Birague, Tournon, the Chancellor Olivier, and the Duc de Nemours, from whom he asked details of the riot.

"Monseigneur," said the Duc de Nemours, "the rebels had sympathizers inside Amboise. Captain Lanoue had got in some men-at-arms, who opened the gate to them through which they got into the town, and of which they had the command——"

"That is to say, you got them into a sack," replied the Prince, looking at Birague.

"If they had been supported by the attack that was to have been made on the Porte des Bons-Hommes by Captain Chaudieu, the preacher's brother, they would have succeeded," said the Duc de Nemours, "but, from the position I had taken up, in obedience to the Duc de Guise, Captain Chaudieu was obliged to make a detour to avoid fighting me.

Instead of arriving at night like the rest, that rebel did not come up till daybreak, just as the King's troops had crushed those who had got into the town."

"And you had a reserve to recapture the gate that had been given up to them?"

"M. le Maréchal de Saint-André was on the spot with five hundred men."

The Prince warmly praised these military maneuvers.

"To have acted thus," said he in conclusion, "the Lieutenant-General must have known the Reformers' secrets. They have evidently been betrayed."

The Prince was treated with greater strictness at each step. After being parted from his followers on entering the château, the Cardinal and the Chancellor stood in his way when he turned to the stairs leading to the King's apartments.

"We are instructed by the King, Sir, to conduct you to your own rooms."

"Am I then a prisoner?"

"If that were the King's purpose, you would not be attended by a Prince of the Church and by me," replied the Chancellor.

The two functionaries led the Prince to an apartment where a guard—of honor so called—was allotted to him, and where he remained for several hours without seeing anyone. From his window he looked out on the Loire, the rich country which makes such a beautiful valley between Amboise and Tours, and he was meditating on his situation, wondering what the Guises might dare to do to his person, when he heard the door of his room open, and saw the King's fool come in, Chicot, who had once been in his service.

"I heard you were in disgrace," said the Prince.

"You cannot think how sober the Court has become since the death of Henri II."

"And yet the King loves to laugh, surely."

"Which King? Francis II. or Francis of Lorraine?"

"Are you so fearless of the Duke that you speak so?"

"He will not punish me for that, Sir," replied Chicot, smiling.

"And to what do I owe the honor of this visit?"

"Was it not due to you after your coming here? I have brought you my cap and bauble."

"I cannot get out then?"

"Try!"

"And if I do get out?"

"I will confess that you have won the game by playing against the rules."

"Chicot, you frighten me.—Have you been sent by some-one who is interested in my fate?"

Chicot nodded "Yes." He went nearer to the Prince, and conveyed to him that they were watched and overheard.

"What have you to say to me?" asked M. de Condé.

"That nothing but daring can get you out of the scrape," said the fool, whispering the words into his ear. "And this is from the Queen-mother."

"Tell those who have sent you," replied the Prince, "that I should never have come to this château if I had anything to blame myself for, or to fear."

"I fly to carry your bold reply," said the fool.

Two hours later, at one in the afternoon, before the King's dinner, the Chancellor and Cardinal de Tournon came to fetch the Prince to conduct him to Francis II. in the great hall where the Council had sat. There, before all the Court, the Prince de Condé affected surprise at the cool reception the King had given him, and he asked the reason.

"You are accused, cousin," said the Queen-mother sternly, "of having meddled with the plots of the Reformers, and you must prove yourself a faithful subject and a good Catholic if you wish to avert the King's anger from your House."

On hearing this speech, spoken by Catherine in the midst of hushed silence, as she stood with her hand in the King's arm and with the Duc d'Orléans on her left hand, the Prince de Condé drew back three steps, and with an impulse of dignified pride laid his hand on his sword, looking at the persons present.

"Those who say so, Madame, lie in their throat!" he exclaimed in angry tones.

He flung his glove at the King's feet, saying—

"Let the man who will maintain this calumny stand forth!"

A shiver ran through the whole Court when the Duc de Guise was seen to quit his place; but instead of picking up the glove as they expected, he went up to the intrepid hunchback.

"If you need a second, Prince, I beg of you to accept my services," said he. "I will answer for you, and will show the Reformers how greatly they deceive themselves if they hope to have you for their leader."

The Prince de Condé could not help offering his hand to the Lieutenant-General of the kingdom. Chicot picked up the glove and restored it to M. de Condé.

"Cousin," said the boy-King, "you should never draw your sword but in defense of your country.—Come to dinner."

The Cardinal de Lorraine, puzzled by his brother's action, led him off to their rooms. The Prince de Condé, having weathered the worst danger, gave his hand to Queen Mary Stewart to lead her to the dining-room; but, while making flattering speeches to the young Queen, he was trying to discern what snare was at this moment being laid for him by the Balafré's policy. In vain he racked his brain, he could not divine the Guises' scheme; but Queen Mary betrayed it.

"It would have been a pity," said she, laughing, "to see so clever a head fall; you must allow that my uncle is magnanimous."

"Yes, Madame, for my head fits no shoulders but my own, although one is larger than the other.—But is it magnanimity in your uncle? Has he not rather gained credit at a cheap rate? Do you think it such an easy matter to have the law of a Prince of the Blood?"

"We have not done yet," replied she. "We shall see how you behave at the execution of the gentlemen, your friends, over which the Council have determined to make the greatest display."

"I shall do as the King does," said Condé.

"The King, the Queen-mother, and I shall all be present, with all the Court and the Ambassadors——"

"Quite a high day!" said the Prince ironically.

"Better than that," said the young Queen, "an *auto-da-fè*, a function of high political purport. The gentlemen of France must be subjugated by the Crown; they must be cured of their taste for faction and maneuvering——"

"You will not cure them of their warlike temper by showing them their danger, Madame, and at this game you risk the Crown itself," replied the Prince.

At the end of this dinner, which was gloomy enough, Queen Mary was so unfortunately daring as to turn the conversation publicly on the trial which the nobles, taken under arms, were at that moment undergoing, and to speak of the necessity for giving the utmost solemnity to their execution.

"But, Madame," said Francis II., "is it not enough for the King of France to know that the blood of so many brave gentlemen must be shed? Must it be a cause of triumph?"

"No, Sir, but an example," replied Catherine.

"Your grandfather and your father were in the habit of seeing heretics burned," said Mary Stewart.

"The kings who reigned before me went their way," said Francis, "and I mean to go mine."

"Philip II.," Catherine went on, "who is a great king, lately, when he was in the Netherlands, had an *auto-da-fè* postponed till he should have returned to Valladolid."

"What do you think about it, cousin?" said the King to the Prince de Condé.

"Sir, you cannot avoid going; the Papal Nuncio and the Ambassadors must be present. For my part, I am delighted to go if the ladies are to be of the party."

The Prince, at a glance from Catherine de' Medici, had boldly taken his line.

While the Prince de Condé was being admitted to the Château of Amboise, the furrier to the two Queens was also arriving from Paris, brought thither by the uneasiness produced by the reports of the Rebellion, not only in himself and his family, but also in the Lalliers.

At the gate of the château, when the old man craved admission, the captain of the Guard, at the words "Queen's furrier," answered at once—

"My good man, if you want to be hanged, you have only to set foot in the courtyard."

On hearing this, the unhappy father sat down on a rail a little way off, to wait till some attendant on either of the Queens, or some woman of the Court, should pass him, to ask for some news of his son; but he remained there the whole day without seeing anybody he knew, and was at last obliged to go down into the town, where he found a lodging, not without difficulty, in an inn on the Square where the executions were to take place. He was obliged to pay a livre a day to secure a room looking out on the Square.

On the following day, he was brave enough to look on from his window at the rebels who had been condemned to the wheel, or to be hanged, as men of minor importance; and the Syndic of the Furriers' Guild was glad enough not to find his son among the sufferers.

When it was all over, he went to place himself in the clerk's way. Having mentioned his name, and pressed a purse full of crown-pieces into the man's hand, he begged him to see whether, in the three former days of execution, the name of Christophe Lecamus had occurred. The registrar, touched by the despairing old father's manner and tone of voice, conducted him to his own house. After carefully comparing notes, he could assure the old man that the said Christophe was not among those who had hitherto been executed, nor was he named among those who were to die within the next few days.

"My dear master," said the clerk to the furrier, "the Parlement is now engaged in trying the lords and gentlemen concerned in the business, and the principal leaders. So, possibly, your son is imprisoned in the château, and will be one in the magnificent execution for which my Lords the Duc de Guise and the Cardinal de Lorraine are making great preparations. Twenty-seven barons are to be beheaded, with eleven counts and seven marquises, fifty gentlemen in all, and leaders of the Reformers. As the administration of justice in Touraine has no connection with that of the Paris Parlement, if you positively must have some news of your son, go to my Lord the Chancellor Olivier, who, by the orders of the

Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, has the management of the proceedings."

Three times did the poor old man go to the Chancellor's house and stand in a file of people in the courtyard, in common with an immense number of people who had come to pray for their relations' lives; but as titled folks were admitted before the middle class, he was obliged to give up all hope of speaking with the Chancellor, though he saw him several times coming out of his house to go either to the château or to the Commission appointed by the Parlement, along a way cleared for him by soldiers, between two hedges of petitioners who were thrust aside.

It was a dreadful scene of misery, for among this crowd were wives, daughters, and mothers, whole families in tears. Old Lecamus gave a great deal of gold to the servants at the château, enjoining on them that they should deliver certain letters he wrote to la Dayelle, Queen Mary's waiting-woman, or to the Queen-mother's woman; but the lackeys took the good man's money, and then, by the Cardinal's orders, handed all letters to the Provost of the Law Court. As a consequence of their unprecedented cruelty, the Princes of Lorraine had cause to fear revenge; and they never took greater precautions than during the stay of the Court at Amboise, so that neither the most effectual bribery, that of gold, nor the most diligent inquiries brought the furrier any light as to his son's fate. He wandered about the little town in a melancholy way, watching the tremendous preparations that the Cardinal was making for the shocking spectacle at which the Prince de Condé was to be present.

Public curiosity was being stimulated, by every means in use at the time, from Paris to Nantes. The execution had been announced from the pulpit by every preacher, in a breath with the King's victory over the heretics.

Three elegant stands, the center one apparently to be the finest of the three, were being erected against the curtain-wall of the château, at the foot of which the execution was to take place. All round the open space raised wooden seats were being put up, after the fashion of an amphitheater, to accommodate the enormous crowd attracted by the notoriety

of this *auto-da-fè*. About ten thousand persons were camping out in the fields on the day before this hideous spectacle. The roofs were crowded with spectators, and windows were let for as much as ten livres, an enormous sum at that time.

The unhappy father had, as may be supposed, secured one of the best places for commanding a view of the Square where so many men of family were to perish, on a huge scaffold erected in the middle, and covered with black cloth. On the morning of the fatal day, the headsman's block, on which the victim laid his head, kneeling in front of it, was placed on the scaffold, and an armchair, hung with black, for the Recorder of the Court, whose duty it was to call the condemned by name and read their sentence. The inclosure was guarded from early morning by the Scotch soldiers and the men-at-arms of the King's household, to keep the crowd out till the hour of the executions.

After a solemn Mass in the chapel of the château and in every church in the town, the gentlemen were led forth, the last survivors of all the conspirators. These men, some of whom had been through the torture chamber, were collected round the foot of the scaffold, and exhorted by monks, who strove to persuade them to renounce the doctrines of Calvin. But not one would listen to these preachers, turned on to them by the Cardinal de Lorraine, among whom, no doubt, these gentlemen feared that there might be some spies on behalf of the Guises.

To escape being persecuted with these exhortations, they began to sing a psalm turned into French verse by Clément Marot. Calvin, as is well known, had decreed that God should be worshiped in the mother-tongue of every country, from motives of common sense as well as from antagonism to the Roman Church. It was a pathetic moment for all those among the throng, who felt for these gentlemen, when they heard this verse sung at the moment when the Court appeared on the scene—

"Lord, help us in our need!
Lord, bless us with Thy grace!
And on the saints in sore distress
Let shine Thy glorious face!"

The eyes of the Reformers all centered on the Prince de Condé, who was intentionally placed between Queen Mary and the Duc d'Orléans. Queen Catherine de' Medici sat next her son, with the Cardinal on her left. The Papal Nuncio stood behind the two Queens. The Lieutenant-General of the kingdom was on horseback, below the Royal stand, with two marshals of France and his captains. As soon as the Prince de Condé appeared, all the gentlemen sentenced to death, to whom he was known, bowed to him, and the brave hunchback returned the salutation.

"It is hard," said he to the Duc d'Orléans, "not to be civil to men who are about to die."

The two other grand stands were filled by invited guests, by courtiers, and the attendants on their Majesties; in short, the rank and fashion of the château from Blois, who thus rushed from festivities to executions, just as they afterwards rushed from the pleasures of Court life to the perils of war, with a readiness which to foreigners will always be one of the mainsprings of their policy in France. The poor Syndic of the Furriers' Guild felt the keenest joy at failing to discern his son among the fifty-seven gentlemen condemned to death.

At a signal from the Duc de Guise, the clerk, from the top of the scaffold, called out at once, in a loud voice—

"Jean-Louis-Albéric, Baron de Raunay, guilty of heresy, of the crime of high treason, and of bearing arms against the King's Majesty."

A tall, handsome man mounted the scaffold with a firm step, bowed to the people and to the Court, and said—

"The indictment is false; I bore arms to deliver the King from his enemies of Lorraine!"

He laid his head on the block, and it fell.

The Reformers sang—

> "Thou, Lord, hast proved our faith
> And searched our soul's desire,
> And purified our froward hearts,
> As silver proved by fire."

"Robert-Jean-René Briquemaut, Comte de Villemongis, guilty of high treason and rebellion against the King," cried the Recorder.

The Count dipped his hands in the Baron de Raunay's blood, and said—

"May this blood be on the head of those who are truly guilty!"

The Reformers sang on—

"Thou, Lord, hast led our feet
Where foes had laid their snare;
To Thee, O Lord, the glory be,
Though we should perish there."

"Confess, my lord Nuncio," said the Prince de Condé, "that if French gentlemen know how to plot, they also know how to die."

"What hatred you are entailing on the heads of your children, brother," said the Duchesse de Guise to the Cardinal de Lorraine.

"The sight makes me feel sick," said the young King, who had turned pale at the sight of all this bloodshed.

"Pooh! Rebels!" said Catherine de' Medici.

Still the hymn went on, still the ax was plied. At last the sublime spectacle of men who could die singing, and, above all, the impression produced on the crowd by the gradual dwindling of the voices, became stronger than the terror inspired by the Guises.

"Mercy!" cried the mob, when they heard at last only the feeble chant of a single victim, reserved till the last, as being the most important.

He was standing alone at the foot of the steps leading up to the scaffold, and sang—

"Lord, help us in our need!
Lord, bless us with Thy grace!
And on the saints in sore distress
Let shine Thy glorious face!"

"Come, Duc de Nemours," said the Prince de Condé, who was tired of his position; "you, to whom the securing of the victory is due, and who helped to entrap all these people,—do not you feel that you ought to ask the life of this one? It is Castelnau, who, as I was told, had your promise for courteous treatment when he surrendered——"

"Did I wait to see him here before trying to save him?" said the Duc de Nemours, stung by this bitter reproof.

The clerk spoke slowly, intentionally, no doubt—

"Michel-Jean-Louis, Baron de Castelnau-Chalosse, accused and convicted of the crime of high treason, and of fighting against his Majesty the King."

"No," retorted Castelnau haughtily; "it can be no crime to oppose the tyranny and intended usurpation of the Guises!"

The headsman, who was tired, seeing some stir in the royal seats, rested on his ax.

"M. le Baron," said he, "I should be glad not to hurt you. One minute may perhaps save you."

And all the people shouted again for mercy.

"Come," said the King, "a pardon for poor Castelnau, who saved the Duc d'Orléans."

The Cardinal intentionally misinterpreted the word "Come." He nodded to the executioner, and Castelnau's head fell at the moment when the King pronounced his pardon.

"That one goes to your account, Cardinal," said Catherine.

On the day after this horrible massacre, the Prince de Condé set out for Navarre.

This affair made a great sensation throughout France and in every foreign Court. The torrents of noble blood then shed caused the Chancellor Olivier such deep grief, that this admirable judge, seeing the end at which the Guises were aiming, felt that he was not strong enough to hold his own against them. Although they had made him what he was, he would not sacrifice his duty and the Monarchy to them; he retired from public life, suggesting that l'Hôpital should be his successor. Catherine, on hearing of Olivier's choice, proposed Birague for the post of Chancellor, and urged her request with great pertinacity. The Cardinal, who knew nothing of the note written to Catherine by l'Hôpital, and who believed him still faithful to the House of Lorraine, upheld him as Birague's rival, and the Queen-mother affected to be over-ridden.

L'Hôpital was no sooner appointed than he took steps to prevent the introduction into France of the Holy Office, which the Cardinal de Lorraine wished to establish; and he so effectually opposed the Anti-Gallican measures and policy of the Guises, and showed himself so sturdy a Frenchman, that within three months of his appointment he was exiled to reduce his spirit, to his estate of Le Vignay, near Etampes.

Old Lecamus impatiently waited till the Court should leave Amboise, for he could find no opportunity of speaking to either Queen Mary or Queen Catherine; but he hoped to be able to place himself in their way at the time when the Court should be moving along the river-bank on the way back to Blois. The furrier dressed himself as a poor man, at the risk of being seized as a spy, and favored by this disguise, he mingled with the beggars who stood by the wayside.

After the departure of the Prince de Condé, the Duke and the Cardinal thought that they had silenced the Reformed party, and they left the Queen-mother a little more liberty. Lecamus knew that Catherine, instead of traveling in a litter, liked to ride on horseback on a *planchette,* as it was called, a side saddle with a foot-rest. This sort of stirrup was invented by or for Catherine, who, having hurt her leg, rested both feet on a velvet sling, sitting sideways, and supporting one knee in a hollow cut in the saddle. As the Queen had very fine legs, she was accused of having hit on this device for displaying them.

Thus the old man was able to place himself in sight of the Queen-mother; but when she saw him, she affected anger.

"Go away from hence, good man, and let no one see you speaking to me," she said with some anxiety. "Get yourself appointed delegate to the States-General from the corporation of Paris Guilds, and be on my side in the Assembly at Orleans, you will then hear something definitely about your son——"

"Is he alive?" said the old man.

"Alas!" said the Queen, "I hope it."

And Lecamus was obliged to return home with this sad

reply, and the secret as to the convocation of the States-General, which the Queen had told him.

Some days before this, the Cardinal de Lorraine had received information as to the guilt of the Court of Navarre. At Lyons, and at Mouvans in Dauphiné, the Reformers, commanded by the most enterprising of the Bourbon princes, had tried to inflame the population. This daring attempt, after the dreadful executions at Amboise, astonished the Guises, who, to put an end to heresy, no doubt, by some means of which they kept the secret, proposed to assemble the States-General at Orleans. Catherine de' Medici, who saw a support for her own policy in the representations of the nation, consented with joy. The Cardinal, who aimed at recapturing his prey, and overthrowing the House of Bourbon, convoked the States solely to secure the presence of the Prince de Condé and of the King of Navarre, Antoine de Bourbon, father of Henri IV. He then meant to make use of Christophe to convict the Prince of high treason if he were able once more to get him into the King's power.

After spending two months in the prison of Blois, Christophe one morning was carried out on a litter lying on a mattress, was embarked on a barge, and taken up the river to Orleans before a westerly breeze. He reached that town the same evening, and was taken to the famous tower of Saint-Aignan. Christophe, who knew not what to make of his transfer, had time enough for meditation on his behavior and on his future prospects. There he remained two months more, on his bed, unable to use his legs. His bones were crushed. When he begged to be allowed the help of a surgeon, the jailer told him that his orders with regard to his prisoner were so strict that he dared not allow anyone else even to bring him his food. This severity, of which the effect was absolutely solitary confinement, surprised Christophe. His idea was that he must be either hanged or released; he knew nothing whatever of the events happening at Amboise.

In spite of the secret warning to remain at home sent to them by Catherine de' Medici, the two chiefs of the House of Bourbon determined to appear at the meeting of the

States-General, since autograph letters from the King were reassuring; and when the Court was settling at Orleans, Groslot, the Chancellor of Navarre, announced their advent, to the surprise of all.

Francis II. took up his quarters in the house of the Chancellor of Navarre, who was also the Bailli or Recorder of Orleans. This man Groslot, whose double appointment is one of the odd features of a time when Reformers were in possession of abbeys—Groslot, the Jacques Cœur of Orleans, one of the richest citizens of his day, did not leave his name to his house. It came to be known as the *Bailliage*, having been purchased, no doubt, from his heirs, by the Crown, or by the provincial authorities, to be the seat of that tribunal. This elegant structure, built by the citizens of the sixteenth century, adds a detail to the history of a time when the King, the nobility, and the middle class vied with each other in wealth, elegance, and splendor; especially in their dwellings—as may be seen at Varangeville, Ango's magnificent manor-house, and the Hôtel d'Hercules, as it is called, in Paris, which still exists, but in a condition that is the despair of archæologists and of lovers of mediæval art.

Those who have been to Orleans can hardly have failed to observe the Hôtel de Ville in the Place de l'Estape. This townhall is the Old Bailli's Court, the Hôtel Groslot, the most illustrious and most neglected house in Orleans.

The remains of this hotel plainly show to the archæologist's eye how magnificent it must once have been, at a time when citizens built their houses more of wood than of stone, and the upper ranks alone had the right to build manor-houses, a word of special meaning. Since it served as the King's residence at a time when the Court made so much display of pomp and luxury, the Hôtel Groslot must then have been the largest and finest house in Orleans.

It was on the Place de l'Estape that the Guises and the King held a review of the municipal guard, to which M. de Cypierre was nominated captain during the King's visit. At that time, the Cathedral of Sainte-Croix—afterwards finished by Henri IV., who desired to set the seal to his conversion—was being built, and the surrounding ground, strewn with

blocks of stone and encumbered with piles of timber, was held by the Guises, who lodged in the Bishop's palace, now destroyed.

The town was in military occupation, and the measures adopted by the Guises plainly showed how little liberty they intended to give to the States-General, while the delegates flocked into the town and raised the rents of the most wretched lodgings. The Court, the municipal militia, the nobles, and the citizens all alike expected some *coup-d'état;* and their expectations were fulfilled when the Princes of the Blood arrived.

As soon as the two Princes entered the King's room, the Court saw with dismay how insolent was the behavior of the Cardinal de Lorraine, who, to assert his audacious pretensions, kept his head covered, while the King of Navarre before him was bareheaded. Catherine de' Medici stood with downcast eyes, not to betray her indignation. A solemn explanation then took place between the young King and the two heads of the younger branch. It was brief, for at the first words spoken by the Prince de Condé, Francis II. closed the discussion by saying—

"My lords and cousins, I fancied the incident of Amboise was at an end; it is not so, and we shall see cause to regret our indulgence!"

"It is not the King who speaks thus," said the Prince de Condé, "but MM. de Guise."

"Good-day, Monsieur," said the little King, crimson with rage.

As he went through the great hall, the Prince was stopped by the two captains of the Guards. When the officer of the French Guard stepped forward, the Prince took a letter out of the breast of his doublet and said, in the presence of all the Court—

"Can you read me this, M. de Maillé-Brézé?"

"With pleasure," said the French captain:—

"'Cousin, come in all security; I give you my royal word that you may. If you need a safe conduct, these presents will serve you.'"

"And signed——?" said the bold and mischievous hunchback.

"Signed 'François,'" said Maillé.

"Nay, nay," replied the Prince, "it is signed 'Your good cousin and friend, François!'—Gentlemen," he went on, turning to the Scotch Guard, "I will follow you to the prison whither you are to escort me by the King's orders. There is enough noble spirit in this room to understand that."

The utter silence that reigned in the room might have enlightened the Guises, but silence is the last thing that princes listen to.

"Monseigneur," said the Cardinal de Tournon, who was following the Prince, "since the day at Amboise you have taken steps in opposition to royal authority at Lyons and at Mouvans in Dauphiné—things of which the King knew nothing when he addressed you in those terms."

"Rascals!" cried the Prince, laughing.

"You made a public declaration against the Mass, and in favor of heresy——"

"We are masters in Navarre," said the Prince.

"In Béarn, you mean! But you owe homage to the Crown," replied the Président de Thou.

"Ah, you are here, Président!" exclaimed the Prince ironically. "And is all the Parlement with you?"

With these words, the Prince flashed a look of contempt at the Cardinal and left the room; he understood that his head was in peril.

On the following day, when MM. de Thou, de Viole, d'Espesse, Bourdin the public prosecutor, and du Tillet, the chief clerk, came into his prison, he kept them standing, and expressed his regrets at seeing them engaged on a business which did not concern them; then he said to the clerk—

"Write."

And he dictated as follows:—

"I, Louis de Bourbon, Prince de Condé, peer of the realm, Marquis de Conti, Comte de Soissons, Prince of the Blood of France, formally refuse to recognize any Commission appointed to try me, inasmuch as that by virtue of my rank and the privileges attaching to every member of the Royal Fam-

ily, I can only be attainted, heard, and judged by a Parlement of all the peers in their places, the Chambers in full assembly, and the King seated on the bed of justice.—You ought to know this better than anyone, gentlemen, and this is all you will get of me. For the rest, I trust in God and my Right."

The magistrates proceeded nevertheless, in spite of the determined silence of the Prince.

The King of Navarre was at liberty, but closely watched; his prison was a wider one than the Prince's, and that was the whole difference between his position and his brother's; for the heads of the King and the Prince were to be felled at the same time.

So Christophe was so closely confined by order of the Cardinal and the Lieutenant-General of the kingdom only to afford proof to the judges of the Prince's guilt. The letters found on the person of la Sagne, the Prince's secretary, intelligible to a statesman, were not clear enough for the judges. The Cardinal had thought of bringing the Prince accidentally face to face with Christophe, who had been placed, not without a purpose, in a lower room of the tower of Saint-Aignan, and the window looked out on the yard. Each time he was examined by the magistrates, Christophe intrenched himself in systematic denial, which naturally prolonged the affair till the meeting of the States-General.

Lecamus, who had made a point of getting himself elected by the citizens of Paris as a deputy for the "Third Estate," came to Orleans a few days after the Prince's arrest. This event, of which he had news at Étampes, increased his alarms, for he understood—he who alone in the world knew of his son's interview with the Prince under the Pont-au-Change—that Christophe's fate was bound up with that of the rashly daring head of the Reformation party. So he determined to study the mysterious interests which had become so entangled at Court since the States had met, so as to hit upon some plan for rescuing his son. It was vain to think of having recourse to Queen Catherine, who refused to receive the furrier. No one of the Court to whom he had access

could give him any satisfactory information with regard to Christophe, and he had sunk to such depths of despair that he was about to address himself to the Cardinal, when he heard that M. de Thou had accepted the office of one of the judges of the Prince de Condé—a blot on the good fame of that great jurist. The Syndic went to call on his son's patron, and learned that Christophe was alive but a prisoner.

Tourillon, the glover, to whose house la Renaudie had sent Christophe, had offered a room to the Sieur Lecamus for the whole time during which the States-General should be sitting. He believed the furrier to be, like himself, secretly attached to the Reformed religion; but he soon perceived that a father who fears for his son's life thinks no more of shades of religious dogma; he throws himself soul and body on the mercy of God, never thinking of the badge he wears before men.

The old man, repulsed at every attempt, wandered half-witless about the streets. Against all his expectations, his gold was of no avail; M. de Thou had warned him that even if he should bribe some servant of the Guise household, he would only be so much out of pocket, for the Duke and the Cardinal allowed nothing to be known concerning Christophe. This judge, whose fair fame is somewhat tarnished by the part he played at this juncture, had tried to give the unhappy father some hope; but he himself trembled for his godson's life, and his consolations only added to the furrier's alarm. The old man was always prowling round the house; in three months he grew quite thin.

His only hope now lay in the warm friendship which had so long bound him to the Hippocrates of the sixteenth century. Ambroise Paré tried to say a word to Queen Mary as he came out of the King's room; but the instant he mentioned Christophe, the daughter of the Stewarts, annoyed by the prospect before her in the event of any ill befalling the King, whom she believed to have been poisoned by the Reformers, as he had been taken suddenly ill, replied—

"If my uncles would take my opinion, such a fanatic would have been hanged before now."

On the evening when this ominous reply had been re-

peated to Lecamus by his friend Paré, on the Place de l'Estape, he went home half dead, and retired to his room, refusing to eat any supper.

Tourillon, very uneasy, went upstairs, and found the old man in tears; and as the poor furrier's feeble eyes showed the reddened and wrinkled linings of the lids, the glover believed that they were tears of blood.

"Be comforted, father," said the Huguenot, "the citizens of Orleans are enraged at seeing their town treated as if it had been taken by assault, and guarded by M. de Cypierre's soldiery. If the Prince de Condé's life should be in danger, we should very soon demolish the tower of Saint-Aignan, for the whole town is on the Reformers' side, and would rise in rebellion, you may be quite certain."

"But even if the Guises were seized, would their death give me back my son?" said the unhappy father.

At this instant there was a timid rap at the outer door; Tourillon went down to open it. It was quite dark. In these troubled times the master of every household took elaborate precautions. Tourillon looked out through the bars of a wicket in the door, and saw a stranger, whose accent betrayed him as an Italian. This man, dressed in black, asked to see Lecamus on matters of business, and Tourillon showed him in. At the sight of the stranger the old furrier quaked visibly, but the visitor had time to lay a finger on his lips. Lecamus, understanding the gesture, immediately said—

"You have come to offer furs for sale, I suppose?"

"*Si*," replied the stranger in Italian, with an air of privity.

This man was, in fact, the famous Ruggieri, the Queen-mother's astrologer. Tourillon went downstairs, perceiving that he was not wanted.

"Where can we talk without fear of being overheard?" said the astute Florentine.

"Only in the open fields," replied Lecamus. "But we shall not be allowed out of the town; you know how strictly the gates are guarded. No one can pass out without an order from M. de Cypierre, not even a member of the As-

sembly like myself. Indeed, at to-morrow's sitting we all intend to complain of this restriction on our liberty."

"Work like a mole, never let your paws be seen in any kind of business," replied the wily Florentine. "To-morrow will no doubt be a decisive day. From my calculations, to-morrow, or soon after, you will perhaps see your son."

"God grant it! Though you are said to deal only with the Devil!"

"Come and see me at home," said the astrologer, smiling. "I watch the stars from the tower belonging to the Sieur Touchet du Beauvais, the Lieutenant of the Bailiwick, whose daughter has found favor in the eyes of the little Duc d'Orléans. I have cast the girl's horoscope, and it does in fact portend that she will become a great lady and be loved by a King. The Lieutenant is a clever fellow, he is interested in science, and the Queen found me lodgings with the good man, who is cunning enough to be a rabid Guisard till Charles IX. comes to the throne."

The furrier and the astrologer made their way to the Sieur de Beauvais's house without being seen or interfered with; and in the event of Lecamus being discovered, Ruggieri meant to afford him a pretext in his desire to consult the astrologer as to his son's fate.

When they had climbed to the top of the turret where the astrologer had established himself, Lecamus said—

"Then my son is really alive?"

"At present," said the Italian. "But we must make haste to save him. Remember, O seller of skins, that I would not give two farthings for yours if in the whole course of your life you breathe one word of what I am about to tell you."

"The warning is not needed, master. I have been furrier to the Court since the time of the late King Louis XII., and this is the fourth reign I have lived under."

"And you may soon say the fifth," replied Ruggieri.

"What do you know of my son?"

"Well, he has been through the torture-chamber."

"Poor boy!" sighed the old man, looking up to heaven.

"His knees and ankles are a little damaged, but he has

gained royal protection, which will be over him as long as he lives," the Florentine added, on seeing the father's horror. "Your little Christophe has done good service to our great Queen Catherine. If we can get your son out of the clutches of the Cardinal, you will see him Councilor in the Parlement yet. And a man would let his bones be broken three times over to find himself in the good graces of that beloved sovereign—a real genius she, who will triumph over every obstacle.

"I have cast the horoscope of the Duc de Guise; he will be killed within a year. Come now, Christophe did meet the Prince de Condé——"

"You know the future, do not you know the past?" the furrier put in.

"I am not questioning you, I am informing you, good man. Well, your son will be placed to-morrow where the Prince will pass by. If he recognizes him, or if the Prince recognizes your son, M. de Condé forfeits his head. As to what would become of his accomplice—God only knows! But be easy. Neither your son nor the Prince is doomed to die; I have read their destiny; they will live. But by what means they may escape I know not. Now we will do what we can, apart from the certainty of my calculations. M. de Condé shall get a prayer-book to-morrow, delivered to him by a safe hand, in which he shall find a warning. God grant that your son may be secretive, for he can have no warning! And a mere flash of recognition would cost the Prince his life. Thus, although the Queen-mother has every reason to depend on Christophe's fidelity——"

"He has been put to cruel tests," cried the furrier.

"Do not speak in that way. Do you suppose that the Queen is dancing for joy? She is indeed going to take her measures exactly as though the Guises had decided on the Prince's death; and she is wise, that shrewd and prudent Queen! Now she counts on you to help her in every way. You have some influence in the 'Third Estate,' where you are the representative of the Guilds of Paris; and even if the Guisards should promise to set your son at liberty, try to deceive them and stir up your class against the Princes of

Lorraine. Vote for the Queen-mother as Regent; the King of Navarre will give his assent to that publicly, to-morrow, in the Assembly."

"But the King?"

"The King will die," said Ruggieri; "I have read it in the stars. What the Queen requires of you in the Assembly is very simple; but she needs a greater service from you than that. You maintained the great Ambroise Paré while he was a student; you are his friend——"

"Ambroise loves the Duc de Guise in these days better than he loves me," said the furrier. "And he is right; he owes his place to him. Still, he is faithful to the King. And, although he has a leaning towards the Reformation, he will do nothing but his duty."

"A plague on all honest men!" cried the Florentine. "Ambroise boasted this evening that he could pull the little King through. If the King recovers his health, the Guises must triumph, the Princes are dead men, the House of Bourborn is extinct, we go back to Florence, your son is hanged, and the Guises will make short work of the rest of the Royal family——"

"Great God!" cried Lecamus.

"Do not exclaim in that way; it is like a citizen who knows nothing of Court manners; but go forth to Ambroise, and find out what he means to do to save the King. If it seems at all certain, come and tell me what the operation is in which he has such faith."

"But——" Lecamus began.

"Obey me blindly, my good friend, otherwise you will be dazzled."

"He is right," thought the furrier.

And he went off to the King's surgeon, who lived in an inn in the Place du Martroi.

At this juncture Catherine de' Medici found herself, politically speaking, in the same extremities as she had been in when Christophe had seen her at Blois. Though she had inured herself to the struggle, and had exerted her fine intellect in that first defeat, her situation, though precisely the

same now as then, was even more critical and dangerous than at the time of the riots at Amboise. Events had grown in magnitude, and the Queen had grown with them. Though she seemed to proceed in agreement with the Princes of Lorraine, Catherine held the threads of a conspiracy skillfully plotted against her terrible associates, and was only waiting for a favorable moment to drop her mask.

The Cardinal had just found himself deceived by Catherine. The crafty Italian had seen in the younger branch of the Royal family an obstacle she could use to check the pretensions of the Guises; and, in spite of the counsel of the two Gondi, who advised her to leave the Guises to act with what violence they could against the Bourbons, she had, by warning the Queen of Navarre, brought to naught the plot to seize Béarn concerted by the Guises with the King of Spain. As this State secret was known only to themselves and to Catherine, the Princes of Lorraine were assured of her betrayal, and they wished to send her back to Florence; but to secure proofs of Catherine's treachery to the State—the House of Lorraine was the State—the Duke and Cardinal had just made her privy to their scheme for making away with the King of Navarre.

The precautions which were immediately taken by Antoine de Bourbon proved to the brothers that this secret, known but to three people, had been divulged by the Queen-mother. The Cardinal de Lorraine accused Catherine of her breach of faith in the presence of the King, threatening her with banishment if any fresh indiscretions on her part should imperil the state. Catherine, seeing herself in imminent danger, was compelled to act as a high-handed sovereign. She gave ample proof indeed of her fine abilities, but it must also be confessed that she was well served by the friends she trusted.

L'Hôpital sent her a letter in these terms:—

"Do not allow a Prince of the Blood to be killed by a committee, or you will soon be carried off yourself."

Catherine sent Birague to Le Vignay, desiring the Chancellor to come to the Assembly of the States-General, al-

though he was in banishment. Birague returned the same evening with l'Hôpital, halting within three leagues of Orleans, and the Chancellor thus declared himself on the side of the Queen-mother.

Chiverni, whose fidelity was with good reason regarded as doubtful by the Guises, had fled from Orleans, and by a forced march, which nearly was his death, he reached Écouen in ten hours. He there told the Connétable de Montmorency of the danger his nephew the Prince de Condé was in, and of the encroachments of the Guises. Anne de Montmorency, furious at learning that the Prince owed his life merely to the sudden illness of which Francis II. was dying, marched up with fifteen hundred horse and a hundred gentlemen under arms. The more effectually to surprise the Guises, he had avoided Paris, coming from Écouen to Corbeil, and from Corbeil to Pithiviers by the Valley of the Essonne.

"Man to man, and both to pull, leaves each but little wool!" he said, on the occasion of this dashing advance.

Anne de Montmorency, who had been the preserver of France when Charles V. invaded Provence, and the Duc de Guise, who had checked the Emperor's second attempt at Metz, were, in fact, the two greatest French warriors of their time.

Catherine had waited for the right moment to stir up the hatred of the man whom the Guises had overthrown. The Marquis de Simeuse, in command of the town of Gien, on hearing of the advance of so considerable a force as the Connétable brought with him, sprang to horse, hoping to warn the Duke in time. The Queen-mother, meanwhile, certain that the Connétable would come to his nephew's rescue, and confident of the Chancellor's devotion to the royal cause, had fanned the hopes and encouraged the spirit of the Reformed party. The Colignys and the adherents of the imperiled House of Bourbon, had made common cause with the Queen-mother's partisans; a coalition between various antagonistic interests, attacked by a common foe, was silently formed in the Assembly of the States, where the question was boldly broached of making Catherine Regent of France in the event of the young King's death. Catherine herself, whose

faith in astrology was far greater than her belief in Church dogmas, had ventured to extremes against her foes when she saw her son dying at the end of the time fixed as his term of life by the famous soothsayer brought to the Château de Chaumont by Nostradamus.

A few days before the terrible close of his reign, Francis II. had chosen to go out on the Loire, so as not to be in the town at the hour of the Prince de Condé's intended execution. Having surrendered the Prince's head to the Cardinal de Lorraine, he feared a riot quite as much as he dreaded the supplications of the Princesse de Condé. As he was embarking, a fresh breeze, such as often sweeps the Loire at the approach of winter, gave him so violent an earache that he was forced to return home; he went to bed, never to leave it alive.

In spite of the disagreement of the physicians, who, all but Chapelain, were his enemies and opponents, Ambroise Paré maintained that an abscess had formed in the head, and that if no outlet were pierced the chances of the King's death were greater every day.

In spite of the late hour and the rigorous enforcement of the curfew at that time in Orleans, which was ruled as in a state of siege, Paré's lamp was shining in his window where he was studying. Lecamus called to him from below; and when he had announced his name, the surgeon gave orders that his old friend should be admitted.

"You give yourself no rest, Ambroise, and while saving the lives of others you will wear out your own," said the furrier as he went in.

Indeed, there sat the surgeon, his books open, his instruments lying about, and before him a skull not long since buried, dug up from the grave, and perforated.

"I must save the King."

"Then you are very sure you can, Ambroise?" said the old man, shuddering.

"As sure as I am alive. The King, my good old friend, has some evil humor festering on his brain, which will fill it up, and the danger is pressing; but by piercing the skull I let the matter out and free his head. I have already per-

formed this operation three times; it was invented by a Piedmontese, and I have been so lucky as to improve upon it. The first time it was at the siege of Metz, on M. de Pienne, whom I got out of the scrape, and who has only been all the wiser for it; the second time it saved the life of a poor man on whom I wished to test the certainty of this daring operation to which M. de Pienne had submitted; the third time was on a gentleman in Paris, who is now perfectly well. Trepanning—for that is the name given to it—is as yet little known. The sufferers object to it on the score of the imperfection of the instrument, but that I have been able to improve. So now I am experimenting on this head, to be sure of not failing to-morrow on the King's."

"You must be very sure of yourself, for your head will be in danger if you——"

"I will wager my life that he is cured," replied Paré, with the confidence of genius. "Oh, my good friend, what is it to make a hole in a skull with due care? It is what soldiers do every day with no care at all."

"But do you know, my boy," said the citizen, greatly daring, "that if you save the King, you ruin France? Do you know that your instrument will place the crown of the Valois on the head of a Prince of Lorraine, calling himself the direct heir of Charlemagne? Do you know that surgery and politics are, at this moment, at daggers drawn? Yes, the triumph of your genius will be the overthrow of your religion. If the Guises retain the Regency, the blood of the Reformers will flow in streams! Be a great citizen rather than a great surgeon, and sleep through to-morrow morning, leaving the King's room free to those leeches who, if they do not save the King, will save France."

"I!" cried Paré. "I—leave a man to die when I can cure him? Never! If I am to be hanged for a Calvinist, I will go to the château, all the same, right early to-morrow. Do not you know that the only favor I mean to ask, when I have saved the King, is your Christophe's life? There will surely be a moment when Queen Mary can refuse me nothing."

"Alas, my friend, has not the little King already refused the Princesse de Condé any pardon for her husband? Do

not kill your religion by enabling the man to live who ought to die."

"Are you going to puzzle yourself by trying to find out how God means to dispose of things in the future?" said Paré. "Honest folks have but one motto—'Do your duty, come what may.'—I did this at the siege of Calais, when I set my foot on the Grand Master; I risked being cut down by all his friends and attendants, and here I am, surgeon to the King; I am a Reformer, and yet I can call the Guises my friends.—I will save the King!" cried the surgeon, with the sacred enthusiasm of conviction that genius knows, "and God will take care of France!"

There was a knock at the door, and a few minutes later one of Ambroise Paré's servants gave a note to Lecamus, who read aloud these ominous words:—

"A scaffold is being erected at the Convent of the Récollets for the beheading of the Prince de Condé to-morrow."

Ambroise and Lecamus looked at each other, both overpowered with horror.

"I will go and make sure," said the furrier.

Out on the Square, Ruggieri took Lecamus by the arm, asking what was Paré's secret for saving the King; but the old man, fearing some treachery, insisted on going to see the scaffold. So the astrologer and the furrier went together to the Récollets, where, in fact, they found carpenters at work by torchlight.

"Hey day, my friend," said Lecamus to one of them; "what business is this?"

"We are preparing to hang some heretics, since the bleeding at Amboise did not cure them," said a young friar, who was superintending the workmen.

"Monseigneur the Cardinal does well," said the prudent Ruggieri. "But in my country we do even better."

"What do you do?"

"We burn them, brother."

Lecamus was obliged to lean on the astrologer; his legs refused to carry him, for he thought that his son might next

day be swinging to one of those gibbets. The poor old man stood between two sciences—astrology and medicine; each promised to save his son, for whom the scaffold was visibly rising. In this confusion of mind he was as wax in the hands of the Florentine.

"Well, my most respectable vendor of *vair*, what have you to say to these pleasantries of Lorraine?" said Ruggieri.

"Woe the day! You know I would give my own skin to see my boy's safe and sound."

"That is what I call talking like a skinner," replied the Italian. "But if you will explain to me the operation that Ambroise proposes to perform on the King, I will guarantee your son's life."

"Truly?" cried the old furrier.

"What shall I swear by?" said Ruggieri.

On this the unhappy old man repeated his conversation with Paré to the Italian, who was off, leaving the disconsolate father in the road the instant he had heard the great surgeon's secret.

"Whom the devil does he mean mischief to?" cried Lecamus, as he saw Ruggieri running at his utmost speed towards the Place de l'Estape.

Lecamus knew nothing of the terrible scene which was going on by the King's bedside, and which had led to the order being given for the erection of the scaffold for the Prince, who had been sentenced in default, as it were, though his execution was postponed for the moment by the King's illness.

There was no one in the hall, on the stairs, or in the courtyard of the bailli's house but those on actual duty. The crowd of courtiers had resorted to the lodgings of the King of Navarre, who, by the law of the land, was Regent. The French nobles, terrified indeed by the insolence of the Guises, felt an impulse to close their ranks round the chief of the younger branch, seeing that the Queen-mother was subservient to the Guises, and not understanding her Italian policy. Antoine de Bourbon, faithful to his secret compact with Catherine, was not to renounce his claim to the regency

in her favor till the States-General should have voted on the question.

This absolute desertion had struck the Grand Master when, on his return from a walk through the town—as a precautionary measure—he found no one about the King but the friends dependent on his fortunes. The room where Francis II.'s bed had been placed adjoins the great hall of the bailiff's residence, and was at that time lined with oak paneling. The ceiling, formed of narrow boards, skillfully adjusted and painted, showed an arabesque pattern in blue on a gold ground, and a piece of it, pulled down about fifty years ago, has been preserved by a collector of antiquities. This room, hung with tapestry, and the floor covered with a carpet, was so dark that the burning tapers scarcely gave it light. The enormous bedstead, with four columnar posts and silk curtains, looked like a tomb. On one side of the bed, by the King's pillow, were Queen Mary and the Cardinal de Lorraine; on the other sat Catherine in an armchair. The physician-in-ordinary, the famous Jean Chapelain, afterwards in attendance on Charles IX., was standing by the fireplace. Perfect silence reigned.

The young King, pale and slight, lost in the sheets, was hardly to be seen, with his small, puckered face on the pillow. The Duchesse de Guise, seated on a stool, was supporting Mary Stewart; and near Catherine, in a window recess, Mme. de Fieschi was watching the Queen-mother's looks and gestures, for she understood the perils of her position.

In the great hall, notwithstanding the late hour, M. de Cypierre, the Duc d'Orléans' tutor, appointed to be governor of the town, occupied a chimney corner with the two Gondi. Cardinal de Tournon, who at this crisis had taken part with Queen Catherine, on finding himself treated as an inferior by the Cardinal de Lorraine, whose equal he undoubtedly was in the Church, was conversing in a low voice with the brothers Gondi. The Maréchal de Vieilleville and M. de Saint-André, Keeper of the Seals, were discussing in whispers the imminent danger of the Guises.

The Duc de Guise crossed the hall, glancing hastily about

him, and bowed to the Duc d'Orléans, whom he recognized.

"Monseigneur," said he, "this may give you a lesson in the knowledge of men. The Catholic nobility of the kingdom have crowded round a heretic prince, believing that the States assembled will place the Regency in the hands of the heir to the traitor who so long kept your illustrious grandfather a prisoner."

And after this speech, which was calculated to make a deep impression on a prince's mind, he went into the bedroom where the young King was lying, not so much asleep as heavily drowsy. As a rule, the Duc de Guise had the art of overcoming, by his affable expression, the sinister appearance of his scarred features; but at this moment he could not force a smile, seeing the instrument of power quite broken. The Cardinal, whose civic courage was equal to his brother's military valor, came forward a step or two to meet the Lieutenant-General.

"Robertet believes that little Pinard has been bought over by the Queen-mother," he said in his ear, as he led him back into the hall. "He has been made use of to work on the members of the Assembly."

"Bah! what matters our being betrayed by a secretary, when there is treason everywhere?" cried the Duke. "The town is for the Reformers, and we are on the eve of a revolt. Yes! the *Guépins* are malcontents," he added, giving the people of Orleans their common nickname, "and if Paré cannot save the King, we shall see a desperate outbreak. Before long we shall have to lay siege to Orleans, which is a vermin's nest of Huguenots."

"In the last minute," said the Cardinal, "I have been watching that Italian woman, who sits there without a spark of feeling. She is waiting for her son's death, God forgive her!—I wonder whether it would not be well to arrest her and the King of Navarre too?"

"It is more than enough to have the Prince de Condé in prison," replied the Duke.

The sound of a horse ridden at top speed came up from the gate. The two Princes went to the window, and by

the light of the gatekeeper's torch and of the cresset that was always burning under the gateway, the Duke recognized in the rider's hat the famous cross of Lorraine, which the Cardinal had made the badge of their partisans. He sent one of the men-at-arms, who stood in the ante-room, to say that the newcomer was to be admitted; and he went to the head of the stairs to meet him, followed by his brother.

"What is the news, my dear Simeuse?" asked the Duke, with the charming manner he always had for a soldier, as he recognized the Commandant of Gien.

"The Connétable is entering Pithiviers; he left Écouen with fifteen hundred horse and a hundred gentlemen——"

"Have they any following?" said the Duke.

"Yes, Monseigneur," replied Simeuse. "There are two thousand six hundred of them in all. Some say that Thoré is behind with a troop of infantry. If Montmorency amuses himself with waiting for his son, you have time before you to undo him."

"And that is all you know? Are his motives for this rush to arms commonly reported?"

"Anne speaks as little as he writes; do you go and meet him, brother, while I will greet him here with his nephew's head," said the Cardinal, ordering an attendant to fetch Robertet.

"Vieilleville," cried the Duke to the Marshal, who came in, "the Connétable de Montmorency has dared to take up arms. If I go out to meet him, will you be responsible for keeping order in the town?"

"The instant you are out of it, the townsfolk will rise; and who can foresee the issue of a fray between horsemen and citizens in such narrow streets?" replied the Marshal.

"My lord!" said Robertet, flying up the stairs, "the Chancellor is at the gates, and insists on coming in; are we to admit him?"

"Yes, admit him," said the Cardinal de Lorraine. "The Constable and the Chancellor together would be too dangerous; we must keep them apart. We were finely tricked by the Queen-mother when we elected l'Hôpital to the office."

Robertet nodded to a captain who awaited the reply at

the foot of the stairs, and returned quickly to take the Cardinal's orders.

"My Lord," said he, making a last effort, "I take the liberty of representing to you that the sentence requires the approval of the King in Council. If you violate the law for a Prince of the Blood, it will not be respected in favor of a Cardinal or of a Duc de Guise."

"Pinard has disturbed your mind, Robertet," said the Cardinal sternly. "Do you not know that the King signed the warrant on the day when he went out, leaving it to us to carry it out?"

"Though you are almost requiring my head of me when you give me this duty—which, however, will be that of the town provost—I obey, my lord."

The Grand Master heard the debate without wincing; but he took his brother by the arm, and led him to a corner of the hall.

"Of course," said he, "the direct heirs of Charlemagne have the right to take back the crown which was snatched from the family by Hugues Capet; but—can they? The pear is not ripe.—Our nephew is dying, and all the Court is gone over to the King of Navarre."

"The King's heart failed him; but for that, the Béarnais would have been stabbed," replied the Cardinal, "and we could easily have disposed of the children."

"We are in a bad position here," said the Duke. "The revolt in the town will be supported by the States-General. L'Hôpital, whom we have befriended so well, and whose elevation Queen Catherine opposed, is now our foe, and we need the law on our side. The Queen-mother has too many adherents now to allow of our sending her away.—And besides, there are three more boys!"

"She is no longer a mother; she is nothing but a queen," said the Cardinal. "In my opinion, this is the very moment to be rid of her. Energy, and again energy! that is what I prescribe."

Having said this, the Cardinal went back into the King's room, and the Duke followed him. The prelate went straight up to Catherine.

"The papers found on la Sagne, the Prince de Condé's secretary, have been communicated to you," said he. "You know that the Bourbons mean to dethrone your children?"

"I know it all," said the Queen.

"Well, then, will you not have the King of Navarre arrested?"

"There is a Lieutenant-General of the kingdom," replied she.

At this moment Francis complained of the most violent pain in his ear, and began to moan lamentably. The physician left the fireplace, where he was warming himself, and came to examine the patient's head.

"Well, Monsieur?" said the Grand Master, addressing him.

"I dare not apply a compress to draw the evil humors. Master Ambroise has undertaken to save his Majesty by an operation, and I should annoy him by doing so."

"Put it off till to-morrow," said Catherine calmly, "and be present, all of you medical men; for you know what calumnies the death of a prince gives ground for."

She kissed her son's hands and withdrew.

"How coolly that audacious trader's daughter can speak of the Dauphin's death, poisoned as he was by Montecuculli, a Florentine of her suite!" cried Mary Stewart.

"Marie," said the little King, "my grandfather never cast a suspicion on her innocence."

"Cannot we hinder that woman from coming here to-morrow?" said the Queen in an undertone to her two uncles.

"What would become of us if the King should die?" replied the Cardinal. "Catherine would hurl us all into his grave."

And so that night the question stood plainly stated between Catherine de' Medici and the House of Lorraine. The arrival of the Chancellor and the Connétable de Montmorency pointed to rebellion, and the dawn of the morrow would prove decisive.

On the following day the Queen-mother was the first to appear. She found no one in her son's room but Mary Stewart, pale and fatigued from having passed the night

in prayer by the bedside. The Duchesse de Guise had kept the Queen company, and the maids of honor had relieved each other. The young King was asleep.

Neither the Duke nor the Cardinal had yet appeared. The prelate, more daring than the soldier, had spent this last night, it is said, in vehement argument, without being able to induce the Duke to proclaim himself King. With the States-General sitting in the town, and the prospect of a battle to be fought with the Constable, the "Balafré" did not think the opportunity favorable; he refused to arrest the Queen-mother, the Chancellor, Cardinal de Tournon, the Gondi, Ruggieri, and Birague, in face of the revolt that would inevitably result from such violent measures. He made his brother's schemes dependent on the life of Francis II.

Perfect silence reigned in the King's bedchamber. Catherine, attended by Mme. de Fieschi, came to the bedside and gazed at her son with an admirable assumption of grief. She held her handkerchief to her eyes, and retreated to the window, where Mme. de Fieschi brought her a chair. From thence she could look down into the courtyard.

It had been agreed between Catherine and the Cardinal de Tournon that if Montmorency got safely into the town, he, the Cardinal, would come to her, accompanied by the two Gondi; in case of disaster, he was to come alone. At nine in the morning the two Princes of Lorraine, accompanied by their suite, who remained in the hall, came to the King's room. The captain on duty had informed them that Ambroise Paré had but just arrived with Chapelain and three other physicians, prompted by Catherine, and all hating Ambroise.

In a few minutes the great hall of the Bailliage presented precisely the same appearance as the guardroom at Blois on the day when the Duc de Guise was appointed Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, and when Christophe was tortured; with only this difference, that then love and glee reigned in the royal rooms, and that the Guises were triumphant; whereas now death and grief prevailed, and the Princes of Lorraine felt the power slipping from their grasp.

The maids of honor of the two Queens were grouped on opposite sides of the great fireplace, where an immense fire was blazing. The room was full of courtiers.

The news, repeated no one knows by whom, of a bold plan of Ambroise Paré's for saving the King's life, brought in every gentleman who had any right to appear at Court. The outer steps of the house and the courtyard were thronged with anxious groups. The scaffold erected for the Prince, opposite the Convent of the Récollets, astonished all the nobles. People spoke in whispers, and here, as at Blois, the conversation was a medley of serious and frivolous subjects, of grave and trivial talk. They were beginning to feel used to turmoils, to sudden rebellion, to a rush to arms, to revolts, to the great and sudden events which marked the long period during which the House of Valois was dying out, in spite of Queen Catherine's efforts. Deep silence was kept for some distance outside the bedroom door, where two men-at-arms were on guard, with two pages, and the captain of the Scotch company.

Antoine de Bourbon, a prisoner in his lodgings, finding himself neglected, understood the hopes of the courtiers; he was overwhelmed at hearing of the preparations made during the night for his brother's execution.

In front of the hall fireplace stood one of the finest and grandest figures of his time, the Chancellor de l'Hôpital, in his crimson robes bordered with ermine, and wearing his square cap, in right of his office. This brave man, regarding his benefactors as the leaders of a rebellion, had espoused the cause of his King, as represented by the Queen-mother; and at the risk of his head he had gone to Écouen to consult the Connétable de Montmorency. No one dared to disturb the meditations in which he was plunged. Robertet, the Secretary of State, two marshals of France, Vieilleville and Saint-André, and the Keeper of the Seals, formed a group in front of the Chancellor.

The men of the Court were not actually laughing, but their tone was sprightly, especially among those who were disaffected to the Guises.

The Cardinal had at last secured Stewart, the Scotchman

who had murdered Président Minard, and was arranging for his trial at Tours. He had also confined in the châteaux of Blois and Tours a considerable number of gentlemen who had seemed compromised, to inspire a certain degree of terror in the nobles; they, however, were not terrified, but saw in the Reformation a fulcrum for the love of resistance they derived from a feeling of their inborn equality with the King. Now, the prisoners at Blois had contrived to escape, and, by a singular fatality, those who had been shut up at Tours had just followed their example.

"Madame," said the Cardinal de Châtillon to Mme. de Fieschi, "if anyone takes an interest in the prisoners from Tours, they are in the greatest danger."

On hearing this speech, the Chancellor looked around at the group of the elder Queen's maids of honor.

"Yes, for young Desvaux, the Prince de Condé's equerry, who was imprisoned at Tours, added a bitter jest to his escape. He is said to have written a note to MM. de Guise to this effect:

"'We have heard of the escape of your prisoners at Blois; it has grieved us so much, that we are about to run after them; we will bring them back to you as soon as we have arrested them.'"

Though he relished this pleasantry, the Chancellor looked sternly at M. de Châtillon.

At this instant louder voices were heard in the King's bedchamber. The two marshals, with Robertet and the Chancellor, went forward, for it was not merely a question of life and death to the King; everybody was in the secret of the danger to the Chancellor, to Catherine, and to her adherents. The silence that ensued was absolute.

Ambroise had examined the King; the moment seemed favorable for the operation; if it were not performed, he might die at any moment. As soon as the brothers de Guise came in, he explained to them the causes of the King's sufferings, and demonstrated that in such extremities

trepanning was absolutely necessary. He only awaited the decision of the physicians.

"Pierce my son's skull as if it were a board, and with that horrible instrument!" cried Catherine de' Medici. "Maître Ambroise, I will not permit it."

The doctors were consulting, but Catherine spoke so loud that, as she intended, her words were heard in the outer room.

"But, Madame, if that is the only hope of saving him?" said Mary Stewart, weeping.

"Ambroise," said Catherine, "remember that you answer for the King with your head."

"We are opposed to the means proposed by Maître Ambroise," said the three physicians. "The King may be saved by injecting a remedy into the ear which will release the humors through that passage."

The Duc de Guise, who was studying Catherine's face, suddenly went up to her, and led her into the window-bay.

"You, Madame," said he, "wish your son to die; you are in collusion with your enemies, and that since we came from Blois. This morning Councilor Viole told your furrier's son that the Prince de Condé was to be beheaded. That young man, who, under torture, had denied all knowledge of the Prince de Condé, gave him a farewell greeting as he passed the window of the lad's prison. You looked on at your hapless accomplice's sufferings with royal indifference. Now, you are opposed to your eldest son's life being saved. You will force us to believe that the death of the Dauphin, which placed the crown on the head of the late King, was not natural, but that Montecuculli was your——"

"M. le Chancelier!" Catherine called out, and at this signal Mme. de Fieschi threw open the double doors of the bedchamber.

The persons assembled in the hall could thus see the whole scene in the King's room: the little King, deadly pale, his features sunk, his eyes dim, but repeating the word "Marie," while he held the hand of the young Queen, who was weeping; the Duchesse de Guise standing, terrified by Catherine's audacity; the two Princes of Lorraine, not less anxious, but

keeping close to the Queen-mother, and resolved to have her arrested by Maillé-Brézé; and finally, the great surgeon Ambroise Paré, with the King's physician. He stood holding his instruments, but not daring to perform the operation, for which perfect quiet was as necessary as the approbation of the medical authorities.

"M. le Chancelier," said Catherine, "MM. de Guise wish to authorize a strange operation on the King's person. Ambroise proposes to perforate his head. I, as his mother, and one of the commission of Regency, protest against what seems to me to be high treason. The three physicians are in favor of an injection which, to me, seems quite as efficacious and less dangerous than the cruel process recommended by Ambroise."

At these words there was a dull murmur in reply. The Cardinal admitted the Chancellor, and then shut the bedroom doors.

"But I am Lieutenant-General of the realm," said the Duc de Guise, "and you must understand, M. le Chancelier, that Ambroise, surgeon to his Majesty, answers for the King's life."

"Well, since this is the state of affairs," said the great Ambroise Paré, "I know what to be doing."

He put out his arm over the bed.

"This bed and the King are mine," said he. "I constitute myself the sole master, and singly responsible; I know the duties of my office, and I will operate on the King without the physicians' sanction."

"Save him!" cried the Cardinal, "and you shall be the richest man in France."

"Only go on!" said Mary Stewart, pressing Paré's hand.

"I cannot interfere," said the Chancellor, "but I shall record the Queen-mother's protest."

"Robertet," the Duc de Guise called out.

Robertet came in, and the Duke pointed to the Chancellor.

"You are Chancellor of France," he said, "in the place of this felon. M. de Maillé, take M. de l'Hôpital to prison with the Prince de Condé.—As to you, Madame," and he turned to Catherine, "your protest will not be recog-

nized, and you would do well to remember that such actions need the support of adequate force. I am acting as a faithful and loyal subject of King Francis II., my sovereign. Proceed, Ambroise," he said to the surgeon.

"M. de Guise," said l'Hôpital, "if you use any violence either on the person of the King or on that of his Chancellor, remember that in the hall without there is enough French nobility to arrest all traitors."

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," said the surgeon, "if you prolong this debate, you may as well shout 'Vive Charles IX.,' for King Francis is dying."

Catherine stood unmoved, looking out of the window.

"Well, then, we will use force to remain masters in the King's bedroom," said the Cardinal, trying to keep the door; but he was startled and horrified, for the great hall was quite deserted. The Court, sure that the King was dying, had gone back to Antoine of Navarre.

"Come; do it, do it," cried Mary Stewart to Ambroise.—"I and you, Duchess," she said to Mme. de Guise, "will protect you."

"Nay, Madame," said Paré, "my zeal carried me too far; the doctors, with the exception of my friend Chapelain, are in favor of the injection; I must yield to them. If I were physician and surgeon-in-chief, he could be saved!—Give it me," he said, taking a small syringe from the hand of the chief physician, and filling it.

"Good God!" cried Mary Stewart; "I command you——"

"Alas! Madame," replied Paré, "I am subordinate to these gentlemen."

The young Queen and the Duchesse de Guise stood between the surgeon and the doctors and the other persons present. The chief physician held the King's head, and Ambroise made the injection into the ear. The two Princes of Lorraine were watchful; Robertet and M. de Maillé stood motionless. At a sign from Catherine, Mme. de Fieschi left the room unnoticed. At the same instant l'Hôpital boldly threw open the door of the King's bedroom.

"I have arrived in the nick of time," exclaimed a man, whose hasty steps rang through the hall, and who, in another minute, was at the door of the King's room. "What, gentlemen! You thought to cut off my fine nephew, the Prince de Condé's head?—You have roused the lion from his lair, and here he is!" added the Connétable de Montmorency.—"Ambroise, you are not to stir up my King's brains with your instruments! The Kings of France do not allow themselves to be knocked about in that way unless by their enemies' swords in fair fight! The first Prince of the Blood, Antoine de Bourbon, the Prince de Condé, the Queen-mother, and the Chancellor are all opposed to the operation."

To Catherine's great satisfaction, the King of Navarre and the Prince de Condé both made their appearance.

"What is the meaning of this?" said the Duc de Guise, laying his hand on his poniard.

"As Lord High Constable, I have dismissed all the sentinels from their posts. Blood and thunder! we are not in an enemy's country, I suppose. The King our Master is surrounded by his subjects, and the States-General of the realm may deliberate in perfect liberty. I have just come from the Assembly, gentlemen; I laid before it the protest of my nephew de Condé, who has been rescued by three hundred gentlemen. You meant to let the royal blood, and to decimate the nobility of France. Henceforth I shall not trust anything you propose, MM. de Lorraine. And if you give the order for the King's head to be opened, by this sword, which saved France from Charles V., I say it shall not be done——!"

"All the more so," said Ambroise Paré, "because it is too late, suffusion has begun."

"Your reign is over, gentlemen," said Catherine to the two Guises, seeing from Paré's manner that there was now no hope.

"You, Madame, have killed your son!" said Mary Stewart, springing like a lioness from the bed to the window, and seizing the Italian Queen by the arm with a vehement clutch.

"My dear," replied Catherine de' Medici, with a keen, cold look that expressed the hatred she had suppressed for six months past, "you, to whose violent passion this death is due, will now go to reign over your own Scotland—and you will go to-morrow. I am now Regent in fact as well as in name."

The three physicians had made a sign to the Queen-mother.

"Gentlemen," she went on, addressing the Guises, "it is an understood thing between M. de Bourbon—whom I hereby appoint Lieutenant-General of the kingdom—and myself that the conduct of affairs is our business.—Come, M. le Chancelier."

"The King is dead!" said the Grand Master, obliged to carry out the functions of his office.

"God save King Charles IX.!" cried the gentlemen who had come with the King of Navarre, the Prince de Condé, and the Constable.

The ceremonies performed when a King of France dies were carried out in solitude. When the king-at-arms called out three times in the great hall, "The King is dead!" after the official announcement by the Duc de Guise, there were but a few persons present to answer—"God save the King!"

The Queen-mother, to whom the Countess Fieschi brought the Duc d'Orléans, now Charles IX., left the room leading the boy by the hand, and followed by the whole Court. Only the two Guises, the Duchesse de Guise, Mary Stewart, and Dayelle remained in the room where Francis II. had breathed his last, with two guards at the door, the Grand Master's pages and the Cardinal's, and their two private secretaries.

"Vive la France!" shouted some of the Reformers, a first cry of opposition.

Robertet, who owed everything to the Duke and the Cardinal, terrified by their schemes and their abortive attempts, secretly attached himself to the Queen-mother, whom the Ambassadors of Spain, England, the German Empire, and Poland met on the stairs, at their head Cardinal Tournon,

who had gone to call them after looking up from the courtyard to Catherine de' Médici just as she was protesting against Ambroise Paré's operation.

"Well, the sons of Louis d'Outre-Mer, the descendants of Charles de Lorraine, have proved cravens," said the Cardinal to the Duke.

"They would have been packed off to Lorraine," replied his brother. "I declare to you, Charles," he went on, "if the crown were there for the taking, I would not put out my hand for it. That will be my son's task."

"Will he ever have the army and the Church on his sid as you have?"

"He will have something better."

"What?"

"The people."

"And there is no one to mourn for him but me—the poor boy who loved me so well!" said Mary Stewart, holding the cold hand of her first husband.

"How can we be reconciled to the Queen?" said the Cardinal.

"Wait till she quarrels with the Huguenots," said the Duchess.

The clashing interests of the House of Bourbon, of Catherine, of the Guises, and of the Reformers produced such confusion in Orleans, that it was not till three days after that the King's body, quite forgotten where it lay, was placed in a coffin by obscure serving men, and carried to Saint-Denis in a covered vehicle, followed only by the Bishop of Senlis and two gentlemen. When this dismal little procession arrived at the town of Étampes, a follower of the Chancellor de l'Hôpital attached to the hearse this bitter inscription, which history has recorded: "Tanneguy du Chastel, where are you? Yet you too were French!" A stinging innuendo, striking at Catherine, Mary Stewart, and the Guises. For what Frenchman does not know that Tanneguy du Chastel spent thirty thousand crowns (a million of francs in these days) on the obsequies of Charles VII., the benefactor of his family?

As soon as the tolling bells announced the death of Francis II., and the Connétable de Montmorency had thrown open the gates of the town, Tourillon went up to his hayloft and made his way to a hiding-place.

"What, can he be dead?" exclaimed the glover.

On hearing the voice, a man rose and replied, "*Prêt à servir*" ("Ready to serve," or "Ready, aye ready"), the watchword of the Reformers of Calvin's sect.

This man was Chaudieu, to whom Tourillon related the events of the last week, during which he had left the preacher alone in his hiding-place, with a twelve-ounce loaf for his sole sustenance.

"Be off to the Prince de Condé, brother, ask him for a safe-conduct for me, and find me a horse," cried the preacher. "I must set out this moment."

"Write him a line then, that I may be admitted."

"Here," said Chaudieu, after writing a few lines, "ask for a pass from the King of Navarre, for under existing circumstances I must hasten to Geneva."

Within two hours all was ready, and the zealous minister was on his way to Geneva, escorted by one of the King of Navarre's gentlemen, whose secretary Chaudieu was supposed to be, and who was the bearer of instructions to the Reformed party in Dauphiné.

Chaudieu's sudden departure was at once permitted, to further the interests of Queen Catherine, who, to gain time, made a bold suggestion which was kept a profound secret. This startling scheme accounts for the agreement so unexpectedly arrived at between the Queen and the leaders of the Protestant party. The crafty woman had, as a guarantee of her good faith, expressed a desire to heal the breach between the two Churches in an assembly which could be neither a Synod, nor a Council, nor a Convocation, for which indeed a new name was needed, and, above all else, Calvin's consent. It may be said in passing, that, when this mystery came out, it led to the alliance of the Guises with the Connétable de Montmorency against Catherine and the King of Navarre—a strange coalition, known to history as the Triumvirate, because the Maréchal de Saint-André was the

third person in this purely Catholic combination, to which Catherine's strange proposal for a meeting gave rise. The Guises were then enabled to judge very shrewdly of Catherine's policy; they saw that the Queen cared little enough for this assembly, and only wanted to temporize with her allies till Charles IX. should be of age; indeed, they deceived Montmorency by making him believe in a collusion between Catherine and the Bourbons, while Catherine was taking them all in. The Queen, it will be seen, had in a short time made great strides.

The spirit of argument and discussion which was then in the air was particularly favorable to this scheme. The Catholics and the Huguenots were all to shine in turn in this tournament of words. Indeed, that is exactly what happened. Is it not extraordinary that historians should have mistaken the Queen's shrewdest craft for hesitancy? Catherine never went more directly to the end she had in view than when she seemed to have turned her back on it. So the King of Navarre, incapable of fathoming Catherine's motives, dispatched Chaudieu to Calvin; Chaudieu having secretly intended to watch the course of events at Orleans, where he ran, every hour, the risk of being seized and hanged without trial, like any man who had been condemned to banishment.

At the rate of traveling then possible Chaudieu could not reach Geneva before the month of February, the negotiations could not be completed till March, and the meeting could not be called till the beginning of May, 1561. Catherine intended to amuse the Court meanwhile, and lull party-feeling by the King's coronation, and by his first Bed of Justice in the Parlement when l'Hôpital and de Thou passed the royal letter, by which Charles IX. intrusted the Government of the kingdom to his mother, seconded by Antoine de Navarre as Lieutenant-General of the realm—the weakest prince of his time.

Was it not one of the strangest things of that day to see a whole kingdom in suspense for the Yea or Nay of a French citizen, risen from obscurity, and living at Geneva? The Pope of Rome held in check by the Pope of Geneva?

The two Princes of Lorraine, once so powerful, paralyzed by the brief concord between the first Prince of the Blood, the Queen-mother, and Calvin? Is it not one of the most pregnant lessons that history has preserved to kings, a lesson that should teach them to judge of men, to give genius its due without any hesitation, and to seek it out, as Louis XIV. did, wherever God has hidden it?

Calvin, whose real name was not Calvin, but Cauvin, was the son of a cooper at Noyon, in Picardy. Calvin's birthplace accounts to a certain degree for the obstinacy mingled with eccentric irritability which characterized the arbiter of the destinies of France in the sixteenth century. No one is less known than this man, who was the maker of Geneva and of the spirit of its people. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who knew little of history, was utterly ignorant of this man's influence on his Republic.

At first, indeed, Calvin, dwelling in one of the humblest houses in the upper town, near the Protestant Church of Saint-Pierre, over a carpenter's shop—one point of resemblance between him and Robespierre—had no great authority in Geneva. His influence was for a long time checked by the hatred of the Genevese.

In the sixteenth century Geneva could boast of Farel, one of those famous citizens who have remained unknown to the world, some of them even to Geneva itself. In the year 1537, or thereabouts, this Farel attached Calvin to Geneva by pointing out to him that it might become the stronghold of a reformation more thorough than that of Luther. Farel and Calvin looked on Lutheranism as an incomplete achievement, ineffectual, and with no hold on France. Geneva, lying between France and Italy, speaking the French tongue, was admirably placed for communicating with Germany, Italy, and France. Calvin adopted Geneva as the seat of his spiritual fortunes, and made it the citadel of his dogmas. At Farel's request, the town council of Geneva authorized Calvin to lecture on theology in the month of September, 1538. Calvin left preaching to Farel, his first disciple, and patiently devoted himself to teaching his doctrine. His authority, which in the later years of his

life was paramount, took long to establish. The great leader met with serious difficulties; he was even banished from Geneva for some time in consequence of the austerity of his doctrines. There was a party of very good folks who clung to their old luxury and the customs of their fathers. But, as is always the case, these worthy people dreaded ridicule; they would not admit what was the real object of their struggles, and the battle was fought over details apart from the real question.

Calvin insisted on leavened bread being used for the Sacrament, and on there being no holy days but Sunday. These innovations were disapproved of at Berne and at Lausanne. The Genevese were required to conform to the ritual of Switzerland. Calvin and Farel resisted; their political enemies made a pretext of this refractoriness to exile them from Geneva, whence they were banished for some years. At a later period Calvin came back in triumph, invited by his flock.

Such persecution is always a consecration of moral power when the prophet can wait. And this return was the era of this Mahomet. Executions began, and Calvin organized his religious Terror. As soon as this commanding spirit reappeared, he was admitted to the citizenship of Geneva; but after fourteen years' residence there, he was not yet on the Council. At the time when Catherine was dispatching a minister to treat with him, this king in the realm of thought had no title but that of Pastor of the Church of Geneva. Indeed, Calvin never had more than a hundred and fifty francs a year in money, fifteen hundred-weight of corn, and two casks of wine for his whole remuneration. His brother, a tailor, kept a shop a few paces away from the Place Saint-Pierre, in a street where one of Calvin's printing places may still be seen.

Such disinterestedness, which in Voltaire and Bacon was lacking, but which is conspicuous in the life of Rabelais, of Campanella, of Luther, of Vico, of Descartes, of Malebranche, of Spinoza, of Loyola, of Kant, and of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, surely forms a noble setting for these sublime and ardent souls.

Robespierre's life, so like that of Calvin, can alone perhaps enable our contemporaries to understand Calvin's. He, founding his power on a similar basis, was as cruel and as tyrannical as the Arras lawyer. It is strange too that Picardy—Arras and Noyon—should have given to the world these two great instruments of reform. Those who examine into the motives of the executions ordered by Calvin will find, on a different scale, no doubt, all of 1793 at Geneva. Calvin had Jacques Gruet beheaded "for having written impious letters and worldly verse, and labored to overthrow Church ordinances." Just consider this sentence, and ask yourself if the worst despotism can show in its annals a more absurdly preposterous indictment.

Valentin Gentilis, condemned to death for involuntary heresy, escaped the scaffold only by making more humiliating amends than ever were inflicted by the Catholic Church. Seven years before the conference presently to be held in Calvin's house on the Queen-mother's proposals, Michel Servet (or Servetus), a Frenchman, passing through Geneva, was put in prison, tried, condemned on Calvin's testimony, and burnt alive for having attacked the mystery of the Trinity in a work which had not been either composed or printed at Geneva. Compare with this the eloquent defense of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose book, attacking the Catholic religion, written in France, and published in Holland, was indeed burnt by the hand of the executioner; but the writer, a foreigner, was only banished from the kingdom, where he had been trying to strike at the fundamental truths of religion and government; and compare the conduct of the Parlement with that of the Genevese tyrant.

Bolsée, again, was brought to judgment for having other ideas than Calvin on the subject of predestination. Weigh all this, and say whether Fouquier-Tinville did anything worse. Calvin's fierce religious intolerance was, morally speaking, more intense, more implacable, than the fierce political intolerance of Robespierre. On a wider stage than was offered by Geneva, Calvin would have shed more blood than the terrible apostle of political equality, as compared with Catholic equality.

Three centuries earlier a monk, also a son of Picardy, had led the whole of Western Europe to invade the East. Peter the Hermit, Calvin, and Robespierre, sons of the same soil, at intervals of three centuries, were, in a political sense, the levers of Archimedes. Each in turn was an embodied idea finding its fulcrum in the interests of man.

Calvin is, beyond doubt, the—almost unrecognized—maker of that dismal town of Geneva, where, only ten years since, a man, pointing out a carriage gate—the first in the town, for till then there had only been house doors in Geneva—said, " Through that gate luxury drove into Geneva." Calvin, by the severity of his sentences and the austerity of his doctrine, introduced the hypocritical feeling that has been well called Puritanism [the nearest English equivalent perhaps to the French word *mômerie*]. Good conduct, according to the *mômiers* or Puritans, lay in renouncing the arts and the graces of life, in eating well but without luxury, and in silently amassing money without enjoying it otherwise than as Calvin enjoyed his power—in fancy.

Calvin clothed the citizens in the same gloomy livery as he threw over life in general. He formed in the Consistory a perfect Calvinist inquisition, exactly like the revolutionary tribunal instituted by Robespierre. The Consistory handed over the victims to be condemned by the Council, which Calvin ruled through the Consistory just as Robespierre ruled the Convention through the Jacobin Club. Thus an eminent magistrate of Geneva was sentenced to two months' imprisonment, to lose his office, and to be prohibited from ever filling any other, because he led a dissolute life and had made friends among Calvin's foes. In this way Calvin was actually a legislator; it was he who created the austere manners, sober, respectable, hideously dull, but quite irreproachable, which have remained unchanged in Geneva to this day; they prevailed there indeed before the English habits were formed that are universally known as Puritanism, under the influence of the Cameronians, the followers of Caméron, a Frenchman who trod in Calvin's steps. These manners have been admirably described by Walter Scott.

The poverty of this man, an absolute sovereign, who treated as a power with other powers, asking for their treasure, demanding armies, and filling his hands with their money for the poor, proves that the Idea, regarded as the sole means of dominion, begets political misers, men whose only enjoyment is intellectual, and who, like the Jesuits, love power for its own sake. Pitt, Luther, Calvin, and Robespierre, all these *Harpagons* in greed of dominion, died penniless. History has preserved the inventory made in Calvin's rooms after his death, and everything, including his books, was valued at fifty crowns. Luther's possessions amounted to as much; indeed, his widow, the famous Catherine de Bora, was obliged to petition for a pension of fifty crowns bestowed on her by a German Elector.

Potemkin, Mazarin, and Richelieu, men of thought and action, who all three founded or prepared the foundations of empires, each left three hundred millions of francs; but these men had a heart, they loved women and the arts, they built and conquered; while, with the exception of Luther, whose wife was the Helen of this Iliad, none of the others could accuse himself of ever having felt his heart throb for a woman.

This brief history was needed to explain Calvin's position at Geneva.

One day early in February 1561, on one of the mild evenings which occur at that time of year on the shores of Lake Léman, two men on horseback arrived at Pré-l'Évêque, so called from the ancient residence of the Bishop of Geneva, driven out thirty years before. These two men, acquainted, no doubt, with the laws of Geneva as to the closing of the gates, very necessary then, and absurd enough in these days, rode towards the Porte de Rives; but they suddenly drew rein at the sight of a man of fifty, walking with the help of a woman servant's arm, and evidently returning to the town. This personage, rather stout in figure, walked slowly and with difficulty, dragging one foot before the other with evident pain, and wearing broad, laced shoes of black velvet.

"It is he," said Chaudieu's companion, who dismounted,

gave his bridle to the preacher, and went forward open-armed to meet the master.

The man on foot, who was in fact Jean Calvin, drew back to avoid the embrace, and cast the severest glance at his disciple. At the age of fifty Calvin looked like a man of seventy. Thick-set and fat, he seemed all the shorter because frightful pain from the stone obliged him to walk much bent. These sufferings were complicated with attacks of the worst form of gout. Anybody might have quaked at the aspect of that face, almost as broad as it was long, and bearing no more signs of good nature, in spite of its roundness, than that of the dreadful King Henry VIII., whom Calvin, in fact, resembled. His sufferings, which never gave him a reprieve, were visible in two deep furrows on each side of his nose, following the line of his mustache, and ending, like it, in a full gray beard.

This face, though red and inflamed like a drunkard's, showed patches where his complexion was yellow; still, and in spite of the velvet cap that covered his massive, broad head, it was possible to admire a large and nobly formed forehead, and beneath it two sparkling brown eyes, which in moments of wrath could flash fire. Whether by reason of his bulk, or because his neck was too thick and short, or as a consequence of late hours and incessant work, Calvin's head seemed sunk between his broad shoulders, which compelled him to wear a quite shallow, pleated ruff, on which his face rested like John the Baptist's in the charger. Between his mustache and his beard there peeped, like a rose, a sweet and eloquent mouth, small, and fresh, and perfectly formed. This face was divided by a square nose remarkable for its long aquiline outline, resulting in high-lights at the tip, significantly in harmony with the prodigious power expressed in this magnificent head.

Though it was difficult to detect in these features any trace of the constant headaches which tormented Calvin in the intervals of a slow fever that was consuming him, pain, constantly defied by study and a strong will, gave this apparently florid face a terrible tinge, attributable, no doubt, to the hue of the layer of fat due to the sedentary

habits of a hard worker. It bore the marks of the perpetual struggle of a sickly temperament against one of the strongest wills known in the history of mankind. Even the lips, though beautiful, expressed cruelty. A chaste life, indispensable to vast projects, and compulsory in such conditions of sickly health, had set its stamp on the face. There was regret in the serenity of that mighty brow, and suffering in the gaze of the eyes, whose calmness was a terror.

Calvin's dress gave effect to his head, for he wore the famous black cloth gown, belted with a cloth band and brass buckle, which was adopted as the costume of Calvinist preachers, and which, having nothing to attract the eye, directed all the spectator's attention to the face.

"I am in too great pain to embrace you, Théodore," said Calvin to the elegant horseman.

Théodore de Bèze, at that time two-and-forty, and, by Calvin's desire, a free citizen of Geneva for two years past, was the most striking contrast to the terrible minister to whom he had given his allegiance. Calvin, like all men of the middle class who have risen to moral supremacy, like all inventors of a social system, was consumed with jealousy. He abhorred his disciples, would suffer no equal, and could not endure the slightest contradiction. However, between him and Théodore de Bèze the difference was so great; this elegant gentleman, gifted with a charming appearance, polished, courteous, and accustomed to Court life, was, in his eyes, so unlike all his fierce Janissaries, that for him he set aside his usual impulses. He never loved him, for this crabbed lawgiver knew absolutely nothing of friendship; but having no fear of finding his successor in him, he liked to play with Théodore, as Richelieu at a later time played with his cat. He found him pliant and amusing. When he saw that de Bèze succeeded to perfection in every mission, he took delight in the polished tool of which he believed himself to be the soul and guide; so true is it that even those men who seem most surly cannot live without some semblance of affection.

Théodore was Calvin's spoilt child. The great Reformer never scolded him, overlooked his irregularities, his love

affairs, his handsome dress, and his choice language. Possibly Calvin was well content to show that the Reformation could hold its own even among Court circles. Théodore de Bèze wanted to introduce a taste for art, letters, and poetry into Geneva, and Calvin would listen to his schemes without knitting his grizzled brows. Thus the contrast of character and person was as complete as the contrast of mind in these two celebrated men.

Calvin accepted Chaudieu's very humble bow, and replied by slightly bending his head. Chaudieu slipped the bridles of both horses over his right arm and followed the two great Reformers, keeping to the right of Théodore de Bèze, who was walking on Calvin's right. Calvin's housekeeper ran forward to prevent the gate being shut, by telling the captain of the Guard that the Pastor had just had a severe attack of pain.

Théodore de Bèze was a native of the Commune of Vézelay, the first to demand for itself corporate government, of which the curious tale has been told by one of the Thierrys. Thus the spirit of citizenship and resistance which were endemic at Vézelay no doubt contributed an item to the great rising of the Reformers in the person of this man, who is certainly a most singular figure in the history of heresy.

"So you still suffer great pain?" said Théodore to Calvin.

"The sufferings of the damned, a Catholic would say," replied the Reformer, with the bitterness that colored his least remarks. "Ah! I am going fast, my son, and what will become of you when I am gone?"

"We will fight by the light of your writings," said Chaudieu.

Calvin smiled; his purple face assumed a more gracious expression, and he looked kindly on Chaudieu.

"Well, have you brought me any news?" he asked. "Have they killed a great many of us?" he added, with a smile, and a sort of mocking glee sparkled in his brown eyes.

"No," said Chaudieu; "peace is the order of the day."

"So much the worse, so much the worse!" cried Calvin.

"Every form of peace would be a misfortune if it were not always, in fact, a snare. Our strength lies in persecution. Where should we be if the Church took up the Reformation?"

"Indeed," said Théodore, "that is what the Queen-mother seems inclined to do."

"She is quite capable of it," said Calvin. "I am studying that woman."

"From hence?" cried Chaudieu.

"Does distance exist for the spirit?" said Calvin severely, regarding the interruption as irreverent. "Catherine longs for power, and women who aim at that lose all sense of honor and faith.—What is in the wind?"

"Well, she suggests a sort of Council," said Théodore de Bèze.

"Near Paris?" asked Calvin roughly.

"Yes."

"Ah! that is well!" said Calvin.

"And we are to try to come to an understanding, and draw up a public Act to consolidate the two Churches."

"Ah! if only she had courage enough to separate the French Church from the Court of Rome, and to create a patriarch in France, as in the Greek Church!" cried the Reformer, whose eyes glistened at this idea, which would place him on a throne. "But, my son, can a Pope's niece be truthful? She only wants to gain time."

"And do not we need time to recover from our check at Amboise, and to organize some formidable resistance in various parts of the kingdom?"

"She has sent away the Queen of Scotland," said Chaudieu.

"That is one less, then," said Calvin, as they passed through the Porte de Rives. "Elizabeth of England will keep her busy. Two neighboring queens will soon be fighting; one is handsome, and the other ugly enough—a first cause of irritation; and then there is the question of legitimacy——"

He rubbed his hands, and his glee had such a ferocious taint that de Bèze shuddered, for he too saw the pool of blood at which his master was gazing.

"The Guises have provoked the House of Bourbon," said de Bèze after a pause; "they broke the stick between them at Orleans."

"Ay," said Calvin; "and you, my son, did not believe me when, as you last started for Nérac, I told you that we should end by stirring up war to the death between the two branches of the royal family of France.

"So at last I have a court, a king, a dynasty on my side. My doctrine has had its effect on the masses. The citizen class understand me; henceforth they will call those who go to Mass idolaters, those who paint the walls of their place of worship, and put up pictures and statues there. Oh, the populace find it far easier to demolish cathedrals and palaces than to discuss justification by faith or the real presence! Luther was a wrangler, I am an army! He was a reasoner, I am a system! He, my child, was but a tormentor, I am a Tarquin!

"Yes, they of the truth will destroy churches, will tear down pictures, will make millstones of the statues to grind the bread of the people. There are bodies in great States, I will have only individuals; bodies are too resistant, and see clearly when individuals are blind.

"Now, we must combine this agitating doctrine with political interests, to consolidate it and to keep up the material of my armies. I have satisfied the logic of thrifty minds and thinking brains by this bare, undecorated worship which lifts religion into the sphere of the ideal. I have made the mob understand the advantages of the suppression of ceremonial.

"Now it is your part, Théodore, to enlist people's interests. Do not overstep that line. In the way of doctrine everything has been done, everything has been said; add not one jot! Why does Caméron, that little *pasteur* in Gascony, meddle with writing?"

Calvin, Théodore de Bèze, and Chaudieu went along the streets of the upper town and through the crowd, without any attention being paid to the men who were unchaining the mob in cities and ravaging France. After this terrifying harangue, they walked on in silence, till they reached

the little square of Saint-Pierre, and made their way towards the minister's dwelling. Calvin's lodging consisted of three rooms on the second floor of this house, which is hardly known, and of which no one ever tells you in Geneva—where, indeed, there is no statue to Calvin. The rooms were floored and wainscoted with pine, and on one side there were a kitchen and a servant's room. The entrance, as is commonly the case in Genevese houses, was through the kitchen, which opened into a small room with two windows, parlor, dining, and drawing-room in one. Next to this was the study where, for fourteen years, Calvin's mind had carried on the battle with pain, and beyond was his bedroom. Four oak chairs with tapestry seats, placed round a long table, formed all the furniture of the sitting-room. A white earthenware stove in one corner of the room gave out a pleasant warmth; paneling of unvarnished pine covered the walls, and there was no other decoration. The bareness of the place was quite in keeping with the frugal and simple life led by the Reformer.

"Well," said de Bèze, as he went in, taking advantage of a few minutes when Chaudieu had left them to put up the horses at a neighboring inn, "what am I to do? Will you agree to this meeting?"

"Certainly," said Calvin. "You, my son, will bear the brunt of the struggle. Be decisive, absolute. Nobody, neither the Queen, nor the Guises, nor I want pacification as a result; it would not suit our purpose. I have much confidence in Duplessis-Mornay. Give him the leading part. We are alone——" said he, with a suspicious glance into the kitchen, of which the door was open, showing two shirts and some collars hung to dry on a line. "Go and shut all the doors.—Well," he went on, when Théodore had done his bidding, "we must compel the King of Navarre to join the Guises and the Connétable de Montmorency, by advising him to desert Queen Catherine de' Medici. Let us take full advantage of his weakness; he is but a poor creature. If he prove a turncoat to the Italian woman, she, finding herself bereft of his support, must inevitably join the Prince de Condé and Coligny. Such a maneuver may possibly com-

promise her so effectually that she must remain on our side——"

Théodore de Bèze raised the hem of Calvin's gown and kissed it.

"Oh, master," said he, "you are indeed great!"

"Unfortunately, I am dying, my dear Théodore. If I should die before seeing you again," he went on, whispering in the ear of his Minister of Foreign Affairs, "remember to strike a great blow by the hand of one of our martyrs."

"Another Minard to be killed?"

"Higher than a lawyer."

"A king?"

"Higher still. The man who wants to be King."

"The Duc de Guise!" cried Théodore, with a gesture of dismay.

"Well," cried Calvin, fancying that he discerned refusal, or at least an instinct of resistance, and failing to notice the entrance of Chaudieu, "have we not a right to strike as we are struck? Yes, and in darkness and silence! May we not return wound for wound, and death for death? Do the Catholics hesitate to lay snares for us and kill us? I trust to you! Burn their churches. Go on, my sons! If you have any devoted youths——"

"I have," Chaudieu put in.

"Use them as weapons of war. To triumph, we may use every means. The Balafré, that terrible man of war, is like me, more than a man; he is a dynasty, as I am a system; he is capable of annihilating us! Death to the Duc de Guise!"

"I should prefer a peaceful victory, brought about by time and reason," said de Bèze.

"By time!" cried Calvin, flinging over his chair. "By reason! Are you mad? Conquer by reason? Do you know nothing of men, you who live among them—idiot? What is so fatal to my teaching, thrice-dyed simpleton, is that it is based on reason. By the thunders of Saint Paul, by the sword of the Mighty! Pumpkin as you are, Théodore, cannot you see the power that the catastrophe at Amboise has given to my reforms? Ideas can never grow till they are

watered with blood. The murder of the Duc de Guise would give rise to a fearful persecution, and I hope for it with all my might! To us reverses are more favorable than success! The Reformation can be beaten and endure, do you hear, oaf? Whereas Catholicism is overthrown if we win a single battle.

"What are these lieutenants of mine? Wet rags and not men! Guts on two legs! Christened baboons! O God, wilt Thou not grant me another ten years to live? If I die too soon, the cause of religion is lost in the hands of such rascals!

"You are as helpless as Antoine de Navarre! Begone! leave me! I must have a better messenger! You are an ass, a popinjay, a poet! Go, write your Catullics, your Tibullics, your acrostics! Hoo!"

The pain he suffered was entirely swamped by the fires of his wrath. Gout vanished before this fearful excitement. Calvin's face was blotched with purple, like the sky before a storm. His broad forehead shone. His eyes flashed fire. He was not like the same man. He let himself give way to this sort of epileptic frenzy, almost madness, which was habitual with him; but, then, struck by the silence of his two listeners, and observing Chaudieu, who said to de Bèze, "The burning bush of Horeb!" the minister sat down, was dumb, and covered his face with his hands, with their thickened joints, and his fingers quivered in spite of their strength.

A few minutes later, while still trembling from the last shocks of this tempest—the result of his austere life—he said in a broken voice—

"My vices, which are many, are less hard to subdue than my impatience! Ah! wild beast, shall I never conquer you?" he exclaimed, striking his breast.

"My beloved master," said de Bèze in a caressing tone, taking his hands and kissing them, "Jove thunders, but he can smile."

Calvin looked at his disciple with a softened expression.

"Do not misunderstand me, my friends," he said.

"I understand that the shepherds of nations have terrible

burdens to bear," replied Théodore. "You have a world on your shoulders."

"I," said Chaudieu, who had become thoughtful under the master's abuse, "have three martyrs on whom we can depend. Stewart, who killed the President, is free——"

"That will not do," said Calvin mildly, and smiling, as a great man can smile when fair weather follows a storm on his face, as if he were ashamed of the tempest. "I know men. He who kills one President will not kill a second."

"Is it absolutely necessary?" said de Bèze.

"What, again?" cried Calvin, his nostrils expanding. "There, go; you will put me in a rage again. You have my decision.—You, Chaudieu, walk in your own path, and keep the Paris flock together. God be with you.—Dinah! Light my friends out."

"Will you not allow me to embrace you?" said de Bèze with emotion. "Who can tell what the morrow will bring forth? We may be imprisoned in spite of safe-conducts——"

"And yet you want to spare them!" said Calvin, embracing de Bèze.

He took Chaudieu's hand, saying—

"Mind you, not Huguenots, not Reformers: be Calvinists! Speak only of Calvinism.—Alas! this is not ambition, for I am a dying man!—Only, everything of Luther's must be destroyed, to the very names of Lutheran and Lutheranism."

"Indeed, divine man, you deserve such honor!" cried Chaudieu.

"Uphold uniformity of creed. Do not allow any further examination or reconstruction. If new sects arise from among us, we are lost."

To anticipate events and dismiss Théodore de Bèze, who returned to Paris with Chaudieu, it may be said that Poltrot, who, eighteen months later, fired a pistol at the Duc de Guise, confessed, under torture, that he had been urged to the crime by Théodore de Bèze; however, he retracted this statement at a later stage. Indeed, Bossuet, who weighed all the historical evidence, did not think that the idea of this attempt was due to Théodore de Bèze. Since Bossuet, however, a dissertation of an apparently trivial character,

à propos to a famous ballad, enabled a compiler of the eighteenth century to prove that the song sung throughout France by the Huguenots on the death of the Duc de Guise was written by Théodore de Bèze; and, moreover, that the well-known ballad or lament on Malbrouck—the Duke of Marlborough—is plagiarized from Théodore de Bèze.[1]

On the day when Théodore de Bèze and Chaudieu reached Paris, the Court had returned thither from Reims, where Charles IX. had been crowned. This ceremony, to which Catherine gave unusual splendor, making it the occasion of great festivities, enabled her to gather round her the leaders of every faction.

After studying the various parties and interests, she saw a choice of two alternatives—either to enlist them on the side of the Throne, or to set them against each other. The Connétable de Montmorency, above all else a Catholic, whose nephew, the Prince de Condé, was the leader of the Reformation, and whose children also had a leaning to that creed, blamed the Queen-mother for allying herself with that party. The Guises, on their side, worked hard to gain over Antoine de Bourbon, a Prince of no strength of character, and attach him to their faction, and his wife, the Queen of Navarre, informed by de Bèze, allowed this to be done. These difficulties checked Catherine, whose newly-acquired authority needed a brief period of tranquillity; she impatiently awaited Calvin's reply by de Bèze and Chaudieu, sent to the great Reformer on behalf of the Prince de Condé, the King of Navarre, Coligny, d'Andelot, and Cardinal de Châtillon.

Meanwhile, the Queen-mother was true to her promises to the Prince de Condé. The Chancellor quashed the trial, in which Christophe was involved, by referring the case to the Paris Parlement, and they annulled the sentence pronounced by the Commission, declaring it incompetent to try a Prince of the Blood. The Parlement reopened the trial by the desire of the Guises and the Queen-mother. La Sagne's papers had been placed in Catherine's hands, and she had burnt them. This sacrifice was the first pledge

[1] See note at the end of this story.

given, quite vainly, by the Guises to the Queen-mother. The Parlement, not having this decisive evidence, reinstated the Prince in all his rights, possessions, and honors.

Christophe, thus released when Orleans was in all its excitement over the King's accession, was excluded from the case, and, as a compensation for his sufferings, was passed as a pleader by M. de Thou.

The Triumvirate—the coalition of interests which were imperiled by Catherine's first steps in authority—was hatching under her very eyes. Just as in chemistry hostile elements fly asunder at the shock that disturbs their compulsory union, so in politics the alliance of antagonistic interests can never last long. Catherine fully understood that, sooner or later, she must fall back on the Connétable and the Guises to fight the Huguenots. The convocation, which served to flatter the vanity of the orators on each side, and as an excuse for another imposing ceremony after that of the coronation, to clear the blood-stained field for the religious war that had, indeed, already begun, was as futile in the eyes of the Guises as it was in Catherine's. The Catholics could not fail to be the losers; for the Huguenots, under the pretense of discussion, would be able to proclaim their doctrine in the face of all France, under the protection of the King and his mother. The Cardinal de Lorraine, flattered by Catherine into the hope of conquering the heretics by the eloquence of the Princes of the Church, induced his brother to consent. To the Queen-mother six months of peace meant much.

A trivial incident was near wrecking the power which Catherine was so laboriously building up. This is the scene as recorded by history; it occurred on the very day when the envoys from Geneva arrived at the Hôtel de Coligny in the Rue Béthisy, not far from the Louvre. At the coronation, Charles IX., who was much attached to his instructor, Amyot, made him High Almoner of France. This affection was fully shared by the Duc d'Anjou (Henri III.), who also was Amyot's pupil.

Catherine heard this from the two Gondi on the way home from Reims to Paris. She had relied on this Crown appointment to gain her a supporter in the Church, and a person

of importance to set against the Cardinal de Lorraine; she had intended to bestow it on Cardinal de Tournon, so as to find in him, as in l'Hôpital, a second crutch—to use her own words. On arriving at the Louvre, she sent for the preceptor. Her rage at seeing the catastrophe that threatened her policy from the ambition of this self-made man—the son of a shoemaker—was such that she addressed him in this strange speech recorded by certain chroniclers—

"What! I can make the Guises cringe, the Colignys, the Montmorencys, the House of Navarre, the Prince de Condé, and I am to be balked by a priestling like you, who were not content to be Bishop of Auxerre!"

Amyot excused himself. He had, in fact, asked for nothing; the King had appointed him of his own free will to this office, of which he, a humble teacher, regarded himself as unworthy.

"Rest assured, Master," for it was by this name that the Kings Charles IX. and Henri III. addressed this great writer, "that you will not be left standing for twenty-four hours unless you induce your pupil to change his mind."

Between death promised him in such an uncompromising way, and the abdication of the highest ecclesiastical office in the kingdom, the shoemaker's son, who had grown covetous, and hoped perhaps for a Cardinal's hat, determined to temporize. He hid in the abbey of Saint-Germain en Laye.

At his first dinner, Charles IX., not seeing Amyot, asked for him. Some Guisard, no doubt, told the King what had passed between Amyot and the Queen-mother.

"What!" cried he, "has he been made away with because I created him High Almoner?"

He went off to his mother in the violent state of a child when one of his fancies is contravened.

"Madame," said he, as he entered her room, "did I not comply with your wishes, and sign the letter you asked of me for the Parlement, by virtue of which you govern my kingdom? Did you not promise me, when you laid it before me, that my will should be yours? and now the only favor I have cared to bestow excites your jealousy.—The Chancellor talks of making me of age at fourteen, three years

from hence, and you treat me as a child!—By God, but I mean to be King, and as much a king as my father and grandfather were kings!"

The tone and vehemence with which he spoke these words were a revelation to Catherine of her son's true character; it was like a blow from a bludgeon on her heart.

"And he speaks thus to me," thought she, "to me, who made him King.—Monsieur," she said, "the business of being King in such times as these is a difficult one, and you do not yet know the master minds you have to deal with. You will never have any true and trustworthy friend but your mother, or other adherents than those whom she long since attached to her, and but for whom you would perhaps not be alive at this day. The Guises are averse both to your position and your person, I would have you know. If they could sew me up in a sack and throw me into the river," said she, pointing to the Seine, "they would do it to-night. Those Lorrainers feel that I am a lioness defending her cubs, and that stays the bold hands they stretch out to clutch the crown. To whom, to what is your preceptor attached? where are his allies? what is his authority? what services can he do you? what weight will his words have? Instead of gaining a buttress to uphold your power, you have undermined it.

"The Cardinal de Lorraine threatens you; he plays the King, and keeps his hat on his head in the presence of the first Prince of the Blood; was it not necessary to counterbalance him with another cardinal, invested with authority equal to his own? Is Amyot, a shoemaker who might tie the bows of his shoes, the man to defy him to his face?—Well, well, you are fond of Amyot. You have appointed him! Your first decision shall be respected, my Lord! But before deciding any further, have the kindness to consult me. Listen to reasons of State, and your boyish good sense will perhaps agree with my old woman's experience before deciding, when you know all the difficulties."

"You must bring back my master!" said the King, not listening very carefully to the Queen, on finding her speech full of reproofs.

"Yes, you shall have him," replied she. "But not he, nor even that rough Cypierre, can teach you to reign."

"It is you, my dear mother," he exclaimed, mollified by his triumph, and throwing off the threatening and sly expression which Nature had stamped on his physiognomy.

Catherine sent Gondi to find the High Almoner. When the Florentine had discovered Amyot's retreat, and the Bishop heard that the courtier came from the Queen, he was seized with terror, and would not come out of the Abbey. In this extremity Catherine was obliged to write to him herself, and in such terms that he came back and obtained the promise of her support, but only on condition of his obeying her blindly in all that concerned the King.

This little domestic tempest being lulled, Catherine came back to the Louvre. It was more than a year since she had left it, and she now held council with her nearest friends as to how she was to deal with the young King, whom Cypierre had complimented on his firmness.

"What is to be done?" said she to the two Gondi, Ruggieri, Birague, and Chiverni, now tutor and Chancellor to the Duc d'Anjou.

"First of all," said Birague, "get rid of Cypierre; he is not a courtier, he will never fall in with your views, and will think he is doing his duty by opposing you."

"Whom can I trust?" cried the Queen.

"One of us," said Birague.

"By my faith," said Gondi, "I promise to make the King as pliant as the King of Navarre."

"You let the late King die to save your other children; well, then, do as the grand Signors of Constantinople do: crush this one's passions and fancies," said Albert de Gondi. "He likes the arts, poetry, hunting, and a little girl he saw at Orleans; all this is quite enough to occupy him."

"Then you would be the King's tutor?" said Catherine, to the more capable of the two Gondi.

"If you will give me the necessary authority; it might be well to make me a Marshal of France and a duke. Cypierre is too small a man to continue in that office. Hence-

forth the tutor of a King of France should be a marshal and duke, or something of the kind——"

"He is right," said Birague.

"Poetry and hunting," said Catherine, in a dreamy voice.

"We will hunt and make love!" cried Gondi.

"Besides," said Chiverni, "you are sure of Amyot, who will always be afraid of a drugged cup in case of disobedience, and with Gondi you will have the King in leading strings."

"You were resigned to the loss of one son to save the three others and the Crown; now you must have the courage to keep this one *occupied* to save the kingdom—to save yourself perhaps," said Ruggieri.

"He has just offended me deeply," said Catherine.

"He does not know how much he owes you; and if he did, you would not be safe," Birague replied with grave emphasis.

"It is settled," said the Queen, on whom this reply had a startling effect; "you are to be the King's governor, Gondi. The King must make me a return in favor of one of my friends for the concession I have made for that cowardly Bishop. But the fool has lost the Cardinal's hat; so long as I live I will hinder the Pope from fitting it to his head! We should have been very strong with Cardinal de Tournon to support us. What a trio they would have made: he as High Almoner with l'Hôpital and de Thou! As to the citizens of Paris, I mean to make my son coax them over, and we will lean on them."

And Gondi was, in fact, made a marshal, created Duc de Retz and tutor to the King, within a few days.

This little council was just over when Cardinal de Tournon came to announce to the Queen the messengers from Calvin. Admiral Coligny escorted them to secure them respectful treatment at the Louvre. The Queen summoned her battalion of maids of honor, and went into the great reception-room built by her husband, which no longer exists in the Louvre of our day.

At that time the staircase of the Louvre was in the clock tower. Catherine's rooms were in the older part of the build-

ing, part of which survives in the Cour du Musée. The present staircase to the galleries was built where the Salle des Ballets was before it. A *ballet* at that time meant a sort of dramatic entertainment performed by all the Court.

Revolutionary prejudice led to the most ridiculous mistake as to Charles IX. *à propos* to the Louvre. During the Revolution a belief defamatory of this King, whose character has been caricatured, made a monster of him. Chénier's tragedy was written under the provocation of a tablet hung up on the window of the part of the palace that projects towards the Quay. On it were these words, "From this window Charles IX. of execrable memory fired on the citizens of Paris." It may be well to point out to future historians and studious persons that the whole of that side of the Louvre, now called the Old Louvre—the projecting wing at a right angle to the Quay, connecting the galleries with the Louvre by what is called the Galerie d'Apollon, and the Louvre with the Tuileries by the picture gallery—was not in existence in the time of Charles IX. The principal part of the site of the river front, where lies the garden known as Le Jardin de l'Infante, was occupied by the Hôtel de Bourbon, which belonged, in fact, to the House of Navarre. It would have been physically impossible for Charles IX. to fire from the Louvre de Henri II. on a boat full of Huguenots crossing the Seine, though he could see the river from some windows, which are now built up, in that part of the palace.

Even if historians and libraries did not possess maps in which the Louvre at the time of Charles IX. is perfectly shown, the building bears in itself the refutation of the error. The several Kings who have contributed to this vast structure have never failed to leave their cipher on the work in some form of monogram. The venerable buildings, now all discolored, of that part of the Louvre that goes down to the Quay bear the initials of Henri II. and of Henri IV.; quite different from those of Henri III., who added to his H Catherine's double C in a way that looks like D to superficial observers. It was Henri IV. who was able to add his own palace, the Hôtel de Bourbon, with

its gardens and domain, on to the Louvre. He first thought of uniting Catherine de' Medici's palace to the Louvre by finishing the galleries, of which the exquisite sculpture is too little appreciated.

But if no plan of Paris under Charles IX. were in existence, nor the monogram of the two Henrys, the difference in the architecture would be enough to give the lie to this calumny. The rusticated bosses of the Hôtel de la Force, and of this portion of the Louvre, are precisely characteristic of the transition from the architecture of the Renaissance to the architecture of Henri III., Henri IV., and Louis XIII.

This archæological digression, in harmony, to be sure, with the pictures at the beginning of this narrative, enables us to see the aspect of this other part of Paris, of which nothing now remains but that portion of the Louvre, where the beautiful bas-reliefs are perishing day by day.

When the Court was informed that the Queen was about to give audience to Théodore de Bèze and Chaudieu, introduced by Admiral Coligny, everyone who had a right to go into the throne room hastened to be present at this interview. It was about six o'clock; Admiral Coligny had supped, and was picking his teeth as he walked upstairs between the two Calvinists. This playing with a toothpick was a confirmed habit with the Admiral; he involuntarily picked his teeth in the middle of a battle when meditating a retreat. "Never trust the Admiral's toothpick, the Constable's 'No,' or Catherine's 'Yes,'"—was one of the proverbs of the Court at the time. And after the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew, the mob made horrible mockery of the Admiral's body, which hung for three days at Montfauçon, by sticking a grotesque toothpick between his teeth. Chroniclers have recorded this hideous jest. And, indeed, this trivial detail in the midst of a tremendous catastrophe is just like the Paris mob, which thoroughly deserves this grotesque parody of a line of Boileau's:

"Le Français, né malin, créa la guillotine."

(The Frenchman, a born wag, invented the guillotine.)

In all ages, the Parisians have made fun before, during, and after the most terrible revolutions.

Théodore de Bèze was in Court dress, black silk long hose, slashed shoes, full trunks, a doublet of black silk, also slashed, and a little black velvet cloak, over which fell a fine white ruff, deeply gauffered. He wore the tuft of beard called a *virgule* (a comma) and a mustache, his sword hung by his side, and he carried a cane. All who know the pictures at Versailles, or the portraits by Odieuvre, know his round and almost jovial face, with bright eyes, and the remarkably high and broad forehead, which is characteristic of the poets and writers of that time. De Bèze had a pleasant face, which did him good service. He formed a striking contrast to Coligny, whose austere features are known to all, and to the bitter and bilious-looking Chaudieu, who wore the preacher's gown and Calvinist bands.

The state of affairs in the Chamber of Deputies in our own day, and that, no doubt, in the Convention, too, may enable us to understand how at that Court and at that time persons, who six months after would be fighting to the death and waging heinous warfare, would meanwhile meet, address each other with courtesy, and exchange jests.

When Coligny entered the room, Birague, who would coldly advise the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew, and the Cardinal de Lorraine, who would tell his servant Besme not to miss the Admiral, came forward to meet him, and the Piedmontese said, with a smile—

"Well, my dear Admiral, so you have undertaken to introduce these gentlemen from Geneva?"

"And you will count it to me for a crime perhaps," replied the Admiral in jest, "while, if you had undertaken it, you would have scored it as a merit."

"Master Calvin, I hear, is very ill," said the Cardinal de Lorraine to Théodore de Bèze. "I hope we shall not be suspected of having stirred his broth for him!"

"Nay, Monseigneur, you would lose too much by that," said Théodore de Bèze shrewdly.

The Duc de Guise, who was examining Chaudieu, stared

at his brother and Birague, who were both startled by this speech.

"By God!" exclaimed the Cardinal, "heretics are of the right faith in keen politics!"

To avoid difficulties, the Queen, who was announced at this moment, remained standing. She began by conversing with the Connétable, who spoke eagerly of the scandal of her admitting Calvin's envoys to her presence.

"But, you see, my dear Constable, we receive them without ceremony."

"Madame," said the Admiral, approaching Catherine, "these are the two doctors of the new religion who have come to an understanding with Calvin, and have taken his instructions as to a meeting where the various Churches of France may compromise their differences."

"This is M. Théodore de Bèze, my wife's very great favorite," said the King of Navarre, coming forward and taking de Bèze by the hand.

"And here is Chaudieu!" cried the Prince de Condé. "My friend the Duc de Guise knows the captain," he added, looking at le Balafré; "perhaps he would like to make acquaintance with the minister."

This sally made everybody laugh, even Catherine.

"By my troth," said the Duc de Guise, "I am delighted to see a man who can so well choose a follower, and make use of him in his degree. One of your men," said he to the preacher, "endured, without dying or confessing anything, the extreme of torture; I fancy myself brave, but I do not know that I could endure so well!"

"Hm!" observed Ambroise Paré, "you said not a word when I pulled the spear out of your face at Calais."

Catherine, in the middle of the semicircle formed right and left of the maids of honor and Court officials, kept silence. While looking at the two famous Reformers, she was trying to penetrate them with her fine, intelligent, black eyes, and study them thoroughly.

"One might be the sheath and the other the blade," Albert de Gondi said in her ear.

"Well, gentlemen," said Catherine, who could not help

smiling, "has your master given you liberty to arrange a public conference where you may convert to the Word of God those modern Fathers of the Church who are the glory of our realm?"

"We have no master but the Lord," said Chaudieu.

"Well, you acknowledge some authority in the King of France?" said Catherine, smiling, and interrupting the minister.

"And a great deal in the Queen," added de Bèze, bowing low.

"You will see," she went on, "that the heretics will be my most dutiful subjects."

"Oh, Madame!" cried Coligny, "what a splendid kingdom we will make for you! Europe reaps great profit from our divisions. It has seen one half of France set against the other for fifty years past."

"Have we come here to hear chants in praise of heretics?" said the Connétable roughly.

"No, but to bring them to amendment," answered the Cardinal de Lorraine in a whisper, "and we hope to achieve it by a little gentleness."

"Do you know what I should have done in the reign of the King's father?" said Anne de Montmorency. "I should have sent for the Provost to hang those two rascals high and dry on the Louvre gallows."

"Well, gentlemen, and who are the learned doctors you will bring into the field?" said the Queen, silencing the Constable with a look.

"Duplessis-Mornay and Théodore de Bèze are our leaders," said Chaudieu.

"The Court will probably go to the château of Saint-Germain; and as it would not be seemly that this colloquy should take place in the same town, it shall be held in the little town of Poissy," replied Catherine.

"Shall we be safe there, Madame?" asked Chaudieu.

"Oh!" said the Queen, with a sort of simplicity, "you will, no doubt, know what precautions to take. Monsieur the Admiral will make arrangements to that effect with my cousins de Guise and Montmorency."

"Fie on it all!" said the Constable; "I will have no part in it."

The Queen took Chaudieu a little way apart.

"What do you do to your sectarians to give them such a spirit?" said she. "My furrier's son was really sublime."

"We have faith," said Chaudieu.

At this moment the room was filled with eager groups, all discussing the question of this assembly, which, from the Queen's suggestion, was already spoken of as the "Convocation of Poissy." Catherine looked at Chaudieu, and felt it safe to say—

"Yes, a new faith."

"Ah, Madame, if you were not blinded by your connection with the Court of Rome, you would see that we are returning to the true doctrine of Jesus Christ, who, while sanctifying the equality of souls, has given all men on earth equal rights."

"And do you think yourself the equal of Calvin?" said Catherine shrewdly.—"Nay, nay, we are equals only in church."—"What, really? Break all bonds between the people and the throne?" cried Catherine. "You are not merely heretics; you rebel against obedience to the King while avoiding all obedience to the Pope."

She sharply turned away, and returned to Théodore de Bèze.

"I trust to you, Monsieur," she said, "to carry through this conference conscientiously. Take time over it."

"I fancied," said Chaudieu to the Prince de Condé, the King of Navarre, and Admiral Coligny, "that affairs of State were taken more seriously."

"Oh, we all know exactly what we mean," said the Prince de Condé, with a significant glance at Théodore de Bèze.

The hunchback took leave of his followers to keep an assignation. This great Prince and party leader was one of the most successful gallants of the Court; the two handsomest women of the day fought for him with such infatuation, that the Maréchale de Saint-André, the wife of one of the coming Triumvirate, gave him her fine estate at Saint-Valery to win him from the Duchesse de Guise, the

wife of the man who had wanted to bring his head under the ax; being unable to wean the Duc de Nemours from his flirtations with Mlle. de Rohan, she fell in love, meanwhile, with the leader of the Reformed party.

"How different from Geneva!" said Chaudieu to Théodore de Bèze on the little bridge by the Louvre.

"They are livelier here, and I cannot imagine why they are such traitors," replied de Bèze.

"Meet a traitor with a traitor-and-a-half," said Chaudieu in a whisper. "I have saints in Paris that I can rely on, and I mean to make a prophet of Calvin. Christophe will rid us of the most dangerous of our enemies."

"The Queen-mother, for whom the poor wretch endured torture, has already had him passed, by high-handed orders, as pleader before the Parlement, and lawyers are more apt to be tell-tales than assassins. Remember Avenelles, who sold the secret of our first attempt to take up arms."

"But I know Christophe," said Chaudieu, with an air of conviction, as he and the Calvinist ambassador parted.

Some days after the reception of Calvin's secret envoys by Catherine, and towards the end of that year—for the year then began at Easter, and the modern calendar was not adopted till this very reign—Christophe, still stretched on an armchair, was sitting on that side of the large somber room where our story began, in such a position as to look out on the river. His feet rested on a stool. Mlle. Lecamus and Babette Lallier had just renewed the application of compresses, soaked in a lotion brought by Ambroise, to whose care Catherine had commended Christophe. When once he was restored to his family, the lad had become the object of the most devoted care. Babette, with her father's permission, came to the house every morning, and did not leave till the evening. Christophe, a subject of wonder to the apprentices, gave rise in the neighborhood to endless tales, which involved him in poetic mystery. He had been put to torture, and the famous Ambroise Paré was exerting all his skill to save him. What, then, had he done to be treated so? On this point neither Christophe nor his father breathed

a word. Catherine, now all-powerful, had an interest in keeping silence, and so had the Prince de Condé. The visits of Ambroise Paré, the surgeon to the King and to the House of Guise, permitted by the Queen-mother and the Princes of Lorraine to attend a youth accused of heresy, added to the singularity of this business, which no one could see through. And then the priest of Saint-Pierre aux Bœufs came several times to see his churchwarden's son, and these visits made the causes of Christophe's condition even more inexplicable.

The old furrier, who had a plan of his own, replied evasively when his fellows of the guild, traders, and friends spoke of his son—

"I am very happy, neighbor, to have been able to save him! You know! it is well not to put your finger between the wood and the bark. My son put his hand to the stake and took out fire enough to burn my house down!—They imposed on his youth, and we citizens never get anything but scorn and harm by hanging on to the great. This quite determines me to make a lawyer of my boy; the law courts will teach him to weigh his words and deeds. The young Queen, who is now in Scotland, had a great deal to do with it; but perhaps Christophe was very imprudent too. I went through terrible grief.—All this will probably lead to my retiring from business; I will never go to Court any more. My son has had enough of the Reformation now; it has left him with broken arms and legs. But for Ambroise, where should I be?"

Thanks to these speeches and to his prudence, a report was spread in the neighborhood that Christophe no longer followed the creed of Colas. Everyone thought it quite natural that the old Syndic should wish to see his son a lawyer in the Parlement, and thus the priest's calls seemed quite a matter of course. In thinking of the old man's woes, no one thought of his ambition, which would have been deemed monstrous.

The young lawyer, who had spent ninety days on the bed put up for him in the old sitting-room, had only been out of it for a week past, and still needed the help of crutches

to enable him to walk. Babette's affection and his mother's tenderness had touched Christophe deeply; still, having him in bed, the two women lectured him soundly on the subject of religion. Président de Thou came to see his godson, and was most paternal. Christophe, as a pleader in the Parlement, ought to be a Catholic, he would be pledged to it by his oath; and the President, who never seemed to doubt the young man's orthodoxy, added these important words—

"You have been cruelly tested, my boy. I myself know nothing of the reasons MM. de Guise had for treating you thus; but now I exhort you to live quietly henceforth, and not to interfere in broils, for the favor of the King and Queen will not be shown to such as brew storms. You are not a great enough man to drive a bargain with the King, like the Duke and the Cardinal. If you want to be councilor in the Parlement some day, you can only attain that high office by serious devotion to the cause of Royalty."

However, neither M. de Thou's visit, nor Babette's charms, nor the entreaties of Mlle. Lecamus his mother, had shaken the faith of the Protestant martyr. Christophe clung all the more stoutly to his religion in proportion to what he had suffered for it.

"My father will never allow me to marry a heretic," said Babette in his ear.

Christophe replied only with tears, which left the pretty girl speechless and thoughtful.

Old Lecamus maintained his dignity as a father and a syndic, watched his son, and said little. The old man, having got back his dear Christophe, was almost vexed with himself, and repentant of having displayed all his affection for his only son; but secretly he admired him. At no time in his life had the furrier pulled so many wires to gain his ends; for he could see the ripe harvest of the crop sown with so much toil, and wished to gather it all.

A few days since he had had a long conversation with Christophe alone, hoping to discover the secret of his son's tenacity. Christophe, who was not devoid of ambition, believed in the Prince de Condé. The Prince's generous speech —which was no more than the stock-in-trade of princes—was

stamped on his heart. He did not know that Condé had wished him to the devil at the moment when he bid him such a touching farewell through the bars of his prison at Orleans.

"A Gascon would have understood," the Prince had said to himself.

And in spite of his admiration for the Prince, Christophe cherished the deepest respect for Catherine, the great Queen who had explained to him in a look that she was compelled by necessity to sacrifice him, and then, during his torture, had conveyed to him in another glance an unlimited promise by an almost imperceptible tear.

During the deep calm of the ninety days and nights he had spent in recovering, the newly-made lawyer thought over the events at Blois and at Orleans. He weighed, in spite of himself, it may be said, the influence of these two patrons; he hesitated between the Queen and the Prince. He had certainly done more for Catherine than for the Reformation; and the young man's heart and mind, of course, went forth to the Queen, less by reason of this difference than because she was a woman. In such a case a man will always found his hopes on a woman rather than on a man.

"I immolated myself for her—what will she not do for me?"

This was the question he almost involuntarily asked himself as he recalled the tone in which she had said, "My poor boy!"

It is difficult to conceive of the pitch of self-consciousness reached by a man alone and sick in bed. Everything, even the care of which he is the object, tends to make him think of himself alone. By exaggerating the Prince de Condé's obligation to him, Christophe looked forward to obtaining some post at the Court of Navarre. The lad, a novice still in politics, was all the more forgetful of the anxieties which absorb party leaders, and of the swift rush of men and events which overrule them, because he lived almost in solitary imprisonment in that dark parlor. Every party is bound to be ungrateful when it is fighting for dear life;

and when it has won the day, there are so many persons to be rewarded, that it is ungrateful still. The rank and file submit to this oblivion, but the captains turn against the new master who for so long has marched as their equal.

Christophe, the only person to remember what he had suffered, already reckoned himself as one of the chiefs of the Reformation by considering himself as one of its martyrs. Lecamus, the old wolf of trade, acute and clear-sighted, had guessed his son's secret thoughts; indeed, all his maneuvering was based on the very natural hesitancy that possessed the lad.

"Would not it be fine," he had said the day before to Babette, "to be the wife of a councilor to the Parlement; you would be addressed as madame."

"You are crazy, neighbor," said Lallier. "In the first place, where would you find ten thousand crowns a year in landed estate, which a councilor must show, and from whom could you purchase a connection? The Queen-mother and Regent would have to give all her mind to it to get your son into the Parlement; and he smells of the stake too strongly to be admitted."

"What would you give, now, to see your daughter a councilor's wife?"

"You want to sound the depth of my purse, you old fox!" exclaimed Lallier.

Councilor to the Parlement! The words distracted Christophe's brain.

Long after the conference was over, one morning when Christophe sat gazing at the river, which reminded him of the scene that was the beginning of all this story, of the Prince de Condé, la Renaudie, and Chaudieu, of his journey to Blois, and of all he hoped for, the Syndic came to sit down by his son with ill-disguised glee under an affectation of solemnity.

"My boy," said he, "after what took place between you and the heads of the riot at Amboise, they owed you so much that your future might very well be cared for by the House of Navarre."

"Yes," replied Christophe.

"Well," his father went on, "I have definitely applied for permission for you to purchase a legal business in Béarn. Our good friend Paré undertook to transmit the letters I wrote in your name to the Prince de Condé and Queen Jeanne.—Here, read this reply from M. de Pibrac, Vice-Chancellor of Navarre."

"*To Master Lecamus, Syndic of the Guild of Furriers.*

"His Highness the Prince de Condé bids me express to you his regret at being unable to do anything for his fellow-prisoner in the Tour de Saint-Aignan, whom he remembers well, and to whom, for the present, he offers the place of man-at-arms in his own company, where he will have the opportunity of making his way as a man of good heart—which he is.

"The Queen of Navarre hopes for an occasion of rewarding Master Christophe, and will not fail.

"And with this, M. le Syndic, I pray God have you in His keeping. PIBRAC,

"*Chancellor of Navarre.*

"Nérac."

"Nérac! Pibrac! Crac!" cried Babette. "There is nothing to be got out of these Gascons; they think only of themselves."

Old Lecamus was looking at his son with ironical amusement.

"And he wants to set a poor boy on horseback whose knees and ankles were pounded up for him!" cried the mother. "What a shameful mockery!"

"I do not seem to see you as a councilor in Navarre," said the old furrier.

"I should like to know what Queen Catherine would do for me if I petitioned her," said Christophe, much crestfallen.

"She made no promises," said the old merchant, "but I am sure she would not make a fool of you, and would remember your sufferings. Still, how could she make a councilor-at-law of a Protestant citizen?"

"But Christophe has never abjured!" exclaimed Babette. "He may surely keep his own secret as to his religious opinions."

"The Prince de Condé would be less scornful of a councilor to the Parlement of Paris," said Lecamus.

"A councilor, father! Is it possible?"

"Yes, if you do nothing to upset what I am managing for you. My neighbor Lallier here is ready to pay two hundred thousand livres, if I add as much again, for the purchase of a fine estate entailed on the heirs male, which we will hand over to you."

"And I will add something more for a house in Paris," said Lallier.

"Well, Christophe?" said Babette.

"You are talking without the Queen," replied the young lawyer.

Some days after this bitter mortification, an apprentice brought this brief note to Christophe—

"Chaudieu wishes to see his son."

"Bring him in," said Christophe.

"O my saint and martyr!" cried the preacher, embracing the young man, "have you got over your sufferings?"

"Yes, thanks to Paré!"

"Thanks to God, who gave you strength to endure them! But what is this I hear? You have passed as a pleader, you have taken the oath of fidelity, you have confessed the Whore, the Catholic, Apostolic, Romish Church?"

"My father insisted."

"But are we not to leave father and mother and children and wife for the sacred cause of Calvinism, and to suffer all things?—Oh, Christophe, Calvin, the great Calvin, the whole party, the whole world, the future counts on your courage and your greatness of soul! We want your life."

There is this strange feature in the mind of man: the most devoted, even in the act of devoting himself, always builds up a romance of hope even in the most perilous crisis. Thus, when on the river under the Pont au Change, the prince, the soldier, and the preacher had required Christophe to carry to Queen Catherine the document which, if dis-

covered, would have cost him his life, the boy had trusted to his wit, to chance, to his perspicacity, and had boldly marched on between the two formidable parties—the Guises and the Queen—who had so nearly crushed him. While in the torture chamber he still had said to himself, "I shall live through it—it is only pain!"

But at this brutal command, "Die!" to a man who was still helpless, hardly recovered from the injuries he had suffered, and who clung all the more to life for having seen death so near, it was impossible to indulge in any such illusions.

Christophe calmly asked, "What do you want of me?"

"To fire a pistol bravely, as Stewart fired at Minard."

"At whom?"

"The Duc de Guise."

"Assassination?"

"Revenge!—Have you forgotten the hundred gentlemen massacred on one scaffold! A child, little d'Aubigné, said as he saw the butchery, 'They have beheaded all France.'"

"We are to take blows and not to return them, is the teaching of the Gospel," replied Christophe. "If we are to imitate the Catholics, of what use is it to reform the Church?"

"Oh, Christophe, they have made a lawyer of you, and you argue!" said Chaudieu.

"No, my friend," the youth replied. "But princes are ungrateful, and you and yours will only be the playthings of the House of Bourbon."

"Oh, Christophe, if you had only heard Calvin, you would know that we can turn them like a glove! The Bourbons are the glove, and we the hand."

"Read this," said Christophe, handing Pibrac's letter to the minister.

"Alas, boy! you are ambitious; you can no longer sacrifice yourself," and Chaudieu went away.

Not long after this visit, Christophe, with the families of Lallier and Lecamus, had met to celebrate the plighting

of Babette and Christophe in the old parlor, whence Christophe's couch was now removed, for he could climb the stairs now, and was beginning to drag himself about without crutches. It was nine in the evening, and they waited for Ambroise Paré. The family notary was sitting at a table covered with papers. The furrier was selling his house and business to his head clerk, who was to pay forty thousand livres down for the house, and to mortgage it as security for the stock-in-trade, besides paying twenty thousand livres on account.

Lecamus had purchased for his son a magnificent house in the Rue de Saint-Pierre aux Bœufs, built of stone by Philibert de l'Orme, as a wedding gift. The Syndic had also spent two hundred and fifty thousand livres out of his fortune, Lallier paying an equal sum, for the acquisition of a fine manor and estate in Picardy, for which five hundred thousand livres were asked. This estate being a dependence of the Crown, letters patent from the King—called letters of rescript—were necessary, besides the payment of considerable fines and fees. Thus the actual marriage was to be postponed till the royal signature could be obtained.

Though the citizens of Paris had obtained the right of purchasing manors and lands, the prudence of the Privy Council had placed certain restrictions on the transfer of lands belonging to the Crown; and the estate on which Lecamus had had his eye for the last ten years was one of these. Ambroise had undertaken to produce the necessary permission this very evening. Old Lecamus went to and fro between the sitting-room and the front door with an impatience that showed the eagerness of his ambition.

At last Ambroise appeared.

"My good friend!" exclaimed the surgeon in a great fuss, and looking at the supper table, "what is your napery like? —Very good.—Now bring waxlights, and make haste, make haste. Bring out the best of everything you have."

"What is the matter?" asked the priest of Saint-Pierre aux Bœufs.

"The Queen-mother and the King are coming to sup with you," replied the surgeon. "The Queen and King expect to

meet here an old councilor, whose business is to be sold to Christophe, and M. de Thou, who has managed the bargain. Do not look as if you expected them; I stole out of the Louvre."

In an instant all were astir. Christophe's mother and Babette's aunt trotted about in all the flurry of housewives taken by surprise. In spite of the confusion into which the announcement had thrown the party, preparations were made with miraculous energy. Christophe, amazed, astounded, overpowered by such condescension, stood speechless, looking on at all the bustle.

"The Queen and the King here!" said the old mother.

"The Queen?" echoed Babette; "but what for, what to do?"

Within an hour everything was altered; the old room was smartened up, the table shone. A sound of horses was heard in the street. The gleam of torches carried by the mounted escort brought all the neighbors' noses to the windows. The rush was soon over; no one was left under the arcade but the Queen-mother and her son, King Charles IX., Charles de Gondi, Master of the Wardrobe, and tutor to the King; M. de Thou, the retiring councilor; Pinard, Secretary of State, and two pages.

"Good folks," said the Queen as she went in, "the King, my son, and I have come to sign the marriage contract of our furrier's son, but on condition that he remains a Catholic. Only a Catholic can serve in the Parlement, only a Catholic can own lands dependent on the Crown, only a Catholic can sit at table with the King—what do you say, Pinard?"

The Secretary of State stepped forward, holding the letters patent.

"If we are not all Catholics here," said the little King, "Pinard will throw all the papers into the fire; but we are all Catholics?" he added, looking round proudly enough at the company.

"Yes, Sire," said Christophe Lecamus, bending the knee, not without difficulty, and kissing the hand the young King held out to him.

Queen Catherine, who also held out her hand to Christophe, pulled him up rather roughly, and leading him into a corner, said—

"Understand, boy, no subterfuges! We are playing an honest game?"

"Yes, Madame," he said, dazzled by this splendid reward and by the honor the grateful Queen had done him.

"Well, then, Master Lecamus, the King, my son, and I permit you to purchase the offices and appointments of this good man Groslay, councilor to the Parlement, who is here?" said the Queen. "I hope, young man, that you will follow in the footsteps of your Lord President."

De Thou came forward and said—

"I will answer for him, Madame."

"Very well, then proceed, notary," said Pinard.

"Since the King, our master, does us the honor of signing my daughter's marriage contract," cried Lallier, "I will pay the whole price of the estate."

"The ladies may be seated," said the young King graciously. "As a wedding gift to the bride, with my mother's permission, I remit my fines and fees."

Old Lecamus and Lallier fell on their knees and kissed the boy King's hand.

"By Heaven, Sire, what loads of money these citizens have!" said Gondi in his ear.

And the young King laughed.

"Their Majesties being so graciously inclined," said old Lecamus, "will they allow me to present to them my successor in the business, and grant him the royal patent as furrier to their Majesties?"

"Let us see him," said the King, and Lecamus brought forward his successor, who was white with alarm.

Old Lecamus was shrewd enough to offer the young King a silver cup which he had bought from Benvenuto Cellini when he was staying in Paris at the Tour de Nesle, at a cost of not less than two thousand crowns.

"Oh, mother! what a fine piece of work!" cried the youth, lifting the cup by its foot.

"It is Florentine," said Catherine.

"Pardon me, Madame," said Lecamus; "it was made in France, though by a Florentine. If it had come from Florence, it should have been the Queen's; but being made in France, it is the King's."

"I accept it, my friend," cried Charles IX., "and henceforth I drink out of it."

"It is good enough," the Queen remarked, "to be included among the Crown treasure."

"And you, Master Ambroise," she went on in an undertone, turning to the surgeon, and pointing to Christophe, "have you cured him? Will he walk?"

"He will fly," said the surgeon, with a smile. "You have stolen him from us very cleverly!"

"The abbey will not starve for lack of one monk!" replied the Queen, in the frivolous tone for which she has been blamed, but which lay only on the surface.

The supper was cheerful; the Queen thought Babette pretty, and, like the great lady she was, she slipped a diamond ring on the girl's finger in compensation for the value of the silver cup.

King Charles IX., who afterwards was perhaps rather too fond of thus invading his subjects' homes, supped with a good appetite; then, on a word from his new tutor, who had been instructed, it is said, to efface the virtuous teaching of Cypierre, he incited the President of Parlement, the old retired councilor, the Secretary of State, the priest, the notary, and the citizens to drink so deep, that Queen Catherine rose to go at the moment when she saw that their high spirits were becoming uproarious.

As the Queen rose, Christophe, his father, and the two women took up tapers to light her as far as the door of the shop. Then Christophe made so bold as to pull the Queen's wide sleeve and give her a meaning look. Catherine stopped, dismissed the old man and the women with a wave of her hand, and said to the young man—"What?"

"If you can make any use of the information, Madame," said he, speaking close to the Queen's ear, "I can tell you that assassins are plotting against the Duc de Guise's life."

"You are a loyal subject," said Catherine with a smile, "and I will never forget you."

She held out her hand, famous for its beauty, drawing off her glove as a mark of special favor. And Christophe, as he kissed that exquisite hand, was more Royalist than ever.

"Then I shall be rid of that wretch without my having anything to do with it," was her reflection as she put on her glove.

She mounted her mule and returned to the Louvre with her two pages.

Christophe drank, but he was gloomy; Paré's austere face reproached him for his apostasy; however, later events justified the old Syndic. Christophe would certainly never have escaped in the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew; his wealth and lands would have attracted the butchers. History has recorded the cruel fate of the wife of Lallier's successor, a beautiful woman, whose naked body remained hanging by the hair for three days to one of the starlings of the Pont au Change. Babette could shudder then as she reflected that such a fate might have been hers if Christophe had remained a Calvinist, as the Reformers were soon generally called. Calvin's ambition was fulfilled, but not till after his death.

This was the origin of the famous Lecamus family of lawyers. Tallemant des Réaux was mistaken in saying they had come from Picardy. It was afterwards to the interest of the Lecamus family to refer their beginnings to the time when they had acquired their principal estate, situated in that province.

Christophe's son, and his successor under Louis XIII., was father of that rich Président Lecamus, who in Louis XIV.'s time built the magnificent mansion which divided with the Hôtel Lambert the admiration of Parisians and foreigners, and which is certainly one of the finest buildings in Paris. This house still exists in the Rue de Thorigny, though it was pillaged at the beginning of the Revolution, as belonging to M. de Juigné, Archbishop of Paris. All the paintings were then defaced, and the lodgers who have

since dwelt there have still further damaged it. This fine residence, earned in the old house in the Rue de la Pelleterie, still shows what splendid results were then the outcome of family spirit. We may be allowed to doubt whether modern individualism, resulting from the repeated equal division of property, will ever raise such edifices.

PART II

THE RUGGIERI'S SECRET

BETWEEN eleven o'clock and midnight, towards the end of October, 1573, two Florentines, brothers, Albert de Gondi, Marshal of France, and Charles de Gondi la Tour, Master of the Wardrobe to King Charles IX., were sitting at the top of a house in the Rue Saint-Honoré on the edge of the gutter. Such gutters were made of stone; they ran along below the roof to catch the rain-water, and were pierced here and there with long gargoyles carved in the form of grotesque creatures with gaping jaws. In spite of the zeal of the present generation in the destruction of ancient houses, there were still in Paris many such gutter-spouts when, not long since, the police regulation as to waste-pipes led to their disappearance. A few sculptured gutters are still to be seen in the Saint-Antoine quarter, where the low rents have kept owners from adding rooms in the roof.

It may seem strange that two persons invested with such important functions should have chosen a perch more befitting cats. But to anyone who has hunted through the historical curiosities of that time, and seen how many interests were complicated about the throne, so that the domestic politics of France can only be compared to a tangled skein of thread, these two Florentines are really cats, and quite in their place in a gutter. The devotion to the person of Catherine de' Medici, who had transplanted them to the French Court, required them to shirk none of the consequences of their intrusion there.

But to explain how and why these two courtiers were perched up there, it will be necessary to relate a scene which had just taken place within a stone's throw of this gutter, at the Louvre, in the fine brown room—which is, perhaps, all that remains of Henri II.'s apartments—where the Court was in attendance after supper on the two Queens and the

King. At that time middle-class folk supped at six o'clock, and men of rank at seven; but people of exquisite fashion supped between eight and nine; it was the meal we nowadays call dinner.

Some people have supposed that etiquette was the invention of Louis XIV.; but this is a mistake; it was introduced into France by Catherine de' Medici, who was so exacting that the Connétable Anne de Montmorency had more difficulty in obtaining leave to ride into the courtyard of the Louvre than in winning his sword, and even then the permission was granted only on the score of his great age. Etiquette was slightly relaxed under the first three Bourbon kings, but assumed an Oriental character under Louis the Great, for it was derived from the Lower Empire, which borrowed it from Persia. In 1573 not only had very few persons a right to enter the courtyard of the Louvre with their attendants and torches, just as in Louis XIV.'s time only dukes and peers might drive under the porch, but the functions which gave the privilege of attending their Majesties after supper could easily be counted. The Maréchal de Retz, whom we have just seen keeping watch on the gutter, once offered a thousand crowns of that day to the clerk of the closet to get speech of Henri III. at an hour when he had no right to *entrée*. And how a certain venerable historian mocks at a view of the courtyard of the château of Blois, into which the draughtsman introduced the figure of a man on horseback!

At this hour, then, there were at the Louvre none but the most eminent persons in the kingdom. Queen Elizabeth of Austria and her mother-in-law, Catherine de' Medici, were seated to the left of the fireplace. In the opposite corner the King, sunk in his armchair, affected an apathy excusable on the score of digestion, for he had eaten like a prince returned from hunting. Possibly, too, he wished to avoid speech in the presence of so many persons whose interest it was to detect his thoughts.

The courtiers stood, hat in hand, at the further end of the room. Some conversed in undertones; others kept an eye on the King, hoping for a glance or a word. One,

being addressed by the Queen-mother, conversed with her for a few minutes. Another would be so bold as to speak a word to Charles IX., who replied with a nod or a short answer. A German noble, the Count of Solern, was standing in the chimney corner by the side of Charles V.'s granddaughter, with whom he had come to France. Near the young Queen, seated on a stool, was her lady-in-waiting, the Countess Fieschi, a Strozzi, and related to Catherine. The beautiful Mme. de Sauves, a descendant of Jacques Cœur, and mistress in succession of the King of Navarre, of the King of Poland, and of the Duc d'Alençon, had been invited to supper, but she remained standing, her husband being merely a Secretary of State. Behind these two ladies were the two Gondi, talking to them. They alone were laughing of all the dull assembly. Gondi, made Duc de Retz and Gentleman of the Bedchamber, since obtaining the Marshal's baton though he had never commanded an army, had been sent as the King's proxy to be married to the Queen at Spires. This honor plainly indicated that he, like his brother, was one of the few persons whom the King and Queen admitted to a certain familiarity.

On the King's side the most conspicuous figure was the Maréchal de Tavannes, who was at Court on business; Neufville de Villeroy, one of the shrewdest negotiators of the time, who laid the foundation of the fortunes of his family; MM. de Birague and de Chiverni, one in attendance on the Queen-mother, the other Chancellor of Anjou and of Poland, who, knowing Catherine's favoritism, had attached himself to Henri III., the brother whom Charles IX. regarded as an enemy; Strozzi, a cousin of Queen Catherine's, and a few more gentlemen, among whom were to be noted the old Cardinal de Lorraine, and his nephew, the young Duc de Guise, both very much kept at a distance by Catherine and by the King. These two chiefs of the Holy Alliance, afterwards known as the League, established some years since with Spain, made a display of the submission of servants who await their opportunity to become the masters; Catherine and Charles IX. were watching each other with mutual attention.

At this Court—as gloomy as the room in which it had assembled—each one had reason for sadness or absence of mind. The young Queen was enduring all the torments of jealousy, and disguised them ineffectually by attempting to smile at her husband, whom she adored as a pious woman of infinite kindness. Marie Touchet, Charles IX.'s only mistress, to whom he was chivalrously faithful, had come home a month since from the château of Fayet, in Dauphiné, whither she had retired for the birth of her child; and she had brought back with her the only son Charles IX. ever had—Charles, at first Comte d'Auvergne, and afterwards Duc d'Angoulême.

Besides the grief of seeing her rival the mother of the King's son, while she had only a daughter, the poor Queen was enduring the mortification of complete desertion. During his mistress's absence, the King had made it up with his wife with a vehemence which history mentions as one of the causes of his death. Thus Marie Touchet's return made the pious Austrian princess understand how little her husband's heart had been concerned in his love-making. Nor was this the only disappointment the young Queen had to endure in this matter; till now Catherine de' Medici had seemed to be her friend; but, in fact, her mother-in-law, for political ends, had encouraged her son's infidelity, and preferred to support the mistress rather than the wife. And this is the reason why.

When Charles IX. first confessed his passion for Marie Touchet, Catherine looked with favor on the girl for reasons affecting her own prospects of dominion. Marie Touchet was brought to Court at a very early age, at the time of life when a girl's best feelings are in their bloom; she loved the King passionately for his own sake. Terrified at the gulf into which ambition had overthrown the Duchesse de Valentinois, better known as Diane de Poitiers, she was afraid too, no doubt, of Queen Catherine, and preferred happiness to splendor. She thought perhaps that a pair of lovers so young as she and the King were could not hold their own against the Queen-mother.

And, indeed, Marie, the only child of Jean Touchet, the

lord of Beauvais and Le Quillard, King's Councilor, and Lieutenant of the Bailiwick of Orleans, halfway between the citizen class and the lowest nobility, was neither altogether a noble nor altogether bourgeois, and was probably ignorant of the objects of innate ambition aimed at by the Pisseleus and the Saint-Valliers, women of family who were struggling for their families with the secret weapons of love. Marie Touchet, alone, and of no rank, spared Catherine de' Medici the annoyance of finding in her son's mistress the daughter of some great house who might have set up for her rival.

Jean Touchet, a wit in his day, to whom some poets dedicated their works, wanted nothing of the Court. Marie, a young creature, with no following, as clever and well-informed as she was simple and artless, suited the Queen-mother to admiration, and won her warm affection.

In point of fact, Catherine persuaded the Parlement to acknowledge the son which Marie Touchet bore to the King in the month of April, and she granted him the title of Comte d'Auvergne, promising the King that she would leave the boy her personal estate, the *Comtés* of Auvergne and Lauraguais. Afterwards, Marguerite, Queen of Navarre, disputed the gift when she became Queen of France, and annulled it; but later still, Louis XIII., out of respect to the royal blood of the Valois, indemnified the Comte d'Auvergne by making him Duc d'Angoulême.

Catherine had already given Marie Touchet, who asked for nothing, the manor of Belleville, an estate without a title, near Vincennes, whither she came when, after hunting, the King slept at that royal residence. Charles IX. spent the greater part of his later days in that gloomy fortress, and, according to some authors, ended his days there as Louis XII. had ended his. Though it was very natural that a lover so entirely captivated should lavish on the woman he adored fresh proofs of affection when he had to expiate his legitimate infidelities, Catherine, after driving her son back to his wife's arms, certainly pleaded for Marie Touchet as women can, and had won the King back to his mistress again. Whatever could keep Charles IX. employed in any-

thing but politics was pleasing to Catherine; and the kind intentions she expressed towards this child for the moment deceived Charles IX., who was beginning to regard her as his enemy.

The motives on which Catherine acted in this business escaped the discernment of the Queen, who, according to Brantôme, was one of the gentlest Queens that ever reigned, and who did no harm nor displeasure to anyone, even reading her Hours in secret. But this innocent Princess began to perceive what gulfs yawn round a throne, a terrible discovery which might well make her feel giddy; and some still worse feeling must have inspired her reply to one of her ladies, who, at the King's death, observed to her that if she had had a son, she would be Queen-mother and Regent—

"Ah, God be praised that He never gave me a son! What would have come of it? The poor child would have been robbed, as they tried to rob the King my husband, and I should have been the cause of it. God has had mercy on the kingdom, and has ordered everything for the best."

This Princess, of whom Brantôme thinks he has given an ample description when he had said that she had a complexion of face as fine and delicate as that of the ladies of her Court, and very pleasing, and that she had a beautiful shape though but of middle height, was held of small account at the Court; and the King's state affording her an excuse for her double grief, her demeanor added to the gloomy hues of a picture to which a young Queen less cruelly stricken than she was might have given some brightness. The pious Elizabeth was at this crisis a proof of the fact that qualities which add luster to a woman in ordinary life may be fatal in a queen. A princess who did not devote her whole night to prayer would have been a valuable ally for Charles IX., who found no help either in his wife or in his mistress.

As to the Queen-mother, she was absorbed in watching the King; he during supper had made a display of high spirits, which she interpreted as assumed to cloak some plan against herself. Such sudden cheerfulness was in too strong

a contrast to the fractious humor he had betrayed by his persistency in hunting, and by a frenzy of toil at his forge, where he wrought iron, for Catherine to be duped by it. Though she could not guess what statesman was lending himself to these schemes and plots—for Charles IX. could put his mother's spies off the scent—Catherine had no doubt that some plan against her was in the wind.

The unexpected appearance of Tavannes, arriving at the same time as Strozzi, whom she had summoned, had greatly aroused her suspicions. By her power of organization Catherine was superior to the evolution of circumstances; but against sudden violence she was powerless.

As many persons know nothing of the state of affairs, complicated by the multiplicity of parties which then racked France, each leader having his own interests in view, it is needful to devote a few words to describing the dangerous crisis in which the Queen-mother had become entangled. And as this will show Catherine de' Medici in a new light, it will carry us to the very core of this narrative.

Two words will fully summarize this strange woman, so interesting to study, whose influence left such deep traces on France. These two words are dominion and astrology. Catherine de' Medici was excessively ambitious; she had no passion but for power. Superstitious and fatalist, as many a man of superior mind has been, her only sincere belief was in the occult sciences. Without this twofold light, she must always remain misunderstood; and by giving the first place to her faith in astrology, a light will be thrown on the two philosophical figures of this study.

There was a man whom Catherine clung to more than to her children; this man was Cosmo Ruggieri. She gave him rooms in her Hôtel de Soissons; she had made him her chief counselor, instructing him to tell her if the stars ratified the advice and common sense of her ordinary advisers.

Certain curious antecedent facts justified the power which Ruggieri exerted over his mistress till her latest breath. One of the most learned men of the sixteenth century was beyond doubt the physician to Catherine's father, Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino. This leech was known as

Ruggiero the elder (*vecchio Ruggier*, and in French *Roger l'Ancien*, with authors who have written concerning alchemy), to distinguish him from his two sons, Lorenzo Ruggiero, called the Great by writers on the Cabala, and Cosmo Ruggiero, Catherine's astrologer, also known as *Roger* by various French historians. French custom altered their name to Ruggieri, as it did Catherine's from Medici to Medicis.

The elder Ruggieri, then, was so highly esteemed by the family of the Medici that the two dukes, Cosmo and Lorenzo, were godfathers to his sons. In his capacity of mathematician, astrologer, and physician to the Ducal House—three offices that were often scarcely distinguished—he cast the horoscope of Catherine's nativity, in concert with Bazile, the famous mathematician. At that period the occult sciences were cultivated with a meagerness which may seem surprising to the skeptical spirits of this supremely analytical age, who perhaps may find in this historical sketch the germ of the positive sciences which flourish in the nineteenth century—bereft, however, of the poetic grandeur brought to them by the daring speculators of the sixteenth; for they, instead of applying themselves to industry, exalted art and vivified thought. The protection universally granted to these sciences by the sovereigns of the period was indeed justified by the admirable works of inventors who, starting from the search for the *magnum opus*, arrived at astonishing results.

Never, in fact, were rulers more curious for these mysteries. The Fugger family, in whom every modern Lucullus must recognize his chiefs, and every banker his masters, were beyond a doubt men of business, not to be caught nodding; well, these practical men, while lending the capitalized wealth of Europe to the sovereigns of the sixteenth century—who ran into debt quite as handsomely as those of to-day—these illustrious entertainers of Charles V. furnished funds for the retorts of Paracelsus. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Ruggieri the elder was the head of that secret college whence came Cardan, Nostradamus, and Agrippa, each in turn physician to the Valois; and all the

astronomers, astrologers, and alchemists who at that period crowded to the Courts of the Princes of Christendom, and who found especial welcome and protection in France from Catherine de' Medici.

In the horoscope cast for Catherine by Bazile and Ruggieri the elder, the principal events of her life were predicted with an accuracy that is enough to drive disbelievers to despair. This forecast announced the disasters which, during the siege of Florence, affected her early life, her marriage with a prince of France, his unexpected accession to the throne, the birth and the number of her children. Three of her sons were to reign in succession, her two daughters were to become queens; all were to die childless. And this was all so exactly verified, that many historians have regarded it as a prophecy after the event.

It is well known that Nostradamus brought to the château of Chaumont, whither Catherine went at the time of la Renaudie's conspiracy, a woman who had the gift of reading the future. Now in the time of Francis II., when the Queen's sons were still children and in good health, before Elizabeth de Valois had married Philip II. of Spain, or Marguerite de Valois had married Henri de Bourbon, King of Navarre, Nostradamus and this soothsayer confirmed all the details of the famous horoscope.

This woman, gifted no doubt with second sight, and one of the extensive association of indefatigable inquirers for the *magnum opus*, though her life has evaded the ken of history, foretold that the last of these children to wear the crown would perish assassinated. Having placed the Queen in front of a magical mirror in which a spinning-wheel was reflected, each child's face appearing at the end of a spoke, the soothsayer made the wheel turn, and the Queen counted the number of turns. Each turn was a year of a reign. When Henri IV. was placed on the wheel, it went round twenty-two times. The woman—some say it was a man—told the terrified Queen that Henri de Bourbon would certainly be King of France. and reign so many years. Queen Catherine vowed a mortal hatred of the Béarnais on hearing that he would succeed the last, murdered Valois.

Curious to know what sort of death she herself would die, she was warned to beware of Saint-Germain. Thenceforth, thinking that she would be imprisoned or violently killed at the château of Saint-Germain, she never set foot in it, though, by its nearness to Paris, it was infinitely better situated for her plans than those where she took refuge with the King in troubled times. When she fell ill, a few days after the Duc de Guise was assassinated, during the assembly of the States-General at Blois, she asked the name of the prelate who came to minister to her. She was told that his name was Saint-Germain.

"I am a dead woman!" she cried.

She died the next day, having lived just the number of years allotted to her by every reading of her horoscope.

This scene, known to the Cardinal de Lorraine, who ascribed it to the Black Art, was being realized; Francis II. had reigned for two turns only of the wheel, and Charles IX. was achieving his last. When Catherine spoke these strange words to her son Henri as he set out for Poland, "You will soon return!" they must be ascribed to her faith in the occult sciences, and not to any intention of poisoning Charles IX. Marguerite de France was now Queen of Navarre; Elizabeth was Queen of Spain; the Duc d'Anjou was King of Poland.

Many other circumstances contributed to confirm Catherine's belief in the occult sciences. On the eve of the tournament where Henri II. was mortally wounded, Catherine saw the fatal thrust in a dream. Her astrological council, consisting of Nostradamus and the two Ruggieri, had foretold the King's death. History has recorded Catherine's earnest entreaties that he should not enter the lists. The prognostic, and the dream begotten of the prognostic, were verified.

The chronicles of the time relate another and not less strange fact. The courier who brought news of the victory of Montcontour arrived at night, having ridden so hard that he had killed three horses. The Queen-mother was roused. and said, "I knew it."

"In fact," says Brantôme, "she had the day before announced her son's success and some details of the fight."

The astrologer attached to the House of Bourbon foretold that the youngest of the princes in direct descent from Saint-Louis, the son of Antoine de Bourbon, would be King of France. This prophecy, noted by Sully, was fulfilled precisely as described by the horoscope, which made Henri IV. remark that by dint of lies these astrologers hit on the truth.

Be this as it may, most of the clever men of the time believed in the far-reaching "science of the Magi," as it was called by the masters of astrology—or sorcery, as it was termed by the people—and they were justified by the verification of horoscopes.

It was for Cosmo Ruggieri, her mathematician and astrologer—her wizard, if you will—that Catherine erected the pillar against the corn market in Paris, the only remaining relic of the Hôtel de Soissons. Cosmo Ruggieri, like confessors, had a mysterious influence which satisfied him, as it does them. His secret ambition, too, was superior to that of vulgar minds. This man, depicted by romance writers and playwrights as a mere juggler, held the rich abbey of Saint-Mahé in Lower Brittany, and had refused high ecclesiastical preferment; the money he derived in abundance from the superstitious mania of the time was sufficient for his private undertakings; and the Queen's hand, extended to protect his head, preserved every hair of it from harm.

As to Catherine's devouring thirst for dominion, her desire to acquire power was so great that, in order to grasp it, she could ally herself with the Guises, the enemies of the throne; and to keep the reins of State in her own hands, she adopted every means, sacrificing her friends, and even her children. This woman could not live without the intrigues of rule, as a gambler cannot live without the excitement of play. Though she was an Italian and a daughter of the luxurious Medici, the Calvinists, though they calumniated her plentifully, never accused her of having a lover.

Appreciating the maxim "Divide to reign," for twelve years she had been constantly playing off one force against an-

other. As soon as she took the reins of government into her hands, she was compelled to encourage discord to neutralize the strength of two rival houses and save the throne. This necessary system justified Henri II.'s foresight. Catherine was the inventor of the political see-saw, imitated since by every prince who has found himself in a similar position; she upheld, by turns, the Calvinists against the Guises, and the Guises against the Calvinists. Then, after using the two creeds to check each other in the heart of the people, she set the Duc d'Anjou against Charles IX. After using things to counteract each other, she did the same with men, always keeping the clew to their interests in her own hands.

But in this tremendous game, which requires the head of a Louis XI. or a Louis XVIII., the player inevitably is the object of hatred to all parties, and is condemned to win unfailingly, for one lost battle makes every interest his enemy, until indeed by dint of winning he ends by finding no one to play against him. The greater part of Charles IX.'s reign was the triumph of the domestic policy carried out by this wonderful woman. What extraordinary skill Catherine must have brought into play to get the chief command of the army given to the Duc d'Anjou, under a brave young King thirsting for glory, capable and generous —and in the face of the Connétable Anne de Montmorency! The Duc d'Anjou, in the eyes of all Europe, reaped the honors of Saint-Bartholomew's Day, while Charles IX. had all the odium. After instilling into the King's mind a spurious and covert jealousy of his brother, she worked upon this feeling so as to exhaust Charles IX.'s really fine qualities in the intrigues of rivalry with his brother. Cypierre, their first tutor, and Amyot, Charles IX.'s preceptor, had made their royal charge so noble a man, and had laid the foundations of so great a reign, that the mother hated the son from the very first day when she feared to lose her power after having conquered it with so much difficulty.

These facts have led certain historians to believe that the Queen-mother had a preference for Henri III.; but her behavior at this juncture proves that her heart was absolutely indifferent towards her children. The Duc

d'Anjou, when he went to govern Poland, robbed her of the tool she needed to keep Charles IX.'s mind fully occupied by these domestic intrigues, which had hitherto neutralized his energy by giving food to his vehement feelings. Catherine then hatched the conspiracy of la Mole and Coconnas, in which the Duc d'Alençon had a hand; and he, when he became Duc d'Anjou on his brother's being made King, lent himself very readily to his mother's views, and displayed an ambition which was encouraged by his sister Marguerite, Queen of Navarre.

This plot, now ripened to the point which Catherine desired, aimed at putting the young Duke and his brother-in-law, the King of Navarre, at the head of the Calvinists, at seizing Charles IX., thus making the King, who had no heir, a prisoner, and leaving the throne free for the Duke, who proposed to establish Calvinism in France. Only a few days before his death, Calvin had won the reward he hoped for—the Reformed creed was called Calvinism in his honor.

La Mole and Coconnas had been arrested fifty days before the night on which this scene opens, to be beheaded in the following April; and if le Laboureur and other judicious writers had not amply proved that they were the victims of the Queen-mother, Cosmo Ruggieri's participation in the affair would be enough to show that she secretly directed it. This man, suspected and hated by the King for reasons which will be presently sufficiently explained, was implicated by the inquiries. He admitted that he had furnished la Mole with an image representing the King and stabbed to the heart with two needles. This form of witchcraft was at that time a capital crime. This kind of bedevilment (called in French *envoûter,* from the Latin *vultus,* it is said) represented one of the most infernal conceptions that hatred could imagine, and the word admirably expresses the magnetic and terrible process carried on, in occult science, by constantly active malevolence on the person devoted to death; its effects being incessantly suggested by the sight of the wax figure. The law at that time considered, and with good reason, that the idea thus embodied constituted high treason.

Charles IX. desired the death of the Florentine; Catherine, more powerful, obtained from the Supreme Court, through the intervention of her Councilor Lecamus, that her astrologer should be condemned only to the galleys. As soon as the King was dead, Ruggieri was pardoned by an edict of Henri III.'s, who reinstated him in his revenues and received him at Court.

Catherine had, by this time, struck so many blows on her son's heart, that at this moment he was only anxious to shake off the yoke she had laid on him. Since Marie Touchet's absence, Charles IX., having nothing to occupy him, had taken to observing very keenly all that went on around him. He had set very skillful snares for certain persons whom he had trusted, to test their fidelity. He had watched his mother's proceedings, and had kept her in ignorance of his own, making use of all the faults she had inculcated in order to deceive her. Eager to efface the feeling of horror produced in France by the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew, he took an active interest in public affairs, presided at the Council, and tried by well planned measures to seize the reins of government. Though the Queen might have attempted to counteract her son's endeavors by using all the influence that maternal authority and her habit of dominion could have over his mind, the downward course of distrust is so rapid that, at the first leap, the son had gone too far to be recalled.

On the day when his mother's words to the King of Poland were repeated to Charles IX., he already felt so ill that the most hideous notions dawned on his mind; and when such suspicions take possession of a son and a King nothing can remove them. In fact, on his deathbed his mother was obliged to interrupt him, exclaiming, "Do not say that, Monsieur!" when Charles IX., intrusting his wife and daughter to the care of Henri IV., was about to put him on his guard against Catherine.

Though Charles IX. never failed in the superficial respect of which she was so jealous, and she never called the Kings, her sons, anything but Monsieur, the Queen-mother had,

for some months past, detected in Charles's manner the ill-disguised irony of revenge held in suspense. But he must be a clever man who could deceive Catherine. She held in her hand this conspiracy of the Duc d'Alençon and la Mole, so as to be able to divert Charles's efforts at emancipation by this new rivalry of a brother; but before making use of it, she was anxious to dissipate the want of confidence which might make her reconciliation with the King impossible—for how could he leave the power in the hands of a mother who was capable of poisoning him?

Indeed, at this juncture she thought herself so far in danger that she had sent for Strozzi, her cousin, a soldier famous for his death. She held secret councils with Birague and the Gondi, and never had she so frequently consulted the oracle of the Hôtel de Soissons.

Though long habits of dissimulation and advancing years had given Catherine that abbess-like countenance, haughty and ascetic, expressionless and yet deep, reserved but scrutinizing, and so remarkable for any student of her portraits, those about her perceived a cloud over this cold, Florentine mirror. No sovereign was ever a more imposing figure than this woman had made herself since the day when she had succeeded in coercing the Guises after the death of Francis II. Her black velvet hood, with a peak over the forehead, for she never went out of mourning for Henri II., was, as it were, a womanly cowl round her cold, imperious features, to which she could, however, on occasion, give insinuating Italian charm. She was so well made, that she introduced the fashion for women to ride on horseback in such a way as to display their legs; this is enough to prove that hers were of perfect form. Every lady in Europe thenceforth rode on a side-saddle, *à la planchette,* for France had long set the fashions.

To anyone who can picture this impressive figure, the scene in the great room that evening has an imposing aspect. The two Queens, so unlike in spirit, in beauty, and in dress, and almost at daggers drawn, were both much too absent-minded to give the impetus for which the courtiers waited to raise their spirits.

The dead secret of the drama which, for the past six months, the son and mother had been cautiously playing, was guessed by some of their followers; the Italians, more especially, had kept an attentive lookout, for if Catherine should lose the game, they would all be the victims. Under these circumstances, at a moment when Catherine and her son were vying with each other in subterfuges, the King was the center of observation.

Charles IX., tired by a long day's hunting, and by the serious reflections he brooded over in secret, looked forty this evening. He had reached the last stage of the malady which killed him, and which gave rise to grave suspicions of poison. According to de Thou, the Tacitus of the Valois, the surgeon found unaccountable spots in the King's body (*ex causâ incognitâ reperti livores*). His funeral was even more carelessly conducted than that of Francis II. Charles the Ninth was escorted from Saint-Lazare to Saint-Denis by Brantôme and a few archers of the Guard commanded by the Comte de Solern. This circumstance, added to the mother's supposed hatred of her son, may confirm the accusation brought against her by de Thou; at least it gives weight to the opinion here expressed, that she cared little for any of her children, an indifference which is accounted for by her faith in the pronouncement of astrology. Such a woman could not care for tools that were to break in her hands. Henri III. was the last King under whom she could hope to reign; and that was all.

In our day it seems allowable to suppose that Charles IX. died a natural death. His excesses, his manner of life, the sudden development of his powers, his last struggles to seize the reins of government, his desire to live, his waste of strength, his last sufferings and his last pleasures, all indicate, to impartial judges, that he died of disease of the lungs, a malady at that time little understood, and of which nothing was known; and its symptoms might lead Charles himself to believe that he was poisoned.

The real poison given him by his mother lay in the evil counsels of the courtiers with whom she surrounded him, who induced him to waste his intellectual and physical powers,

and who thus were the cause of a disease which was purely incidental and not congenital.

Charles the Ninth, at this period of his life more than at any other, bore the stamp of a somber dignity not unbecoming in a king. The majesty of his secret thoughts was reflected in his face, which was remarkable for the Italian complexion he inherited from his mother. This ivory pallor, so beautiful by artificial light, and so well suited with an expression of melancholy, gave added effect to his deep blue eyes showing narrowly under thick eyelids, and thus acquiring that keen acumen which imagination pictures in the glance of a king, while their color was an aid to dissimulation. Charles's eyes derived an awe-inspiring look from his high, marked eyebrows—accentuating a lofty forehead—which he could lift or lower with singular facility. His nose was long and broad, and thick at the tip—a true lion's nose; he had large ears; light reddish hair; lips of the color of blood, the lips of a consumptive man; the upper lip thin and satirical, the lower full enough to indicate fine qualities of feeling.

The wrinkles stamped on his brow in early life, when terrible anxieties had blighted its freshness, made his face intensely interesting; more than one had been caused by remorse for the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew, a deed which had been craftily foisted on him; but there were two other lines on his face which would have been eloquent to any student who at that time could have had a special revelation of the principles of modern physiology. These lines made a deep furrow from the cheekbones to each corner of the mouth, and betrayed the efforts made by an exhausted organization to respond to mental strain and to violent physical enjoyment. Charles IX. was worn out. The Queen-mother, seeing her work, must have felt some remorse, unless, indeed, politics stifle such a feeling in all who sit under the purple. If Catherine could have foreseen the effects of her intrigues on her son, she might perhaps have shrunk from them?

It was a terrible spectacle. The King, by nature so strong, had become weak; the spirit, so nobly tempered, was

racked by doubts; this man, the center of authority, felt himself helpless; the naturally firm temper had lost confidence in its power. The warrior's valor had degenerated into ferocity, reserve had become dissimulation, the refined and tender passion of the Valois was an insatiable thirst for pleasure. This great man, misprized, perverted, with every side of his noble spirit chafed to a sore, a king without power, a loving heart without a friend, torn a thousand ways by conflicting schemes, was, at four-and-twenty, the melancholy image of a man who has found everything wanting, who distrusts everyone, who is ready to stake his all, even his life. Only lately had he understood his mission, his power, his resources, and the obstacles placed by his mother in the way of the pacification of the kingdom; and the light glowed in a broken lamp.

Two men, for whom the King had so great a regard that he had saved one from the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew, and had dined with the other at a time when his enemies accused him of poisoning the King—his chief physician Jean Chapelain, and the great surgeon Ambroise Paré—had been sent for from the country by Catherine, and, obeying the summons in hot haste, arrived at the King's bedtime. They looked anxiously at their sovereign, and some of the courtiers made whispered inquiries, but they answered with due reserve, saying nothing of the sentence each had secretly pronounced. Now and again the King would raise his heavy eyelids and try to conceal from the bystanders the glance he shot at his mother. Suddenly he rose, and went to stand in front of the fireplace.

"M. de Chiverni," said he, "why do you keep the title of Chancellor of Anjou and Poland? Are you our servant or our brother's?"

"I am wholly yours, Sire," replied Chiverni, with a bow.

"Well, then, come to-morrow; I mean to send you to Spain, for strange things are doing at the Court of Madrid, gentlemen."

The King looked at his wife and returned to his chair.

"Strange things are doing everywhere," he added in a whisper to Marshal Tavannes, one of the favorites of his

younger days. And he rose to lead the partner of his youthful pleasures into the recess of an oriel window, saying to him—

"I want you; stay till the last. I must know whether you will be with me or against me. Do not look astonished. I am breaking the leading strings. My mother is at the bottom of all the mischief here. In three months I shall either be dead, or be really King. As you love your life, silence! You are in my secret with Solern and Villeroy. If the least hint is given, it will come from one of you three. —Do not keep too close to me; go and pay your court to my mother; tell her that I am dying, and that you cannot regret it, for that I am but a poor creature."

Charles IX. walked round the room leaning on his old favorite's shoulder, and discussing his sufferings with him, to mislead inquisitive persons; then, fearing that his coldness might be too marked, he went to talk with the two Queens, calling Birague to his side.

Just then Pinard glided in at the door and came up to Queen Catherine, slipping in like an eel, close to the wall. He murmured two words in the Queen-mother's ear, and she replied with an affirmative nod. The King did not ask what this meant, but he went back to his chair with a scowl round the room of horrible rage and jealousy. This little incident was of immense importance in the eyes of all the Court. This exertion of authority without any appeal to the King was like the drop of water that makes the glass overflow. The young Queen and Countess Fieschi withdrew without the King's paying her the least attention, but the Queen-mother attended her daughter-in-law to the door. Though the misunderstanding between the mother and son lent enormous interest to the movements, looks, and attitude of Catherine and Charles IX., their cold composure plainly showed the courtiers that they were in the way; as soon as the Queen had gone they took their leave. At ten o'clock no one remained but certain intimate persons—the two Gondi, Tavannes, the Comte de Solern, Birague, and the Queen-mother.

The King sat plunged in the deepest melancholy. This

silence was fatiguing. Catherine seemed at a loss; she wished to retire, and she wanted the King to attend her to the door, but Charles remained obstinately lost in thought; she rose to bid him good-night, Charles was obliged to follow her example; she took his arm, and went a few steps with him to speak in his ear these few words—

"Monsieur, I have matters of importance to discuss with you."

As she left, the Queen-mother met the eyes of the Gondi reflected in a glass, and gave them a significant glance, which her son could not see—all the more so because he himself was exchanging meaning looks with the Comte de Solern and Villeroy; Tavannes was absorbed in thought.

"Sire," said the Maréchal de Retz, coming out of his meditations, "you seem right royally bored. Do you never amuse yourself nowadays? Heaven above us! where are the times when we went gadding about the streets of nights?"

"Yes, those were good times," said the King, not without a sigh.

"Why not be off now?" said M. de Birague, bowing himself out, with a wink at the Gondi.

"I always think of that time with pleasure," cried the Maréchal de Retz.

"I should like to see you on the roofs, M. le Maréchal," said Tavannes. "*Sacré chat d'Italie*, if you might but break your neck," he added in an undertone to the King.

"I know not whether you or I should be nimblest at jumping across a yard or a street; but what I do know is, that neither of us is more afraid of death than the other," replied the Duc de Retz.

"Well, Sire, will you come to scour the town as you did when you were young?" said the Master of the Wardrobe to the King.

Thus at four-and-twenty the unhappy King was no longer thought young, even by his flatterers. Tavannes and the King recalled, like two schoolfellows, some of the good tricks they had perpetrated in Paris, and the party was soon made up. The two Italians, being dared to jump from roof to roof across the street, pledged themselves to follow where

the King should lead. They all went to put on common clothes.

The Comte de Solern, left alone with the King, looked at him with amazement. The worthy German, though filled with compassion as he understood the position of the King of France, was fidelity and honor itself, but he had not a lively imagination. King Charles, surrounded by enemies, and trusting no one, not even his wife—who, not knowing that his mother and all her servants were inimical to him, had committed some little indiscretions—was happy to have found in M. de Solern a devotion which justified complete confidence. Tavannes and Villeroy were only partly in the secret. The Comte de Solern alone knew the whole of the King's schemes; and he was in every way very useful to his master, inasmuch as that he had a handful of confidential and attached men at his orders who obeyed him blindly. M. de Solern, who held a command in the Archers of the Guard, had for some days been picking from among his men some who were faithful in their adherence to the King, to form a chosen company. The King could think of everything.

"Well, Solern," said Charles IX., "we were needing a pretext for spending a night out of doors. I had the excuse, of course, of Mme. de Belleville; but this is better, for my mother can find out what goes on at Marie's house."

M. de Solern, as he was to attend the King, asked if he might not go the rounds with some of his Germans, and to this Charles consented. By eleven o'clock the King, in better spirits now, set out with his three companions to explore the neighborhood of the Rue Saint-Honoré.

"I will take my lady by surprise," said Charles to Tavannes as they went along the Rue de l'Autruche.

To make this nocturnal play more intelligible to those who may be ignorant of the topography of old Paris, it will be necessary to explain the position of the Rue de l'Autruche. The part of the Louvre, begun by Henri II., was still being built amid the wreck of houses. Where the wing now stands looking over the Pont des Arts, there was at that time a garden. In the place of the Colonnade there were a moat and a drawbridge on which, somewhat

later, a Florentine, the Maréchal d'Ancre, met his death. Beyond this garden rose the turrets of the Hôtel de Bourbon, the residence of the princes of that branch till the day when the Constable's treason (after he was ruined by the confiscation of his possessions, decreed by Francis I., to avoid having to decide between him and his mother) put an end to the trial that had cost France so dear, by the confiscation of the Constable's estates.

This château, which looked well from the river, was not destroyed till the time of Louis XIV.

The Rue de l'Autruche ran from the Rue Saint-Honoré, ending at the Hôtel de Bourbon on the quay. This street, named de l'Autruche on some old plans, and de l'Austruc on others, has, like many more, disappeared from the map. The Rue des Poulies would seem to have been cut across the ground occupied by the houses nearest to the Rue Saint-Honoré. Authors have differed, too, as to the etymology of the name. Some suppose it to be derived from a certain Hôtel d'Osteriche (*Osterrichen*) inhabited in the fourteenth century by a daughter of that house who married a French nobleman. Some assert that this was the site of the Royal Aviaries, whither, once on a time, all Paris crowded to see a living ostrich.

Be it as it may, this tortuous street was made notable by the residences of certain princes of the blood, who dwelt in the vicinity of the Louvre. Since the Sovereign had deserted the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, where for several centuries he had lived in the Bastille, and removed to the Louvre, many of the nobility had settled near the palace. The Hôtel de Bourbon had its fellow in the old Hôtel d'Alençon in the Rue Saint-Honoré. This, the palace of the Counts of that name, always an appanage of the Crown, was at this time owned by Henri II.'s fourth son, who subsequently took the title of Duc d'Anjou, and who died in the reign of Henri III., to whom he gave no little trouble. The estate then reverted to the Crown, including the old palace, which was pulled down. In those days a prince's residence was a vast assemblage of buildings; to form some idea of its extent, we have only to go and see the space covered by

the Hôtel de Soubise, which is still standing in the Marais. Such a palace included all the buildings necessary to these magnificent lives, which may seem almost problematical to many persons who see how poor is the state of a prince in these days. There were immense stables, lodgings for physicians, librarians, chancellor, chaplains, treasurers, officials, pages, paid servants, and lackeys, attached to the prince's person.

Not far from the Rue Saint-Honoré, in a garden belonging to the hôtel, stood a pretty little house built in 1520 by command of the celebrated Duchesse d'Alençon, which had since been surrounded with other houses erected by merchants. Here the King had installed Marie Touchet. Although the Duc d'Alençon was engaged in a conspiracy against the King at that time, he was incapable of annoying him in such a matter.

As the King was obliged to pass by his lady's door on his way down the Rue Saint-Honoré, where at that time highway robbers had no opportunities within the Barrière des Sergents, he could hardly avoid stopping there. While keeping a lookout for some stroke of luck—a belated citizen to be robbed, or the watch to be thrashed—the King scanned every window, peeping in wherever he saw lights, to see what was going on, or to overhear a conversation. But he found his good city in a provokingly peaceful state. On a sudden, as he came in front of the house kept by a famous perfumer named René, who supplied the Court, the King was seized with one of those swift inspirations which are suggested by antecedent observation, as he saw a bright light shining from the topmost window of the roof.

This perfumer was strongly suspected of doctoring rich uncles when they complained of illness; he was credited at Court with the invention of the famous *Elixir à successions*—the Elixir of Inheritance—and had been accused of poisoning Jeanne d'Albret, Henri IV.'s mother, who was buried without her head having been opened, in spite of the express orders of Charles IX., as a contemporary tells us. For two months past the King had been seeking some stratagem to enable him to spy out the secrets of René's laboratory, whither

Cosmo Ruggieri frequently resorted. Charles intended, if anything should arouse his suspicions, to take steps himself without the intervention of the police or the law, over whom his mother would exert the influence of fear or of bribery.

It is beyond all doubt that during the sixteenth century, and the years immediately preceding and following it, poisoning had been brought to a pitch of perfection which remains unknown to modern chemistry, but which is indisputably proved by history. Italy, the cradle of modern science, was at that time the inventor and mistress of these secrets, many of which are lost. Romancers have made such extravagant use of this fact, that whenever they introduce Italians they make them play the part of assassins and poisoners.

But though Italy had then the monopoly of those subtle poisons of which historians tell us, we must regard her supremacy in toxicology merely as part of her pre-eminence in all branches of knowledge and in the arts, in which she led the way for all Europe. The crimes of the period were not hers alone; she served the passions of the age, as she built magnificently, commanded armies, painted glorious frescoes, sang songs, loved queens, and directed politics. At Florence this hideous art had reached such perfection, that a woman dividing a peach with a duke could make use of a knife of which one side only was poisoned, and, eating the untainted half, dealt death with the other. A pair of perfumed gloves introduced a mortal malady by the pores of the hand; poison could be concealed in a bunch of fresh roses of which the fragrance, inhaled but once, meant certain death. Don Juan of Austria, it is said, was poisoned by a pair of boots.

So King Charles had a right to be inquisitive, and it is easy to imagine how greatly the dark suspicions which tormented him added to his eagerness to detect René in the act.

The old fountain, since rebuilt, at the corner of the Rue de l'Arbre-Sec, afforded this illustrious crew the necessary access to the roof of a house, which the King pretended that he wished to invade, not far from René's. Charles,

followed by his companions, began walking along the roofs, to the great terror of the good folks awakened by these marauders, who would call to them, giving them some coarsely grotesque name, listen to family squabbles or love-makings, and do some vexatious damage.

When the two Gondi saw Tavannes and the King clambering along the roof adjoining René's, the Maréchal de Retz sat down, saying he was tired, and his brother remained with him.

"So much the better," thought the King, glad to be quit of his spies.

Tavannes made fun of the two Italians, who were then left alone in the midst of perfect silence in a place where they had only the sky above them and the cats for listeners. And the brothers took advantage of this position to speak out thoughts which they never would have uttered elsewhere —thoughts suggested by the incidents of the evening.

"Albert," said the Grand Master to the Marshal, "the King will get the upper hand of the Queen; we are doing bad business so far as our fortunes are concerned by attaching ourselves to Catherine's. If we transfer our services to the King now, when he is seeking some support against his mother, and needs capable men to rely upon, we shall not be turned out like wild beasts when the Queen-mother is banished, imprisoned, or killed."

"You will not get far, Charles, by that road," the Marshal replied. "You will follow your master into the grave, and he has not long to live; he is wrecked by dissipation; Cosmo Ruggieri has foretold his death next year."

"A dying boar has often gored the hunter," said Charles de Gondi. "This plot of the Duc d'Alençon with the King of Navarre and the Prince de Condé, of which la Mole and Coconnas are taking the onus, is dangerous rather than useful. In the first place, the King of Navarre, whom the Queen-mother hopes to take in the fact, is too suspicious of her, and will have nothing to do with it. He means to get the benefit of the conspiracy and run none of the risks. And now, the last idea is to place the crown on the head of the Duc d'Alençon, who is to turn Calvinist."

"*Budelone!* Dolt that you are, do not you see that this plot enables our Queen to learn what the Huguenots can do with the Duc d'Alençon, and what the King means to do with the Huguenots? For the King is temporizing with them. And Catherine, to set the King riding on a wooden horse, will betray the plot which must nullify his schemes."

"Ay!" said Charles de Gondi, "by dint of taking our advice she can beat us at our own game. That is very good."

"Good for the Duc d'Anjou, who would rather be King of France than King of Poland; I am going to explain matters to him."

"You are going, Albert?"

"To-morrow. Is it not my duty to attend the King of Poland? I shall join him at Venice, where the Signori have undertaken to amuse him."

"You are prudence itself."

"*Che bestia!* I assure you solemnly that there is not the slightest danger for either of us at Court. If there were, should I leave? I would stick to our kind Mistress."

"Kind!" said the Grand Master. "She is the woman to drop her tools if she finds them too heavy."

"*O coglione!* You call yourself a soldier, and are afraid of death? Every trade has its duties, and our duty is to Fortune. When we attach ourselves to monarchs who are the fount of all temporal power, and who protect and ennoble and enrich our families, we have to give them such love as inflames the soul of the martyr for Heaven; when they sacrifice us for the throne we may perish, for we die as much for ourselves as for them, but our family does not perish.—*Ecco;* I have said!"

"You are quite right, Albert; you have got the old duchy of Retz."

"Listen to me," said the Duc de Retz. "The Queen has great hopes of the Ruggieri and their arts to reconcile her to her son. When that artful youth refused to have anything to do with René, our Queen easily guessed what her son's suspicions were. But who can tell what the King

has in his pocket? Perhaps he is only doubting as to what fate he intends for his mother; he hates her, you understand? He said something of his purpose to the Queen, and the Queen talked of it to Mme. de Fieschi; Mme. de Fieschi carried it on to the Queen-mother, and since then the King has kept out of his wife's way."

"It was high time——" said Charles de Gondi.

"What to do?" asked the Marshal.

"To give the King something to do," replied the Grand Master, who, though he was on less intimate terms with Catherine than his brother, was not less clear-sighted.

"Charles," said de Retz gravely, "I have started on a splendid road; but if you want to be a duke, you must, like me, be our Mistress's ready tool. She will remain Queen; she is the strongest. Mme. de Sauves is still devoted to her; and the King of Navarre and the Duc d'Alençon are devoted to Mme. de Sauves; Catherine will always have them in leading strings under this King, as she will have them under King Henri III. Heaven send he may not be ungrateful!"

"Why?"

"His mother does too much for him."

"Hark! There is a noise in the Rue Saint-Honoré," cried Charles de Gondi. "René's door is being locked. Cannot you hear a number of men? They must have taken the Ruggieri."

"The devil! What a piece of prudence! The King has not shown his usual impetuosity. But where will he imprison them?—Let us see what is going on."

The brothers reached the corner of the Rue de l'Autruche at the moment when the King was entering his mistress's house. By the light of the torches held by the gatekeeper they recognized Tavannes and the Ruggieri.

"Well, Tavannes," the Grand Master called out as he ran after the King's companion, who was making his way back to the Louvre, "what adventures have you had?"

"We dropped on a full council of wizards, and arrested two who are friends of yours, and who will explain for the benefit of French noblemen by what means you, who are not

Frenchmen, have contrived to clutch two Crown offices," said Tavannes, half in jest.

"And the King?" asked the Grand Master, who was not much disturbed by Tavannes's hostility.

"He is staying with his mistress."

"We have risen to where we stand by the most absolute devotion to our masters, a brilliant and noble career which you too have adopted, my dear Duke," replied the Maréchal de Retz.

The three courtiers walked on in silence. As they bid each other good-night, rejoining their retainers, who escorted them home, two men lightly glided along the Rue de l'Autruche in the shadow of the wall. These were the King and the Comte de Solern, who soon reached the river bank at a spot where a boat and rowers, engaged by the German Count, were awaiting them. In a few minutes they had reached the opposite shore.

"My mother is not in bed," cried the King, "she will see us; we have not made a good choice of our meeting-place."

"She will think some duel is in the wind," said Solern. "And how is she to distinguish who we are at this distance?"

"Well! Even if she sees me!" cried Charles IX. "I have made up my mind now."

The King and his friend jumped on shore, and hurried off towards the Pré aux Clercs. On arriving there, the Comte de Solern, who went first, parleyed with a man on sentry, with whom he exchanged a few words, and who then withdrew to a group of others.

Presently two men, who seemed to be princes by the way the outposts saluted them, left the spot where they were in hiding behind some broken fencing, and came to the King, to whom they bent the knee; but Charles IX. raised them before they could touch the ground, saying—

"No ceremony; here we are all gentlemen together."

These three were now joined by a venerable old man, who might have been taken for the Chancellor de l'Hôpital, but that he had died the year before. Then all four walked

on as quickly as possible to reach a spot where their conversation could not be overheard by their retainers, and Solern followed them at a little distance to keep guard over the King. This faithful servant felt some doubts which Charles did not share, for to him indeed life was too great a burden. The Count was the only witness to the meeting on the King's side.

It soon became interesting.

"Sire," said one of the speakers, "the Connétable de Montmorency, the best friend the King, your father, had, and possessed of all his secrets, agreed with the Maréchal de Saint-André that Mme. Catherine should be sewn up in a sack and thrown into the river. If that had been done, many good men would be alive now."

"I have executions enough on my conscience, Monsieur," replied the King.

"Well, Sire," said the youngest of the four gentlemen, "from the depths of exile Queen Catherine would still manage to interfere and find men to help her. Have we not everything to fear from the Guises, who, nine years since, schemed for a monstrous Catholic alliance, in which your Majesty is not included, and which is a danger to the throne? This alliance is a Spanish invention—for Spain still cherishes the hope of leveling the Pyrenees. Sire, Calvinism can save France by erecting a moral barrier between this nation and one that aims at the Empire of the world. If the Queen-mother finds herself in banishment, she will throw herself on Spain and the Guises."

"Gentlemen," said the King, "I will have you to know that, with your help, and with peace established on a basis of confidence, I will undertake to make every soul in the kingdom quake. By God and every sacred relic! it is time that the royal authority should assert itself. Understand this clearly; so far, my mother is right, power is slipping from your grasp, as it is from mine. Your estates, your privileges are bound to the throne; when you have allowed religion to be overthrown, the hands you are using as tools will turn against the Monarchy and against you.

"I have had enough of fighting ideas with weapons that

cannot touch them. Let us see whether Protestantism can make its way if left to itself; above all, let us see what the spirit of that faction means to attack. The Admiral, God be merciful to him, was no enemy of mine. He swore to me that he would restrain the revolt within the limits of spiritual feeling, and in the temporal kingdom secure mastery to the King and submissive subjects. Now, gentlemen, if the thing is still in your power, set an example, and help your Sovereign to control the malcontents who are disturbing the peace of both parties alike. War robs us of all our revenue, and ruins the country; I am weary of this troubled State—so much so, that, if it should be absolutely necessary, I would sacrifice my mother. I would do more; I would have about me a like number of Catholics and of Protestants, and I would hang Louis XI.'s ax over their heads to keep them equal. If MM. de Guise plot a holy alliance which endangers the Crown, the executioner shall begin on them.

"I understand the griefs of my people, and am quite ready to cut freely at the nobles who bring trouble on our country. I care little for questions of conscience; I mean henceforth to have submissive subjects who will work, under my rule, at the prosperity of the State.

"Gentlemen, I give you ten days to treat with your adherents, to break up your plots, and return to me, who will be a father to you. If you are refractory, you will see great changes. I shall make use of smaller men who, at my bidding, will rush upon the great lords. I will follow the example of a king who pacified his realm by striking down greater men than you are who dared to defy him. If Catholic troops are wanting, I can appeal to my brother of Spain to defend a threatened throne; nay, and if I need a minister to carry out my will, he will lend me the Duke of Alva."

"In that event, Sire, we can find Germans to fight your Spaniards," said one of the party.

"I may remind you, cousin," said Charles IX. coldly, "that my wife's name is Elizabeth of Austria; your allies on that side might fail you. But take my advice; let us

fight this alone without calling in the foreigner. You are the object of my mother's hatred, and you care enough for me to play the part of second in my duel with her—well, then, listen. You stand so high in my esteem, that I offer you the office of High Constable; you will not betray us as the other has done."

The Prince thus addressed took the King's hand in a friendly grasp, exclaiming—

"God's 'ounds, brother, that is indeed forgiving evil! But, Sire, the head cannot move without the tail, and our tail is hard to drag along. Give us more than ten days. We still need at least a month to make the rest hear reason. By the end of that time we shall be the masters."

"A month, so be it; Villeroy is my only plenipotentiary. Take no word but his, whatever anyone may say."

"One month," said the three other gentlemen; "that will be enough time."

"Gentlemen," said the King, "we are but five, all men of mettle. If there is any treachery, we shall know with whom to deal."

The three gentlemen left the King with every mark of deep respect and kissed his hand.

As the King recrossed the Seine, four o'clock was striking by the Louvre clock.

Queen Catherine was still up.

"My mother is not gone to bed," said Charles to the Comte de Solern.

"She too has her forge," said the German.

"My dear Count, what must you think of a king who is reduced to conspiracy?" said Charles IX. bitterly, after a pause.

"I think, Sire, that if you would only allow me to throw that woman into the river, as our young friend said, France would soon be at peace."

"Parricide!—and after Saint-Bartholomew's!" said the King. "No, no—exile. Once fallen, my mother would not have an adherent or a partisan."

"Well, then, Sire," the Count went on, "allow me to take her into custody now, at once, and escort her be-

yond the frontier; for by to-morrow she will have won you round."

"Well," said the King, "come to my forge; no one can hear us there. Besides, I am anxious that my mother should know nothing of the arrest of the Ruggieri. If she knows I am within, the good lady will suspect nothing, and we will concert the measures for arresting her."

When the King, attended by Solern, went into the low room which served as his workshop, he smiled as he pointed to his forge and various tools.

"I do not suppose," said he, "that of all the kings France may ever have, there will be another with a taste for such a craft. But when I am really King, I shall not forge swords; they shall all be sheathed."

"Sire," said the Comte de Solern, "the fatigues of tennis, your work at the forge, hunting, and—may I say it?—love-making, are chariots lent you by the Devil to hasten your journey to Saint-Denis."

"Ah, Solern!" said the King sadly, "if only you could feel the fire they have set burning in my heart and body. Nothing can slake it.—Are you sure of the men who are guarding the Ruggieri?"

"As sure as of myself."

"Well, in the course of this day I shall have made up my mind. Think out the means of acting, and I will give you my final instructions at five this evening, at Mme. de Belleville's."

The first gleams of daybreak were struggling with the lights in the King's workshop, where the Comte de Solern had left him alone, when he heard the door open and saw his mother, looking like a ghost in the gloom. Though Charles IX. was highly strung and nervous, he did not start, although under the circumstances this apparition had an ominous and grotesque aspect.

"Monsieur," said she, "you are killing yourself——"

"I am fulfilling my horoscopes," he retorted, with a bitter smile. "But you, Madame, are you as ill as I am?"

"We have both watched through the night, Monsieur,

but with very different purpose. When you were setting out to confer with your bitterest enemies in the open night, and hiding it from your mother, with the connivance of Tavannes and the Gondi, with whom you pretended to be scouring the town, I was reading dispatches which prove that a terrible conspiracy is hatching, in which your brother the Duc d'Alençon is implicated with your brother-in-law, the King of Navarre, the Prince de Condé, and half the nobility of your kingdom. Their plan is no less than to snatch the Crown from you by taking possession of your person. These gentlemen have already a following of fifty thousand men, all good soldiers."

"Indeed!" said the King incredulously.

"Your brother is becoming a Huguenot," the Queen went on.

"My brother joining the Huguenots?" cried Charles, brandishing the iron bar he held.

"Yes. The Duc d'Alençon, a Huguenot at heart, is about to declare himself. Your sister, the Queen of Navarre, has scarcely a tinge of affection left for you. She loves M. le Duc d'Alençon, she loves Bussy, and she also loves little la Mole."

"What a large heart!" said the King.

"Little la Mole, to grow great," the Queen went on, "can think of no better means than making a King of France to his mind. Then, it is said, he is to be High Constable."

"That damned Margot!" cried the King. "This is what comes of her marrying a heretic——"

"That would be nothing; but then there is the head of the younger branch, whom you have placed near the throne against my warnings, and who only wants to see you all kill each other! The House of Bourbon is the enemy of the House of Valois. Mark this, Monsieur, a younger branch must always be kept in abject poverty, for it is born with the spirit of conspiracy, and it is folly to give it weapons when it has none, or to leave them in its possession when it takes them. The young branches must be impotent for mischief—that is the law of sovereignty. The sultans of Asia observe it.

"The proofs are upstairs in my closet, whither I begged you to follow me when we parted last night, but you had other projects. Within a month, if we do not take a high hand, your fate will be that of Charles the Simple."

"Within a month!" exclaimed Charles, amazed at the coincidence of this period with the term fixed by the princes that very night. "In a month we shall be the masters," thought he to himself, repeating their words. "You have proofs, Madame?" he asked aloud.

"They are unimpeachable, Monsieur; they are supplied by my daughter Marguerite. Terrified by the probable outcome of such a coalition, in spite of her weakness for your brother d'Alençon, the throne of the Valois lay, for once, nearer to her heart than all her amours. She asks indeed, as the reward of her revelation, that la Mole shall go scot free; but that popinjay seems to me to be a rogue we ought to get rid of, as well as the Comte de Coconnas, your brother d'Alençon's right-hand man. As to the Prince de Condé, that boy would agree to anything so long as I may be flung into the river; I do not know if that is his idea of a handsome return on his wedding-day for the pretty wife I got him.

"This is a serious matter, Monsieur. You spoke of predictions! I know of one which says that the Bourbons will possess the throne of the Valois; and if we do not take care, it will be fulfilled. Do not be vexed with your sister, she has acted well in this matter.

"My son," she went on, after a pause, with an assumption of tenderness in her tone, "many evil-minded persons, in the interest of the Guises, want to sow dissension between you and me, though we are the only two persons in the realm whose interests are identical. Reflect. You blame yourself now, I know, for Saint-Bartholomew's night; you blame me for persuading you to it. But Catholicism, Monsieur, ought to be the bond of Spain, France, and Italy, three nations which by a secretly and skillfully worked scheme may, in the course of time, be united under the House of Valois. Do not forfeit your chances by letting the cord slip which

includes these three kingdoms in the pale of the same faith.

"Why should not the Valois and the Medici carry out, to their great glory, the project of Charles V., who lost his head? Let those descendants of Jane the Crazy people the new world which they are grasping at. The Medici, masters of Florence and Rome, will subdue Italy to your rule; they will secure all its advantages by a treaty of commerce and alliance, and recognize you as their liege lord for the fiefs of Piedmont, the Milanese, and Naples over which you have rights. These, Monsieur, are the reasons for the war to the death we are waging with the Huguenots. Why do you compel us to repeat these things?

"Charlemagne made a mistake when he pushed northwards. France is a body of which the heart is on the Gulf of Lyons, and whose two arms are Spain and Italy. Thus we should command the Mediterranean, which is like a basket into which all the wealth of the East is poured to the benefit of the Venetians now, in the teeth of Philip II.

"And if the friendship of the Medici and your inherited rights can thus entitle you to hope for Italy, force, or alliance, or perhaps inheritance, may give you Spain. There you must step in before the ambitious House of Austria, to whom the Guelphs would have sold Italy, and who still dream of possessing Spain. Though your wife is a daughter of that line, humble Austria, hug her closely to stifle her! There lie the enemies of your dominion, since from thence comes aid for the Reformers.—Do not listen to men who would profit by our disagreement, and who fill your head with trouble by representing me as your chief enemy at home. Have I hindered you from having an heir? Is it my fault that your mistress has a son and your wife only a daughter? Why have you not by this time three sons, who would cut off all this sedition at the root?—Is it my part, Monsieur, to reply to these questions? If you had a son, would M. d'Alençon conspire against you?"

As she spoke these words, Catherine fixed her eyes on Charles IX. with the fascinating gaze of a bird of prey on its victim. The daughter of the Medici was beautiful

in her way; her real feelings illumined her face, which, like that of a gambler at the green-table, was radiant with ambitious greed. Charles IX. saw her no longer as the mother of one man, but, as she had been called, the mother of armies and empires (*mater castrorum*). Catherine had spread the pinions of her genius, and was boldly soaring in the realm of high politics of the Medici and the Valois, sketching the vast plans which had frightened Henri II., and which, transmitted by the Medici to Richelieu, were stored in the Cabinet of the House of Bourbon. But Charles IX., seeing his mother take so many precautions, supposed them to be necessary, and wondered to what end she was taking them. He looked down; he hesitated, his distrust was not to be dispelled by words.

Catherine was astonished to see what deeply founded suspicion lurked in her son's heart.

"Well, Monsieur," she went on, "do you not choose to understand me? What are we, you and I, compared with the eternity of a royal Crown? Do you suspect me of any purposes but those which must agitate us who dwell in the sphere whence empires are governed?"

"Madame," said he, "I will follow you to your closet—we must act——"

"Act?" cried Catherine. "Let them go their way and take them in the act; the law will rid you of them. For God's sake, Monsieur, let them see us smiling."

The Queen withdrew. The King alone remained standing for a minute, for he had sunk into extreme dejection.

"On which side are the snares?" he said aloud. "Is it she who is deceiving me, or they? What is the better policy? *Deus! discerne causam meam*," he cried, with tears in his eyes. "Life is a burden to me. Whether natural or compulsory, I would rather meet death than these contradictory torments," he added, and he struck the hammer on his anvil with such violence that the vaults of the Louvre quaked. "Great God!" he exclaimed, going out and looking up at the sky, "Thou for whose holy religion I am warring, give me the clearness of Thine eyes to see into my mother's heart by questioning the Ruggieri."

The little house inhabited by the Lady of Belleville, where Charles had left his prisoners, was the last but one in the Rue de l'Autruche, near the Rue Saint-Honoré. The street-gate, guarded by two little lodges built of brick, looked very plain at a time when gates and all their accessories were so elaborately treated. The entrance consisted of two stone pillars, diamond-cut, and the architrave was graced with the reclining figure of a woman holding a cornucopia. The gate, of timber covered with heavy iron scroll work, had a wicket peephole at the level of the eye for spying anyone who desired admittance. In each lodge a porter lived, and Charles's caprice insisted that a gatekeeper should be on the watch day and night.

There was a little courtyard in front of the house paved with Venetian mosaic. At that time, when carriages had not been invented, and ladies rode on horseback or in litters, the courtyards could be splendid with no fear of injury from horses or vehicles. We must constantly bear these facts in mind to understand the narrowness of the streets, the small extent of the forecourts, and various other details of the dwellings of the fifteenth century.

The house, of one story above the ground floor, had at the top a sculptured frieze, on which rested a roof sloping up from all the four sides to a flat space at the top. The sides were pierced by dormer windows adorned with architraves and side-posts, which some great artist had chiseled into delicate arabesques. All the three windows of the first floor rooms were equally conspicuous for this embroidery in stone, thrown into relief by the red brick walls. On the ground floor a double flight of outside steps, elegantly sculptured—the balcony being remarkable for a true lovers' knot—led to the house door, decorated in the Venetian style with stone cut into pointed lozenges, a form of ornament that was repeated on the window jambs on each side of the door.

A garden laid out in the fashion of the time, and full of rare flowers, occupied a space behind the house of equal extent with the forecourt. A vine hung over the walls. A silver pine stood in the center of a grass plot; the flower borders were divided from the turf by winding paths leading

to a little bower of clipped yews at the further end. The garden walls, covered with a coarse mosaic of colored pebbles, pleased the eye by a richness of color that harmonized with the hues of the flowers. The garden front of the house, like the front to the court, had a pretty balcony from the middle window over the door; and on both façades alike the architectural treatment of this middle window was carried up to the frieze of the cornice, with a bow that gave it the appearance of a lantern. The sills of the other windows were inlaid with fine marbles let into the stone.

Notwithstanding the perfect taste evident in this building, it had a look of gloom. It was shut out from the open day by neighboring houses and the roofs of the Hôtel d'Alençon, which cast their shadow over the courtyard and garden; then absolute silence prevailed. Still, this silence, this subdued light, this solitude, were restful to a soul that could give itself up to a single thought, as in a cloister where we may meditate, or in a snug home where we may love.

Who can fail now to conceive of the interior elegance of this dwelling, the only spot in all his kingdom where the last Valois but one could pour out his heart, confess his sufferings, give play to his taste for the arts, and enjoy the poetry he loved—pleasures denied him by the cares of his most ponderous royalty. There alone were his lofty soul and superior qualities appreciated; there alone, for a few brief months, the last of his life, could he know the joys of fatherhood, to which he abandoned himself with the frenzy which his presentiment of an imminent and terrible death lent to all his actions.

In the afternoon of this day, Marie was finishing her toilet in her oratory—the ladies' boudoir of that time. She was arranging the curls of her fine black hair, so as to leave a few locks to turn over a new velvet coif, and was looking attentively at herself in the mirror.

"It is nearly four o'clock! That interminable Council must be at an end by now," said she to herself. "Jacob is back from the Louvre, where they are greatly disturbed by reason of the number of councilors convened, and by the duration of the sitting. What can have happened, some

disaster? Dear Heaven! does *he* know how the spirit is worn by waiting in vain? He is gone hunting, perhaps. If he is amused, all is well. If I see him happy, I shall forget my sorrows——"

She pulled down her bodice round her waist, that there might not be a wrinkle in it, and turned to see how her dress fitted in profile; but then she saw the King reclining on a couch. The carpeted floors deadened the sound of footsteps so effectually, that he had come in without being heard.

"You startled me," she said, with a cry of surprise, which she instantly checked.

"You were thinking of me, then?" said the King.

"When am I not thinking of you?" she asked him, sitting down by his side.

She took off his cap and cloak, and passed her hands through his hair as if to comb it with her fingers. Charles submitted without speaking. Marie knelt down to study her royal master's pale face, and discerned in it the lines of terrible fatigue and of a more devouring melancholy than any she had ever been able to scare away. She checked a tear, and kept silence, not to irritate a grief she as yet knew nothing of by some ill-chosen word. She did what tender wives do in such cases; she kissed the brow seamed with precocious wrinkles and the hollow cheeks, trying to breathe the freshness of her own spirit into that careworn soul through its infusion into gentle caresses, which, however, had no effect. She raised her head to the level of the King's, embracing him fondly with her slender arms, and then laid her face on his laboring breast, waiting for the opportune moment to question the stricken man.

"My Charlot, will you not tell your poor, anxious friend what are the thoughts that darken your brow and take the color from your dear, red lips?"

"With the exception of Charlemagne," said he, in a dull, hollow voice, "every King of France of the name of Charles has come to a miserable end."

"Pooh!" said she. "What of Charles VIII.?"

"In the prime of life," replied the King, "the poor man

knocked his head against a low doorway in the Château d'Amboise, which he was decorating splendidly, and he died in dreadful pain. His death gave the Crown to our branch."

"Charles VII. reconquered his kingdom."

"Child, he died"—and the King lowered his voice—"of starvation, in the dread of being poisoned by the Dauphin, who had already caused the death of his fair Agnes. The father dreaded his son. Now, the son dreads his mother!"

"Why look back on the past?" said she, remembering the terrible existence of Charles VI.

"Why not, dear heart? Kings need not have recourse to diviners to read the fate that awaits them; they have only to study history. I am at this time engaged in trying to escape the fate of Charles the Simple, who was bereft of his crown, and died in prison after seven years' captivity."

"Charles V. drove out the English!" she cried triumphantly.

"Not he, but du Guesclin; for he, poisoned by Charles of Navarre, languished in sickness."

"But Charles IV.?" said she.

"He married three times and had no heir, in spite of the masculine beauty that distinguished the sons of Philip the Handsome. The first Valois dynasty ended in him. The second Valois will end in the same way. The Queen has only brought me a daughter, and I shall die without leaving any child to come, for a minority would be the greatest misfortune that could befall the kingdom. Besides, if I had a son, would he live?—Charles is a name of ill-omen, Charlemagne exhausted all the luck attending it. If I could be King of France again, I would not be called Charles X."

"Who then aims at your crown?"

"My brother d'Alençon is plotting against me. I see enemies on every side——"

"Monsieur," said Marie, with an irresistible pout, "tell me some merrier tales."

"My dearest treasure," said the King vehemently, "never call me *Monsieur*, even in jest. You remind me of my mother, who incessantly offends me with that word. I feel as if

she deprived me of my crown. She says, 'My son' to the Duc d'Anjou, that is to say, the King of Poland."

"Sire," said Marie, folding her hands as if in prayer, "there is a realm where you are adored, which your Majesty fills entirely with glory and strength; and there the word Monsieur means my gentle lord."

She unclasped her hands, and with a pretty action pointed to her heart. The words were so sweetly musical—*musiquées*, to use an expression of the period, applied to love songs—that Charles took Marie by the waist, raised her with the strength for which he was noted, seated her on his knee, and gently rubbed his forehead against the curls his mistress had arranged with such care.

Marie thought this a favorable moment; she ventured on a kiss or two, which Charles allowed rather than accepted; then, between two kisses, she said—

"If my people told the truth, you were scouring Paris all night, as in the days when you played the scapegrace younger son?"

"Yes," said the King, who sat lost in thought.

"Did not you thrash the watch and rob certain good citizens?—And who are the men placed under my guard, and who are such criminals that you have forbidden all communication with them? No girl was ever barred in with greater severity than these men, who have had neither food nor drink. Solern's Germans have not allowed anyone to go near the room where you left them. Is it a joke? Or is it a serious matter?"

"Yes," said the King, rousing himself from his reverie, "last night I went scampering over the roofs with Tavannes and the Gondi. I wanted to have the company of my old comrades in folly. But our legs are not what they were; we did not dare jump across the streets. However, we crossed two courtyards by leaping from roof to roof. The last time, however, when we alighted on a gable close by this, as we clung to the bar of a chimney, we decided, Tavannes and I, that we could not do it again. If either of us had been alone, he would not have tried it."

"You were the first to jump, I will wager."

The King smiled.

"I know why you risk your life so."

"Hah, fair sorceress!"

"You are weary of life."

"Begone with witchcraft! I am haunted by it!" said the King, grave once more.

"My witchcraft is love," said she, with a smile. "Since the happy day when you first loved me, have I not always guessed your thoughts? And if you will suffer me to say so, the thoughts that torment you to-day are not worthy of a king."

"Am I a king?" said he bitterly.

"Can you not be King? What did Charles VII. do, whose name you bear? He listened to his mistress, my lord, and he won back his kingdom, which was invaded by the English then as it is now by the adherents of the New Religion. Your last act of State opened the road you must follow: Exterminate heresy."

"You used to blame the stratagem," said Charles, "and now——"

"It is accomplished," she put in. "Besides, I am of Mme. Catherine's opinion. It was better to do it yourself than to leave it to the Guises."

"Charles VII. had only men to fight against, and I have to battle with ideas," the King went on. "You may kill men; you cannot kill words! The Emperor Charles V. gave up the task; his son, Don Philip, is spending himself in the attempt. We shall die of it, we kings. On whom can I depend? On my right, with the Catholics I find the Guises threatening me; on my left, the Calvinists will never forgive the death of my poor Father Coligny, nor the blood-letting of August; besides, they want to be rid of us altogether. And in front of me, my mother——"

"Arrest her; reign alone," said Marie, whispering in his ear.

"I wanted to do so yesterday—but I do not to-day. You speak of it lightly enough."

"There is no such great distance between the daughter of an apothecary and the daughter of a leech," said Marie

Touchet, who would often laugh at the parentage falsely given her.

The King knit his brows.

"Marie, take no liberties. Catherine de' Medici is my mother, and you ought to tremble at——"

"But what are you afraid of?"

"Poison!" cried the King, beside himself.

"Poor boy!" said Marie, swallowing her tears, for so much strength united to so much weakness moved her deeply. "Oh!" she went on, "how you make me hate Mme. Catherine, who used to seem so kind; but her kindness seems to be nothing but perfidy. Why does she do me so much good and you so much evil? While I was away in Dauphiné I heard a great many things about the beginning of your reign which you had concealed from me; and the Queen your mother seems to have been the cause of all your misfortunes."

"How?" said the King, with eager interest.

"Women whose soul and intentions are pure rule the men they love through their virtues; but women who do not truly wish them well find a motive power in their evil inclinations. Now the Queen has turned many fine qualities in you into vices, and made you believe that your bad ones were virtues. Was that acting a mother's part?—Be a tyrant like Louis XI., make everybody dreadfully afraid of you, imitate Don Philip, banish the Italians, hunt out the Guises, and confiscate the estates of the Calvinists; you will rise to stand in solitude, and you will save the Crown. The moment is favorable; your brother is in Poland."

"We are two infants in politics," said Charles bitterly. "We only know how to love. Alas! dear heart, yesterday I could think of all this; I longed to achieve great things. Puff! my mother has blown down my house of cards. From afar difficulties stand out as clearly as mountain peaks. I say to myself, 'I will put an end to Calvinism; I will bring MM. de Guise to their senses; I will cut adrift from the Court of Rome; I will rely wholly on the people of the middle class'; in short, at a distance everything looks easy, but when we try to climb the mountains, the nearer we get, the more obstacles we discern.

"Calvinism in itself is the last thing the party leaders care about; and the Guises, those frenzied Catholics, would be in despair if the Calvinists were really exterminated. Every man thinks of his own interests before all else, and religious opinions are but a screen for insatiable ambition. Charles IX.'s party is the weakest of all; those of the King of Navarre, of the King of Poland, of the Duc d'Alençon, of the Condés, of the Guises, of my mother, form coalitions against each other, leaving me alone even in the Council Chamber. In the midst of so many elements of disturbance my mother is the stronger, and she has just shown me that my plans are inane. We are surrounded by men who defy the law. The ax of Louis XI. of which you speak is not in our grasp. The Parlement would never sentence the Guises, nor the King of Navarre, nor the Condés, nor my brothers. It would think it was setting the kingdom in a blaze. What is wanted is the courage to command murder; the throne must come to that, with these insolent wretches who have nullified justice; but where can I find faithful hands? The Council I held this morning disgusted me with everything—treachery on all sides, antagonistic interests everywhere!

"I am tired of wearing the crown; all I ask is to die in peace."

And he sank into gloomy somnolence.

"Disgusted with everything!" echoed Marie Touchet sadly, but respecting her lover's heavy torpor.

Charles was, in fact, a prey to utter prostration of mind and body, resulting from over-fatigue of every faculty, and enhanced by the dejection caused by the vast scale of his misfortunes and the evident impossibility of overcoming them in the face of such a multiplicity of difficulties as genius itself takes alarm at. The King's depression was proportionate to the height to which his courage and his ideas had soared during the last few months; and now a fit of nervous melancholy, part, in fact, of his malady, had come over him as he left the long sitting of the Council he had held in his closet. Marie saw that he was suffering from a crisis when everything is irritating and importunate—even love;

so she remained on her knees, her head in the King's lap as he sat with his fingers buried in her hair without moving, without speaking, without sighing, and she was equally still. Charles IX. was sunk in the lethargy of helplessness; and Marie, in the dark despair of a loving woman, who can see the border-line ahead where love must end.

Thus the lovers sat for some little time in perfect silence, in the mood when every thought is a wound, when the clouds of a mental storm hide even the remembrance of past happiness.

Marie believed herself to be in some sort to blame for this terrible dejection. She wondered, not without alarm, whether the King's extravagant joy at welcoming her back, and the vehement passion she could not contend with, were not helping to wreck his mind and frame. As she looked up at her lover, her eyes streaming with tears that bathed her face, she saw tears in his eyes too and on his colorless cheeks. This sympathy, uniting them even in sorrow, touched Charles IX. so deeply, that he started up like a horse that feels the spur. He put his arm round Marie's waist, and before she knew what he was doing had drawn her down on the couch.

"I will be King no more!" he said. "I will be nothing but your lover, and forget everything in that joy. I will die happy, and not eaten up with the cares of a throne."

The tone in which he spoke, the fire that blazed in eyes, just now so dull, instead of pleasing Marie, gave her a terrible pang; at that moment she blamed her love for contributing to the illness of which the King was dying.

"You forget your prisoners," said she, starting up suddenly.

"What do I care about the men? They have my permission to kill me."

"What? Assassins!" said she.

"Do not be uneasy, we have them safe, dear child.—Now, think not of them, but of me. Say, do you not love me?"

"Sire!" she cried.

"Sire!" he repeated, flashing sparks from his eyes, so

violent was his first surge of fury at his mistress's ill-timed deference. "You are in collusion with my mother."

"Great God!" cried Marie, turning to the picture over her praying chair, and trying to get to it to put up a prayer. "Oh, make him understand me!"

"What!" said the King sternly. "Have you any sin on your soul?"

And still holding her in his arms, he looked deep into her eyes. "I have heard of the mad passion of one d'Entragues for you," he went on, looking wildly at her, "and since their grandfather Capitaine Balzac married a Visconti of Milan, those rascals hesitate at nothing."

Marie gave the King such a look of pride that he was ashamed. Just then the cry was heard of the infant Charles de Valois from the adjoining room; he was just awake, and his nurse was no doubt bringing him to his mother.

"Come in, la Bourguignonne," said Marie, taking the child from his nurse and bringing him to the King. "You are more of a child than he," said she, half angry, but half appeased.

"He is a fine boy," said Charles IX., taking his son in his arms.

"No one but me can know how like you he is," said Marie. "He has your smile and ways already."

"What, so young?" said the King, smiling.

"Men will never believe such things," said she; "but look, my Charlot, play with him, look at him—now, am I not right?"

"It is true," said the King, startled by a movement on the infant's part, which struck him as the miniature reproduction of a trick of his own.

"Pretty flower!" said his mother. "He will never go away from me; he will never make me unhappy."

The King played with the child, tossing it, kissing it with entire devotion, speaking to it in those vague and foolish words, the onomatopœia of mothers and nurses; his voice was childlike, his brow cleared, joy came back to his saddened countenance; and when Marie saw that her lover had

forgotten everything, she laid her head on his shoulder and whispered in his ear—

"Will not you tell me, my Charlot, why you put assassins in my keeping, and who these men are, and what you intend to do with them? And whither were you going across the roofs? I hope there was no woman in the case."

"Then you still love me so well?" said the King, caught by the bright flash of one of those questioning looks which women can give at a critical moment.

"You could doubt me," replied she, as the tears gathered under her beautiful girlish eyelids.

"There are women in my adventure, but they are witches, Where was I?"

"We were quite near here, on the gable of a house," said Marie. "In what street?"

"In the Rue Saint-Honoré, my jewel," said the King, who seemed to have recovered himself, and who, as he recalled his ideas, wanted to give his mistress some notion of the scene that was about to take place here. "As I crossed it in pursuit of some sport, my eyes were attracted by a bright light in a top window of the house inhabited by René, my mother's perfumer and glover—yours too, the whole Court's. I have strong suspicions as to what goes on in that man's house, and if I am poisoned that is where the poison is prepared."

"I give him up to-morrow," said Marie.

"What, you have still dealt with him since I left him?" said the King. "My life was here," he added gloomily, "and here no doubt they have arranged for my death."

"But, my dear boy, I have but just come home from Dauphiné with our Dauphin," said she, with a smile, "and I have bought nothing of René since the Queen of Navarre died.—well, go on; you climbed up to René's roof——?"

"Yes," the King went on. "In a moment I, followed by Tavannes, had reached a spot whence, without being seen, I could see into the devil's kitchen, and note certain things which led me to take strong measures. Do you ever happen to have noticed the attics that crown that damned Florentine's house? All the windows to the street are con-

stantly kept shut excepting the last, from which the Hôtel de Soissons can be seen, and the column my mother had erected for her astrologer Cosmo Ruggieri. There is a room in this top story with a corridor lighted from the inner yard, so that in order to see what is being done within, a man must get to a perch which no one would ever think of climbing, the coping of a high wall which ends against the roof of René's house. The creatures who placed the alembics there to distill death, trusted to the faint hearts of the Parisians to escape inspection; but they counted without their Charles de Valois. I crept along the gutter, and supported myself against the window jamb with my arm round the neck of a monkey that is sculptured on it."

"And what did you see, dear heart?" said Marie, in alarm.

"A low room where deeds of darkness are plotted," replied the King. "The first thing on which my eyes fell was a tall, old man seated in a chair, with a magnificent beard like old l'Hôpital's, and dressed, like him, in black velvet. The concentrated rays of a brightly burning lamp fell on his high forehead, deeply furrowed by hollow lines, on a crown of white hair and a calm, thoughtful face, pale with vigils and study. His attention was divided between a manuscript on parchment several centuries old, and two lighted stoves on which some heretical mixtures were cooking. Neither the floor nor the ceiling was visible; they were so covered with animals hung up there, skeletons, dried herbs, minerals, and drugs, with which the place was stuffed; here some books and retorts, with chests full of instruments for magic and astrology; there diagrams for horoscopes, phials, wax figures, and perhaps the poisons he concocts for René in payment for the shelter and hospitality bestowed on him by my mother's glover.

"Tavannes and I were startled, I can tell you, at the sight of this diabolical arsenal; for merely at the sight of it one feels spellbound, and but that my business is to be King of France, I should have been frightened. 'Tremble for us both,' said I to Tavannes.

"But Tavannes's eyes were riveted on the most mysterious

object. On a couch by the old man's side lay a girl at full length, of the strangest beauty, as long and slender as a snake, as white as an ermine, as pale as death, as motionless as a statue. Perhaps it was a woman just dug out of her grave, for she seemed to be still wrapped in her shroud; her eyes were fixed, and I could not see her breathe. The old wretch paid no sort of heed to her. I watched him so curiously that his spirit I believe passed into me. By dint of studying him, at last I admired that searching eye, keen and bold, in spite of the chills of age; that mouth, mobile with thoughts that came from what seemed a single fixed desire, graven in a myriad wrinkles. Everything in the man spoke of a hope which nothing can discourage and nothing dismay. His attitude, motionless but full of thrilling life, his features so chiseled, so deeply cut by a passion that has done the work of the sculptor's tool, that mind dead-set on some criminal or scientific purpose, that searching intelligence on the track of Nature though conquered by her, and bent, without having broken, under the burden of an enterprise it will never give up, threatening creation with fire borrowed from itself—— I was fascinated for a moment.

"That old man was more a king than I, for his eye saw the whole world and was its master. I am determined to temper no more swords; I want to float over abysses, as that old man does; his science seems to me a sovereignty. In short, I believe in these occult sciences."

"You, the eldest son, and the defender of the Holy Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church!" cried Marie.

"I."

"Why, what has come over you? Go on; I will be frightened for you, and you shall be brave for me."

"The old man looked at the clock and rose," the King went on. "He left the room, how I could not see, but I heard him open the window towards the Rue Saint-Honoré. Presently a light shone out, and then I saw another light, answering to the old man's, by which we could perceive Cosmo Ruggieri on the top of the column.

"'Oh, ho! They understand each other,' said I to Ta-

vannes, who at once thought the whole affair highly suspicious, and was quite of my opinion that we should seize these two men, and at once make a search in their abominable workshop. But before proceeding to a raid, we wanted to see what would happen. By the end of a quarter of an hour the door of the laboratory opened, and Cosmo Ruggieri, my mother's adviser—the bottomless pit in which all the Court secrets are buried, of whom wives crave help against their husbands and their lovers, and husbands and lovers take counsel against faithless women, who gains money out of the past and the future, taking it from everyone, who sells horoscopes, and is supposed to know everything,—that half-demon came in, saying to the old man, 'Good-evening, brother.'

"He had with him a horrible little old woman, toothless, hunchbacked, crooked, and bent like a lady's marmoset, but far more hideous; she was wrinkled like a withered apple, her skin was of the color of saffron, her chin met her nose, her mouth was a hardly visible slit, her eyes were like the black spots of the deuce on dice, her brow expressed a bitter temper, her hair fell in gray locks from under a dirty coif; she walked with a crutch; she stank of devilry and the stake; and she frightened us, for neither Tavannes nor I believed that she was a real woman; God never made one so horrible as she.

"She sat down on a stool by the side of the fair white serpent with whom Tavannes was falling in love.

"The two brothers paid no heed to either the old woman or the young one, who, side by side, formed a horrible contrast. On one hand life in death, on the other death in life."

"My sweet poet!" cried Marie, kissing the King.

"'Good-evening, Cosmo,' the old alchemist replied. And then both looked at the stove.—'What is the power of the moon to-night?' the old man asked Cosmo.—'Why, *caro Lorenzo*,' my mother's astrologer replied, 'the high tides of September are not yet over; it is impossible to read anything in the midst of such confusion.'—'And what did the Orient say this evening?'—'He has just discovered,' said

Cosmo, 'that there is a creative force in the air which gives back to the earth all it takes from it; he concludes, with us, that everything in this world is the outcome of a slow transformation, but all the various forms are of one and the same matter.'—'That is what my predecessor thought,' replied Lorenzo. 'This morning Bernard Palissy was telling me that the metals are a result of compression, and that fire, which parts all things, joins all things also; fire has the power of compressing as well as that of diffusing. That worthy has a spark of genius in him.'

"Though I was placed where I could not be seen, Cosmo went up to the dead girl, and taking her hand, he said, 'There is someone near! Who is it?'—'The King,' said she.

"I at once showed myself, knocking on the window-pane; Ruggieri opened the window, and I jumped into this wizard's kitchen, followed by Tavannes.

"'Yes, the King,' said I to the two Florentines, who seemed terror-stricken. 'In spite of your furnaces and books, your witches and your learning, you could not divine my visit.—I am delighted to see the famous Lorenzo Ruggieri, of whom the Queen my mother speaks with such mystery,' said I to the old man, who rose and bowed.—'You are in this kingdom without my consent, my good man. Whom are you working for here, you, who from father to son have dwelt in the heart of the House of the Medici? Listen to me. You have your hand in so many purses, that the most covetous would by this have had their fill of gold; you are far too cunning to plunge unadvisedly into criminal courses, but you ought not either to rush like feather-brains into this kitchen; you must have some secret schemes, you who are not content with gold or with power? Whom do you serve, God or the Devil? What are you concocting here? I insist on the whole truth. I am honest man enough to hear and keep the secret of your undertakings, however blamable they may be. So tell me everything without concealment. If you deceive me, you will be sternly dealt with. But Pagan or Christian, Calvinist or Mohammedan, you have my royal word for it that you may leave the country

unpunished, even if you have some peccadilloes to confess. At any rate, I give you the remainder of this night and to-morrow morning to examine your consciences, for you are my prisoners, and you must now follow me to a place where you will be guarded like a treasure.'

"Before yielding to my authority, the two Florentines glanced at each other with a wily eye, and Lorenzo Ruggieri replied that I might be certain that no torture would wring their secrets from them; that in spite of their frail appearance, neither pain nor human feeling had any hold on them. Confidence alone could win from their lips what their mind had in its keeping. I was not to be surprised if at that moment they treated on an equal footing with a king who acknowledged no one above him but God, for that their ideas also came from God alone. Hence they demanded of me such confidence as they would grant. So, before pledging themselves to answer my questions without reserve, they desired me to place my left hand in the young girl's and my right hand in the old woman's. Not choosing to let them suppose that I feared any devilry, I put out my hands. Lorenzo took the right and Cosmo the left, and each placed one in the hand of a woman, so there I was like Jesus Christ between the two thieves. All the time the two witches were studying my hands, Cosmo held a mirror before me, desiring me to look at myself, while his brother talked to the two women in an unknown tongue. Neither Tavannes nor I could catch the meaning of a single sentence.

"We set seals on every entrance to this laboratory before bringing away the men, and Tavannes undertook to keep guard till Bernard Palissy and Chapelain, my physician-in-chief, shall go there to make a close examination of all the drugs stored or made there. It was to hinder their knowing anything of the search going on in their kitchen, and to prevent their communicating with anyone whatever outside—for they might have sent some message to my mother—that I brought these two demons to be shut up here with Solern's Germans to watch them, who are as good as the stoutest prison walls. René himself is confined to his room under the eye of Solern's groom, and the two witches also. And

now, sweetheart, as I hold the key of the Cabala, the kings of Thunes, the chiefs of witchcraft, the princes of Bohemia, the masters of the future, the inheritors of all the famous soothsayers, I will read and know your heart, and at last we will know what is to become of us."

"I shall be very glad if they can lay my heart bare," said Marie, without showing the least alarm.

"I know why necromancers do not frighten you; you cast spells yourself."

"Will you not have some of these peaches?" said she, offering him some fine fruit on a silver gilt plate. "Look at these grapes and pears; I went myself to gather them all at Vincennes."

"Then I will eat some, for there can be no poison in them but the philters distilled from your fingers."

"You ought to eat much fruit, Charles; it would cool your blood, which you scorch by such violent living."

"And ought I not to love you less too?"

"Perhaps——" said she. "If what you love is bad for you,—and I have thought so—I should find power in my love to refuse to let you have it. I adore Charles far more than I love the King, and I want the man to live without the troubles that make him sad and anxious."

"Royalty is destroying me."

"It is so," replied she. "If you were only a poor prince like your brother-in-law the King of Navarre, that wretched debauchee who has not a sou or a stitch of his own, who has merely a poor little kingdom in Spain where he will never set foot, and Béarn in France, which yields him scarcely enough to live on, I should be happy, much happier than if I were really Queen of France."

"But are you not much more than the Queen? King Charles is hers only for the benefit of the kingdom, for the Queen, after all, is part of our politics."

Marie smiled with a pretty little pout, saying—

"We all know that, my liege.—And my sonnet—is it finished?"

"Dear child, it is as hard to write verses as to draw up an edict of pacification. I will finish them for you soon.

Ah God! life sits lightly on me here, would I could never leave you!—But I must, nevertheless, examine the two Florentines. By all the sacred relics, I thought one Ruggieri quite enough in France, and behold there are two! Listen, my dearest heart, you have a good mother-wit, you would make a capital lieutenant of police, for you detect everything——"

"Well, Sire, we women take all we dread for granted, and to us what is probable is certain; there is all our subtlety in two words."

"Well, then, help me to fathom these two men. At this moment every determination I may come to depends on this examination. Are they innocent? Are they guilty?—Behind them stands my mother."

"I hear Jacob on the winding stair," said Marie.

Jacob was the King's favorite body servant, who accompanied him in all his amusements; he now came to ask whether his master would wish to speak with the two prisoners.

At a nod of consent, the mistress of the house gave some orders.

"Jacob," said she, "make everyone in the place leave the house, excepting the nurse and M. le Dauphin d'Auvergne—they may stay. Do you remain in the room downstairs; but first of all shut the windows, draw the curtains, and light the candles."

The King's impatience was so great that, while these preparations were being made, he came to take his place in *a large settle, and his pretty mistress seated herself by his side in the nook of a wide, white marble chimney-place, where a bright fire blazed on the hearth.* In the place of a mirror hung a portrait of the King, in a red velvet frame. Charles rested his elbow on the arm of the seat, to contemplate the two Italians at his ease.

The shutters shut, and the curtains drawn, Jacob lighted the candles in a sort of candelabrum of chased silver, placing it on a table at which the two Florentines took their stand—seeming to recognize the candlestick as the work of their fellow-townsman, Benvenuto Cellini. Then the effect of this rich room, decorated in the King's taste, was really brilliant.

The russet tone of the tapestries looked better than by daylight. The furniture, elegantly carved, reflected the light of the candles and of the fire in its shining bosses. The gilding, judiciously introduced, sparkled here and there like eyes, and gave relief to the brown coloring that predominated in this nest for lovers.

Jacob knocked twice, and at a word brought in the two Florentines. Marie Touchet was immediately struck by the grand presence which distinguished Lorenzo in the sight of great and small alike. This austere and venerable man, whose silver beard was relieved against an overcoat of black velvet, had a forehead like a marble dome. His severe countenance, with two black eyes that darted points of fire, inspired a thrill as of a genius emerged from the deepest solitude, and all the more impressive because its power was not dulled by contact with other men. It was as the steel of a blade that has not yet been used.

Cosmo Ruggieri wore the Court dress of the period. Marie nodded to the King, to show him that he had not exaggerated the picture, and to thank him for introducing her to this extraordinary man.

"I should have liked to see the witches too," she whispered.

Charles IX., sunk again in brooding, made no reply; he was anxiously flipping off some crumbs of bread that happened to lie on his doublet and hose.

"Your science cannot work on the sky, nor compel the sun to shine, M. de Florence," said the King, pointing to the curtains which had been drawn to shut out the gray mist of Paris. "There is no daylight."

"Our science, Sire, enables us to make a sky as we will," said Lorenzo Ruggieri. "The weather is always fair for those who work in a laboratory by the light of a furnace."

"That is true," said the King.—"Well, Father," said he, using a word he was accustomed to employ to old men, "explain to us very clearly the object of your studies."

"Who will guarantee us impunity?"

"The word of a king," replied Charles, whose curiosity was greatly excited by this question.

Lorenzo Ruggieri seemed to hesitate, and Charles exclaimed—

"What checks you? we are alone."

"Is the King of France here?" asked the old man.

Charles IX. reflected for a moment, then he replied, "No."

"But will he not come?" Lorenzo urged.

"No," replied Charles, restraining an impulse of rage.

The imposing old man took a chair and sat down. Cosmo, amazed at his boldness, dared not imitate his brother.

Charles IX. said, with severe irony—

"The King is not here, Monsieur, but you are in the presence of a lady whose permission you ought to wait for."

"The man you see before you, Madame," said the grand old man, "is as far above kings as kings are above their subjects, and you shall find me courteous, even when you know my power."

Hearing these bold words, spoken with Italian emphasis, Charles and Marie looked at each other and then at Cosmo, who, with his eyes fixed on his brother, seemed to be asking himself, "How will he get himself out of the awkward position we are in?"

In fact, one person only could appreciate the dignity and skill of Lorenzo Ruggieri's first move; not the King, nor his young mistress, over whom the older man had cast the spell of his audacity, but his not less wily brother Cosmo. Though he was superior to the cleverest men at Court, and perhaps to his patroness Catherine de' Medici, the astrologer knew Lorenzo to be his master.

The learned old man, buried in solitude, had gauged the sovereigns of the earth, almost all of them wearied out by the perpetual shifting of politics; for at that time great crises were so sudden, so far reaching, so fierce, and so unexpected! He knew their satiety, their lassitude; he knew with what eagerness they pursued all that was new, strange, or uncommon; and, above all, how glad they were to rise now and then to intellectual regions so as to escape from the perpetual struggle with men and things. To those who have exhausted politics, nothing remains but abstract thought; this Charles V. had proved by his abdication.

Charles IX., who made sonnets and swords to recreate himself after the absorbing business of an age when the throne was in not less ill odor than the King, and when Royalty had only its cares and none of its pleasures, could not but be strangely startled by Lorenzo's audacious negation of his power. Religious impiety had ceased to be surprising at a time when Catholicism was closely inquired into; but the subversion of all religion, assumed as a groundwork for the wild speculations of mystical arts, naturally amazed the King, and roused him from his gloomy absence of mind. Besides, a victory to be won over mankind was an undertaking which would make every other interest seem trivial in the eyes of the Ruggieri. An important debt to be paid depended on this idea to be suggested to the King; the brothers could not ask for this, and yet they must obtain it. The first thing was to make Charles IX. forget his suspicions by making him jump at some new idea.

The two Italians knew full well that in this strange game their lives were at stake; and the glances—deferent but proud—that they exchanged with Marie and the King, whose looks were keen and suspicious, were a drama in themselves.

"Sire," said Lorenzo Ruggieri, "you have asked for the truth. But to show her to you naked, I must bid you sound the well, the pit, from which she will rise. I pray you let the gentleman, the poet, forgive us for saying what the Eldest Son of the Church may regard as blasphemy—I do not believe that God troubles Himself about human affairs."

Though fully resolved to preserve his sovereign indifference, Charles IX. could not control a gesture of surprise.

"But for that conviction, I should have no faith in the miraculous work to which I have devoted myself. But, to carry it out, I must believe it; and if the hand of God rules all things, I am a madman. So, be it known to the King, we aim at winning a victory over the immediate course of human nature.

"I am an alchemist, Sire; but do not suppose, with the vulgar, that I am striving to make gold. The composition

of gold is not the end, but only an incident of our researches; else we should not call our undertaking *Magnum Opus*, the great work. The Great Work is something far more ambitious than that. If I, at this day, could recognize the presence of God in matter, the fire of the furnaces that have been burning for centuries would be extinguished to-morrow at my bidding.

"But make no mistake—to deny the direct interference of God is not to deny God. We place the Creator of all things far above the level to which religions reduce Him. Those who hope for immortality are not to be accused of atheism. Following the example of Lucifer, we are jealous of God, and jealousy is a proof of violent love. Though this doctrine lies at the root of our labors, all adepts do not accept it. Cosmo," said the old man, indicating his brother, "Cosmo is devout; he pays for Masses for the repose of our father's soul, and he goes to hear them. Your mother's astrologer believes in the Divinity of Christ, in the Immaculate Conception, and in Transubstantiation; he believes in the Pope's indulgences, and in hell—he believes in an infinite number of things.—His hour is not yet come, for I have read his horoscope; he will live to be nearly a hundred. He will live through two reigns, and see two kings of France assassinated——"

"Who will be——?" asked the King.

"The last of the Valois and the first of the Bourbons," replied Lorenzo. "But Cosmo will come to my way of thinking. In fact, it is impossible to be an alchemist and a Catholic; to believe in the dominion of man over matter, and in the supreme power of mind."

"Cosmo will live to be a hundred?" said the King, knitting his brows in the terrible way that was his wont.

"Yes, Sire," said Lorenzo decisively. "He will die peacefully in his bed."

"If it is in your power to predict the moment of your death, how can you be ignorant of the result of your inquiries?" asked the King. And he smiled triumphantly as he looked at Marie Touchet.

The brothers exchanged a swift look of satisfaction.

"He is interested in alchemy," thought they, "so we are safe."

"Our prognostics are based on the existing relations of man to nature; but the very point we aim at is the complete alteration of those relations," replied Lorenzo.

The King sat thinking.

"But if you are sure that you must die, you are assured of defeat," said Charles IX.

"As our predecessors were," replied Lorenzo, lifting his hand and letting it drop with a solemn and emphatic gesture, as dignified as his thoughts. "But your mind has rushed on to the goal of our attempts, Sire; we must come back again, Sire! Unless you know the ground on which our edifice is erected, you may persist in saying that it will fall, and judge this science, which has been pursued for centuries by the greatest minds, as the vulgar judge it."

The King bowed assent.

"I believe, then, that this earth belongs to man, that he is master of it, and may appropriate all the forces, all the elements thereof. Man is not a creature proceeding directly from the hand of God, but the result of the principle diffused throughout the infinite ether, wherein myriads of beings are produced; and these have no resemblance to each other between star and star, because the conditions of life are everywhere different. Ay, my liege, the motion we call life has its source beyond all visible worlds; creation draws from it as the surrounding conditions may require, and the minutest beings share in it by taking all they are able, at their own risk and peril; it is their part to defend themselves from death. This is the sum-total of alchemy.

"If man, the most perfect animal on this globe, had within him a fraction of the Godhead, he could not perish—but he does perish. To escape from this dilemma, Socrates and his school invented the soul. I—the successor of the great unknown kings who have ruled this science—I am for the old theories against the new; I believe in the transmutation of matter which I can see, as against the eternity of a soul which I cannot see. I do not acknowledge the world of souls. If such a world existed, the substances of which the

beautiful combination produces your body—and which in Madame are so dazzling—would not separate and resolve themselves after your death to return each to its own place; the water to water, the fire to fire, the metal to metal, just as when my charcoal is burnt its elements are restored to their original molecules.

"Though you say that something lives on, it is not we ourselves; all that constitutes our living self perishes.

"Now, it is my living self that I desire to perpetuate beyond the common term of life; it is the present manifestation for which I want to secure longer duration. What! trees live for centuries, and men shall live for years, while those are passive and we are active; while they are motionless and speechless, and we walk and talk! No creature on earth ought to be superior to us either in power or permanency. We have already expanded our senses; we can see into the stars. We ought to be able to extend our life. I place life above power. Of what use is power if life slips from us?

"A rational man ought to have no occupation but that of seeking—not whether there is another life—but the secret on which our present life is based, so as to be able to prolong it at will!—This is the desire that has silvered my hair. But I walk on boldly in the darkness, leading to battle those intellects which share my faith. Life will some day be ours."

"But how?" cried the King, starting to his feet.

"The first condition of our faith is the belief that this world is for man; you must grant me that," said Lorenzo.

"Well and good, so be it!" said Charles de Valois, impatient, but already fascinated.

"Well, then, Sire, if we remove God from this world, what is left but man? Now let us survey our domain. The material world is composed of elements; those elements have a first principle within them. All these principles resolve themselves into one which is gifted with motion. The number Three in the formula of creation: Matter, Motion, Production!"

"Proof, proof? Pause there!" cried the King.

"Do you not see the effects?" replied Lorenzo. "We have analyzed in our crucibles the acorn from which an oak would have arisen as well as the embryo which would have become a man; from these small masses of matter a pure element was derived to which some force, some motion would have been added. In the absence of a Creator, must not that first principle be able to assume the external forms which constitute our world? For the phenomena of life are everywhere the same. Yes, in metals as in living beings, in plants as in man, life begins by an imperceptible embryo which develops spontaneously. There is a first principle! We must detect it at the point where it acts on itself, where it is one, where it is a principle before it is a creature, a cause before it is an effect; then we shall see it absolute—formless, but capable of assuming all the forms we see it take.

"When we are face to face with this particle or atom, and have detected its motion from the starting point, we shall know its laws; we are thenceforth its masters, and able to impose on it the form we may choose, among all we see; we shall possess gold, having the world, and can give ourselves centuries of life to enjoy our wealth. That is what we seek, my disciples and I. All our powers, all our thoughts are directed to that search; nothing diverts us from it. One hour wasted on any other passion would be stolen from our greatness! You have never found one of your hunting dogs neglectful of the game or the death, and I have never known one of my persevering subjects diverted by a woman or a thought of greed.

"If the adept craves for gold and power, that hunger comes of our necessities; he clutches at fortune as a thirsty hound snatches a moment from the chase to drink, because his retorts demand a diamond to consume, or ingots to be reduced to powder. Each one has his line of work. This one seeks the secret of vegetable nature, he studies the torpid life of plants, he notes the parity of motion in every species and the parity of nutrition; in every case he discerns that sun, air, and water are needed for fertility and nourishment. Another investigates the blood of animals. A third studies

the laws of motion generally and its relation to the orbits of the stars. Almost all love to struggle with the intractable nature of metals; for though we find various elements in everything, we always find metals the same throughout, down to their minutest particles.

"Hence the common error as to our labors. Do you see all these patient toilers, these indefatigable athletes, always vanquished, and always returning to the assault? Humanity, Sire, is at our heels, as your huntsman is at the heels of the pack. It cries to us, 'Hurry on! Overlook nothing! Sacrifice everything, even a man—you who sacrifice yourselves! Hurry onward! Cut off the head and hands of Death, my foe!'

"Yes, Sire, we are animated by a sentiment on which the happiness depends of generations to come. We have buried many men—and what men!—who have died in the pursuit. When we set foot on that road it is not to work for ourselves; we may perish without discovering the secret. And what a death is that of a man who does not believe in a future life! We are glorious martyrs; we bear the selfishness of the whole race in our hearts; we live in our successors. On our way we discover secrets which enrich the mechanical and liberal arts. Our furnaces shed gleams of light which help society to possess more perfect forms of industry. Gunpowder was discovered in our retorts; we shall conquer the thunder yet. Our patient vigils may overthrow politics."

"Can that be possible!" cried the King, sitting up again on the settle.

"Why not?" replied the Grand Master of the New Templars. "*Tradidit mundum disputationibus!* God has given us the world. Listen to this once again! Man is lord on earth, and matter is his. Every means, every power is at his service. What created us? A motion. What power keeps life in us? A motion? And should not science grasp this motion? Nothing on earth is lost, nothing flies off from our planet to go elsewhere; if it were so, the stars would fall on one another. The waters of the Deluge are all here, and not a drop lost. Around us, above, below, are the elements whence have proceeded the innumerable mil-

lions of men who have trodden the earth, before and since the Deluge. What is it that remains to be done? To detect the disintegrating force; on the other hand, to discover the combining force. We are the outcome of a visible toil. When the waters covered our globe, men came forth from them who found the elements of life in the earth's covering, in the atmosphere, and in food. Earth and air, then, contain the first principle of human transformations; these go on under our eyes, by the agency of what is under our eyes; hence we can discover the secret by not confining our efforts to the span of one man's life, but making the task endure as long as mankind itself. We have, in fact, attacked matter as a whole; matter, in which I believe, and which I, Grand Master of our Order, am bent on penetrating.

"Christopher Columbus gave a world to the King of Spain; I am seeking to give the King of France a people that shall never die.—I, an outpost on the remotest frontier which cuts us off from the knowledge of things, a patient student of atoms, I destroy forms, I dissolve the bonds of every combination, I imitate Death to enable me to imitate Life. In short, I knock incessantly at the door of Creation, and shall still knock till my latest day. When I die, my knocker will pass into other hands not less indefatigable, as unknown giants bequeathed it to me.

"Fabulous images, never understood, such as those of Prometheus, of Ixion, of Adonis, of Pan, etc., which are part of the religious beliefs of every people and in every age, show us that this hope had its birth with the human race. Chaldæa, India, Persia, Egypt, Greece, and the Moors have transmitted Magian lore, the highest of all the occult sciences, the storehouse of the results of generations of watchers. Therein lay the bond of the noble and majestic Order of the Temple. When he burned the Templars, a predecessor of yours, Sire, only burned men; their secrets remain with us. The reconstruction of the Temple is the watchword of an unrecognized people, a race of intrepid seekers, all looking to the Orient of life, all brethren, all inseparable, united by an idea, stamped with the seal of toil. I am the sovereign of this people, their chief by

election and not by birth. I guide them all towards the essence of life! Grand Master, Rosicrucians, companions, adepts, we all pursue the invisible molecule which escapes our crucibles, and still evades our sight; but we shall make ourselves eyes manifold more powerful than those bestowed on us by nature; we shall get to the primitive atom, the corpuscular element so perseveringly sought by all the sages who have preceded us in the sublime pursuit.

"Sire, when a man stands astride on that abyss, and has at his command divers so intrepid as my brethren, other human interests look very small; hence we are not dangerous. Religious disputes and political struggles are far from us; we are immeasurably beyond them. Those who contend with nature do not condescend to take men by the throat.

"Moreover, every result in our science is appreciable; we can measure every effect, we can predict it, whereas in the combinations which include men and their interests everything is unstable. We shall submit the diamond to our crucible; we shall make diamonds; we shall make gold! Like one of our craft at Barcelona, we shall make ships move by the help of a little water and fire. We shall dispense with the wind, nay, we shall make the wind, we shall make light and renew the face of empires by new industries!—But we will never stoop to mount a throne to be *gehennaed* by nations."

Notwithstanding his desire to avoid being entrapped by Florentine cunning, the King, as well as his simple-minded mistress, was by this time caught and carried away in the rhetoric and rhodomontade of this pompous and specious flow of words. The lovers' eyes betrayed how much they were dazzled by the vision of mysterious riches spread out before them; they saw, as it were, subterranean caverns in long perspective full of toiling gnomes. The impatience of curiosity dissipated the alarms of suspicion.

"But, then," exclaimed the King, "you are great politicians, and can enlighten us."

"No, Sire," said Lorenzo simply.

"Why not?" asked the King.

"Sire, it is given to no one to be able to predict what

will come of a concourse of some thousands of men; we may be able to tell what one man will do, how long he will live, and whether he will be lucky or unlucky; but we cannot tell how several wills thrown together will act, and any calculation of the swing of their interests is even more difficult, for interests are men *plus* things; only in solitude can we discern the general aspect of the future. The Protestantism that is devouring you will be devoured in its turn by its practical outcome, which, in its day, will become a theory too. Europe, so far, has not gone further than Religion; to-morrow it will attack Royalty."

"Then the night of Saint-Bartholomew was a great conception?"

"Yes, Sire; for when the people triumph, they will have their Saint-Bartholomew. When Religion and Royalty are swept away, the people will attack the great, and after the great they will fall upon the rich. Finally, when Europe is no more than a dismembered herd of men for lack of leaders, it will be swallowed up by vulgar conquerors. The world has presented a similar spectacle twenty times before, and Europe is beginning again. Ideas devour the ages as men are devoured by their passions. When man is cured, human nature will cure itself perhaps. Science is the soul of mankind, and we are its pontiffs; and those who study the soul care but little for the body."

"How far have you gone?" asked the King.

"We move but slowly; but we never lose what we have once conquered."

"So you, in fact, are the King of the Wizards," said Charles IX., piqued at finding himself so small a personage in the presence of this man.

The imposing Grand Master of Adepts flashed a look at him that left him thunder-stricken.

"You are the King of men," replied he; "I am the King of ideas. Besides, if there were real wizards, you could not have burnt them!" he added, with a touch of irony. "We too have our martyrs."

"But by what means," the King went on, "do you cast nativities? How did you know that the man near your

window last night was the King of France? What power enabled one of your race to foretell to my mother the fate of her three sons? Can you, the Grand Master of the Order that would fain knead the world,—can you, I say, tell me what the Queen my mother is thinking at this moment?"

"Yes, Sire."

The answer was spoken before Cosmo could pull his brother's coat to warn him.

"You know why my brother, the King of Poland, is returning home?"

"Yes, Sire."

"And why?"

"To take your place."

"Our bitterest enemies are our own kith and kin," cried the King, starting up in a fury, and striding up and down the room. "Kings have no brothers, no sons, no mother! Coligny was right; my executioners are in the conventicles, they are at the Louvre. You are either impostors or regicides!—Jacob, call in Solern."

"My Lord," said Marie Touchet, "the Ruggieri have your word of honor. You have chosen to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge; do not complain of its bitterness."

The King smiled with an expression of deep contempt; his material sovereignty seemed small in his eyes in comparison with the supreme intellectual sovereignty of old Lorenzo Ruggieri. Charles IX. could scarcely govern France; the Grand Master of the Rosicrucians commanded an intelligent and submissive people.

"Be frank; I give you my word as a gentleman that your reply, even if it should contain the avowal of the worst crimes, shall be as though it had never been spoken," the King said. "Do you study poisons?"

"To know what will secure life, it is needlful to know what will cause death."

"You have the secret of many poisons?"

"Yes, but in theory only, and not in practice; we know them, but do not use them."

"Has my mother asked for any?"

"The Queen-mother, Sire, is far too clever to have re-

course to such means. She knows that the sovereign who uses poison shall perish by poison; the Borgias, and Bianca, Grand Duchess of Tuscany, are celebrated examples of the dangers incurred by those who use such odious means. At Court everything is known. You can kill a poor wretch outright; of what use, then, is it to poison him? But if you attempt the life of conspicuous persons, what chance is there of secrecy? Nobody could have fired at Coligny but you, or the Queen-mother, or one of the Guises. No one made any mistake about that. Take my word for it, in politics poison cannot be used twice with impunity; princes always have successors.

"As to smaller men, if, like Luther, they become sovereigns by the power of ideas, by killing them you do not kill their doctrine.—The Queen is a Florentine; she knows that poison can only be the instrument of private vengeance. My brother, who has never left her since she came to France, knows how deeply Mme. Diane aggrieved her; she never thought of poisoning her, and she could have done so. What would the King your father have said? No woman would have been more thoroughly justified, or more certain of impunity. But Mme. de Valentinois is alive to this day."

"And the magic of wax images?" asked the King.

"Sire," said Cosmo, "those figures are so entirely innocuous that we lend ourselves to such magic to satisfy blind passions, like physicians who give bread pills to persons who fancy themselves sick. A desperate woman images that by stabbing the heart of an image she brings disaster on the faithless lover it represents. What can we say? These are our taxes."

"The Pope sells indulgences," said Lorenzo Ruggieri, smiling.

"Does my mother make use of such images?"

"Of what use would such futile means be to her who can do what she will?"

"Could Queen Catherine save you at this moment?" asked Charles ominously.

"We are in no danger, Sire," said Lorenzo calmly. "I knew before I entered this house that I should leave it safe

and sound, as surely as I know the ill-feeling that the King will bear my brother a few days hence; but, even if he should run some risk, he will triumph. Though the King reigns by the sword, he also reigns by justice," he added, in allusion to the famous motto on a medal struck for Charles IX.

"You know everything; I shall die before long, and that is well," returned the King, hiding his wrath under feverish impatience. "But how will my brother die, who, according to you, is to be Henri III.?"

"A violent death."

"And M. d'Alençon?"

"He will never reign."

"Then Henri de Bourbon will be King?"

"Yes, Sire."

"And what death will he die?"

"A violent death."

"And when I am dead, what will become of Madame?" asked the King, turning to Marie Touchet.

"Mme. de Belleville will marry, Sire."

"You are impostors!—Send them away, my Lord," said Marie Touchet.

"Dear heart, the Ruggieri have my word as a gentleman," said Charles, smiling. "Will Marie have children?"

"Yes—and Madame will live to be more than eighty."

"Must I have them hanged?" said the King to his mistress.—"And my son, the Comte d'Auvergne?" said Charles, rising to fetch the child.

"Why did you tell him that I should marry?" said Marie Touchet to the two brothers during the few moments when they were alone.

"Madame," replied Lorenzo with dignity, "the King required us to tell the truth, and we told it."

"Then it is true?" said she.

"As true as that the Governor of Orleans loves you to distraction."

"But I do not love him," cried she.

"That is true, Madame," said Lorenzo. "But your horoscope shows that you are to marry the man who at this present loves you."

"Could you not tell a little lie for my sake?" said she with a smile. "For if the King should believe your forecast——"

"Is it not necessary that he should believe in our innocence?" said Cosmo, with a glance full of meaning. "The precautions taken by the King against us have given us reason, during the time we spent in your pretty jail, to suppose that the occult sciences must have been maligned in his ears."

"Be quite easy," replied Marie; "I know him, and his doubts are dispelled."

"We are innocent," said the old man haughtily.

"So much the better; for at this moment the King is having your laboratory searched and your crucibles and phials examined by experts."

The brothers looked at each other and smiled.

Marie took this smile for the irony of innocence; but it meant: "Poor simpletons! Do you suppose that if we know how to prepare poisons, we do not also know how to conceal them?"

"Where are the King's people, then?" asked Cosmo.

"In René's house," replied Marie; and the Ruggieri exchanged the glance which conveyed from each to each the same thought, "The Hôtel de Soissons is inviolable!"

The King had so completely thrown off his suspicions, that when he went to fetch his son, and Jacob intercepted him to give him a note written by Chapelain, he opened it in the certainty of finding in it what his physician told him concerning his visit to the laboratory, where all that had been discovered bore solely on alchemy.

"Will he live happy?" asked the King, showing his infant son to the two alchemists.

"This is Cosmo's concern," said Lorenzo, turning to his brother.

Cosmo took the child's little hand and studied it carefully.

"Monsieur," said Charles IX. to the elder man, "if you are compelled to deny the existence of the spirit to believe that your enterprise is possible, tell me how it is that you

can doubt that which constitutes your power. The mind you desire to annihilate is the torch that illumines your search. Ah, ha! Is not that moving while denying the fact of motion?" cried he, and pleased at having hit on this argument, he looked triumphantly at his mistress.

"Mind," said Lorenzo Ruggieri, "is the exercise of an internal sense, just as the faculty of seeing various objects and appreciating their form and color is the exercise of our sight. That has nothing to do with what is assumed as to another life. Mind—thought—is a faculty which may cease even during life with the forces that produce it."

"You are logical," said the King with surprise. "But alchemy is an atheistical science."

"Materialist, Sire, which is quite a different thing. Materialism is the outcome of the Indian doctrines transmitted through the mysteries of Isis to Chaldæa and Egypt, and brought back to Greece by Pythagoras, one of the demigods among men; his doctrine of transmigration is the mathematics of materialism, the living law of its phases. Each of the different creations which make up the earthly creation possess the power of retarding the impulse that drags it into another form."

"Then alchemy is the science of sciences!" cried Charles IX., fired with enthusiasm. "I must see you at work."

"As often as you will, Sire. You cannot be more eager than the Queen your mother."

"Ah! That is why she is so much attached to you!" cried the King.

"The House of Medici has secretly encouraged our research for almost a century past."

"Sire," said Cosmo, "this child will live nearly a hundred years; he will meet with some checks, but will be happy and honored, having in his veins the blood of the Valois."

"I will go to see you," said the King, who had recovered his good humor. "You can go."

The brothers bowed to Marie and Charles IX. and withdrew. They solemnly descended the stairs, neither looking at each other nor speaking; they did not even turn to look up at the windows from the courtyard, so sure were they

that the King's eye was on them; and, in fact, as they turned to pass through the gate, they saw Charles IX. at a window.

As soon as the alchemist and the astrologer were in the Rue de l'Autruche, they cast a look in front and behind to see that no one was either following them or waiting for them, and went on as far as the Louvre moat without speaking a word; but there, finding that they were alone, Lorenzo said to Cosmo in the Florentine Italian of the time—

"*Affè d' Iddio! como le abbiamo infinocchiato!*" (By God, we have caught them finely!)

"*Gran mercés! a lui sta di spartojarsi*"—(Much good may it do him; he must make what he can of it)—said Cosmo. "May the Queen do as much for me! We have done a good stroke for her."

Some days after this scene, which had struck Marie Touchet no less than the King, in one of those moments when in the fullness of joy the mind is in some sort released from the body, Marie exclaimed—

"Charles, I understand Lorenzo Ruggieri; but Cosmo said nothing."

"That is true," said the King, startled by this sudden flash of light, "and there was as much falsehood as truth in what they said. Those Italians are as slippery as the silk they spin."

This suspicion explains the hatred of Cosmo that the King betrayed on the occasion of the trial on the conspiracy of la Mole and Coconnas. When he found that Cosmo was one of the contrivers of that plot, the King believed himself duped by the two Italians; for it proved to him that his mother's astrologer did not devote himself exclusively to studying the stars, fulminating powder and final atoms. Lorenzo had then left the country.

In spite of many persons' incredulity of such things, the events which followed this scene confirmed the prophecies uttered by the Ruggieri.

The King died three months later. The Comte de Gondi followed Charles IX. to the tomb, as he had been told that

he would by his brother, the Maréchal de Retz, a friend of the Ruggieri, and a believer in their foresight.

Marie Touchet married Charles de Balzac, Marquis d'Entragues, Governor of Orleans, by whom she had two daughters. The more famous of these two, the Comte d'Auvergne's half-sister, was Henri IV.'s mistress, and at the time of Biron's conspiracy tried to place her brother on the throne of France and oust the Bourbons.

The Comte d'Auvergne, made Duc d'Angoulême, lived till the reign of Louis XIV. He coined money in his province, altering the superscription; but Louis XIV. did not interfere, so great was his respect for the blood of the Valois.

Cosmo lived till after the accession of Louis XIII.; he saw the fall of the House of Medici in France, and the overthrow of the Concini. History has taken care to record that he died an atheist—that is to say, a materialist.

The Marquise d'Entragues was more than eighty when she died.

Lorenzo and Cosmo had for their disciple the famous Comte de Saint-Germain, who became notorious under Louis XV. The great alchemist was not less than a hundred and thirty years old, the age to which some biographers say Marion Delorme attained. The Count may have heard from the Ruggieri anecdotes of the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew and of the reigns of the Valois, in which they could at pleasure assume a part by speaking in the first person. The Comte de Saint-Germain is the last professor of alchemy who explained the science well, but he left no writings. The doctrine of the Cabala set forth in this volume was derived from that mysterious personage.

It is a strange thing! Three men's lives, that of the old man from whom this information was obtained, that of the Comte de Saint-Germain, and that of Cosmo Ruggieri, embrace European history from the reign of Francis I. to that of Napoleon. Only fifty lives of equal length would cover the time to as far back as the first known epoch of the world.—"What are fifty generations for studying the mysteries of life?" the Comte de Saint-Germain used to say.

PARIS, *November-December* 1836.

PART III

THE TWO DREAMS

IN 1786 Bodard de Saint-James, treasurer to the Navy, was of all the financiers of Paris the one whose luxury gave rise to most remark and gossip. At that time he was building his famous *Folly* at Neuilly, and his wife bought, to crown the tester of her bed, a plume of feathers of which the price had dismayed the Queen. It was far easier then than now to make oneself the fashion and be talked of by all Paris; a witticism was often quite enough, or the caprice of a woman.

Bodard lived in the fine house in the Place Vendôme which the farmer-general Dangé had not long since been compelled to quit. This notorious Epicurean was lately dead; and on the day when he was buried, M. de Bièvre, his intimate friend, had found matter for a jest, saying that now one could cross the Place Vendôme without danger (or Dangé). This allusion to the terrific gambling that went on in the deceased man's house was his funeral oration. The house is that opposite to the Chancellerie.

To complete Bodard's history as briefly as possible, he was a poor creature, he failed for fourteen millions of francs after the Prince de Guéménée. His clumsiness in not anticipating that Serene bankruptcy—to use an expression of Lebrun-Pindare's—led to his never even being mentioned. He died in a garret, like Bourvalais, Bouret, and many others.

Mme. de Saint-James indulged an ambition of never receiving any but people of quality—a stale absurdity that is ever new. To her the cap of a lawyer in the Parlement was but a small affair; she wanted to see her rooms filled with persons of title who had at least the minor privileges of *entrée* at Versailles. To say that many blue ribbons were to be seen in the lady's house would be untrue; but it is quite

certain that she had succeeded in winning the civility and attention of some members of the Rohan family, as was proved subsequently in the too famous case of the Queen's necklace.

One evening—it was, I believe, in August 1786—I was greatly surprised to see in this millionaire's room, precise as she was in the matter of proofs of rank, two new faces, which struck me as being of decidedly inferior birth.

She came up to me as I stood in a window recess, where I had intentionally ensconced myself.

"Do tell me," said I, with a questioning glance at one of these strangers, "who is that specimen? How did he get into your house?"

"He is a charming man."

"Do you see him through the prism of love, or am I mistaken in him?"

"You are not mistaken," she replied, laughing; "he is as ugly as a toad; but he has done me the greatest service a woman can accept from a man."

As I looked at her with mischievous meaning, she hastened to add—"He has entirely cured me of the ugly red patches which spoilt my complexion and made me look like a peasant woman."

I shrugged my shoulders with disgust.

"A quack!" I exclaimed.

"No," said she, "he is a physician to the Court pages. He is clever and amusing, I assure you; and he has written books too. He is a very learned physicist."

"If his literary style is like his face!——" said I, smiling. "And the other?"

"What other?"

"That little prim man, as neat as a doll, and who looks as if he drank verjuice."

"He is a man of good family," said she. "He has come from some province—I forget which.—Ah! yes, from Artois. He is in Paris to wind up some affair that concerns the Cardinal, and his Eminence has just introduced him to M. de Saint-James. They have agreed in choosing M. de Saint-James to be arbitrator. In that the gentleman from the

provinces has not shown much wisdom. What are people thinking of when they place a case in that man's hands? He is as gentle as a lamb, and as shy as a girl. His Eminence is most kind to him."

"What is it about?" said I.

"Three hundred thousand livres," said she.

"What! a lawyer?" I asked, with a little start of astonishment.

"Yes," replied she.

And, somewhat disturbed by having to make this humiliating confession, Mme. Bodard returned to her game of faro.

Every table was made up. I had nothing to do or to say. I had just lost two thousand crowns to M. de Laval, whom I had met in a courtesan's drawing-room. I went to take a seat in a deep chair near the fire. If ever on this earth there was an astonished man, it certainly was I on discovering that my opposite neighbor was the Controller-General. M. de Calonne seemed to be drowsy, or else he was absorbed in one of those brown studies which come over a statesman. When I pointed out the minister to Beaumarchais, who came to speak to me, the creator of *Figaro* explained the mystery without speaking a word. He pointed first to my head and then to Bodard's in an ingenuously significant way, by directing his thumb to one and his little finger to the other, with the rest of the fingers closed. My first impulse was to go and say something sharp to Calonne, but I sat still; in the first place, because I intended to play the favorite a trick, and also because Beaumarchais had somewhat familiarly seized my hand.

"What is it, Monsieur?" said I.

With a wink he indicated the minister.

"Do not wake him," he said in a low tone; "we may be only too thankful when he sleeps."

"But even sleeping is a scheme of finance," said I.

"Certainly it is," replied the statesman, who had read our words by the mere motion of our lips. "And would to God we could sleep a long time; there would not be such an awakening as you will see!"

"Monseigneur," said the play-writer, "I owe you some thanks."

"What for?"

"M. de Mirabeau is gone to Berlin. I do not know whether in this matter of the Waters we may not both be drowned."

"You have too much memory and too little gratitude," replied the minister dryly, vexed at this betrayal of one of his secrets before me.

"Very possibly," said Beaumarchais, greatly nettled. "But I have certain millions which may square many accounts." Calonne affected not to have heard.

It was half-past twelve before the card tables broke up. Then we sat down to supper—ten of us: Bodard and his wife, the Controller-General, Beaumarchais, the two strangers, two pretty women whose names may not be mentioned, and a farmer-general named, I think, Lavoisier. Of thirty persons whom I had found on entering the drawing-room but these ten remained. And the two "specimens" would only stay to supper on the pressing invitation of the lady of the house, who thought she could discharge her debt to one by giving him a meal, and asked the other perhaps to please her husband, to whom she was doing the civil—wherefore I know not. M. de Calonne was a power, and if anyone had cause to be annoyed it would have been I.

The supper was at first deadly dull. The two men and the farmer-general weighed on us. I signed to Beaumarchais to make the son of Esculapius, by whom he was sitting, drink till he was tipsy, giving him to understand that I would deal with the lawyer. As this was the only kind of amusement open to us, and as it gave promise of some blundering impertinence on the part of the two strangers, which amused us by anticipation, M. de Calonne smiled on the scheme. In two seconds the ladies had entered into our Bacchic plot. By significant glances they expressed their readiness to play their part, and the wine of Sillery crowned our glasses again and again with silvery foam. The surgeon was easy enough to deal with; but as I was about to pour out my neighbor's second glass, he told me

with the cold politeness of a money-lender that he would drink no more.

At this time, by what chance I know not, Mme. de Saint-James had turned the conversation on the wonderful suppers to the Comte de Cagliostro, given by the Cardinal de Rohan. My attention was not too keenly alive to what the mistress of the house was saying; for since her reply I had watched, with invincible curiosity, my neighbor's pinched, thin face, of which the principal feature was a nose at once wide and sharp, which made him at times look very like a ferret. Suddenly his cheeks flushed as he heard Mme. de Saint-James disputing with M. de Calonne.

"But I assure you, Monsieur," said she in a positive tone, "that I have seen Queen Cleopatra."

"I believe it, Madame," said my neighbor. "I have spoken to Catherine de' Medici."

"Oh! oh!" said M. de Calonne.

The words spoken by the little provincial had an indescribably sonorous tone—to use a word borrowed from physical science. This sudden clearness of enunciation, from a man who till now had spoken very little and very low, in the best possible taste, surprised us in the highest degree.

"Why, he is talking!" exclaimed the surgeon, whom Beaumarchais had worked up to a satisfactory condition.

"His neighbor must have touched a spring," replied the satirist.

Our man colored a little as he heard these words, though they were spoken in a murmur.

"And what was the late lamented Queen like?" asked Calonne.

"I will not assert that the person with whom I supped last night was Catherine de' Medici herself; such a miracle must seem as impossible to a Christian as to a philosopher," replied the lawyer, resting his finger-tips lightly on the table, and leaning back in his chair as if preparing to speak at some length. "But, at any rate, I can swear that that woman was as like to Catherine de' Medici as though they had been sisters. The lady I saw wore a black velvet dress, absolutely like that which the Queen is wearing in the por-

trait belonging to the King; on her head was the characteristic black velvet cap; her complexion was colorless, and her face the face you know. I could not help expressing my surprise to his Eminence. The suddenness of the apparition was all the more wonderful because M. le Comte de Cagliostro could not guess the name of the personage in whose company I wished to be. I was utterly amazed. The magical spectacle of a supper where such illustrious women of the past were the guests robbed me of my presence of mind. When, at about midnight, I got away from this scene of witchcraft, I almost doubted my own identity.

"But all these marvels seemed quite natural by comparison with the strange hallucination under which I was presently to fall. I know not what words I can use to describe the condition of my senses. But I can declare, in all sincerity of heart, that I no longer wonder that there should have been, of old, spirits weak enough—or strong enough—to believe in the mysteries of magic and the power of the Devil. For my part, till I have ampler information, I regard the apparitions of which Cardan and certain other thaumaturgists have spoken as quite possible."

These words, pronounced with incredible eloquence of tone, were of a nature to rouse extreme curiosity in those present. Our looks all centered on the orator, and we sat motionless. Our eyes alone showed life as they reflected the bright wax lights in the candlesticks. By dint of watching the stranger, we fancied we could see an emanation from the pores of his face, and especially from those of his brow, of the inner feelings that wholly possessed him. This man, apparently so cold and strictly reserved, seemed to have within him a hidden fire, of which the flame came forth to us.

"I know not," he went on, "whether the figure I had seen called up made itself invisible to follow me; but as soon as I had laid my head on my pillow, I saw the grand shade of Catherine rise before me. I instinctively felt myself in a luminous sphere; for my eyes, attracted to the Queen with painful fixity, saw her alone. Suddenly she bent over

At these words the ladies with one consent betrayed keener curiosity.

"But," said the lawyer, "I do not know whether I ought to go on; although I am inclined to think that it was but a dream, what remains to be told is serious."

"Does it bear on religion?" asked Beaumarchais.

"Or is it in any way indecent?" asked Calonne. "These ladies will forgive it."

"It bears on government," replied the lawyer.

"Go on," said the minister. "Voltaire, Diderot, and their like have done much to educate our ears."

The Controller-General was all attention, and his neighbor, Mme. de Genlis, became absorbed. The stranger still hesitated. Then Beaumarchais exclaimed impetuously—

"Come, proceed, Maître! Do not you know that when the laws leave folks so little liberty, people revenge themselves by laxity of manners?"

So the lawyer went on—

"Whether it was that certain ideas were fermenting in my soul, or that I was prompted by some unknown power, I said to her—

"'Ah, Madame, you committed a very great crime.'

"'Which?' she asked in a deep voice.

"'That for which the signal was given by the Palace clock on the 24th of August.'

"She smiled scornfully, and some deep furrows showed on her pallid cheeks.

"'Do you call that a crime?' replied she; 'it was only an accident. The undertaking was badly managed, and the good result we looked for failed—for France, for all Europe, and for the Catholic Church. How could we help it? Our orders were badly carried out. We could not find so many Montlucs as we needed. Posterity will not give us credit for the defective communications which hindered us from giving our work the unity of impulse which is necessary to any great *coup-d'état;* that was our misfortune. If by the 25th of August not the shadow of a Huguenot had been left in France, I should have been regarded to the remotest posterity as a noble incarnation of Providence. How often

have the clear-seeing spirits of Sixtus V., of Richelieu, of Bossuet, secretly accused me of having failed in my undertaking, after daring to conceive of it! And how many regrets attended my death!

"'The disease was still rife thirty years after that Saint-Bartholomew's night; and it had caused the shedding of ten times more noble blood in France than was left to be shed on August 26, 1572. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes, for which you had medals struck, cost more tears, more blood and money, and killed more prosperity in France than three Saint-Bartholomews. Letellier, with a dip of ink, carried into effect the decree which the Crown had secretly desired since my day; but though on August 25, 1572, this tremendous execution was necessary, on August 25, 1685, it was useless. Under Henri de Valois's second son heresy was scarcely pregnant; under Henri de Bourbon's second son the teeming mother had cast her spawn over the whole world.

"'You accuse me of crime, and you raise statues to the son of Anne of Austria! But he and I aimed at the same end. He succeeded; I failed; but Louis XIV. found the Protestants disarmed, while in my day they had powerful armies, statesmen, captains, and Germany to back them.'

"On hearing these words slowly spoken, I felt within me a tremulous thrill. I seemed to scent the blood of I know not what victims. Catherine had grown before me. She stood there like an evil genius, and I felt as if she wanted to get into my conscience to find rest there——"

"He must have dreamed that," said Beaumarchais, in a low voice. "He certainly never invented it."

"'My reason is confounded,' said I to the Queen. 'You pride yourself on an action which three generations have condemned and held accursed, and——'

"'Add,' said she, 'that writers have been more unjust to me than my contemporaries were. No one undertakes my defense. I am accused of ambition—I who was so rich and a queen. I am taxed with cruelty—I who have but two decapitations on my conscience. And to the most impartial minds I am still, no doubt, a great riddle. Do you really

believe that I was governed by feelings of hatred, that I breathed only vengeance and fury?' She smiled scornfully. 'I was as calm and cold as Reason itself. I condemned the Huguenots without pity, but without anger; they were the rotten orange in my basket. If I had been Queen of England, I should have judged the Catholics in the same way, if they had been seditious. To give our power any vitality at that period, only one God could be allowed in the State, only one faith and one master. Happily for me, I left my excuse recorded in one sentence. When Birague brought me a false report of the loss of the battle of Dreux —"well and good," said I, "then we will go to Sermon."— Hate the leaders of the New Religion? I esteemed them highly, and I did not know them. If I ever felt an aversion for any political personage, it was for that cowardly Cardinal de Lorraine, and for his brother, a wily and brutal soldier, who had me watched by their spies. They were my children's enemies; they wanted to snatch the crown from them; I saw them every day, and they were more than I could bear. If we had not carried out the plan for Saint-Bartholomew's Day, the Guises would have done it with the help of Rome and its monks. The Ligue, which had no power till I had grown old, would have begun in 1573.'

"'But, Madame,' said I, 'instead of commanding that horrible butchery—excuse my frankness—why did you not employ the vast resources of your political genius in giving the Reformers the wise institutions which made Henri IV.'s reign so glorious and peaceful?'

"She smiled again, shrugging her shoulders, and her hollow wrinkles gave her pale features an ironical expression full of bitterness.

"'After a furious struggle a nation needs repose,' said she. 'That is the secret of that reign. But Henri IV. committed two irremediable blunders. He ought neither to have abjured Protestantism nor to have left France Catholic after his own conversion. He alone has ever been in a position to change the face of France without a shock. Either not a single stole, or not a single conventicle! That is what he ought to have seen. To leave two hostile principles

at work in a government with nothing to balance them is a crime in a King; it is sowing the seed of revolutions. It belongs to God alone to leave good and evil forever at odds in the work of His hand. But this sentence was perhaps inscribed at the foundations of Henri IV.'s policy, and perhaps it was what led to his death. It is impossible that Sully should not have cast a covetous eye on the immense possessions of the clergy—though the clergy were not their sole masters, for the nobles dissipated at least two-thirds of the Church revenues. Sully the Reformer owned abbeys nevertheless.' She paused, to think, as it seemed.

"'But does it occur to you,' said she, 'that you are asking a Pope's niece her reason for remaining Catholic?'—Again she paused—'And, after all, I would just as soon have been a Calvinist,' she went on, with a gesture of indifference. 'Can the superior men of your age still think that religion had really anything to do with that great trial, the most tremendous of those that Europe has been required to decide—a vast revolution retarded by trivial causes, which will not hinder it from overflowing the whole world, since I failed to stop it—A Revolution,' said she, with a look of deep meaning, 'which is still progressing, and which you may achieve.—Yes, *You*, who hear me!'

"I shuddered.

"'What! Has no one yet understood that old interests on one hand, and on the other new interests, had taken Rome and Luther to be their standards of battle! What! When Louis IX., to avoid a somewhat kindred struggle, dragged after him a population a hundred times greater than I condemned to death, and left them in the sands of Egypt, he earned the title of Saint, while I!—But I,' she added, 'failed.'

"She looked down and stood silent for a minute. It was no longer a queen that I beheld, but rather one of those Druidesses of old who sacrificed men, and could unroll the pages of the future while exhuming the lore of the past. But she presently raised her royal and majestic face.

"'By directing the attention of the middle classes to the abuses of the Roman Church,' said she, 'Luther and Calvin

gave birth in Europe to a spirit of investigation which inevitably led the nations to examine everything. Examination leads to doubt. Instead of the faith indispensable to social existence, they brought in their train, and long after them, an inquisitive philosophy, armed with hammers, and greedy of destruction. Science, with its false lights, sprang glittering from the womb of heresy. Reform in the Church was not so much what was aimed at as the indefinite liberty of man, which is fatal to power. I have seen that. The result of the successes of the Reformers in their contest against the priesthood—even at that time better armed and more formidable than the Crown—was the destruction of the monarchical power raised with so much difficulty by Louis XI. on the ruins of feudality. Their aim was nothing less than the annihilation of religion and royalty, and over their wreck the middle classes of all lands were to join in a common compact. Thus this contest was war to the death between these new allies and ancient laws and beliefs. The Catholics were the representative expression of the material interests of the Crown, the nobility, and the priesthood.

"'It was a duel to the death between two giants; the night of Saint-Bartholomew was, unfortunately, only a wound. Remember that, to save a few drops of blood at the right moment, a torrent had to be shed at a later day. There is a misfortune which the Intelligence that looks down on a kingdom cannot avert; that, namely, of having no peers by whom to be judged when he succumbs under the burden of events. My peers are few; fools are in the majority; these two propositions account for everything. If my name is held in execration in France, the inferior minds which constitute the mass of every generation are to blame.

"'In such great crises as I have been through, reigning does not mean holding audience, reviewing troops, and signing decrees. I may have made mistakes; I was but a woman. But why was there no man then living who was superior to the age? The Duke of Alva had a soul of iron, Philip II. was stultified by Catholic dogmas, Henri IV. was a gambler and a libertine, the Admiral was systematically pig-headed. Louis XI. had lived too soon; Richelieu came too late.

Whether it were virtuous or criminal, whether the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew is attributed to me or no, I accept the burden. I shall always stand between those two great men as a visible link in an unrecognized chain. Some day paradoxical writers will wonder whether nations have not sometimes given the name of executioner to those who, in fact, were victims. Not once only will mankind be ready to immolate a God rather than accuse itself! You are all ready to shed tears for two hundred louts, when you refuse them for the woes of a generation, of a century, of the whole world! And you also forget that political liberty, the peace of a nation, and science itself are gifts for which Fate demands a heaxy tax in blood!'

" 'May the nations never be happy at less cost?' cried I, with tears in my eyes.

" 'Great truths leave their wells only to find fresh vigor in baths of blood. Christianity itself, the essence of all truth, since it proceeds from God, was not established without martyrs. Has not blood flowed in torrents? Must it not forever flow?—You will know—you who are to be one of the builders of the social edifice founded by the apostles. As long as you use your instruments to level heads, you will be applauded; then, when you want to take up the trowel, you will be killed.'

" 'Blood! blood!'—the words rang in my brain like the echo of a bell.

" 'According to you,' said I, 'Protestantism has the same right as you have to argue thus?'

"But Catherine had vanished as though some draught of air had extinguished the supernatural light which enabled my mind to see the figure which had grown to gigantic proportions. I had suddenly discerned in myself an element which assimilated the horrible doctrines set forth by the Italian Queen.

"I woke in a sweat, and in tears; and at the moment when reason, triumphing within me, assured me in her mild tones that it was not the function of a King, nor even of a nation, to practice these principles, worthy only of a people of atheists——"

" And how are perishing monarchies to be saved? " asked Beaumarchais.

" God is above all, Monsieur," replied my neighbor.

" Well, then," said M. de Calonne, with the flippancy which characterized him, " we have always the resource of believing ourselves to be instruments in the hand of God, as the gospel according to Bossuet has it."

As soon as the ladies understood that the whole scene was a conversation between the Queen and the lawyer, they had begun whispering. Indeed, I have spared the reader the exclamations and interruptions with which they broke into the lawyer's narrative. However, such phrases as, " What a deadly bore! " and " My dear, when will he have done? " reached my ear.

When the stranger ceased speaking, the ladies were silent. M. Bodard was asleep. The surgeon being half drunk, Lavoisier, Beaumarchais, and I alone had been listening; M. de Calonne was playing with the lady at his side.

At this moment the silence was almost solemn. The light of the tapers seemed to me to have a magical hue. A common sentiment linked us by mysterious bonds to this man who, to me, suggested the inexplicable effects of fanaticism. It needed nothing less than the deep hollow voice of Beaumarchais's neighbor to rouse us.

" I too dreamed! " he exclaimed.

I then looked more particularly at the surgeon, and felt an indescribable sentiment of horror. His earthy complexion, his features, large but vulgar, were the exact expression of what I must be allowed to call *la canaille*, the rough mob. A few specks of dull blue and black dotted his skin like spots of mud, and his eyes flashed with sinister fires. The face looked more ominous perhaps than it really was, because a powdered wig *à la frimas* crowned his head with snow.

" That man must have buried more than one patient," said I to my neighbor.

" I would not trust my dog to his care," he replied.

" I hate him involuntarily," said I.

"I despise him," replied he.

"And yet how unjust!" cried I.

"Oh! bless me, by the day after to-morrow he may be as famous as Volange the actor," replied the stranger.

M. de Calonne pointed to the surgeon with a gesture that seemed to convey, "This fellow might amuse us."

"And did you too dream of a queen?" asked Beaumarchais.

"No, I dreamed of a people," said he with emphasis, making us laugh. "I was attending a patient whose leg I was to amputate the next day——"

"And you found a people in your patient's thigh?" asked M. de Calonne.

"Exactly so!" replied the surgeon.

"Is not he amusing?" cried Mme. de Genlis.

"I was greatly surprised," the speaker went on, never heeding these interruptions, and stuffing his hands into his breeches pockets, "to find someone to talk to in that leg. I had the strange power of entering into my patient. When I first found myself in his skin, I discerned there an amazing number of tiny beings, moving, thinking, and arguing. Some lived in the man's body, and some in his mind. His ideas were creatures that were born, grew, and died; they were sick, gay, healthy, sad—and all had personal individuality. They fought or fondled. A few ideas flew forth and went to dwell in the world of intellect. Suddenly I understood that there are two worlds—the visible and the invisible universe; that the earth, like man, has a body and a soul. A new light was cast on nature, and I perceived its immensity when I saw the ocean of beings everywhere distributed in masses and in species, all of one and the same living matter, from marble rocks up to God. A magnificent sight! In short, there was a universe in my patient. When I inserted my lancet in his gangrened leg, I destroyed a thousand such beings.—You laugh, ladies, at the idea that you are a prey to a thousand creatures——"

"No personalities," said M. de Calonne, "speak for yourself and your patient."

"My man, horrified at the outcry of his animalcules,

wanted to stop the operation; but I persisted, telling him that malignant creatures were already gnawing at his bones. He made a motion to resist me, not understanding that what I was doing was for his good, and my lancet pierced me in the side——"

"He is too stupid," said Lavoisier.

"No, he is drunk," replied Beaumarchais.

"But, gentlemen, my dream has a meaning," cried the surgeon.

"Oh, oh!" cried Bodard, waking, "my leg is asleep!"

"Your animalcules are dead," said his wife.

"That man has a vocation," said my neighbor, who had imperturbably stared at the surgeon all the time he was talking.

"It is to Monsieur's vocation what action is to speech, or the body to the soul," said the ugly guest.

But his tongue was heavy, and he got confused; he could only utter unintelligible words. Happily, the conversation took another turn. By the end of half an hour we had forgotten the surgeon to the Court pages, and he was asleep.

When we rose from table, the rain was pouring in torrents.

"The lawyer is no fool," said I to Beaumarchais.

"Oh! he is dull and cold. But you see the provinces can still produce good folks who take political theories and the history of France quite seriously. It is a leaven that will spread."

"Have you a carriage?" Mme. de Saint-James asked me.

"No," said I shortly. "I did not know that I should want it this evening. You thought, perhaps, that I should take home the Controller-General? Did he come to your house *en polisson?*" (the fashionable name at the time for a person who drove his own carriage at Marly dressed as a coachman.) Mme. de Saint-James left me hastily, rang the bell, ordered her husband's carriage, and took the lawyer aside.

"M. de Robespierre, will you do me the favor of seeing

M. Marat home, for he is incapable of standing upright?" said she.

"With pleasure, Madame," replied M. de Robespierre with an air of gallantry; "I wish you had ordered me to do something more difficult."

PARIS, *January* 1828.

NOTE

This is the song published by the Abbé de la Place in his collection of interesting fragments, in which may be found the dissertation alluded to. [It will be seen that it goes to the old tune of *Malbrouk s'en va-t-en guerre.*]

THE DUC DE GUISE'S BURIAL

Qui veut ouïr chanson? (*Bis.*)
C'est du Grand Duc de Guise;
Et bon bon bon bon,
Di dan di dan don,
C'est du Grand Duc de Guise!
(This last line was spoken, no doubt, in a comic tone.)
Qui est mort et enterré.

Qui est mort et enterré. (*Bis.*)
Aux quatre coins du poêle,
Et bon bon bon bon,
Di dan di dan don,
Quatre gentilshomm's y avoit.

Quatre gentilshomm's y avoit. (*Bis.*)
L'un portoit son grand casque,
Et bon, etc.
Et l'autre ses pistolets.

Et l'autre ses pistolets. (*Bis.*)
Et l'autre son épée,
Et bon, etc.
Qui tant d'Hugu'nots a tués.

Qui tant d'Hugu'nots a tués. (*Bis.*)
Venoit le quatrième,
Et bon, etc.
Qui étoit le plus dolent.

Qui étoit le plus dolent; (*Bis.*)
Après venoient les pages,
Et bon, etc.
Et les valets de pied.

Et les valets de pied, (*Bis.*)
Avecque de grands crêpes,
Et bon, etc.
Et des souliers cirés.

Et des souliers cirés, (*Bis.*)
Et des beaux bas d'estame,
Et bon, etc.
Et des culottes de piau.

Et des culottes de piau. (*Bis.*)
La cérémonie faite,
  Et bon, etc.
Chacun s'alla coucher.

Chacun s'alla coucher: (*Bis.*)
Les uns avec leurs femmes,
  Et bon, etc.
Et les autres tout seuls.

The discovery of these curious verses seems to prove, to a certain extent, the guilt of Théodore de Bèze, who tried to mitigate the horror caused by this murder by turning it to ridicule. The principal merit of this song lay, it would appear, in the tune.

THE END

FAREWELL

[*Adieu* first appeared in *La Mode* during June 1830, and for a time was classed as a *Scène de la Vie Privée*.]

FAREWELL

To Prince Friedrich von Schwarzenberg.

"COME, Deputy of the Center, come along! We shall have to mend our pace if we mean to sit down to dinner when everyone else does, and that's a fact! Hurry up! Jump, Marquis! That's it! Well done! You are bounding over the furrows just like a stag!"

These words were uttered by a sportsman seated much at his ease on the outskirts of the Forêt de l'Isle-Adam; he had just finished an Havannah cigar, which he had smoked while he waited for his companion, who had evidently been straying about for some time among the forest undergrowth. Four panting dogs by the speaker's side likewise watched the progress of the personage for whose benefit the remarks were made. To make their sarcastic import fully clear, it should be added that the second sportsman was both short and stout; his ample girth indicated a truly magisterial corpulence, and in consequence his progress across the furrows was by no means easy. He was striding over a vast field of stubble; the dried corn-stalks underfoot added not a little to the difficulties of his passage, and to add to his discomforts, the genial influence of the sun that slanted into his eyes brought great drops of perspiration into his face. The uppermost thought in his mind being a strong desire to keep his balance, he lurched to and fro much like a coach jolted over an atrocious road.

It was one of those September days of almost tropical heat that finishes the work of summer and ripens the grapes. Such heat forebodes a coming storm; and though as yet there were wide patches of blue between the dark rain-clouds low down on the horizon, pale golden masses were rising and scattering with ominous swiftness from west to east, and drawing a shadowy veil across the sky. The wind was still, save in the upper regions of the air, so that the weight of the atmosphere seemed to compress the steamy heat of the

earth into the forest glades. The tall forest trees shut out every breath of air so completely that the little valley across which the sportsman was making his way was as hot as a furnace; the silent forest seemed parched with the fiery heat. Birds and insects were mute; the topmost twigs of the trees swayed with scarcely perceptible motion. Anyone who retains some recollection of the summer of 1819 must surely compassionate the plight of the hapless supporter of the ministry who toiled and sweated over the stubble to rejoin his satirical comrade. That gentleman, as he smoked his cigar, had arrived, by a process of calculation based on the altitude of the sun, to the conclusion that it must be about five o'clock.

"Where the devil are we?" asked the stout sportsman. He wiped his brow as he spoke, and propped himself against a tree in the field opposite his companion, feeling quite unequal to clearing the broad ditch that lay between them.

"And you ask that question of *me!*" retorted the other, laughing from his bed of tall brown grasses on the top of the bank. He flung the end of his cigar into the ditch, exclaiming, "I swear by Saint Hubert that no one shall catch *me* risking myself again in a country that I don't know with a magistrate, even if, like you, my dear d'Albon, he happens to be an old schoolfellow."

"Why, Philip, have you really forgotten your own language? You surely must have left your wits behind you in Siberia," said the stouter of the two, with a glance half-comic, half-pathetic at a guide-post distant about a hundred paces from them.

"I understand," replied the one addressed as Philip. He snatched up his rifle, suddenly sprang to his feet, made but one jump of it into the field, and rushed off to the guide-post. "This way, d'Albon, here you are! left about!" he shouted, gesticulating in the direction of the highroad. "*To Baillet and l'Isle-Adam!*" he went on; "so if we go along here, we shall be sure to come upon the crossroad to Cassan."

"Quite right, Colonel," said M. d'Albon, putting the cap with which he had been fanning himself back on his head.

"Then *forward!* highly respected Councilor," returned

Colonel Philip, whistling to the dogs, that seemed already to obey him rather than the magistrate their master.—"Are you aware, my lord Marquis, that two leagues yet remain before us?" inquired the malicious soldier. "That village down yonder must be Baillet."

"Great Heavens!" cried the Marquis d'Albon. "Go on to Cassan by all means, if you like; but if you do, you will go alone. I prefer to wait here, storm or no storm; you can send a horse for me from the château. You have been making game of me, Sucy. We were to have a nice day's sport by ourselves; we were not to go very far from Cassan, and go over ground that I knew. Pooh! Instead of a day's fun, you have kept me running like a greyhound since four o'clock this morning, and nothing but a cup or two of milk by way of breakfast. Oh! if ever you find yourself in a court of law, I will take care that the day goes against you if you were in the right a hundred times over."

The dejected sportsman sat himself down on one of the stumps at the foot of the guide-post, disencumbered himself of his rifle and empty game-bag, and heaved a prolonged sigh.

"Oh, France, behold thy Deputies!" laughed Colonel de Sucy. "Poor old d'Albon; if you had spent six months at the other end of Siberia as I did . . ."

He broke off, and his eyes sought the sky, as if the story of his troubles was a secret between himself and God.

"Come, march!" he added. "If you once sit down, it is all over with you."

"I can't help it, Philip! It is such an old habit in a magistrate! I am dead beat, upon my honor. If I had only bagged one hare though!"

Two men more different are seldom seen together. The civilian, a man of forty-two, seemed scarcely more than thirty; while the soldier, at thirty years of age, looked to be forty at the least. Both wore the red rosette that proclaimed them to be officers of the Legion of Honor. A few locks of hair, mingled white and black, like a magpie's wing, had strayed from beneath the Colonel's cap; while thick, fair curls clustered about the magistrate's temples.

The Colonel was tall, spare, dried up, but muscular; the lines in his pale face told a tale of vehement passions or of terrible sorrows; but his comrade's jolly countenance beamed with health, and would have done credit to an Epicurean. Both men were deeply sunburnt. Their high gaiters of brown leather carried souvenirs of every ditch and swamp that they crossed that day.

"Come, come," cried M. de Sucy, "forward! One short hour's march, and we shall be at Cassan with a good dinner before us."

"You never were in love, that is positive," returned the Councilor, with a comically piteous expression. "You are as inexorable as Article 304 of the Penal Code!"

Philip de Sucy shuddered violently. Deep lines appeared in his broad forehead, his face was overcast like the sky above them; but though his features seemed to contract with the pain of an intolerably bitter memory, no tears came to his eyes. Like all men of strong character, he possessed the power of forcing his emotions down into some inner depth, and, perhaps, like many reserved natures, he shrank from laying bare a wound too deep for any words of human speech, and winced at the thought of ridicule from those who do not care to understand. M. d'Albon was one of those who are keenly sensitive by nature to the distress of others, who feel at once the pain they have unwittingly given by some blunder. He respected his friend's mood, rose to his feet, forgot his weariness, and followed in silence, thoroughly annoyed with himself for having touched on a wound that seemed not yet healed.

"Some day I will tell you my story," Philip said at last, wringing his friend's hand, while he acknowledged his dumb repentance with a heartrending glance. "To-day, I cannot."

They walked on in silence. As the Colonel's distress passed off the Councilor's fatigue returned. Instinctively, or rather urged by weariness, his eyes explored the depths of the forest around them; he looked high and low among the trees, and gazed along the avenues, hoping to discover some dwelling where he might ask for hospitality. They reached a place

where several roads met; and the Councilor, fancying that he saw a thin film of smoke rising through the trees, made a stand and looked sharply about him. He caught a glimpse of the dark green branches of some firs among the other forest trees, and finally, "A house! a house!" he shouted. No sailor could have raised the cry of "Land ahead!" more joyfully than he.

He plunged at once into undergrowth, somewhat of the thickest; and the Colonel, who had fallen into deep musings, followed him unheedingly.

"I would rather have an omelette here and homemade bread, and a chair to sit down in, than go further for a sofa, truffles, and Bordeaux wine at Cassan."

This burst of enthusiasm on the Councilor's part was caused by the sight of the whitened wall of a house in the distance, standing out in strong contrast against the brown masses of knotted tree-trunks in the forest.

"Aha! This used to be a priory, I should say," the Marquis d'Albon cried once more, as they stood before a grim old gateway. Through the grating they could see the house itself standing in the midst of some considerable extent of park land; from the style of the architecture it appeared to have been a monastery once upon a time.

"Those knowing rascals of monks knew how to choose a site!"

This last exclamation was caused by the magistrate's amazement at the romantic hermitage before his eyes. The house had been built on a spot half-way up the hillside on the slope below the village of Nerville, which crowned the summit. A huge circle of great oak trees, hundreds of years old, guarded the solitary place from intrusion. There appeared to be about forty acres of the park. The main building of the monastery faced the south, and stood in a space of green meadow, picturesquely intersected by several tiny clear streams, and by larger sheets of water so disposed as to have a natural effect. Shapely trees with contrasting foliage grew here and there. Grottos had been ingeniously contrived; and broad terraced walks, now in ruin, though the steps were broken and the balustrades eaten through with

rust, gave to this sylvan Thebaïd a certain character of its own. The art of man and the picturesqueness of nature had wrought together to produce a charming effect. Human passions surely could not cross that boundary of tall oak trees which shut out the sounds of the outer world, and screened the fierce heat of the sun from this forest sanctuary.

"What neglect!" said M. d'Albon to himself, after the first sense of delight in the melancholy aspect of the ruins in the landscape, which seemed blighted by a curse.

It was like some haunted spot, shunned of men. The twisted ivy stems clambered everywhere, hiding everything away beneath a luxuriant green mantle. Moss and lichens, brown and gray, yellow and red, covered the trees with fantastic patches of color, grew upon the benches in the garden, overran the roof and the walls of the house. The window-sashes were weather-worn and warped with age, the balconies were dropping to pieces, the terraces in ruins. Here and there the folding shutters hung by a single hinge. The crazy doors would have given way at the first attempt to force an entrance.

Out in the orchard the neglected fruit trees were running to wood, the rambling branches bore no fruit save the glistening mistletoe berries, and tall plants were growing in the garden walks. All this forlornness shed a charm across the picture that wrought on the spectator's mind with an influence like that of some enchanting poem, filling his soul with dreamy fancies. A poet must have lingered there in deep and melancholy musings, marveling at the harmony of this wilderness, where decay had a certain grace of its own.

In a moment a few gleams of sunlight struggled through a rift in the clouds, and a shower of colored light fell over the wild garden. The brown tiles of the roof glowed in the light, the mosses took bright hues, strange shadows played over the grass beneath the trees; the dead autumn tints grew vivid, bright unexpected contrasts were evoked by the light, every leaf stood out sharply in the clear, thin air. Then all at once the sunlight died away, and the landscape that seemed to have spoken grew silent and gloomy

again, or rather, it took gray soft tones like the tenderest hues of autumn dusk.

"It is the palace of the Sleeping Beauty," the Councilor said to himself (he had already begun to look at the place from the point of view of an owner of property). "Whom can the place belong to, I wonder. He must be a great fool not to live on such a charming little estate!"

Just at that moment, a woman sprang out from under a walnut tree on the right-hand side of the gateway, and passed before the Councilor as noiselessly and swiftly as the shadow of a cloud. This apparition struck him dumb with amazement.

"Hallo, d'Albon, what is the matter?" asked the Colonel.

"I am rubbing my eyes to find out whether I am awake or asleep," answered the magistrate, whose countenance was pressed against the grating in the hope of catching a second glimpse of the ghost.

"In all probability she is under that fig-tree," he went on, indicating, for Philip's benefit, some branches that overtopped the wall on the left-hand side of the gateway.

"She? Who?"

"Eh! how should I know?" answered M. d'Albon. "A strange-looking woman sprang up there under my very eyes just now," he added, in a low voice; "she looked to me more like a ghost than a living being. She was so slender, light, and shadowy that she might be transparent. Her face was as white as milk, her hair, her eyes, and her dress were black. She gave me a glance as she flitted by. I am not easily frightened, but that cold stony stare of hers froze the blood in my veins."

"Was she pretty?" inquired Philip.

"I don't know. I saw nothing but those eyes in her head."

"The devil take dinner at Cassan!" exclaimed the Colonel; "let us stay here. I am as eager as a boy to see the inside of this queer place. The window-sashes are painted red, do you see? There is a red line round the panels of the doors and the edges of the shutters. It might be the Devil's own dwelling; perhaps he took it over when the monks went

out. Now, then, let us give chase to the black and white lady; come along!" cried Philip, with forced gayety.

He had scarcely finished speaking when the two sportsmen heard a cry as if some bird had been taken in a snare. They listened. There was a sound like the murmur of rippling water, as something forced its way through the bushes; but diligently as they lent their ears, there was no footfall on the path, the earth kept the secret of the mysterious woman's passage, if indeed she had moved from her hiding-place.

"This is very strange!" cried Philip.

Following the wall of the park, the two friends reached before long a forest road leading to the village of Chauvry; they went along this track in the direction of the highway to Paris, and reached another large gateway. Through the railings they had a complete view of the façade of the mysterious house. From this point of view, the dilapidation was still more apparent. Huge cracks had riven the walls of the main body of the house built round three sides of a square. Evidently the place was allowed to fall to ruin; there were holes in the roof, broken slates and tiles lay about below. Fallen fruit from the orchard trees was left to rot on the ground; a cow was grazing over the bowling-green and trampling the flowers in the garden beds; a goat browsed on the green grapes and young vine-shoots on the trellis.

"It is all of a piece," remarked the Colonel. "The neglect is in a fashion systematic." He laid his hand on the chain of the bell-pull, but the bell had lost its clapper. The two friends heard no sound save the peculiar grating creak of the rusty spring. A little door in the wall beside the gateway, though ruinous, held good against all their efforts to force it open.

"Oho! all this is growing very interesting," Philip said to his companion.

"If I were not a magistrate," returned M. d'Albon, "I should think that the woman in black is a witch."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when the cow came up to the railings and held out her warm damp nose,

as if she were glad of human society. Then a woman, if so indescribable a being could be called a woman, sprang up from the bushes, and pulled at the cord about the cow's neck. From beneath the crimson handkerchief about the woman's head, fair matted hair escaped, something as tow hangs about a spindle. She wore no kerchief at the throat. A coarse black-and-gray striped woolen petticoat, too short by several inches, left her legs bare. She might have belonged to some tribe of Redskins in Fenimore Cooper's novels; for her neck, arms, and ankles looked as if they had been painted brick-red. There was no spark of intelligence in her featureless face; her pale, bluish eyes looked out dull and expressionless from beneath the eyebrows with one or two straggling white hairs on them. Her teeth were prominent and uneven, but white as a dog's.

"Hallo, good woman," called M. de Sucy.

She came slowly up to the railing, and stared at the two sportsmen with a contorted smile painful to see.

"Where are we? What is the name of the house yonder? Whom does it belong to? Who are you? Do you come from hereabouts?"

To these questions, and to a host of others poured out in succession upon her by the two friends, she made no answer save gurgling noises in the throat, more like animal sounds than anything uttered by a human voice.

"Don't you see that she is deaf and dumb?" said M. d'Albon.

"*Minorites!*" the peasant woman said at last.

"Ah! she is right. The house looks as though it might once have been a Minorite convent," he went on.

Again they plied the peasant woman with questions, but, like a wayward child, she colored up, fidgeted with her sabot, twisted the rope by which she held the cow that had fallen to grazing again, stared at the sportsmen, and scrutinized every article of clothing upon them; she gibbered, grunted, and clucked, but no articulate word did she utter.

"Your name?" asked Philip, fixing her with his eyes as if he were trying to bewitch the woman.

"Geneviève," she answered, with an empty laugh.

"The cow is the most intelligent creature we have seen so far," exclaimed the magistrate. "I shall fire a shot, that ought to bring somebody out."

D'Albon had just taken up his rifle when the Colonel put out a hand to stop him, and pointed out the mysterious woman who had aroused such lively curiosity in them. She seemed to be absorbed in deep thought, as she went along a green alley some little distance away, so slowly that the friends had time to take a good look at her. She wore a threadbare black satin gown, her long hair curled thickly over her forehead, and fell like a shawl about her shoulders below her waist. Doubtless she was accustomed to the dishevelment of her locks, for she seldom put back her hair on either side of her brows; but when she did so, she shook her head with a sudden jerk that had not to be repeated to shake away the thick veil from her eyes or forehead. In everything that she did, moreover, there was a wonderful certainty in the working of the mechanism, an unerring swiftness and precision, like that of an animal, well nigh marvelous in a woman.

The two sportsmen were amazed to see her spring up into an apple tree and cling to a bough lightly as a bird. She snatched at the fruit, ate it, and dropped to the ground with the same supple grace that charms us in a squirrel. The elasticity of her limbs took all appearance of awkwardness or effort from her movements. She played about upon the grass, rolling in it as a young child might have done; then, on a sudden, she lay still and stretched out her feet and hands, with the languid natural grace of a kitten dozing in the sun.

There was a threatening growl of thunder far away, and at this she started up on all fours and listened, like a dog who hears a strange footstep. One result of this strange attitude was to separate her thick black hair into two masses, that fell away on either side of her face and left her shoulders bare; the two witnesses of this singular scene wondered at the whiteness of the skin that shone like a meadow daisy, and at the neck that indicated the perfection of the rest of her form.

A wailing cry broke from her; she rose to her feet, and stood upright. Every successive movement was made so lightly, so gracefully, so easily, that she seemed to be no human being, but one of Ossian's maids of the mist. She went across the grass to one of the pools of water, deftly shook off her shoe, and seemed to enjoy dipping her foot, white as marble, in the spring; doubtless it pleased her to make the circling ripples, and watch them glitter like gems. She knelt down by the brink, and played there like a child, dabbling her long tresses in the water, and flinging them loose again to see the water drip from the ends, like a string of pearls in the sunless light.

"She is mad!" cried the Councilor.

A hoarse cry rang through the air; it came from Geneviève, and seemed to be meant for the mysterious woman. She rose to her feet in a moment, flinging back the hair from her face, and then the Colonel and d'Albon could see her features distinctly. As soon as she saw the two friends she bounded to the railings with the swiftness of a fawn.

"*Farewell!*" she said in low, musical tones, but they could not discover the least trace of feeling, the least idea in the sweet sounds that they had awaited impatiently.

M. d'Albon admired the long lashes, the thick, dark eyebrows, the dazzling fairness of a skin untinged by any trace of red. Only the delicate blue veins contrasted with that uniform whiteness.

But when the Marquis turned to communicate his surprise at the sight of so strange an apparition, he saw the Colonel stretched on the grass like one dead. M. d'Albon fired his gun into the air, shouted for help, and tried to raise his friend. At the sound of the shot, the strange lady, who had stood motionless by the gate, fled away, crying out like a wounded wild creature, circling round and round in the meadow, with every sign of unspeakable terror.

M. d'Albon heard a carriage rolling along the road to l'Isle-Adam, and waved his handkerchief to implore help. The carriage immediately came towards the Minorite convent, and M. d'Albon recognized neighbors, M. and Mme. de Grandville, who hastened to alight and put their carriage

at his disposal. Colonel de Sucy inhaled the salts which Mme. de Grandville happened to have with her; he opened his eyes, looked towards the mysterious figure that still fled wailing through the meadow, and a faint cry of horror broke from him; he closed his eyes again, with a dumb gesture of entreaty to his friends to take him away from this scene. M. and Mme. de Grandville begged the Councilor to make use of their carriage, adding very obligingly that they themselves would walk.

"Who can the lady be?" inquired the magistrate, looking towards the strange figure.

"People think that she comes from Moulins," answered M. de Grandville. "She is a Comtesse de Vandières; she is said to be mad; but as she has only been here for two months, I cannot vouch for the truth of all this hearsay talk."

M. d'Albon thanked M. and Mme. de Grandville, and they set out for Cassan.

"It is she!" cried Philip, coming to himself.

"She? who?" asked d'Albon.

"Stéphanie. . . . Ah! dead and yet living still; still alive, but her mind is gone! I thought the sight would kill me."

The prudent magistrate, recognizing the gravity of the crisis through which his friend was passing, refrained from asking questions or exciting him further, and grew impatient of the length of the way to the château, for the change wrought in the Colonel's face alarmed him. He feared lest the Countess's terrible disease had communicated itself to Philip's brain. When they reached the avenue at l'Isle-Adam, d'Albon sent the servant for the local doctor, so that the Colonel had scarcely been laid in bed before the surgeon was beside him.

"If M. le Colonel had not been fasting, the shock must have killed him," pronounced the leech. "He was over-tired, and that saved him," and with a few directions as to the patient's treatment, he went to prepare a composing draught himself. M. de Sucy was better the next morning, but the doctor had insisted on sitting up all night with him.

"I confess, M. le Marquis," the surgeon said, "that I

feared for the brain. M. de Sucy has had some very violent shock; he is a man of strong passions, but, with his temperament, the first shock decides everything. He will very likely be out of danger to-morrow."

The doctor was perfectly right. The next day the patient was allowed to see his friend.

"I want you to do something for me, dear d'Albon," Philip said, grasping his friend's hand. "Hasten at once to the Minorite convent, find out everything about the lady whom we saw there, and come back as soon as you can; I shall count the minutes till I see you again."

M. d'Albon called for his horse, and galloped over to the old monastery. When he reached the gateway he found someone standing there, a tall, spare man with a kindly face, who answered in the affirmative when he was asked if he lived in the ruined house. M. d'Albon explained his errand.

"Why, then, it must have been you, sir, who fired that unlucky shot! You all but killed my poor invalid."

"Eh! I fired into the air!"

"If you had actually hit Mme. la Comtesse, you would have done less harm to her."

"Well, well, then, we can neither of us complain, for the sight of the Countess all but killed my friend, M. de Sucy."

"The Baron de Sucy, is it possible?" cried the doctor, clasping his hands. "Has he been in Russia? was he in the Beresina?"

"Yes," answered d'Albon. "He was taken prisoner by the Cossacks and sent to Siberia. He has not been back in this country a twelvemonth."

"Come in, monsieur," said the other, and he led the way to a drawing-room on the ground floor. Everything in the room showed signs of capricious destruction.

Valuable china jars lay in fragments on either side of a clock beneath a glass shade, which had escaped. The silk hangings about the windows were torn to rags, while the muslin curtains were untouched.

"You see about you the havoc wrought by a charming being to whom I have dedicated my life. She is my niece;

and though medical science is powerless in her case, I hope to restore her to reason, though the method which I am trying is, unluckily, only possible to the wealthy."

Then, like all who live much alone and daily bear the burden of a heavy trouble, he fell to talk with the magistrate. This is the story that he told, set in order, and with the many digressions made by both teller and hearer omitted.

When, at nine o'clock at night, on the 28th of November 1812, Marshal Victor abandoned the heights of Studzianka, which he had held through the day, he left a thousand men behind with instructions to protect, till the last possible moment, the two pontoon bridges over the Beresina that still held good. This rearguard was to save if possible an appalling number of stragglers, so numbed with the cold, that they obstinately refused to leave the baggage-wagons. The heroism of the generous band was doomed to fail; for, unluckily, the men who poured down to the eastern bank of the Beresina found carriages, caissons, and all kinds of property which the army had been forced to abandon during its passage on the 27th and 28th days of November. The poor, half-frozen wretches, sunk almost to the level of brutes, finding such unhoped-for riches, bivouacked in the deserted space, laid hands on the military stores, improvised huts out of the material, lighted fires with anything that would burn, cut up the carcases of the horses for food, tore out the linings of the carriages, wrapped themselves in them, and lay down to sleep, instead of crossing the Beresina in peace under cover of night—the Beresina that even then had proved, by an incredible fatality, so disastrous to the army. Such apathy on the part of the poor fellows can only be understood by those who remember tramping across those vast deserts of snow, with nothing to quench their thirst but snow, snow for their bed, snow as far as the horizon on every side, and no food but snow, a little frozen beetroot, horse-flesh, or a handful of meal.

The miserable creatures were dropping down, overcome by hunger, thirst, weariness, and sleep, when they reached the shores of the Beresina and found fuel and fire and vic-

tuals, countless wagons and tents, a whole improvised town, in short. The whole village of Studzianka had been removed piecemeal from the heights to the plain, and the very perils and miseries of this dangerous and doleful habitation smiled invitingly to the wayfarers, who beheld no prospect beyond it but the awful Russian deserts. A huge hospice, in short, was erected for twenty hours of existence. Only one thought—the thought of rest—appealed to men weary of life or rejoicing in unlooked-for comfort.

They lay right in the line of fire from the cannon of the Russian left; but to that vast mass of human creatures, a patch upon the snow, sometimes dark, sometimes breaking into flame, the indefatigable grape-shot was but one discomfort the more. For them it was only a storm, and they paid the less attention to the bolts that fell among them because there were none to strike down there save dying men, the wounded, or perhaps the dead. Stragglers came up in little bands at every moment. These walking corpses instantly separated, and wandered begging from fire to fire; and meeting, for the most part, with refusals, banded themselves together again, and took by force what they could not otherwise obtain. They were deaf to the voices of their officers prophesying death on the morrow, and spent the energy required to cross the swamp in building shelters for the night and preparing a meal that often proved fatal. The coming death no longer seemed an evil, for it gave them an hour of slumber before it came. Hunger and thirst and cold—these were evils, but not death.

At last wood and fuel and canvas and shelters failed, and hideous brawls began between destitute late comers and the rich already in possession of a lodging. The weaker were driven away, until a few last fugitives before the Russian advance were obliged to make their bed in the snow, and lay down to rise no more.

Little by little the mass of half-dead humanity became so dense, so deaf, so torpid,—or perhaps it should be said so happy—that Marshal Victor, their heroic defender against twenty thousand Russians under Wittgenstein, was actually compelled to cut his way by force through this forest of

men, so as to cross the Beresina with the five thousand heroes whom he was leading to the Emperor. The miserable creatures preferred to be trampled and crushed to death rather than stir from their places, and died without a sound, smiling at the dead ashes of their fires, forgetful of France.

Not before ten o'clock that night did the Duc de Belluno reach the other side of the river. Before committing his men to the pontoon bridges that led to Zembin, he left the fate of the rearguard at Studzianka in Eblé's hands, and to Eblé the survivors of the calamities of the Beresina owed their lives.

About midnight, the great General, followed by a courageous officer, came out of his little hut by the bridge, and gazed at the spectacle of this camp between the bank of the Beresina and the Borizof road to Studzianka. The thunder of the Russian cannonade had ceased. Here and there faces that had nothing human about them were lighted up by countless fires that seemed to grow pale in the glare of the snowfields, and to give no light. Nearly thirty thousand wretches, belonging to every nation that Napoleon had hurled upon Russia, lay there hazarding their lives with the indifference of brute beasts.

"We have all these to save," the General said to his subordinate. "To-morrow morning the Russians will be in Studzianka. The moment they come up we shall have to set fire to the bridge; so pluck up heart, my boy! Make your way out and up yonder through them, and tell General Fournier that he has barely time to evacuate his post and cut his way through to the bridge. As soon as you have seen him set out, follow him down, take some able-bodied men, and set fire to the tents, wagons, caissons, carriages, anything and everything, without pity, and drive these fellows on to the bridge. Compel everything that walks on two legs to take refuge on the other bank. We must set fire to the camp; it is our last resource. If Berthier had let me burn those d——d wagons sooner, no lives need have been lost in the river except my poor pontooners, my fifty heroes, who saved the army, and will be forgotten."

The General passed his hand over his forehead and said

no more. He felt that Poland would be his tomb, and foresaw that afterwards no voice would be raised to speak for the noble fellows who had plunged into the stream—into the waters of the Beresina!—to drive in the piles for the bridges. And, indeed, only one of them is living now, or, to be more accurate, starving, utterly forgotten in a country village! The brave officer had scarcely gone a hundred paces towards Studzianka, when General Eblé roused some of his patient pontooners, and began his work of mercy by setting fire to the camp on the side nearest the bridge, so compelling the sleepers to rise and cross the Beresina. Meanwhile the young aide-de-camp, not without difficulty, reached the one wooden house yet left standing in Studzianka.

"So the box is pretty full, is it, messmate?" he said to a man whom he found outside.

"You will be a knowing fellow if you manage to get inside," the officer returned, without turning round or stopping his occupation of hacking at the woodwork of the house with his saber.

"Philip, is that you?" cried the aide-de-camp, recognizing the voice of one of his friends.

"Yes. Aha! is it you, old fellow?" returned M. de Sucy, looking round at the aide-de-camp, who like himself was not more than twenty-three years old. "I fancied you were on the other side of this confounded river. Do you come to bring us sweetmeats for dessert? You will get a warm welcome," he added, as he tore away a strip of bark from the wood and gave it to his horse by way of fodder.

"I am looking for your Commandant. General Eblé has sent me to tell him to file off to Zembin. You have only just time to cut your way through that mass of dead men; as soon as you get through, I am going to set fire to the place to make them move——"

"You almost make me feel warm! Your news has put me in a fever; I have two friends to bring through. Ah! but for those marmots, I should have been dead before now, old fellow. On their account I am taking care of my horse instead of eating him. But have you a crust about you, for pity's sake? It is thirty hours since I have stowed any

victuals. I have been fighting like a madman to keep up a little warmth in my body and what courage I have left."

"Poor Philip! I have nothing—not a scrap!—But is your General in there?"

"Don't attempt to go in. The barn is full of our wounded. Go up a bit higher, and you will see a sort of pigsty to the right—that is where the General is. Good-by, my dear fellow. If ever we meet again in a quadrille in a ballroom in Paris——"

He did not finish the sentence, for the treachery of the northeast wind that whistled about them froze Major Philip's lips, and the aide-de-camp kept moving for fear of being frost-bitten. Silence soon prevailed, scarcely broken by the groans of the wounded in the barn, or the stifled sounds made by M. de Sucy's horse crunching the frozen bark with famished eagerness. Philip thrust his saber into the sheath, caught at the bridle of the precious animal that he had managed to keep for so long, and drew her away from the miserable fodder that she was bolting with apparent relish.

"Come along, Bichette! come along! It lies with you now, my beauty, to save Stéphanie's life. There, wait a little longer, and they will let us lie down and die, no doubt"; and Philip, wrapped in a pelisse, to which doubtless he owed his life and energies, began to run, stamping his feet on the frozen snow to keep them warm. He was scarce five hundred paces away before he saw a great fire blazing on the spot where he had left his carriage that morning with an old soldier to guard it. A dreadful misgiving seized upon him. Many a man under the influence of a powerful feeling during the Retreat summoned up energy for his friend's sake when he would not have exerted himself to save his own life; so it was with Philip. He soon neared a hollow, where he had left a carriage sheltered from the cannonade, a carriage that held a young woman, his playmate in childhood, dearer to him than anyone else on earth.

Some thirty stragglers were sitting round a tremendous blaze, which they kept up with logs of wood, planks wrenched from the floors of the caissons, and wheels, and panels from

carriage bodies. These had been, doubtless, among the last to join the sea of fires, huts, and human faces that filled the great furrow in the land between Studzianka and the fatal river, a restless living sea of almost imperceptibly moving figures, that sent up a smothered hum of sound blended with frightful shrieks. It seemed that hunger and despair had driven these forlorn creatures to take forcible possession of the carriage, for the old General and his young wife, whom they had found warmly wrapped in pelisses and traveling cloaks, were now crouching on the earth beside the fire, and one of the carriage doors was broken.

As soon as the group of stragglers round the fire heard the footfall of the Major's horse, a frenzied yell of hunger went up from them. "A horse!" they cried. "A horse!"

All the voices went up as one voice.

"Back! back! Look out!" shouted two or three of them, leveling their muskets at the animal.

"I will pitch you neck and crop into your fire, you blackguards!" cried Philip, springing in front of the mare. "There are dead horses lying up yonder; go and look for them!"

"What a rum customer the officer is!—Once, twice, will you get out of the way?" returned a giant grenadier. "You won't? All right then, just as you please."

A woman's shriek rang out above the report. Luckily, none of the bullets hit Philip; but poor Bichette lay in the agony of death. Three of the men came up and put an end to her with thrusts of the bayonet.

"Cannibals! leave me the rug and my pistols," cried Philip in desperation.

"Oh! the pistols if you like; but as for the rug, there is a fellow yonder who has had nothing to wet his whistle these two days, and is shivering in his coat of cobwebs, and that's our General."

Philip looked up and saw a man with worn-out shoes and a dozen rents in his trousers; the only covering for his head was a ragged foraging cap, white with rime. He said no more after that, but snatched up his pistols.

Five of the men dragged the mare to the fire, and began

to cut up the carcass as dexterously as any journeymen butchers in Paris. The scraps of meat were distributed and flung upon the coals, and the whole process was magically swift. Philip went over to the woman who had given the cry of terror when she recognized his danger, and sat down by her side. She sat motionless upon a cushion taken from the carriage, warming herself at the blaze; she said no word, and gazed at him without a smile. He saw beside her the soldier whom he had left mounting guard over the carriage; the poor fellow had been wounded; he had been overpowered by numbers, and forced to surrender to the stragglers who had set upon him, and, like a dog who defends his master's dinner till the last moment, he had taken his share of the spoil, and had made a sort of cloak for himself out of a sheet. At that particular moment he was busy toasting a piece of horseflesh, and in his face the Major saw a gleeful anticipation of the coming feast.

The Comte de Vandières, who seemed to have grown quite childish in the last few days, sat on a cushion close to his wife, and stared into the fire. He was only just beginning to shake off his torpor under the influence of the warmth. He had been no more affected by Philip's arrival and danger than by the fight and subsequent pillage of his traveling carriage.

At first Sucy caught the young Countess's hand in his, trying to express his affection for her, and the pain that it gave him to see her reduced like this to the last extremity of misery; but he said nothing as he sat by her side on the thawing heap of snow, he gave himself up to the pleasure of the sensation of warmth, forgetful of danger, forgetful of all things else in the world. In spite of himself his face expanded with an almost fatuous expression of satisfaction, and he waited impatiently till the scrap of horseflesh that had fallen to his soldier's share should be cooked. The smell of the charred flesh stimulated his hunger. Hunger clamored within him and silenced his heart, his courage, and his love. He coolly looked round on the results of the spoliation of his carriage. Not a man seated round the fire but had shared the booty, the rugs, cushions, pelisses,

dresses,—articles of clothing that belonged to the Count and Countess or to himself. Philip turned to see if anything worth taking was left in the berline. He saw by the light of the flames, gold, and diamonds, and silver lying scattered about; no one had cared to appropriate the least particle. There was something hideous in the silence among those human creatures round the fire; none of them spoke, none of them stirred, save to do such things as each considered necessary for his own comfort.

It was a grotesque misery. The men's faces were warped and disfigured with the cold, and plastered over with a layer of mud; you could see the thickness of the mask by the channel traced down their cheeks by the tears that ran from their eyes, and their long slovenly kept beards added to the hideousness of their appearance. Some were wrapped round in women's shawls, others in horse-cloths, dirty blankets, rags stiffened with melting hoar-frost; here and there a man wore a boot on one foot and a shoe on the other, in fact, there was not one of them but wore some ludicrously odd costume. But the men themselves with such matter for jest about them were gloomy and taciturn.

The silence was unbroken save by the crackling of the wood, the roaring of the flames, the far-off hum of the camp, and the sound of sabers hacking at the carcass of the mare. Some of the hungriest of the men were still cutting tit-bits for themselves. A few miserable creatures, more weary than the others, slept outright; and if they happened to roll into the fire, no one pulled them back. With cut-and-dried logic their fellows argued that if they were not dead, a scorching ought to be sufficient warning to quit and seek out more comfortable quarters. If the poor wretch woke to find himself on fire, he was burned to death, and nobody pitied him. Here and there the men exchanged glances, as if to excuse their indifference by the carelessness of the rest; the thing happened twice under the young Countess's eyes, and she uttered no sound. When all the scraps of horse-flesh had been broiled upon the coals, they were devoured with a ravenous greediness that would have been disgusting in wild beasts.

"And now we have seen thirty infantrymen on one horse for the first time in our lives!" cried the grenadier who had shot the mare, the one solitary joke that sustained the Frenchmen's reputation for wit.

Before long the poor fellows huddled themselves up in their clothes, and lay down on planks of timber, on anything but the bare snow, and slept—heedless of the morrow. Major de Sucy, having warmed himself and satisfied his hunger, fought in vain against the drowsiness that weighed upon his eyes. During this brief struggle he gazed at the sleeping girl who had turned her face to the fire, so that he could see her closed eyelids and part of her forehead. She was wrapped round in a furred pelisse and a coarse horseman's cloak, her head lay on a blood-stained cushion; a tall astrakhan cap tied over her head by a handkerchief knotted under the chin protected her face as much as possible from the cold, and she had tucked up her feet in the cloak. As she lay curled up in this fashion, she bore no likeness to any creature.

Was this the lowest of camp-followers? Was this the charming woman, the pride of her lover's heart, the queen of many a Parisian ballroom? Alas! even for the eyes of this most devoted friend, there was no discernible trace of womanhood in that bundle of rags and linen, and the cold was mightier than the love in a woman's heart.

Then for the Major the husband and wife came to be like two distant dots seen through the thick veil that the most irresistible kind of slumber spread over his eyes. It all seemed to be part of a dream—the leaping flames, the recumbent figures, the awful cold that lay in wait for them three paces away from the warmth of the fire that glowed for a little while. One thought that could not be stifled haunted Philip—"If I go to sleep, we shall die; I will not sleep," he said to himself.

He slept. After an hour's slumber M. de Sucy was awakened by a hideous uproar and the sound of an explosion. The remembrance of his duty, of the danger of his beloved, rushed upon his mind with a sudden shock. He uttered a cry like the growl of a wild beast. He and his servant

stood upright above the rest. They saw a sea of fire in the darkness, and against it moving masses of human figures. Flames were devouring the huts and tents. Despairing shrieks and yelling cries reached their ears; they saw thousands upon thousands of wild and desperate faces; and through this inferno a column of soldiers was cutting its way to the bridge, between two hedges of dead bodies.

"Our rearguard is in full retreat," cried the Major. "There is no hope left!"

"I have spared your traveling carriage, Philip," said a friendly voice.

Sucy turned and saw the young aide-de-camp by the light of the flames.

"Oh, it is all over with us," he answered. "They have eaten my horse. And how am I to make this sleepy general and his wife stir a step?"

"Take a brand, Philip, and threaten them."

"Threaten the Countess? . . ."

"Good-by," cried the aide-de-camp; "I have only just time to get across that unlucky river, and go I must, there is my mother in France! . . . What a night! This herd of wretches would rather lie here in the snow, and most of them would sooner be burned alive than get up. . . . It is four o'clock, Philip! In two hours the Russians will begin to move, and you will see the Beresina covered with corpses a second time, I can tell you. You haven't a horse, and you cannot carry the Countess, so come along with me," he went on, taking his friend by the arm.

"My dear fellow, how am I to leave Stéphanie!"

Major de Sucy grasped the Countess, set her on her feet, and shook her roughly; he was in despair. He compelled her to wake, and she stared at him with dull fixed eyes.

"Stéphanie, we must go, or we shall die here!"

For all answer the Countess tried to sink down again and sleep on the earth. The aide-de-camp snatched a brand from the fire and shook it in her face.

"We must save her in spite of herself," cried Philip, and he carried her in his arms to the carriage. He came back to entreat his friend to help him, and the two young men

took the old general and put him beside his wife, without knowing whether he were alive or dead. The major rolled the men over as they crouched on the earth, took away the plundered clothing, and heaped it upon the husband and wife, then he flung some of the broiled fragments of horse-flesh into a corner of the carriage.

"Now, what do you mean to do?" asked the aide-de-camp.

"Drag them along!" answered Sucy.

"You are mad!"

"You are right!" exclaimed Philip, folding his arms on his breast.

Suddenly a desperate plan occurred to him.

"Look you here!" he said, grasping his sentinel by the unwounded arm, "I leave her in your care for one hour. Bear in mind that you must die sooner than let anyone, no matter whom, come near the carriage!"

The Major seized a handful of the lady's diamonds, drew his saber, and violently battered those who seemed to him to be the bravest among the sleepers. By this means he succeeded in rousing the gigantic grenadier and a couple of men whose rank and regiment were undiscoverable.

"It is all up with us!" he cried.

"Of course it is," returned the grenadier; "but that is all one to me."

"Very well then, if die you must, isn't it better to sell your life for a pretty woman, and stand a chance of going back to France again?"

"I would rather go to sleep," said one of the men, dropping down into the snow; "and if you worry me again, Major, I shall stick my toasting-iron into your belly!"

"What is it all about, sir?" asked the grenadier. "The man's drunk. He is a Parisian, and likes to lie in the lap of luxury."

"You shall have these, good fellow," said the Major, holding out a *rivière* of diamonds, "if you will follow me and fight like a madman. The Russians are not ten minutes away; they have horses; we will march up to the nearest battery and carry off two stout ones."

"How about the sentinels, Major?"

"One of us three——" he began; then he turned from the soldier and looked at the aide-de-camp.—"You are coming, aren't you, Hippolyte?"

Hippolyte nodded assent.

"One of us," the Major went on, "will look after the sentry. Besides, perhaps those blessed Russians are also fast asleep."

"All right, Major; you are a good sort! But will you take me in your carriage?" asked the grenadier.

"Yes, if you don't leave your bones up yonder.—If I come to grief, promise me, you two, that you will do everything in your power to save the Countess."

"All right," said the grenadier.

They set out for the Russian lines, taking the direction of the batteries that had so cruelly raked the mass of miserable creatures huddled together by the river bank. A few minutes later the hoofs of two galloping horses rang on the frozen snow, and the awakened battery fired a volley that passed over the heads of the sleepers; the hoof-beats rattled so fast on the iron ground that they sounded like the hammering in a smithy. The generous aide-de-camp had fallen; the stalwart grenadier had come off safe and sound; and Philip himself had received a bayonet thrust in the shoulder while defending his friend. Notwithstanding his wound, he clung to his horse's mane, and gripped him with his knees so tightly that the animal was held as in a vice.

"God be praised!" cried the Major, when he saw his soldier still on the spot, and the carriage standing where he had left it.

"If you do the right thing by me, sir, you will get me the cross for this. We have treated them to a sword dance to a pretty tune from the rifle, eh?"

"We have done nothing yet! Let us put the horses in. Take hold of these cords."

"They are not long enough."

"All right, grenadier, just go and overhaul those fellows sleeping there; take their shawls, sheets, anything——"

"I say! the rascal is dead," cried the grenadier, as he

plundered the first man who came to hand. "Why, they are all dead! how queer!"

"All of them?"

"Yes, every one. It looks as though horseflesh *à la neige* was indigestible."

Philip shuddered at the words. The night had grown twice as cold as before.

"Great Heaven! to lose her when I have saved her life a score of times already."

He shook the Countess, "Stéphanie! Stéphanie!" he cried.

She opened her eyes.

"We are saved, madame!"

"Saved!" she echoed, and fell back again.

The horses were harnessed after a fashion at last. The Major held his saber in his unwounded hand, took the reins in the other, saw to his pistols, and sprang on one of the horses, while the grenadier mounted the other. The old sentinel had been pushed into the carriage, and lay across the knees of the General and the Countess; his feet were frozen. Urged on by blows from the flat of the saber, the horses dragged the carriage at a mad gallop down to the plain, where endless difficulties awaited them. Before long it became almost impossible to advance without crushing sleeping men, women, and even children at every step, all of whom declined to stir when the grenadier awakened them. In vain M. de Sucy looked for the track that the rearguard had cut through this dense crowd of human beings; there was no more sign of their passage than of the wake of a ship in the sea. The horses could only move at a foot pace, and were stopped most frequently by soldiers, who threatened to kill them.

"Do you mean to get there?" asked the grenadier.

"Yes, if it costs every drop of blood in my body! if it costs the whole world!" the Major answered.

"Forward, then! . . . You can't have the omelette without breaking eggs." And the grenadier of the Garde urged on the horses over the prostrate bodies, and upset the bivouacs; the blood-stained wheels plowing that field of faces left a double furrow of dead. But in justice it

should be said that he never ceased to thunder out his warning cry, "Carrion! look out!"

"Poor wretches!" exclaimed the Major.

"Bah! That way, or the cold, or the cannon!" said the grenadier, goading on the horses with the point of his sword.

Then came the catastrophe, which must have happened sooner but for miraculous good fortune; the carriage was overturned, and all further progress was stopped at once.

"I expected as much!" exclaimed the imperturbable grenadier. "Oho! he is dead!" he added, looking at his comrade.

"Poor Laurent!" said the Major.

"Laurent! Wasn't he in the Fifth Chasseurs?"

"Yes."

"My own cousin.—Pshaw! this beastly life is not so pleasant that one need be sorry for him as things go."

But all this time the carriage lay overturned, and the horses were only released after great and irreparable loss of time. The shock had been so violent that the Countess had been awakened by it, and the subsequent commotion aroused her from her stupor. She shook off the rugs and rose.

"Where are we, Philip?" she asked in musical tones, as she looked about her.

"About five hundred paces from the bridge. We are just about to cross the Beresina. When we are on the other side, Stéphanie, I will not tease you any more; I will let you go to sleep; we shall be in safety, we can go on to Wilna in peace. God grant that you may never know what your life has cost!"

"You are wounded!"

"A mere trifle."

The hour of doom had come. The Russian cannon announced the day. The Russians were in possession of Studzianka, and thence were raking the plain with grapeshot; and by the first dim light of the dawn the Major saw two columns moving and forming above on the heights. Then a cry of horror went up from the crowd, and in a moment

everyone sprang to his feet. Each instinctively felt his danger, and all made a rush for the bridge, surging towards it like a wave.

Then the Russians came down upon them, swift as a conflagration. Men, women, children, and horses all crowded towards the river. Luckily for the Major and the Countess, they were still at some distance from the bank. General Eblé had just set fire to the bridge on the other side; but in spite of all the warnings given to those who rushed towards the chance of salvation, not one among them could or would draw back. The overladen bridge gave way, and not only so, the impetus of the frantic living wave towards that fatal bank was such that a dense crowd of human beings was thrust into the water as if by an avalanche. The sound of a single human cry could not be distinguished; there was a dull crash as if an enormous stone had fallen into the water—and the Beresina was covered with corpses.

The violent recoil of those in front, striving to escape this death, brought them into hideous collision with those behind them, who were pressing towards the bank, and many were suffocated and crushed. The Comte and Comtesse de Vandières owed their lives to the carriage. The horses that had trampled and crushed so many dying men were crushed and trampled to death in their turn by the human maelstrom which eddied from the bank. Sheer physical strength saved the Major and the grenadier. They killed others in self-defense. That wild sea of human faces and living bodies, surging to and fro as by one impulse, left the bank of the Beresina clear for a few moments. The multitude had hurled themselves back on the plain. Some few men sprang down from the banks toward the river, not so much with any hope of reaching the opposite shore, which for them meant France, as from dread of the wastes of Siberia. For some bold spirits despair became a panoply. An officer leapt from hummock to hummock of ice, and reached the other shore; one of the soldiers scrambled over miraculously on the piles of dead bodies and drift ice. But the immense multitude left behind saw at last that the Russians would not slaughter twenty thousand unarmed men, too numb with

the cold to attempt to resist them, and each awaited his fate with dreadful apathy. By this time the Major and his grenadier, the old General and his wife, were left to themselves not very far from the place where the bridge had been. All four stood dry-eyed and silent among the heaps of dead. A few able-bodied men and one or two officers, who had recovered all their energy at this crisis, gather about them. The group was sufficiently large; there were about fifty men all told. A couple of hundred paces from them stood the wreck of the artillery bridge, which had broken down the day before; the Major saw this, and "Let us make a raft!" he cried.

The words were scarcely out of his mouth before the whole group hurried to the ruins of the bridge. A crowd of men began to pick up iron clamps and to hunt for planks and ropes—for all the materials for a raft, in short. A score of armed men and officers, under command of the Major, stood on guard to protect the workers from any desperate attempt on the part of the multitude if they should guess their design. The longing for freedom, which inspires prisoners to accomplish impossibilities, cannot be compared with the hope which lent energy at that moment to these forlorn Frenchmen.

"The Russians are upon us! Here are the Russians!" the guard shouted to the workers.

The timbers creaked, the raft grew larger, stronger, and more substantial. Generals, colonels, and common soldiers all alike bent beneath the weight of wagon wheels, chains, coils of rope, and planks of timber; it was a modern realization of the building of Noah's ark. The young Countess, sitting by her husband's side, looked on, regretful that she could do nothing to aid the workers, though she helped to knot the lengths of rope together.

At last the raft was finished. Forty men launched it out into the river, while ten of the soldiers held the ropes that must keep it moored to the shore. The moment that they saw their handiwork floating on the Beresina, they sprang down on to it from the bank with callous selfishness. The Major, dreading the frenzy of the first rush, held back

Stéphanie and the General; but a shudder ran through him when he saw the landing place black with people, and men crowding down like playgoers into the pit of a theater.

"It was I who thought of the raft, you savages!" he cried. "I have saved your lives, and you will not make room for me!"

A confused murmur was the only answer. The men at the edge took up stout poles, thrust them against the bank with all their might, so as to shove the raft out and gain an impetus at its starting upon a journey across a sea of floating ice and dead bodies towards the other shore.

"*Tonnerre de Dieu!* I will knock some of you off into the water if you don't make room for the Major and his two companions," shouted the grenadier. He raised his saber threateningly, delayed the departure, and made the men stand closer together, in spite of threatening yells.

"I shall fall in! . . . I shall go overboard! . . ." his fellows shouted.

"Let us start! Put off!"

The Major gazed with tearless eyes at the woman he loved; an impulse of sublime resignation raised her eyes to heaven.

"To die with you!" she said.

In the situation of the folk upon the raft there was a certain comic element. They might utter hideous yells, but not one of them dared to oppose the grenadier, for they were packed together so tightly that if one man were knocked down, the whole raft might capsize. At this delicate crisis, a captain tried to rid himself of one of his neighbors; the man saw the hostile intention of his officer, collared him, and pitched him overboard. "Aha! The duck has a mind to drink. . . . Over with you!—There is room for two now!" he shouted. "Quick, Major! throw your little woman over, and come! Never mind that old dotard; he will drop off to-morrow!"

"Be quick!" cried a voice, made up of a hundred voices.

"Come, Major! Those fellows are making a fuss, and well they may!"

The Comte de Vandières flung off his ragged blankets, and stood before them in his general's uniform.

"Let us save the Count," said Philip.

Stéphanie grasped his hand tightly in hers, flung her arms about, and clasped him close in an agonized embrace.

"Farewell," she said.

Then each knew the other's thoughts. The Comte de Vandières recovered his energies and presence of mind sufficiently to jump on to the raft, whither Stéphanie followed him after one last look at Philip.

"Major, won't you take my place? I do not care a straw for life; I have neither wife, nor child, nor mother belonging to me——"

"I give them into your charge," cried the Major, indicating the Count and his wife.

"Be easy; I will take as much care of them as of the apple of my eye."

Philip stood stock-still on the bank. The raft sped so violently towards the opposite shore that it ran aground with a violent shock to all on board. The Count, standing on the very edge, was shaken into the stream; and as he fell, a mass of ice swept by and struck off his head, and sent it flying like a ball.

"Hey! Major!" shouted the grenadier.

"Farewell!" a woman's voice called aloud.

An icy shiver of dread ran through Philip de Sucy, and he dropped down where he stood, overcome with cold and sorrow and weariness.

"My poor niece went out of her mind," the doctor added after a brief pause. "Ah! monsieur," he went on, grasping M. d'Albon's hand, "what a fearful life for the poor little thing, so young, so delicate! An unheard-of misfortune separated her from that grenadier of the Garde (Fleuriot by name), and for two years she was dragged on after the army, the laughing-stock of a rabble of outcasts. She went barefoot, I heard, ill-clad, neglected, and starved for months at a time; sometimes confined in a hospital, sometimes living like a hunted animal. God alone knows all

the misery which she endured, and yet she lives. She was shut up in a madhouse in a little German town, while her relations, believing her to be dead, were dividing her property here in France.

"In 1816 the grenadier Fleuriot recognized her in an inn in Strasbourg. She had just managed to escape from captivity. Some peasants told him that the Countess had lived for a whole month in a forest, and how that they had tracked her and tried to catch her without success.

"I was at that time not many leagues from Strasbourg; and hearing the talk about this girl in the wood, I wished to verify the strange facts that had given rise to absurd stories. What was my feeling when I beheld the Countess? Fleuriot told me all that he knew of the piteous story. I took the poor fellow with my niece into Auvergne, and there I had the misfortune to lose him. He had some ascendency over Mme. de Vandières. He alone succeeded in persuading her to wear clothes; and in those days her one word of human speech—*Farewell*—she seldom uttered. Fleuriot set himself to the task of awakening certain associations; but there he failed completely; he drew that one sorrowful word from her a little more frequently, that was all. But the old grenadier could amuse her, and devoted himself to playing with her, and through him I hoped; but——" Here Stéphanie's uncle broke off. After a moment he went on again.

"Here she has found another creature with whom she seems to have an understanding—an idiot peasant girl, who once, in spite of her plainness and imbecility, fell in love with a mason. The mason thought of marrying her because she had a little bit of land, and for a whole year poor Geneviève was the happiest of living creatures. She dressed in her best, and danced on Sundays with Dallot; she understood love; there was room for love in her heart and brain. But Dallot thought better of it. He found another girl who had all her senses and rather more land than Geneviève, and he forsook Geneviève for her. Then the poor thing lost the little intelligence that love had developed in her; she can do nothing now but cut grass and look after the cattle.

My niece and the poor girl are in some sort bound to each other by the invisible chain of their common destiny, and by their madness due to the same cause. Just come here a moment; look!" and Stéphanie's uncle led the Marquis d'Albon to the window.

There, in fact, the magistrate beheld the pretty Countess sitting on the ground at Geneviève's knee, while the peasant girl was wholly absorbed in combing out Stéphanie's long, black hair with a huge comb. The Countess submitted herself to this, uttering low smothered cries that expressed her enjoyment of the sensation of physical comfort. A shudder ran through M. d'Albon as he saw her attitude of languid abandonment, the animal supineness that revealed an utter lack of intelligence.

"Oh! Philip, Philip!" he cried, "past troubles are as nothing. Is it quite hopeless?" he asked.

The doctor raised his eyes to heaven.

"Good-by, monsieur," said M. d'Albon, pressing the old man's hand. "My friend is expecting me; you will see him here before very long."

"Then it is Stéphanie herself?" cried Sucy when the Marquis had spoken the first few words. "Ah! until now I did not feel sure!" he added. Tears filled the dark eyes that were wont to wear a stern expression.

"Yes; she is the Comtesse de Vandières," his friend replied.

The Colonel started up, and hurriedly began to dress.

"Why, Philip!" cried the horrified magistrate. "Are you going mad?"

"I am quite well now," said the Colonel simply. "This news has soothed all my bitterest grief; what pain could hurt me while I think of Stéphanie? I am going over to the Minorite convent, to see her and speak to her, to restore her to health again. She is free; ah, surely, surely, happiness will smile on us, or there is no Providence above. How can you think that she could hear my voice, poor Stéphanie, and not recover her reason?"

"She has seen you once already, and she did not recognize you," the magistrate answered gently, trying to suggest some

wholesome fears to this friend, whose hopes were visibly too high.

The Colonel shuddered, but he began to smile again, with a slight involuntary gesture of incredulity. Nobody ventured to oppose his plans, and a few hours later he had taken up his abode in the old priory, to be near the doctor and the Comtesse de Vandières.

"Where is she?" he cried at once.

"Hush!" answered M. Fanjat, Stéphanie's uncle. "She is sleeping. Stay; here she is."

Philip saw the poor distraught sleeper crouching on a stone bench in the sun. Her thick hair, straggling over her face, screened it from the glare and heat; her arms dropped languidly to the earth; she lay at ease as gracefully as a fawn, her feet tucked up beneath her; her bosom rose and fell with her even breathing; there was the same transparent whiteness as of porcelain in her skin and complexion that we so often admire in children's faces. Geneviève sat there motionless, holding a spray that Stéphanie doubtless had brought down from the top of one of the tallest poplars; the idiot girl was waving the green branch above her, driving away the flies from her sleeping companion, and gently fanning her.

She stared at M. Fanjat and the Colonel as they came up; then, like a dumb animal that recognizes its master, she slowly turned her face towards the Countess, and watched over her as before, showing not the slightest sign of intelligence or of astonishment. The air was scorching. The glittering particles of the stone bench shone like sparks of fire; the meadow sent up the quivering vapors that hover above the grass and gleam like golden dust when they catch the light, but Geneviève did not seem to feel the raging heat.

The Colonel wrung M. Fanjat's hands; the tears that gathered in the soldier's eyes stole down his cheeks, and fell on the grass at Stéphanie's feet.

"Sir," said her uncle, "for these two years my heart has been broken daily. Before very long you will be as I am; if you do not weep, you will not feel your anguish the less."

"You have taken care of her!" said the Colonel, and jealousy no less than gratitude could be read in his eyes.

The two men understood one another. They grasped each other by the hand again, and stood motionless, gazing in admiration at the serenity that slumber had brought into the lovely face before them. Stéphanie heaved a sigh from time to time, and this sigh, that had all the appearance of sensibility, made the unhappy Colonel tremble with gladness.

"Alas!" M. Fanjat said gently, "do not deceive yourself, monsieur; as you see her now, she is in full possession of such reason as she has."

Those who have sat for whole hours absorbed in the delight of watching over the slumber of some tenderly-beloved one, whose waking eyes will smile for them, will doubtless understand the bliss and anguish that shook the Colonel. For him this slumber was an illusion, the waking must be a kind of death, the most dreadful of all deaths.

Suddenly a kid frisked in two or three bounds towards the bench, and snuffed at Stéphanie. The sound awakened her; she sprang lightly to her feet without scaring away the capricious creature; but as soon as she saw Philip she fled, followed by her four-footed playmate, to a thicket of elder trees; then she uttered a little cry like the note of a startled wild bird, the same sound that the Colonel had heard once before near the grating, when the Countess appeared to M. d'Albon for the first time. At length she climbed into a laburnum tree, ensconced herself in the feathery greenery, and peered out at the *strange man* with as much interest as the most inquisitive nightingale in the forest.

"Farewell, farewell, farewell," she said, but the soul sent no trace of expression of feeling through the words, spoken with the careless intonation of a bird's notes.

"She does not know me!" the Colonel exclaimed in despair. "Stéphanie! Here is Philip, your Philip! . . . Philip!" and the poor soldier went towards the laburnum tree; but when he stood three paces away, the Countess eyed him almost defiantly, though there was timidity in her eyes; then at a bound she sprang from the laburnum to an acacia, and

thence to a spruce-fir, swinging from bough to bough with marvelous dexterity.

"Do not follow her," said M. Fanjat, addressing the Colonel. "You would arouse a feeling of aversion in her which might become insurmountable; I will help you to make her acquaintance and to tame her. Sit down on the bench. If you pay no heed whatever to her, poor child, it will not be long before you will see her come nearer by degrees to look at you."

"That *she* should not know me! that *she* should fly from me!" the Colonel repeated, sitting down on a rustic bench and leaning his back against a tree that overshadowed it.

He bowed his head. The doctor remained silent. Before very long the Countess stole softly down from her high refuge in the spruce-fir, flitting like a will-of-the-wisp; for as the wind stirred the boughs, she lent herself at times to the swaying movements of the trees. At each branch she stopped and peered at the stranger; but as she saw him sitting motionless, she at length jumped down to the grass, stood a while, and came slowly across the meadow. When she took up her position by a tree about ten paces from the bench, M. Fanjat spoke to the Colonel in a low voice.

"Feel in my pocket for some lumps of sugar," he said, "and let her see them, she will come; I willingly give up to you the pleasure of giving her sweetmeats. She is passionately fond of sugar, and by that means you will accustom her to come to you and to know you."

"She never cared for sweet things when she was a woman," Philip answered sadly.

When he held out the lump of sugar between his thumb and finger, and shook it, Stéphanie uttered the wild note again, and sprang quickly towards him; then she stopped short, there was a conflict between longing for the sweet morsel and instinctive fear of him; she looked at the sugar, turned her head away, and looked again like an unfortunate dog forbidden to touch some scrap of food, while his master slowly recites the greater part of the alphabet until he reaches the letter that gives permission. At length animal appetite conquered fear; Stéphanie rushed to Philip, held out

a dainty brown hand to pounce upon the coveted morsel, touched her lover's fingers, snatched the piece of sugar, and vanished with it into a thicket. This painful scene was too much for the Colonel; he burst into tears, and took refuge in the drawing-room.

"Then has love less courage than affection?" M. Fanjat asked him. "I have hope, M. le Baron. My poor niece was once in a far more pitiable state than at present."

"Is it possible?" cried Philip.

"She would not wear clothes," answered the doctor.

The Colonel shuddered, and his face grew pale. To the doctor's mind this pallor was an unhealthy symptom; he went over to him and felt his pulse, M. de Sucy was in a high fever; by dint of persuasion, he succeeded in putting the patient in bed, and gave him a few drops of laudanum to gain repose and sleep.

The Baron de Sucy spent nearly a week in a constant struggle with a deadly anguish, and before long he had no tears left to shed. He was often well-nigh heart-broken; he could not grow accustomed to the sight of the Countess's madness; but he made terms for himself, as it were, in this cruel position, and sought alleviations in his pain. His heroism was boundless. He found courage to overcome Stéphanie's wild shyness by choosing sweetmeats for her, and devoted all his thoughts to this, bringing these dainties, and following up the little victories that he set himself to gain over Stéphanie's instincts (the last gleam of intelligence in her), until he succeeded to some extent—she grew *tamer* than ever before. Every morning the Colonel went into the park; and if, after a long search for the Countess, he could not discover the tree in which she was rocking herself gently, nor the nook where she lay crouching at play with some bird, nor the roof where she had perched herself, he would whistle the well-known air *Partant pour la Syrie,* which recalled old memories of their love, and Stéphanie would run towards him lightly as a fawn. She saw the Colonel so often that she was no longer afraid of him; before very long she would sit on his knee with her thin, lithe arms about him. And while thus they sat as lovers love to do, Philip doled

out sweetmeats one by one to the eager Countess. When they were all finished, the fancy often took Stéphanie to search through her lover's pockets with a monkey's quick instinctive dexterity, till she had assured herself that there was nothing left, and then she gazed at Philip with vacant eyes; there was no thought, no gratitude in their clear depths. Then she would play with him. She tried to take off his boots to see his foot; she tore his gloves to shreds, and put on his hat; and she would let him pass his hands through her hair, and take her in his arms, and submit passively to his passionate kisses, and at last, if he shed tears, she would gaze silently at him.

She quite understood the signal when he whistled *Partant pour la Syrie*, but he could never succeed in inducing her to pronounce her own name—*Stéphanie*. Philip persevered in his heartrending task, sustained by a hope that never left him. If on some bright autumn morning he saw her sitting quietly on a bench under a poplar tree, grown brown now as the season wore, the unhappy lover would lie at her feet and gaze into her eyes as long as she would let him gaze, hoping that some spark of intelligence might gleam from them. At times he lent himself to an illusion; he would imagine that he saw the hard, changeless light in them falter, that there was a new life and softness in them, and he would cry, "Stéphanie! oh, Stéphanie! you hear me, you see me, do you not?"

But for her the sound of his voice was like any other sound, the stirring of the wind in the trees, or the lowing of the cow on which she scrambled; and the Colonel wrung his hands in a despair that lost none of its bitterness; nay, time and these vain efforts only added to his anguish.

One evening, under the quiet sky, in the midst of the silence and peace of the forest hermitage, M. Fanjat saw from a distance that the Baron was busy loading a pistol, and knew that the lover had given up all hope. The blood surged to the old doctor's heart; and if he overcame the dizzy sensation that seized on him, it was because he would rather see his niece live with a disordered brain than lose her forever. He hurried to the place.

"What are you doing?" he cried.

"That is for me," the Colonel answered, pointing to a loaded pistol on the bench, "and this for her!" he added, as he rammed down the wad into the pistol that he held in his hands.

The Countess lay stretched out on the ground, playing with the balls.

"Then you do not know that last night, as she slept, she murmured 'Philip'?" said the doctor quietly, dissembling his alarm.

"She called my name?" cried the Baron, letting his weapon fall. Stéphanie picked it up, but he snatched it out of her hands, caught the other pistol from the bench, and fled.

"Poor little one!" exclaimed the doctor, rejoicing that his stratagem had succeeded so well. He held her tightly to his heart as he went on. "He would have killed you, selfish that he is! He wants you to die because he is unhappy. He cannot learn to love you for your own sake, little one! We forgive him, do we not? He is senseless; you are only mad. Never mind; God alone shall take you to Himself. We look upon you as unhappy because you no longer share our miseries, fools that we are! . . . Why, she is happy," he said, taking her on his knee; "nothing troubles her; she lives like the birds, like the deer——"

Stéphanie sprang upon a young blackbird that was hopping about, caught it with a little shriek of glee, twisted its neck, looked at the dead bird, and dropped it at the foot of a tree without giving it another thought.

The next morning at daybreak the Colonel went out into the garden to look for Stéphanie; hope was very strong in him. He did not see her, and whistled; and when she came, he took her arm, and for the first time they walked together along an alley beneath the trees, while the fresh morning wind shook down the dead leaves about them. The Colonel sat down, and Stéphanie, of her own accord, lit upon his knee. Philip trembled with gladness.

"Love!" he cried, covering her hands with passionate kisses, "I am Philip . . ."

She looked curiously at him.

"Come close," he added, as he held her tightly. "Do you feel the beating of my heart? It has beat for you, for you only. I love you always. Philip is not dead. He is here. You are sitting on his knee. You are my Stéphanie, I am your Philip!"

"Farewell!" she said, "farewell!"

The Colonel shivered. He thought that some vibration of his highly wrought feeling had surely reached his beloved; that the heartrending cry, drawn from him by hope, the utmost effort of a love that must last forever, of passion in its ecstasy, striving to reach the soul of the woman he loved, must awaken her.

"Oh, Stéphanie! we shall be happy yet!"

A cry of satisfaction broke from her, a dim light of intelligence gleamed in her eyes.

"She knows me! . . . Stéphanie! . . ."

The Colonel felt his heart swell, and tears gathered under his eyelids. But all at once the Countess held up a bit of sugar for him to see; she had discovered it by searching diligently for it while he spoke. What he had mistaken for a human thought was a degree of reason required for a monkey's mischievous trick!

Philip fainted. M. Fanjat found the Countess sitting on his prostrate body. She was nibbling her bit of sugar, giving expression to her enjoyment by little grimaces and gestures that would have been thought clever in a woman in full possession of her senses if she tried to mimic her paroquet or her cat.

"Oh, my friend!" cried Philip, when he came to himself. "This is like death every moment of the day! I love her too much! I could bear anything if only through her madness she had kept some little trace of womanhood. But, day after day, to see her like a wild animal, not even a sense of modesty left, to see her——"

"So you must have a theatrical madness, must you?" said the doctor sharply, "and your prejudices are stronger than your lover's devotion? What, monsieur! I resign to you the sad pleasure of giving my niece her food, and the enjoy-

ment of her playtime; I have kept for myself nothing but the most burdensome cares. I watch over her while you are asleep, I—— Go, monsieur, and give up the task. Leave this dreary hermitage; I can live with my little darling; I understand her disease; I study her movements; I know her secrets. Some day you shall thank me."

The Colonel left the Minorite convent, that he was destined to see only once again. The doctor was alarmed by the effect that his words made upon his guest; his niece's lover became as dear to him as his niece. If either of them deserved to be pitied, that one was certainly Philip; did he not bear alone the burden of an appalling sorrow?

The doctor made inquiries, and learned that the hapless Colonel had retired to a country house of his near Saint-Germain. A dream had suggested to him a plan for restoring the Countess to reason, and the doctor did not know that he was spending the rest of the autumn in carrying out a vast scheme. A small stream ran through his park, and in winter time flooded a low-lying land, something like the plain on the eastern side of the Beresina. The village of Satout, on the slope of a ridge above it, bounded the horizon of a picture of desolation, something as Studzianka lay on the heights that shut in the swamp of the Beresina. The Colonel set laborers to work to make a channel to resemble the greedy river that had swallowed up the treasures of France and Napoleon's army. By the help of his memories, Philip reconstructed on his own lands the bank where General Eblé had built his bridges. He drove in piles, and then set fire to them, so as to reproduce the charred and blackened balks of timber that on either side of the river told the stragglers that their retreat to France had been cut off. He had materials collected like the fragments out of which his comrades in misfortune had made the raft; his park was laid waste to complete the illusion on which his last hopes were founded. He ordered ragged uniforms and clothing for several hundred peasants. Huts and bivouacs and batteries were raised and burned down. In short, he omitted no device that could reproduce that most hideous of all scenes. He succeeded. When, in the earliest days of December, snow

covered the earth with a thick white mantle, it seemed to him that he saw the Beresina itself. The mimic Russia was so startlingly real, that several of his old comrades recognized the scene of their past sufferings. M. de Sucy kept the secret of the drama to be enacted with this tragical background, but it was looked upon as a mad freak in several circles of society in Paris.

In the early days of the month of January 1820, the Colonel drove over to the Forest of l'Isle-Adam in a carriage like the one in which M. and Mme. de Vandières had driven from Moscow to Studzianka. The horses closely resembled that other pair that he had risked his life to bring from the Russian lines. He himself wore the grotesque and soiled clothes, accouterments, and cap that he had worn on the 29th of November 1812. He had even allowed his hair and beard to grow, and neglected his appearance, that no detail might be lacking to recall the scene in all its horror.

"I guessed what you meant to do," cried M. Fanjat, when he saw the Colonel dismount. "If you mean your plan to succeed, do not let her see you in that carriage. This evening I will give my niece a little laudanum, and while she sleeps, we will dress her in such clothes as she wore at Studzianka, and put her in your traveling carriage. I will follow you in a berline."

Soon after two o'clock in the morning, the young Countess was lifted into the carriage, laid on the cushions, and wrapped in a coarse blanket. A few peasants held torches while this strange elopement was arranged.

A sudden cry rang through the silence of night, and Philip and the doctor, turning, saw Geneviève. She had come out half-dressed from the low room where she slept.

"Farewell, farewell; it is all over, farewell!" she called, crying bitterly.

"Why, Geneviève, what is it?" asked M. Fanjat.

Geneviève shook her head despairingly, raised her arm to heaven, looked at the carriage, uttered a long snarling sound, and with evident signs of profound terror, slunk in again.

"'Tis a good omen," cried the Colonel. "The girl is

sorry to lose her companion. Very likely she *sees* that Stéphanie is about to recover her reason."

"God grant it may be so!" answered M. Fanjat, who seemed to be affected by this incident. Since insanity had interested him, he had known several cases in which a spirit of prophecy and the gift of second sight had been accorded to a disordered brain—two faculties which many travelers tell us are also found among savage tribes.

So it happened that, as the Colonel had foreseen and arranged, Stéphanie traveled across the mimic Beresina about nine o'clock in the morning, and was awakened by an explosion of rockets about a hundred paces from the scene of action. It was a signal. Hundreds of peasants raised a terrible clamor, like the despairing shouts that startled the Russians when twenty thousand stragglers learned that by their own fault they were delivered over to death or to slavery.

When the Countess heard the report and the cries that followed, she sprang out of the carriage, and rushed in frenzied anguish over the snow-covered plain; she saw the burned bivouacs and the fatal raft about to be launched on a frozen Beresina. She saw Major Philip brandishing his saber among the crowd. The cry that broke from Mme. de Vandières made the blood run cold in the veins of all who heard it. She stood face to face with the Colonel, who watched her with a beating heart. At first she stared blankly at the strange scene about her, then she reflected. For an instant, brief as a lightning flash, there was the same quick gaze and total lack of comprehension that we see in the bright eyes of a bird; then she passed her hand across her forehead with the intelligent expression of a thinking being; she looked round on the memories that had taken substantial form, into the past life that had been transported into her present; she turned her face to Philip—and saw him! An awed silence fell upon the crowd. The Colonel breathed hard, but dared not speak; tears filled the doctor's eyes. A faint color overspread Stéphanie's beautiful face, deepening slowly, till at last she glowed like a girl radiant with youth. Still the bright flush grew. Life and joy, kindled within

her at the blaze of intelligence, swept through her like leaping flames. A convulsive tremor ran from her feet to her heart. But all these tokens, which flashed on the sight in a moment, gathered and gained consistence, as it were, when Stéphanie's eyes gleamed with heavenly radiance, the light of a soul within. She lived, she thought! She shuddered—was it with fear? God Himself unloosed a second time the tongue that had been bound by death, and set His fire anew in the extinguished soul. The electric torrent of the human will vivified the body whence it had so long been absent.

"Stéphanie!" the Colonel cried.

"Oh! it is Philip!" said the poor Countess.

She fled to the trembling arms held out towards her, and the embrace of the two lovers frightened those who beheld it. Stéphanie burst into tears.

Suddenly the tears ceased to flow; she lay in his arms a dead weight, as if stricken by a thunderbolt, and said faintly—

"Farewell, Philip! . . . I love you . . . farewell!"

"She is dead!" cried the Colonel, unclasping his arms.

The old doctor received the lifeless body of his niece in his arms as a young man might have done; he carried her to a stack of wood and set her down. He looked at her face, and laid a feeble hand, tremulous with agitation, upon her heart—it beat no longer.

"Can it really be so?" he said, looking from the Colonel, who stood there motionless, to Stéphanie's face. Death had invested it with a radiant beauty, a transient aureole, the pledge, it may be, of a glorious life to come.

"Yes, she is dead."

"Oh, but that smile!" cried Philip; "only see that smile. Is it possible?"

"She has grown cold already," answered M. Fanjat.

M. de Sucy made a few strides to tear himself from the sight; then he stopped, and whistled the air that the mad Stéphanie had understood; and when he saw that she did not rise and hasten to him, he walked away, staggering like a drunken man, still whistling, but he did not turn again.

In society General de Sucy is looked upon as very agreeable, and above all things, as very lively and amusing. Not very long ago a lady complimented him upon his good humor and equable temper.

"Ah! madame," he answered, "I pay very dearly for my merriment in the evening if I am alone."

"Then, you are never alone, I suppose."

"No," he answered, smiling.

If a keen observer of human nature could have seen the look that Sucy's face wore at that moment, he would, without doubt, have shuddered.

"Why do you not marry?" the lady asked (she had several daughters of her own at a boarding-school). "You are wealthy; you belong to an old and noble house; you are clever; you have a future before you; everything smiles upon you."

"Yes," he answered; "one smile is killing me——"

On the morrow the lady heard with amazement that M. de Sucy had shot himself through the head that night.

The fashionable world discussed the extraordinary news in divers ways, and each had a theory to account for it; play, love, ambition, irregularities in private life, according to the taste of the speaker, explained the last act of the tragedy begun in 1812. Two men alone, a magistrate and an old doctor, knew that M. le Comte de Sucy was one of those souls unhappy in the strength God gives to them to enable them to triumph daily in a ghastly struggle with a mysterious horror. If for a moment God withdraws His sustaining hand, they succumb.

PARIS, *March* 1830.

SERAPHITA

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To Mme. Eveline de Hanska,
née Countess Rzewuska.

Madame,—Here is the work you desired of me; in dedicating it to you I am happy to offer you some token of the respectful affection you allow me to feel for you. If I should be accused of incapacity after trying to extract from the depths of mysticism this book, which demanded the glowing poetry of the East under the transparency of our beautiful language; the blame be yours! Did you not compel me to the effort—such an effort as Jacob's—by telling me that even the most imperfect outline of the figure dreamed of by you, as it has been by me from my infancy, would still be something in your eyes? Here, then, is that something.—Why cannot this book be set apart exclusively for those lofty spirits who, like you, are preserved from worldly pettiness by solitude! They might impress on it the melodious rhythm which it lacks, and which, in the hands of one of our poets, might have made it the glorious epic for which France still waits. Still, they will accept it from me as one of those balustrades, carved by some artist full of faith, on which the pilgrim leans to meditate on the end of man, while gazing at the choir of a fine church.

I remain, with respect, madame, your faithful servant, *De Balzac.*

Paris, ***August*** **23, 1835.**

I

SERAPHITUS

ON seeing the Norwegian coast as outlined on the map, what imagination can fail to be amazed at its fantastic contour—long tongues of granite, round which the surges of the North Sea are forever moaning? Who has not dreamed of the majestic spectacle of these beachless shores, these endless creeks, and inlets, and little bays, no two of which are alike, and each a pathless gulf? Would it not seem as though Nature had amused herself by representing, in an indestructible hieroglyphic, the symbol of life in Norway, by giving its coast the configuration of the bones of an enormous fish? For fishing is the staple of commerce, and almost the sole article of food to a handful of men who cling, like a tuft of lichen, to those barren rocks. On a land extending over fourteen degrees of longitude there are scarcely seven hundred thousand souls. Owing to the inglorious dangers and the perpetual snow that these Norwegian peaks offer to the traveler—the very name of Norway makes one cold—their sublime beauty remains inviolate and harmonizes with certain human phenomena, which took place there—equally unknown, at least to romance, and of which this is the story.

When one of these inlets, a mere fissure in the sight of the eider-ducks, is wide enough to prevent the sea from freezing over in the rocky prison it tosses and struggles in, the inhabitants call such a little gulf a fjord, a word which most geographers have tried to adopt into their respective languages. In spite of the general resemblance of all these channels, each has its own individuality; the sea penetrates into all these breaches, but in each the rocks are differently riven, and their contorted precipices defy the terms of geometry: here the crest is toothed like a saw; there its sides are too perpendicular to allow the snow to rest on them, or the glorious clumps of northern pines to take root; further on, the convulsions of the globe have rounded off

some soft declivity, a lovely valley furnished with stage on stage of dark-plumed trees. You feel inclined to call this land Marine Switzerland.

One of these gulfs, lying between Dronthjem and Christiania, is called Stromfiord. If the Stromfiord is not the most beautiful of these scenes, it has at least the merit of presenting the earthly magnificence of Norway, and of having been the background to the scenes of a really heavenly romance.

The general outline of the Stromfiord is, at a first glance, that of a funnel forced open by the sea. The entrance made by the waves is the record of a contest between the ocean and the granite, two equally powerful elements—one by its inertia, the other by its motion. The proof lies in some half-sunken rocks of fantastic shapes which prohibit the entrance of vessels. The hardy sons of the soil can in some places leap from rock to rock, undismayed by a gulf a hundred fathoms deep and six feet wide. Here and there a frail and ill-balanced block of gneiss, thrown across, joins two crags, or hunters or fishermen have flung some pine-trees, by way of a bridge, from one perpendicular cliff to another, where the sea murmurs unceasingly below.

This dangerous inlet turns to the right with a serpentine twist, where it meets a mountain rising three hundred fathoms above the surface of the sea, its foot forming a vertical shelf half a league in length, where the unyielding granite does not begin to split into rifts and inequalities till at about two hundred feet above the water. Thus the sea, rushing violently in, is no less violently driven back, by the resistant inertia of the mountain, towards the opposite shore, which the rebounding waves have worn into gentle indentations. The fiord is closed at the head by a cliff of gneiss, crowned with forest, whence a stream falls in cascades, forms a river when the snows melt, spreads into a lake of considerable extent, and escapes with a rush, carrying down old pine-trees and ancient larches, hardly perceptible in the tumbling torrent. Flung by the fall to the bottom of the abyss, these trees presently come to the surface again, and combine in a tangle, forming islets which

are stranded on the left bank, where the inhabitants of the little village built on the Stromfiord find them splintered, broken, sometimes entire, but always stripped of their leaves and branches.

The mountain, which thus receives at its feet the assaults of the sea, and on its head the buffeting of the north wind, is the Falberg. Its summit, always wrapped in a mantle of ice and snow, is the highest in Norway, where the vicinity of the Pole produces, at a level of eighteen hundred feet above the sea, such cold as prevails elsewhere on the highest mountains on the globe. The crest of this cliff, perpendicular on the side towards the sea, shelves gradually away to the east down to the falls of the Sieg, by a succession of slopes where the cold allows no vegetation but heath and much-enduring shrubs. That part of the fiord where the waters escape under the thick forests is called Siegdalen, or the valley of the Sieg—the name of the river.

The bay opposite to the cliffs of the Falberg is the valley of Jarvis—a pretty spot overlooked by hills covered with fir-trees, larches, and birch, with a few oaks and beeches, the thickest and most variously colored hangings nature ever affords to this wild northern scenery. The eye can easily distinguish the line where the ground, warmed by the sun's rays, first admits of culture and shows the first signs of the Norwegian flora. At this part the gulf is wide enough to allow the waters flung back by the Falberg to die murmuring on the lowest ledge of the hills, where the strand is softly fringed with fine sand, mingled with mica, tiny crystals, and pretty pebbles of porphyry and many-colored marbles brought from Sweden by the river, with waifs from the sea, and shells and ocean weeds tossed up by storms from the Pole or from the South.

At the foot of the Jarvis hills is the village, consisting of about two hundred wooden houses, inhabited by a population that live there, lost, like the swarms of bees in a forest, happily vegetating and extorting a living from the wilderness around them. The unrecognized existence of this village is easily explained. Few of its men were bold enough to venture out among the rocks to reach the open sea and

attempt the fishing which the Norwegians carry on to a great extent on less dangerous parts of the coast. The various fish in the fiord partly supplies the food of the inhabitants; the pasture land in the valleys affords milk and butter; a few plots of good land allow them to reap a harvest of rye, of hemp, and vegetables, which they manage to protect against the bitter cold and the transient but terrible heat of the sun, showing true Norwegian ingenuity in this two-fold conflict. The absence of communications, either by land, where roads are impracticable, or by sea, where only small boats can thread the watery labyrinths of the fiord, hinders them from acquiring wealth by the sale of their timber. It would cost an equally enormous sum to clear the channel at the entrance or to open up a road to the interior.

The roads from Christiania to Dronthjem all make a bend round the Stromfiord, crossing the Sieg by a bridge several leagues above the falls; the coast between the Jarvis valley and Dronthjem is covered with impenetrable forests, and the Falberg is divided from Christiania by inaccessible precipices. The village of Jarvis might perhaps have opened communications with Sweden by way of the Sieg, but to bring it into touch with civilization the Stromfiord needed a man of genius. The genius indeed came: a poet, a pious Swede, who died admiring and respecting the beauties of the land as being one of the grandest of the Creator's works.

Those of my readers who have been gifted by study with that "mind's eye," whose rapid perception can throw on the soul, as on a canvas, the most diverse landscapes of the world, may now readily conceive of the general aspect of the Stromfiord. They alone, perhaps, will be able to thread their tortuous way through the reef of the inlet where the sea fights and foams; to glide on its swell below the shelves of the Falberg, whose white peaks mingle with the misty clouds of a sky that is almost constantly pearl-gray; to admire the dented margin of the pretty sheet of water; to hear the falls of the Sieg, which drops in long streamers on to a picturesque medley of large trees tossed in confusion, some upright, some hidden among bowlders of gneiss; and

at last to rest on the smiling pictures offered to the eye by the lower hills of Jarvis, whence rise the noblest products of the North in clumps, in myriads: here, birch-trees, as graceful as girls and, like them, gently stooping; there, pillared aisles of beech with centennial, mossy trunks; all the contrast of these various shades of green, of white clouds among black pine-trees, of heath-grown commons in every shade of purple—all the colors, all the fragrance, the unknown marvels, in short, of this vegetation.

Expand the proportions of this amphitheater, soar up to the clouds, lose yourself in the caves of the rocks where the walruses hide, still your fancy will never be equal to the riches, the poetry of this Norwegian scene. For can your thought ever be as vast as the ocean that bounds the land, as fantastic as the strange forms assumed by the forests, as the clouds, the shadows, the changes of light?

Do you see now, above the meadows on the shore, on the furthest fold of the plain that undulates at the foot of the high hills of Jarvis, two or three hundred houses, roofed with *næver*, a kind of thatch of birch bark; frail-looking dwellings, quite low, and suggesting silkworms flung there on a mulberry leaf brought by the wind? Above these humble and peaceful dwellings is a church, built with a simplicity that harmonizes with the poverty of the village. A graveyard lies round the chancel of this church; the parsonage is seen beyond. A little higher, on a knoll of the hillside, stands a dwelling, the only one built of stone, and for that reason called by the natives the Castle—the Swedish Castle.

In fact, a rich man had come from Sweden thirty years before this story opens and settled at Jarvis, trying to improve its fortunes. This little mansion, erected with a view to tempting the inhabitants to build the like, was remarkable for its substantial character, for a garden wall—a rare thing in Norway, where, in spite of the abundance of stone, wood is used for all the fences, even for those that divide the fields. The house, thus protected from snow, stood on a mound in the midst of a vast courtyard. The windows were screened by those verandas of immense depth supported on large

squared fir-trunks, which give northern buildings a sort of patriarchal expression.

From under their shelter the savage bareness of the Falberg could easily be seen, and the infinitude of the open ocean be compared with the drop of water in the foam-flecked gulf; the portentous rush of the Sieg could be heard, though from afar the sheet of water looked motionless, where it threw itself into its granite bowl hedged in for three leagues round with vast glaciers—in short, the whole landscape where the scene is laid of the supernatural but simple events of this narrative.

The winter of 1799-1800 was one of the hardest in the memory of Europe; the Norway sea froze in every fiord, where the violence of the undertow commonly prevents the ice from forming. A wind, in its effects resembling the Spanish desert wind, had swept the ice of the Stromfiord by drifting the snow to the head of the gulf. It was long since the good folks of Jarvis had seen the vast mirror of the pool in winter reflecting the sky—a curious effect here in the heart of the hills whose curves were effaced under successive layers of snow, the sharpest peaks, like the deepest hollows, forming mere faint undulations under the immense sheet thrown by nature over the landscape now so dolefully dazzling and monotonous. The long hangings of the Sieg, suddenly frozen, described a vast arch, behind which the traveler might have walked sheltered from the storm if anyone had been bold enough to venture across country. But the dangers of any expedition kept the boldest hunters within doors, fearing that they might fail to discern under the snow the narrow paths traced along the edge of the precipices, the ravines, and the cliffs. Not a creature gave life to this white desert reigned over by the polar blast, whose voice alone was sometimes though rarely heard.

The sky, always gray, gave the pool a hue of tarnished steel. Now and again an eider-duck might fly across with impunity, thanks to the thick down that shelters the dreams of the wealthy, who little know the dangers that purchase it; but the bird—like the solitary Bedouin who traverses the

sands of Africa—was neither seen nor heard; in the torpid air, bereft of electric resonance, the rush of its wings was noiseless, its joyous cry unheard. What living eye could endure the sparkle of that precipice hung with glittering icicles, and the hard reflections from the snows, scarcely tinted on the peaks by the beams of the pallid sun which peeped out now and then like a dying thing anxious to prove that it still lives? Many a time, when the rack of gray clouds, driven in squadrons over the mountains and pine forests, hid the sky with their dense shroud, the earth, for lack of heavenly lights, had an illumination of its own.

Here, then, were met all the majestic attributes of the eternal cold that reigns at the Pole, of which the most striking is such royal silence as absolute monarchs dwell in. Every condition carried to excess has the appearance of negation, or the stamp of apparent death; is not life the conflict of two forces? Here nothing showed a sign of life. One force alone, the barren force of frost, reigned supreme. The beating of the open sea even did not penetrate to this silent hollow, so full of sound during the three brief months when nature hurriedly produces the uncertain harvest needful to support this patient race. A few tall fir-trees protruded their dark pyramids loaded with festoons of snow; and the droop of their boughs, bending under these heavy beards, gave a finishing touch to the mourning aspect of the heights, where they were seen as black points.

Every family clung to the fireside in a house carefully closed, with a store of biscuit, run butter, dried fish, and provisions laid in to stand seven months of winter. Even the smoke of these dwellings was scarcely visible; they were all nearly buried in snow, of which the weight was broken by long planks starting from the roof, and supported at some distance from the walls on strong posts, thus forming a covered way round the house. During these dreadful winters the women weave and dye the stuffs of wool or linen of which the clothes are made; while the men for the most part read, or else lose themselves in those prodigious meditations which have given birth to the grand theories, the mystical dreams of the North, its beliefs and its studies—so thorough on

certain points of science that they have probed to the core; a semi-monastic mode of life, which forces the soul back on itself, to feed on itself, and which makes the Norwegian peasant a being apart in the nations of Europe.

This, then, was the state of things on the Stromfiord in the first year of the nineteenth century, about the middle of the month of May.

One morning, when the sun was blazing down into the heart of this landscape, lighting up the flashes of the ephemeral diamonds produced by the crystallized surface of the snow and ice, two persons crossed the gulf and flew along the shelves of the Falberg, mounting towards the summit from ledge to ledge. Were they two human beings, or were they arrows? Anyone who should have seen them would have taken them for two eiders soaring with one consent below the clouds. Not the most superstitious fisherman, not the most daring hunter, would have supposed that human creatures could have the power of pursuing a path along the faint lines traced on the granite sides, where this pair were, nevertheless, gliding along with the appalling skill of somnambulists, when, utterly unconscious of the laws of gravity and the perils of the least false step, they run along a roof, preserving their balance under the influence of an unknown power.

"Stop here, Seraphitus," said a pale girl, "and let me take breath. I would look only at you as we climbed the walls of this abyss; if I had not, what would have become of me? But, at the same time, I am but a feeble creature. Do I tire you?"

"No," said the being on whose arm she leaned. "Let us go on, Minna; the spot where we are standing is not firm enough to remain on."

Once more the snow hissed off from the long boards attached to their feet, and they presently reached the first angular crag which chance had thrown out boldly from the face of the precipice. The person whom Minna had addressed as Seraphitus poised himself on his right heel to raise the lath of about six feet long, and as narrow as a child's shoe, which was fastened to his boot by two straps of walrus skin;

this lath, about an inch thick, had a sole of reindeer skin, and the hair, pressed back against the snow, brought him to a full stop. By turning his left foot, on which this snow-shoe (or *ski*) was not less than twelve feet in length, he was able to turn nimbly round, he returned to his timid companion, lifted her up in spite of his awkward footgear, and set her down on a rocky seat, after dusting away the snow with his pelisse.

"You are safe here, Minna, and may tremble at your ease."

"We have already reached a third of the height of the Ice-cap," said she, looking at the peak, which she called by its popular Norwegian name. "I do not yet believe——"

But she was too much out of breath to talk; she smiled at Seraphitus, who, without replying, held her up, his hand on her heart, listening to its palpitations, as rapid as those of a startled fledgling.

"It often beats as fast as that when I have been running," said she.

Seraphitus bowed, without any contempt or coldness. In spite of the grace of this reply, which made it almost sweet, it nevertheless betrayed a reserve which in a woman would have been intoxicatingly provoking. Seraphitus clasped the girl to him, and Minna took the caress for an answer, and sat looking at him. As Seraphitus raised his head, tossing back the golden locks of his hair with an almost impatient jerk, he saw happiness in his companion's eyes.

"Yes, Minna," said he, in a paternal tone that was peculiarly charming in a youth scarcely full grown, "look at me. Do not look down."

"Why?"

"Do you want to know?—Try then."

Minna gave one hasty glance at her feet, and cried out like a child that has met a tiger. The dreadful influence of the void had seized her, and one look had been enough to give it to her. The fiord, greedy of its prey, had a loud voice, stunning her by ringing in her ears, as though to swallow her up more surely by coming between her and life. From her hair to her feet, all down her back, ran a shudder, at first of cold; but then it seemed to fire her nerves with

intolerable heat, throbbed in her veins, and made her limbs feel weak from electrical shocks, like those caused by touching the electrical eel. Too weak to resist, she felt herself drawn by some unknown force to the bottom of the cliff, where she fancied she could see a monster spouting venom, a monster whose magnetic eyes fascinated her, and whose yawning jaws crunched his prey by anticipation.

"I am dying, my Seraphitus, having loved no one but you," said she, mechanically moving to throw herself down.

Seraphitus blew softly on her brow and eyes. Suddenly, as a traveler is refreshed by a bath, Minna had forgotten that acute anguish; it had vanished under that soothing breath, which penetrated her frame and bathed it in balsamic effluence, as swiftly as the breath had passed through the air.

"Who and what are you?" said she, with an impulse of delicious alarm. "But I know.—You are my life.—How can you look down into the gulf without dying?" she asked after a pause.

Seraphitus left Minna clinging to the granite, and went as a shadow might have done to stand on the edge of the crag, his eyes sounding the bottom of the fiord, defying its bewildering depths; his figure did not sway, his brow was as white and calm as that of a marble statue—deep meeting deep.

"Seraphitus, if you love me, come back!" cried the girl. "Your danger brings back all my torments. Who—who are you to have such superhuman strength at your age?" she asked, feeling his arms around her once more.

"Why," said Seraphitus, "you can look into far vaster space without a qualm"; and raising his hand, the strange being pointed to the blue halo formed by the clouds round a clear opening just over their heads, in which they could see the stars, though it was daylight, in consequence of some atmospheric laws not yet fully explained.

"But what a difference!" she said, smiling.

"You are right," he replied; "we are born to aspire skywards. Our native home, like a mother's face, never frightens its children."

His voice found an echo in his companion's soul; she was silent.

"Come, let us go on," said he.

They rushed on together by the paths faintly visible along the mountain side, devouring the distance, flying from shelf to shelf, from ledge to ledge, with the swiftness of the Arab horse, that bird of the desert. In a few minutes they reached a green carpet of grass, moss, and flowers, on which no one yet had ever rested.

"What a pretty *sæter!*" cried Minna, giving the native name to this little meadow; "but how comes it here, so high up?"

"Here, indeed, the Norwegian vegetation ceases," said Seraphitus; "and if a few plants and flowers thrive on this spot, it is thanks to the shelter of the rock which protects them from the polar cold.—Put this spray in your bosom, Minna," he went on, plucking a flower; "take this sweet creature on which no human eye has yet rested, and keep the unique blossom in memory of this day, unique in your life! You will never again find a guide to lead you to this *sæter*."

He hastily gave her a hybrid plant which his eagle eye had discerned among the growth of *silene acaulis* and saxifrage, a real miracle developed under the breath of angels. Minna seized it with childlike eagerness; a tuft of green, as transparent and vivid as an emerald, composed of tiny leaves curled into cones, light brown at the heart, shaded softly to green at the point, and cut into infinitely delicate teeth. These leaves were so closely set that they seemed to mingle in a dense mass of dainty rosettes. Here and there this cushion was studded with white stars edged with a line of gold, and from the heart of each grew a bunch of purple stamens without a pistil. A scent that seemed to combine that of the rose and of the orange-blossom, but wilder and more ethereal, gave a heavenly charm to this mysterious flower, at which Seraphitus gazed with melancholy, as though its perfume had expressed to him a plaintive thought, which he alone understood. To Minna this amazing blossom seemed a caprice of Nature, who had amused herself by endowing a

handful of gems with the freshness, tenderness, and fragrance of a plant.

"Why should it be unique? Will it never reproduce its kind?" said she to Seraphitus, who colored and changed the subject.

"Let us sit down—turn round—look! At such a height you will perhaps not be frightened. The gulfs are so far below that you cannot measure their depth; they have the level perspective of the sea, the indefiniteness of the clouds, the hue of the sky. The ice in the fiord is an exquisite turquoise, the pine forests are visible only as dim brown streaks. To us the depths may well be thus disguised."

Seraphitus spoke these words with that unction of tone and gesture which is known only to those who have attained to the highest places on the mountains of the earth, and which is so involuntarily assumed that the most arrogant master finds himself prompted to treat his guide as a brother, and never feels himself the superior till they have descended into the valleys where men dwell.

He untied Minna's snowshoes, kneeling at her feet. The girl did not notice it, so much was she amazed at the imposing spectacle of the Norwegian panorama—the long stretch of rocks lying before her at a glance, so much was she struck by the perennial solemnity of those frozen summits, for which words have no expression.

"We have not come here by unaided human strength!" said she, clasping her hands. "I must be dreaming!"

"You call a fact supernatural, because you do not know its cause," he replied.

"Your answers are always stamped with some deep meaning," said she. "With you I understand everything without an effort.—Ah! I am free!"

"Your snowshoes are off, that is all."

"Oh!" cried she, "and I would fain have untied yours, and have kissed your feet!"

"Keep those speeches for Wilfrid," said Seraphitus mildly.

"Wilfrid!" echoed Minna in a tone of fury, which died away as she looked at her companion. "You are never

angry!" said she, trying, but in vain, to take his hand. "You are in all things so desperately perfect!"

"Whence you infer that I have no feelings?"

Minna was startled at a glance so penetratingly thrown into her mind.

"You prove to me that we understand each other," replied she, with the grace of a loving woman.

Seraphitus gently shook his head, with a flashing look that was at once sweet and sad.

"You who know everything," Minna went on, "tell me why the alarm I felt below, by your side, is dissipated now that I am up here; why I dare for the first time to look you in the face; whereas, down there, I scarce dare steal a glance at you?"

"Perhaps up here we have cast off the mean things of the earth," said he, pulling off his pelisse.

"I never saw you so beautiful," said Minna, sitting down on a mossy stone, and gazing in contemplation of the being who had thus brought her to a part of the mountain which from afar seemed inaccessible.

Never, in fact, had Seraphitus shone with such brilliant splendor—the only expression that can do justice to the eagerness of his face and the aspect of his person. Was this radiance due to the effulgence given to the complexion by the pure mountain air and the reflection from the snow? Was it the result of an internal impetus which still excites the frame at the moment it is resting after long exertion? Was it produced by the sudden contrast between the golden glow of sunshine and the gloom of the clouds through which this pretty pair had passed?

To all these causes we must perhaps add the effects of one of the most beautiful phenomena that human nature can offer. If some skilled physiologist had studied this being, who, to judge by the boldness of his brow and the light in his eyes at this moment, was a youth of seventeen; if he had sought the springs of this blooming life under the whitest skin that the North ever bestowed on one of its sons, he would, no doubt, have believed in the existence of a phosphoric fluid in the sinews that seemed to shine through the skin,

or in the constant presence of an internal glow, which tinted Seraphitus as a light shines through an alabaster vase. Delicately slender as his hands were—he had taken off his gloves to loosen Minna's sandals—they seemed to have such strength as the Creator has given to the diaphanous joints of a crab. The fire that blazed in his eyes rivaled the rays of the sun; he seemed not to receive but to give out light. His frame, as slight and fragile as a woman's, was that of a nature feeble in appearance, but whose strength is always adequate to its desires, which are sometimes strong. Seraphitus, though of middle height, seemed taller as seen in front; he looked as if he fain would spring upwards. His hair, with its light curls, as if touched by a fairy hand and tossed by a breeze, added to the illusion produced by his airy attitude; but this absolutely effortless mien was the outcome rather of a mental state than of physical habit.

Minna's imagination seconded this constant hallucination; it would have affected any beholder, for it gave to Seraphitus the appearance of one of the beings we see in our happiest dreams. No familiar type can give any idea of this face, to Minna so majestically manly, though in the sight of a man its feminine grace would have eclipsed the loveliest heads by Raphael. That Painter of Heaven has frequently given a sort of tranquil joy and tender suavity to the lines of his angelic beauties; but without seeing Seraphitus himself, what mind can conceive of the sadness mingled with hope which half clouded the ineffable feelings expressed in his features? Who could picture to himself, even in the artist's dream, where all things are possible, the shadows cast by mysterious awe on that too intellectual brow, which seemed to interrogate the skies, and always to pity the earth? That head could tower disdainful, like a noble bird of prey whose cries rend the air, or bow resigned, like the turtle-dove whose voice sheds tenderness in the depths of the silent forest.

Seraphitus had a complexion of surprising whiteness, made all the more remarkable by red lips, brown eyebrows, and silky lashes, the only details that broke the pallor of a face whose perfect regularity did not hinder the strong expression of his feelings; they were mirrored there without shock or

violence, but with the natural, majestic gravity we like to attribute to superior beings. Everything in those monumental features spoke of strength and repose.

Minna stood up to take the young man's hand, hoping to draw him down to her so as to press on that fascinating brow a kiss of admiration rather than of love; but one look from his eyes, a look that went through her as a sunbeam goes through a glass prism, froze the poor child. She felt the gulf between them without understanding it; she turned away her head and wept. Suddenly a strong hand was round her waist, and a voice full of kindness said—

"Come."

She obeyed, resting her head in sudden relief on the young man's heart; while he, measuring his steps by hers in gentle and attentive conformity, led her to a spot whence they could behold the dazzling beauty of the polar scenery.

"But before I look or listen, tell me, Seraphitus, why do you repulse me? Have I displeased you? And how? Tell me. I do not want to call anything my own; I would that my earthly possessions should be yours, as the riches of my heart already are; that light should come to me only from your eyes, as my mind is dependent on yours; then I should have no fear of offending you, since I should but reflect the impulses of your soul, the words of your heart, the light of your light, as we send up to God the meditations by which He feeds our spirit.—I would be wholly you!"

"Well, Minna, a constant aspiration is a promise made by the future. Hope on!—Still, if you would be pure always, unite the thought of the Almighty to your earthly affections. Thus will you love all creatures, and your heart will soar high!"

"I will do whatever you desire," said she, looking up at him timidly.

"I cannot be your companion," said Seraphitus sadly.

He suppressed some reflections, raised his arms in the direction of Christiania, which was visible as a speck on the horizon, and said—

"Look!"

"We are indeed small," said she.

"Yes; but we become great by feeling and intellect," said Seraphitus. "The knowledge of things, Minna, begins with us; the little we know of the laws of the visible world enables us to conceive of the immensity of higher spheres. I know not whether the time is ripe for talking thus to you; but I so long to communicate to you the flame of my hopes! Some day, perhaps, we may meet in the world where love never dies."

"Why not now and forever?" said she in a murmur.

"Here nothing is permanent!" said he in a tone of scorn. "The transient joys of earthly love are false lights which reveal to some souls the dawn of more durable bliss, just as the discovery of a law of nature enables certain privileged minds to deduct a whole system. Is not our perishable happiness here below an earnest of some other more perfect happiness, as the earth, a mere fragment of the universe, testifies to the universe? We cannot measure the orbit of the Divine mind, of which we are but atoms as minute as God is great; but we may have our intuitions of its vastness, we may kneel, adore, and wait. Men are constantly mistaken in their science, not seeing that everything on their globe is relative and subordinate to a general cycle, an incessant productiveness which inevitably involves progress, and an aim. Man himself is not the final creation; if he were, God would not exist."

"How have you had time to learn so many things?" said the girl.

"They are memories," replied he.

"To me you are more beautiful than anything I see."

"We are one of the greatest works of God. Has He not bestowed on us the faculty of reflecting nature, concentrating it in ourselves by thought, and making it a stepping-stone from which to fly to Him? We love each other in proportion to what is heavenly in our souls.—But do not be unjust, Minna; look at the scene displayed at our feet; is it not grand? The ocean lies spread like a floor, the mountains

are like the walls of an amphitheater, the ether above is like the suspended velarium of the theater, and we can inhale the mind of God as a perfume.

"Look! the storms that wreck vessels filled with men from hence appear like mere froth; if you look above you all is serene; we see a diadem of stars. The shades of earthly expression are here lost. Thus supported by nature so attenuated by space, do you not feel your mind to be deep rather than keen? Are you not conscious of more loftiness than enthusiasm, of more energy than will? Have you not feelings to which nothing within us can give utterance? Do you not feel your wings?—Let us pray!"

Seraphitus knelt, crossing his hands over his bosom, and Minna fell on her knees weeping. Thus they remained for some minutes, and for some minutes the blue halo that quivered in the sky above them spread, and rays of light fell round the unconscious pair.

"Why do you not weep when I cannot help it?" said Minna in a broken voice.

"Those who are pure in spirit shed no tears," replied Seraphitus, rising. "Why should I weep? I no longer see human misery. Here all is good and shines in majesty. Below I hear the supplications and the lament of the harp of suffering, sounding under the hands of the spirit held captive. Here I listen to the concert of harmonious harps. Below, you have hope, the beautiful rudiment of faith; but here faith reigns, the realization of hope!"

"You can never love me, I am too imperfect; you disdain me," said the girl.

"Minna, the violet hidden at the foot of the oak says to itself, 'The sun does not love me, he never comes.'—The sun says, 'If I fell on her, that poor little flower would perish!' Because he is the flower's friend he lets his beams steal through the oak-leaves, subduing them to tint the petals of the blossom he loves.—I feel I am not sufficiently shrouded, and fear lest you should see me too clearly; you would quail if you knew me too well. Listen; I have no taste for the fruits of the earth; I have understood your joys too well; like the debauched emperors of pagan Rome, I am disgusted

with all things, for I have the gift of vision.—Leave me forever," added Seraphitus sorrowfully.

He went away to sit down on a projecting rock, his head drooping on his breast.

"Why thus drive me to despair?" said Minna.

"Go from me!" cried Seraphitus; "I can give nothing that you want. Your love is too gross for me. Why do you not love Wilfrid? Wilfrid is a man, a man tested by passion, who will clasp you in his sinewy arms, and make you feel his broad, strong hand. He has fine black hair, eyes full of human feeling, a heart that fires the words of his lips with a lava torrent. He will crush you with caresses. He will be your lover, your husband. Go to Wilfrid!"

Minna was crying bitterly.

"Dare you tell me that you do not love him?" he added in a voice that pierced her like a dagger.

"Mercy! Mercy! My Seraphitus!"

"Love him, poor child of earth, to which fate irrevocably rivets you," said the terrible Seraphitus, seizing the girl with such force as dragged her to the brink of the *sæter*, whence the prospect was so extensive that a young creature full of enthusiasm might easily fancy that she was above the world. "I wanted a companion to go with me to the realm of light; I thought to show her this ball of clay, and I find you still cling to it. Adieu! Remain as you are, enjoy through your senses, obey your nature; turn pale with men, blush with women, play with children, pray with sinners, look up to heaven when you are stricken; tremble, hope, yearn; you will have a comrade, you still may laugh and weep, give and receive.—For me—I am an exile far from heaven; like a monster, far from earth! My heart beats for none; I live in myself, for myself alone. I feel through my spirit, I breathe by my brain, I see by my mind, I am dying of impatience and longing. No one here below can satisfy my wishes or soothe my eagerness; and I have forgotten how to weep. I am alone.—I am resigned, and can wait."

Seraphitus looked at the flowery knoll on which he had placed Minna, and then turned towards the frowning sum-

mits, round whose peaks heavy clouds had gathered, into which he seemed to fling his next thoughts.

"Do you hear that delightful music, Minna?" said he, in his dove-like tones, for the eagle had ended his cry. "Might one not fancy that it was the harmony of those Eolian harps which poets imagine in the midst of forests and mountains? Do you see the shadowy forms moving among those clouds? Do you discern the winged feet of those who deck the sky with such hangings? Those sounds refresh the soul; Heaven will erelong shed the blossoms of spring, a flash blazes up from the Pole. Let us fly—it is time!"

In an instant they had replaced their snowshoes and were descending the Falberg by the steep slopes down to the valley of the Sieg. Some miraculous intelligence guided their steps—or rather their flight. When a crevasse covered with snow lay before them, Seraphitus seized Minna, and with a swift rush dashed, scarce the weight of a bird, across the frail bridge that covered a chasm. Many a time, by just pushing his companion, he deviated slightly to avoid a cliff or tree, a block of stone which he seemed to see through the snow, as certain mariners, accustomed to the sea, discern a shoal by the color, the eddy, and the recoil of the water.

When they had reached the roads of the Siegdahl, and they could proceed without hesitation in a straight line down to the ice on the fiord, Seraphitus spoke.

"You have nothing more to say to me?" he asked Minna.

"I fancied," replied the girl respectfully, "that you wished to think in silence."

"Make haste, pretty one, the night is falling," said he.

Minna was startled at hearing the new voice, so to speak, in which her guide spoke. A voice as clear as a girl's, dissipating the fantastic flashes of the dream in which she had been walking. Seraphitus was abdicating his manly strength, and his looks were losing their too keen insight. Presently the fair couple were gliding across the fiord; they reached the snowy level that lay between the margin of the bay and the first houses of Jarvis; then, urged by the waning light, they hurried up to the parsonage as if climbing the steps of an enormous stairway.

"My father will be uneasy," said Minna.

"No," said Seraphitus.

At this moment they stopped at the porch of the humble dwelling where Pastor Becker, the minister of Jarvis, sat reading while awaiting his daughter's return to supper.

"Dear Pastor Becker," said Seraphitus, "I have brought your daughter back safe and sound."

"Thank you, mademoiselle," said the old man, laying his spectacles on the book. "You must be tired."

"Not in the least," said Minna, on whose brow her companion had just breathed.

"Dear child, will you come to tea with me the evening after to-morrow?"

"With pleasure, dear."

"Pastor Becker, will you bring her?"

"Yes, mademoiselle."

Seraphitus nodded prettily, bowed to the old man, and left, and in a few minutes was in the courtyard of the Swedish Castle. An old servant of eighty came out under the wide veranda carrying a lantern. Seraphitus slipped off the snowshoes with the grace of a woman, ran into the sitting-room, dropped on to a large divan covered with skins, and lay down.

"What will you take?" said the old man, lighting the enormously long tapers that are used in Norway.

"Nothing, David; I am too tired."

Seraphitus threw off the sable-lined pelisse, wrapped it about him, and was asleep. The old servant lingered a few minutes in loving contemplation of the strange being resting under his gaze, and whose sex the most learned man would have been puzzled to pronounce on. Seeing him as he lay, wrapped in his usual garment, which was as much like a woman's dressing-gown as a man's overcoat, it was impossible to believe that the slender feet that hung down, as if to display the delicacy with which nature had molded them, were not those of a young girl; but the brow, the profile, seemed the embodiment of human strength carried to its highest pitch.

"She is suffering, and will not tell me," thought the old

man. "She is dying like a flower scorched by too fierce a sunbeam."

And the old man wept.

II

SERAPHITA

In the course of the evening David came into the drawing-room.

"I know who is coming," said Seraphita in a sleepy voice. "Wilfrid may come in."

On hearing these words, a man at once appeared, and came to sit down by her.

"My dear Seraphita, are you ill? You look paler than usual."

She turned languidly towards him, after tossing back her hair like a pretty woman overpowered by sick headache and too feeble to complain.

"I was foolish enough," said she, "to cross the fiord with Minna; we have been up the Falberg."

"Did you want to kill yourself?" cried he, with a lover's alarm.

"Do not be uneasy, my good Wilfrid, I took great care of your Minna."

Wilfrid struck the table violently with his hand, took a few steps towards the door with an exclamation of pain; then he came back and began to reproach her.

"Why so much noise if you suppose me to be suffering?" said Seraphita.

"I beg your pardon, forgive me," said he, kneeling down. "Speak harshly to me, require anything of me that your cruel woman's caprice may suggest to you as hardest to be endured, but, my beloved, do not doubt my love! You use Minna like a hatchet to hit me with again and again. Have some mercy!"

"Why speak thus, my friend, when you know that such words are useless?" she replied, looking at him with a gaze

that became at last so soft that what Wilfrid saw was not Seraphita's eyes, but a fluid light shimmering like the last vibrations of a song full of Italian languor.

"Ah! anguish cannot kill!" cried he.

"Are you in pain?" said she, in a voice which produced on him the same effect as her look. "What can I do for you?"

"Love me, as I love you!"

"Poor Minna!" said she.

"I never bring any weapons!" cried Wilfrid.

"You are in a detestable temper," said Seraphita, smiling. "Have I not spoken nicely, like the Parisian ladies of whom you tell me love stories?"

Wilfrid sat down, folded his arms, and looked gloomily at Seraphita.

"I forgive you," said he, "for you know not what you do."

"Oh!" retorted she, "every woman from Eve downwards knows when she is doing good or evil."

"I believe it," said he.

"I am sure of it, Wilfrid. Our intuition is just what makes us so perfect. What you men have to learn, we feel."

"Why, then, do you not feel how much I love you?"

"Because you do not love me."

"Great God!"

"Why then do you complain of anguish?"

"You are terrible this evening, Seraphita. You are a perfect demon!"

"No; but I have the gift of understanding, and that is terrifying. Suffering, Wilfrid, is a light thrown on life."

"Why did you go up the Falberg?"

"Minna will tell you; I am too tired to speak. You must talk, you who know everything, who have learnt everything and forgotten nothing, and have gone through so many social experiences. Amuse me; I am listening."

"What can I tell you that you do not know! Indeed, your request is a mockery. You recognize nothing that is worldly, you analyze its terminology, you demolish its laws, its manners, feelings, sciences, by reducing them to the pro-

portions they assume when we take our stand outside the globe."

"You see, my friend, I am not a woman. You are wrong to love me. What! I quit the ethereal regions of strength you attribute to me; I make myself humble and insignificant to stoop after the manner of the poor female of every species —and you at once uplift me! Then, when I am crushed and broken, I crave your help; I want your arm, and you repulse me! We do not understand each other."

"You are more malignant this evening than I have ever known you."

"Malignant?" said she, with a flashing look that melted every sentiment into one heavenly emotion. "No; I am weary, that is all. Then, leave me, my friend. Will not that be a due exercise of your rights as a man? We are always to charm you, to recreate you, always to be cheerful, and have no whims but those that amuse you.—What shall I do, my friend? Shall I sing, or dance, when fatigue has deprived me of voice and of the use of my legs? Yes, gentlemen, at our last gasp we still must smile on you! That, I believe, you call your sovereignty!—Poor women! I pity them. You abandon them when they are old; tell me, have they then no longer heart or soul? Well, and I am more than a hundred, Wilfrid. Go—go to kneel at Minna's feet."

"Oh, my one, eternal love!"

"Do you know what eternity is? Be silent, Wilfrid.— You desire me, but you do not love me.—Tell me, now, do not I remind you of some coquette you have met?"

"I certainly do not see you now as the pure and heavenly maiden I saw for the first time in the church at Jarvis."

As he spoke Seraphita passed her hands over her brow, and when she uncovered her face Wilfrid was astonished at the religious and saintly expression it wore.

"You are right, my friend. I am always wrong to set foot on your earth."

"Yes, beloved Seraphita, be my star.—Never descend from the place whence you shed such glorious light on me."

He put out his hand to take the girl's, but she withdrew it, though without disdain or anger. Wilfrid hastily rose

and went to stand by the window, turning towards it so that Seraphita should not see a few tears that filled his eyes.

"Why these tears?" she asked. "You are no longer a boy, Wilfrid. Come back to me, I insist.—You are vexed with me, when it is I who should be angry. You see I am not well, and you compel me by some foolish doubts to think and speak, or participate in whims and ideas that fatigue me. If you at all understood my nature, you would have given me some music; you would have soothed my weariness; but you love me for your own sake, not for myself."

The storm which raged in Wilfrid's soul was stilled by these words; he came back slowly to contemplate the bewitching creature who reclined under his eyes, softly pillowed, her head resting on her hand, and her elbow in an insinuating attitude.

"You fancy I do not like you," she went on. "You are mistaken. Listen, Wilfrid. You are beginning to know a great deal, and you have suffered much. Allow me to explain your thoughts. You wanted to take my hand."

She sat up, and her graceful movement seemed to shed gleams of light.

"Does not a girl who allows a man to take her hand make a promise, and ought she not to keep it? You know full well that I can never be yours. Two feelings rule the love that attracts the women of this earth: either they devote themselves to suffering creatures, degraded and guilty, whom they desire to comfort, to raise, to redeem; or they give themselves wholly to superior beings, sublime and strong, whom they are fain to worship and understand—by whom they are too often crushed. You have been degraded, but you have purified yourself in the fires of repentance, and you now are great; I feel myself too small to be your equal, and I am too religious to humble myself to any power but that of the Most High. Your life, my friend, may thus be stated; we are in the North, among the clouds, where abstractions are familiar to our minds."

"Seraphita, you kill me when you talk so," he replied. "It is always torture to me to see you thus apply the monstrous science which strips all human things of the prop-

erties they derive from time, space, form, when you regard them mathematically under some ultimate simplest expression, as geometry does with bodies, abstracting dimensions from substance."

"Well, Wilfrid, I submit.—Look at this bearskin rug which my poor David has spread. What do you think of it?"

"I like it very well."

"You did not know I had that *Doucha Greka?*"

It was a sort of pelisse made of cashmere lined with black fox-skin; the name means, "warm to the soul."

"Do you suppose," said she, "that any sovereign in any court possesses a fur wrap to match it?"

"It is worthy of her who wears it."

"And whom you think very beautiful?"

"Human words are inapplicable to her; she must be addressed heart to heart."

"Wilfrid, it is kind of you to soothe my griefs with such sweet words—which you have spoken to others."

"Good-by."

"Stay. I love you truly, and Minna too, believe me, but to me you two are one being. Thus combined you are as a brother, or, if you will, a sister to me. Marry each other, let me see you happy before quitting forever this sphere of trial and sorrow. Dear me! the most ordinary women have made their lovers obey their will. They have said 'Be silent!' and their lovers were mute. They have said 'Die!' and men have died. They have said 'Love me from afar!' the lovers have remained at a distance like courtiers in the presence of a king. They have said 'Go, marry!' and the men have married. Now, I want you to be happy, and you refuse. Have I then no power?—Well, Wilfrid—come close to me.—Yes, I should be sorry to see you married to Minna; but when you see me no more, then—promise me to make her your wife. Heaven intends you for each other."

"I have heard you with rapture, Seraphita. Incomprehensible as your words are, they are like a charm. But what, indeed, do you mean?"

"To be sure; I forget to be foolish, to be the poor creature

in whose weakness you delight. I torture you, and you came to this wild country to find rest—you who are racked by the fierce throes of misunderstood genius, worn out by the patient labors of science, who have almost stained your hands by crime, and worn the chains of human justice."

Wilfrid had fallen half dead on the floor. Seraphita breathed on the young man's brow, and he fell calmly asleep, lying at her feet.

"Sleep, rest," said she, rising.

After laying her hands on Wilfrid's forehead, the following phrases fell from her lips, one by one, each in a different tone, but alike melodious and full of a kindly spirit that seemed to emanate from her countenance in misty undulations like the light shed by the heathen goddess on the beloved shepherd in his sleep.

"I may show myself to you, dear Wilfrid, as I am, to you who are strong.

"The hour is come, the hour when the shining lights of the future cast their reflections on the soul, the hour when the soul moves, feeling itself free.

"It is granted to me now to tell you how well I love you. Do you not see what my love is, a love devoid of self-interest, a feeling full of you alone, a love which follows you into the future, to light up your future, for such love is the true light. Do you now perceive how ardently I long to see you released from the life that is a burden to you, and nearer to the world where love rules forever? Is not love for a lifetime only sheer suffering? Have you not felt a longing for eternal love? Do you not now understand to what ecstasy a being can rise when he is double through loving Him who never betrays his love, Him before whom all bow and worship?

"I would I had wings, Wilfrid, to cover you withal; I would I had strength to give you that you might know the foretaste of the world where the purest joys of the purest union known on earth would cast a shadow in the light that there perennially enlightens and rejoices all hearts!

"Forgive a friendly soul for having shown you in one word a vision of your faults with the charitable intention of

lulling the acute torments of your remorse. Listen to the choir of forgiveness! Refresh your spirit by inhaling the dawn that shall rise for you beyond the gloom of death! Yes, for your life lies there.

"My words shall wear for you the glorious garb of dreams, and appear as forms of flame descending to visit you. Rise! Rise to the heights whence men see each other truly, though tiny and crowded as the sands of the seashore. Humanity is unrolled before you as a ribbon: look at the endless hues of that flower of the gardens of heaven.—Do you see those who lack intelligence, those who are beginning to be tinged by it, those who have been tried, those who are in the circle of love, and those in wisdom, who aspire to celestial illumination?

"Do you understand, through these thoughts made visible, the destination of man—whence he comes, whither he is tending? Keep on your road. When you shall reach your journey's end, you will hear the trumpet call of omnipotence and loud shouts of victory, and harmonies, only one of which would shake the earth, but which are lost in a world where there is neither east nor west.

"Do you perceive, dear, much-tried one, that but for the torpor and the veil of sleep, such visions would rend and carry away your intellect, as the wind of a tempest rends and sweeps away a light sail, and would rob a man forever of his reason? Do you perceive that the soul alone, raised to its highest power, and even in a dream, can scarce endure the consuming effluence of the Spirit?

"Fly, fly again through the realms of light and glory, admire, hurry on. As you fly you are resting, you go forward without fatigue. Like all men, you would fain dwell always thus bathed in these floods of fragrance and light, where you are wandering free of your unconscious body, speaking in thought only. Hurry, fly, rejoice for a moment in the wings you will have earned when love is so perfect in you that you shall cease to have any senses, that you shall be all intellect and all love! The higher you soar, the less can you conceive of the gulf beneath.—Now, gaze at me for a moment, for you will henceforth see me but

darkly, as you behold me by the light of the dull sun of the earth!"

Seraphita stole up with her head gently bent on one side, her hair flowing about her in the airy pose which the sublimest painters have attributed to messengers from heaven; the folds of her dress had the indescribable grace which makes the artist, the man to whom everything is an expression of feeling, stop to gaze at the exquisite flowing veil of the antique statue of Polyhymnia.

Then she extended her hand and Wilfrid rose.

When he looked at Seraphita, the fair girl was lying on the bearskin, her head resting on her hand, her face calm, her eyes shining. Wilfrid gazed at her in silence, but his features expressed respectful awe, and he looked at her timidly.

"Yes, dear one," said he at last, as if answering a question, "whole worlds divide us! I submit; I can only adore you. But what is to become of me thus lonely?"

"Wilfrid, have you not your Minna?"

He hung his head.

"Oh, do not be so scornful! a woman can understand everything by love. When she fails to understand, she feels; when she cannot feel, she sees; when she can neither see, nor feel, nor understand—well, that angel of earth divines your need, to protect you and to hide her protection under the grace of love."

"Seraphita, am I worthy to love a woman?"

"You are suddenly grown very modest! Is this a snare? A woman is always so much touched to find her weakness glorified!—Well, the evening after to-morrow, come to tea. You will find our good Pastor Becker, and you will see Minna, the most guileless creature I ever knew in this world. —Now leave me, my friend; I must say long prayers this evening in expiation of my sins."

"How can you sin?"

"My poor, dear friend, is not the abuse of power the sin of pride? I have been, I think, too arrogant to-day.—Now go. Till to-morrow."

"Till to-morrow!" Wilfrid feebly echoed, with a long

look at the being of whom he desired to carry away an indelible memory.

Though he meant to leave, he remained standing for some moments outside, looking at the lights that beamed from the windows of the Swedish Castle.

"What was it that I saw?" he asked himself. "No, it was not a single being, but a whole creation. I retain, of that world seen through veils and mists, a ringing echo like the remembrance of departed pain, or like the dizziness caused by dreams in which we hear the moaning of past generations mingling with the harmonious voices of higher spheres, where all is light and love. Am I awake? Do I still slumber? Have I not yet opened my sleeping eyes, those eyes before whose sight luminous spaces stretch into infinitude, eyes that can discern those spaces?—In spite of the night and the cold, my head is still on fire. I will go to the manse. Between the pastor and his daughter I may recover my balance."

But he did not yet leave the spot whence he could see into Seraphita's sitting-room. This mysterious being seemed to be the radiant center of a circle which formed an atmosphere about her rarer than that which surrounds others; he who came within it found himself involved in a vortex of light and of consuming thoughts. Wilfrid, obliged to struggle against this inexplicable force, did not triumph without considerable efforts; but when he had got out of the precincts of the house, he recovered his freedom of will, walked quickly to the parsonage, and presently found himself under the lofty wooden porch that served as an entrance hall to Pastor Becker's house. He pushed open the first door, packed with birch bark, against which the snow had drifted, and knocked eagerly at the inner door, saying—

"Will you allow me to spend the evening with you, Pastor Becker?"

"Yes," was the answer in two voices speaking as one.

On entering the parlor, Wilfrid was gradually brought back to real life. He bowed very cordially to Minna, shook hands with the minister, and then looked about him on a scene which soothed the excitement of his physical nature, in which a process was going on resembling that which some-

times takes place in men accustomed to long contemplation. When some powerful conception carries away a man of science or a poet on its chimera-like wings, and isolates him from the external surroundings that hedge him in on earth, soaring with him through those boundless regions where vast masses of fact appear as abstractions and the most stupendous works of nature seem but images, woe to him if some sudden noise rouses his senses and recalls his wandering soul to its prison of bone and flesh! The collision of the two powers: body and spirit, one of which has something of the invisible element of lightning; while the other, like all tangible forms, has a certain soft resistancy which for the moment defies destruction—this collision, or, to be accurate, this terrible reunion, gives rise to unspeakable suffering. The body has cried out for the fire that consumes it, and the flame has recaptured its prey. But this fusion cannot take place without the ebullition, the crepitation and convulsions, of which chemistry affords visible examples when two hostile elements are sundered that have been joined by its act.

For some days past, whenever Wilfrid went to Seraphita's house, his body there fell into an abyss. By a single look this wonderful creature translated him in the spirit to the sphere whither meditation carries the learned, whither prayer transports the pious soul, whither his eye can carry the artist, and sleep can waft some dreamers; for each there is a call bidding him to that empyrean void, for each a guide to lead him there—for all there is anguish in the return. There alone is the veil rent, there alone is Revelation seen without disguise—an ardent and awful disclosure of the unknown sphere of which the soul brings back naught but fragments. To Wilfrid, an hour spent with Seraphita was often like the dream so dear to the opium eater, in which each nerve-fiber becomes the focus of radiating rapture. He came away exhausted, like a girl who should try to keep up with the pace of a giant.

The sharp, punishing cold began to subdue the agony of trepidation caused by the re-amalgamation of the two elements in his nature thus violently wrenched asunder; then

he always made his way to the manse, attracted to Minna by his thirst for the scenes of homely life, as a European traveler thirsts for his native land when homesickness seizes him in the midst of the fairy splendors that tempted him to the East.

At this moment the visitor, more exhausted than he had ever been before, dropped into a chair and looked about him for some minutes, like a man aroused from sleep. Pastor Becker and his daughter, accustomed no doubt to their guest's eccentricity, went on with their occupations.

The room was decorated with a collection of Norwegian insects and shells. These curiosities, ingeniously arranged on the background of yellow pinewood with which the wall was wainscoted, formed a colored ornamentation to which tobacco smoke had imparted a soberer tone. At the further end, opposite the door, was an enormous wrought-iron stove, carefully rubbed by the maid-servant till it shone like polished steel.

Pastor Becker was seated in a large armchair, covered with worsted work, near the stove and in front of a table, his feet in a foot-muff, while he read from a folio supported on other books to form a sort of desk. On his right stood a beer-jug and a glass; on his left a smoky lamp fed with fish oil. The minister was a man of about sixty years; his face of the type so often painted by Rembrandt: the small, keen eyes set in circles of fine wrinkles under thick grizzled brows; white hair falling in two silky locks from beneath a black velvet cap; a broad, bald forehead, and the shape of face which a heavy chin made almost square, and, added to this, the self-possessed calm that betrays to the observer some conscious power—the sovereignty conferred by wealth, by the judicial authority of burgomaster, by the conviction of Art, or the stolid tenacity of happy ignorance. The handsome old man, whose substantial build revealed sound health, was wrapped in a dressing-gown of rough cloth with no ornament but the binding. He gravely held a long meerschaum pipe in his mouth, blowing off the tobacco smoke at regular intervals, and watching its fantastic spirals with a speculative eye, while endeavoring, no doubt, to assimilate

and digest by meditation the ideas of the author whose works he was studying.

On the other side of the stove, near the door that led into the kitchen, Minna was dimly visible through the fog of smoke, to which she seemed to be inured. In front of her, on a small table, were the various implements of a needle-woman; a pile of towels and stockings to be mended, and a lamp like that which shone on the white pages of the book in which her father seemed to be absorbed. Her fresh, young face, delicately pure in outline, harmonized with the innocence that shone on her white brow, and in her bright eyes. She sat forward on her chair, leaning a little towards the light to see the better, unconsciously showing the grace of her figure. She was already dressed for the evening in a white calico wrapper; a plain, cambric cap, with no ornament but its frill, covered her hair. Though lost in some secret meditation, she counted without mistake the threads in the towel, or the stitches in her stocking. Thus she presented the most complete and typical image of woman born to earthly duties, whose eye might pierce the clouds of the sanctuary, while a mind at once humble and charitable kept her on the level of man. Wilfrid, from his armchair between the two tables, contemplated the harmonious picture with a sort of rapture; the clouds of smoke were not out of keeping.

The single window which gave light to the room in the summer was now carefully closed. For a curtain, an old piece of tapestry hung from a rod in heavy folds. There was no attempt at the picturesque or showy—austere simplicity, genuine homeliness, the unpretentiousness of nature, all the habits of domestic life free from troubles and anxieties. Many dwellings leave the impression of a dream; the dazzling flash of transient pleasure seems to hide a ruin under the chill smile of luxury, but this parlor was sublimely real, harmonious in color, and apt to suggest patriarchal ideas of a busy and devout life.

The silence was broken only by the heavy step of the maid preparing the supper, and by the singing in the pan of the dried fish she was frying in salt butter, after the fashion of the country.

"Will you smoke a pipe?" said the pastor presently, when he thought that Wilfrid would heed him.

"No, thank you, dear Pastor Becker," he replied.

"You seem less well than usual this evening," said Minna, struck by the visitor's weak voice.

"I am always so when I have been to the Castle."

Minna was startled.

"A strange creature dwells there, Pastor Becker," he went on after a pause. "I have been six months in the village, and have never dared to question you about her; and to-night I have to do violence to my feelings even to speak of her. At first I greatly regretted to find my travels interrupted by the winter, and to be obliged to remain here; for the last two months, however, the chains binding me to Jarvis have been more closely riveted, and I fear I may end my days here.—You know how I first met Seraphita, and the impression made on me by her eyes and her voice, and how at last I was admitted to visit her though she receives nobody. On the very first day, I came to you for information concerning that mysterious creature. Then began for me the series of enchantments——"

"Of enchantments?" exclaimed the pastor, shaking out the ashes of his pipe into a coarse pan of sand that served him as a spittoon. "Are enchantments possible?"

"You, certainly, who at this very moment are so conscientiously studying Jean Wier's book of *Incantations*, will understand the account I can give you of my sensations," Wilfrid replied quickly. "If we study nature attentively, alike in its great revolutions and in its minutest works, it is impossible not to admit the possibility of enchantment—giving the word its fullest meaning. Man can create no force; he can but use the only existing force, which includes all others, namely, Motion—the incomprehensible Breath of the Sovereign Maker of the Universe. The elements are too completely separated for the hand of man to combine them; the only miracle he can work consists in the mingling of two hostile substances. Even so, gunpowder is akin to thunder!

"As to effecting an act of creation, and that suddenly!—

All creation needs time, and time will neither hurry nor turn backwards at our bidding. Hence, outside us, plastic nature obeys laws whose order and procedure cannot be reversed by any human effort.

"But after conceding this to mere matter, it would be unreasonable to deny the existence, within us, of a vast power, of which the effects are so infinitely various that past generations have not yet completely classified them. I will say nothing of man's faculty of abstracting his mind, of comprehending nature in the limits of speech, a stupendous fact, of which common minds think no more than they think out the act of motion, but which led Indian Theosophists to speak of creation by the Word, to which they also attributed the contrary power. The tiniest item of their daily food—a grain of rice, whence proceeds a whole creature, which presently results in a grain of rice again—afforded them so complete a symbol of the creative Word and the synthetical Word, that it seemed a simple matter to apply the system to the creation of worlds.

"Most men would do well to be content with the grain of rice that lies at the origin of every genesis. Saint John, when he said that the Word was in God, only complicated the difficulty.

"But the fruition, the germination, and the blossoming of our ideas is but a trifle if we compare this property, which is distributed among so many men, with the wholly personal faculty of communicating to it certain more or less efficient forces by means of concentration, and thus raising it to the third, ninth, or twenty-seventh power, giving it a hold on masses, and obtaining magical results by concentrating the action of nature. What I call enchantments are the stupendous dramas played out between two membranes on the canvas of the brain. In the unexplored realms of the spiritual world we meet with certain beings armed with these astounding faculties—comparable only to the terrible powers of gases in the physical world—beings who can combine with other beings, can enter into them as an active cause, and work magic in them, against which their hapless victims are defenseless; they cast a spell on them, override them, reduce

them to wretched serfdom, and crush them with the weight and magnificent sway of a superior nature; acting, now like the gymnotus which electrifies and numbs the fisherman; now, again, like a dose of phosphorus which intensifies the sense of life or hastens its projection; sometimes like opium, which lulls corporeal nature, frees the spirit from its bondage, sends it soaring above the world, shows it the universe through a prism, and extracts for it the nourishment that best pleases it; and sometimes like catalepsy, which annuls every faculty to enhance a single vision.

"Miracles, spells, incantations, witchcrafts, in short all the facts that are incorrectly called supernatural, can only be possible and accounted for by the authority with which some other mind compels us to accept the effects of a mysterious law of optics which magnifies, or diminishes, or exalts creation, enables it to move within us independently of our will, distorts or embellishes it, snatches us up to heaven, or plunges us into hell—the two terms by which we express the excess of rapture or of pain. These phenomena are within us, not outside us.

"The being we call Seraphita seems to me to be one of those rare and awe-inspiring spirits to whom it is given to constrain men, to coerce nature, and share the occult powers of God. The course of her enchantments on me began by her compelling me to silence. Every time I dared wish to question you about her, it seemed to me that I was about to reveal a secret of which I was bound to be the impeccable guardian; whenever I was about to speak, a burning seal was set on my lips, and I was the involuntary slave of this mysterious prohibition. You see me now, for the hundredth time, crushed, broken, by having played with the world of hallucinations that dwells in that young thing, to you so gentle and frail, to me the most ruthless magician. Yes—to me she is a sorceress who bears in her right hand an invisible instrument to stir the world with, and in her left the thunderbolt that dissolves everything at her command. In short, I can no longer behold her face; it is unendurably dazzling.

"I have for the last few days been wandering round this

abyss of madness too helplessly to keep silence any longer. I have, therefore, seized a moment when I find courage enough to resist the monster that drags me to her presence without asking whether I have strength enough to keep up with his flight.—Who is she? Did you know her as a child? Was she ever born? Had she parents? Was she conceived by the union of sun and ice?—She freezes and she burns; she comes forth and then vanishes like some coy truth; she attracts and repels me; she alternately kills and vivifies me; I love her and I hate her!—I cannot live thus. I must be either in heaven altogether, or in hell."

Pastor Becker, his refilled pipe in one hand and in the other the stopper, listened to Wilfrid with a mysterious expression, glancing occasionally at his daughter, who seemed to understand this speech, in harmony with the being it referred to. Wilfrid was as splendid as Hamlet struggling against his father's ghost, to whom he speaks when it rises visible to him alone amid the living.

"This is very much the tone of a man in love," said the good man simply.

"In love!" cried Wilfrid, "yes, to ordinary apprehensions; but, my dear Mr. Becker, no words can describe the frenzy with which I rush to meet this wild creature."

"Then you do love her?" said Minna reproachfully.

"Mademoiselle, I endure such strange agitation when I see her, and such deep dejection when I see her not, that in any other man they would be symptoms of love; but love draws two beings ardently together, while between her and me a mysterious gulf constantly yawns, which chills me through when I am in her presence, but of which I cease to be conscious when we are apart. I leave her each time in greater despair; I return each time with greater ardor, like a scientific inquirer seeking for nature's secrets and forever baffled; like a painter who yearns to give life to his canvas, and wrecks himself and every resource of art in the futile attempt."

"Yes, that strikes me as very true," said the girl.

"How should you know, Minna?" asked the old man.

"Ah! father, if you had been with us this morning to

the summit of the Falberg, and had seen her praying, you would not ask me. You would say, as Wilfrid did the first time he saw her in our place of worship, 'She is the Spirit of Prayer!'"

A few moments of silence ensued.

"It is true!" cried Wilfrid. "She has nothing in common with the creatures who writhe in the pits of this world."

"On the Falberg!" the old pastor exclaimed. "How did you manage to get there?"

"I do not know," said Minna. "The expedition is to me now like a dream of which only the remembrance survives. I should not believe in it, perhaps, but for this substantial proof."

She drew the flower from her bosom and showed it to him. They all three fixed their eyes on the pretty saxifrage, still quite fresh, which under the gleam of the lamps shone amid the clouds of smoke like another light.

"This is supernatural," said the old man, seeing a flower in bloom in the winter.

"An abyss!" cried Wilfrid, fevered by the perfume.

"The flower fills me with rapture," said Minna. "I fancy I can still hear his speech, which is the music of the mind, as I still see the light of his gaze, which is love."

"Let me entreat you, my dear Pastor Becker, to relate the life of Seraphita—that enigmatical flower of humanity whose image I see in this mysterious blossom."

"My dear guest," said the minister, blowing a puff of tobacco smoke, "to explain the birth of this being, it will be necessary to disentangle for you the obscurest of all Christian creeds; but it is not easy to be clear when discussing the most incomprehensible of all revelations, the latest flame of faith, they say, that has blazed on our ball of clay.—Do you know anything of Swedenborg?"

"Nothing but his name. Of himself, his writings, his religion, I am wholly ignorant."

"Well, then, I will tell you all about Swedenborg."

III

SERAPHITA—SERAPHITUS

After a pause, while the pastor seemed to be collecting his thoughts, he went on as follows:—

"Emanuel von Swedenborg was born at Upsala, in Sweden, in the month of January 1688, as some authors say, or, according to his epitaph, in 1689. His father was Bishop of Skara. Swedenborg lived to the age of eighty-five, and died in London on the 29th March 1772. I use the word 'died' to express a change of condition only. According to his disciples, Swedenborg has been at Jarvis and in Paris since that time.—Permit me, my dear friend," said the pastor, with a gesture to check interruption, "I am relating the tale without affirming or denying the facts. Listen, and when I have done you can think what you choose. I will warn you when I myself judge, criticise, or dispute the doctrines, so as to show my intellectual neutrality between reason and the man himself.

"Emanuel Swedenborg's life was divided into two distinct phases," Becker went on. "From 1688 till 1745 Baron Emanuel von Swedenborg was known in the world as a man of vast learning, esteemed and beloved for his virtues, always blameless, and invariably helpful. While filling important public posts in Sweden, he published, between 1709 and 1740, several important books on mineralogy, physics, mathematics, and astronomy which were of value in the scientific world. He invented a method of constructing docks to receive vessels; he treated many very important questions, from the height of the flood-tide to the position of the earth in space. He discovered the way to construct more efficient locks on canals, as well as simpler methods for the smelting of metals. In short, he never took up a science without advancing it.

"In his youth he studied Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and the Oriental languages, and became so familiar with these tongues that several celebrated professors constantly con-

sulted him, and he was enabled to discover in Tartary some traces of the earliest book of God's Word, called the *Book of the Wars of Jehovah*, and of the Judgments mentioned by Moses (Numbers xxi. 14, 15), by Joshua, Jeremiah, and Samuel. The wars of the Lord are said to be the historical portion, and the Judgments the prophetic portion, of this book, written prior to *Genesis*. Swedenborg even asserted that the Book of Jasher, or of the Upright, mentioned by Joshua, existed in eastern Tartary with the worship by Correspondences. A Frenchman, I have been told, has recently confirmed Swedenborg's anticipations by announcing the discovery at Bagdad of several parts of the Bible unknown in Europe.

"In 1785, on the occasion of the discussion on animal magnetism started in Paris, and raised almost throughout Europe, in which most men of science took an eager part, M. de Thomé defended Swedenborg's memory in a reply to the assertions so rashly made by the Commissioners appointed by the King of France to inquire into this subject. These gentlemen stated that there was no theory accounting for the action of the lodestone, whereas Swedenborg had made it his study so early as in 1720. M. de Thomé took the opportunity to point out the reasons for the neglect in which the most celebrated savants had left the name of the learned Swede, so as to be free to plunder his volumes and use his treasures in their own works. 'Some of the most illustrious,' said M. de Thomé, alluding to Buffon's *Theory of the Earth*, 'are mean enough to dress in the peacock's plumage without giving him the credit.' Finally, by several convincing quotations from Swedenborg's encyclopedic writings, he proved that this great prophet had outstripped by many centuries the slow progress of human learning; and, indeed, to read his works is enough to carry conviction on this point.

"In one passage he is the precursor of the present system of chemistry, announcing that the products of organic nature can all be decomposed and resolved into two pure elements; that water, air, and fire are not elements; in another he goes in a few words to the heart of magnetic mystery,

and thus anticipates Mesmer.—In short," said the minister, pointing to a long shelf between the stove and the window, on which were books of various sizes, " there are seventeen works by him; one of them, published in 1734, *Studies in Philosophy and Mineralogy,* consists of three folio volumes.

" These books, which bear witness to Swedenborg's practical knowledge, were given to me by Baron Seraphitus, his cousin, and Seraphita's father.

" In 1740 Swedenborg sank into complete silence, never relaxing it excepting to renounce temporal studies and to think exclusively of the spiritual world.

" He received his first commands from heaven in 1745. This is how he relates his call:—

" ' One evening, in London, after he had dined, eating heartily, a thick mist filled the room. When the darkness cleared away, a being that had assumed a human form rose up in a corner of the room and said in a terrible voice, " Do not eat so much." He then fasted completely. Next evening the same man was visible, radiant with light, and said to him—

" ' " I am sent by God, who has chosen thee to set forth to men the meaning of His word and His creation. I will dictate what thou shalt write." '

" The vision lasted but a few minutes. The angel, he said, was clad in purple.

" During that night the eyes of his *inner man* were opened and enabled to see into the heavens, into the world of spirits, and into hell, three different circles, where he met persons he had known who had perished from their human state, some long ago, and some quite recently. From that time Swedenborg always lived the spiritual life, and remained in this world as a being sent from God.

" Though his mission was disputed by the incredulous, his conduct was visibly that of a being superior to human weakness. In the first instance, though limited by his means to the strictest necessaries, he gave away immense sums, and was known to be the means of restoring, in various commercial towns, some great houses of business that had

failed, or were failing. No one who appealed to his generosity went away without being helped on the spot. An incredulous Englishman, going in search of him, met him in Paris, and he has recorded that Swedenborg's doors were always left open. One day his servant complained of this neglect, which exposed him to suspicion if his master should be robbed.

" 'Let him make his mind easy,' said Swedenborg, smiling; 'I forgive him want of faith; he cannot see the guardian who keeps watch before my door.'

" And, in fact, in whatever country he might he living, his doors were never shut, and he never lost anything.

" When he was at Gothenburg, a town sixty miles away from Stockholm, three days before the news arrived of the great fire that raged at Stockholm, he had announced the hour at which it had begun, adding that his house was unharmed—which was true.

" The Queen of Sweden, when at Berlin, told the King, her brother, that one of her ladies being summonsed to repay a sum of money which she knew that her husband had returned before his death, being unable to find the receipt, had gone to Swedenborg and begged him to inquire of her husband where the proof of payment could be. On the following day Swedenborg told her the place where the receipt was; then, in accordance with the lady's desire, he called upon the dead man to appear to his wife, and she saw her husband, in a dream, in the dressing-gown he had worn before his death, and he showed her the document in the place mentioned by Swedenborg, where in fact it lay hidden.

" One day, on sailing from London in the ship of a Captain Dixon, he heard a lady asking if there were a good stock of provisions on board.

" 'You will not need a very large quantity,' said he. 'In a week, at two o'clock, we shall be in the port of Stockholm,' and it was so.

" The state of second sight, into which Swedenborg could pass at will in relation to earthly things, astonishing as

it was to all who knew him, by its marvelous results, was no more than a weaker development of his power of seeing into the skies.

"Of all his visions, those in which he traveled to other astral worlds are not the least curious, and his descriptions are no doubt surprisingly artless in their details. A man whose great scientific acquirements are beyond question, who combined in his brain conception, will, and imagination, would certainly have invented something better if he had invented at all. Nor does the fantastic literature of the East contain anything that can have suggested the idea of this bewildering narrative full of poetic germs, if we may compare a work of faith to the writings of Arab fancy.

"The account of his being snatched up by the angel who guided him in his first voyage is sublime to a degree as far beyond the poems of Klopstock, Milton, Tasso, and Dante, as the earth, by God's will, is from the sun. This chapter, which forms the introduction to his *Treatise on the Astral Worlds*, has never been published; it remains among the oral traditions left by Swedenborg to the three disciples who were dearest to him. M. Silverichm has it in writing. Baron Seraphitus sometimes tried to tell me of it; but his memory of his cousin was so vivid that he stopped after a few words, and fell into a reverie from which nothing could rouse him.

"The discourse in which the angel proved to Swedenborg that those planets are not created to wander uninhabited, crushes all human science, the Baron assured me, under the grandeur of its divine logic.

"According to the Seer, the inhabitants of Jupiter do not affect the sciences, which they call Shades; those of Mercury object to the expression of ideas by words, which they think too material, and they have a language of the eye; those of Saturn are persistently tormented by evil spirits; those of the Moon are as small as children of six years old, their voice proceeds from the stomach, and they creep about; those of Venus are of gigantic stature, but very stupid, and live by robbery; part of that planet, however, is inhabited by beings of great gentleness, who live

loving to do good. Finally, he describes the customs of the people who dwell on those globes, and gives an account of the general purpose of their existence as part of the universe in terms so precise, adding explanations which agree so well with the effects of their apparent motion in the system of the universe, that some day, perhaps, scientific men will drink of these luminous founts. Here," said the pastor, taking down a volume and opening it at a page where a marker was placed, "these are the words which conclude this great work: 'If anyone should doubt my having been transported to so many astral earths, let him remember my remarks as to distances in the other life. They exist only in relation to the external form of man; now I, having been inwardly constituted like the angelic spirits of those globes, have been enabled to know them.'

"The circumstances to which we owed the residence in this district of Baron Seraphitus, Swedenborg's dearly loved cousin, made me intimately familiar with every fact of the life of that extraordinary man.

"Not long since he was accused of imposture in some European newspapers, which reported the following facts as related in a letter from the Chevalier Beylon. Swedenborg, 'informed,' it was said, 'by some senators of a secret correspondence between the late Queen of Sweden and her brother, the Prince of Prussia, revealed the contents to that Princess, leaving her to believe that he had acquired the information by supernatural means. A man of the highest credit, M. Charles-Léonard von Stahlhammer, Captain of the King's Guard and Knight of the Sword, refuted this calumny in a letter.'"

The pastor hunted through some papers in his table-drawer, found a newspaper, and handed it to Wilfrid, who read aloud the following letter:—

"STOCKHOLM, *May* 13, 1788.

"I have read with astonishment the letter reporting the interview between the famous Swedenborg and Queen Louisa-Ulrica. All the circumstances are falsified; and I hope the writer will pardon me if I show him how greatly he is

mistaken, by giving here an exact account, of which the truth can be attested by several personages of distinction who were present, and who are still living.

"In 1758, not long after the Prince of Prussia's death, Swedenborg came to Court; he was in the habit of doing so very regularly. No sooner did the Queen see him than she asked, 'By the way, Baron Assessor, have you seen my brother?' Swedenborg said he had not, and the Queen replied, 'If you should see him, greet him from me.'

"She had no idea in saying this but of a jest; it did not occur to her to ask for any information concerning her brother.

"A week later—not twenty-four days, nor for a private audience—Swedenborg came again, but so early that the Queen had not yet left her own apartment, known as the white room, where she was chatting with her ladies of honor and other ladies about the Court. Swedenborg did not wait for the Queen to come out. He went into her private room and spoke in her ear. The Queen, quite astounded, turned faint, and it took some time to revive her. When she had recovered herself, she said to those about her, 'God alone and my brother could know what he has just told me!' And she said he had spoken of her last correspondence with the Prince, of which the subject had been known to themselves only.

"I cannot explain how Swedenborg gained his knowledge of this secret; but what I can aver on my honor is that neither Count H——, as the author of the letter states, nor anyone else, had intercepted or read the Queen's letters. The Senate had at that time allowed her to write to her brother in the strictest confidence, regarding the correspondence as a matter perfectly indifferent to the State. It is evident that the writer of that letter knew nothing of Count H——'s character. That distinguished gentleman, who did his country important service, combines with intellectual talent fine qualities of the heart, and his advanced years have not deteriorated his noble gifts. Throughout his official career he has been equally remarkable for enlightened political views and the most scrupulous integrity, and he was always

the declared enemy of secret intrigues and covert devices, which he regarded as the basest means to any end.

"Nor did the writer know Swedenborg the Assessor; the only weak point in this thoroughly honest man was his belief in apparitions and spirits; but I knew him for a long time, and I can positively state that he was as well assured that he certainly did talk and mingle with spirits as I am at this moment of writing these lines. As a citizen and as a friend, he was a man of absolute integrity, with a horror of imposture, and he led an exemplary life.

"Hence the account given of the incident by the Chevalier de Beylon is without foundation; and the visit said to have been paid to Swedenborg, at night, by Counts H—— and T—— is a pure invention.

"The writer of the letter may rest assured that I am anything rather than a follower of Swedenborg; nothing but the love of truth has moved me to relate with accuracy a fact that has often been told with details that are incorrect; and I affirm what I have here written to be the truth, and sign it with my name."

"The proofs of his mission given by Swedenborg to the families of Prussia and Sweden no doubt formed a basis for the belief he inspired in several personages of the two Courts," the pastor went on, replacing the newspaper in his drawer. "At the same time, I cannot tell you all the facts of his material and visible life; his habits precluded their being exactly known. He lived in strict retirement, never trying to grow rich or to rise to fame. He was even remarkable for a sort of repugnance to proselytizing; he spoke freely to very few persons, and never communicated those gifts but to those who were conspicuous for faith, wisdom, and love. He could read at a glance the frame of mind in which each one approached him, and could make seers of those whom he desired to touch with his inward Word.

"After the year 1745 his disciples never saw him do a single thing from a merely human motive.

"One man only, a Swedish priest named Matthésius,

accused him of madness. By a singular coincidence this Matthésius, the enemy of Swedenborg and his writings, went mad not long after, and was living a few years since at Stockholm on a pension allowed him by the King of Sweden.

"A discourse in honor of Swedenborg was composed with great care as to the details of his life, and read at a general meeting in the Hall of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Stockholm, by M. de Sandel, Councilor to the College of Mines, in 1786. Finally, a deposition laid before the Lord Mayor of London testifies to the smallest circumstances of Swedenborg's last illness and death under the ministrations of Pastor Férélius, a Swedish ecclesiastic of the highest respectability. The persons attesting declared that, far from recanting, Swedenborg always averred the truth of his writings.

"'In a hundred years' time,' said he, 'my doctrines will govern the Church.'

"He foretold very precisely the day and hour of his death. On that day, Sunday, March 29, 1772, he asked what o'clock it was.

"'Five o'clock,' was the answer.

"'It is all over,' said he. 'God bless you!'

"And ten minutes after he died quite calmly with a gentle sigh. Thus, moderation, simplicity, and solitude were the features of his life.

"Whenever he had finished writing a treatise, he took ship to have it printed in London or in Holland, and never talked about it. He thus published twenty-seven works in all, written, as he declared, at the dictation of angels. Whether or no this be true, few men are capable of enduring this flaming language.

"Here they all are," said the minister, pointing to an upper shelf on which stood about sixty volumes. "The seven books on which the Spirit of God has shed its brightest light are:—*The Delights of Wisdom in Conjugal Love; Heaven and Hell; The Apocalypse Explained; An Exposition of the Inward Sense; On the Divine Love; The True Christian Religion; The Angelic Wisdom of the Omnipotence, Omnisci-*

ence, and Omnipresence of those who share the Eternity and Immensity of God.

"His explanation of the *Apocalypse* begins with these words," said the pastor, opening the volume that was lying near him: "'Herein I have written nothing of my own; I have spoken at the bidding of the Lord, who said to John, by the same angel, "Thou shalt not seal the words of this prophecy."'

"My dear sir," the good man went on, looking at Wilfrid, "many a winter night have I quaked in every limb while reading the tremendous works in which this man sets forth the greatest marvels in perfect good faith.

"'I have seen,' says he, 'the heavens and the angels. The spiritual man sees spiritual man far more clearly than the earthly man sees earthly man. I obey the command of the Lord who hath given it to me to do. Men are free not to believe me; I cannot put others into the state into which God hath put me. It is not in my power to make them hold conversation with the angels, nor to work a miracle in predisposing their understanding; they themselves must be the agents of their angelical exaltation. For twenty-eight years now I have dwelt in the spiritual world with the angels, and yet on earth with men; for it hath pleased the Lord to open the eyes of my spirit as he opened the eyes of Paul, of Daniel, and of Elisha.'

"Certain persons, however, have had visions of the spiritual world through the complete severance of their external body and their inner man by somnambulism. In that state, Swedenborg tells us in his *Treatise on Angelic Wisdom*, man may be raised to celestial light, because, the physical senses being in abeyance, heavenly influences act on the inner man without interference.

"A good many persons who do not doubt that Swedenborg had celestial revelations, still do not regard all his writings as equally stamped with divine inspiration. Others insist on a complete acceptance of Swedenborg, while confessing his obscurities; but they think that it was the imperfection of earthly language that hindered the prophet in expressing his spiritual visions, so that such obscurities disappear before

the eyes of those who are regenerate by faith; to use a striking expression of his favorite disciple's, the flesh is begotten externally.

"To poets and writers he is infinitely marvelous; to seers it is all absolute truth. His descriptions have been a matter of scandal to some Christians; critics have laughed at the 'celestial substance' of his temples, his golden palaces, his magnificent mansions where angels flutter and play; others have ridiculed his groves of mystical trees, and gardens where flowers have speech, where the air is white, and mystical gems—sardonyx, carbuncle, chrysolite, chrysoprase, cyanite, chalcedony, and beryl, the Urim and Thummim—are endowed with motion, express celestial truths, and may be questioned, since they reply by variations of light (*True Religion*, 217, 218). Some very good men will not recognize his worlds where colors are heard in delicious concerts, where words are flames, and the Word is written in inflected letters (*True Religion*, 278). Even in the North some writers have made fun of his gates of pearl, of the diamonds with which the houses of his New Jerusalem are paved and furnished, where the humblest utensils are made of the rarest materials.

"'But,' his disciples argue, 'though such substances are sparely distributed in this world, is that any reason why they should not be abundant in another? On earth they are but earthly, while in heaven they are seen under celestial aspects in relation to the angelic state.' And Swedenborg would quote on such points the great words of Jesus Christ, 'If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?' (John iii. 12).

"I, sir, have read Swedenborg from beginning to end," the pastor went on, with an emphatic gesture. "I may say it with pride, since I have preserved my reason. As you read you must either lose your wits or become a seer. Though I have escaped both forms of madness, I have often felt unknown raptures, deep amazement, inward joy such as can only come of the fullness of truth, the evidence of heavenly illumination. Everything here below shrinks, dwindles, as the soul studies the burning pages of those writings. It is impossible not to be struck with astonishment on reflecting that

within the space of thirty years this man published twenty-five quarto volumes on the truths of the spiritual world, written in Latin, the shortest containing five hundred pages, and all in small print. He left twenty more, it is said, in London, in the care of his nephew, M. Silverichm, formerly chaplain to the King of Sweden. Certainly the man who, between twenty and sixty, spent himself in publishing a sort of encyclopedia, must have had supernatural help to enable him to compose these prodigious treatises, at an age when the powers of man are beginning to fail.

"In these works there are thousands of propositions, all numbered, none of them contradictory. Method, preciseness, and a collected mind are everywhere conspicuous, all based on the one fact of the existence of angels. His *True Religion*, in which his whole dogma is summed up, is a work of powerful lucidity, and was conceived and carried out when he was eighty-three years of age. His ubiquity, his omniscience, have indeed never been disproved by his critics or his enemies.

"Nevertheless, even when I was soaked, so to speak, in this torrent of celestial illumination, God did not open my inward eye; I judged of these writings by the reason of an unregenerate man. I have often been of opinion that Swedenborg, the *inspired*, must have misunderstood the angels. I laughed at many visions, which, according to the seers, I ought reverently to believe in. I could not, for instance, appreciate the inflected writing of the angels, nor their belts of thicker or thinner gold. Though the statement, 'There are solitary angels,' at first struck me as singularly pathetic, I could not reconcile this loneliness with their manner of marriage. I did not see why the Virgin Mary should wear white satin robes in heaven. I dared question why the giant demons Enakim and Hephilim came again and again to fight with the Cherubim in the Apocalyptic fields of Armageddon. I fail to see how the Satanic and heavenly angels can still hold discussions. Baron Seraphitus replied to me that these details referred to the angels who are yet on earth in human form.

"The visions of the Swedish prophet are often disfigured

by grotesque touches. One of his *Memorabilia*—the name he gives them—begins with these words: 'I saw the spirits met together, and they had hats on their heads.' In another of these *Memorabilia* he received from heaven a small paper on which, he says, he saw the letters used by primitive races, composed of curved lines with little rings curling upwards. For clearer proof of this communication from heaven I should have liked him to deposit this document with the Royal Academy of Sciences at Stockholm.

"After all, I may be wrong; the material absurdities that are scattered throughout his works have spiritual meanings perhaps. Otherwise, how can we account for the growing influence of his doctrine? His followers now number more than seven hundred thousand souls, partly in the United States of America, where many sects have joined them in a body, and partly in England, where there are seven thousand Swedenborgians in the city of Manchester alone. Men no less distinguished by their learning than by their worldly rank—some in Germany, and some in Prussia and the North—have publicly adopted Swedenborg's beliefs, which indeed are more consolatory than those of many another Christian communion.

"I should now like to expound to you in a few short words the capital points of the doctrines set forth by Swedenborg to his Church; but such an abridgment, from memory, would necessarily be defective. I can, therefore, only enlarge on the arcana connected with the birth of Seraphita."

Here the pastor paused while meditating apparently to collect his reminiscences, and then he went on:—

"Having proved mathematically that man shall live forever in an upper or a lower sphere, Swedenborg gives the title of angelic spirits to such beings as, in this world, are prepared for heaven, where they become angels. According to him, God did not create angels independently; there are none but those who have been human beings on earth. Thus the earth is the nursery ground for heaven. The angels are not angels by original nature; they are transformed into angels by an intimate union with God which

God never refuses, the very essence of God being never negative, but always active (*Angelic Wisdom*).

"Angelic spirits, then, go through three natures of love, for man can only be regenerate by stages (*True Religion*). First, love of self: the supreme expression of it is human genius, of which the works are worshiped. Next, love of the world at large, which produces prophets and those great men whom the earth accepts as guides, and hails as divine. Finally, love of heaven, which forms angelic spirits. These spirits are, so to speak, the flowers of humanity, which is epitomized, and strives to be epitomized, in them. They must have either the love or the wisdom of heaven; but they must dwell in that love before they dwell in wisdom. Thus the first transformation of man is to love. To achieve this first grade, in his previous existences he must have gone through hope and charity, which engender in him the gifts of faith and prayer. The ideas gained by the exercise of these virtues are transmitted to each new human embodiment within which the metamorphoses of the inner man are hidden. Nothing avails separately; hope is inseparable from charity, faith from prayer; the four faces of this figure are equally important. 'For lack of one virtue,' says he, 'the angelic spirit is as a flawed pearl.' Thus each existence is a sphere into which are absorbed the celestial treasures of the former one. The great perfection of the angelic spirits comes of this mysterious progress, by which nothing is lost of the qualities successively acquired till they attain to their most glorious incarnation; for, at every fresh transformation, they unconsciously lose something of the flesh and its works.

"When he lives in love man has thrown off all his evil passions; hope, charity, faith, and prayer have, to use the word of Isaiah, *winnowed* his inner man, which must no longer be polluted by any earthly affection. Hence the great lesson in Saint Luke, 'Provide yourselves a treasure in the heavens that faileth not,' and the teaching of Jesus Christ that we should leave this world to men, for it is theirs, and purify ourselves and go to the Father.

"The second transformation is to wisdom. Wisdom is that apprehension of heavenly things to which the spirit

rises through love. The spirit of love has triumphed over force; as a result of having conquered every earthly passion, he loves God blindly; but the spirit of wisdom has intelligence and knowledge of why he loves. The wings of the first are spread and bear him up to God; the wings of the second are folded in awe derived from knowledge: he knows God. One incessantly desires to see God, and soars up to Him; the other stands near to Him and trembles.

"The union of a spirit of love with a spirit of wisdom lifts the creature into the divine state in which the soul is woman and the body man—the final expression of humanity, in which the spirit is supreme over the form, and the form still contends with the divine spirit; for the form, which is the flesh, is ignorant and rebellious, and would fain remain gross. It is this supreme conflict which gives rise to the inexpressible anguish which the heavens alone can see, and which Christ endured in the Garden of Olives. After death, the first heaven opens to receive this purified compound human nature. Thus men die in despair, while spirits die in ecstasy. Hence the natural state, in which are all unregenerate beings; the spiritual state, in which are the angelic spirits; and the divine state, in which the angel dwells before bursting its husk, are the three degrees of existence by which man attains to heaven.

"A sentence of Swedenborg's will admirably explain to you the difference between the natural and the spiritual states: 'To men,' says he, 'the natural passes into the spiritual; they regard the world under its visible forms, and perceive it in a reality adjusted to their senses. But to the angelic spirit the spiritual passes into the natural; he regards the world in its inmost spirit, not under its outer form.'

"Hence our human sciences are but the analysis of form. The learned of this world are purely superficial, as their knowledge is; their inner man is of no avail except to preserve an aptitude for apprehension and truth. The angelic spirit goes far beyond this. His knowledge is the thought of which human science is the mere utterance; he derives a knowledge of things from the Word by studying the correspondences through which the worlds are harmonized with

the heavens. The Word of God was written entirely by such correspondences; it contains a hidden or spiritual meaning which cannot be understood without the study of correspondences. 'There are,' says Swedenborg (*Celestial Doctrine*), 'innumerable arcana in the inward meaning of the correspondences.'

"Those men who have laughed to scorn the books in which the prophets have treasured the Word, were in such a state cf ignorance as men are in, who, in this world, knowing nothing of a science, mock the truths of that science. To know the correspondences of the Word with heavenly things, to know the correspondences that exist between the visible and ponderable things of the earthly globe and invisible and imponderable things of the spiritual world, is to 'have the heavens in your understanding.'

"Every object of every creation proceeded from the hand of God, and has, therefore, necessarily a hidden meaning, as we see in those grand words of Isaiah, 'The earth is as a garment' (Isaiah li. 6). This mysterious tie between the smallest atoms of matter and the heavens constitutes what Swedenborg calls a *Celestial Arcanum*. Indeed, his *Treatise on the Celestial Arcana*, in which he explains the correspondences or symbolism of the natural and spiritual, containing, as Jacob Boehm has it, the 'sign and sealing of all things,' contains no less than thirteen thousand propositions, filling sixteen volumes. 'This wonderful apprehension of correspondences which the grace of God vouchsafed to Swedenborg,' says one of his disciples, 'is the secret of the interest taken in his works.' According to this commentator, 'everything is derived from heaven, everything returns to heaven. The prophet's words are sublime and lucid; he speaks in the heavens, and is understood on earth. A volume might be written on any one of his phrases.' And, among a thousand others, he quotes this text: 'The realm of heaven,' says Swedenborg (*Arcana Celestia*), 'is the realm of impulsion. Action takes form in heaven, and thence in the world, and by degrees in the minutest details of earthly life; earthly effects being thus continuous with heavenly causes, the result in every case is correspondent and sym-

bolical. Man is the link of union between the Natural and the Spiritual.'

"Angelic spirits, then, inevitably know the correspondences that link each earthly thing to heaven, and they know the inmost sense of the prophetic words which foretell their evolution. Thus, to these spirits everything here below has its hidden meaning. The smallest flower is a thought, a life answering to some feature of the Great Whole, of whom they have a persistent intuition. To them the adulteries and debauchery of which the Scripture and the Prophets speak, and which are often misapprehended by self-styled scribes, signify the state of the souls who in this world persist in debasing themselves with earthly affections, and so confirm their divorce from heaven. Clouds symbolize the veils that shroud God. The candlesticks, the shewbread, the horses and riders, the whores, the jewels,—everything in the Scriptures has for them a super-sensual meaning, and reveals the future of earthly history in its relation to heaven. They can all enter into the truth of the declarations of Saint John, which human science demonstrates, and substantially proves at a later time, such as this, 'pregnant,' says Swedenborg, 'with many human sciences': 'I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away' (Rev. xxi. 1). They know the suppers where 'they eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men,' to which [the fowls] are bidden by an angel standing in the sun (Rev. xix. 17, 18). They see the woman with wings, clothed with the sun, and the man always armed. 'The horse of the Apocalypse,' says Swedenborg, 'is the visible image of the human intellect ridden by death, because it bears in itself the element of its own destruction.' Finally, they recognize the nations hidden under forms which, to the ignorant, seem grotesque.

"When a man is prepared to receive the prophetical insufflation of correspondences, the Spirit of the Word moves within him; he then sees that creations are but transformations; it gives vitality to his intellect, and a burning thirst for truth which can only be quenched in heaven. In propor-

tion to the greater or less perfection of his inner man he can conceive of the power of the angelic spirit; and guided by desire, the least perfect state of unregenerate man, he proceeds to hope, which opens before him the world of spirits, and thence to prayer, which is the key of heaven.

"What human creature could fail to desire to become worthy of passing into the sphere of those intellects that live in secret by love or wisdom? During their life on earth those spirits remain pure; they neither see, nor think, nor speak as other men do.

"There are two modes of perception—the external and the internal. Man is wholly external; the angelic spirit is wholly internal. The spirit penetrates the sense of numbers; it masters them all and knows their meanings. It is lord of motion, and is one with everything by ubiquity: 'One angel is present to another whenever he will,' says the Swedish Seer (*Angelic Wisdom concerning Divine Love*), for he has the power of escaping from the body, and sees the heavens as the prophets saw them, and as Swedenborg himself saw them.

"'In this state,' he says, in the *True Religion*, 'the spirit of a man is borne from one place to another, his body remaining where it is, a state in which I lived for twenty-six years.' This is the meaning to be given to the Bible phrase, 'The Spirit carried me.'

"Angelic wisdom is to human wisdom what the numberless forces of nature are to its action, which is single. Everything lives again, moves, and exists in the spirit, for it is in God, as it is expressed in these words of Saint Paul, *In Deo sumus, movemur et vivimus* (In God we live and move and have our being, Acts xvii. 28). Earth offers no obstacle to it, as the Word offers no difficulties. Its nearness to the divine state enables it to see the thought of God veiled by the Word, just as the spirit dwelling inwardly can communicate with the hidden meaning of all the things of this world. Science is the language of the temporal world; love is that of the spiritual world. Man, indeed, describes more than he explains; while the angelic spirit sees and understands. Science saddens man; love enraptures the

angel; science is still seeking, love has found. Man judges of nature in relation to itself; the angelic spirit judges of it in relation to heaven. In short, to the spirits everything speaks.

"The spirits are in the secret of the reciprocal harmony of creations; they are in accord with the spirit of sounds, with the spirit of colors, with the spirit of vegetable life; they can question minerals, and minerals reply to their thoughts. What, to them, are the learning and the treasures of earth when they can constantly command them by their sight, and when the worlds of which men think so much are for the spirits no more than the topmost step whence they will fly up to God? Heavenly love, or heavenly wisdom, are visibly with them, seen by the elect in a halo of light that envelops them. Their innocence, of which a child's innocence is the external image, has knowledge which children have not; they are innocent, and they know.

"'And,' says Swedenborg, 'the innocence of heaven makes so deep an impression on the soul, that those who enjoy it feel a rapture which goes with them all through life, as I myself have experienced.' 'It is enough, perhaps,' he says elsewhere, 'to have the smallest inkling of it to transform one forever, and, by desiring to go to heaven, to enter into the sphere of hope.'

"His doctrine of marriage may be summed up in a few words:—

"'The Lord took the beauty and grace of man's life and infused them into woman. When man is disunited from this beauty and elegance of life, he is austere, sad, or savage; when he is reunited to them, he is happy, he is complete.'

"The angels are forever in the perfection of beauty. Their marriages take place with miraculous ceremonies. To such a union, from which no children are born, man brings Understanding, woman brings Will; they become one being—one flesh on earth; then, after putting on the heavenly body, they go to heaven. On earth, in the natural state, the mutual affection of the two sexes leads to lust, which is an *effect*, producing fatigue and disgust; but in their heavenly form, the pair, having become one spirit, finds

in itself a cause of perpetual joys. Swedenborg had seen such an union of spirits, who, as Saint Luke has written, 'neither marry nor are given in marriage,' and this union leads to none but spiritual pleasures. An angel offered to take him to witness such a marriage, and bore him away on his wings; the wings are only symbolical, and not an earthly reality. He clothed him in his festal garment; and Swedenborg, seeing himself arrayed in light, asked the reason.

"'On such occasions,' replied the angel, 'our robes light up and shine and are nuptial garments' (*The Delight of Wisdom in Conjugal Love*).

"He then saw two angels who came—one from the South, and the other from the East. The angel from the South rode in a chariot drawn by two white horses, whose reins were of the color and the radiance of the morning; but when they came close to him in heaven, he saw no more of the chariot or horses. The angel from the East, clothed in purple, and the angel from the South, in hyacinth color, rushed together like two breaths of wind, and were one; one was an angel of Love, and the other an angel of Wisdom. Swedenborg's guide told him that on earth these two angels had been bound by an inward sympathy, and constantly united, though divided by space. Consent, which is the essence of happy marriage on earth, is the habitual condition of angels in heaven. Love is the light of their world.

"The perpetual ecstasy of the angels is produced by the faculty, bestowed on them by God, of giving back to Him the joy they have in Him. This reciprocity of the infinite constitutes their life. In heaven they too become infinite by partaking of the essential nature of God, who is self-subsistent. Such is the vastness of the heavens where the angels dwell, that if man were endowed with vision as constantly rapid as the transmission of light from the sun to the earth, and if he gazed through all eternity, his eyes would find no horizon to rest on. Light alone can be an emblem of the joys of heaven. 'It is,' says he (*Angelic Wisdom*), 'an effluence of the virtue of God, a pure emanation from His glory, compared to which our most brilliant

day is dark.' It is omnipotent, it renews everything, and cannot be absorbed; it surrounds the angel, putting him into contact with God by infinite joys which are felt to multiply and reproduce themselves to infinity. This light kills the man who is not prepared to receive it. No one on earth, or indeed in the heavens, can look on God and live. This is why it is written (Exodus xix. 12, 21-23), 'Set bounds unto the people round about [the Mount] . . . lest they break through . . . and many of them perish.' And again (Exodus xxxiv. 29-35), 'When Moses came down with the two tables of testimony, the skin of his face shone, and Moses put a vail upon his face till he had done speaking with the people.' The Transfiguration of Jesus Christ also testifies to the light shed by a messenger from heaven and the extreme joy of the angels in being forever bathed in it. 'His face,' says Saint Matthew (xvii. 2), 'did shine as the sun, and His raiment was as white as the light . . . and a bright cloud overshadowed the disciples.'

"When a planet is inhabited only by beings who reject the Lord and misprize His Word, when the angelic spirits have gathered from the four winds, God sends a destroying angel to alter the whole mass of that rebellious world, which, in the vast spaces of the universe, is to Him what an infertile seed is in the natural world. As he approaches that globe, the destroying angel, riding on a cornet, reverses it on its axis and makes the continents become the bottom of the sea, the highest mountains then are islands, and the lands hitherto covered by the seas reappear in all their freshness, obeying the laws of Genesis; thus the Word of God is in power once more on a new earth, which everywhere shows the effects of terrestrial waters and celestial fires. The light the angel brings down from heaven makes the sun pale. Then, as Isaiah saith (ii. 10, 19), men will enter into the holes of the rocks and hide themselves in the dust. 'They will cry to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the wrath of the Lamb' (Rev. vi. 16). The Lamb is the great emblem of the angels who are unrecognized and persecuted on earth.

"Christ Himself hath said, 'Blessed are they that mourn!

Blessed are the meek! Blessed are the peace-makers.' All Swedenborg is there: Suffer, believe, and love. To love truly, must we not have suffered; must we not believe? Love begets strength, and strength gives wisdom; this is intelligence, for strength and wisdom include will. Is not true intellect composed of knowledge, will, and wisdom, the three attributes of the angelic spirit?

"'If the universe has a meaning, that surely is the worthiest of God,'" said M. Saint-Martin to me when I saw him during his visit to Sweden.

"But," the minister went on, after a pause, "of what value can these shreds be, snatched from a work so vast that the only way to give you an idea of it is to compare it to a river of light, a torrent of flame? When a man plunges into it, he is carried away by an overwhelming flood. Dante Alighieri's poem seems a mere speck to the reader who will dive into the innumerable passages in which Swedenborg has given actuality to the heavenly spheres, just as Beethoven builds up palaces of harmony out of thousands of notes, and architects construct cathedrals of thousands of stones. He flings you up to infinite heights, where your mind sometimes fails to bear you up. It is necessary certainly to have a powerful brain if you are to come back sane and safe to our social notions.

"Swedenborg was especially attached to Baron Seraphitz, whose name, according to an old Swedish custom, had from time immemorial taken the Latin suffix *us*. The Baron was the Swedish prophet's most zealous disciple; the eyes of his inner man had been opened by the Seer, who had prepared him to live in conformity with commands from on high. He was in search of a woman with the angelic spirit, and Swedenborg showed her to him in a vision. His bride was the daughter of a shoemaker in London; in her, said Swedenborg, the life of heaven shone brightly, and she had gone through the first tests. After the prophet was translated, the Baron came to Jarvis to solemnize his heavenly nuptials in the practice of prayer. For my part, sir, I, who am no seer, could only note the earthly life of the couple, and it was undoubtedly that of the saints whose virtues are the

glory of the Roman Church. They alleviated the sufferings of the inhabitants, giving them a portion which does not suffice to live on without work, but which is then sufficient for their needs; those who lived with them never saw them moved to anger or impatience; they were invariably gentle and beneficent, full of amiability, graciousness, and true kindness; their marriage was the harmony of two souls in constant union. Two eider-ducks in equal flight, a sound and its echo, the thought and the word, are but imperfect images of that union. Here they were loved by everybody with an affection which can only be compared to the love of plants for the sun.

"The wife was simple in her manners and beautiful to behold; her face was lovely, and her dignity worthy of the most august personage.

"In 1783, in the twenty-sixth year of her age, this woman bore a child; it was a time of solemn rejoicing. The husband and wife took leave of the world, telling me that they had no doubt that they should be transformed when the child should have shed the garb of flesh, which would need their care until she should have received strength to live by herself. The child was born, and was this Seraphita with whom we are just now concerned; for the nine months before her birth her father and mother lived in greater retirement than before, uplifting themselves to heaven by prayer. Their hope was that they might see Swedenborg, and faith procured its fulfillment. On the day of Seraphita's birth, Swedenborg appeared in Jarvis, and filled the room where the babe was born with light. His words, it is said, were:—

"'The work is accomplished; the heavens rejoice!'

"The servants in the house heard strange sounds of music, brought, they declared, by the winds from the four points of the compass.

"The spirit of Swedenborg led the father out of the house and out on the fiord, where it left him. Some men of Jarvis, going up to the Baron, heard him repeating these soothing words from Scripture—'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!'

"I was setting out from the manse to go to the Castle,

intending to baptize the child, and carry out the duties enjoined on me by law, when I met the Baron.

"'Your ministrations are superfluous,' said he; 'our child is to be nameless on earth. You will not baptize with earthly waters one who has been bathed in fires from heaven. This child will always be a flower; you will not see it grow old; you will see it pass away. You have existence, it has life; you have external senses, it has not; it is wholly inward.' The words were uttered in a supernatural voice, which impressed me even more than the brightness of his face, which shed a radiance. His whole appearance was a realization of the fantastic ideas we form of inspired men, as we read the prophecies in the Bible. Still, such effects are not rare in our mountains, where the niter formed in the permanent snows produces singular effects on our persons.

"I asked him the cause of his agitation.

"'Swedenborg has appeared; I have just parted from him; I have breathed the air of heaven,' said he.

"'Under what form did he appear to you?' I asked.

"'Under his mortal aspect, dressed as he was the last time I saw him in London with Richard Shearsmith, near Coldbath Fields, in July, 1771. He had on his shot velveteen coat with steel buttons, a high waistcoat, a white cravat, and the same imposing wig, with heavy, powdered curls at the side, and the hair combed back from the forehead, showing that broad and luminous brow in harmony with his large, square face, so full of calm power. I recognized his nose with its open, ardent nostrils; the mouth that always smiled —an angel's mouth, from which fell these words of promised happiness, "We meet again, soon!" And I felt the glory of heavenly love.'

"The conviction stamped on the Baron's face prohibited any discussion; I listened in silence; his voice had an infectious fervor that warmed me to the core; his enthusiasm stirred my heart, as another man's anger can thrill one's nerves. I followed him, without speaking, home to his house, where I saw the nameless child lying mysteriously wrapped on her mother's bosom. Seraphita heard me come in, and raised her head towards me; her eyes were not those of an ordinary

infant; to express the impression they produced on me, I can only say they already saw and understood.

" The childhood of this predestined being was marked by some extraordinary circumstances of climate. For nine years our winters were milder and our summers longer than usual. This phenomenon gave rise to much discussion among the learned; but their explanations, which seemed inadequate to the doctors of the Academy, made the Baron smile when I repeated them to him.

" Seraphita was never seen perfectly nude, as children are sometimes; she was never touched by the hand of man or woman; she lay spotless on her mother's breast, and she never cried. Old David will confirm these facts if you question him about his mistress, for whom he feels such veneration as the king whose name he bears had for the Ark of God.

" At the age of nine the child began to be absorbed in prayer. Prayer is her life; you saw her in our church on Christmas Day, the only day she ever comes there. She is placed apart from the other worshipers by a considerable distance. If this space is not left about her, she is ill. Indeed, she spends most of her time indoors. The details of her life are, however, unknown; she never shows herself; her faculties, her feelings are essentially inward; she is commonly in the state of mystical contemplation which, as Papist writers tell us, was familiar to the first Christian recluses, in whom dwelt the tradition of Christ's teaching. Her understanding, her soul, her body, everything about her, is as virginal as the snow on our mountains. At ten years old she was what you see her now.

" When she was nine her father and mother died at the same instant without pain, without any visible malady, after naming the hour at which they should cease to breathe. She, standing at their feet, looked on them with a calm eye, displaying neither grief, nor pain, nor joy, nor curiosity; her father and mother smiled at her.

" When we went in to carry away the two bodies, she said—

" 'Take them away!'

" 'Seraphita,' said I, for we called her by that name, 'are

you not grieved by your father's and mother's death? They loved you so well.'

"'Dead?' said she. 'No, they are still in me. This is nothing,' she added, pointing to the bodies they were taking away.

"This was the third time I had seen her since her birth. It is difficult to see her in church; she stands near the pillar that supports the pulpit, in such a dark corner that it is hardly possible to discern her features.

"Of all the servants of the house, none were left at the time of that event but old David, who, though he is eighty-two years old, manages to do all his mistress needs. Some of the people of Jarvis have strange tales about the girl. Their stories having assumed some consistency in a land that is greatly addicted to mysteries, I set to work to study Jean Wier's *Treatise on Sorcery*, and other works on demonology, in which the effects on man of the supernatural (so called) are recorded, in search of facts analogous to what are ascribed to her——"

"Then you do not believe in her?" asked Wilfrid.

"Indeed, yes," said the pastor with simplicity, "in so far that I regard her as a most fantastic creature, spoilt by her parents, who have turned her brain by the religious notions I have set forth to you."

Minna shook her head in a gentle expression of negation.

"Poor girl!" the pastor went on, "she has inherited from her parents the fatal enthusiasm which misleads mystics and makes them more or less crazy. She fasts in a way that drives poor David to despair. The good old man is like some frail plant that trembles at a breath of wind and basks in the smallest gleam of sunshine. His mistress, whose incomprehensible language he has adopted, is to him the breeze and sunshine; to him her feet are diamonds, her forehead crowned with stars; she moves environed by a white and luminous halo; her voice has an accompaniment of music; she has the gift of becoming invisible. Ask to see her; he will tell you that she is wandering through astral worlds. It is difficult to believe such fables. Every such miracle, you know,

is more or less like the story of the Golden Tooth: we have a Golden Tooth at Jarvis, that is all.

"For instance, Duncker, the fisherman, declares that he has seen her plunging into the fiord and coming to the surface in the form of an eider-duck, or walking on the waves during a storm. Fergus, who tends the herds on the *sæter*, says that, in rainy weather, he has seen the sky always clear over the Swedish Castle, and always blue over Seraphita's head if she goes out. Several women hear the chords of an immense organ when Seraphita comes to church, and ask their neighbors quite seriously if they also do not hear it.

"However, my daughter, to whom Seraphita has taken a great fancy these two years past, has heard no music, and has not perceived the heavenly perfumes which embalm the air, they say, wherever she goes. Minna has often come home full of a simple girl's admiration for the beauties of the spring; she is enraptured by the fragrance of the first tender larch shoots, the fir-trees, and the flowers they have enjoyed together; but after our long winter nothing can be more natural than such intense delight. There is nothing very remarkable in the conversation of that being, is there, my child?"

"His secrets are not mine," replied Minna. "When I am with him, I know all things; away from him, I know nothing; with him, I cease to be myself; away from him, I forget that more perfect life. Seeing him is as a dream, of which my remembrance depends on his will. I may have heard, when with him, the music of which Bancker's wife and Erikson's speak, and forget it when we are apart; I may have perceived those celestial perfumes and have beheld marvels, and yet know nothing of them here."

"What has most surprised me since I first knew her," said the pastor to Wilfrid, "is that she should allow you to approach her."

"To approach her!" said the stranger. "She has never allowed me to kiss nor even to touch her hand. The first time I saw her she abashed me by her look, and said, 'You are welcome here; you were due to come.' It was as though

she knew me. I trembled.—My fear makes me believe in her."

"And my love," said Minna, without a blush.

"Are you making fun of me?" said the pastor, laughing with good humor; "you, my child, in calling yourself a Spirit of Love; and you, sir, in making yourself out to be a Spirit of Wisdom?"

He drank off a glass of beer, and did not observe a singular look which Wilfrid gave to Minna.

"Jesting apart," Becker went on, "I was greatly amazed to hear that those two crazy girls had gone to-day for the first time to the top of the Falberg; but is not that some exaggeration? The girls must have simply climbed some hill; the summit of the Falberg is inaccessible."

"Father," said Minna, in some agitation, "I must then have been in the power of the demon; for I climbed the Falberg with him."

"This is a serious matter," said the pastor. "Minna has never told a lie."

"My dear sir," said Wilfrid, "I can assure you, Seraphita exerts the most extraordinary power over me; I know not what words can give any idea of it. She has told me things which no one but I could know."

"Somnambulism!" cried the old man. "Various cases of that kind are reported by Jean Wier as phenomena easy to account for, and known of old in Egypt."

"Lend me the theosophical works of Swedenborg," said Wilfrid. "I long to plunge into those lakes of light; you have made me thirst for them."

Pastor Becker handed a volume to Wilfrid, who immediately began to read. It was about nine o'clock in the evening. The maid had just brought in the supper, and Minna made the tea. The meal ended, all three sat silently occupied; the pastor read Jean Wier's *Treatise on Demonology;* Wilfrid lost himself in the study of Swedenborg; Minna sewed and dreamed over her recollections. It was a thoroughly Norwegian scene, a peaceful, studious evening, full of thought—a flower under the snow. Wilfrid, as he read the writings of the prophet, was alive only to his inward senses. Now and

again the pastor, with a half-serious, half-ironical gesture, pointed him out to Minna, who smiled rather sadly. To Minna, Seraphitus smiled down upon them, floating above the cloud of tobacco smoke in which they were wrapped.

Midnight struck. Suddenly the outer door was violently pushed open; heavy but hasty steps, the steps of a terrified old man, were heard in the sort of small hall between the two doors. Then David burst into the room.

"Violence! Violence!" he cried. "Come! all of you, come! The Satans are unchained; they wear miters of flame! Adonis, Vertumnus, the Sirens! They are tempting her as Jesus was tempted on the mountain. Come and drive them out."

"Do you recognize the language of Swedenborg, pure and unmixed?" said the pastor, laughing.

But Wilfrid and Minna were gazing in terror at old David, who, with streaming hair and wild eyes, his legs trembling, and covered with snow, stood shaking as if he were buffeted by a stormy wind.

"What has happened?" asked Minna.

"Well, the Satans hope and purpose to conquer her."

The words made Wilfrid's heart beat.

"For nearly five hours she has been standing up with her eyes raised to heaven, her arms uplifted; she is in torment; she calls upon God. I cannot cross the line; hell has set Vertumni to guard it. They have raised a barrier of iron between her and her old David. If she wants me, what can I do? Help me! Come and pray!"

The poor old man's despair was terrible to behold.

"The glory of God protects her; but if she were to yield to violence?" he said, with persuasive good faith.

"Silence, David, do not talk so wildly. These are facts to be verified.—We will go with you," said the pastor, "and you will see that there are neither Vertumni in the house, nor Satans, nor Sirens."

"Your father is blind," David whispered to Minna.

Wilfrid, on whom his first reading of a treatise by Swedenborg, hasty as it had been, had produced a powerful effect, was already in the passage putting on his snowshoes. Minna

was ready in a moment. They rushed off to the Swedish Castle, leaving the two old men to follow.

"Do you hear that cracking?" said Wilfrid.

"The ice is moving in the fiord," said Minna; "the spring will soon be here."

Wilfrid said no more. When they were in the courtyard, they both felt that they had no right, no strength, to enter the house.

"What do you think of her?" asked Wilfrid.

"What a blaze of light!" cried Minna, standing in front of the drawing-room window. "There he is—great God! and how beautiful! Oh, my Seraphitus, take me to thee!"

The girl's outcry was inward and inaudible. She saw Seraphitus standing lightly shrouded in an opal-tinted mist, which was diffused for a short distance all about the apparently phosphorescent body.

"How lovely she is!" was Wilfrid's mental exclamation.

Pastor Becker now came up with David; he saw his daughter and the stranger in front of the window, came close to them, looked into the room, and said—

"Well, David, she is saying her prayers."

"But try to go in, sir."

"Why disturb her when she is praying?" replied the pastor.

At this moment a ray of moonlight from beyond the Falberg fell on the window. They all looked round, startled by this natural phenomenon; but when they turned again to look at Seraphita, she had vanished.

"That is strange!" said Wilfrid in surprise.

"But I hear exquisite strains," said Minna.

"Well, what next?" said the pastor; "she is going to bed, no doubt."

David had gone in. They walked home in silence; all three interpreted this vision in a different sense. Pastor Becker felt doubt; Minna felt adoration; Wilfrid, desire.

Wilfrid was a man of six-and-thirty. Though built on a large scale, he was not ill-proportioned. He was of a middle

height, like most men who are superior to the common herd; his chest and shoulders were broad, and his neck was short, as in men whose heart is near their head; he had thick, fine black hair, and his eyes, of a tawny brown, had a sunny sparkle in them that showed how eagerly his nature absorbed light. If his strong and irregular features were lacking in that internal calm which is given by a life free from storms, they revealed the inexhaustible forces of ardent senses and instinctive appetites; just as his movements showed the perfection of physical structure, adaptability of nature, and responsive action. This man might hold his own with the savage; might hear, as he does, the footfall of the enemy in the depths of the forest, scent his trail in the air, and see a friendly signal on the remote horizon. His sleep was light, like that of creatures alert against surprise. His frame quickly adapted itself to the climate of any country whither his stormy life might lead him. Art and Science alike would have admired this organization as a sort of human model; everything was truly balanced, heart and movement, intelligence and will.

At first sight he might seem to be classed with those purely instinctive beings who abandon themselves wholly to material needs; but, early in life, he had made his way in the social world to which his feelings had committed him; reading had raised his intelligence, meditation had improved his mind, science had expanded his understanding. He had studied the laws of humanity, and the play of interests moved to action by the passions, and he seemed to have been long familiar with the abstract notions on which society is founded. He had grown pale over books, which are human actions in death; he had kept late hours in the midst of festivities in many a European capital; he had waked up in many strange beds; he had slept perhaps on a battlefield on the night before the fight, and the night after a victory; his tempestuous youth might have tossed him on the deck of a pirate ship in the most dissimilar quarters of the globe; thus he was experienced in living human action. So he knew the present and the past; both chapters of history—that of the elder and that of the present time.

Many men have been, like Wilfrid, equally strong of hand, heart, and brain; and, like him, they have generally misused this threefold power.

But though this man's outward husk was still akin to the scum of humanity, he certainly belonged no less to the sphere where force is intelligent. Notwithstanding the wrappers in which his soul was shrouded, there were in him those indescribable symptoms visible to the eye of the pure-hearted, of children whose innocence has never felt the blighting breath of evil passions, of old men who have triumphed over theirs; and these signs revealed a Cain to whom hope yet remained, and who seemed to be seeking absolution at the ends of the earth. Minna suspected the slave of glory in this man; Seraphita recognized it; both admired and pitied him. Whence had they this intuition? Nothing can be simpler or, at the same time, more extraordinary. As soon as man desires to penetrate the secrets of nature, where there is no real secret, all that is needed is sight; he can see that the marvelous is the outcome of the simple.

"Seraphitus," said Minna, one evening a few days after Wilfrid's arrival at Jarvis, "you read this stranger's soul, while I have only a vague impression of him. He freezes or he warms me; but you seem to know the reason of this frost and this heat; you can tell me, for you know all about him."

"Yes, I have seen the causes," said Seraphitus, his heavy eyelids closing over his eyes.

"By what power?" asked the inquisitive Minna.

"I have the gift of specialism," he replied. "Specialism constitutes a sort of inward vision which penetrates all things, and you can understand its processes only by a comparison. In the great cities of Europe, where works of art are produced by which the human hand endeavors to represent the effects of moral nature as well as those of physical nature, there are some sublime geniuses who express their ideas in marble. The sculptor works on the marble; he shapes it, and puts into it a world of thought. There are such marbles to which the hand of man has given the power of representing a wholly sublime or a wholly evil aspect of humanity; most be-

holders see in these a human figure and nothing more; others, a little higher in the scale of human beings, discern some part of the thoughts rendered by the sculptor, and admire the form; but those who are initiated into the secrets of Art are in sympathy with the sculptor; when they see his work they recognize in it the whole world of his thoughts. These are the princes of Art; they bear in themselves a mirror in which nature is reflected with all its most trifling details.

"Well, in me there is a mirror in which moral nature is reflected with all its causes and effects. I can read the past and the future by thus looking into the conscience. You still ask me how? Suppose the marble to be a man's body, and the sculptor to be feeling passion, vice, or crime, virtue, error, or repentance; then you will understand how I could read the stranger's soul, though you will not understand specialism; to imagine what that gift is you must possess it."

Though Wilfrid was akin to both the primitive and widely different types of men—men of might and men of mind—his excesses, his stormy life, and his sins had often shown him the way of faith; for doubt has two sides—the side of light and the side of darkness. Wilfrid had too thoroughly squeezed the world in both its aspects—matter and spirit—not to have felt the thirst of the unknown, the longing for the Beyond which comes to most men who have knowledge, power, and will. But neither his knowledge, nor his actions, nor his will had due guidance. He had escaped from social life from necessity, as a criminal flies to the cloister. Remorse, the virtue of the weak, could not touch him. Remorse is impotence; it will sin again. Only repentance is strong; it can end everything. But Wilfrid, in traveling through the world, which he had made his sanctuary, nowhere found balm for his wounds; nowhere had he found a nature to which he could attach himself. Despair had dried up in him the wellspring of desire. His was one of those spirits which, having come to a conflict with passion, have proved themselves the stronger, and so have nothing left to clutch in their talons; spirits which, the opportunity failing them for putting themselves at the head of their peers to trample a whole people under their horse's hoofs, would pay the

price of a dreadful martyrdom for the gift of a faith to be wrecked upon; like lofty rocks waiting for the touch of a staff which never comes, to enable them to shed springs of running water.

Tossed among the snows of Norway by one of the purposes of his restless and inquiring life, the winter had taken him by surprise at Jarvis. On the day when he first saw Seraphita, the meeting wiped out all memories of his past life. This girl gave him such intense agitation as he had fancied was dead forever. The ashes burst into flame again, and were blown away by the first breath of that voice. Who has known what it is to become young and pure again after growing cold with age and foul with impurities? Wilfrid loved suddenly, as he had never loved; he loved in secret, with faith and awe and hidden frenzies. His life was disturbed to its very source at the mere thought of seeing Seraphita. When he heard her speak, he was borne away to unknown worlds; he was dumb in her presence—she bewitched him.

Here, under the snows, amid the ice-fields, this heavenly flower had blossomed on the stem—the flower to which his hopes went up, till now deceived, whose mere presence gave rise to the new aspirations, the ideas, the feelings, that crowd around us to lift us up to higher realms, as angels transport the elect to heaven in the symbolical pictures suggested to painters by some familiar spirit. Celestial odors softened the granite of this rock, light endowed with language poured forth the divine melodies which escort the pilgrim on his way to heaven. Having drained the cup of earthly love and crushed it with his teeth, he now saw the cup of election, sparkling with limpid waters, the chalice that gives a thirst for unfading joys to all who approach it with lips of faith so ardent that the crystal does not break at their touch. He had met with the walls of brass he had been seeking throughout the world that he might climb them.

He flew to Seraphita, intending to express to her the vehemence of a passion under which he was plunging, like the horse in the story under the bronze rider whom nothing

can move, who sits firm, and whose weight grows greater as the fiery steed tries to throw him. He went to tell her his life, to display the greatness of his soul by the greatness of his sins, to show her the ruins in his desert. But as soon as he had entered the precincts, and found himself in the vast domain surveyed by those eyes whose heavenly blue knew no limits in the present or in the past, he became as calm and submissive as a lion when, rushing on his prey in the African plain, he scents a love message on the wings of the breeze, and stands still. A gulf opened before him in which the words of his delirium were lost, and whence a voice came up that transformed him: he was a boy again, a boy of sixteen, shy and bashful before this maiden of the tranquil brow, this white creature whose immovable calm was like the stern impassibility of human justice. And the struggle had never ceased till this evening when, with a single look, she had at length stricken him down like a hawk, which, after describing bewildering spirals round its prey, makes it drop stunned before carrying it off to its eyrie.

We have long struggles with ourself, of which the outcome is one of our actions; they are, as it were, the inner side of human nature. This inner side is God's; the outer side belongs to men.

More than once had Seraphita chosen to show Wilfrid that she knew that motley inner part which forms the second life of most men. She had often said to him, in her dove-like tone, when Wilfrid had vowed on the way up that he would carry her off to be his own possession, "Why so much vehemence?" Wilfrid, when alone, was strong enough to utter the cry of rebellion he had given vent to at Pastor Becker's, to be soothed by the old man's narrative. This man—a mocker, a scorner—at last saw the light of a star-like belief rising in his darkness; he wondered whether Seraphita were not an exile from the upper spheres on her homeward road. He did not offer this Norwegian lily the homage of such idealization as lovers of every land are apt to squander; he really believed in her divinity.

Why was she buried in the depths of this fiord? What was she doing there? Unanswerable questions crowded on

his mind. What could happen between him and her? What fate had led him hither?

To him Seraphita was the motionless statue, as light as a shade, that Minna had just seen standing on the brink of the abyss. Seraphita could thus confront every abyss, and nothing could hurt her; the line of her brow would be unmoved, the light in her eye would never tremble. His love, then, was without hope, but not without curiosity.

From the first moment when Wilfrid suspected the ethereal nature in this sorceress, who had told him the secret of his life in harmonious dreams, he resolved to try to subjugate her, to keep her, to steal her from heaven, where perhaps they awaited her. He would be the representative of humanity, of this earth, recapturing their prey. His pride, the only sentiment which can uplift a man for any length of time, would make him rejoice in that triumph for the rest of his life. At the mere thought his blood boiled in his veins, his heart swelled. If he could not succeed, he would crush her. It is so natural to destroy what you cannot get possession of, to deny what you do not understand, to insult what you covet.

Next day Wilfrid, full of the ideas to which the extraordinary spectacle he had witnessed had naturally given rise, wanted to cross-question David, and came to see him, making a pretext of his wish for news of Seraphita. Though Pastor Becker thought the poor old man was childish, the stranger trusted to his own perspicacity to guide him in discovering the grains of truth the old serving-man might drop in the torrent of his wandering talk.

David had the rigid but undecided expression of a man of eighty; under his white hair his brow showed deep wrinkles, forming broken stratifications, and his whole face was furrowed like the dry bed of a torrent. All his vitality seemed to be concentrated in his eyes, where a spark still gleamed; but that light even was hidden behind clouds, and might be either the fitful activity of a feeble mind, or the stupid glare of intoxication. His slow, heavy movements betrayed the chill of old age, and seemed to communicate it to anyone who gazed at him for long, for he had the strength of inertia.

His narrow intelligence awoke only at the sound of his mistress's voice, at the sight or the thought of her. She was the soul of this merely material wreck. When David was alone you would have thought him a corpse; if Seraphita appeared, or spoke, or was spoken of, the dead rose from the grave and recovered motion and speech.

Never were the dry bones that the breath of God shall revive in the valley of Jehosaphat—never was that Apocalyptic parable more vividly realized than in this Lazarus perennially called forth from the sepulcher by the voice of this young girl. His mode of speech, always highly figurative, and often incomprehensible, kept the villagers from talking to him; but they greatly respected a mind so far removed from the vulgar routine; it commands the instinctive reverence of common folk.

Wilfrid found David in the outer room apparently asleep, close to the stove. Like a dog recognizing a friend's approach, the old man opened his eyes, saw the stranger, and did not stir.

"Well, where is she?" asked Wilfrid, sitting down by the old man.

David fluttered his fingers in the air to represent the flight of a bird.

"She is not still in pain?" asked Wilfrid.

"None but those beings who are plighted to heaven can suffer without any diminution of their love; that is the seal of true faith," said the old man gravely, like an instrument responding to a chance touch.

"Who tells you to say that?"

"The spirit."

"What happened, after all, last evening? Did you force your way past the Vertumni on guard? Did you steal in between the Mammons?"

"Yes," replied David, waking as if from a dream.

The mist before his eye cleared off under a flash that came from within, and which made it grow gradually as bright as an eagle's, as intelligent as a poet's.

"What then did you see?" asked Wilfrid, amazed at this sudden change.

"I saw Species and Shapes, I heard the Spirit of All Things; I saw the rebellion of the Wicked, I listened to the words of the Good. Seven devils appeared, seven archangels came down to them. The archangels stood afar, they were veiled, and looked on. The devils were close at hand, they glittered and moved. Mammon was there in a shell of pearl, in the guise of a beautiful naked woman; his body was as dazzling as the snow, no human form can be so perfect; and he said, 'I am all pleasure, and thou shalt possess me!' —Lucifer, the Prince of Serpents, came in his royal attire; he was as a man, as beautiful as an angel, and he said, 'The human race shall serve thee!'—The Queen of the Covetous, she who never restores that which she has taken—the Sea herself appeared in her mantle of green, she opened her bosom and showed her store of gems, she vomited treasures and offered them as a gift; she tossed up waves of sapphire and emerald; her creatures were disturbed, they came forth from their hiding-places and spoke; the fairest of the pearls spread butterflies' wings, she glistened, and spoke in sea-melodies, saying, 'We are both daughters of suffering, we are sisters; wait for me; we will fly together; I have only to be changed into a woman.' The bird that has the talons of an eagle and the legs of a lion, the head of a woman and a horse's quarters—the Animal—crouched before her and licked her feet, and promised seven hundred years of plenty to this well-beloved daughter.

"The most formidable of all, the Child, came to her very knee, weeping, and saying, 'Can you forsake me, so feeble and helpless? Mother, stay with me!' He played with the others, he shed idleness in the air; heaven itself might have yielded to his lament. The Virgin of pure song brought music that debauches the soul. The Kings of the East passed by with their slaves, their armies, and their women; the Wounded clamored for help, the Wretched held out their hands: 'Do not leave us, do not leave us!' was their cry.

"I too cried, 'Do not leave us; we will worship you—only stay!'

"Flowers burst from their seeds, and wrapped her in perfume, which said, 'Stay!' The Giant Anakim came down

from Jupiter, bringing Gold and his comrades, and all the Spirits of the astral worlds who had followed him, and they all said, 'We will be thine for seven hundred years.' At last Death got off his pale horse and said, 'I will obey thee!' And they all fell on their faces at her feet; if you could but have seen them! They filled a vast plain, and all cried to her, 'We have fed thee; thou art our child; do not forsake us!'

"Life came up from the red waters and said, 'I will not desert thee!' Then, finding Seraphita speechless, she suddenly blazed like the sun, and exclaimed, 'I am the Light!' —'The light is there!' replied Seraphita, pointing to clouds where the archangels were astir. But she was worn out; Desire had broken her on the rack; she could only cry aloud, 'My God!'

"How many Angelic Spirits who have climbed the hill, and are on the point of reaching the summit, have stumbled on a stone that has made them fall and roll back into the depths!—All these fallen Spirits marveled at her constancy; they stood there a motionless chorus, weeping, and saying, 'Courage!' At last she had triumphed over Desire, unchained to rend her in every Shape and Species. She remained praying; and when she raised her eyes, she saw the feet of the angels flying back to heaven."

"She saw the feet of the angels?" repeated Wilfrid.

"Yes," said the old man.

"This was a dream that she told you?" asked Wilfrid.

"A dream as real as that you are alive," replied David. "I was there."

The old servant's calm conviction struck Wilfrid, who went away, wondering whether these visions were at all less extraordinary than those of which Swedenborg wrote, and of which he had read the evening before.

"If spirits exist, they must surely act," said he to himself as he went into the manse, where he found the pastor alone.

"My dear pastor," said he, "Seraphita is human only in form, and her form is unaccountable. Do not regard me as mad or in love: conviction cannot be argued away. Convert

my belief into a scientific hypothesis, and let us try to understand all this. To-morrow we will go to see her together."

"And then?" said the minister.

"If her eye knows no limitation of space, if her thought is the sight of the intellect, allowing her to apprehend the essence of things and to connect them with the general evolution of the universe; if, in a word, she knows and sees everything, let us get the Pythoness on to her tripod, and compel the eagle to spread its wings, by threats. Help me! I breathe a consuming fire; I must extinguish it, or be devoured by it. In short, I see my prey; I will have it."

"It will be a conquest difficult of achievement," said the minister, "for the poor girl is——"

"Is——?" said Wilfrid.

"Mad," said the pastor.

"I will not dispute her madness," said Wilfrid, "so long as you do not dispute her superiority. Dear Pastor Becker, she has often put me to the blush by her learning. Has she traveled much?"

"From her house to the fiord."

"She has never been away!" cried Wilfrid. "Then she must have read a great deal?"

"Not a page, not a jot. I am the only person in Jarvis who has any books. Swedenborg's writings, the only works in the hamlet, are here; she has never borrowed a single volume."

"Have you ever tried to converse with her?"

"Of what use would it be?"

"No one has dwelt under her roof?"

"She has no friends but you and Minna; no servant but old David."

"And she has never learned anything of Science or Art?"

"From whom?" said the pastor.

"Then, when she discusses such matters very pertinently, as she has often done with me, what would you infer?"

"That the girl may, perhaps, during all these years of silence, have acquired such faculties as were possessed by Apollonius of Tyana, and by certain so-called wizards, who

were burned by the Inquisition, which rejected the idea of second sight."

"When she talks Arabic, what can you say?"

"The history of medicine contains many accredited instances of women who spoke languages they did not understand."

"What can I do?" said Wilfrid. "She knows things concerning my past life of which the secret lay in me."

"We will see if she can tell me any thoughts that I have never spoken to anyone," said Pastor Becker.

Minna came into the room.

"Well, my child, and how is your Spirit-friend?"

"He is suffering, father," said she, bowing to Wilfrid. "The passions of humanity, tricked out in their false splendor, tortured him in the night, and spread incredible pomp before his eyes.—But you treat all these things as mere fables."

"Fables as delightful to him who reads them in his brain as those of the *Arabian Nights* are to ordinary minds," said her father, smiling.

"Then, did not Satan," she retorted, "transport the Saviour to the summit of the Temple and show Him the kingdoms at His feet?"

"The Evangelists," replied Becker, "did not so effectually correct their text but that several versions exist."

"You, then, believe in the reality of these apparitions?" Wilfrid asked of Minna.

"Who can doubt that hears him tell of them?"

"Him?—Who?" asked Wilfrid.

"He who dwells there," said Minna, pointing to the Castle.

"You speak of Seraphita?" said Wilfrid, surprised.

The girl hung her head, with a gentle but mischievous glance at him.

"Yes, you too take pleasure in confusing my mind.—Who is she? What is your idea of her?"

"What I feel is inexplicable," said Minna, coloring.

"You are both mad!" said the pastor.

"Then we meet to-morrow," said Wilfrid, as he left.

IV

THE CLOUDS OF THE SANCTUARY

There are spectacles to which all the material magnificence at man's command is made to contribute. Whole tribes of slaves or divers go forth to seek in the sands of the sea, in the bowels of the rocks, the pearls and diamonds that adorn the spectators. These treasures, handed down from heir to heir, have blazed on crowned heads, and might be the most veracious historians of humanity if they could but speak. Have they not seen the joys and woes of the greatest as well as of the humblest? They have been everywhere—worn with pride at high festivals; carried in despair to the money-lender; stolen amid blood and pillage; treasured in miracles of artistic workmanship contrived for their safe-keeping. Excepting Cleopatra's pearl, not one has perished.

The great and the rich are assembled to see a king crowned—a monarch whose raiment is the work of men's hands, but who, in all his glory, is arrayed in purple less exquisite than that of a humble flower. These festivities, blazing with light, bathed in music through which the words of men strive to be heard in thunder,—all these works of man can be crushed by a thought, a feeling. The mind of man can bring to his ken light more glorious, can make him hear more tuneful harmonies, show him among clouds the glittering constellations he may question; and the heart can do yet more! Man may stand face to face with a single being and find in a single word, a single look, a burden so heavy to be borne, a light so intense, a sound so piercing, that he can but yield and kneel. The truest splendors are not in outward things, but in ourselves.

To a learned man, is not some secret of science a whole new world of wonders? But do the clarions of force, the gems of wealth, the music of triumph, the concourse of the crowd, do honor to his joy? No. He goes off to some remote nook, where a man, often pale and feeble, whispers a

single word in his ear. That word, like a torch in an underground passage, lights up the whole of science.

Every human conception, arrayed in the most attractive forms that mystery can invent, once gathered round a blind man sitting in the mud by a roadside. The three worlds—the Natural, Spiritual, and Divine—were revealed to an unhappy Florentine exile; as he went he was escorted by the happy and by the suffering, by those who prayed and those who cursed, by angels and by the damned. When He who came from God, who knew and could do all things, appeared to three of His disciples, it was one evening at the common table of a poor little inn; there and then the Light broke forth, bursting material husks, and showing its spiritual power. They saw Him in His glory, and the earth clung to their feet no more than as the sandals they could slip off them.

The pastor, Wilfrid, and Minna were all three excited to alarm at going to the house of the extraordinary being they proposed to question. To each of them the Swedish Castle was magnified into the scene of a stupendous spectacle, like those of which the composition and color are so skillfully arranged by poets, where the actors, though imaginary to men, are real to those who are beginning to enter into the spiritual world. On the seats of that amphitheater the pastor beheld arrayed the dark legions of doubt, his gloomy ideas, his vicious syllogisms in argument; he called up the various philosophical and religious sects, ever contentious, and all embodied in the shape of a fleshless system, as lean as the figure of Time as imagined by man—the old mower who with one hand raises the scythe, and in the other carries a meager world, the world of human life.

Wilfrid saw there his first illusions and his last hopes; he imagined human destiny incarnate there and all its struggles; religion and its triumphant hierarchies.

Minna vaguely found heaven there, seen through a vista; love held up a curtain embroidered with mystical figures, and the harmonious sounds that fell on her ears increased her curiosity. Hence this evening was to them what the supper at Emmaus was to the three travelers, what a vision was to

Dante, what an inspiration was to Homer; to them, too, the three aspects of the world were to be revealed, veils rent, doubts dispelled, darkness lightened. Human nature in all its phases, and awaiting illumination, could find no better representatives than this young girl, this man, and these two elders, one of them learned enough to be skeptical, the other ignorant enough to believe. No scene could be simpler in appearance oı more stupendous in fact.

On entering, shown in by old David, they found Seraphita standing by the table, on which were spread the various items constituting a Tea, a meal which takes the place in the North of the pleasures of wine-drinking, reserved for southern lands. Nothing certainly betrayed in her—or in him—a wondrous being who had the power of appearing under two distinct forms, nothing that showed the various forces she could command. With a homely desire to make her three guests comfortable, Seraphita bid David to feed the stove with wood.

"Good-evening, neighbors," said she. "Dear Pastor Becker, you did well to come; you see me alive, perhaps, for the last time. This winter has killed me.—Be seated, pray," she added to Wilfrid.—"And you, Minna, sit there," and she pointed to an armchair near the young man. "You have brought your work, I see. Did you find out the stitch? The pattern is very pretty. For whom is it to be? For your father or for this gentleman?" and she turned to Wilfrid. "We must not allow him to leave without some remembrance of the damsels of Norway."

"Then you were in pain again yesterday?" asked Wilfrid.

"That is nothing," she replied. "Such pain makes me glad; it is indispensable to escape from life."

"Then you are not afraid of dying?" said the minister, smiling for he did not believe in her illness.

"No, dear pastor; there are two ways of dying—to some death means victory, to some it is defeat."

"And you think you have won?" said Minna.

"I do not know," said she. "Perhaps it is only a step more."

The milky radiance of her brow seemed to fade, her eyes fell under her lids, which slowly closed. This simple circumstance distressed the three inquirers, who sat quite still. The pastor was the boldest.

"My dear girl," said he, "you are candor itself; you are also divinely kind. I want more of you this evening than the dainties of your tea-table. If we may believe what some people say, you know some most wonderful things; and if so, would it not be an act of charity to clear up some of our doubts?"

"Oh yes!" said Seraphita, with a smile. "They say that I walk on the clouds; I am on familiar terms with the eddies in the fiord; the sea is a horse I have saddled and bridled; I know where the singing flower grows, where the talking light shines, where living colors blaze that scent the air; I have Solomon's ring; I am a fairy; I give my orders to the wind, and it obeys me like a submissive slave; I can see the treasures in the mine; I am the virgin whom pearls rush to meet, and——"

"And we walk unharmed on the Falberg," Minna put in.

"What, you too?" replied the Being with a luminous glance at the girl, which quite upset her. "If I had not the power of reading through your brows the wish that has brought you here, should I be what you think I am?" she went on, including them all in her captivating gaze, to David's great satisfaction, and he went off rubbing his hands. —"Yes," she went on after a pause, "you all came overflowing with childish curiosity. You, my dear pastor, wondered whether it were possible that a girl of seventeen should know even one of the thousand secrets which learned men seek diligently with their noses to the ground instead of with their eyes raised to heaven! Now, if I were to show you how and where plant life and animal life mingle, you would begin to doubt your doubts.—You plotted to cross-question me, confess?"

"Yes, beloved Seraphita," said Wilfrid. "But is not such a desire natural to man?"

"And do you want to worry this child?" she said, laying her hand on Minna's hair with a caressing gesture.

The girl looked up, and seemed to long to be merged in the Being before her.

"The word is given for all," the mysterious Being went on very gravely. "Woe to him who should keep silence even in the midst of the desert, thinking that none would hear. Everything speaks, everything hears here below. The word moves worlds.—I hope, Pastor Becker, not to speak in vain. I know what difficulties trouble you most: would it not be a miracle if I could at once apprehend all the past experiences of your conscience? Well, that miracle will be accomplished. —Listen to me: you have never confessed your doubts in their full extent; I alone, immovable in my faith, can set them before you, and frighten you at your own image. You are on the darkest declivity of doubt. You do not believe in God, and everything on earth is of secondary importance to the man who attacks the first cause of everything.

"Let us set aside the discussions thrashed out without result by false philosophers. Generations of Spiritualists have made no less vain efforts to disprove the existence of matter than generations of Materialists have made to disprove the existence of the spirit. Why these contests? Does not man, as he is, afford undeniable proofs of both? Is he not an union of matter and spirit? Only a madman can refuse to find an atom of matter in the human frame; when it is decomposed, natural science finds no difference between its elements and those of other animals. The idea which is produced in man by the power of comparing several different objects, on the other hand, does not seem to come within the domain of matter. On this I give no opinion; we have to deal with your doubts, not with my convictions.

"But to you, as to most thoughtful men, the relations which you have the faculty of discerning between things, of which the real existence is made certain to you through your senses, do not, I suppose, seem *material*. The natural Universe, then, of things and beings meets in man with the supernatural Universe of likeness or difference which he can discern between the innumerable forms in nature—relations so various that they seem to be infinite; for if, till the present day, no one has been able to enumerate the created things of

this earth only, what man can ever enumerate their relations to each other? Is not the small fraction with which you are familiar, in regard to the grand total, as a unit to the infinite?

"Hence here you find yourself already made aware of the existence of the infinite, and this necessarily leads you to conceive of a purely spiritual sphere. Hence, too, man is in himself sufficient evidence of these two modes of life: Matter and Spirit. In him ends a finite, visible universe; in him begins an infinite and invisible universe—two worlds that do not know each other. Have the pebbles of the fiord any cognizance of their relative shapes, are they conscious of the colors seen in them by the eye of man, do they hear the music of the ripples that dance over them? Let us then leap the gulf we cannot fathom, the unthinkable union of a material with a spiritual universe, the concept of a visible, ponderable, tangible creation, conterminous with an invisible, imponderable, intangible creation; absolutely dissimilar, separated by a void, united by indisputable points of contact, and meeting in a being who belongs to both! Let us, I say, mingle in one world these two worlds, which, in your philosophy, can never coalesce, and which, in fact, do coalesce.

"However abstract man may call it, the relation which binds two things together must stamp its mark. Where? On what? We have not now to inquire to what degree of rarity matter may be reduced. If that were indeed the question, I do not see why He who has linked the stars together at immeasurable distances by physical laws, to veil His face withal, should not have created substances that could think, nor why you will not allow that He should have given thought a body.

"To you, then, your invisible, moral, or mental universe, and your visible, physical universe, constitute one and the same matter. We will not divide bodies from their properties, nor objects from their relations. Everything that exists, that weighs upon and overwhelms us from above and beneath us, before us or within us; all that our eyes or our minds apprehend, all that is named or nameless, must, to reduce the problem of Creation to the standard of your logic, be a finite mass of matter; if it were infinite, God could not be its

master. Thus, according to you, dear pastor, by whatever scheme you propose to introduce God, who is infinite, into this finite mass of matter, God could no longer exist with such attributes as are ascribed to Him by man. If we seek Him through facts, He is not; if we seek Him through reason, still He is not; both spiritually and materially God is impossible. Let us hearken to the word of human reason driven to its utmost consequences.

"If we now conceive of God face to face with this stupendous whole, we find only two conditions of relationship possible: Either God and Matter were contemporaneous, or God was alone and pre-existent. If all the wisdom that has enlightened the human race from the first day of its existence could be collected in one vast brain, that monstrous brain could invent no third mode of being, short of denying both God and Matter. Human philosophers may pile up mountains of words and ideas, Religions may accumulate emblems and beliefs, revelations and mysteries, still we are forced on to this terrible dilemma, and must choose one of the two propositions it offers. However, you have not much choice, for each leads the human mind to skepticism.

"The problem being thus stated, what signifies Spirit or Matter? What does it signify which way the worlds are moving if once the Being who guides them is proved to be absurd? Of what use is it to inquire whether man is advancing towards heaven or coming back from it, whether Creation is tending upwards towards the spirit, or downwards towards matter, if the worlds we question can give no answer? Of what consequence are theogonies and their armies, theologies and their dogmas, when, whichever alternative man chooses in answer to the problem, his God is no more?

"Let us examine the first: Suppose God and matter to have been co-existent from the beginning. Can He be God who suffers the action and co-existence of a substance that is not Himself? On this theory God is but a secondary agent constrained to organize matter. Who constrained Him? And as between that coarse other half and Him, who was to decide? Who paid the Great Workman for the six days'

labor attributed to Him? If there were, indeed, some coercing force which was neither God nor matter, if God were compelled to make the machinery of the universe, it would be no less absurd to call Him God than to call a slave set to turn a mill a Roman citizen. And, in fact, the difficulty is just as insoluble in the case of that Supreme Intelligence as in that of God Himself. It only carries the problem a step further back; and is not this like the Indian philosophers, who place the world on a tortoise, and the tortoise on an elephant, but cannot say on what their elephant's feet rest? Can we conceive that this Supreme Will, evolved from the conflict of God with matter—this God greater than God—should have existed during eternity without Willing what He Willed, granting that eternity can be divided into two periods? Wherever God may be, if He knew not what His future Will would be, what becomes of His intuitive perceptions? And of these two eternities, which is the superior—uncreated eternity or created eternity?

"If God from all eternity willed that the world should be what it is, this fresh view of necessity, which is in harmony no doubt with the notion of a Sovereign Intelligence, implies the co-eternity of matter. Whether matter be co-eternal by the Divine Will, which must at all times be at one with itself, or whether it be independently co-eternal, since the power of God must be absolute, it perishes if He has not His free-will. He would always have found within Himself a supreme reason which would have ruled Him. Is God God if He cannot separate Himself from the works of His creation in subsequent as well as in anterior eternity?

"This aspect of the problem is then insoluble so far as cause is concerned. Let us examine it in its effects.

"If God the Creator, under compulsion to create the universe from all eternity, is inconceivable, He is no less so as perpetually one with His work. God, eternally constrained to exist in His creatures, is no less dishonored than in His former position as a workman. Can you conceive of a God who can no more be independent of His work than dependent on it? Can He destroy it without treason to Himself? Consider and make your choice: Whether He should some day destroy

it, or not destroy it; either alternative is equally fatal to attributes without which He cannot subsist. Is the world a mere experiment, a perishable mold which must be destroyed? Then God must be inconsistent and impotent. Inconsistent—for ought He not to have known the issue before making the experiment, and why does He delay destroying that which is to be destroyed? Impotent—or how else could He have created an imperfect world?

" And if an imperfect creation belies the faculties that man ascribes to God, let us, on the other hand, suppose it to be perfect. This idea is in harmony with our conception of a God of supreme intelligence who could make no mistake; but, then, why any deterioration? Why Regeneration? Then a perfect world is necessarily indestructible, its forms must be imperishable; it can neither advance nor retrocede; it rolls on in an eternal orbit whence it can never deviate. Thus is God dependent on His work; thus is it co-eternal with Him, which brings us back to one of the propositions which most audaciously attacks God. If the universe is imperfect, it allows of advance and progress; if perfect, it is stationary. If it is impossible to conceive of a progressive God, not knowing from all eternity what the result would be of His creation, can we then admit a stationary God? Would not that be the apotheosis of matter, the greatest possible negation? Under the first hypothesis, God deceases by want of power; under the second, He deceases by the force of inertia.

" Hence, alike in the conception and the execution of creation, to every honest mind the notion of matter as contemporaneous with God is a denial of God.

" Compelled to choose between these two aspects of the question, in order to govern the nations, many generations of great thinkers have chosen the second. This gave rise to the dogma of two moral elements, as conceived of by the Magians, which has spread in Europe under the image of Satan contending with the Father of all. But are not this dogmatic formula and the endless deifications that are derived from it crimes of high treason to the divine Majesty? By what other name can we call a belief that makes the per-

sonification of Evil the rival of God, forever struggling in the throes of a supreme intellect without any hope of victory? The laws of statics show that two forces thus placed must neutralize each other.

"Now, turn to the other side of the problem: God was pre-existent and alone.

"We need not reproduce the former arguments, which are equally strong in relation to the division of eternity into two periods—uncreated and created. We will also set aside the question of the motion or the immobility of worlds, and restrict ourselves to the inherent difficulties of this second thesis.

"If God pre-existed alone, the universe proceeded from Him; matter is the emanation of His essence. Then matter is not. Every form is but a veil hiding the Divine Spirit. Then, the world is eternal; then, the world is God! But is not this formula even more fatal than the former one to the attributes assigned to God by human reason? Does matter, as emanating from God, and always one with Him, account for the existing conditions of matter? How are we to believe that the Almighty, supremely good in His nature and His acts, could beget things so unlike Himself that He is not in all things and everywhere the same? Were there in Him certain evil constituents which He rejected from Him?—A conjecture more terrible than offensive or ridiculous, inasmuch as it includes the two theorems which, in our former argument, we proved to be inadmissable. God must be One, and cannot divide Himself without infringing the most important of His attributes. Is it possible to conceive of a portion of God which is not God?

"This hypothesis seemed so impious to the Roman Church, that she made God's Omnipresence, even in the smallest fragments of the Eucharist, an article of Faith.

"How, then, are we to conceive of an Omnipotent Intelligence which yet cannot conquer? How unite it with Nature, unless by direct conquest? But Nature seeks and combines, reproduces, dies, and is born again; it is even more agitated in the creative effort than when all is in a state of fusion; it suffers and groans; it is ignorant, degenerate,

does evil, makes mistakes, destroys itself, disappears, and begins again. How are we to justify the almost universal eclipse of the divine element? Why is death? Why was the spirit of evil, the monarch of this earth, sent forth from a supremely good God—good alike in His essence and His faculties, who could have produced nothing that was not like Himself?

"And if, setting aside this relentless issue which leads us at once to the absurd, we go into details, what purpose can we ascribe to the world? If all is God, all is at once effect and cause; or, more accurately, cause and effect do not exist. Like God, all is one; and you can discern no starting-point and no end. Can the real end be, possibly, a rotation of matter growing more and more rare? But whatever the end may be, is not the mechanism of such matter proceeding from God and returning to God, a mere child's plaything? Why should He embody Himself so grossly? Under what form is God most completely God? Which wins the day, spirit or matter, when neither of those modes of being can be wrong? Who can possibly discern God in this perennial toil by which He divides Himself into two natures—one omniscient, the other knowing nothing? Can you conceive of God as playing at being man, laughing His own labors to scorn, dying on Friday to rise again on Sunday, and carrying on the farce from age to age while knowing the end from all eternity; and never telling Himself, the Creature, what He is doing as Creator?

"The God of the former hypothesis, null as He is by sheer inertia, seems more possible—if we had to choose between impossibilities—than that stupid mocking God who destroys Himself when two portions of humanity meet weapon in hand. Comical as this ultimate expression of the second aspect of the problem may be, it was that chosen by half the human race among nations that had created certain gay mythologies. These amorous nations were consistent; to them everything was a god, even fear and its cowardice, even crime and its bacchanals. If we accept Pantheism, the faith of some great human geniuses, who can tell where reason lies? Is it with the savage running free in the desert, clothed in

his nakedness, lordly and always right in his actions whatever they may be, listening to the sun and talking to the sea? Is it with the civilized man, whose greatest pleasures are due to falsehoods, who hews and hammers nature to make the gun he carries on his shoulder, who has applied his intelligence to hasten the hour of his death, and create maladies that taint his pleasures? When the scourge of pestilence, or the plowshare of war, or the genius of the desert had passed over a spot of earth, annihilating everything, which came off best—the Nubian savage or the patrician of Thebes?

"Your skepticism permeates from above downwards. Your doubts include everything, the end as well as the means. If the physical world seems inexplicable, the moral world proves even more against God. Where, then, is progress? If everything goes on improving, why do we die as children? Why do not nations, at any rate, perpetuate themselves? Is the world that proceeded from God, that is contained in God, stationary? Do we live but once? Or do we live forever? If we live but once, coerced by the advance of the Great All, of which we have no knowledge given us, let us do what we will! If we are eternal, let everything pass! Can the creature be guilty because it exists when changes are going on? If it sins at the moment of some great transformation, shall it be punished for it after having been the victim? What becomes of divine goodness if it refuses to place us at once in the realms of happiness—if such there be? What becomes of God's foreknowledge if He does not know the results of the trials to which He subjects us? What is this alternative proposed to man by all his creeds, between stewing in an eternal caldron and wandering in a white robe with a palm in his hand and a halo to crown him? Can this pagan invention be the supreme promise of God?

"And what magnanimous spirit but sees how unworthy of man and God alike is virtue out of self-interest, the eternity of joys offered by every creed to those who, during a few brief hours of existence, fulfill certain monstrous and often unnatural conditions? Is it not preposterous to endow man with vehement senses and then forbid his gratifying them?

"Besides, to what end these trivial objections when good

and evil alike are negatived? Does evil exist? If matter in all its manifestations is evil, evil is God.

"The faculty of reason, as well as the faculty of feeling, being bestowed on man for his use, nothing can be more pardonable than to seek a meaning in human suffering and to inquire into the future; if this rigid and rigorous logic leads us to such conclusions, what confusion is here! The world has then no stability; nothing moves on, and nothing stands still; everything changes, but nothing is destroyed; everything renews itself and reappears; for, if your mind cannot unanswerably prove an end, it is equally impossible to prove the annihilation of the smallest atom of matter: it may be transformed, but not destroyed. Though blind force may prove the atheist's position, intelligent force is inscrutable; for, if it proceeds from God, ought it to encounter any obstacles; ought it not to conquer them immediately?

"Where is God? If the living are not aware of Him, will the dead find Him?

"Crumble into dust, O idolatries and creeds! Fall, O too feeble keystones of the social arches, for ye have never retarded the destruction, the death, the oblivion, that have come upon all the nations of the past, however securely they were founded. Fall, O morality and justice! Our crimes are but relative, they are divine results of which the causes are unknown to us! Everything is God. Either we are God, or God is not! Child of an age of which each year has left on your brow the cold touch of its skepticism—Old Man! this is the sum-total of your science and your long meditations!

"Dear Pastor Becker, you have rested your head on the pillow of doubt, finding it the easiest solution, acting indeed like the majority of the human race. They say to themselves, 'We will think no more of this question if God will not vouchsafe us an algebraic demonstration for its solution, while He has given us so many that lead us safely up from the earth to the stars——'

"Now, are not these your secret thoughts? Have I missed them? Have I not, on the contrary, precisely stated them?—Either the dogma of the two elementary principles, an

antagonism in which God is destroyed by the very fact that He—who is Almighty—plays at a struggle; or the ridiculous Pantheism in which all things being God, God is no more—these two founts, whence flow the creeds to whose triumph the earth is devoted, are equally pernicious.

"There, between us, lies the two-edged ax with which you behead the white-haired Ancient of Days whom you enthrone on painted clouds!

"Now, give me the ax!"

The pastor and Wilfrid looked at the girl in a sort of dismay.

"Belief," said Seraphita, in her gentle voice—for the man had been speaking hitherto—"belief is a gift! Belief is feeling. To believe in God, you must feel God. This sense is a faculty slowly acquired by the human being, as those wonderful powers are acquired which you admire in great men—in warriors, artists, men of science—those who act, those who produce, those who know. Thought, a bundle of the relations which you discern between different things, is an intellectual language that may be learned, is it not? Belief, a bundle of heavenly truths, is in the same way a language, but as far above thought as thought is above instinct. This language too can be learned.

"The believer answers in a single cry, a single sign; faith places in his hand a flaming sword which cuts and throws light on everything. The seer does not come down again from heaven; he contemplates it and is silent. There is a being who both believes and sees, who has knowledge and power, who loves, prays, and waits. That being is resigned, and aspires to the realm of light; he has neither the believer's lofty scorn, nor the seer's dumbness; he both listens and replies. To him the doubt of the dark ages is not a lethal weapon, but a guiding clew; he accepts the battle in whatever guise; he can accommodate his tongue to every language; he is never wroth, he pities; he neither condemns nor kills, he redeems and comforts; he has not the harshness of an aggressor, but rather the mild fluidity of light which penetrates and warms and lights up every place. In his eye skepticism is not impiety, is not blasphemy, is not a crime;

it is a stage of transition whence a man must go forward towards the light, or back into the darkness.

"So now, dear pastor, let us reason together. You do not believe in God. Why?—God, as you express it, is incomprehensible and inexplicable. I grant it. I will not retort that to comprehend God altogether is to be God. I will not tell you that you deny what you think inexplicable simply to give myself a right of affirming what seems to me believable. To you there is an evident fact dwelling within you. In you matter is conterminous with intelligence; and yet you think that human intelligence will end in darkness, in doubt, in nothingness? Even if God seems to you incomprehensible and inexplicable, confess at least that in all physical phenomena you recognize in Him a consistent and exquisite Craftsman.

"Then why should His logic end at man, as His most finished work? Though the question may not be convincing, it deserves some consideration at any rate. Though you deny God, to give a basis to your doubts, you happily can appreciate certain double-edged truths which demolish your arguments as effectually as your arguments demolish God.

"We both admit that matter and spirit are two separate creations, neither of which contains the other; that the spiritual world consists of infinite relations to which the finite material world gives rise; and that whereas no one on earth has ever been able to identify himself by a sheer effort of mind with the sum-total of earthly creations, all the more certainly can he not rise to an apprehension of the relations which the spirit discerns between these creations. So I might end the matter with one blow by denying you the faculty of understanding God, just as you deny the pebbles by the fiord the faculty of counting or of seeing themselves. How do you know that they may not deny the existence of man, though man uses them to build his house with?

"There is one fact which overthrows you—Infinitude. If you feel it within you, how is it that you do not recognize the consequences? Can the finite fully apprehend the infinite? If you cannot comprehend the relations which, by

your own admission, are infinite, how can you comprehend the remote finality in which they are summed up? Order, of which the manifestation is one of your needs, being infinite, can your finite reason comprehend it?

"Nor need you inquire why man cannot comprehend all he can conceive of, for he likewise can conceive of much that he cannot comprehend. If I were to prove to you that your mind is ignorant of everything that lies within its grasp, would you grant me that it is impossible for it to conceive of what lies beyond it? Should I not be justified, then, in saying, 'One of the alternatives which bring God to naught at the bar of your judgment must be true and the other false; Creation exists, you feel the need for an end; must not that end be a noble one? Now, if in man matter is conterminous with intelligence, why can you not be satisfied to grant that human intelligence ends where the light begins of those superior spheres for which is reserved the intuition of the God who, to you, is merely an insoluble problem?

"The species lower than man have no comprehension of the universe; you have. Why should there not be, above man again, species more intelligent than he? Before using his powers to take measure of God, would not man do well to know more about himself? Before defying the stars that give him light, before attacking transcendent truths, ought he not rather to verify the truths that immediately concern him?

"But I should answer the negations of doubt by negation. Well, then, I ask you: Is there here on earth a single thing so self-evident that I am bound to believe in it? I will show you in a minute that you believe firmly in things that can act and yet are not beings, that can give birth to thought and yet are not spirits, in living abstractions which the understanding cannot grasp under any shape, which nowhere exist, but which you can everywhere find; which have no possible names—though you have given them names; which, like the God in human form whom you conceive of, perish before the inexplicable, the incomprehensible, and the absurd. And I will ask you: If you admit these things, why do you reserve your doubts for God?

"You believe in Number as the foundation on which rests the edifice of what you call the exact sciences. Without number mathematics are impossible. Well, then, what impossible being to whom life everlasting should be granted, could ever finish counting—and in what sufficiently concise language could he utter—the numbers contained in the infinite number of which the existence is demonstrated by your reason? Ask the greatest human genius, and suppose him to sit for a thousand years leaning on a table, his head in his hands, what would he answer?

"You know neither where number begins, where it pauses, nor where it ends. Now you call it time, anon you call it space; by number only does anything exist; but for number all substance would be one and the same; it alone differentiates and modifies matter. Number is to your mind what it is to matter, an intangible agent. But will you then make a god of it? Is it a being? Is it a breath of God sent forth to organize the material universe, wherein nothing takes shape but as a result of divisibility which is an effect of number? The most minute as well as the most immense objects in creation are distinguished from each other by quantity, quality, dimension, and force,—are not these all conditions of number? That number is infinite is a fact proved to your intellect, but of which no material proof is obtainable. A mathematician will tell you that infinity of number is certain, but cannot be demonstrated. And, my dear pastor, believers will tell you that God is Number endowed with motion, to be felt but not proved. He, like the unit, is the origin of number though having nothing in common with numbers. The existence of number depends on that of the unit, which is not a number, but the parent of them all. And God, dear Pastor Becker, is a stupendous Unit, having nothing in common with His creations, but their Parent nevertheless.

"You must grant me that you are equally ignorant as to where number begins or ends, and as to where created eternity begins or ends? Why, then, if you believe in number, should you deny God? Does not creation hold a place between the infinite of inorganic substances and the infinite of the divine spheres, as the unit stands between the infinite of fractions—

lately termed decimals—and the infinite numbers you call whole numbers? Men alone on earth comprehend number, the first step to the forecourt leading to God, and even there reason stumbles. What! you can neither measure nor grasp the primary abstraction proposed to you, and you want to apply your puny standard to the ends of God's purpose? What if I should cast you into the bottomless depths of Motion, the force which organizes number?

"If I were to tell you that the universe is nothing but Number and Motion, we should already, you see, be speaking a different language. I understand both terms; you do not. What, then, if I should go on to say that motion and number are generated by the Word? This term, the Supreme Reason of seers and prophets, who of old heard the voice of God that overthrew St. Paul, is a laughing-stock to you—you men, though your own visible works—communities, monuments, actions, and passions—all are the outcome of your own feeble Word; and though without speech you would still be no higher than the Orang of the woods, the great ape that is so nearly akin to the negro.

"Well, you believe firmly in number and motion, inexplicable and incomprehensible as force and result, though I might apply to their existence the same logical dilemma as just now relieved you of the necessity of acknowledging that of God. You, a powerful reasoner, will surely relieve me of the necessity for proving that the Infinite must be everywhere the same, and that it is inevitably one? God alone is the Infinite, for there obviously cannot be two Infinites. If, to use words in their human sense, anything proved to you here on earth strikes you as infinite, you may be sure you have in that a glimpse of one aspect of God.

"To proceed: you have found for yourselves a place in the Infinite of number; you have fitted it to your stature by creating arithmetic—if you can be said to create anything—the basis on which everything is built up, even society. Arithmetic, or the use of number, has organized the moral world, just as number, the only thing in which your professing Atheists believe, organizes physical creation. This science of numbers ought to be absolute, like everything that is

intrinsically true; but it is, in fact, purely relative, it has no absolute existence. You can give no proof of its reality.

"To begin with, though this science is apt at summing up organized substances, it is impotent as applied to organizing forces, since these are infinite, whereas the former are finite. Man, whose intellect can conceive of the Infinite, cannot deal with it as a whole; if he could, he would be God. Hence your arithmetic, as applied to finite things and not to the Infinite, is true in relation to the details you apprehend, but false in relation to the whole which you cannot apprehend. Though Nature does not vary in her organizing forces and her elementary causes, which are infinite, she is never the same in her finite results. Hence in all nature you will find no two objects exactly alike.

"Thus, in the order of nature, two and two can never really make four, since the units would have to be exactly equal; and you know that it is impossible to find two leaves alike on one tree, or two specimens alike of the same species of tree. This axiom of arithmetic then, which is false as regards visible nature, is no less false in the invisible nature of your abstractions, where there is the same dissimilarity in your ideas which are derived from the objects of the visible world, only extended in their relations; in fact, differences are even more strongly marked there than elsewhere. Everything there being modified by the temperament, the strength, the manners, and the habits of individuals, who are never alike, the most trifling matters are representative of personal character.

"If man has ever succeeded in creating a unit, it was, no doubt, by assigning equal weight and value to certain pieces of gold. Well, add a rich man's ducat to a poor man's, and tell yourself that to the public treasury these are equal quantities; but in the eyes of a thoughtful man, one, morally speaking, is unquestionably greater than the other; one represents a month's happiness, the other the most transient caprice. Two and two only make four in the sense of a false and monstrous abstraction.

"A fraction, again, has no existence in nature, since what you call a part is a thing complete in itself; and does it not

often happen—and have we not proof of the fact—that the hundredth part of some substance may be stronger than what you call the whole? And if a fraction has no existence in the natural world, far less does it exist in the moral world, where ideas and feelings may be as various as the species of the vegetable kingdom, but are always a whole. The theory of fractions, then, is another concession of the mind. Number, with its 'infinitely small' and its 'infinite total,' is a power of which a small part only is known to you, while its extent evades you. You have built a little cottage in the infinitude of number; you have adorned it with hieroglyphics very learnedly designed and painted; and you have said, 'Everything is here!'

"From abstract number we will pass on to number as applied to solids. Your geometry states it as an axiom that a straight line is the shortest way from one point to another; and astronomy shows you that God has given motion only in curves. Here, then, in the same science, are two facts equally well proved—one by the evidence of your senses, aided by the telescope; the other by the testimony of your mind; but one contradicts the other. Man, who is liable to error, asserts one, and the Maker of the worlds—whom you have never found in error—contradicts it. Who can decide between rectilinear and curvilinear geometry?—between the theory of straight lines and the theory of curved lines? If, in His work, the mysterious Maker, who attains His ends with miraculous directness, only makes use of the straight line to divide it at a right angle and obtain a curve, man himself cannot rely on it: the bullet a man wishes to send in a straight line follows a curve, and when you want to hit a point in space with certainty you propel the ball on its cruel parabola. Not one of your learned men has arrived at the simple induction that the curved line is that of the material world, and the straight line that of the spiritual world; that one is the theory of finite creation, and the other the theory of the infinite. Man alone—he alone here on earth having any consciousness of the infinite—can know the straight line; he alone, in a special organ, has the sense of the vertical. May not the predilection for curved lines in some men be an indica-

tion of the impurity of their nature, still too closely allied to the material substances which engender us? and may not the love for straight lines, seen in lofty minds, be in them a presentiment of heaven? Between these two lines lies a gulf as wide as between the Finite and the Infinite, between Matter and Spirit, between Man and the Idea, between Motion and the Thing moved, between the Creature and God. Borrow the wings of Divine Love and you may cross that gulf. Beyond it the revelation of the Word begins!

"The things you call material are nowhere devoid of thickness; lines are the edges of solids having a power of action which you ignore in your theorems, and that makes them false in relation to bodies regarded as a whole; hence the constant destruction of human works, to which you have unwittingly given active properties. Nature knows nothing but solid bodies; your science deals only with combinations of surfaces. And so nature constantly gives the lie to all your laws: can you name one to which no fact makes an exception? The laws of statics are contradicted by a thousand incidents in physics; a fluid overthrows the most stupendous mountains, and so proves that the heaviest substances may be upheaved by imponderable agents. Your laws of acoustics and optics are nullified by the sounds you hear in your brain during sleep, and by the light of an electric flash, of which the rays are often overpowering. You do not know how light is brought to your intelligence, any more than you know the simple and natural process by which it is changed to ruby, sapphire, opal, and emerald on the neck of an Indian bird, while it lies dim and gray on the same bird under a misty sky of Europe, nor why it beams perpetually white here in the heart of the polar regions. You cannot tell whether color is a faculty with which bodies are endowed, or an effect produced by the diffusion of light.

"You believe the whole sea to be salt without having ascertained that it is so in its deepest places.

"You recognize the existence of various substances which traverse what you call the Void: substances intangible under any known form assumed by matter, and which meet and combine with it in spite of every obstacle. That being the

case, you believe in the results obtained by chemistry, though as yet it knows no method of estimating the changes produced by the currents to and fro of those substances as they pass through your crystals and your instruments on the inappreciable waves of heat or of light, conducted or repelled by the affinities of metals or vitrified flint. You obtain no substances but what are dead, out of which you have driven the unknown force which resists decomposition in all earthly things, the force of which attraction, undulation, cohesion, and polarity are manifestations.

"Life is the mind of body; bodies are but a mode of detaining it, of delaying it in its transit; if bodies were themselves living things, they would be a cause; they would not die. When a man establishes the results of the motion of which every form of creation has its share in proportion to its power of absorbing it, you call him a Learned Man, as though genius consisted in explaining what exists. Genius should lift its eyes above effects. All your learned men would laugh if you should say to them, 'There is a certain connecting relation between two beings, such as that if one of them were here and the other in Java, they might feel the same sensation at the same instant, and be aware of the fact, and question and answer each other without a mistake.' And yet there are some mineral substances which exhibit sympathies as far-reaching as that of which I speak. You believe in the power of electricity when it is fixed in the lodestone, but you deny it as emanating from the soul. According to you, the moon, whose influence over the tides seems to you proven, has none over the winds, over vegetation, or over men; it can move the sea and eat into glass, but it cannot affect the sick; it has undoubted effects on one-half of the human race; none on the other half. These are your most precious convictions.

"We may go further: You believe in physics; but your physics are based, like the Catholic religion, on an act of faith. Do they not recognize an external force apart from bodies to which it imparts movement? You see its effects, but what is *it?* Where is it? What is its essence, its life? Has it any limits?—— And you deny God!

"Thus most of your scientific axioms, though true in relation to man, are false in relation to the Whole. Science is one, and you have divided it. To know the true sense of the laws of phenomena, would it not be necessary to know the correlations existing between the phenomena and the laws of the whole? There is in all things an appearance, a presentment, which strikes your sense; behind this presentment there is a soul moving—the body, and the faculty. Where are the relations which hold things together studied or taught? Nowhere. Have you, then, no absolute finality? Your best ascertained theses rest on an analysis of the forms of matter, while the spirit is constantly neglected.

"There is a supreme science of which some men—too late—get a glimpse, though they dare not own it. These men perceive the necessity for considering all bodies, not merely from the point of view of their mathematical properties, but also from that of their whole relations and occult affinities.

"The greatest of you all discerned, towards the end of his life, that all things were at the same time cause and effect reciprocally; that the visible worlds were co-ordinated to each other and captive to invisible spheres. He groaned over having tried to establish absolute principles. When counting his worlds, like grains of sand scattered throughout the ether, he explained their connection by the laws of planetary and molecular attraction. You hailed that man.—Well, and I tell you that he died in despair. Assuming that the centrifugal and centripetal forces, which he invented to account for the universe, were absolutely equal, the universe would stand still, and he insisted on motion, though in an undefined direction; but assuming the forces to be unequal, the worlds must at once fall into confusion. Thus his laws were not final; there was another problem still higher than that of attraction, on which his spurious glory was founded. The pull of the stars against each other, and the centripetal tendency of their individual motion, did not hinder him from seeking the branch from which the whole cluster was hanging. Unhappy man; the more he extended space, the heavier was his load. He told you that every part was in equilibrium; but whither was the whole bound?

"He contemplated the space, infinite in the eyes of men, that is filled with the groups of worlds, of which a small number are registered by our telescopes, while its immensity is proved by the rapidity of light. This sublime contemplation gave him a conception of the infinitude of worlds, planted in space like flowers in a meadow, which are born like infants, grow like men, die like old men, which live by assimilating from their atmosphere the substances proper to nourish them, which have a center and principle of life, which protect themselves from each other by an intervening space, which constitute a grand whole, that has its own life, its own destination.

"At this prospect the man trembled. He knew that life is produced by the union of the Thing with its first Principle; that death, or inertia—or gravitation—is caused by a rupture between the Thing and the motion proper to it; and he thus foresaw the crash of worlds, in ruins if God should withhold His Word. Then he set to work to seek the traces of that Word in the Apocalypse. You all thought him mad. Know this: he strove to earn forgiveness for his genius.

"Wilfrid, you came to request me to resolve equations, to fly on a rain-cloud, to plunge into the fiord and reappear as a swan. If science or miracle were the end of humanity, Moses would have left you a calculus of fluxions; Jesus Christ would have cleared up the dark places of science; His apostles would have told you whence come those immense trains of gas or of fused metals which rush revolving on a nucleus, solidifying as they seek a place in the ether, and are sometimes violently projected within range of a system where they are absorbed by a star, or crash into it by their shock, or dissolve it by the infusion of deadly vapors. St. Paul, instead of bidding you live in God, would have explained to you that nutrition is the secret bond among all creation, and the visible bond among all living animals. In our own day, the greatest miracle would be to square the circle, a problem which you pronounce impossible, but which has no doubt been solved in the progress of worlds by the intersection of some mathematical line, whose curves are apparent to the eye of spirits elevated to the highest spheres.

"Believe me, miracles are within us and not without us. Thus have natural effects been wrought, which the nations deemed to be supernatural. Would not God have been unjust if He had vouchsafed to show His power to some generations, and had refused it to others? The Brazen Rod belongs to all. Neither Moses nor Jacob, neither Zoroaster nor Paul, nor Pythagoras nor Swedenborg, neither the most obscure evangelists nor the most amazing of God's prophets, have been superior to what you might become. Only, nations have their day of faith. If positive science were indeed the end of all human effort, how is it—confess now—that every social community, every great center to which men gather, is invariably broken up by Providence? If civilization were the final cause of the human species, could intelligence perish? Would it perennially continue to be a purely individual possession?

"The greatness of all the nations that have ever been great has been founded on exceptions: when the exception ceased to be the power was dead. Would not the Seers, the Prophets, the Evangelists, have laid their hand on science instead of relying on faith; would they not have hammered at your brains rather than have touched your hearts? They all came to drive the nations to God; they all proclaimed the way of life in the simple words which lead to the Heavenly Kingdom; and fired with love and faith, and inspired by the Word which hovers over the nations, compels them, vivifies them, and uplifts them, they never use it for any human end. Your great geniuses, poets, kings, and sages, are swallowed up with their towns, and the desert has buried them under a shroud of sand; while the names of these good shepherds still are blessed and survive every catastrophe.

"We can never agree on any point. Gulfs lie between us. You are on the side of darkness, I live in the true light.

"Is this the word you desired of me? I utter it with joy; it may change you. Know, then, that there are sciences of Matter and sciences of the Spirit. Where you see bodies, I see forces tending towards each other by a creative impulse. To me the character of a body is the sign-manual of its first principles and the expression of its properties. These prin-

ciples give rise to certain affinities which elude you, but which are connected with centers. The different species to which life is distributed are unfailing springs which communicate with each other. Each has its specific function.

"'Man is at once cause and effect; he is nourished, but he nourishes in return. When you call God the Creator, you belittle Him. He did not, as you imagine, create plants, animals, and the stars; could He act by such various means? Must He not have proceeded by unity of purpose? He emitted principles which were compelled to develop in accordance with His general laws, and subject to the conditions of their environment?

"In point of fact, all the affinities are bound together by immediate similarities; the life of worlds is attracted to centers by a greedy aspiration, just as you are all driven by hunger to seek nourishment. To give you an instance of affinities linked to similarities: the secondary law on which the creations of your mind rest—music, a celestial art—is the active evidence of this principle: is it not an assemblage of sounds harmonized by number? Is not sound a condition of the air under compression, dilatation, and repercussion? You know of what the air is composed? Azote, carbon, and oxygen. Since you can produce no sound in a vacuum, it is evident that music and the human voice are the result of organic chemical elements, acting in unison with the same substances prepared within you by your mind, and coordinated by means of light, the great foster-mother of this globe: for can you have cogitated on the quantities of niter deposited by the snows, on the discharge of thunder, on plants which derive from the air the elements they contain, and have failed to conclude that it is the sun that fuses and diffuses the subtle essence which nourishes all things here below? Swedenborg truly said, 'The earth is a man.'

"All your sciences of to-day, which make you so great in your own eyes, are a mere trifle compared with the light that floods the seer.

"Cease, cease to question me; we speak a different language. I have used yours for once, to throw a flash of faith upon your souls, to cast a corner of my mantle over

you, and tempt you away to the glorious regions of prayer. Is it God's part to stoop to you? Is it not yours rather to rise to Him? If human reason has so soon exhausted the limits of its powers merely by laying God out to prove His existence, without succeeding in doing so, is it not evident that it must seek some other way of knowing Him? That other way is in ourselves. The seer and the believer have within themselves eyes more piercing than are those eyes which are bent on things of earth, and they discern a dawn.

"Understand this saying: Your most exact sciences, your boldest speculations, your brightest flashes of light, are but clouds. Above them all is the sanctuary whence the true Light is shed."

She sat down and was silent; and her calm features betrayed not the least sign of the trepidation which commonly disturbs an orator after his least inflamed speech.

Wilfrid whispered into the pastor's ear, leaning over him to do so—

"Who told her all this?"

"I do not know," was the reply.

"He was milder on the Falberg," Minna remarked.

Seraphita passed her hands over her eyes, and said with a smile—

"You are very pensive this evening, gentlemen. You treat me and Minna like men to whom you would talk politics or discuss trade, while we are but girls to whom you should tell fairy-tales while drinking tea, as is the custom in our evenings in Norway.—Come, Pastor Becker, tell me some saga which I do not know. That of Frithiof, in which you believe, and which you promised to tell me, or the story of the peasant's son who has a ship that speaks and has a soul? I dream of the frigate *Ellida*. Is it not on that fairy vessel that girls should sail the seas?"

"Since we have come down to Jarvis again," said Wilfrid, whose eyes were fixed on Seraphita as those of a robber hidden in the gloom are fixed on the spot where treasure lies, "tell me why you do not marry?"

"You are all born widowers or widows," replied she. "My marriage was decided on at my birth; I am betrothed——"

"To whom?" they all asked in a breath.

"Allow me to keep my secret," said she. "I promise, if our father will grant it, to invite you to that mysterious wedding."

"Is it to be soon?"

"I am waiting."

A long silence ensued.

"The spring is come," said Seraphita. "The noise of waters and of breaking ice has begun; will you not come to hail the first springtime of the new century?"

She rose and, followed by Wilfrid, went to a window which David had thrown open. After the long stillness of winter, the vast waters were stirring beneath the ice, and sang through the fiord like music; for there are sounds which distance glorifies, and which reach the ear in waves that seem to bring refreshment and light.

"Cease, Wilfrid," said she, "cease to cherish evil thoughts whose triumph will be a torment to endure. Who could fail to read your wishes in the sparkle of your eyes? Be good; take a step in well-doing! Is it not a step beyond the mere love of men to sacrifice yourself entirely to the happiness of the one you love? Submit to me, and I will lead you into a path where you will attain to all the greatness you dream of, and where love will be really infinite."

She left Wilfrid lost in thought.

"Can this gentle creature really be the prophetess who but now flashed lightnings from her eyes, whose words thundered about the worlds, whose hand wielded the ax of Doubt in defiance of our sciences?" said he to himself. "Have we been asleep for these few minutes?"

"Minna," said Seraphitus, returning to the pastor's daughter, "the eagles gather where the dead lie, the turtle-dove flies to the springs of living water under green and peaceful groves. The eagle soars to the skies, the dove descends from them. Venture no more into regions where you will find neither fountains nor shade. If this morning you could not look into the gulf without destruction, keep your powers for him who will love you. Go, poor child, I am betrothed, as you know."

Minna rose and went with Seraphitus to the window, where Wilfrid still was standing. They could all three hear the Sieg leaping under the force of the upper waters, which were bringing down the trees that had been frozen into the ice. The fiord had found its voice again. Illusion was over. They wondered at Nature bursting her bonds, and answering in noble harmonies to the Spirit whose call had awakened her.

When the three guests had left this mysterious being, they were filled with an indefinable feeling which was not sleep, nor torpor, nor astonishment, but a mixture of all three, which was neither twilight nor daybreak, but which made them long for light. They were all very thoughtful.

"I begin to think that she is a spirit veiled in human form," said the pastor.

Wilfrid, in his own room again, calmed and convinced, knew not how to contend with powers so divinely majestic.

Minna said to herself—

"Why will he not allow me to love him?"

V

THE FAREWELL

There is in man a phenomenon which is the despair of those reflective minds who endeavor to find some meaning in the march of social vicissitudes, and to formulate some laws of progress for the movement of intellect. However serious a fact may be, or, if supernatural facts could exist, however magnificent a miracle could be, publicly performed, the lightning flash of the fact, the thunderbolt of the miracle would be lost in the moral ocean, and the surface, rippled for an instant by some slight ebullition, would at once resume the level of its ordinary swell.

Does the Voice, to be more surely heeded, pass through an animal's jaws? Does the Hand write in strange characters on the cornice of the hall where the Court is reveling? Does the Eye light up the King's slumbers? Does the Prophet

read the dream? Does Death, when summoned, stand in the luminous space where a man's faculties revive? Does the Spirit crush matter at the foot of the mystical ladder of the seven spiritual worlds hung one above another in space, and seen by the floods of light that fall in cascades down the steps of the heavenly floor? Still however deep the inner revelation, however distinct the outward sign, by the morrow Balaam doubts both his ass and himself; Belshazzar and Pharaoh call in seers to explain the sign—Daniel or Moses.

The Spirit descends, snatches a man above the earth, opens the seas and shows him the bottom of them, calls up vanished generations, gives life to the dry bones thickly strewn in the great valley; the Apostle writes the *Apocalypse;* and twenty centuries later human science confirms the Apostle and translates his figure of speech into axioms. What difference does it make? The mass of people live to-day as they lived yesterday, as they lived in the first Olympiad, as they lived the first day after creation, and on the eve of the great cataclysm. Doubt drowns everything in its waters. The same waves beat, with the selfsame ebb and flow, on the human granite that hems in the sea of intellect.

Man asks himself whether indeed he saw what he saw, whether he really heard the words that were spoken, whether the fact was a fact, and the idea really an idea; and then he goes on his way, he thinks of his business, he obeys the inevitable servitor of Death—Forgetfulness, who throws his black cloak over the old humanity of which the younger has no remembrance. Man never ceases to move, to go on, to grow as a vegetable grows, till the day when the ax falls. If this flood-like force, this mounting pressure of bitter waters, hinders all progress, it also, no doubt, is a warning of death. None but the loftier spirits open to faith can discern Jacob's mystical stair.

After listening to the reply in which Seraphita, being so urgently questioned, had unrolled the divine scroll, as an organ fills a church with its roar, and shows the power of the musical universe by flooding the most inaccessible vaults with its solemn notes, playing, like light, among the frail wreaths of the capitals, Wilfrid went home, appalled at having seen

the world in ruins, and, above the ruins, a light unknown, shed by the hand of that young creature.

On the following day he was still thinking of it, but his terrors were allayed; he was not in ruins, nor even changed—his passions and ideas woke up fresh and vigorous.

He went to breakfast with the minister, and found him lost in the study of Jean Wier's treatise, which he had been looking through that morning to be able to reassure his visitor. With the childlike simplicity of a sage, the pastor had turned down the leaves at some pages where Jean Wier adduced authentic evidence demonstrating the possibility of such things as had happened the day before; for to the learned an idea is an event, whereas the greatest events are to them hardly an idea.

By the time these two philosophers had swallowed their fifth cup of tea, that mystical evening seemed quite natural. The heavenly truths were more or less substantial arguments, and open to discussion. Seraphita was a more or less eloquent girl; allowance must be made for her exquisite voice, her enchanting beauty, her fascinating manner, all the oratorical skill by which an actor can put a world of feelings and ideas into a sentence which in itself is often quite commonplace.

"Pooh!" said the good minister, with a little philosophical grimace, as he spread a slice of bread with salt butter, "the answer to all these riddles is six feet beneath the mold!"

"At the same time," said Wilfrid, sugaring his tea, "I cannot understand how a girl of sixteen can know so many things; for she squeezed everything into her speech as if it were in a vice."

"But only read the story of the Italian girl who, at twelve years old, could speak forty-two languages, ancient and modern," said the pastor. "And again, that of the monk who read thought by smell. These are in Jean Wier, and in a dozen other treatises which I will give you to read, a thousand proofs rather than one."

"I daresay, my dear pastor; but Seraphita remains to me a wife it would be divine joy to possess."

"She is all intellect," replied the minister dubiously.

Some days passed by, during which the snow in the valleys insensibly melted away; the greenery of the forests peeped through like a fresh growth; Norwegian nature made itself beautiful in anticipation of its brief bridal day. All this time, though the milder temperature allowed of open-air exercise, Seraphita remained in solitary seclusion. Thus Wilfrid's passion was enhanced by the aggravating vicinity of the girl he loved, and who refused to be seen. When the inscrutable being admitted Minna, Minna could detect the symptoms of an inward fever; Seraphita's voice was hollow, and her complexion was wan; whereas hitherto its transparency might have been compared by a poet to that of the diamond, it now had the sheen of the topaz.

"Have you seen her?" asked Wilfrid, who had prowled round the house, awaiting Minna's return.

"We shall lose him!" said the girl, her eyes filling with tears.

"Do not try to fool me!" cried the stranger, controlling the vehemence of tone that expressed his fury. "You can only love Seraphita as one girl loves another, not with such love as I feel for her. You cannot conceive what peril you would be in if there were anything to alarm my jealousy.—Why can I not go to see her? Is it you who raise difficulties?"

"I cannot think," said Minna, calm on the surface, but quaking with mortal terror, "what right you have to sound the depths of my heart.—Yes, I love him," she went on, summoning the courage of conviction to confess the faith of her soul. "But my jealousy, though natural to love, fears nobody here. Alas! What I am jealous of is some unconfessed feeling in which he is absorbed. Between him and me lies a space I can never abridge. I want to know whether the stars love him more than I, whether they or I would be the more eagerly devoted to his happiness? Why, why, should I not be free to declare my affection? In the presence of death we may all confess our attachment—and Seraphitus is dying."

"Minna, indeed you are under a mistake; the siren round whom my desires have so often hovered, who allows me to

admire her as she reclines on her couch, so graceful, fragile, and suffering, is not a man."

"Nay," replied Minna, in some agitation, "he whose powerful hand guided me over the Falberg to the *sæter* under the shelter of the Ice-cap up there"—and she pointed to the peak—"is certainly not a mere, weak girl. If you had but heard her prophesy! Her poetry is the music of thought. No young girl could have had the solemn depth of voice which stirred my soul."

"What certainty have you——?" Wilfrid began.

"None but that of my heart!" replied Minna in confusion, and hastily interrupting the speaker.

"Well, but I," cried Wilfrid, with a terrible glance of murderous eagerness and desire, "I, who know what the extent of her power is over me—I will prove your mistake."

At this moment, when words were rushing to Wilfrid's tongue as vehemently as ideas in his head, he saw Seraphita come out of the Swedish Castle, followed by David. The sight of her soothed his effervescent state.

"Look," said he; "none but a woman can have that grace and languor."

"He is ill; it is his last walk!" said Minna.

At a sign from his mistress, David left her, and she advanced towards Wilfrid and Minna.

"Let us go to the falls of the Sieg," said the mysterious being; it was the wish of a sufferer which all hasten to accede to.

A thin, white haze hung over the heights and dales of the fiord, and the peaks, glittering like stars, pierced above it, giving it the effect of a milky way moving onwards. Through this earth-born vapor the sun was visible as a globe of red-hot iron. In spite of these last freaks of winter, gusts of mild air, bringing the scent of the birch-trees, already covered with their yellow flowers, and the rich perfume exhaled by the larches, whose silky tufts were all displayed—breezes warm with the incense and the breathing of the earth testified to the exquisite springtime of northern lands, the brief rapture of a most melancholy nature.

The wind was beginning to roll away the veil of mist

that hardly hid the view of the gulf. The birds were singing.

Where the sun had not dried off the frost that trickled down the road in murmuring rills, the bark of the trees was pleasing to the eye by its fantastic appearance.

They all three went along the strand in silence. Wilfrid and Minna were lost in contemplation of the magical scene after their long endurance of the monotonous winter landscape. Their companion was pensive, and walked as though trying to distinguish one voice in the concert. They reached the rock between which the Sieg tumbles, at the end of the long avenue of ancient fir-trees which the torrent had cut in meandering through the forest, a path covered in by a groined arch of boughs, meeting like those of a cathedral. From thence the whole of the fiord was seen, and the sea sparkled on the horizon like a steel blade. At this instant the clouds vanished, showing the blue sky. Down in the hollows and round the trees the air was full of floating sparkles, the diamond dust swept up by a light breeze, and dazzling gems of drops were hanging at the tip of the branches of each pyramid. The torrent was rolling below; a smoke came up from the surface, tinted in the sunshine with every hue of light; its beams, decomposed, displayed perfect rainbows of the seven colors, like the play of a thousand prisms meeting and crossing there. This wild shore was curtained with various kinds of lichen, a rich web, sheeny with moisture, like some gorgeous hanging of silk. Heath, already in blossom, crowned the rocks with flowers in skillful disorder. All this stirring foliage, tempted by the living waters, hung their heads over it like hair; the larches waved their lace-like arms, as if caressing the pines, that stood rigid like careworn old men.

This luxuriant display was a contrast to the solemnity of the antique colonnades of the forests, range upon range on the hillsides, and to the broad sheet of the fiord, in which the torrent drowned its fury at the feet of the three spectators. Beyond it all, the open sea closed in this picture, traced by the greatest of poets—Chance—to which we owe the medley beauty of creation when left, as it would seem, to itself.

Jarvis was a speck almost lost in this landscape, in this immensity—sublime, as everything is, which, having but a brief existence, offers a transient image of perfection; for by a law, fatal only to our sight, creations that appear perfect, the delight of our heart and of our eyes, have but one spring to live here.

At the top of that cliff these three beings might easily fancy themselves alone in all the world.

"How exquisite!" exclaimed Wilfrid.

"Nature sings its hymns," said Seraphita. "Is not this music delicious? Confess now, Wilfrid, no woman you ever knew could create for herself so magnificent a retreat. Here I experience a feeling that the sight of great cities rarely inspires, and which makes me long to remain here, lying among these grasses of such rapid growth. Then, with my eyes on the sky, my heart laid bare, lost in the sense of immensity, I could let myself listen to the sighs of the flower, which, scarcely released from its primitive nature, would fain run about; and to the cries of the eider, aggrieved at having only wings, while I thought of the cravings of man, who has something of everything, and who also is forever full of desires!—But this, Wilfrid, is a woman's poetic fancy! You can find a voluptuous thought in that hazy expanse of water; in those fantastic veils, behind which nature plays like some coquettish bride; and in this atmosphere, where she perfumes her green hair for her bridal. You would fain see the form of a naiad in that wreath of mist, and I, as you think, ought to hear a manly voice in the torrent."

"And is not love in it all, like a bee in a flower?" replied Wilfrid, who, seeing in her for the first time some trace of earthly feeling, thought it a favorable moment for the expression of his fervent affection.

"Always the same?" said Seraphita, laughing, Minna having left them; the girl was climbing a crag where she had seen some blue saxifrages.

"Always!" exclaimed Wilfrid. "Listen," he said, with an imperious glance that met a panoply of adamant, "you know not who I am, nor what my power is, nor what I demand.

Do not reject my last entreaty. Be mine, for the sake of the world within your heart! Be mine, that my conscience may be pure, that a heavenly voice may sound in my ears and inspire me aright in the undertaking I have vowed to carry out, impelled by my hatred of the nations, but to be achieved for their welfare if only you are with me. What nobler mission may a woman dream of?—I came to these lands meditating a great scheme."

"And you are prepared to sacrifice it and its glories," said she, "to a very simple girl, whom you will love, and who will guide you into a peaceful path?"

"What do I care? I only want you! This is my secret," he replied, going on with his speech. "I have traveled all over the North, the great workshop where the new races are produced who overspread the earth like floods of humanity sent forth to renew worn-out civilization. I wanted to have begun my work on one of these points, conquering there the ascendency that force and intellect can assert over a small race; to have trained it to battle, to have declared war, and have sent it raging like a conflagration to consume Europe, while shouting to these 'Liberty!' to those 'Plunder!' to some 'Glory!' to others 'Pleasure!' I, standing meanwhile like the image of Fate, pitiless and cruel, moving like the storm which assimilates from the atmosphere the atoms of which the lightning is compounded, and feeding on men like a rapacious monster. I should then have conquered Europe; she is now at a period when she looks for the coming of the new Messiah, who is to devastate the world and to reform the nations. Europe can believe in no one but Him who will trample her under foot.

"Some day historians and poets would have justified my existence, have magnified me, have ascribed great ideas to me —to me, to whom this huge pleasantry, written in blood, is but revenge.

"But, dear Seraphita, what I have seen has disgusted me with the North; force here is too blind, and I crave for the Indies. A duel with a selfish, cowardly, and mercenary government fascinates me more. Besides, it is easier to arouse the imagination of the races that dwell at the foot of

Caucasus than to convince the minds of men in these frozen lands. I am tempted to cross the Russian steppes, to reach the frontiers of Asia, to cover it as far as the Ganges with my victorious flood of human beings, and then I shall overthrow the English rule. Seven men, at different periods, have already carried out such a scheme. I shall renew Art, as the Saracens did when Mahomet cast them over Europe. I will not be so sordid a king as those who now govern the ancient provinces of the Roman Empire, quarreling with their subjects over custom-house dues. No, nothing shall arrest the flash of my gaze or the storm of my speech! My feet, like those of Genghis Khan, shall cover a third of the globe; my hand shall grasp Asia as did that of Aurung Zeeb.

"Be my partner; take your seat, fair and lovely being, on a throne. I have never doubted my success, but with you to dwell in my heart, I should be certain of it."

"I have reigned already," said Seraphita.

The words were like the blow dealt by the ax of a skillful woodsman at the root of a sapling, felling it at once. Men alone can know what a storm a woman can rouse in a man's soul when he has been trying to impress her with his strength or his power, his intellect or his superiority, and the capricious fair nods her head and says, "Oh, that is nothing!" or, with a bored smile, observes, "I know all that," when power is as naught to her.

"What!" cried Wilfrid in despair, "the riches of Art, the wealth of the world, the splendor of a court——"

She checked him by a mere curl of her lips, and said—

"Beings more powerful than you are have offered me more."

"Well, have you no soul, then, that you are not fascinated by the prospect of consoling a great man who will sacrifice everything to dwell with you in a little home by the side of a lake?"

"Why," said she, "I am loved with a boundless love."

"By whom?" cried Wilfrid, going towards Seraphita with a frenzied gesture, as if to fling her into the foaming falls of the Sieg.

She looked at him; his arm dropped; and she pointed to Minna, who came running down, all rose and white, and as pretty as the flowers she carried in her hand.

"My child!" said Seraphitus, going forward to meet her.

Wilfrid stood on the edge of the cliff as motionless as a statue, lost in thought, longing to cast himself into the flow of the torrent, like one of the fallen trees that passed under his eyes and vanished in the abyss beneath.

"I gathered them for you," said Minna, giving the nosegay to the being she adored. "One of them—this one," said she, picking out a particular blossom, "is like the flower we gathered on the Falberg."

Seraphitus looked at the blossom and then at Minna.

"Why do you question me thus? Do you doubt me?"

"No," said the girl, "my confidence in you is unbounded. While you are far more beautiful to me than this beautiful scenery, you also seem to me to be superior in intelligence to all the rest of humanity. When I have been with you, I seem to have communed with God. I only wish——"

"What?" asked Seraphitus, with a flashing look that revealed to the girl the vast distance that divided them.

"I wish I could suffer in your stead."

"This is the most dangerous of Thy creatures," thought Seraphitus. "Is it a criminal thought, O God, to long to present her to Thee?—Have you forgotten," he said aloud, "all I told you up there?" and he pointed upwards to the peak of the Ice-cap.

"Now he is terrible again!" thought Minna with a shudder.

The roar of the Sieg formed an accompaniment to the thoughts of these three beings, who stood together for a few minutes on a projecting slab of rock, parted, as they were, by immeasurable gulfs in the spiritual world.

"Teach me then, Seraphitus," said Minna, in a voice as silvery as a pearl and as gentle as the movements of a sensitive plant. "Teach me what I must do to avoid loving you? Who could fail to admire you? And love is the admiration that is never tired."

"Poor child!" said Seraphitus, turning pale, "only one Being can be loved thus."

"Who is that?" asked Minna.

"You shall know!" was the reply in the weak voice of one who lies down to die.

"Help! He is dying!" cried Minna.

Wilfrid hastened forward, and seeing this being reclining gracefully on a block of gneiss over which time had thrown its carpet of velvet, its glistening lichens, and dusky mosses, lustrous in the sunshine,—

"She is lovely!" he exclaimed.

"This is the last glance I may give to nature in travail," said Seraphita, collecting all her strength to rise. She went to the edge of the cliff, whence she could see the whole of the sublime landscape, but lately wrapped in its mantle of snow, now full of life, green and flowery.

"Farewell," said she, "oh, burning hot-bed of love! whence everything tends from the center to the utmost circumference, while the extremities are gathered up, like a woman's hair, to be spun into the unknown plait by which thou art linked, in the invisible ether, to the Divine Idea!

"Behold him who is bending over the furrow, watered with his sweat, and pausing for an instant to look up to heaven; behold her who gathers the children in to feed them from her breast; him who knots the ropes in the fury of the tempest; her who sits in the niche of a rock awaiting her father; and, again, all those who hold out their hands for help after spending their life in thankless toil? Peace and courage to them all, and to all farewell!

"Do you hear the cry of the soldier who dies unknown, the wrath of the man who laments, disappointed, in the desert? Peace and courage to all, to all farewell! Farewell, you who die for the kings of the earth; but farewell, too, ye races without a native land, and farewell, lands without a people—seeking each other. Farewell, above all, to thee, sublime exile, who knowest not where to lay thy head! Farewell, dear innocents, dragged away by the hair of your head for having loved too well! Farewell, mothers sitting by your dying sons! Farewell, holy, broken-hearted wives! Farewell, O ye

who are poor, young, weak, and suffering, whose woes I have so often made my own! Farewell, all ye who gravitate in the sphere of instinct, suffering there for others!

"Farewell, ye discoverers who seek the East through the thick darkness of abstractions as grand as first principles; and ye martyrs of thought, led by thought to the true light! Farewell, realms of inquiry, where I can hear the moans of insulted genius, the sigh of the sage to whom light comes—too late!

"I perceive the angelic harmonies, the wafted fragrance, the inc nse from the heart exhaled by those who move on, praying, comforting, diffusing divine light and heavenly balm to sorrowing souls. Courage, Choir of Love! to whom the nations cry, 'Comfort us! Protect us!' Courage, and farewell!

"Farewell, rock of granite, thou shalt become a flower; farewell, flower, thou shalt be a dove; farewell, dove, thou shalt be a woman; farewell, woman, thou shalt be Suffering; farewell, man, thou shalt be Belief; farewell, you, who shall be all love and prayer!"

Exhausted by fatigue, this inexplicable being for the first time leaned on Wilfrid and Minna to support her back to her house. Wilfrid and Minna felt some mysterious contagion from her touch. They had gone but a few steps when they met David in tears.

"She is going to die; why have you brought her here?" he exclaimed from afar.

Seraphita was lifted up by the old man, who had recovered the strength of youth, and he flew with her to the door of the Swedish Castle, like an eagle carrying some white lamb to his eyrie.

VI

THE ROAD TO HEAVEN

On the day after Seraphita had had this foretaste of her end, and had bidden farewell to the earth, as a prisoner looks at his cell before quitting it forever, she was suffering such

pain as compelled her to remain in the absolute quietude of those who endure extreme anguish. Wilfrid and Minna went to see her, and found her lying on her couch of furs. Her soul, still shrouded in the flesh, shone through the veil, bleaching it, as it were, from day to day. The progress made by the spirit in undermining the last barrier which divided it from the infinite was called sickness; the hour of life was named death. David wept to see his mistress suffering, and refused to listen to her consolations; the old man was as unreasonable as a child. The pastor was urgent on Seraphita to take some remedies; but all was in vain.

One morning she asked for the two she had been so fond of, telling them that this was the last of her bad days. Wilfrid and Minna came in great alarm; they knew that they were about to lose her. Seraphita smiled at them, as those smile who are departing to a better world; her head dropped like a flower overweighted with dew, which opens its cup for the last time and exhales its last fragrance to the air. She looked at them with sadness, of which they were the cause; she had ceased to think of herself, and they felt this without being able to express their grief, mingled as it was with gratitude.

Wilfrid remained standing, silent and motionless, lost in such contemplation as is suggested by things so vast that they make us understand, here on earth, the Supreme Immensity. Minna, emboldened by the weakness of this powerful being, or perhaps by her dread of losing her beloved forever, bent down and murmured, "Seraphitus—let me follow you!"

"Can I hinder you?"

"But why do you not love me enough to remain here?"

"I could not love anything here."

"What, then, do you love?"

"Heaven."

"Are you worthy of heaven, if you thus despise God's creatures here?"

"Minna, can we love two beings at the same time? Is the Best-beloved really the Best-beloved if He does not fill the whole heart? Ought He not to be the first and last and

only One? Does not she who is all love quit the world for her Beloved? Her whole family becomes but a memory; she has but one relation—it is He! Her soul is no longer her own, but His! If she keeps anything within her that is not His, she does not love; no, she does not love! Is loving half-heartedly loving at all? The voice of the Beloved makes her all glad and flows through her veins like a purple tide, redder than the blood; His look is a light that flashes through her, she is fused with Him; where He is all is beautiful. He is warmth to her soul, He lights everything; near Him, is it ever cold or dark to her? He is never absent; He is always within us, we think in Him, with Him, for Him. That, Minna, is how I love Him."

"Whom?" said Minna, gripped by consuming jealousy.

"God!" replied Seraphitus, whose voice flashed upon their souls like a beacon light of freedom, blazing from hill to hill—"God, who never betrays us! God, who does not desert us, but constantly fulfills our desires, and who alone can perennially satisfy His creatures with infinite and unmixed joys! God, who is never weary, and who only has smiles! God, ever new, who pours His treasures into the soul, who purifies it without bitterness, who is all harmony, all flame! God, who enters into us to blossom there, who fulfills all our aspirations, who never calls us to account if we are His, but gives Himself wholly, ravishes us, and expands and multiplies us in Himself—God, in short!

"Minna, I love you because you may be His! I love you because if you come to Him you will be mine."

"Then lead me to Him," said she, kneeling down. "Take me by the hand; I will leave you no more."

"Lead us, Seraphita," cried Wilfrid vehemently, coming forward to kneel with Minna. "Yes, you have made me thirst for the Light and thirst for the Word; I thirst with the love you have implanted in my heart, I will cherish your soul in mine; impart your Will, and I will do whatsoever you bid me do. If I may not win you, I will treasure every feeling that you can infuse into me as part of you! If I cannot be united to you but by my strength alone, I will cling as flame clings to what it consumes.—Speak!"

"Angel!" cried the incomprehensible being, with a look that seemed to enfold them in an azure mantle. "Angel! heaven is thine inheritance!"

And a great silence fell after this cry, which rang in the souls of Wilfrid and Minna like the first chord of some celestial symphony.

"If you desire to train your feet to walk in the way that leads to heaven, remember that the first steps are rough," said the suffering soul. "God must be sought for His own sake. In that sense He is a jealous God, He will have you altogether His; but when you have given yourself to Him, He never abandons you. I will leave you the keys of the kingdom where His light shines, where you will everywhere be in the bosom of the Father, in the heart of the Bridegroom. No sentinel guards the gates; you can enter from any side; His palace, His treasures, His scepter, nothing is forbidden; He says to all, 'Take them freely!' But you must *will* to go thither. You must start as for a journey, leave your home, give up your plans, bid farewell to your friends—father, mother, sister, even the infant brother that cries—an eternal farewell, for you will never return, any more than martyrs bound for the stake returned to their homes; you must, in short, strip yourself of the feelings and possessions to which men cling; otherwise, you will not be wholly given up to your enterprise.

"Do for God what you would have done for your ambitious schemes, what you do when you take up an art, what you did when you loved a creature more than Him, or when you were studying some secret of human knowledge. Is not God Knowledge itself, Love itself, the Fount of all poetry? Is not His treasure a thing to covet? His treasure is inexhaustible, His poetry is infinite, His love unchangeable, His knowledge infallible and full of mysteries. Cling to nothing, then; He will give you All! Yes, in His heart you will find possessions beyond all compare with those you leave on earth.

"What I tell you is the truth. You will have His power, you will be allowed to use it as you use anything that belongs to your lover or your mistress.

"Alas! most men doubt, lack faith, will, and perseverance. Though some set out on the road, they presently look back and return. Few are they who know how to choose between these two extremes—to go or to stay; heaven or the muck-heap. All hesitate. Weakness leads to wandering, passion to evil ways, vice as a habit clogs the feet, and man makes no progress towards a better state.

"Every being passes a preliminary life in the Sphere of Instinct, laboring with endless toil to amass earthly treasures, only to recognize their futility at last. But how many times must we live through this first life before quitting it fit to begin another stage of trial in the Sphere of Abstractions, where the mind is exercised in false science, and the spirit is at last weary of human speech—for, matter being exhausted, the spirit prevails? How many forms must the being elect to heaven wear out, before he has learnt the preciousness of silence, and of the solitude whose star-strewn steppes are the floor of the spiritual world? It is after testing and trying the void that his eyes turn to the right path. Then there are other existences to be worn through or ever he may reach the road where the Light shines.

"Death marks a stage on this journey. After that, his experience is in a reversed order; it takes a whole life, perhaps, to acquire the virtues that are the antithesis of the errors in which he has previously lived.

"Thus, first we live the life of suffering, where torments make us thirst for love. Next comes the life of loving, where devotion to the creature teaches us devotion to the Creator; where the virtues of love, its thousand sacrifices, its angelic hope, its joys paid for by grief, its patience and resignation excite an appetite for things divine. After this comes the life during which we seek, in silence, the traces of the Word, and become humble and charitable. Then the life of high desire; finally, the life of prayer. There we find eternal sunshine; there are flowers, there is fruition!

"The qualities we acquire, and which slowly grow up in us, are the invisible bonds binding each of these existences to the next; the soul alone remembers them, since matter has no memory for spiritual things. The mind alone preserves a

tradition of former states. This unbroken legacy of the past to the present, and of the present to the future, is the secret of human genius: some have the gift of form, some the gift of number, some the gift of harmony; these are all steps in the way to the Light. Yes, whoever possesses one of these gifts, touches the infinite at one spot.

"The Word, of which I have here uttered a few axioms, has been distributed over the earth, which has reduced it to powder, and infused it into its works, its doctrines, its poetry. If the tiniest speck of it shines on a work, you say, 'This is great; this is true; this is sublime!' And that mere atom vibrates within you, giving you a foretaste of heaven. Thus, one has sickness, to divide him from the world; another has solitude, bringing him near to God; a third has poetry; in short, everything that throws you in on yourself, striking you and crushing you, is a ringing call from the Divine Sphere.

"When a being has traced the first furrow straight, it is enough to make the others by; one single profound thought, a voice once heard, an acute pang, a single echo that finds the Word in you, changes your soul forever. Every road leads to God; hence you have many chances of finding Him if you walk straight on. When the happy day dawns that finds you with your foot on the road, starting on your pilgrimage, the earth knows no more of you, it understands you no more, you are no longer in harmony with it, it rejects you.

"Those who come to know these things, and who speak a few utterances of the true Word, find not where to lay their head; they are hunted like wild beasts, and often perish on the scaffold amid the rejoicing of the assembled populace; but angels open the gates of heaven to them. So your destination is a secret between you and God, as love is a secret between two hearts. You are as the hidden treasure over which men trample, greedy for gold, but not knowing that it is there.

"Your life is one of incessant activity. Each act has a purpose that tends to God, just as when you love, your acts and thoughts are full of the creature you love; but love and its joys, love and its sensual pleasures, is but an imperfect

image of the infinite love that unites you to the Celestial Bridegroom. Every earthly joy is succeeded by anguish and dissatisfaction; for love to bring no disgust in its train, death must quench it at the fiercest, or ever you see the ashes; but God transforms our miseries into raptures, joy is multiplied by itself, it constantly increases, and knows no bounds.

"Thus, in the earthly life a transient love is ended by enduring tribulations; whereas, in the spiritual life, the tribulations of a day end in infinite joys. Your soul is forever glad. You feel God close to you, in you; He gives a flavor of holiness to all things, He shines in your soul, He seals you with His sweetness, He weans you from the earth for your own sake, and makes you care for it for His sake by suffering you to use His power. You do, in His name, the works He inspires you to do; you wipe away tears; you act for Him; you have nothing of your own; like Him, you love all creatures with inextinguishable love; you long to see them all marching towards Him, as a truly loving woman would fain see all the nations of the earth obedient to her Beloved.

"The last life—that in which all previous lives are summed up—is the life of prayer; in it every power is strung to the highest pitch, and its merits will open the gates of heaven to the being made perfect. Who can make you understand the greatness, the majesty, the power of prayer? Oh, that my voice may be as thunder in your hearts, and that it may change them! Be now, forthwith, what you will become after trials. There are certain privileged beings—prophets, seers, evangelists, martyrs, all who suffer for the Word or who have declared it—these souls cross the human spheres at a single bound, and rise at once to prayer. So, too, do those who are consumed by the flame of faith. Be ye then such a daring pair! God accepts such temerity; He loves those who take Him with violence, He never rejects such as can force their way to Him. Understand this: Desire, the torrent of will, is so potent in a man, that a single jet forcibly emitted is enough to win anything, a single cry is often enough when uttered under the stress of faith. Be ye one of those beings, full of force, will, and love! Be victorious

over the earth! Let the hunger and thirst for God possess you wholly; run to Him as the thirsting hart runs to the water-brook. Desire will give you wings; tears, the flowers of repentance, will fall like a heavenly baptism, whence your nature will come forth purified. From the bosom of these waters leap into prayer!

"Silence and meditation are efficacious means of entering on this road; God always reveals Himself to the solitary and contemplative man. By this method the necessary separation is effected between matter, which has so long held you shrouded in darkness, and the spirit, which is born in you and gives you light, and day will dawn in your soul. Your broken heart receives the light which floods it; you no longer feel convictions, but dazzling certainties. The poet has expression, the sage meditates, the righteous man acts; but he who is on the frontier of the divine world prays, and his prayer is expression, meditation, and action all in one! Yes, his prayer contains everything, includes everything; it completes your nature by showing you the Spirit and the Way.

"Prayer is the fair and radiant daughter of all the human virtues, the arch connecting heaven and earth, the sweet companion that is alike the lion and the dove; and prayer will give you the key of heaven. As pure and as bold as innocence, as strong as all things are that are entire and single, this fair and invincible queen rests on the material world; she has taken possession of it; for, like the sun, she casts about it a sphere of light. The universe belongs to him who will, who can, who knows how to pray; but he must will, he must be able, and he must know how—in one word, he must have power, faith, and wisdom. And, indeed, when prayer is the outcome of so many trials, it is the consummation of all truth, of all power, of all emotion. The offspring of the laborious, slow, and persistent development of every natural property, and alive by the divine insufflation of the Word, she has enchantments in her hand, she is the crown of worship—neither material worship, which has its symbols, nor spiritual worship, which has its formulas, but worship of the divine order.

"We do not then say prayers; prayer lights up within us, and is a faculty which acts of itself: it acquires the vital activity which lifts it above all forms; it links the soul to God, and you are joined to Him as the root of a tree is joined to the earth; the elements of things flow in your veins, and you live the life of the worlds themselves. Prayer bestows external conviction by enabling you to penetrate the world of matter through a cohesion of all your faculties with elementary substances; it bestows internal conviction by evolving your very essence, and mingling it with that of the spiritual spheres.

"To pray thus you must attain to absolute freedom from the flesh; you must be refined in the furnace to the purity of a diamond; for that perfect communion can only be achieved by absolute quiescence, the stilling of every storm. Yes, prayer, literally an aspiration of the soul set wholly free from the body, bears up every power, applying them all to the constant and persistent union of the visible and the invisible. When you possess the gift of praying without weariness, with love, assurance, force, and intelligence, your spiritualized nature soon attains to power. It passes beyond everything, like the whirlwind or the thunder, and partakes of the nature of God. You acquire alacrity of spirit; in one instant you can be present in every region; you are borne, like the Word itself, from one end of the world to the other. There is a harmony—you join in it; there is a light—you see it; there is a melody—its counterpart is in you. In that frame you will feel your intellect expanding, growing, and its insight reaching to prodigious distances; in fact, to the spirit, time and space are not. Distance and duration are proportions proper to matter; and spirit and matter have nothing in common.

"Although these things proceed in silence and stillness, without disturbance or external motion, everything is action in prayer; but vital action, devoid of all substantiality, refined like the motion of worlds into a pure and invisible force. It comes down from above like light, and gives life to the souls that lie in its rays, as nature lies in those of the sun. It everywhere resuscitates virtue, purifies and sanctifies

action, peoples the solitude, and gives a foretaste of eternal bliss. When once you have known the ecstasy of the divine transport that comes of your internal struggles, there is no more to be said; when once you have grasped the sistrum on which to praise God, you will never lay it down. Hence the isolation in which angelic spirits dwell and their scorn of all that constitutes human joys.

"I say unto you, they are cut off from the number of those who must die; if they understand their speech they no longer understand their ideas; they are amazed by their doings, by what is termed politics, by earthly laws and communities; to them there are no mysteries, nothing but truth. Those who have attained the degree at which their eyes can discern the gates of heaven, and who, without casting a single glance behind, without expressing a single regret, can look down upon the worlds and read their destinies,—those, I say, are silent, and wait and endure the last conflict; the last is the hardest, resignation is the supreme virtue. To dwell in exile and make no complaint, to have no care for things on earth and yet to smile, to belong to God and be left among men!

"Do you not plainly hear the voice that cries to you, 'On! on!'? Often in a celestial vision the angels descend and wrap you in song. Then you must see them soar back to the hive without a tear, without a murmur. To murmur would be to fail. Resignation is the fruit that ripens at the gate of heaven. How impressive and beautiful are the calm smile, the unruffled brow of the resigned creature! How radiant the light that adorns his face! Those who come within his range grow better; his look is penetrating and pathetic. He triumphs merely by his presence, more eloquent in his silence than the prophet in his speech. He stands alert like a faithful dog listening for his master.

"Stronger than love, more eager than hope, greater than faith, Resignation is the adorable maiden who, prone on the earth, clings for an instant to the palm she has won by leaving the print of her pure white feet; and when she is no more, men come in crowds and say, 'Behold!' God preserves her there as an image, and at her feet creep all the shapes and species of animal life seeking their way. Now and again

she shakes and sheds the light that emanates from her hair, and we see; she speaks, and we listen; and all say to one another, 'A miracle!'

"Often she triumphs in the name of God; men in their terror deny her and put her to death; she lays down her sword and smiles at the stake after saving the nations!

"How many pardoned angels have stepped from martyrdom to heaven! Sinai and Golgotha are not here nor there. The angel is crucified everywhere, and in every sphere. Sighs go up to God from every world. The earth on which we live is one ear of the harvest; humanity is but a species in the vast field where flowers are grown for heaven.

"In short, God is everywhere the same, and it is easy everywhere to go up to Him by prayer."

After these words, falling as from the lips of a second Hagar in the desert, and stirring the souls they pierced like the spears shot by the fiery word of Isaiah, the Being was silent to collect some little remaining strength. Neither Wilfrid nor Minna dared to speak. Then on a sudden HE sat up to die.

"Soul of the universe, oh God, whom I love for Thyself! Thou, Judge and Father, gauge a fervor that knows no limit but Thine infinite goodness! Impart to me Thine essence and Thy faculties, that I may be more truly Thine! Take me, that I may no longer be my own. If I am not duly purified, cast me back into the furnace. If I am not finely molded, let me be made into some useful plowshare or victorious sword. Grant me some glorious martyrdom to proclaim Thy word. Even if Thou reject me, I will bless Thy justice. If my exceeding love may win in a moment what hard and patient labor may not obtain, snatch me up in Thy chariot of fire! Whether Thou shalt grant me to triumph or to suffer again, blessed be Thou! But if I suffer for Thee, is not that a triumph! Take me—seize, snatch, drag me away! Or, if Thou wilt, reject me! Thou art He whom I worship, and who can do no wrong.—Ah!" he cried after a pause, "the bonds are breaking. Pure spirits, holy throng, come forth from the depths, fly over the surface of the luminous flood! The hour has struck, come, gather

round me. We will sing at the gates of the sanctuary, our chants shall disperse the last lingering clouds. We will unite to hail the morn of everlasting day. Behold the dawn of the true Light! Why cannot I take my friends with me? —Farewell, poor earth, farewell!"

VII

THE ASSUMPTION

This last hymn was not uttered in words, nor expressed by gestures, nor by any of the signs which serve men as a means of communicating their thoughts, but as the soul speaks to itself; for, at the moment when Seraphita was revealed in her true nature, her ideas were no longer enslaved to human language. The vehemence of her last prayer had broken the bonds. Like a white dove, the soul hovered for a moment above this body, of which the exhausted materials were about to dissever.

The aspiration of this soul to heaven was so infectious, that Wilfrid and Minna failed to discern death as they saw the radiant spark of life.

They had fallen on their knees when Seraphitus had turned to the dawn, and they were inspired by his ecstasy.

The fear of the Lord, who creates man anew and purges him of his dross, consumed their hearts. Their eyes were closed to the things of the earth, and opened to the glories of heaven.

Though surprised by the trembling before God which overcame some of those seers known to men as prophets, they still trembled, like them, when they found themselves within the circle where the glory of the Spirit was shining.

Then the veil of the flesh, which had hitherto hidden him from them, insensibly faded away, revealing the divine substance. They were left in the twilight of the dawn, whose pale light prepared them to see the true light, and to hear the living word without dying of it.

In this condition they both began to understand the im-

measurable distances that divide the things of earth from the things of heaven.

The life on whose brink they stood, trembling and dazzled in a close embrace, as two children take refuge side by side to gaze at a conflagration—that Life gave no hold to the senses. The Spirit was above them; it shed fragrance without odor, and melody without the help of sound; here, where they knelt, there were neither surfaces, nor angles, nor atmosphere. They dared no longer question him nor gaze on him, but remained under his shadow, as under the burning rays of the tropical sun we dare not raise our eyes for fear of being blinded.

They felt themselves near to him, though they could not tell by what means they thus found themselves, as in a dream, on the border line of the visible and the invisible, nor how they had ceased to see the visible and perceived the invisible.

They said to themselves, "If he should touch us, we shall die!" But the Spirit was in the infinite, and they did not know that in the infinite time and space are not, that they were divided from him by gulfs, though apparently so near. Their souls not being prepared to receive a complete knowledge of the faculties of that life, they only perceived it darkly, apprehending it according to their weakness.

Otherwise, when the Living Word rang forth, of which the distant sound fell on their ear, its meaning entering into their soul as life enters into a body, a single tone of that Word would have swept them away, as a whirl of fire seizes a straw.

Thus they beheld only what their nature, upheld by the power of the Spirit, allowed them to see; they heard only so much as they were able to hear.

Still, in spite of these mitigations, they shuddered as they heard the voice of the suffering soul, the hymn of the spirit awaiting life, and crying out for it. That cry froze the very marrow in their bones.

The Spirit knocked at the sacred gate.

"What wilt thou?" asked a choir, whose voice rang through all the worlds.

"To go to God."

"Hast thou conquered?"

"I have conquered the flesh by abstinence; I have vanquished false speech by silence; I have vanquished false knowledge by humility; I have vanquished pride by charity; I have vanquished the earth by love; I have paid my tribute of suffering; I am purified by burning for the faith; I have striven for life by prayer; I wait adoring, and I am resigned."

But no reply came.

"The Lord be praised!" said the Spirit, believing himself rejected. His tears flowed, and fell in dew on the kneeling witnesses, who shuddered at the judgments of God.

On a sudden, the trumpets sounded for the victory of the Angel in this last test; their music filled space, like a sound met by an echo; it rang through it, making the universe tremble. Wilfrid and Minna felt the world shrink under their feet. They shivered, shaken by the terrors of apprehending the mystery that was to be accomplished.

There was, in fact, a vast stir, as though the eternal legions were forming to march, and gathering in spiral order. The worlds spun round, like clouds swept away by a mad whirlwind. It was all in a moment. The veils were rent; they saw far above them, as it were, a star immeasurably brighter than the brightest star in the skies; it fell from its place like a thunderbolt, still flashing like the lightning, paling in its flight all that they had ever hitherto thought to be light.

This was the messenger bearing the good tidings, and the plume in his helmet was a flame of life. He left behind him a wake, filled up at once by the waves of the luminous flood he passed through.

He bore a palm and a sword; with the palm he touched the Spirit, and it was transfigured; its white wings spread without a sound.

At the communication of the Light, which changed the Spirit into a seraph, the garb of heavenly armor that clothed its glorious form, shed such radiance that the two seers were blinded. And, like the three apostles to whose sight Jesus appeared, Wilfrid and Minna were conscious of the burden

of their bodies, which hindered them from complete and unclouded intuition of the Word and the True Life.

They saw the nakedness of their souls, and could measure their lack of brightness by comparison with the halo of the seraph, in which they stood as a shameful spot. They felt an ardent desire to rush back into the mire of the universe, to endure trial there, so as to be able some day to utter at the sacred gate the answer spoken by the glorified Spirit.

That seraph knelt down at the gate of the sanctuary, which he could at last see face to face, and said, pointing to them–

"Grant them to see more clearly. They will love the Lord, and proclaim His Word."

In answer to this prayer, a veil fell. Whether the unknown power that laid a hand on the two seers did for a moment annihilate their physical bodies, or whether it released their spirit to soar free, they were aware of a separation in themselves of the pure from the impure.

Then the seraph's tears rose round them in the form of a vapor which hid the lower worlds from their eyes, and wrapped them round and carried them away, and gave them oblivion of earthly meanings, and the power of understanding the sense of divine things. The True Light appeared; it shed light on all creation, which, to them, looked barren indeed when they saw the source whence the worlds, earthly, spiritual, and divine, derive motion.

Each world had a center to which tended every atom of the sphere; these worlds were themselves each an atom tending to the center of their species. Each species had its center in the vast celestial region that is in communion with the inexhaustible and flaming *motor power of all that exists.* Thus, from the most vast to the smallest of the worlds, and from the smallest sphere to the minutest atom of the creation that constitutes it, each thing was an individual, and yet all was one.

What, then, was the purpose of the Being, immutable in Essence and Faculty, but able to communicate them without loss, able to manifest them as phenomena without separating them from Himself, and causing everything outside Himself

to be a creation immutable in its essence and mutable in its form? The two guests bidden to this high festival could only see the order and arrangement of beings, and wonder at their immediate ends. None but angels could go beyond that, and know the means and understand the purpose.

But that which those two chosen ones could contemplate, and of which they carried away the evidence to be a light to their souls forever after, was the certainty of the action of worlds and beings, and a knowledge of the effort with which they all tend to a final result. They heard the various parts of the infinite forming a living melody; and at each beat, when the concord made itself felt as a deep expiration, the worlds, carried on by this unanimous motion, bowed to the Omnipotent One, who in His unapproachable center made all things issue from Him and return to Him. This ceaseless alternation of voices and silence seemed to be the rhythm of the holy hymn that was echoed and sustained from age to age.

Wilfrid and Minna now understood some of the mysterious words of the being who on earth had appeared to them under the form which was intelligible to each—Seraphitus to one, Seraphita to the other—seeing that here all was homogeneous. Light gave birth to melody, and melody to light; colors were both light and melody; motion was number endowed by the Word; in short, everything was at once sonorous, diaphanous, and mobile; so that, everything existing in everything else, extension knew no limits, and the angels could traverse it everywhere to the utmost depths of the infinite.

They saw then how puerile were the human sciences of which they had heard. Before them lay a view without any horizon, an abyss into which ardent craving invited them to plunge; but burdened with their hapless bodies, they had the desire without the power.

The seraph lightly spread his wings to take his flight, and did not look back at them—he had nothing now in common with the earth.

He sprang upwards; the vast span of his dazzling pinions covered the two seers like a beneficent shade, allowing them to raise their eyes and see him borne away in his glory

escorted by the rejoicing archangel. He mounted like a beaming sun rising from the bosom of the waters; but, more happy he than the daystar, and destined to more glorious ends, he was not bound, like inferior creatures, to a circular orbit; he followed the direct line of the infinite, tending undeviatingly to the central one, to be lost there in life eternal, and to absorb into his faculties and into his essence the power of rejoicing through love and the gift of comprehending through wisdom.

The spectacle that was then suddenly unveiled to the eyes of the two seers overpowered them by its vastness, for they felt like atoms whose smallness was comparable only to the minutest fraction which infinite divisibility allows man to conceive of, brought face to face with the infinitely numerous which God alone can contemplate as He contemplates Himself.

What humiliation and what greatness in those two points, strength and love, which the seraph's first desire had placed as two links uniting the immensity of the inferior universe to the immensity of the superior universe! They understood the invisible bonds by which material worlds are attached to the spiritual worlds. As they recalled the stupendous efforts of the greatest human minds, they discerned the principle of melody as they heard the songs of heaven which gave them all the sensations of color, perfume, and thought, and reminded them of the innumerable details of all the creations, as an earthly song can revive the slenderest memories of love.

Strung by the excessive exaltation of their faculties to a pitch for which there is no word in any language, for a moment they were suffered to glance into the divine sphere. There all was gladness. Myriads of angels winged their way with one consent and without confusion, all alike but all different, as simple as the wild rose, as vast as worlds.

Wilfrid and Minna did not see them come nor go; they suddenly pervaded the infinite with their presence, as stars appear in the unfathomable ether. The blaze of all their diadems flashed into light in space, as the heavenly fire is lighted when the day rises among mountains. Waves of light fell from their hair, and their movements gave rise to

undulating throbs like the dancing waves of a phosphorescent sea.

The two seers could discern the seraph as a darker object amid deathless legions, whose wings were as the mighty plumage of a forest swept by the breeze. And then, as though all the arrows of a quiver were shot off at once, the spirits dispelled with a breath every vestige of his former shape; as the seraph mounted higher he was purified, and erelong he was no more than a filmy image of what they had seen when he was first transfigured—lines of fire with no shadow. Up and up, receiving a fresh gift at each circle, while the sign of his election was transmitted to the highest heaven, whither he mounted purer and purer.

None of the voices ceased; the hymn spread in all its modes—

"Hail to him who rises to life! Come, flower of the worlds, diamond passed through the fire of affliction, pearl without spot, desire without flesh, new link between earth and heaven, be thou Light! Conquering spirit, queen of the world, fly to take thy crown; victorious over the earth, receive thy diadem! Be one of us!"

The angel's virtues reappeared in all their beauty. His first longing for heaven was seen in the grace of tender infancy. His deeds adorned him with brightness like constellations; his acts of faith blazed like the hyacinth of the skies, the hue of the stars. Charity decked him with Oriental pearls, treasured tears. Divine love bowered him in roses, and his pious resignation by its whiteness divested him of every trace of earthliness.

Soon, to their eyes, he was no more than a speck of flame, growing more and more intense, its motion lost in the melodious acclamations that hailed his arrival in heaven.

The celestial voices made the two exiles weep.

Suddenly the silence of death spread like a solemn veil from the highest to the lowest sphere, throwing Wilfrid and Minna into unutterable expectancy. At that instant the seraph was lost in the heart of the sanctuary, where he received the gift of eternal life.

Then they were aware of an impulse of intense adoration,

which filled them with rapture mingled with awe. They felt that every being had fallen prostrate in the divine spheres, in the spiritual spheres, and in the world of darkness. The angels bent the knee to do honor to his glory, the spirits bent the knee to testify to their eagerness, and in the abyss all knelt, shuddering with awe.

A mighty shout of joy broke out, as a choked spring breaks forth again, tossing up its thousands of flower-like jets, mirroring the sun which turns the sparkling drops to diamond and pearl, at the instant when the seraph emerged, a blaze of light, crying:

"Eternal! Eternal! Eternal!"

The worlds heard him and acknowledged him; he became one with them as God is, and took possession of the infinite.

The seven divine worlds were aroused by his voice and answered him.

At this instant there was a great rush, as if whole stars were purified and went up in dazzling glory to be eternal. Perhaps the seraph's first duty was to call all creations filled with the Word to come to God.

But the hallelujah was already dying away in the ears of Wilfrid and Minna, like the last waves of dying music. The glories of heaven were already vanishing, like the hues of a setting sun amid curtains of purple and gold.

Death and impurity were repossessing themselves of their prey.

As they resumed the bondage of the flesh from which their spirit had for a moment been released by a sublime trance, the two mortals felt as on awaking in the morning from a night of splendid dreams, of which reminiscences float in the brain, though the senses have no knowledge of them, and human language would fail to express them. The blackness of the limbo into which they fell was the sphere where the sun of visible worlds shines.

"We must go down again," said Wilfrid to Minna.

"We will do as he bids us," replied she. "Having seen the worlds moving on towards God, we know the right way. —Our starry diadems are above!"

They fell into the abyss, into the dust of the lower worlds, and suddenly saw the earth as it were a crypt, of which the prospect was made clear to them by the light they brought back in their souls, for it still wrapped them in a halo, and through it they still vaguely heard the vanishing harmonies of heaven. This was the spectacle which of old fell on the mind's eye of the prophets. Ministers of various religions, all calling themselves true, kings consecrated by force and fear, warriors and conquerors sharing the nations, learned men and rich lording it over a refractory and suffering populace whom they trampled under foot,—these were all attended by their followers and their women, all were clad in robes of gold, silver, and azure, covered with pearls and gems torn from the bowels of the earth or from the depths of the sea by the perennial toil of sweating and blaspheming humanity. But in the eyes of the exiles this wealth and splendor, harvested with blood, were but filthy rags.

"What do ye here in motionless ranks?" asked Wilfrid.

They made no answer.

"What do ye here in motionless ranks?"

But they made no answer.

Wilfrid laid his hands on them and shouted—

"What do ye here in motionless ranks?"

By a common impulse they all opened their robes and showed him their bodies, dried up, eaten by worms, corrupt, falling to dust, and consumed by horrible diseases. "Ye lead the nations to death," said Wilfrid; "ye have defiled the earth, perverted the Word, prostituted justice. Ye have eaten the herb of the field, and now ye would kill the lambs! Do ye think that there is justification in showing your wounds? I shall warn those of my brethren who can still hear the Voice, that they may slake their thirst at the springs that you have hidden."

"Let us save our strength for prayer," said Minna. "It is not your mission to be a prophet, nor a redeemer, nor an evangelist. We are as yet only on the margin of the lowest sphere; let us strive to cleave through space on the pinions of prayer."

"You are my sole love!"

"You are my sole strength!"

"We have had a glimpse of the higher mysteries; we are, each to the other, the only creatures here below with whom joy and grief are conceivable. Come then, we will pray; we know the road, we will walk in it."

"Give me your hand," said the girl. "If we always walk together, the path will seem less rough and not so long."

"Only with you," said the young man, "could I traverse that vast desert without allowing myself to repine."

"And we will go to heaven together!" said she.

The clouds fell, forming a dark canopy. Suddenly the lovers found themselves kneeling by a dead body, which old David was protecting from prying curiosity, and insisted on burying with his own hands.

Outside, the first summer of the nineteenth century was in all its glory; the lovers fancied they could hear a voice in the sunbeams. They breathed heavenly perfume from the new-born flowers, and said as they took each other by the hand—

"The vast ocean that gleams out there is an image of that we saw above!"

"Whither are you going?" asked Pastor Becker.

"We mean to go to God." said they. "Come with us, father."

GENEVA AND PARIS,
December 1833—*November* 1835.

LOUIS LAMBERT

[*Louis Lambert* appeared first—as *Notice Biographique sur L. L.*—in 1832 in the *Nouveaux Contes Philosophiques;* then in February 1833 as a small volume by itself, a good deal enlarged, and entitled *Le Livre Mystique*, published by Werdet in 1835. In 1842, it was again published by Charpentier, and in 1846 it joined the *Comédie.*]

LOUIS LAMBERT

Dedication:

"*Et nunc et semper dilectæ dicatum.*"

LOUIS LAMBERT was born in 1797 at Montoire, a little town in the Vendômois. where his father owned a tannery of no great magnitude, and intended that his son should succeed him; but his precocious bent for study modified the paternal decision. For, indeed, the tanner and his wife adored Louis, their only child, and never contradicted him in anything.

At the age of five Louis had begun by reading the Old and New Testaments; and these two Books, including so many books, had sealed his fate. Could that childish imagination understand the mystical depths of the Scriptures? Could it so early follow the flight of the Holy Spirit across the worlds? Or was it merely attracted by the romantic touches which abound in those Oriental poems! Our narrative will answer these questions to some readers.

One thing resulted from this first reading of the Bible: Louis went all over Montoire begging for books, and he obtained them by those winning ways peculiar to children, which no one can resist. While devoting himself to these studies under no sort of guidance, he reached the age of ten.

At that period substitutes for the army were scarce; rich families secured them long beforehand to have them ready when the lots were drawn. The poor tanner's modest fortune did not allow of their purchasing a substitute for their son, and they saw no means allowed by law for evading the conscription but that of making him a priest; so, in 1807, they sent him to his maternal uncle, the parish priest of Mer, another small town on the Loire, not far from Blois. This arrangement at once satisfied Louis's passion for knowledge and his parents' wish not to expose him to the dread

chances of war; and, indeed, his taste for study and precocious intelligence gave grounds for hoping that he might rise to high fortunes in the Church.

After remaining for about three years with his uncle, an old and not uncultured Oratorian, Louis left him early in 1811 to enter the college at Vendôme, where he was maintained at the cost of Madame de Staël.

Lambert owed the favor and patronage of this celebrated lady to chance, or shall we not say to Providence, who can smooth the path of forlorn genius. To us, indeed, who do not see below the surface of human things, such vicissitudes, of which we find many examples in the lives of great men, appear to be merely the result of physical phenomena; to most biographers the head of a man of genius rises above the herd as some noble plant in the fields attracts the eye of the botanist by its splendor. This comparison may well be applied to Louis Lambert's adventure; he was accustomed to spend the time allowed him by his uncle for holidays at his father's house; but instead of indulging, after the manner of schoolboys, in the sweets of the delightful *far niente* that tempts us at every age, he set out every morning with part of a loaf and his books, and went to read and meditate in the woods, to escape his mother's remonstrances, for she believed such persistent study to be injurious. How admirable is a mother's instinct! From that time reading was in Louis a sort of appetite which nothing could satisfy; he devoured books of every kind, feeding indiscriminately on religious works, history, philosophy, and physics. He has told me that he found indescribable delight in reading dictionaries for lack of other books, and I readily believed him. What scholar has not many a time found pleasure in seeking the probable meaning of some unknown word? The analysis of a word, its physiognomy and history, would be to Lambert matter for long dreaming. But these were not the instinctive dreams by which a boy accustoms himself to the phenomena of life, steels himself to every moral or physical perception—n involuntary education which subsequently brings forth uit both in the understanding and character of a man; no, is mastered the facts, and he accounted for them after

seeking out both the principle and the end with the mother wit of a savage. Indeed, from the age of fourteen, by one of those startling freaks in which nature sometimes indulges, and which proved how anomalous was his temperament, he would utter quite simply ideas of which the depth was not revealed to me till a long time after.

"Often," he has said to me when speaking of his studies, "often have I made the most delightful voyage, floating on a word down the abyss of the past like an insect embarked on a blade of grass tossing on the ripples of a stream. Starting from Greece, I would get to Rome, and traverse the whole extent of modern ages. What a fine book might be written of the life and adventures of a word! It has, of course, received various stamps from the occasions on which it has served its purpose; it has conveyed different ideas in different places; but is it not still grander to think of it under the three aspects of soul, body, and motion? Merely to regard it in the abstract, apart from its functions, its effects, and its influence, is enough to cast one into an ocean of meditations. Are not most words colored by the idea they represent? Then, to whose genius are they due? If it takes great intelligence to create a word, how old may human speech be? The combination of letters, their shapes, and the look they give to the word, are the exact reflection, in accordance with the character of each nation, of the unknown beings whose traces survive in us.

"Who can philosophically explain the transition from sensation to thought, from thought to word, from the word to its hieroglyphic presentment, from hieroglyphics to the alphabet, from the alphabet to written language, of which the eloquent beauty resides in a series of images, classified by rhetoric, and forming, in a sense, the hieroglyphics of thought? Was it not the ancient mode of representing human ideas as embodied in the forms of animals that gave rise to the shapes of the first signs used in the East for writing down language? Then has it not left its traces by traditio on our modern languages, which have all seized some remna of the primitive speech of nations, a majestic and sol tongue whose grandeur and solemnity decrease as commur

grow old; whose sonorous tones ring in the Hebrew Bible, and still are noble in Greece, but grow weaker under the progress of successive phases of civilization?

"Is it to this time-honored spirit that we owe the mysteries lying buried in every human word? In the word *True* do we not discern a certain imaginary rectitude? Does not the compact brevity of its sound suggest a vague image of chaste nudity and the simplicity of Truth in all things? The syllable seems to me singularly crisp and fresh.

"I chose the formula of an abstract idea on purpose, not wishing to illustrate the case by a word which should make it too obvious to the apprehension, as the word *Flight* for instance, which is a direct appeal to the senses.

"But is it not so with every root word? They all are stamped with a living power that comes from the soul, and which they restore to the soul through the mysterious and wonderful action and reaction between thought and speech. Might we not speak of it as a lover who finds on his mistress's lips as much love as he gives? Thus, by their mere physiognomy, words call to life in our brain the beings which they serve to clothe. Like all beings, there is but one place where their properties are at full liberty to act and develop. But the subject demands a science to itself perhaps!"

And he would shrug his shoulders, as much as to say, "But we are too high and too low!"

Louis's passion for reading had on the whole been very well satisfied. The curé of Mer had two or three thousand volumes. This treasure had been derived from the plunder committed during the Revolution in the neighboring châteaux and abbeys. As a priest who had taken the oath, the worthy man had been able to choose the best books from among these precious libraries, which were sold by the pound. In three years Louis Lambert had assimilated the contents of all the books in his uncle's library that were worth reading. The process of absorbing ideas by means of reading had become him a very strange phenomenon. His eye took in six or n lines at once, and his mind grasped the sense with a ness as remarkable as that of his eye; sometimes even one

word in a sentence was enough to enable him to seize the gist of the matter.

His memory was prodigious. He remembered with equal exactitude the ideas he had derived from reading, and those which had occurred to him in the course of meditation or conversation. Indeed, he had every form of memory—for places, for names, for words, things, and faces. He not only recalled any object at will, but he saw them in his mind, situated, lighted, and colored as he had originally seen them. And this power he could exert with equal effect with regard to the most abstract efforts of the intellect. He could remember, as he said, not merely the position of a sentence in the book where he had met with it, but the frame of mind he had been in at remote dates. Thus his was the singular privilege of being able to retrace in memory the whole life and progress of his mind, from the ideas he had first acquired to the last thought evolved in it, from the most obscure to the clearest. His brain, accustomed in early youth to the mysterious mechanism by which human faculties are concentrated, drew from this rich treasury endless images full of life and freshness, on which he fed his spirit during those lucid spells of contemplation.

"Whenever I wish it," said he to me in his own language, to which a fund of remembrance gave precocious originality, "I can draw a veil over my eyes. Then I suddenly see within me a camera obscura, where natural objects are reproduced in purer forms than those under which they first appeared to my external sense."

At the age of twelve his imagination, stimulated by the perpetual exercise of his faculties, had developed to a point which permitted him to have such precise concepts of things which he knew only from reading about them, that the image stamped on his mind could not have been clearer if he had actually seen them, whether this was by a process of analogy or that he was gifted with a sort of second sight by which he could command all nature.

"When I read the story of the battle of Austerlitz," said he to me one day, "I saw every incident. The roar of the cannon, the cries of the fighting men rang in my ears, and

made my inmost self quiver; I could smell the powder; I heard the clatter of horses and the voices of men; I looked down on the plain where armed nations were in collision, just as if I had been on the heights of Santon. The scene was as terrifying as a passage from the Apocalypse." On the occasions when he brought all his powers into play, and in some degree lost consciousness of his physical existence, and lived on only by the remarkable energy of his mental powers, whose sphere was enormously expanded, he left space behind him, to use his own words.

But I will not here anticipate the intellectual phases of his life. Already, in spite of myself, I have reversed the order in which I ought to tell the history of this man, who transferred all his activities to thinking, as others throw all their life into action.

A strong bias drew his mind to mystical studies.

"*Abyssus abyssum*," he would say. "Our spirit is abysmal and loves the abyss. In childhood, manhood, and old age, we are always eager for mysteries in whatever form they present themselves."

This predilection was disastrous; if indeed his life can be measured by ordinary standards, or if we may gauge another's happiness by our own or by social notions. This taste for the "things of heaven," another phrase he was fond of using, this *mens divinior*, was due perhaps to the influence produced on his mind by the first books he read at his uncle's. Saint-Theresa and Madame Guyon were a sequel to the Bible; they had the firstfruits of his manly intelligence, and accustomed him to those swift reactions of the soul of which ecstasy is at once the result and the means. This line of study, this peculiar taste, elevated his heart, purified, ennobled it, gave him an appetite for the divine nature, and suggested to him the almost womanly refinement of feeling which is instinctive in great men; perhaps their sublime superiority is no more than the desire to devote themselves which characterizes woman, only transferred to the greatest things.

As a result of these early impressions, Louis passed immaculate through his school life; this beautiful virginity of

the senses naturally resulted in the richer fervor of his blood, and in increased faculties of mind.

The Baroness de Staël, forbidden to come within forty leagues of Paris, spent several months of her banishment on an estate near Vendôme. One day, when out walking, she met on the skirts of the park the tanner's son, almost in rags, and absorbed in reading. The book was a translation of *Heaven and Hell*. At that time M. Saint-Martin, M. de Gence, and a few other French or half-German writers were almost the only persons in the French Empire to whom the name of Swedenborg was known. Mme. de Staël, greatly surprised, took the book from him with the roughness she affected in her questions, looks, and manners, and with a keen glance at Lambert,—

"Do you understand all this?" she asked.

"Do you pray to God?" said the child.

"Why? yes!"

"And do you understand Him?"

The Baroness was silent for a moment; then she sat down by Lambert, and began to talk to him. Unfortunately, my memory, though retentive, is far from being so trustworthy as my friend's, and I have forgotten the whole of the dialogue excepting those first words.

Such a meeting was of a kind to strike Mme. de Staël very greatly; on her return home she said but little about it, notwithstanding an effusiveness which in her became mere loquacity; but it evidently occupied her thoughts.

The only person now living who preserves any recollection of the incident, and whom I catechised to be informed of what few words Mme. de Staël had let drop, could with difficulty recall these words spoken by the Baroness as describing Lambert, "He is a real seer."

Louis failed to justify in the eyes of the world the high hopes he had inspired in his protectress. The transient favor she showed him was regarded as a feminine caprice, one of the fancies characteristic of artist souls. Mme. de Staël determined to save Louis Lambert alike from serving the Emperor or the Church, and to preserve him for the glorious destiny which, she thought, awaited him; for she

made him out to be a second Moses snatched from the watei Before her departure she instructed a friend of hers, M. (Corbigny, to send her Moses in due course to the Hig School at Vendôme; then she probably forgot him.

Having entered this college at the age of fourteen, earl in 1811, Lambert would leave it at the end of 1814, whei he had finished the course of Philosophy. I doubt whethei during the whole time he ever heard a word of his benefactress —if indeed it was the act of a benefactress to pay for a lad's schooling for three years without a thought of his future prospects, after diverting him from a career in which he might have found happiness. The circumstances of the time, and Louis Lambert's character, may to a great extent absolve Mme. de Staël for her thoughtlessness and her generosity. The gentleman who was to have kept up communications between her and the boy left Blois just at the time when Louis passed out of the college. The political events that ensued were then a sufficient excuse for this gentleman's neglect of the Baroness's protégé. The authoress of *Corinne* heard no more of her little Moses.

A hundred louis, which she placed in the hands of M. de Corbigny, who died, I believe, in 1812, was not a sufficiently large sum to leave lasting memories in Mme. de Staël, whose excitable nature found ample pasture during the vicissitudes of 1814 and 1815, which absorbed all her interest.

At this time Louis Lambert was at once too proud and too poor to go in search of a patroness who was traveling all over Europe. However, he went on foot from Blois to Paris in the hope of seeing her, and arrived, unluckily, on the very day of her death. Two letters from Lambert to the Baroness remained unanswered. The memory of Mme. de Staël's good intentions with regard to Louis remains, therefore, only in some few young minds, struck, as mine was, by the strangeness of the story.

No one who had not gone through the training at our college could understand the effect usually made on our minds by the announcement that a "new boy" had arrived, or

the impression that such an adventure as Louis Lambert's was calculated to produce.

And here a little information must be given as to the primitive administration of this institution, originally half-military and half-monastic, to explain the new life which there awaited Lambert. Before the Revolution, the Oratorians, devoted, like the Society of Jesus, to the education of youth—succeeding the Jesuits, in fact, in certain of their establishments—had various provincial houses, of which the most famous were the colleges of Vendôme, of Tournon, of la Flèche, Pont-Levoy, Sorrèze, and Juilly. That at Vendôme, like the others, I believe, turned out a certain number of cadets for the army. The abolition of educational bodies, decreed by the Convention, had but little effect on the college at Vendôme. When the first crisis had blown over, the authorities recovered possession of their buildings; certain Oratorians, scattered about the country, came back to the college and re-opened it under the old rules, with the habits, practices, and customs which gave this school a character with which I have seen nothing at all comparable in any that I have visited since I left that establishment.

Standing in the heart of the town, on the little river Loir which flows under its walls, the college possesses extensive precincts, carefully inclosed by walls, and including all the buildings necessary for an institution on that scale: a chapel, a theater, an infirmary, a bakehouse, gardens, and water supply. This college is the most celebrated home of learning in all the central provinces, and receives pupils from them and from the colonies. Distance prohibits any frequent visits from parents to their children.

The rule of the House forbids holidays away from it. Once entered there, a pupil never leaves till his studies are finished. With the exception of walks taken under the guidance of the Fathers, everything is calculated to give the school the benefit of conventual discipline; in my day the tawse was still a living memory, and the classical leather strap played its terrible part with all the honors. The punishments originally invented by the Society of Jesus, as alarm-

ing to the moral as to the physical man, were still in force in all the integrity of the original code.

Letters to parents were obligatory on certain days, so was confession. Thus our sins and our sentiments were all according to pattern. Everything bore the stamp of monastic rule. I well remember, among other relics of the ancient order, the inspection we went through every Sunday. We were all in our best, placed in file like soldiers to await the arrival of the two inspectors who, attended by the tutors and the tradesmen, examined us from the three points of view, of dress, health, and morals.

The two or three hundred pupils lodged in the establishment were divided, according to ancient custom, into the *minimes* (the smallest), the little boys, the middle boys, and the big boys. The division of the *minimes* included the eighth and seventh classes; the little boys formed the sixth, fifth, and fourth; the middle boys were classed as third and second; and the first class comprised the senior students—of philosophy, rhetoric, the higher mathematics, and chemistry. Each of these divisions had its own buildings, classrooms, and playground, in the large common precincts on to which the classrooms opened, and beyond which was the refectory.

This dining-hall, worthy of an ancient religious Order, accommodated all the school. Contrary to the usual practice in educational institutions, we were allowed to talk at our meals, a tolerant Oratorian rule which enabled us to exchange plates according to our taste. This gastronomical barter was always one of the chief pleasures of our college life. If one of the "middle" boys at the head of his table wished for a helping of lentils instead of dessert—for we had dessert—the offer was passed down from one to another: "Dessert for lentils!" till some other epicure had accepted, then the plate of lentils was passed up to the bidder from hand to hand, and the plate of dessert returned by the same road. Mistakes were never made. If several identical offers were made, they were taken in order, and the formula would be, "Lentils number one for dessert number one." The tables were very long; our incessant barter kept everything moving; we transacted it with amazing eagerness; and the chatter of

three hundred lads, the bustling to and fro of the servants employed in changing the plates, setting down the dishes, handing the bread, with the tours of inspection of the masters, made this refectory at Vendôme a scene unique in its way, and the amazement of visitors.

To make our life more tolerable, deprived as we were of all communication with the outer world and of family affection, we were allowed to keep pigeons and to have gardens. Our two or three hundred pigeon houses, with a thousand birds nesting all round the outer wall, and above thirty garden plots, were a sight even stranger than our meals. But a full account of the peculiarities which made the college at Vendôme a place unique in itself and fertile in reminiscences to those who spent their boyhood there, would be weariness to the reader. Which of us all but remembers with delight, notwithstanding the bitterness of learning, the eccentric pleasures of that cloistered life? The sweetmeats purchased by stealth in the course of our walks, permission obtained to play cards and devise theatrical performances during the holidays, such tricks and freedom as were necessitated by our seclusion; then again, our military band, a relic of the cadets; our academy, our chaplain, our Father professors, and all our games permitted or prohibited, as the case might be; the cavalry charges on stilts, the long slides made in winter, the clatter of our clogs; and, above all, the trading transactions with "the shop" set up in the courtyard itself.

This shop was kept by a sort of cheap-jack, of whom big and little boys could procure—according to his prospectus—boxes, stilts, tools, Jacobin pigeons, and Nuns, Mass-books—an article in small demand—penknives, paper, pens, pencils, ink of all colors, balls and marbles; in short, the whole catalogue of the most treasured possessions of boys, including everything from sauce for the pigeons we were obliged to kill off, to the earthenware pots in which we set aside the rice from supper to be eaten at next morning's breakfast. Which of us is so unhappy as to have forgotten how his heart beat at the sight of this booth, open periodically during play-hours on Sundays, to which we went, each in his turn, to spend his little pocket-money; while the small-

ness of the sum allowed by our parents for these minor pleasures required us to make a choice among all the objects that appealed so strongly to our desires? Did ever a young wife, to whom her husband, during the first days of happiness, hands, twelve times a year, a purse of gold, the budget of her personal fancies, dream of so many different purchases, each of which would absorb the whole sum, as we imagined possible on the eve of the first Sunday in each month? For six francs during one night we owned every delight of that inexhaustible shop! and during Mass every response we chanted was mixed up in our minds with our secret calculations. Which of us all can recollect ever having had a sou left to spend on the Sunday following? And which of us but obeyed the instinctive law of social existence by pitying, helping, and despising those pariahs who, by the avarice or poverty of their parents, found themselves penniless?

Anyone who forms a clear idea of this huge college, with its monastic buildings in the heart of a little town, and the four plots in which we were distributed as by a monastic rule, will easily conceive of the excitement that we felt at the arrival of a new boy, a passenger suddenly embarked on the ship. No young duchess, on her first appearance at Court, was ever more spitefully criticised than the new boy by the youths in his division. Usually during the evening play-hour before prayers, those sycophants who were accustomed to ingratiate themselves with the Fathers who took it in turns two and two for a week to keep an eye on us, would be the first to hear on trustworthy authority: "There will be a new boy to-morrow!" and then suddenly the shout, "A New Boy!—A New Boy!" rang through the courts. We hurried up to crowd round the superintendent and pester him with questions—

"Where was he coming from? What was his name? Which class would he be in?" and so forth.

Louis Lambert's advent was the subject of a romance worthy of the *Arabian Nights*. I was in the fourth class at the time—among the little boys. Our housemasters were two men whom we called Fathers from habit and tradition, though they were not priests. In my time there were indeed but three

genuine Oratorians to whom this title legitimately belonged; in 1814 they all left the college which had gradually become secularized, to find occupation about the altar in various country parishes, like the curé of Mer.

Father Haugoult, the master for the week, was not a bad man, but of very moderate attainments, and he lacked the tact which is indispensable for discerning the different characters of children, and graduating their punishment to their powers of resistance. Father Haugoult, then, began very obligingly to communicate to his pupils the wonderful events which were to end on the morrow in the advent of the most singular of "new boys." Games were at an end. All the children came round in silence to hear the story of Louis Lambert, discovered, like an aërolite, by Mme. de Staël, in a corner of the wood. M. Haugoult had to tell us all about Mme. de Staël ; that evening she seemed to me ten feet high; I saw at a later time the picture of "Corinne," in which Gérard represents her as so tall and handsome; and, alas! the woman painted by my imagination so far transcended this, that the real Mme. de Staël fell at once in my estimation, even after I read her book of really masculine power, *De l'Allemagne.*

But Lambert at that time was an even greater wonder. M. Mareschal, the headmaster, after examining him, had thought of placing him among the senior boys. It was Louis's ignorance of Latin that placed him so low as the fourth class, but he would certainly leap up a class every year; and, as a remarkable exception, he was to be one of the "Academy." *Proh pudor!* we were to have the honor of counting among the "little boys" one whose coat was adorned with the red ribbon displayed by the "Academicians" of Vendôme. These Academicians enjoyed distinguished privileges; they often dined at the director's table, and held two literary meetings annually, at which we were all present to hear their elucubrations. An Academician was a great man in embryo. And if every Vendôme scholar would speak the truth, he would confess that, in later life, an Academician of the great French Academy seemed to him far less remarkable than the stupendous boy who wore the cross and the imposing red ribbon which were the insignia of our "Academy."

It was very unusual to be one of that illustrious body before attaining to the second class, for the Academicians were expected to hold public meetings every Thursday during the holidays, and to read tales in verse or prose, epistles, essays, tragedies, dramas—compositions far above the intelligence of the lower classes. I long treasured the memory of a story called the "Green Ass," which was, I think, the masterpiece of this unknown Society. In the fourth, and an Academician! This boy of fourteen, a poet already, the protégé of Mme. de Staël, a coming genius, said Father Haugoult, was to be one of us! a wizard, a youth capable of writing a composition or a translation while we were being called in to lessons, and of learning his lessons by reading them through but once. Louis Lambert bewildered all our ideas. And Father Haugoult's curiosity and impatience to see this new boy added fuel to our excited fancy.

"If he has pigeons, he can have no pigeon-house; there is not room for another. Well, it cannot be helped," said one boy, since famous as an agriculturist.

"Who will sit next to him?" said another.

"Oh, I wish I might be his chum!" cried an enthusiast.

In school language, the word here rendered chum—*faisant*, or, in some schools, *copin*—expressed a fraternal sharing of the joys and evils of your childish existence, a community of interests that was fruitful of squabbling and making friends again, a treaty of alliance offensive and defensive. It is strange, but never in my time did I know brothers who were chums. If man lives by his feelings, he thinks perhaps that he will make his life the poorer if he merges an affection of his own choosing in a natural tie.

The impression made upon me by Father Haugoult's harangue that evening is one of the most vivid reminiscences of my childhood; I can compare it with nothing but my first reading of *Robinson Crusoe*. Indeed, I owe to my recollection of these prodigious impressions an observation that may perhaps be new as to the different sense attached to words by each hearer. The word in itself has no final meaning; we affect a word more than it affects us; its value is in relation to the images we have assimilated and grouped round it;

but a study of this fact would require considerable elaboration, and lead us too far from our immediate subject.

Not being able to sleep, I had a long discussion with my next neighbor in the dormitory as to the remarkable being who on the morrow was to be one of us. This neighbor, who became an officer, and is now a writer with lofty philosophical views, Barchou de Penhoën, has not been false to his predestination, nor to the hazard of fortune by which the only two scholars of Vendôme, of whose fame Vendôme ever hears, were brought together in the same classroom, on the same form, and under the same roof. Our comrade Dufaure had not, when this book was published, made his appearance in public life as a lawyer. The translator of Fichte, the expositor and friend of Ballanche, was already interested, as I myself was, in metaphysical questions; we often talked nonsense together about God, ourselves, and nature. He at that time affected pyrrhonism. Jealous of his place as leader, he doubted Lambert's precocious gifts; while I, having lately read *Les Enfants Célèbres*, overwhelmed him with evidence, quoting young Montcalm, Pico della Mirandola, Pascal—in short, a score of early developed brains, anomalies that are famous in the history of the human mind, and Lambert's predecessors.

I was at the time passionately addicted to reading. My father, who was ambitious to see me in the École Polytechnique, paid for me to have a special course of private lessons in mathematics. My mathematical master was the librarian of the college, and allowed me to help myself to books without much caring what I chose to take from the library, a quiet spot where I went to him during play-hours to have my lesson. Either he was no great mathematician, or he was absorbed in some grand scheme, for he very willingly left me to read when I ought to have been learning, while he worked at I knew not what. So, by a tacit understanding between us, I made no complaints of being taught nothing, and he said nothing of the books I borrowed.

Carried away by this ill-timed mania, I neglected my studies to compose poems, which certainly can have shown no great promise, to judge by a line of too many feet which became

famous among my companions—the beginning of an epic on the Incas—

"O Inca! O roi infortuné et malheureux!"

In derision of such attempts, I was nicknamed the Poet, but mockery did not cure me. I was always rhyming, in spite of good advice from M. Mareschal, the headmaster, who tried to cure me of an unfortunately inveterate passion by telling me the fable of a linnet that fell out of the nest because it tried to fly before its wings were grown. I persisted in my reading; I became the least emulous, the idlest, the most dreamy of all the division of "little boys," and consequently the most frequently punished.

This autobiographical digression may give some idea of the reflections I was led to make in anticipation of Lambert's arrival. I was then twelve years old. I felt sympathy from the first for the boy whose temperament had some points of likeness to my own. I was at last to have a companion in daydreams and meditations. Though I knew not yet what glory meant, I thought it glory to be the familiar friend of a child whose immortality was foreseen by Mme. de Staël. To me Louis Lambert was as a giant.

The looked-for morrow came at last. A minute before breakfast we heard the steps of M. Mareschal and of the new boy in the quiet courtyard. Every head was turned at once to the door of the classroom. Father Haugoult, who participated in our torments of curiosity, did not sound the whistle he used to reduce our mutterings to silence and bring us back to our tasks. We then saw this famous new boy, whom M. Mareschal was leading by the hand. The superintendent descended from his desk, and the headmaster said to him solemnly, according to etiquette: "Monsieur, I have brought you M. Louis Lambert; will you place him in the fourth class, he will begin work to-morrow."

Then, after speaking a few words in an undertone to the class-master, he said—

"Where can he sit?"

It would have been unfair to displace one of us for a

newcomer; so as there was but one desk vacant, Louis Lambert came to fill it, next to me, for I had last joined the class. Though we still had some time to wait before lessons were over, we all stood up to look at Louis Lambert. M. Mareschal heard our mutterings, saw how eager we were, and said, with the kindness that endeared him to us all—

"Well, well, but make no noise; do not disturb the other classes."

These words set us free to play some little time before breakfast, and we all gathered round Lambert while M. Mareschal walked up and down the courtyard with Father Haugoult.

There were about eighty of us little demons, as bold as birds of prey. Though we ourselves had all gone through this cruel novitiate, we showed no mercy on a newcomer, never sparing him the mockery, the catechism, the impertinence, which were inexhaustible on such occasions, to the discomfiture of the neophyte, whose manners, strength, and temper were thus tested. Lambert, whether he was stoical, or dumfounded, made no reply to any questions. One of us thereupon remarked that he was no doubt of the school of Pythagoras, and there was a shout of laughter. The new boy was thenceforth Pythagoras through all his life at the college. At the same time, Lambert's piercing eye, the scorn expressed in his face for our childishness, so far removed from the stamp of his own nature, the easy attitude he assumed, and his evident strength in proportion to his years, infused a certain respect into the veriest scamps among us. For my part, I kept near him, absorbed in studying him in silence.

Louis Lambert was slightly built, nearly five feet in height; his face was tanned, and his hands were burnt brown by the sun, giving him an appearance of manly vigor, which, in fact, he did not possess. Indeed, two months after he came to the college, when study in the classroom had faded his vivid, so to speak, vegetable coloring, he became as pale and white as a woman.

His head was unusually large. His hair, of a fine, bright

black in masses of curls, gave wonderful beauty to his brow, of which the proportions were extraordinary even to us heedless boys, knowing nothing, as may be supposed, of the auguries of phrenology, a science still in its cradle. The distinction of this prophetic brow lay principally in the exquisitely chiseled shape of the arches under which his black eyes sparkled, and which had the transparency of alabaster, the line having the unusual beauty of being perfectly level to where it met the top of the nose. But when you saw his eyes it was difficult to think of the rest of his face, which was indeed plain enough, for their look was full of a wonderful variety of expression; they seemed to have a soul in their depths. At one moment astonishingly clear and piercing, at another full of heavenly sweetness, those eyes became dull, almost colorless, as it seemed, when he was lost in meditation. They then looked like a window from which the sun had suddenly vanished after lighting it up. His strength and his voice were no less variable; equally rigid, equally unexpected. His tone could be as sweet as that of a woman compelled to own her love; at other times it was labored, rough, rugged, if I may use such words in a new sense. As to his strength, he was habitually incapable of enduring the fatigue of any game, and seemed weakly, almost infirm. But during the early days of his school life, one of our little bullies having made game of this sickliness, which rendered him unfit for the violent exercise in vogue among his fellows, Lambert took hold with both hands of one of the class tables, consisting of twelve large desks, face to face and sloping from the middle; he leaned back against the class-master's desk, steadying the table with his feet on the crossbar below, and said—

"Now, ten of you try to move it!"

I was present, and can vouch for this strange display of strength; it was impossible to move the table.

Lambert had the gift of summoning to his aid at certain times the most extraordinary powers, and of concentrating all his forces on a given point. But children, like men, are wont to judge of everything by first impressions, and after the first few days we ceased to study Louis; he entirely belied

Mme. de Staël's prognostications, and displayed none of the prodigies we looked for in him.

After three months at school, Louis was looked upon as a quite ordinary scholar. I alone was allowed really to know that sublime—why should I not say divine?—soul, for what is nearer to God than genius in the heart of a child? The similarity of our tastes and ideas made us friends and chums; our intimacy was so brotherly that our schoolfellows joined our two names; one was never spoken without the other, and to call either they always shouted "Poet-and-Pythagoras!" Some other names had been known coupled in a like manner. Thus for two years I was the school friend of poor Louis Lambert; and during that time my life was so identified with his, that I am enabled now to write his intellectual biography.

It was long before I fully knew the poetry and the wealth of ideas that lay hidden in my companion's heart and brain. It was not till I was thirty years of age, till my experience was matured and condensed, till the flash of an intense illumination had thrown a fresh light upon it, that I was capable of understanding all the bearings of the phenomena which I witnessed at that early time. I benefited by them without understanding their greatness or their processes; indeed, I have forgotten some, or remember only the most conspicuous facts; still, my memory is now able to co-ordinate them, and I have mastered the secrets of that fertile brain by looking back to the delightful days of our boyish affection. So it was time alone that initiated me into the meaning of the events and facts that were crowded into that obscure life, as into that of many another man who is lost to science. Indeed, this narrative, so far as the expression and appreciation of many things is concerned, will be found full of what may be termed moral anachronisms, which perhaps will not detract from its peculiar interest.

In the course of the first few months after coming to Vendôme, Louis became the victim of a malady which, though the symptoms were invisible to the eye of our superiors, considerably interfered with the exercise of his remarkable gifts. Accustomed to live in the open air, and to the freedom of a

purely haphazard education, happy in the tender care of an old man who was devoted to him, used to meditating in the sunshine, he found it very hard to submit to college rules, to walk in the ranks, to live within the four walls of a room where eighty boys were sitting in silence on wooden forms each in front of his desk. His senses were developed to such perfection as gave them the most sensitive keenness, and every part of him suffered from this life in common.

The effluvia that vitiated the air, mingled with the odors of a classroom that was never clean or free from the fragments of our breakfasts or snacks, affected his sense of smell, the sense which, being more immediately connected than the others with the nerve centers of the brain, must, when shocked, cause invisible disturbance to the organs of thought.

Besides these elements of impurity in the atmosphere, there were lockers in the classrooms in which the boys kept their miscellaneous plunder—pigeons killed for fête days, or titbits filched from the dinner-table. In each classroom, too, there was a large stone slab, on which two pails full of water were kept standing, a sort of sink, where we every morning washed our faces and hands, one after another, in the master's presence. We then passed on to a table, where women combed and powdered our hair. Thus the place, being cleaned but once a day before we were up, was always more or less dirty. In spite of numerous windows and lofty doors, the air was constantly fouled by the smells from the washing-place, the hairdressing, the lockers, and the thousand messes made by the boys, to say nothing of their eighty closely packed bodies. And this sort of *humus*, mingling with the mud we brought in from the playing-yard, produced a suffocatingly pestilent muck-heap.

The loss of the fresh and fragrant country air in which he had hitherto lived, the change of habits and strict discipline, combined to depress Lambert. With his elbow on his desk and his head supported on his left hand, he spent the hours of study gazing at the trees in the court or the clouds in the sky; he seemed to be thinking of his lessons; but the master, seeing his pen motionless, or the sheet before him still a blank, would call out—

"Lambert, you are doing nothing!"

This "*you are doing nothing!*" was a pin-thrust that wounded Louis to the quick. And then he never earned the rest of playtime; he always had impositions to write. The imposition, a punishment which varies according to the practice of different schools, consisted at Vendôme of a certain number of lines to be written out in play hours. Lambert and I were so overpowered with impositions, that we had not six free days during the two years of our school friendship. But for the books we took out of the library, which maintained some vitality in our brains, this system of discipline would have reduced us to idiotcy. Want of exercise is fatal to children. The habit of preserving a dignified appearance, begun in tender infancy, has, it is said, a visible effect on the constitution of royal personages when the faults of such an education are not counteracted by the life of the battlefield or the laborious sport of hunting. And if the laws of etiquette and Court manners can act on the spinal marrow to such an extent as to affect the pelvis of kings, to soften their cerebral tissue, and to degenerate the race, what deep-seated mischief, physical and moral, must result in schoolboys from the constant lack of air, exercise, and cheerfulness!

Indeed, the rules of punishment carried out in schools deserve the attention of the Office of Public Instruction when any thinkers are to be found there who do not think exclusively of themselves.

We incurred the infliction of an imposition in a thousand ways. Our memory was so good that we never learned a lesson. It was enough for either of us to hear our class-fellows repeat the task in French, Latin, or grammar, and we could say it when our turn came; but if the master, unfortunately, took it into his head to reverse the usual order and call upon us first, we very often did not even know what the lesson was; then the imposition fell in spite of our most ingenious excuses. Then we always put off writing our exercises till the last moment; if there were a book to be finished, or if we were lost in thought, the task was forgotten—again an imposition. How often have we scribbled an exercise during the time when the head-boy, whose business it

was to collect them when we came into school, was gathering them from the others!

In addition to the moral misery which Lambert went through in trying to acclimatize himself to college life, there was a scarcely less cruel apprenticeship through which every boy had to pass: to those bodily sufferings which seemed infinitely varied. The tenderness of a child's skin needs extreme care, especially in winter, when a schoolboy is constantly exchanging the frozen air of the muddy playing-ground for the stuffy atmosphere of the classroom. The "little boys" and the smallest of all, for lack of a mother's care, were martyrs to chilblains and chaps so severe that they had to be regularly dressed during the breakfast hour; but this could only be very indifferently done to so many damaged hands, toes, and heels. A good many of the boys indeed were obliged to prefer the evil to the remedy; the choice constantly lay between their lessons waiting to be finished or the joys of a slide, and waiting for a bandage carelessly put on, and still more carelessly cast off again. Also it was the fashion in the school to gibe at the poor, feeble creatures who went to be doctored; the bullies vied with each other in snatching off the rags which the infirmary nurse had tied on. Hence, in winter, many of us, with half-dead feet and fingers, sick with pain, were incapable of work, and punished for not working. The Fathers, too often deluded by shammed ailments, would not believe in real suffering.

The price paid for our schooling and board also covered the cost of clothing. The committee contracted for the shoes and clothes supplied to the boys; hence the weekly inspection of which I have spoken. This plan, though admirable for the manager, is always disastrous to the managed. Woe to the boy who indulged in the bad habit of treading his shoes down at heel, of cracking the shoe leather, or wearing out the soles too fast, whether from a defect in his gait, or by fidgeting during lessons in obedience to the instinctive need of movement common to all children. That boy did not get through the winter without great suffering. In the first place, his chilblains would ache and shoot as badly as a fit of the gout; then the rivets and pack-thread intended to repair the shoes

would give way, or the broken heels would prevent the wretched shoes from keeping on his feet; he was obliged to drag them wearily along the frozen roads, or sometimes to dispute their possession with the clay soil of the district; the water and snow got in through some unnoticed crack or ill-sewn patch, and the foot would swell.

Out of sixty boys, not ten perhaps could walk without some special form of torture; and yet all kept up with the body of the troop, dragged on by the general movement, as men are driven through life by life itself. Many a time some proud-tempered boy would shed tears of rage while summoning his remaining energy to run ahead and get home again in spite of pain, so sensitively afraid of laughter or of pity—two forms of scorn—is the still tender soul at that age.

At school, as in social life, the strong despise the feeble without knowing in what true strength consists.

Nor was this all. No gloves. If by good hap a boy's parents, the infirmary nurse, or the headmaster gave gloves to a particularly delicate lad, the wags or the big boys of the class would put them on the stove, amused to see them dry and shrivel; or if the gloves escaped the marauders, after getting wet they shrunk as they dried for want of care. No, gloves were impossible. Gloves were a privilege, and boys insist on equality.

Louis Lambert fell a victim to all these varieties of torment. Like many contemplative men, who, when lost in thought, acquire a habit of mechanical motion, he had a mania for fidgeting with his shoes, and destroyed them very quickly. His girlish complexion, the skin of his ears and lips, cracked with the least cold. His soft white hands grew red and swollen. He had perpetual colds. Thus he was a constant sufferer till he became inured to school life. Taught at last by cruel experience, he was obliged to "look after his things," to use the school phrase. He was forced to take care of his locker, his desk, his clothes, his shoes; to protect his ink, his books, his copy-paper, and his pens from pilferers; in short, to give his mind to the thousand details of our trivial life, to which more selfish and commonplace minds devoted such strict attention—thus infallibly securing prizes for "proficiency"

and "good conduct"—while they were overlooked by a boy of the highest promise, who, under the hand of an almost divine imagination, gave himself up with rapture to the flow of his ideas.

This was not all. There is a perpetual struggle going on between the masters and the boys, struggle without truce, to be compared with nothing else in the social world, unless it be the resistance of the opposition to the ministry in a representative government. But journalists and opposition speakers are probably less prompt to take advantage of a weak point, less extreme in resenting an injury, and less merciless in their mockery than boys are in regard to those who rule over them. It is a task to put angels out of patience. An unhappy class-master must then not be too severely blamed, ill-paid as he is, and consequently not too competent, if he is occasionally unjust or out of temper. Perpetually watched by a hundred mocking eyes, and surrounded with snares, he sometimes revenges himself for his own blunders on the boys who are only too ready to detect them.

Unless for serious misdemeanors, for which there were other forms of punishment, the strap was regarded at Vendôme as the *ultima ratio Patrum.* Exercises forgotten, lessons ill learnt, common ill behavior were sufficiently punished by an imposition, but offended dignity spoke in the master through the strap. Of all the physical torments to which we were exposed, certainly the most acute was that inflicted by this leathern instrument, about two fingers wide, applied to our poor little hands with all the strength and all the fury of the administrator. To endure this classical form of correction, the victim knelt in the middle of the room. He had to leave his form and go to kneel down near the master's desk under the curious and generally merciless eyes of his fellows. To sensitive natures these preliminaries were an introductory torture, like the journey from the Palais de Justice to the Place de Grève which the condemned used to make to the scaffold.

Some boys cried out and shed bitter tears before or after the application of the strap; others accepted the infliction with stoic calm; it was a question of nature; but few could control an expression of anguish in anticipation.

Louis Lambert was constantly enduring the strap, and owed it to a peculiarity of his physiognomy of which he was for a long time quite unconscious. Whenever he was suddenly roused from a fit of abstraction by the master's cry, "You are doing nothing!" it often happened that, without knowing it, he flashed at his teacher a look full of fierce contempt, and charged with thought, as a Leyden jar is charged with electricity. This look, no doubt, discomfited the master, who, indignant at this unspoken retort, wished to cure his scholar of that thunderous flash.

The first time the Father took offense at this ray of scorn, which struck him like a lightning flash, he made this speech, as I well remember—

"If you look at me again in that way, Lambert, you will get the strap."

At these words every nose was in the air, every eye looked alternately at the master and at Louis. The observation was so utterly foolish, that the boy again looked at the Father, overwhelming him with another flash. From this arose a standing feud between Lambert and his master, resulting in a certain amount of "strap." Thus did he first discover the power of his eye.

The hapless poet, so full of nerves, as sensitive as a woman, under the sway of chronic melancholy, and as sick with genius as a girl with love that she pines for, knowing nothing of it; —this boy, at once so powerful and so weak, transplanted by "Corinne" from the country he loved, to be squeezed in the mold of a collegiate routine to which every spirit and every body must yield, whatever their range or temperament, accepting its rule and its uniform as gold is crushed into round coin under the press; Louis Lambert suffered in every spot where pain can touch the soul or the flesh. Stuck on a form, restricted to the acreage of his desk, a victim to the strap and to a sickly frame, tortured in every sense, environed by distress—everything compelled him to give his body up to the myriad tyrannies of school life; and, like the martyrs who smiled in the midst of suffering, he took refuge in heaven, which lay open to his mind. Perhaps this life of purely in-

ward emotions helped him to see something of the mysteries he so entirely believed in!

Our independence, our illicit amusements, our apparent waste of time, our persistent indifference, our frequent punishments and aversion for our exercises and impositions, earned us a reputation, which no one cared to controvert, for being an idle and incorrigible pair. Our masters treated us with contempt, and we fell into utter disgrace with our companions, from whom we concealed our secret studies for fear of being laughed at. This hard judgment, which was injustice in the masters, was but natural in our schoolfellows. We could neither play ball, nor run races, nor walk on stilts. On exceptional holidays, when amnesty was proclaimed, and we got a few hours of freedom, we shared in none of the popular diversions of the school. Aliens from the pleasures enjoyed by the others, we were outcasts, sitting forlorn under a tree in the playing-ground. The Poet-and-Pythagoras formed an exception and led a life apart from the life of the rest.

The penetrating instinct and unerring conceit of schoolboys made them feel that we were of a nature either far above or far beneath their own; hence some simply hated our aristocratic reserve, others merely scorned our ineptitude. These feelings were equally shared by us without our knowing it; perhaps I have but now divined them. We lived exactly like two rats, huddled into the corner of the room where our desks were, sitting there alike during lesson time and play hours. This strange state of affairs inevitably and in fact placed us on a footing of war with all the other boys in our division. Forgotten for the most part, we sat there very contentedly; half happy, like two plants, two images who would have been missed from the furniture of the room. But the most aggressive of our schoolfellows would sometimes torment us, just to show their malignant power, and we responded with stolid contempt, which brought many a thrashing down on the Poet-and-Pythagoras.

Lambert's homesickness lasted for many months. I know no words to describe the dejection to which he was a prey. Louis has taken the glory off many a masterpiece for me. We had both played the part of the "Leper of Aosta," and

had both experienced the feelings described in M. de Maistre's story, before we read them as expressed by his eloquent pen. A book may, indeed, revive the memories of our childhood, but it can never compete with them successfully. Lambert's woes had taught me many a chant of sorrow far more appealing than the finest passages in *Werther*. And, indeed, there is no possible comparison between the pangs of a passion condemned, whether rightly or wrongly, by every law, and the grief of a poor child pining for the glorious sunshine, the dews of the valley, and liberty. Werther is the slave of desire; Louis Lambert was an enslaved soul. Given equal talent, the more pathetic sorrow, founded on desires which, being purer, are the more genuine, must transcend the wail even of genius.

After sitting for a long time with his eyes fixed on a lime-tree in the playground, Louis would say just a word; but that word would reveal an infinite speculation.

"Happily for me," he exclaimed one day, "there are hours of comfort when I feel as though the walls of the room had fallen and I were away—away in the fields! What a pleasure it is to let oneself go on the stream of one's thoughts as a bird is borne up on its wings!"

"Why is green a color so largely diffused throughout creation?" he would ask me. "Why are there so few straight lines in nature? Why is it that man, in his structures, rarely introduces curves? Why is it that he alone, of all creatures, has a sense of straightness?"

These queries revealed long excursions in space. He had, I am sure, seen vast landscapes, fragrant with the scent of woods. He was always silent and resigned, a living elegy, always suffering, but unable to complain of suffering. An eagle that needed the world to feed him, shut in between four narrow, dirty walls; and thus his life became an ideal life in the strictest meaning of the words. Filled as he was with contempt of the almost useless studies to which we were harnessed, Louis went on his skyward way absolutely unconscious of the things about us.

I, obeying the imitative instinct that is so strong in childhood, tried to regulate my life in conformity with his. And

Louis the more easily infected me with the sort of torpor in which deep contemplation leaves the body, because I was younger and more impressionable than he. Like two lovers, we got into the habit of thinking together in a common reverie. His intuitions had already acquired that acuteness which must surely characterize the intellectual perceptiveness of great poets and often bring them to the verge of madness.

"Do you ever feel," said he to me one day, "as though imagined suffering affected you in spite of yourself? If, for instance, I think with concentration of the effect that the blade of my penknife would have in piercing my flesh, I feel an acute pain as if I had really cut myself; only the blood is wanting. But the pain comes suddenly, and startles me like a sharp noise breaking profound silence. Can an idea cause physical pain!—What do you say to that, eh?"

When he gave utterance to such subtle reflections, we both fell into artless meditation; we set to work to detect in ourselves the inscrutable phenomena of the origin of thoughts, which Lambert hoped to discover in their earliest germ, so as to describe some day the unknown process. Then, after much discussion, often mixed up with childish notions, a look would flash from Lambert's eager eyes; he would grasp my hand, and a word from the depths of his soul would show the current of his mind.

"Thinking is seeing," said he one day, carried away by some objection raised as to the first principle of our organization. "Every human science is based on deduction, which is a slow process of seeing by which we work up from the effect of the cause; or, in a wider sense, all poetry, like every work of art, proceeds from a swift vision of things."

He was a spiritualist (as opposed to materialism); but I would venture to contradict him, using his own arguments to consider the intellect as a purely physical phenomenon. We both were right. Perhaps the words materialism and spiritualism express the two faces of the same fact. His considerations on the substance of the mind led to his accepting, with a certain pride, the life of privation to which we were condemned in consequence of our idleness and our indifference to learn-

ing. He had a certain consciousness of his own powers which bore him up through his spiritual cogitations. How delightful it was to me to feel his soul acting on my own! Many a time have we remained sitting on our form, both buried in one book, having quite forgotten each other's existence, and yet not apart; each conscious of the other's presence, and bathing in an ocean of thought, like two fish swimming in the same waters.

Our life, apparently, was merely vegetating; but we lived through our heart and brain.

Lambert's influence over my imagination left traces that still abide. I used to listen hungrily to his tales, full of the marvels which make men, as well as children, rapturously devour stories in which truth assumes the most grotesque forms. His passion for mystery, and the credulity natural to the young, often led us to discuss heaven and hell. Then Louis, by expounding Swedenborg, would try to make me share in his beliefs concerning angels. In his least logical arguments there were still amazing observations as to the powers of man, which gave his words that color of truth without which nothing can be done in any art. The romantic end he foresaw as the destiny of man was calculated to flatter the yearning which tempts blameless imaginations to give themselves up to beliefs. Is it not during the youth of a nation that its dogmas and idols are conceived? And are not the supernatural beings before whom the people trembled the personification of their feeling and their magnified desires?

All that I can now remember of the poetical conversations we held together concerning the Swedish prophet, whose works I have since had the curiosity to read, may be told in a few paragraphs.

In each of us there are two distinct beings. According to Swedenborg, the angel is an individual in whom the inner being conquers the external being. If a man desires to earn his call to be an angel, as soon as his mind reveals to him his twofold existence, he must strive to foster the delicate angelic essence that exists within him. If, for lack of a lucid appreciation of his destiny, he allows bodily action to

predominate, instead of confirming his intellectual being, all his powers will be absorbed in the use of his external senses, and the angel will slowly perish by the materialism of both natures. In the contrary case, if he nourishes his inner being with the aliment needful to it, the soul triumphs over matter and strives to get free.

When they separate by the act of what we call death, the angel, strong enough then to cast off its wrappings, survives and begins its real life. The infinite variety which differentiates individual men can only be explained by this twofold existence, which, again, is proved and made intelligible by that variety.

In point of fact, the wide distance between a man whose torpid intelligence condemns him to evident stupidity, and one who, by the exercise of his inner life, has acquired the gift of some power, allows us to suppose that there is as great a difference between men of genius and other beings as there is between the blind and those who see. This hypothesis, since it extends creation beyond all limits, gives us, as it were, the clew to heaven. The beings who, here on earth, are apparently mingled without distinction, are there distributed, according to their inner perfection, in distinct spheres whose speech and manners have nothing in common. In the invisible world, as in the real world, if some native of the lower spheres comes, all unworthy, into a higher sphere, not only can he never understand the customs and language there, but his mere presence paralyzes the voice and hearts of those who dwell therein.

Dante, in his *Divine Comedy*, had perhaps some slight intuition of those spheres which begin in the world of torment, and rise, circle on circle, to the highest heaven. Thus Swedenborg's doctrine is the product of a lucid spirit noting down the innumerable signs by which the angels manifest their presence among men.

This doctrine, which I have endeavored to sum up in a more or less consistent form, was set before me by Lambert with all the fascination of mysticism, swathed in the wrappings of the phraseology affected by mystical writers: an obscure language full of abstractions, and taking such effect

on the brain, that there are books by Jacob Bœhm, Swedenborg, and Mme. Guyon, so strangely powerful that they give rise to phantasies as various as the dreams of the opium-eater. Lambert told me of mystical facts so extraordinary, he so acted on my imagination, that he made my brain reel. Still, I loved to plunge into that realm of mystery, invisible to the senses, in which everyone likes to dwell, whether he pictures it to himself under the indefinite ideal of the Future, or clothes it in the more solid guise of romance. These violent revulsions of the mind on itself gave me, without my knowing it, a comprehension of its power, and accustomed me to the workings of the mind.

Lambert himself explained everything by his theory of the angels. To him pure love—love as we dream of it in youth—was the coalescence of two angelic natures. Nothing could exceed the fervency with which he longed to meet a woman angel. And who better than he could inspire or feel love? If anything could give an impression of an exquisite nature, was it not the amiability and kindliness that marked his feelings, his words, his actions, his slightest gestures, the conjugal regard that united us as boys, and that we expressed when we called ourselves *chums?*

There was no distinction for us between my ideas and his. We imitated each other's handwriting, so that one might write the tasks of both. Thus, if one of us had a book to finish and to return to the mathematical master, he could read on without interruption while the other scribbled off his exercise and imposition. We did our tasks as though paying a tax on our peace of mind. If my memory does not play me false, they were sometimes of remarkable merit when Lambert did them. But on the foregone conclusion that we were both of us idiots, the master always went through them under a rooted prejudice, and even kept them to read to be laughed at by our schoolfellows.

I remember one afternoon, at the end of the lesson, which lasted from two till four, the master took possession of a page of translation by Lambert. The passage began with, *Caius Gracchus, vir nobilis;* Lambert had construed this by "Caius Gracchus had a noble heart."

"Where do you find 'heart' in *nobilis?*" said the Father sharply.

And there was a roar of laughter, while Lambert looked at the master in some bewilderment.

"What would Mme. la Baronne de Staël say if she could know that you make such nonsense of a word that means of noble family, cf patrician rank?"

"She would say that you were an ass!" said I in a muttered tone.

"Master Poet, you will stay in for a week," replied the master, who unfortunately overheard me.

Lambert simply repeated, looking at me with inexpressible affection, "*Vir nobilis!*"

Mme. de Staël was, in fact, partly the cause of Lambert's troubles. On every pretext masters and pupils threw the name in his teeth, either in irony or in reproof.

Louis lost no time in getting himself "kept in" to share my imprisonment. Freer thus than in any other circumstances, we could talk the whole day long in the silence of the dormitories, where each boy had a cubicle six feet square, the partitions consisting at the top of open bars. The doors, fitted with gratings, were locked at night and opened in the morning under the eye of the Father whose duty it was to superintend our rising and going to bed. The creak of these gates, which the college servants unlocked with remarkable expedition, was a sound peculiar to that college. These little cells were our prison, and boys were sometimes shut up there for a month at a time. The boys in these coops were under the stern eye of the prefect, a sort of censor who stole up at certain hours, or at unexpected moments, with a silent step, to hear if we were talking instead of writing our impositions. But a few walnut shells dropped on the stairs, or the sharpness of our hearing, almost always enabled us to beware of his coming, so we could give ourselves up without anxiety to our favorite studies. However, as books were prohibited, our prison hours were chiefly filled up with metaphysical discussions, or with relating singular facts connected with the phenomena of mind.

One of the most extraordinary of these incidents beyond

question is this, which I will here record, not only because it concerns Lambert, but because it perhaps was the turning-point of his scientific career. By the law of custom in all schools, Thursday and Sunday were holidays; but the services, which we were made to attend very regularly, so completely filled up Sunday, that we considered Thursday our only real day of freedom. After once attending Mass, we had a long day before us to spend in walks in the country round the town of Vendôme. The manor of Rochambeau was the most interesting object of our excursions, perhaps by reason of its distance; the smaller boys were very seldom taken on so fatiguing an expedition. However, once or twice a year the class-masters would hold out Rochambeau as a reward for diligence.

In 1812, towards the end of the spring, we were to go there for the first time. Our anxiety to see this famous château of Rochambeau, where the owner sometimes treated the boys to milk, made us all very good, and nothing hindered the outing. Neither Lambert nor I had ever seen the pretty valley of the Loir where the house stood. So his imagination and mine were much excited by the prospect of this excursion, which filled the school with traditional glee. We talked of it all the evening, planning to spend in fruit or milk such money as we had saved, against all the habits of school life.

After dinner next day, we set out at half-past twelve, each provided with a square hunch of bread, given to us for our afternoon snack. And off we went, as gay as swallows, marching in a body on the famous château with an eagerness which would at first allow of no fatigue. When we reached the hill, whence we looked down on the house standing halfway down the slope, on the devious valley through which the river winds and sparkles between meadows in graceful curves—a beautiful landscape, one of those scenes to which the keen emotions of early youth or of love lend such a charm, that it is wise never to see them again in later years—Louis Lambert said to me, "Why, I saw this last night in a dream."

He recognized the clump of trees under which we were standing, the grouping of the woods, the color of the water, the turrets of the château, the details, the distance, in fact

every part of the prospect which he looked on for the first time. We were mere children; I, at any rate, who was but thirteen; Louis, at fifteen, might have the precocity of genius, but at that time we were incapable of falsehood in the most trivial matters of our life as friends. Indeed, if Lambert's powerful mind had any presentiment of the importance of such facts, he was far from appreciating their whole bearing; and he was quite astonished by this incident. I asked him if he had not perhaps been brought to Rochambeau in his infancy, and my question struck him; but after thinking it over, he answered in the negative. This incident, analogous to what may be known of the phenomena of sleep in several persons, will illustrate the beginnings of Lambert's line of talent; he took it, in fact, as the basis of a whole system, using a fragment—as Cuvier did in another branch of inquiry—as a clew to the reconstruction of a complete system.

At this moment we were sitting together on an old oak-stump, and after a few minutes' reflection, Louis said to me—

"If the landscape did not come to me—which it is absurd to imagine—I must have come here. If I was here while I was asleep in my cubicle, does not that constitute a complete severance of my body and my inner being? Does it not prove some inscrutable locomotive faculty in the spirit with effects resembling those of locomotion in the body? Well, then, if my spirit and my body can be severed during sleep, why should I not insist on their separating in the same way while I am awake? I see no halfway mean between the two propositions.

"But if we go further into details: Either the facts are due to the action of a faculty which brings out a second being to whom my body is merely a husk, since I was in my cell, and yet I saw the landscape—and this upsets many systems: or the facts took place either in some nerve center, of which the name is yet to be discovered, where our feelings dwell and move; or else in the cerebral center, where ideas are formed. This last hypothesis gives rise to some strange questions. I walked, I saw, I heard. Motion is inconceivable but in space, sound acts only at certain angles or on surfaces,

color is caused only by light. If, in the dark, with my eyes shut, I saw, in myself, colored objects; if I heard sounds in the most perfect silence and without the conditions requisite for the production of sound; if without stirring I traversed wide tracts of space, there must be inner faculties independent of the external laws of physics. Material nature must be penetrable by the spirit.

"How is it that men have hitherto given so little thought to the phenomena of sleep, which seem to prove that man has a double life? May there not be a new science lying beneath them?" he added, striking his brow with his hand. "If not the elements of a science, at any rate the revelation of stupendous powers in man; at least they prove a frequent severance of our two natures, the fact I have been thinking out for a very long time. At last, then, I have hit on evidence to show the superiority that distinguishes our latent senses from our corporeal senses! *Homo duplex!*

"And yet," he went on, after a pause, with a doubtful shrug, "perhaps we have not two natures; perhaps we are merely gifted with personal and perfectible qualities, of which the development within us produces certain unobserved phenomena of activity, penetration, and vision. In our love of the marvelous, a passion begotten of our pride, we have translated these effects into poetical inventions, because we did not understand them. It is so convenient to defy the incomprehensible!

"I should, I own, lament over the loss of my illusions. I so much wished to believe in our twofold nature and in Swedenborg's angels. Must this new science destroy them? Yes; for the study of our unknown properties involves us in a science that appears to be materialistic, for the Spirit uses, divides, and animates the Substance; but it does not destroy it."

He remained pensive, almost sad. Perhaps he saw the dreams of his youth as swaddling clothes that he must soon shake off.

"Sight and hearing are, no doubt, the sheaths for a very marvelous instrument," said he, laughing at his own figure of speech.

Always when he was talking to me of heaven and hell, he was wont to treat of nature as being master; but now, as he pronounced these last words, big with prescience, he seemed to soar more boldly than ever above the landscape, and his forehead seemed ready to burst with the afflatus of genius. His powers—mental powers we must call them till some new term is found—seemed to flash from the organs intended to express them. His eyes shot out thoughts; his uplifted hand, his silent but tremulous lips were eloquent; his burning glance was radiant; at last his head, as though too heavy, or exhausted by too eager a flight, fell on his breast. This boy—this giant—bent his head, took my hand and clasped it in his own, which was damp, so fevered was he for the search for truth; then, after a pause, he said—

"I shall be famous!—And you, too," he added after a pause. "We will both study the Chemistry of the Will."

Noble soul! I recognized his superiority, though he took great care never to make me feel it. He shared with me all the treasures of his mind, and regarded me as instrumental in his discoveries, leaving me the credit of my insignificant contributions. He was always as gracious as a woman in love; he had all the bashful feeling, the delicacy of soul which make life happy and pleasant to endure.

On the following day he began writing what he called a *Treatise on the Will;* his subsequent reflections led to many changes in its plan and method; but the incident of that day was certainly the germ of the work, just as the electric shock always felt by Mesmer at the approach of a particular manservant was the starting-point of his discoveries in magnetism, a science till then interred under the mysteries of Isis, of Delphi, of the cave of Trophonius, and rediscovered by that prodigious genius, close on Lavater, and the precursor of Gall.

Lambert's ideas, suddenly illuminated by this flash of light, assumed vaster proportions; he disentangled certain truths from his many acquisitions and brought them into order; then, like a founder, he cast the model of his work. At the

end of six months' indefatigable labor, Lambert's writings excited the curiosity of our companions, and became the object of cruel practical jokes which led to a fatal issue.

One day one of the masters, who was bent on seeing the manuscripts, enlisted the aid of our tyrants, and came to seize, by force, a box that contained the precious papers. Lambert and I defended it with incredible courage. The trunk was locked, our aggressors could not open it, but they tried to smash it in the struggle, a stroke of malignity at which we shrieked with rage. Some of the boys, with a sense of justice, or struck perhaps by our heroic defense, advised the attacking party to leave us in peace, crushing us with insulting contempt. But suddenly, brought to the spot by the noise of a battle, Father Haugoult roughly intervened, inquiring as to the cause of the fight. Our enemies had interrupted us in writing our impositions, and the class-master came to protect his slaves. The foe, in self-defense, betrayed the existence of the manuscript. The dreadful Haugoult insisted on our giving up the box; if we should resist, he would have it broken open. Lambert gave him the key; the master took out the papers, glanced through them, and said, as he confiscated them—

"And it is for such rubbish as this that you neglect your lessons!"

Large tears fell from Lambert's eyes, wrung from him as much by a sense of his offended moral superiority as by the gratuitous insult and betrayal that we had suffered. We gave the accusers a glance of stern reproach: had they not delivered us over to the common enemy? If the common law of school entitled them to thrash us, did it not require them to keep silence as to our misdeeds?

In a moment they were no doubt ashamed of their baseness.

Father Haugoult probably sold the *Treatise on the Will* to a local grocer, unconscious of the scientific treasure, of which the germs thus fell into unworthy hands.

Six months later I left the school, and I do not know whether Lambert ever recommenced his labors. Our parting threw him into a mood of the darkest melancholy.

It was in memory of the disaster that befell Louis's book that, in the tale which comes first in these *Études,* I adopted the title invented by Lambert for a work of fiction, and gave the name of a woman who was dear to him to a girl characterized by her self-devotion; but this is not all I have borrowed from him: his character and occupations were of great value to me in writing that book, and the subject arose from some reminiscences of our youthful meditations. This present volume is intended as a modest monument, a broken column, to commemorate the life of the man who bequeathed to me all he had to leave—his thoughts.

In that boyish effort Lambert had enshrined the ideas of a man. Ten years later, when I met some learned men who were devoting serious attention to the phenomena that had struck us and that Lambert had so marvelously analyzed, I understood the value of his work, then already forgotten as childish. I at once spent several months in recalling the principal theories discovered by my poor schoolmate. Having collected my reminiscences, I can boldly state that, by 1812, he had proved, divined, and set forth in his *Treatise* several important facts of which, as he had declared, evidence was certain to come sooner or later. His philosophical speculations ought undoubtedly to gain him recognition as one of the great thinkers who have appeared at wide intervals among men, to reveal to them the bare skeleton of some science to come, of which the roots spread slowly, but which, in due time, bring forth fair fruit in the intellectual sphere. Thus a humble artisan, Bernard Palissy, searching the soil to find minerals for glazing pottery, proclaimed, in the sixteenth century, with the infallible intuition of genius, geological facts which it is now the glory of Cuvier and Buffon to have demonstrated.

I can, I believe, give some idea of Lambert's *Treatise* by stating the chief propositions on which it was based; but, in spite of myself, I shall strip them of the ideas in which they were clothed, and which were indeed their indispensable accompaniment. I started on a different path, and only made use of those of his researches which answered the purpose of my scheme. I know not, therefore, whether as his disciple I

can faithfully expound his views, having assimilated them in the first instance so as to color them with my own.

New ideas require new words, or a new and expanded use of old words, extended and defined in their meaning. Thus Lambert, to set forth the basis of his system, had adopted certain common words that answered to his notions. The word Will he used to connote the medium in which the mind moves, or to use a less abstract expression, the mass of power by which man can reproduce, outside himself, the actions constituting his external life. Volition—a word due to Locke—expressed the act by which a man exerts his will. The word Mind, or Thought, which he regarded as the quintessential product of the Will, also represented the medium in which the ideas originate to which thought gives substance. The Idea, a name common to every creation of the brain, constituted the act by which man uses his mind. Thus the Will and the Mind were two generating forces; the Volition and the Idea were the two products. Volition, he thought, was the Idea evolved from the abstract state to a concrete state, from its generative fluid to a solid expression, so to speak, if such words may be taken to formulate notions so difficult of definition. According to him, the Mind and Ideas are the motion and the outcome of our inner organization, just as the Will and Volition are of our external activity.

He gave the Will precedence over the Mind.

"You must will before you can think," he said. "Many beings live in a condition of Willing without ever attaining to the condition of Thinking. In the North, life is long; in the South, it is shorter; but in the North we see torpor, in the South a constant excitability of the Will, up to the point where from an excess of cold or of heat the organs are almost nullified."

The use of the word "medium" was suggested to him by an observation he had made in his childhood, though, to be sure, he had no suspicion then of its importance, but its singularity naturally struck his delicately alert imagination. His mother, a fragile, nervous woman, all sensitiveness and affection, was one of those beings created to represent womanhood in all the perfection of her attributes, but

relegated by a mistaken fate to too low a place in the social scale. Wholly loving, and consequently wholly suffering, she died young, having thrown all her energies into her motherly love. Lambert, a child of six, lying, but not always sleeping, in a cot by his mother's bed, saw the electric sparks from her hair when she combed it. The man of fifteen made scientific application of this fact which had amused the child, a fact beyond dispute, of which there is ample evidence in many instances, especially of women who by a sad fatality are doomed to let unappreciated feelings evaporate in the air, or some superabundant power run to waste.

In support of his definitions, Lambert propounded a variety of problems to be solved, challenges flung out to science, though he proposed to seek the solution for himself. He inquired, for instance, whether the element that constitutes electricity does not enter as a base into the specific fluid whence our Ideas and Volitions proceed? Whether the hair, which loses its color, turns white, falls out, or disappears, in proportion to the decay or crystallization of our thoughts, may not be in fact a capillary system, either absorbent or diffusive, and wholly electrical? Whether the fluid phenomena of the Will, a matter generated within us, and spontaneously reacting under the impress of conditions as yet unobserved, were at all more extraordinary than those of the invisible and intangible fluid produced by a voltaic pile, and applied to the nervous system of a dead man? Whether the formation of Ideas and their constant diffusion was less incomprehensible than evaporation of the atoms, imperceptible indeed, but so violent in their effects, that are given off from a grain of musk without any loss of weight. Whether, granting that the function of the skin is purely protective, absorbent, excretive, and tactile, the circulation of the blood and all its mechanism would not correspond with the transubstantiation of our Will, as the circulation of the nerve fluid corresponds to that of the Mind? Finally, whether the more or less rapid affluence of these two real substances may not be the result of a certain perfection or imperfection of organs whose conditions require investigation in every manifestation?

Having set forth these principles, he proposed to class the

phenomena of human life in two series of distinct results, demanding, with the ardent insistency of conviction, a special analysis for each. In fact, having observed in almost every type of created thing two separate motions, he assumed, nay, he asserted, their existence in our human nature, and designated this vital antithesis Action and Reaction.

"A desire," he said, "is a fact completely accomplished in our will before it is accomplished externally."

Hence the sum total of our Volitions and our Ideas constitutes Action, and the sum total of our external acts he called Reaction.

When I subsequently read the observations made by Bichat on the duality of our external senses, I was really bewildered by my recollections, recognizing the startling coincidences between the views of that celebrated physiologist and those of Louis Lambert. They both died too young, and they had with equal steps arrived at the same strange truths. Nature has in every case been pleased to give a twofold purpose to the various apparatus that constitute her creatures; and the twofold action of the human organism, which is now ascertained beyond dispute, proves by a mass of evidence in daily life how true were Lambert's deductions as to Action and Reaction.

The inner Being, the Being of Action—the word he used to designate an unknown specialization—the mysterious nexus of fibrils to which we owe the inadequately investigated powers of thought and will—in short, the nameless entity which sees, acts, foresees the end, and accomplishes everything before expressing itself in any physical phenomenon—must, in conformity with its nature, be free from the physical conditions by which the external Being of Reaction, the visible man, is fettered in its manifestation. From this followed a multitude of logical explanations as to those results of our twofold nature which appear the strangest, and a rectification of various systems in which truth and falsehood are mingled.

Certain men, having had a glimpse of some phenomena of the natural working of the Being of Action, were, like Swedenborg, carried away above this world by their ardent soul, thirsting for poetry, and filled with the Divine Spirit. Thus,

in their ignorance of the causes and their admiration of the facts, they pleased their fancy by regarding that inner man as divine, and constructing a mystical universe. Hence we have angels! A lovely illusion which Lambert would never abandon, cherishing it even when the sword of his logic was cutting off their dazzling wings.

"Heaven," he would say, "must, after all, be the survival of our perfected faculties, and hell the void into which our unperfected faculties are cast away."

But how, then, in the ages when the understanding had preserved the religious and spiritualist impressions, which prevailed from the time of Christ till that of Descartes, between faith and doubt, how could men help accounting for the mysteries of our nature otherwise than by divine interposition? Of whom but of God Himself could sages demand an account of an invisible creature so actively and so re-actively sensitive, gifted with faculties so extensive, so improvable by use, and so powerful under certain occult influences, that they could sometimes see it annihilate, by some phenomenon of sight or movement, space in its two manifestations—Time and Distance—of which the former is the space of the intellect, the latter is physical space? Sometimes they found it reconstructing the past, either by the power of retrospective vision, or by the mystery of a palingenesis not unlike the power a man might have of detecting in the form, integument, and embryo in a seed, the flowers of the past, and the numberless variations of their color, scent, and shape; and sometimes, again, it could be seen vaguely foreseeing the future, either by its apprehension of final causes, or by some phenomenon of physical presentiment.

Other men, less poetically religious, cold, and argumentative—quacks perhaps, but enthusiasts in brain at least, if not in heart—recognizing some isolated examples of such phenomena, admitted their truth while refusing to consider them as radiating from a common center. Each of these was, then, bent on constructing a science out of a simple fact. Hence arose demonology, judicial astrology, the black arts, in short, every form of divination founded on circumstances that were

essentially transient, because they varied according to men's temperament, and to conditions that are still completely unknown.

But from these errors of the learned, and from the ecclesiastical trials under which fell so many martyrs to their own powers, startling evidence was derived of the prodigious faculties at the command of the Being of Action, which, according to Lambert, can abstract itself completely from the Being of Reaction, bursting its envelope, and piercing walls by its potent vision; a phenomenon known to the Hindoos, as missionaries tell us, by the name of *Tokeiad;* or again, by another faculty, can grasp in the brain, in spite of its closest convolutions, the ideas which are formed or forming there, and the whole of past consciousness.

"If apparitions are not impossible," said Lambert, "they must be due to a faculty of discerning the ideas which represent man in his purest essence, whose life, imperishable perhaps, escapes our grosser senses, though they may become perceptible to the inner being when it has reached a high degree of ecstasy, or a great perfection of vision."

I know—though my remembrance is now vague—that Lambert, by following the results of Mind and Will step by step, after he had established their laws, accounted for a multitude of phenomena which, till then, had been regarded with reason as incomprehensible. Thus wizards, men possessed, those gifted with second sight, and demoniacs of every degree—the victims of the Middle Ages—became the subject of explanations so natural, that their very simplicity often seemed to me the seal of their truth. The marvelous gifts which the Church of Rome, jealous of all mysteries, punished with the stake, were, in Louis's opinion, the result of certain affinities between the constituent elements of matter and those of mind, which proceed from the same source. The man holding a hazel rod when he found a spring of water was guided by some antipathy or sympathy of which he was unconscious; nothing but the eccentricity of these phenomena could have availed to give some of them historic certainty.

Sympathies have rarely been proved; they afford a kind of pleasure which those who are so happy as to possess them

rarely speak of unless they are abnormally singular, and even then only in the privacy of intimate intercourse, where everything is buried. But the antipathies that arise from the inversion of affinities have, very happily, been recorded when developed in famous men. Thus, Bayle had hysterics when he heard water splashing, Scaliger turned pale at the sight of watercress, Erasmus was thrown into a fever by the smell of fish. These three antipathies were connected with water. The Duc d'Épernon fainted at the sight of a hare, Tycho-Brahe at that of a fox, Henri III. at the presence of a cat, the Maréchal d'Albret at the sight of a wild hog; these antipathies were produced by animal emanations, and often took effect at a great distance. The Chevalier de Guise, Marie de' Medici, and many other persons, have felt faint at seeing a rose even in a painting. Lord Bacon, whether he were forewarned or no of an eclipse of the moon, always fell into a syncope while it lasted; and his vitality, suspended while the phenomenon lasted, was restored as soon as it was over without his feeling any further inconvenience. These effects of antipathy, all well authenticated, and chosen from among many which history has happened to preserve, are enough to give a clew to the sympathies which remain unknown.

This fragment of Lambert's investigations, which I remember from among his essays, will throw a light on the method on which he worked. I need not emphasize the obvious connection between this theory and the collateral sciences projected by Gall and Lavater; they were its natural corollary; and every more or less scientific brain will discern the ramifications by which it is inevitably connected with the phrenological observations of one and the speculations on physiognomy of the other.

Mesmer's discovery, so important, though as yet so little appreciated, was also embodied in a single section of this treatise, though Louis did not know the Swiss doctor's writings—which are few and brief.

A simple and logical inference from these principles led him to perceive that the will might be accumulated by a contractile effort of the inner man, and then, by another

effort, projected, or even imparted, to material objects. Thus, the whole force of a man must have the property of reacting on other men, and of infusing into them an essence foreign to their own, if they could not protect themselves against such an aggression. The evidence of this theorem of the science of humanity is, of course, very multifarious; but there is nothing to establish it beyond question. We have only the notorious disaster of Marius and his harangue to the Cimbrian commanded to kill him, or the august injunction of a mother to the Lion of Florence, in historic proof of instances of such lightning flashes of mind. To Lambert, then, Will and Thought were *living forces;* and he spoke of them in such a way as to impress his belief on the hearer. To him these two forces were, in a way, visible, tangible. Thought was slow or alert, heavy or nimble, light or dark; he ascribed to it all the attributes of an active agent, and thought of it as rising, resting, waking, expanding, growing old, shrinking, becoming atrophied, or resuscitating; he described its life, and specified all its actions by the strangest words in our language, speaking of its spontaneity, its strength, and all its qualities with a kind of intuition which enabled him to recognize all the manifestations of its substantial existence.

"Often," said he, "in the midst of quiet and silence, when our inner faculties are dormant, when we have given ourselves up to sweet repose, when a sort of darkness reigns within us, and we are lost in the contemplation of things outside us, an idea suddenly flies forth, and rushes with the swiftness of lightning across the infinite space which our inner vision allows us to perceive. This radiant idea, springing into existence like a will-o'-the-wisp, dies out never to return; an ephemeral life, like that of babes who give their parents such infinite joy and sorrow; a sort of stillborn blossom in the fields of the mind. Sometimes an idea instead of springing forcibly into life and dying unembodied, dawns gradually, hovers in the unknown limbo of the organs where it has its birth; exhausts us by long gestation, develops, is itself fruitful, grows outwardly in all the grace of youth and the promising attributes of a long life; it can endure the closest inspection,

invites it, and never tires the sight; the investigation it undergoes commands the admiration we give to works slowly elaborated. Sometimes ideas are evolved in a swarm; one brings another; they come linked together; they vie with each other; they fly in clouds, wild and headlong. Again, they rise up pallid and misty, and perish for want of strength or of nutrition; the vital force is lacking. Or again, on certain days, they rush down into the depths to light up that immense obscurity; they terrify us and leave the soul dejected.

"Ideas are a complete system within us, resembling a natural kingdom, a sort of flora, of which the iconography will one day be outlined by some man who will perhaps be accounted a madman.

"Yes, within us and without, everything testifies to the livingness of those exquisite creations, which I compare with flowers in obedience to some unutterable revelation of their true nature!

"Their being produced as the final cause of man is, after all, not more amazing than the production of perfume and color in paint. Perfumes *are* ideas, perhaps!

"When we consider that the line where flesh ends and the nail begins contains the invisible and inexplicable mystery of the constant transformation of a fluid into horn, we must confess that nothing is impossible in the marvelous modifications of human tissue.

"And are there not in our inner nature phenomena of weight and motion comparable to those of physical nature? Suspense, to choose an example vividly familiar to everybody, is painful only as a result of the law in virtue of which the weight of a body is multiplied by its velocity. The weight of the feeling produced by suspense increases by the constant addition of past pain to the pain of the moment.

"And then, to what, unless it be to the electric fluid, are we to attribute the magic by which the Will enthrones itself so imperiously in the eye to demolish obstacles at the behest of genius, thunders in the voice, or filters, in spite of dissimulation, through the human frame? The current of that sovereign fluid, which, in obedience to the high pressure of thought or of feeling, flows in a torrent or is reduced to a

mere thread, and collects to flash in lightnings, is the occult agent to which are due the evil or the beneficent efforts of Art and Passion—intonation of voice, whether harsh or suave, terrible, lascivious, horrifying or seductive by turns, thrilling the heart, the nerves, or the brain at our will; the marvels of the touch, the instrument of the mental transfusions of a myriad artists, whose creative fingers are able, after passionate study, to reproduce the forms of nature; or, again, the infinite gradations of the eye from dull inertia to the emission of the most terrifying gleams.

"By this system God is bereft of none of His rights. Mind, as a form of matter, has brought me a new conviction of His greatness."

After hearing him discourse thus, after receiving into my soul his look like a ray of light, it was difficult not to be dazzled by his conviction and carried away by his arguments The Mind appeared to me as a purely physical power, surrounded by its innumerable progeny. It was a new conception of humanity under a new form.

This brief sketch of the laws which, as Lambert maintained, constitute the formula of our intellect, must suffice t give a notion of the prodigious activity of his spirit feedi on itself. Louis had sought for proofs of his theories in t history of great men, whose lives, as set forth by tl biographers, supply very curious particulars as to the op tion of their understanding. His memory allowed him t call such facts as might serve to support his statement had appended them to each chapter in the form of demon tions, so as to give to many of his theories an almost m matical certainty. The works of Cardan, a man gifte singular powers of insight, supplied him with valual terials. He had not forgotten that Apollonius of Tya in Asia, announced the death of the tyrant with ever of his execution, at the very hour when it was taking Rome; nor that Plotinus, when far away from Po was aware of his friend's intention to kill himself, to dissuade him; nor the incident in the last centur in the face of the most incredulous mockery e —an incident most surprising to men who were

to regard doubt as a weapon against the fact alone, but simple enough to believers—the fact that Alphonzo-Maria di Liguori, Bishop of Saint-Agatha, administered consolations to Pope Ganganelli, who saw him, heard him, and answered him, while the Bishop himself, at a great distance from Rome, was in a trance at home, in the chair where he commonly sat on his return from Mass. On recovering consciousness, he saw all his attendants kneeling beside him, believing him to be dead: "My friends," said he, "the Holy Father is just dead." Two days later a letter confirmed the news. The hour of the Pope's death coincided with that when the Bishop had been restored to his natural state.

Nor had Lambert omitted the yet more recent adventure of an English girl who was passionately attached to a sailor, and set out from London to seek him. She found him, without a guide, making her way alone in the North American wilderness, reaching him just in time to save his life.

Louis had found confirmatory evidence in the mysteries of he ancients, in the acts of the martyrs—in which glorious stances may be found of the triumph of human will, in e demonology of the Middle Ages, in criminal trials and ·dical researches; always selecting the real fact, the probe phenomenon, with admirable sagacity.

\ll this rich collection of scientific anecdotes, culled from so y books, most of them worthy of credit, served no doubt rap parcels in; and this work, which was curious, to say east of it, as the outcome of a most extraordinary ·ry, was doomed to destruction.

ong the various cases which added to the value of rt's *Treatise* was an incident that had taken place in ı family, of which he had told me before he wrote y. This fact, bearing on the post-existence of the ın, if I may be allowed to coin a new word for a non hitherto nameless, struck me so forcibly that I ·r forgotten it. His father and mother were being ·o a lawsuit, of which the loss would leave them with ı their good name, the only thing they had in the ·nce their anxiety was very great when the question as to whether they should yield to the plaintiff's

unjust demands, or should defend themselves against him. The matter came under discussion one autumn evening, before a turf fire in the room used by the tanner and his wife. Two or three relations were invited to this family council, and among others Louis's maternal great-grandfather, an old laborer, much bent, but with a venerable and dignified countenance, bright eyes, and a bald, yellow head, on which grew a few locks of thin, white hair. Like the Obi of the Negroes, or the Sagamore of the Indian savage, he was a sort of oracle, consulted on important occasions. His land was tilled by his grandchildren, who fed and served him; he predicted rain and fine weather, and told them when to mow the hay and gather the crops. The barometric exactitude of his forecasts was quite famous, and added to the confidence and respect he inspired. For whole days he would sit immovable in his armchair. This state of rapt meditation often came upon him since his wife's death; he had been attached to her with the truest and most faithful affection.

This discussion was held in his presence, but he did not seem to give much heed to it.

"My children," said he, when he was asked for his opinio "this is too serious a matter for me to decide on alone. must go and consult my wife."

The old man rose, took his stick, and went out, to the gr astonishment of the others, who thought him daft. He p ently came back and said—

"I did not have to go so far as the graveyard; mother came to meet me; I found her by the brook. Sh me that you will find some receipts in the hands of a n at Blois, which will enable you to gain your suit."

The words were spoken in a firm tone; the old ma meanor and countenance showed that such an app was habitual with him. In fact, the disputed recei found, and the lawsuit was not attempted.

This event, under his father's roof and to his ow edge, when Louis was nine years old, contributed l his belief in Swedenborg's miraculous visions, for in of that philosopher's life he repeatedly gave pro power of sight developed in his Inner Being. A

older, and as his intelligence was developed, Lambert was naturally led to seek in the laws of nature for the causes of the miracle which, in his childhood, had captivated his attention. What name can be given to the chance which brought within his ken so many facts and books bearing on such phenomena, and made him the principal subject and actor in such marvelous manifestations of mind?

If Lambert had no other title to fame than the fact of his having formulated, in his sixteenth year, such a psychological dictum as this:—"The events which bear witness to the action of the human race, and are the outcome of its intellect, have causes by which they are preconceived, as our actions are accomplished in our mind before they are reproduced by the outer man; presentiments or predictions are the perception of these causes"—I think we may deplore in him a genius equal to Pascal, Lavoisier, or Laplace. His chimerical notions about angels perhaps overruled his work too long; but was it not in trying to make gold that the alchemists unconsciously created chemistry? At the same time, Lambert, at a ater period, studied comparative anatomy, physics, geometry, nd other sciences bearing on his discoveries, and this was ndoubtedly with the purpose of collecting facts and subitting them to analysis—the only torch that can guide us rough the dark places of the most inscrutable work of ure. He had too much good sense to dwell among the nds of theories which can all be expressed in a few words. ur day, is not the simplest demonstration based on facts highly esteemed than the most specious system though ded by more or less ingenious inductions? But as I did now him at the period of his life when his cogitations no doubt, the most productive of results, I can only ure what the bent of his work must have been from his first efforts of thought.

asy to see where his *Treatise on the Will* was faulty. gifted already with the powers which characterize men, he was but a boy. His brain, though endowed reat faculty for abstractions, was still full of the beliefs that hover around youth. Thus his con- hile at some points it touched the ripest fruits of

his genius, still, by many more, clung to the smaller elements of its germs. To certain readers, lovers of poetry, what he chiefly lacked must have been a certain vein of interest.

But his work bore the stamp of the struggle that was going on in that noble Spirit between the two great principles of Spiritualism and Materialism, round which so many a fine genius has beaten its way without ever daring to amalgamate them. Louis, at first purely Spiritualist, had been irresistibly led to recognize the Material conditions of Mind. Confounded by the facts of analysis at the moment when his heart still gazed with yearning at the clouds that floated in Swedenborg's heaven, he had not yet acquired the necessary powers to produce a coherent system, compactly cast in a piece, as it were. Hence certain inconsistencies that have left their stamp even on the sketch here given of his first attempts. Still, incomplete as his work may have been, was it not the rough copy of a science of which he would have investigated the secrets at a later time, have secured the foundations, have examined, deduced, and connected the logical sequence?

Six months after the confiscation of the *Treatise on th* *Will* I left school. Our parting was unexpected. My mothe alarmed by a feverish attack which for some months I h been unable to shake off, while my inactive life induced syn toms of coma, carried me off at four or five hours' not The announcement of my departure reduced Lambert dreadful dejection.

"Shall I ever see you again?" said he in his gentle as he clasped me in his arms. "You will live," he wer "but I shall die. If I can, I will come back to you."

Only the young can utter such words with the acc conviction that gives them the impressiveness of pr of a pledge, leaving a terror of its fulfillment. For time indeed I vaguely looked for the promised ap Even now there are days of depression, of doubt, al loneliness, when I am forced to repel the intrusion of parting, though it was not fated to be the last.

When I crossed the yard by which we left, Lamb one of the refectory windows to see me pass. By

my mother obtained leave for him to dine with us at the inn, and in the evening I escorted him back to the fatal gate of the college. No lover and his mistress ever shed more tears at parting.

"Well, good-by; I shall be left alone in this desert!" said he, pointing to the playground where two hundred boys were disporting themselves and shouting. "When I come back half dead with fatigue from my long excursions through the fields of thought, on whose heart can I rest? I could tell you everything in a look. Who will understand me now?—Good-by! I could wish I had never met you; I should not know all I am losing."

"And what is to become of me?" said I. "Is not my position a dreadful one? *I* have nothing here to uphold me!" and I slapped my forehead.

He shook his head with a gentle gesture, gracious and sad, and we parted.

At that time Louis Lambert was about five feet five inches n height; he grew no more. His countenance, which was ıll of expression, revealed his sweet nature. Divine patience, veloped by harsh usage, and the constant concentration eded for his meditative life, had bereft his eyes of the dacious pride which is so attractive in some faces, and ch had so shocked our masters. Peaceful mildness gave rm to his face, an exquisite serenity that was never marred a tinge of irony or satire; for his natural kindliness ered his conscious strength and superiority. He had y hands, very slender, and almost always moist. His was a marvel, a model for a sculptor; but our iron-gray m, with gilt buttons and knee-breeches, gave us such ainly appearance that Lambert's fine proportions and scles could only be appreciated in the bath. When n in our pool in the Loir, Louis was conspicuous by ness of his skin, which was unlike the different shades hoolfellows' bodies mottled by the cold, or blue from . Gracefully formed, elegant in his attitudes, hue, never shivering after his bath, perhaps be- voided the shade and always ran into the sunshine, ike one of those cautious blossoms that close their

petals to the blast and refuse to open unless to a clear sky. He ate little, and drank water only; either by instinct or by choice he was averse to any exertion that made a demand on his strength; his movements were few and simple, like those of Orientals or of savages, with whom gravity seems a condition of nature.

As a rule, he disliked everything that resembled any special care for his person. He commonly sat with his head a little inclined to the left, and so constantly rested his elbows on the table, that the sleeves of his coats were soon in holes.

To this slight picture of the outer man I must add a sketch of his moral qualities, for I believe I can now judge him impartially.

Though naturally religious, Louis did not accept the minute practices of the Roman ritual; his ideas were more intimately in sympathy with Saint Theresa and Fénelon, and several Fathers and certain Saints, who, in our day, would be regarded as heresiarchs or atheists. He was rigidly calm during the services. His own prayers went up in gusts, in aspirations, without any regular formality; in all things he gave himself up to nature, and would not pray, any more than he would think, at any fixed hour. In chapel he was equally apt to think of God or to meditate on some problem of philosophy.

To him Jesus Christ was the most perfect type of his system. *Et Verbum caro factum est* seemed a sublime statement intended to express the traditional formula of the Will, the Word, and the Act made visible. Christ's unconsciousness of His Death—having so perfected His inner Being by divine works, that one day the invisible form of it appeared to His disciples—and the other Mysteries of the Gospels, the magnetic cures wrought by Christ, and the gift of tongues, all to him confirmed his doctrine. I remember once hearing him say on this subject, that the greatest work that could be written nowadays was a History of the Primitive Church. And he never rose to such poetic heights as when, in the evening, as we conversed, he would enter on an inquiry into miracles worked by the power of Will during that great age of faith. He discerned the strongest evidence of his theory

in most of the martyrdoms endured during the first century of our era, which he spoke of as *the great era of the Mind.*

"Do not the phenomena observed in almost every instance of the torments so heroically endured by the early Christians for the establishment of the faith, amply prove that Material force will never prevail against the force of Ideas or the Will of man?" he would say. "From this effect, produced by the Will of all, each man may draw conclusions in favor of his own."

I need say nothing of his views on poetry or history, nor of his judgment on the masterpieces of our language. There would be little interest in the record of opinions now almost universally held, though at that time, from the lips of a boy, they might seem remarkable. Louis was capable of the highest flights. To give a notion of his talents in two words, he could have written *Zadig* as wittily as Voltaire; he could have thought out the Dialogue between Sylla and Eucrates as powerfully as Montesquieu. His rectitude of character made him desire above all else in a work that it should bear the stamp of utility; at the same time, his refined taste demanded novelty of thought as well as of form. One of his most remarkable literary observations, which will serve as a clew to all the others, and show the lucidity of his judgment, is this, which has ever dwelt in my memory, "The Apocalypse is written ecstasy." He regarded the Bible as a part of the traditional history of the antediluvian nations which had taken for its share the new humanity. He thought that the mythology of the Greeks was borrowed both from the Hebrew Scriptures and from the sacred Books of India, adapted after their own fashion by the beauty-loving Hellenes.

"It is impossible," said he, "to doubt the priority of the Asiatic Scriptures; they are earlier than our Sacred Books. The man who is candid enough to admit this historical fact sees the whole world expand before him. Was it not on the Asiatic highland that the few men took refuge who were able to escape the catastrophe that ruined our globe—if, indeed, men had existed before that cataclysm or shock? A serious query, the answer to which lies at the bottom of the sea. The anthropogony of the Bible is merely a genealogy of a

swarm escaping from the human hive which settled on the mountainous slopes of Thibet between the summits of the Himalaya and the Caucasus.

"The character of the primitive ideas of that horde, called by its lawgiver the people of God, no doubt to secure its unity, and perhaps also to induce it to maintain his laws and his system of government—for the Books of Moses are a religious, political, and civil code—that character bears the authority of terror; convulsions of nature are interpreted with stupendous power as a vengeance from on high. In fact, since this wandering tribe knew none of the ease enjoyed by a community settled in a patriarchal home, their sorrows as pilgrims inspired them with none but gloomy poems, majestic but blood-stained. In the Hindoos, on the contrary, the spectacle of the rapid recoveries of the natural world, and the prodigious effects of sunshine, which they were the first to recognize, gave rise to happy images of blissful love, to the worship of Fire and of the endless personifications of reproductive force. These fine fancies are lacking in the Book of the Hebrews. A constant need of self-preservation amid all the dangers and the lands they traversed to reach the Promised Land engendered their exclusive race-feeling and their hatred of all other nations.

"These three Scriptures are the archives of an engulfed world. Therein lies the secret of the extraordinary splendor of those languages and their myths. A grand human history lies beneath those names of men and places, and those fables which charm us so irresistibly, we know not why. Perhaps it is because we find in them the native air of renewed humanity."

Thus, to him, this threefold literature included all the thoughts of man. Not a book could be written, in his opinion, of which the subject might not there be discerned in its germ. This view shows how learnedly he had pursued his early studies of the Bible, and how far they had led him. Hovering, as it were, over the heads of society, and knowing it solely from books, he could judge it coldly.

"The law," said he, "never puts a check on the enterprises of the rich and great, but crushes the poor, who, on the contrary, need protection."

His kind heart did not therefore allow him to sympathize in political ideas; his system led rather to the passive obedience of which Jesus set the example. During the last hours of my life at Vendôme, Louis had ceased to feel the spur to glory; he had, in a way, had an abstract enjoyment of fame; and having opened it, as the ancient priests of sacrifice sought to read the future in the hearts of men, he had found nothing in the entrails of his chimera. Scorning a sentiment so wholly personal: "Glory," said he, "is but beatified egoism."

Here, perhaps, before taking leave of this exceptional boyhood, I may pronounce judgment on it by a rapid glance.

A short time before our separation, Lambert said to me:—

"Apart from the general laws which I have formulated—and this, perhaps, will be my glory—laws which must be those of the human organism, the life of man is Movement determined in each individual by the pressure of some inscrutable influence—by the brain, the heart, or the sinews. All the innumerable modes of human existence result from the proportions in which these three generating forces are more or less intimately combined with the substances they assimilate in the environment they live in."

He stopped short, struck his forehead, and exclaimed: "How strange! In every great man whose portrait I have remarked, the neck is short. Perhaps nature requires that in them the heart should be nearer to the brain!"

Then he went on:—

"From that, a sum-total of action takes its rise which constitutes social life. The man of sinew contributes action or strength; the man of brain, genius; the man of heart, faith. But," he added sadly, "faith sees only the clouds of the sanctuary; the angel alone has light."

So, according to his own definitions, Lambert was all brain and all heart. It seems to me that his intellectual life was divided into three marked phases.

Under the impulsion, from his earliest years, of a precocious activity, due, no doubt, to some malady—or to some special perfection—of organism, his powers were concentrated on the functions of the inner senses and a super-

abundant flow of nerve fluid. As a man of ideas, he craved to satisfy the thirst of his brain, to assimilate every idea. Hence his reading; and from his reading, the reflections that gave him the power of reducing things to their simplest expression, and of absorbing them to study them in their essence. Thus, the advantages of this splendid stage, acquired by other men only after long study, were achieved by Lambert during his bodily childhood: a happy childhood, colored by the studious joys of a born poet.

The point which most thinkers reach at last was to him the starting-point, whence his brain was to set out one day in search of new worlds of knowledge. Though as yet he knew it not, he had made for himself the most exacting life possible, and the most insatiably greedy. Merely to live, was he not compelled to be perpetually casting nutriment into the gulf he had opened in himself? Like some beings who dwell in the grosser world, might he not die of inanition for want of feeding abnormal and disappointed cravings? Was not this a sort of debauchery of the intellect which might lead to spontaneous combustion, like that of bodies saturated with alcohol?

I had seen nothing of this first phase of his brain-development; it is only now, at a later day, that I can thus give an account of its prodigious fruit and results. Lambert was now thirteen.

I was so fortunate as to witness the first stage of the second period. Lambert was cast into all the miseries of school life—and that, perhaps, was his salvation—it absorbed the superabundance of his thoughts. After passing from concrete ideas to their purest expression, from words to their ideal import, and from that import to principles, after reducing everything to the abstract, to enable him to live he yearned for yet other intellectual creations. Quelled by the woes of school and the critical development of his physical constitution, he became thoughtful, dreamed of feeling, and caught a glimpse of new sciences—positively masses of ideas. Checked in his career, and not yet strong enough to contemplate the higher spheres, he contemplated his inmost self. I then perceived in him the struggle of the Mind reacting on

itself, and trying to detect the secrets of its own nature, like a physician who watches the course of his own disease.

At this stage of weakness and strength, of childish grace and superhuman powers, Louis Lambert is the creature who, more than any other, gave me a poetical and truthful image of the being we call an angel, always excepting one woman whose name, whose features, whose identity, and whose life I would fain hide from all the world, so as to be sole master of the secret of her existence, and to bury it in the depths of my heart.

The third phase I was not destined to see. It began when Lambert and I were parted, for he did not leave college till he was eighteen, in the summer of 1815. He had at that time lost his father and mother about six months before. Finding no member of his family with whom his soul could sympathize, expansive still, but, since our parting, thrown back on himself, he made his home with his uncle, who was also his guardian, and who, having been turned out of his benefice as a priest who had taken the oaths, had come to settle at Blois. There Louis lived for some time; but consumed ere long by the desire to finish his incomplete studies, he came to Paris to see Mme. de Staël, and to drink of science at its highest font. The old priest, being very fond of his nephew, left Louis free to spend his whole little inheritance in his three years' stay in Paris, though he lived very poorly. This fortune consisted of but a few thousand francs.

Lambert returned to Blois at the beginning of 1820, driven from Paris by the sufferings to which the impecunious are exposed there. He must often have been a victim to the secret storms, the terrible rage of mind by which artists are tossed, to judge from the only fact his uncle recollected, and the only letter he preserved of all those which Louis Lambert wrote to him at that time, perhaps because it was the last and the longest.

To begin with the story. Louis one evening was at the Théâtre-Français, seated on a bench in the upper gallery, near to one of the pillars which, in those days, divided off the third row of boxes. On rising between the acts, he saw a

young woman who had just come into the box next him. The sight of this lady, who was young, pretty, well dressed, in a low bodice no doubt, and escorted by a man for whom her face beamed with all the charms of love, produced such a terrible effect on Lambert's soul and senses, that he was obliged to leave the theater. If he had not been controlled by some remaining glimmer of reason, which was not wholly extinguished by this first fever of burning passion, he might perhaps have yielded to the almost irresistible desire that came over him to kill the young man on whom the lady's looks beamed. Was not this a reversion, in the heart of the Paris world, to the savage passion that regards woman as its prey, an effect of animal instinct combining with the almost luminous flashes of a soul crushed under the weight of thought? In short, was it not the prick of the penknife so vividly imagined by the boy, felt by the man as the thunderbolt of his most vital craving—for love?

And now, here is the letter that depicts the state of his mind as it was struck by the spectacle of Parisian civilization. His feelings, perpetually wounded no doubt in that whirlpool of self-interest, must always have suffered there; he probably had no friend to comfort him, no enemy to give tone to his life. Compelled to live in himself alone, having no one to share his subtle raptures, he may have hoped to solve the problem of his destiny by a life of ecstasy, adopting an almost vegetative attitude, like an anchorite of the early Church, and abdicating the empire of the intellectual world.

This letter seems to hint at such a scheme, which is a temptation to all lofty souls at periods of social reform. But is not this purpose, in some cases, the result of a vocation? Do not some of them endeavor to concentrate their powers by long silence, so as to emerge fully capable of governing the world by word or by deed? Louis must, assuredly, have found much bitterness in his intercourse with men, or have striven hard with Society in terrible irony, without extracting anything from it, before uttering so strident a cry, and expressing, poor fellow, the desire which satiety of power and of all earthly things has led even monarchs to indulge!

And perhaps, too, he went back to solitude to carry out

some great work that was floating inchoate in his brain. We would gladly believe it as we read this fragment of his thoughts, betraying the struggle of his soul at the time when youth was ending and the terrible power of production was coming into being, to which we might have owed the works of the man.

This letter connects itself with the adventure at the theater. The incident and the letter throw light on each other, body and soul were tuned to the same pitch. This tempest of doubts and asseverations, of clouds and of lightnings that flash before the thunder, ending by a starved yearning for heavenly illumination, throws such a light on the third phase of his education as enables us to understand it perfectly. As we read these lines, written at chance moments, taken up when the vicissitudes of life in Paris allowed, may we not fancy that we see an oak at that stage of its growth when its inner expansion bursts the tender green bark, covering it with wrinkles and cracks, when its majestic stature is in preparation—if indeed the lightnings of heaven and the ax of man shall spare it?

This letter, then, will close, alike for the poet and the philosopher, this portentous childhood and unappreciated youth. It finishes off the outline of this nature in its germ. Philosophers will regret the foliage frost-nipped in the bud; but they will, perhaps, find the flowers expanding in regions far above the highest places of the earth.

"PARIS, *September-October* 1819.

"DEAR UNCLE:—I shall soon be leaving this part of the world, where I could never bear to live. I find no one here who likes what I like, who works at my work, or who is amazed at what amazes me. Thrown back on myself, I eat my heart out in misery. My long and patient study of Society here has brought me to melancholy conclusions, in which doubt predominates.

"Here, money is the mainspring of everything. Money is indispensable, even for going without money. But though that dross is necessary to anyone who wishes to think in peace, I have not courage enough to make it the sole motive

power of my thoughts. To make a fortune, I must take up a profession; in two words, I must, by acquiring some privilege of position or of self-advertisement, either legal or ingeniously contrived, purchase the right of taking day by day out of somebody else's purse a certain sum which, by the end of the year, would amount to a small capital; and this, in twenty years, would hardly secure an income of four or five thousand francs to a man who deals honestly. An advocate, a notary, a merchant, any recognized professional, has earned a living for his later days in the course of fifteen or sixteen years after ending his apprenticeship.

"But I have never felt fit for work of this kind. I prefer thought to action, an idea to a transaction, contemplation to activity. I am absolutely devoid of the constant attention indispensable to the making of a fortune. Any mercantile venture, any need for using other people's money would bring me to grief, and I should be ruined. Though I have nothing, at least at the moment, I owe nothing. The man who gives his life to the achievement of great things in the sphere of intellect, needs very little; still, though twenty sous a day would be enough, I do not possess that small income for my laborious idleness. When I wish to cogitate, want drives me out of the sanctuary where my mind has its being. What is to become of me?

"I am not frightened at poverty. If it were not that beggars are imprisoned, branded, scorned, I would beg, to enable me to solve at my leisure the problems that haunt me. Still, this sublime resignation, by which I might emancipate my mind, through abstracting it from my body, would not serve my end. I should still need money to devote myself to certain experiments. But for that, I would accept the outward indigence of a sage possessed of both heaven and earth. A man need only never stoop, to remain lofty in poverty. He who struggles and endures, while marching on to a glorious end, presents a noble spectacle; but who can have the strength to fight here? We can climb cliffs, but it is unendurable to remain forever tramping the mud. Everything here checks the flight of a spirit that strives towards the future.

"I should not be afraid of myself in a desert cave; I am

afraid of myself here. In the desert I should be alone with myself, undisturbed; here man has a thousand wants which drag him down. You go out walking, absorbed in dreams; the voice of the beggar asking an alms brings you back to this world of hunger and thirst. You need money only to take a walk. Your organs of sense, perpetually wearied by trifles, never get any rest. The poet's sensitive nerves are perpetually shocked, and what ought to be his glory becomes his torment; his imagination is his cruelest enemy. The injured workman, the poor mother in childbed, the prostitute who has fallen ill, the foundling, the infirm and aged—even vice and crime here find a refuge and charity; but the world is merciless to the inventor, to the man who thinks. Here everything must show an immediate and practical result. Fruitless attempts are mocked at, though they may lead to the greatest discoveries; the deep and untiring study that demands long concentration of every faculty is not valued here. The State might pay talent as it pays the bayonet; but it is afraid of being taken in by mere cleverness, as if genius could be counterfeited for any length of time.

"Ah, my dear uncle, when monastic solitude was destroyed, uprooted from its home at the foot of mountains, under green and silent shade, asylums ought to have been provided for those suffering souls who, by an idea, promote the progress of nations or prepare some new and fruitful development of science.

"September 20th.

"The love of study brought me hither, as you know. I have met really learned men, amazing for the most part; but the lack of unity in scientific work almost nullifies their efforts. There is no Head of instruction or of scientific research. At the Museum a professor argues to prove that another in the Rue Saint-Jacques talks nonsense. The lecturer at the College of Medicine abuses him of the Collège de France. When I first arrived, I went to hear an old Academician who taught five hundred youths that Corneille was a haughty and powerful genius; Racine, elegiac and graceful; Molière, inimitable; Voltaire, supremely witty;

Bossuet and Pascal, incomparable in argument. A professor of philosophy may make a name by explaining how Plato is Platonic. Another discourses on the history of words, without troubling himself about ideas. One explains Æschylus, another tells you that communes were communes, and neither more nor less. These original and brilliant discoveries, diluted to last several hours, constitute the higher education which is to lead to giant strides in human knowledge.

"If the Government could have an idea, I should suspect it of being afraid of any real superiority, which, once roused, might bring Society under the yoke of an intelligent rule. Then nations would go too far and too fast; so professors are appointed to produce simpletons. How else can we account for a scheme devoid of method or any notion of the future?

"The Institut might be the central government of the moral and intellectual world; but it has been ruined lately by its subdivision into separate academies. So human science marches on, without a guide, without a system, and floats haphazard with no road traced out.

"This vagueness and uncertainty prevails in politics as well as in science. In the order of nature means are simple, the end is grand and marvelous; here in science, as in government, the means are stupendous, the end is mean. The force which in nature proceeds at an equal pace, and of which the sum is constantly being added to itself—the A+A from which everything is produced—is destructive in society. Politics, at the present time, place human forces in antagonism to neutralize each other, instead of combining them to promote their action to some definite end.

"Looking at Europe alone, from Cæsar to Constantine, from the puny Constantine to the great Attila, from the Huns to Charlemagne, from Charlemagne to Leo X., from Leo X. to Philip II., from Philip II. to Louis XIV., from Venice to England, from England to Napoleon, from Napoleon to England, I see no fixed purpose in politics; its constant agitation has led to no progress.

"Nations leave witnesses to their greatness in monuments,

and to their happiness in the welfare of individuals. Are modern monuments as fine as those of the ancients? I doubt it. The arts, which are the direct outcome of the individual, the products of genius or of handicraft, have not advanced much. The pleasures of Lucullus were as good as those of Samuel Bernard, of Beaujon, or of the King of Bavaria. And then human longevity has diminished.

"Thus, to those who will be candid, man is still the same; might is still his only law, and success his only wisdom.

"Jesus Christ, Mahomet, and Luther, only lent a different hue to the arena in which youthful nations disport themselves.

"No development of politics has hindered civilization, with its riches, its manners, its alliance of the strong against the weak, its ideas, and its delights, from moving from Memphis to Tyre, from Tyre to Baalbek, from Tadmor to Carthage, from Carthage to Rome, from Rome to Constantinople, from Constantinople to Venice, from Venice to Spain, from Spain to England—while no trace is left of Memphis, of Tyre, of Carthage, of Rome, of Venice, or Madrid. The soul of those great bodies has fled. Not one of them has preserved itself from destruction, nor formulated this axiom: When the effect produced ceases to be in a ratio to its cause, disorganization follows.

"The most subtle genius can discover no common bond between great social facts. No political theory has ever lasted. Governments pass away, as men do, without handing down any lesson, and no system gives birth to a system better than that which came before it. What can we say about politics when a Government directly referred to God perished in India and Egypt; when the rule of the Sword and of the Tiara are past; when Monarchy is dying; when the Government of the People has never been alive; when no scheme of intellectual power as applied to material interests has ever proved durable, and everything at this day remains to be done all over again, as it has been at every period when man has turned to cry out, 'I am in torment!'

"The Code, which is considered Napoleon's greatest achievement, is the most Draconian work I know of. Terri-

torial subdivision carried out to the uttermost, and its principle confirmed by the equal division of property generally, must result in the degeneracy of the nation and the death of the Arts and Sciences. The land, too much broken up, is cultivated only with cereals and small crops; the forests, and consequently the rivers, are disappearing; oxen and horses are no longer bred. Means are lacking both for attack and for resistance. If we should be invaded, the people must be crushed; it has lost its mainspring—its leaders. This is the history of deserts!

"Thus the science of politics has no definite principles, and it can have no fixity; it is the spirit of the hour, the perpetual application of strength proportioned to the necessities of the moment. The man who should foresee two centuries ahead would die on the place of execution, loaded with the imprecations of the mob, or else—which seems worse—would be lashed with the myriad whips of ridicule. Nations are but individuals, neither wiser nor stronger than man, and their destinies are identical. If we reflect on man, is not that to consider mankind?

"By studying the spectacle of society perpetually storm-tossed in its foundations as well as in its results, in its causes as well as in its actions, while philanthropy is but a splendid mistake, and progress is vanity, I have been confirmed in this truth: Life is within and not without us; to rise above men, to govern them, is only the part of an aggrandized schoolmaster; and those men who are capable of rising to the level whence they can enjoy a view of the world should not look at their own feet.

"November 4th.

"I am no doubt occupied with weighty thoughts, I am on the way to certain discoveries, an invincible power bears me toward a luminary which shone at an early age on the darkness of my moral life; but what name can I give to the power that ties my hands and shuts my mouth, and drags me in a direction opposite to my vocation? I must leave Paris, bid farewell to the books in the libraries, those noble centers of illumination, those kindly and always accessible sages, and the

younger geniuses with whom I sympathize. Who is it that drives me away? Chance or Providence?

"The two ideas represented by those words are irreconcilable. If Chance does not exist, we must admit fatalism, that is to say, the compulsory co-ordination of things under the rule of a general plan. Why then do we rebel? If man is not free, what becomes of the scaffolding of his moral sense? Or, if he can control his destiny, if by his own free-will he can interfere with the execution of the general plan, what becomes of God?

"Why did I come here? If I examine myself, I find the answer: I find in myself axioms that need developing. But why then have I such vast faculties without being suffered to use them? If my suffering could serve as an example, I could understand it; but no, I suffer unknown.

"This is perhaps as much the act of Providence as the fate of the flower that dies unseen in the heart of the virgin forest, where no one can enjoy its perfume or admire its splendor. Just as that blossom vainly sheds its fragrance to the solitude, so do I, here in a garret, give birth to ideas that no one can grasp.

"Yesterday evening I sat eating bread and grapes in front of my window with a young doctor named Meyraux. We talked as men do whom misfortune has joined in brotherhood, and I said to him—

"'I am going away; you are staying. Take up my ideas and develop them.'

"'I cannot!' said he, with bitter regret; 'my feeble health cannot stand so much work, and I shall die young of my struggle with penury.'

"We looked up at the sky and grasped hands. We first met at the Comparative Anatomy course, and in the galleries of the Museum, attracted thither by the same study—the unity of geological structure. In him this was the presentiment of genius sent to open a new path in the fallows of intellect; in me it was a deduction from a general system.

"My point is to ascertain the real relation that may exist between God and man: Is not this a need of the age? Without the highest assurance, it is impossible to put bit and

bridle on the social factions that have been let loose by the spirit of skepticism and discussion, and which are now crying aloud: 'Show us a way in which we may walk and find no pitfalls in our way!'

"You will wonder what comparative anatomy has to do with a question of such importance to the future of society. Must we not attain to the conviction that man is the end of all earthly means before we ask whether he too is not the means to some end? If man is bound up with everything, is there not something above him with which he again is bound up? If he is the end-all of the unexplained transmutations that lead up to him, must he not be also the link between the visible and invisible creations?

"The activity of the universe is not absurd; it must tend to an end, and that end is surely not a social body constituted as ours is! There is a fearful gulf between us and heaven. In our present existence we can neither be always happy nor always in torment; must there not be some tremendous change to bring about Paradise and Hell, two images without which God cannot exist to the mind of the vulgar? I know that a compromise was made by the invention of the Soul; but it is repugnant to me to make God answerable for human baseness, for our disenchantments, our aversions, our degeneracy.

"Again, how can we recognize as divine the principle within us which can be overthrown by a few glasses of rum? How conceive of immaterial faculties which matter can conquer, and whose exercise is suspended by a grain of opium? How imagine that we shall be able to feel when we are bereft of the vehicles of sensation? Why must God perish if matter can be proved to think? Is the vitality of matter in its innumerable manifestations—the effect of its instincts—at all more explicable than the effects of the mind? Is not the motion given to the worlds enough to prove God's existence, without our plunging into absurd speculations suggested by pride? And if we pass, after our trials, from a perishable state of being to a higher existence, is not that enough for a creature that is distinguished from other creatures only by more perfect instincts? If in moral philosophy there is not a single principle which does not lead to the absurd, or

cannot be disproved by evidence, is it not high time that we should set to work to seek such dogmas as are written in the innermost nature of things? Must we not reverse philosophical science?

"We trouble ourselves very little about the supposed void that must have pre-existed for us, and we try to fathom the supposed void that lies before us. We make God responsible for the future, but we do not expect Him to account for the past. And yet it is quite as desirable to know whether we have any roots in the past as to discover whether we are inseparable from the future.

"We have been Deists or Atheists in one direction only.

"Is the world eternal? Was the world created? We can conceive of no middle term between these two propositions; one, then, is true and the other false! Take your choice. Whichever it may be, God, as our reason depicts Him, must be deposed, and that amounts to denial. The world is eternal: then, beyond question, God has had it forced upon Him. The world was created: then God is an impossibility. How could He have subsisted through an eternity, not knowing that He would presently want to create the world? How could He have failed to foresee all the results?

"Whence did He derive the essence of creation? Evidently from Himself. If, then, the world proceeds from God, how can you account for evil? That Evil should proceed from Good is absurd. If evil does not exist, what do you make of social life and its laws? On all hands we find a precipice! On every side a gulf in which reason is lost! Then social science must be altogether reconstructed.

"Listen to me, uncle; until some splendid genius shall have taken account of the obvious inequality of intellects and the general sense of humanity, the word God will be constantly arraigned, and Society will rest on shifting sands. The secret of the various moral zones through which man passes will be discovered by the analysis of the animal type as a whole. That animal type has hitherto been studied with reference only to its differences, not to its similitudes; in its organic manifestations, not in its faculties. Animal faculties are perfected in direct transmission, in obedience to laws

which remain to be discovered. These faculties correspond to the forces which express them, and those forces are essentially material and divisible.

"Material faculties! Reflect on this juxtaposition of words. Is not this a problem as insoluble as that of the first communication of motion to matter—an unsounded gulf of which the difficulties were transposed rather than removed by Newton's system? Again, the universal assimilation of light by everything that exists on earth demands a new study of our globe. The same animal differs in the tropics of India and in the North. Under the angular or the vertical incidence of the sun's rays nature is developed the same, but not the same; identical in its principles, but totally dissimilar in its outcome. The phenomenon that amazes our eyes in the zoological world when we compare the butterflies of Brazil with those of Europe, is even more startling in the world of Mind. A particular facial angle, a certain amount of brain convolutions, are indispensable to produce Columbus, Raphael, Napoleon, Laplace, or Beethoven; the sunless valley produces the cretin—draw your own conclusions. Why such differences due to the more or less ample diffusion of light to men? The masses of suffering humanity, more or less active, fed, and enlightened, are a difficulty to be accounted for, crying out against God.

"Why in great joy do we always want to quit the earth? whence comes the longing to rise which every creature has known or will know? Motion is a great Soul, and its alliance with matter is just as difficult to account for as the origin of thought in man. In these days science is one; it is impossible to touch politics independent of moral questions, and these are bound up with scientific questions. It seems to me that we are on the eve of a great human struggle; the forces are there; only I do not see the General.

"November 25th.

"Believe me, dear uncle, it is hard to give up the life that is in us without a pang. I am returning to Blois with a heavy grip at my heart; I shall die then, taking with me some useful truths. No personal interest debases my regrets. Is

earthly fame a guerdon to those who believe that they will mount to a higher sphere?

"I am by no means in love with the two syllables *Lam* and *bert;* whether spoken with respect or with contempt over my grave, they can make no change in my ultimate destiny. I feel myself strong and energetic; I might become a power; I feel in myself a life so luminous that it might enlighten a world, and yet I am shut up in a sort of mineral, as perhaps indeed are the colors you admire on the neck of an Indian bird. I should need to embrace the whole world, to clasp and re-create it; but those who have done this, who have thus embraced and remolded it began—did they not?—by being a wheel in the machine. I can only be crushed. Mahomet had the sword; Jesus had the cross; I shall die unknown. I shall be at Blois for a day, and then in my coffin.

"Do you know why I have come back to Swedenborg after vast studies of all religions, and after proving to myself, by reading all the works published within the last sixty years by the patient English, by Germany, and by France, how deeply true were my youthful views about the Bible? Swedenborg undoubtedly epitomizes all the religions—or rather the one religion—of humanity. Though forms of worship are infinitely various, neither their true meaning nor their metaphysical interpretation has ever varied. In short, man has, and has had, but one religion.

"Sivaism, Vishnuism, and Brahmanism, the three primitive creeds, originating as they did in Thibet, in the valley of the Indus, and on the vast plains of the Ganges, ended their warfare some thousand years before the birth of Christ by adopting the Hindoo Trimourti. The Trimourti is our Trinity. From this dogma Magianism arose in Persia; in Egypt, the African beliefs and the Mosaic law; the worship of the Cabiri, and the polytheism of Greece and Rome. While by this ramification of the Trimourti the Asiatic myths became adapted to the imaginations of various races in the lands they reached by the agency of certain sages whom men elevated to be demi-gods—Mithra, Bacchus, Hermes, Hercules, and the rest—Buddha, the great reformer of the three primeval religions, lived in India, and founded his Church there, a sect which

still numbers two hundred millions more believers than Christianity can show, while it certainly influenced the powerful Will both of Jesus and of Confucius.

"Then Christianity raised her standard. Subsequently Mahomet fused Judaism and Christianity, the Bible and the Gospel, in one book, the Koran, adapting them to the apprehension of the Arab race. Finally, Swedenborg borrowed from Magianism, Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Christian mysticism all the truth and divine beauty that those four great religious books hold in common, and added to them a doctrine, a basis of reasoning that may be termed mathematical.

"Any man who plunges into those religious waters, of which the sources are not all known, will find proofs that Zoroaster, Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus Christ, and Swedenborg had identical principles and aimed at identical ends.

"The last of them all, Swedenborg, will perhaps be the Buddha of the North. Obscure and diffuse as his writings are, we find in them the elements of a magnificent conception of society. His Theocracy is sublime, and his creed is the only acceptable one to superior souls. He alone brings man into immediate communion with God, he gives a thirst for God, he has freed the Majesty of God from the trappings in which other human dogmas have disguised Him. He left Him where He is, making His myriad creations and creatures gravitate towards Him through successive transformations which promise a more immediate and more natural future than the Catholic idea of Eternity. Swedenborg has absolved God from the reproach attaching to Him in the estimation of tender souls for the perpetuity of revenge to punish the sin of a moment—a system of injustice and cruelty.

"Each man may know for himself what hope he has of life eternal, and whether this world has any rational sense. I mean to make the attempt. And this attempt may save the world, just as much as the cross at Jerusalem or the sword at Mecca. These were both the offspring of the desert. Of the thirty-three years of Christ's life, we only know the

history of nine; His life of seclusion prepared Him for His life of glory. And I too crave for the desert!"

Notwithstanding the difficulties of the task, I have felt it my duty to depict Lambert's boyhood, the unknown life to which I owe the only happy hours, the only pleasant memories, of my early days. Excepting during those two years I had nothing but annoyances and weariness. Though some happiness was mine at a later time, it was always incomplete.

I have been diffuse, I know; but in default of entering into the whole wide heart and brain of Louis Lambert—two words which inadequately express the infinite aspects of his inner life—it would be almost impossible to make the second part of his intellectual history intelligible—a phase that was unknown to the world and to me, but of which the mystical outcome was made evident to my eyes in the course of a few hours. Those who have not already dropped this volume, will, I hope, understand the events I still have to tell, forming as they do a sort of second existence lived by this creature—may I not say this creation?—in whom everything was to be so extraordinary, even his end.

When Louis returned to Blois, his uncle was eager to procure him some amusement; but the poor priest was regarded as a perfect leper in that godly-minded town. No one would have anything to say to a revolutionary who had taken the oaths. His society, therefore, consisted of a few individuals of what were then called liberal or patriotic, or constitutional opinions, on whom he would call for a rubber of whist or of boston.

At the first house where he was introduced by his uncle, Louis met a young lady, whose circumstances obliged her to remain in this circle, so contemned by those of the fashionable world, though her fortune was such as to make it probable that she might by and by marry into the highest aristocracy of the province. Mlle. Pauline de Villenoix was sole heiress to the wealth amassed by her grandfather, a Jew named Salomon, who, contrary to the customs of his nation, had, in his old age, married a Christian and a Catholic. He

had an only son, who was brought up in his mother's faith. At his father's death young Salomon purchased what was known at that time as a *savonette à vilain* (literally *a cake of soap for a serf*), a small estate called Villenoix, which he contrived to get registered with a baronial title, and took its name. He died unmarried, but he left a natural daughter, to whom he bequeathed the greater part of his fortune, including the lands of Villenoix. He appointed one of his uncles, M. Joseph Salomon, to be the girl's guardian. The old Jew was so devoted to his ward that he seemed willing to make great sacrifices for the sake of marrying her well. But Mlle. de Villenoix's birth, and the cherished prejudice against Jews that prevails in the provinces, would not allow of her being received in the very exclusive circle which, rightly or wrongly, considers itself noble, notwithstanding her own large fortune and her guardian's.

M. Joseph Salomon was resolved that if she could not secure a country squire, his niece should go to Paris and make choice of a husband among the peers of France, liberal or monarchical; as to happiness, that he believed he could secure her by the terms of the marriage contract.

Mlle. de Villenoix was now twenty. Her remarkable beauty and gifts of mind were surer guarantees of happiness than those offered by money. Her features were of the purest type of Jewish beauty; the oval lines, so noble and maidenly, have an indescribable stamp of the ideal, and seem to speak of the joys of the East, its unchangeably blue sky, the glories of its lands, and the fabulous riches of life there. She had fine eyes, shaded by deep eyelids, fringed with thick, curled lashes. Biblical innocence sat on her brow. Her complexion was of the pure whiteness of the Levite's robe. She was habitually silent and thoughtful, but her movements and gestures betrayed a quiet grace, as her speech bore witness to a woman's sweet and loving nature. She had not, indeed, the rosy freshness, the fruit-like bloom which blush on a girl's cheek during her careless years. Darker shadows, with here and there a redder vein, took the place of color, symptomatic of an energetic temper and nervous irritability, such as many men do not like to meet with in a wife, while to others they are an

indication of the most sensitive chastity and passion mingled with pride.

As soon as Louis saw Mlle. de Villenoix, he discerned the angel within. The richest powers of his soul, and his tendency to ecstatic reverie, every faculty within him was at once concentrated in boundless love, the first love of a young man, a passion which is strong indeed in all, but which in him was raised to incalculable power by the perennial ardor of his senses, the character of his ideas, and the manner in which he lived. This passion became a gulf, into which the hapless fellow threw everything; a gulf whither the mind dare not venture, since his, flexible and firm as it was, was lost there. There all was mysterious, for everything went on in that moral world, closed to most men, whose laws were revealed to him—perhaps to his sorrow.

When an accident threw me in the way of his uncle, the good man showed me into the room which Lambert had at that time lived in. I wanted to find some vestiges of his writings, if he should have left any. There among his papers, untouched by the old man from that fine instinct of grief that characterizes the aged, I found a number of letters, too illegible ever to have been sent to Mlle. de Villenoix. My familiarity with Lambert's writing enabled me in time to decipher the hieroglyphics of this shorthand, the result of impatience and a frenzy of passion. Carried away by his feelings, he had written without being conscious of the irregularity of words too slow to express his thoughts. He must have been compelled to copy these chaotic attempts, for the lines often ran into each other; but he was also afraid perhaps of not having sufficiently disguised his feelings, and at first, at any rate, he had probably written his love-letters twice over.

It required all the fervency of my devotion to his memory, and the sort of fanaticism which comes of such a task, to enable me to divine and restore the meaning of the five letters that here follow. These documents, preserved by me with pious care, are the only material evidence of his overmastering passion. Mlle. de Villenoix has no doubt destroyed the real letters that she received, eloquent witnesses to the delirium she inspired.

The first of these papers, evidently a rough sketch, betrays by its style and by its length the many emendations, the heartfelt alarms, the innumerable terrors caused by a desire to please; the changes of expression and the hesitation between the whirl of ideas that beset a man as he indites his first love-letter—a letter he never will forget, each line the result of a reverie, each word the subject of long cogitation, while the most unbridled passion known to man feels the necessity of the most reserved utterance, and like a giant stooping to enter a hovel, speaks humbly and low, so as not to alarm a girl's soul.

No antiquary ever handled his palimpsests with greater respect than I showed in reconstructing these mutilated documents of such joy and suffering as must always be sacred to those who have known similar joy and grief.

I.

" Mademoiselle, when you have read this letter, if you ever should read it, my life will be in your hands, for I love you; and to me, the hope of being loved is life. Others, perhaps, ere now, have, in speaking of themselves, misused the words I must employ to depict the state of my soul; yet, I beseech you to believe in the truth of my expressions; though weak, they are sincere. Perhaps I ought not thus to proclaim my love. Indeed, my heart counseled me to wait in silence till my passion should touch you, that I might the better conceal it if its silent demonstrations should displease you; or till I could express it even more delicately than in words if I found favor in your eyes. However, after having listened for long to the coy fears that fill a youthful heart with alarms, I write in obedience to the instinct which drags useless lamentations from the dying.

" It has needed all my courage to silence the pride of poverty, and to overleap the barriers which prejudice erects between you and me. I have had to smother many reflections to love you in spite of your wealth; and as I write to you, am I not in danger of the scorn which women often reserve for professions of love, which they accept only as one more tribute

of flattery? But we cannot help rushing with all our might towards happiness, or being attracted to the life of love as a plant is to the light; we must have been very unhappy before we can conquer the torment, the anguish, of those secret deliberations when reason proves to us by a thousand arguments how barren our yearning must be if it remains buried in our hearts, and when hopes bid us dare everything.

"I was happy when I admired you in silence; I was so lost in the contemplation of your beautiful soul, that only to see you left me hardly anything further to imagine. And I should not now have dared to address you if I had not heard that you were leaving. What misery has that one word brought upon me! Indeed, it is my despair that has shown me the extent of my attachment—it is unbounded. Mademoiselle, you will never know—at least, I hope you may never know—the anguish of dreading lest you should lose the only happiness that has dawned on you on earth, the only thing that has thrown a gleam of light in the darkness of misery. I understood yesterday that my life was no more in myself, but in you. There is but one woman in the world for me, as there is but one thought in my soul. I dare not tell you to what state I am reduced by my love for you. I would have you only as a gift from yourself; I must therefore avoid showing myself to you in all the attractiveness of dejection—for is it not often more impressive to a noble soul than that of good fortune? There are many things I may not tell you. Indeed, I have too lofty a notion of love to taint it with ideas that are alien to its nature. If my soul is worthy of yours, and my life pure, your heart will have a sympathetic insight, and you will understand me!

"It is the fate of man to offer himself to the woman who can make him believe in happiness; but it is your prerogative to reject the truest passion if it is not in harmony with the vague voices in your heart—that I know. If my lot, as decided by you, must be adverse to my hopes, Mademoiselle, let me appeal to the delicacy of your maiden soul and the ingenuous compassion of a woman to burn my letter. On my knees I beseech you to forget all! Do not mock at a feeling that is wholly respectful, and that is too deeply graven

on my heart ever to be effaced. Break my heart, but do not rend it! Let the expression of my first love, a pure and youthful love, be lost in your pure and youthful heart! Let it die there as a prayer rises up to die in the bosom of God!

"I owe you much gratitude: I have spent delicious hours occupied in watching you, and giving myself up to the faint dreams of my life; do not crush these long but transient joys by some girlish irony. Be satisfied not to answer me. I shall know how to interpret your silence; you will see me no more. If I must be condemned to know forever what happiness means, and to be forever bereft of it; if, like a banished angel, I am to cherish the sense of celestial joys while bound for ever to a world of sorrow—well, I can keep the secret of my love as well as that of my griefs.—And farewell!

"Yes, I resign you to God, to whom I will pray for you, beseeching Him to grant you a happy life; for even if I am driven from your heart, into which I have crept by stealth, still I shall ever be near you. Otherwise, of what value would the sacred words be of this letter, my first and perhaps my last entreaty? If I should ever cease to think of you, to love you, whether in happiness or in woe, should I not deserve my punishment?"

II.

"You are not going away! And I am loved! I, a poor, insignificant creature! My beloved Pauline, you do not yourself know the power of the look I believe in, the look you gave me to tell me that you had chosen me—you so young and lovely, with the world at your feet!

"To enable you to understand my happiness, I should have to give you a history of my life. If you had rejected me, all was over for me. I have suffered too much. Yes, my love for you, my comforting and stupendous love, was a last effort of yearning for the happiness my soul strove to reach—a soul crushed by fruitless labor, consumed by fears that make me doubt myself, eaten into by despair which has often urged me to die. No one in the world can conceive of the terrors

my fateful imagination inflicts on me. It often bears me up to the sky and suddenly flings me to earth again from prodigious heights. Deep-seated rushes of power, or some rare and subtle instance of peculiar lucidity, assure me now and then that I am capable of great things. Then I embrace the universe in my mind, I knead, shape it, inform it, I comprehend it—or fancy that I do; then suddenly I awake—alone, sunk in blackest night, helpless and weak; I forget the light I saw but now, I find no succor; above all, there is no heart where I may take refuge.

"This distress of my inner life affects my physical existence. The nature of my character gives me over to the raptures of happiness as defenseless as when the fearful light of reflection comes to analyze and demolish them. Gifted as I am with the melancholy faculty of seeing obstacles and success with equal clearness, according to the mood of the moment, I am happy or miserable by turns.

"Thus, when first I met you, I felt the presence of an angelic nature, I breathed an air that was sweet to my burning breast, I heard in my soul the voice that never can be false, telling me that here was happiness; but perceiving all the barriers that divided us, I understood for the first time what worldly prejudices were; I understood the vastness of their pettiness, and these difficulties terrified me more than the prospect of happiness could delight me. At once I felt the awful reaction which casts my expansive soul back on itself; the smile you had brought to my lips suddenly turned to a bitter grimace, and I could only strive to keep calm, while my soul was boiling with the turmoil of contradictory emotions. In short, I experienced that gnawing pang to which twenty-three years of suppressed sighs and betrayed affections have not inured me.

"Well, Pauline, the look by which you promised that I should be happy suddenly warmed my vitality, and turned all my sorrows into joy. Now, I could wish that I had suffered more. My love is suddenly full-grown. My soul was a wide territory that lacked the blessing of sunshine, and your eyes have shed light on it. Beloved providence! you will be all in all to me, orphan as I am, without a relation but my uncle.

You will be my whole family, as you are my whole wealth, nay, the whole world to me. Have you not bestowed on me every gladness man can desire in that chaste—lavish—timid glance?

"You have given me incredible self-confidence and audacity. I can dare all things now. I came back to Blois in deep dejection. Five years of study in the heart of Paris had made me look on the world as a prison. I had conceived of vast schemes, and dared not speak of them. Fame seemed to me a prize for charlatans, to which a really noble spirit should not stoop. Thus, my ideas could only make their way by the assistance of a man bold enough to mount the platform of the press, and to harangue loudly the simpletons he scorns. This kind of courage I have not. I plowed my way on, crushed by the verdict of the crowd, in despair at never making it hear me. I was at once too humble and too lofty! I swallowed my thoughts as other men swallow humiliations. I had even come to despise knowledge, blaming it for yielding no real happiness.

"But since yesterday I am wholly changed. For your sake I now covet every palm of glory, every triumph of success. When I lay my head on your knees, I could wish to attract to you the eyes of the whole world, just as I long to concentrate in my love every idea, every power that is in me. The most splendid celebrity is a possession that genius alone can create. Well, I can, at my will, make for you a bed of laurels. And if the silent ovation paid to science is not all you desire, I have within me the sword of the Word; I could run in the path of honor and ambition where others only crawl.

"Command me, Pauline; I will be whatever you will. My iron will can do anything—I am loved! Armed with that thought, ought not a man to sweep everything before him? The man who wants all can do all. If you are the prize of success, I enter the lists to-morrow. To win such a look as that you bestowed on me, I would leap the deepest abyss. Through you I understand the fabulous achievements of chivalry and the most fantastic tales of the *Arabian Nights*. I can believe now in the most fantastic excesses of love, and in the success of a prisoner's wildest attempt to recover his liberty. You have aroused the thousand virtues that lay

dormant within me—patience, resignation, all the powers of my heart, all the strength of my soul. I live by you and—heavenly thought!—for you. Everything now has a meaning for me in life. I understand everything, even the vanities of wealth.

"I find myself shedding all the pearls of the Indies at your feet; I fancy you reclining either on the rarest flowers, or on the softest tissues, and all the splendor of the world seems hardly worthy of you, for whom I would I could command the harmony and the light that are given out by the harps of seraphs and the stars of heaven! Alas! a poor, studious poet, I offer you in words treasures I cannot bestow; I can only give you my heart, in which you reign forever. I have nothing else. But are there no treasures in eternal gratitude, in a smile whose expression will perpetually vary with perennial happiness, under the constant eagerness of my devotion to guess the wishes of your loving soul? Has not one celestial glance given us assurance of always understanding each other?

"I have a prayer now to be said to God every night—a prayer full of you: 'Let my Pauline be happy!' And will you fill all my days as you now fill my heart?

"Farewell, I can but trust you to God alone!"

III.

"Pauline! tell me if I can in any way have displeased you yesterday? Throw off the pride of heart which inflicts on me the secret tortures that can be caused by one we love. Scold me if you will! Since yesterday, a vague, unutterable dread of having offended you pours grief on the life of feeling which you had made so sweet and so rich. The lightest veil that comes between two souls sometimes grows to be a brazen wall. There are no venial crimes in love! If you have the very spirit of that noble sentiment, you must feel all its pangs, and we must be unceasingly careful not to fret each other by some heedless word.

"No doubt, my beloved treasure, if there is any fault, it is in me. I cannot pride myself in the belief that I under-

stand a woman's heart in all the expansion of its tenderness, all the grace of its devotedness; but I will always endeavor to appreciate the value of what you vouchsafe to show me of the secrets of yours.

"Speak to me! Answer me soon! The melancholy into which we are thrown by the idea of a wrong done is frightful; it casts a shroud over life, and doubts on everything.

"I spent this morning sitting on the bank by the sunken road, gazing at the turrets of Villenoix, not daring to go to our hedge. If you could imagine all I saw in my soul! What gloomy visions passed before me under the gray sky, whose cold sheen added to my dreary mood! I had dark presentiments! I was terrified lest I should fail to make you happy.

"I must tell you everything, my dear Pauline. There are moments when the spirit of vitality seems to abandon me. I feel bereft of all strength. Everything is a burden to me; every fiber of my body is inert, every sense is flaccid, my sight grows dim, my tongue is paralyzed, my imagination is extinct, desire is dead—nothing survives but my mere human vitality. At such times, though you were in all the splendor of your beauty, though you should lavish on me your subtlest smiles and tenderest words, an evil influence would blind me, and distort the most ravishing melody into discordant sounds. At those times—as I believe—some argumentative demon stands before me, showing me the void beneath the most real possessions. This pitiless demon mows down every flower, and mocks at the sweetest feelings, saying: 'Well—and then?' He mars the fairest work by showing me its skeleton, and reveals the mechanism of things while hiding the beautiful results.

"At those terrible moments, when the evil spirit takes possession of me, when the divine light is darkened in my soul without my knowing the cause, I sit in grief and anguish, I wish myself deaf and dumb, I long for death to give me rest. These hours of doubt and uneasiness are perhaps inevitable; at any rate, they teach me not to be proud after the flights which have borne me to the skies where I have gathered a full harvest of thoughts; for it is always after

some long excursion in the vast fields of the intellect, and after the most luminous speculations, that I tumble, broken and weary, into this limbo. At such a moment, my angel, a wife would doubt my love for her—at any rate, she might. If she were capricious, ailing, or depressed, she would need the comforting overflow of ingenious affection, and I should not have a glance to bestow on her. It is my shame, Pauline, to have to tell you that at such times I could weep with you, but that nothing could make me smile.

"A woman can always conceal her troubles; for her child, or for the man she loves, she can laugh in the midst of suffering. And could not I, for you, Pauline, imitate the exquisite reserve of a woman? Since yesterday I have doubted my own power. If I could displease you once, if I failed once to understand you, I dread lest I should often be carried out of our happy circle by my evil demon. Supposing I were to have many of those dreadful moods, or that my unbounded love could not make up for the dark hours of my life—that I were doomed to remain such as I am?—Fatal doubts!

"Power is indeed a fatal possession if what I feel within me is power. Pauline, go! Leave me, desert me! Sooner would I endure every ill in life than endure the misery of knowing that you were unhappy through me.

"But, perhaps, the demon has had such empire over me only because I have had no gentle, white hands about me to drive him off. No woman has ever shed on me the balm of her affection; and I know not whether, if love should wave his pinions over my head in these moments of exhaustion, new strength might not be given to my spirit. This terrible melancholy is perhaps a result of my isolation, one of the torments of a lonely soul which pays for its hidden treasures with groans and unknown suffering. Those who enjoy little shall suffer little; immense happiness entails unutterable anguish!

"How terrible a doom! If it be so, must we not shudder for ourselves, we who are superhumanly happy? If nature sells us everything at its true value, into what pit are we not fated to fall? Ah! the most fortunate lovers are those

who die together in the midst of their youth and love! How sad it all is! Does my soul foresee evil in the future? I examine myself, wondering whether there is anything in me that can cause you a moment's anxiety. I love you too selfishly perhaps? I shall be laying on your beloved head a burden heavy out of all proportion to the joy my love can bring to your heart. If there dwells in me some inexorable power which I must obey—if I am compelled to curse when you pray, if some dark thought coerces me when I would fain kneel at your feet and play as a child, will you not be jealous of that wayward and tricky spirit?

"You understand, dearest heart, that what I dread is not being wholly yours; that I would gladly forego all the scepters and the palms of the world to enshrine you in one eternal thought, to see a perfect life and an exquisite poem in our rapturous love; to throw my soul into it, drown my powers, and wring from each hour the joys it has to give!

"Ah, my memories of love are crowding back upon me, the clouds of despair will lift. Farewell. I leave you now to be more entirely yours. My beloved soul, I look for a line, a word that may restore my peace of mind. Let me know whether I really grieved my Pauline, or whether some uncertain expression of her countenance misled me. I could not bear to have to reproach myself after a whole life of happiness, for ever having met you without a smile of love, a honeyed word. To grieve the woman I love—Pauline, I should count it a crime. Tell me the truth, do not put me off with some magnanimous subterfuge, but forgive me without cruelty."

FRAGMENT.

"Is so perfect an attachment happiness? Yes, for years of suffering would not pay for an hour of love.

"Yesterday, your sadness, as I suppose, passed into my soul as swiftly as a shadow falls. Were you sad or suffering? I was wretched. Whence came my distress? Write to me at once. Why did I not know it? We are not yet completely one in mind. At two leagues' distance or at a thousand I

ought to feel your pains and sorrows. I shall not believe that I love you till my life is so bound up with yours that our life is one, till our hearts, our thoughts are one. I must be where you are, see what you see, feel what you feel, be with you in thought. Did not I know, at once, that your carriage had been overthrown and you were bruised? But on that day I had been with you, I had never left you, I could see you. When my uncle asked me what made me turn so pale, I answered at once, 'Mlle. de Villenoix has had a fall.'

"Why, then, yesterday, did I fail to read your soul? Did you wish to hide the cause of your grief? However, I fancied I could feel that you were arguing in my favor, though in vain, with that dreadful Salomon, who freezes my blood. That man is not of our heaven.

"Why do you insist that our happiness, which has no resemblance to that of other people, should conform to the laws of the world? And yet I delight too much in your bashfulness, your religion, your superstitions, not to obey your lightest whim. What you do must be right; nothing can be purer than your mind, as nothing is lovelier than your face, which reflects your divine soul.

"I shall wait for a letter before going along the lanes to meet the sweet hour you grant me. Oh! if you could know how the sight of those turrets makes my heart throb when I see them edged with light by the moon, our only confidante."

IV.

"Farewell to glory, farewell to the future, to the life I had dreamed of! Now, my well-beloved, my glory is that I am yours, and worthy of you; my future lies entirely in the hope of seeing you; and is not my life summed up in sitting at your feet, in lying under your eyes, in drawing deep breaths in the heaven you have created for me? All my powers, all my thoughts must be yours, since you could speak those thrilling words, 'Your sufferings must be mine!' Should I not be stealing some joys from love, some moments from happiness, some experiences from your divine spirit, if I gave my hours to study—ideas to the world and poems to

the poets? Nay, nay, my very life, I will treasure everything for you; I will bring to you every flower of my soul. Is there anything fine enough, splendid enough, in all the resources of the world or of intellect, to do honor to a heart so rich, so pure as yours—the heart to which I dare now and again unite my own? Yes, now and again, I dare believe that I can love as much as you do.

"And yet, no; you are the angel-woman; there will always be a greater charm in the expression of your feelings, more harmony in your voice, more grace in your smile, more purity in your looks than in mine. Let me feel that you are the creature of a higher sphere than that I live in; it will be your pride to have descended from it; mine, that I should have deserved you; and you will not perhaps have fallen too far by coming down to me in my poverty and misery. Nay, if a woman's most glorious refuge is in a heart that is wholly her own, you will always reign supreme in mine. Not a thought, not a deed, shall ever pollute this heart, this glorious sanctuary, so long as you vouchsafe to dwell in it—and will you not dwell in it forever? Did you not enchant me by the words, 'Now and forever?' *Nunc et semper!* And I have written these words of our ritual below your portrait—words worthy of you, as they are of God. He is *nunc et semper*, as my love is.

"Never, no, never, can I exhaust that which is immense, infinite, unbounded—and such is the feeling I have for you; I have imagined its immeasurable extent, as we measure space by the dimensions of one of its parts. I have had ineffable joys, whole hours filled with delicious meditation, as I have recalled a single gesture or the tone of a word of yours. Thus there will be memories of which the magnitude will overpower me, if the reminiscence of a sweet and friendly interview is enough to make me shed tears of joy, to move and thrill my soul, and to be an inexhaustible wellspring of gladness. Love is the life of angels!

"I can never, I believe, exhaust my joy in seeing you. This rapture, the least fervid of any, though it never can last long enough, has made me apprehend the eternal contemplation in which seraphs and spirits abide in the presence

of God; nothing can be more natural, if from His essence there emanates a light as fruitful of new emotions as that of your eyes is, of your imposing brow, and your beautiful countenance—the image of your soul. Then, the soul, our second self, whose pure form can never perish, makes our love immortal. I would there were some other language than that I use to express to you the ever-new ecstasy of my love; but since there is one of our own creating, since our looks are living speech, must we not meet face to face to read in each other's eyes those questions and answers from the heart, that are so living, so penetrating, that one evening you could say to me, 'Be silent!' when I was not speaking. Do you remember it, dear life?

"When I am away from you in the darkness of absence, am I not reduced to use human words, too feeble to express heavenly feelings? But words at any rate represent the marks those feelings leave in my soul, just as the word *God* imperfectly sums up the notions we form of that mysterious First Cause. But, in spite of the subtleties and infinite variety of language, I have no words that can express to you the exquisite union by which my life is merged into yours whenever I think of you.

"And with what word can I conclude when I cease writing to you, and yet do not part from you? What can *farewell* mean, unless in death? But is death a farewell? Would not my spirit be then more closely one with yours? Ah! my first and last thought; formerly I offered you my heart and life on my knees; now what fresh blossoms of feeling can I discover in my soul that I have not already given you? It would be a gift of a part of what is wholly yours.

"Are you my future? How deeply I regret the past! I would I could have back all the years that are ours no more, and give them to you to reign over, as you do over my present life. What indeed was that time when I knew you not? It would be a void but that I was so wretched."

FRAGMENT.

"Beloved angel, how delightful last evening was! How full of riches your dear heart is! And is your love endless,

like mine? Each word brought me fresh joy, and each look made it deeper. The placid expression of your countenance gave our thoughts a limitless horizon. It was all as infinite as the sky, and as bland as its blue. The refinement of your adored features repeated itself by some inexplicable magic in your pretty movements and your least gestures. I knew that you were all graciousness, all love, but I did not know how variously graceful you could be. Everything combined to urge me to tender solicitations, to make me ask the first kiss that a woman always refuses, no doubt that it may be snatched from her. You, dear soul of my life, will never guess beforehand what you may grant to my love, and will yield perhaps without knowing it! You are utterly true, and obey your heart alone.

"The sweet tones of your voice blended with the tender harmonies that filled the quiet air, the cloudless sky. Not a bird piped, not a breeze whispered—solitude, you, and I. The motionless leaves did not quiver in the beautiful sunset hues which are both light and shadow. You felt that heavenly poetry—you who experienced so many various emotions, and who so often raised your eyes to heaven to avoid answering me. You who are proud and saucy, humble and masterful, who give yourself to me so completely in spirit and in thought, and evade the most bashful caress. Dear witcheries of the heart! They ring in my ears; they sound and play there still. Sweet words but half spoken, like a child's speech, neither promise nor confession, but allowing love to cherish its fairest hopes without fear or torment! How pure a memory for life! What a free blossoming of all the flowers that spring from the soul, which a mere trifle can blight, but which, at that moment, everything warmed and expanded.

"And it will be always so, will it not, my beloved? As I recall, this morning, the fresh and living delights revealed to me in that hour, I am conscious of a joy which makes me conceive of true love as an ocean of everlasting and ever-new experiences, into which we may plunge with increasing delight. Every day, every word, every kiss, every glance, must increase it by its tribute of past happiness. Hearts that are large enough never to forget must live every moment in their

past joys as much as in those promised by the future. This was my dream of old, and now it is no longer a dream! Have I not met on this earth with an angel who has made me know all its happiness, as a reward, perhaps, for having endured all its torments? Angel of heaven, I salute thee with a kiss.

"I shall send you this hymn of thanksgiving from my heart, I owe it to you; but it can hardly express my gratitude or the morning worship my heart offers up day by day to her who epitomized the whole gospel of the heart in this divine word: 'Believe.'"

V.

"What! no further difficulties, dearest heart! We shall be free to belong to each other every day, every hour, every minute, and forever! We may be as happy for all the days of our life as we now are by stealth, at rare intervals! Our pure, deep feelings will assume the expression of the thousand fond acts I have dreamed of. For me your little foot will be bared, you will be wholly mine! Such happiness kills me; it is too much for me. My head is too weak, it will burst with the vehemence of my ideas. I cry and I laugh—I am possessed! Every joy is as an arrow of flame; it pierces and burns me. In fancy you rise before my eyes, ravished and dazzled by numberless and capricious images of delight.

"In short, our whole future life is before me—its torrents, its still places, its joys; it seethes, it flows on, it lies sleeping; then again it awakes fresh and young. I see myself and you side by side, walking with equal pace, living in the same thought; each dwelling in the other's heart, understanding each other, responding to each other as an echo catches and repeats a sound across wide distances.

"Can life be long when it is thus consumed hour by hour? Shall we not die in a first embrace? What if our souls have already met in that sweet evening kiss which almost overpowered us—a feeling kiss, but the crown of my hopes, the ineffectual expression of all the prayers I breathe while we are apart, hidden in my soul like remorse?

"I, who would creep back and hide in the hedge only to

hear your footsteps as you went homewards—I may henceforth admire you at my leisure, see you busy, moving, smiling, prattling! An endless joy! You cannot imagine all the gladness it is to me to see you going and coming; only a man can know that deep delight. Your least movement gives me greater pleasure than a mother even can feel as she sees her child asleep or at play. I love you with every kind of love in one. The grace of your least gesture is always new to me. I fancy I could spend whole nights breathing your breath; I would I could steal into every detail of your life, be the very substance of your thoughts—be your very self.

"Well, we shall, at any rate, never part again! No human alloy shall ever disturb our love, infinite in its phases and as pure as all things are which are One—our love, vast as the sea, vast as the sky! You are mine! all mine! I may look into the depths of your eyes to read the sweet soul that alternately hides and shines there, to anticipate your wishes.

"My best-beloved, listen to some things I have never yet dared to tell you, but which I may confess to you now. I felt a certain bashfulness of soul which hindered the full expression of my feelings, so I strove to shroud them under the garb of thoughts. But now I long to lay my heart bare before you, to tell you of the ardor of my dreams, to reveal the boiling demands of my senses, excited, no doubt, by the solitude in which I have lived, perpetually fired by conceptions of happiness, and aroused by you, so fair in form, so attractive in manner. How can I express to you my thirst for the unknown rapture of possessing an adored wife, a rapture to which the union of two souls by love must give frenzied intensity. Yes, my Pauline, I have sat for hours in a sort of stupor caused by the violence of my passionate yearning, lost in the dream of a caress as though in a bottomless abyss. At such moments my whole vitality, my thoughts and powers, are merged and united in what I must call desire, for lack of a word to express that nameless delirium.

"And I may confess to you now that one day, when I would not take your hand when you offered it so sweetly—an act of melancholy prudence that made you doubt my love—I was in one of those fits of madness when a man could

commit a murder to possess a woman. Yes, if I had felt the exquisite pressure you offered me as vividly as I heard your voice in my heart, I know not to what lengths my passion might not have carried me. But I can be silent, and suffer a great deal. Why speak of this anguish when my visions are to become realities? It will be in my power now to make life one long love-making!

"Dearest love, there is a certain effect of light on your black hair which could rivet me for hours, my eyes full of tears, as I gazed at your sweet person, were it not that you turn away and say, 'For shame; you make me quite shy!'

"To-morrow, then, our love is to be made known! Oh, Pauline! the eyes of others, the curiosity of strangers weigh on my soul. Let us go to Villenoix, and stay there far from everyone. I should like no creature in human form to intrude into the sanctuary where you are to be mine; I could even wish that, when we are dead, it should cease to exist—should be destroyed. Yes; I would fain hide from all nature a happiness which we alone can understand, alone can feel, which is so stupendous that I throw myself into it only to die—it is a gulf!

"Do not be alarmed by the tears that have wetted this page; they are tears of joy. My only blessing, we need never part again!"

In 1823 I traveled from Paris to Touraine by diligence. At Mer we took up a passenger for Blois. As the guard put him into that part of the coach where I had my seat, he said jestingly—

"You will not be crowded, M. Lefebvre!"—I was, in fact, alone.

On hearing this name, and seeing a white-haired old man, who looked eighty at least, I naturally thought of Lambert's uncle. After a few ingenious questions, I discovered that I was not mistaken. The good man had been looking after his vintage at Mer, and was returning to Blois. I then asked for some news of my old "chum." At the first word, the old priest's face, as grave and stern already as that of a soldier

who has gone through many hardships, became more sad and dark; the lines on his forehead were slightly knit, he set his lips, and said, with a suspicious glance—

"Then you have never seen him since you left the college?"

"Indeed, I have not," said I. "But we are equally to blame for our forgetfulness. Young men, as you know, lead such an adventurous and storm-tossed life when they leave their school-forms, that it is only by meeting that they can be sure of an enduring affection. However, a reminiscence of youth sometimes comes as a reminder, and it is impossible to forget entirely, especially when two lads have been such friends as we were. We went by the name of the Poet-and-Pythagoras."

I told him my name; when he heard it, the worthy man grew gloomier than ever.

"Then you have not heard his story?" said he. "My poor nephew was to be married to the richest heiress in Blois; but the day before his wedding he went mad."

"Lambert! Mad!" cried I in dismay. "But from what cause? He had the finest memory, the most strongly constituted brain, the soundest judgment, I ever met with. Really a great genius—with too great a passion for mysticism perhaps; but the kindest heart in the world. Something most extraordinary must have happened?"

"I see you knew him well," said the priest.

From Mer, till we reached Blois, we talked only of my poor friend, with long digressions, by which I learned the facts I have already related in the order of their interest. I confessed to his uncle the character of our studies and of his nephew's predominant ideas; then the old man told me of the events that had come into Lambert's life since our parting. From M. Lefebvre's account, Lambert had betrayed some symptoms of madness before his marriage; but they were such as are common to men who love passionately, and seemed to me less startling when I knew how vehement his love had been and when I saw Mlle. de Villenoix. In the country, where ideas are scarce, a man overflowing with original thought and devoted to a system, as Louis was, might well be regarded as eccentric, to say the least. His language would,

no doubt, seem the stranger because he so rarely spoke. He would say, "That man does not dwell in my heaven," where anyone else would have said, "We are not made on the same pattern." Every clever man has his own quirks of speech. The broader his genius, the more conspicuous are the singularities which constitute the various degrees of eccentricity. In the country an eccentric man is at once set down as half mad.

Hence M. Lefebvre's first sentences left me doubtful of my schoolmate's insanity. I listened to the old man, but I criticised his statements.

The most serious symptom had supervened a day or two before the marriage. Louis had had some well-marked attacks of catalepsy. He had once remained motionless for fifty-nine hours, his eyes staring, neither speaking nor eating; a purely nervous affection, to which persons under the influence of violent passion are liable; a rare malady, but perfectly well known to the medical faculty. What was really extraordinary was that Louis should not have had several previous attacks, since his habits of rapt thought and the character of his mind would predispose him to them. But his temperament, physical and mental, was so admirably balanced, that it had no doubt been able to resist the demands on his strength. The excitement to which he had been wound up by the anticipation of acute physical enjoyment, enhanced by a chaste life and a highly strung soul, had no doubt led to these attacks, of which the results are as little known as the cause.

The letters that have by chance escaped destruction show very plainly a transition from pure idealism to the most intense sensualism.

Time was when Lambert and I had admired this phenomenon of the human mind, in which he saw the fortuitous separation of our two natures, and the signs of a total removal of the inner man, using its unknown faculties under the operation of an unknown cause. This disorder, a mystery as deep as that of sleep, was connected with the scheme of evidence which Lambert had set forth in his *Treatise on the Will*. And when M. Lefebvre spoke to me of Louis's first

attack, I suddenly remembered a conversation we had had on the subject after reading a medical book.

"Deep meditation and rapt ecstasy are perhaps the undeveloped germs of catalepsy," he had said in conclusion.

On the occasion when he so concisely formulated this idea, he had been trying to link mental phenomena together by a series of results, following the processes of the intellect step by step, from their beginnings as those simple, purely animal impulses of instinct, which are all-sufficient to many human beings, particularly to those men whose energies are wholly spent in mere mechanical labor; then, going on to the aggregation of ideas and rising to comparison, reflection, meditation, and finally ecstasy and catalepsy. Lambert, of course, in the artlessness of youth, imagined that he had laid down the lines of a great work when he thus built up a scale of the various degrees of man's mental powers.

I remember that, by one of those chances which seem like predestination, we got hold of a great Martyrology, in which the most curious narratives are given of the total abeyance of physical life which a man can attain to under the paroxysms of the inner life. By reflecting on the effects of fanaticism, Lambert was led to believe that the collected ideas to which we give the name of feelings may very possibly be the material outcome of some fluid which is generated in all men, more or less abundantly, according to the way in which their organs absorb, from the medium in which they live, the elementary atoms that produce it. We went crazy over catalepsy; and with the eagerness that boys throw into every pursuit, we endeavored to endure pain by thinking of something else. We exhausted ourselves by making experiments not unlike those of the epileptic fanatics of the last century, a religious mania which will some day be of service to the science of humanity. I would stand on Lambert's chest, remaining there several minutes without giving him the slightest pain; but notwithstanding these crazy attempts, we did not achieve an attack of catalepsy.

This digression seemed necessary to account for my first doubts, which were, however, completely dispelled by M. Lefebvre.

"When this attack had passed off," said he, "my nephew sank into a state of extreme terror, a dejection that nothing could overcome. He thought himself unfit for marriage. I watched him with the care of a mother for her child, and found him preparing to perform on himself the operation to which Origen believed he owed his talents. I at once carried him off to Paris, and placed him under the care of M. Esquirol. All through our journey Louis sat sunk in almost unbroken torpor, and did not recognize me. The Paris physicians pronounced him incurable, and unanimously advised his being left in perfect solitude, with nothing to break the silence that was needful for his very improbable recovery, and that he should live always in a cool room with a subdued light. Mlle. de Villenoix, whom I had been careful not to apprise of Louis's state," he went on, blinking his eyes, "but who was supposed to have broken off the match, went to Paris and heard what the doctors had pronounced. She immediately begged to see my nephew, who hardly recognized her; then, like the noble soul she is, she insisted on devoting herself to giving him such care as might tend to his recovery. She would have been obliged to do so if he had been her husband, she said, and could she do less for him as her lover?

"She removed Louis to Villenoix, where they have been living for two years."

So, instead of continuing my journey, I stopped at Blois to go to see Louis. Good M. Lefebvre would not hear of my lodging anywhere but at his house, where he showed me his nephew's room with the books and all else that had belonged to him. At every turn the old man could not suppress some mournful exclamation, showing what hopes Louis's precocious genius had raised, and the terrible grief into which this irreparable ruin had plunged him.

"That young fellow knew everything, my dear sir!" said he, laying on the table a volume containing Spinoza's works. "How could so well organized a brain go astray?"

"Indeed, monsieur," said I, "was it not perhaps the result of its being so highly organized? If he really is a victim to the malady as yet unstudied in all its aspects, which is known

simply as madness, I am inclined to attribute it to his passion. His studies and his mode of life had strung his powers and faculties to a degree of energy beyond which the least further strain was too much for nature; Love was enough to crack them, or to raise them to a new form of expression which we are maligning perhaps, by ticketing it without due knowledge. In fact, he may perhaps have regarded the joys of marriage as an obstacle to the perfection of his inner man and his flight towards spiritual spheres."

"My dear sir," said the old man, after listening to me with attention, "your reasoning is, no doubt, very sound; but even if I could follow it, would this melancholy logic comfort me for the loss of my nephew?"

Lambert's uncle was one of those men who live only by their affections.

I went to Villenoix on the following day. The kind old man accompanied me to the gates of Blois. When we were out on the road to Villenoix, he stopped me and said—

"As you may suppose, I do not go there. But do not forget what I have said; and in Mlle. de Villenoix's presence affect not to perceive that Louis is mad."

He remained standing on the spot where I left him, watching me till I was out of sight.

I made my way to the château of Villenoix, not without deep agitation. My thoughts were many at each step on this road, which Louis had so often trodden with a heart full of hopes, a soul spurred on by the myriad darts of love. The shrubs, the trees, the turns of the winding road where little gullies broke the banks on each side, were to me full of strange interest. I tried to enter into the impressions and thoughts of my unhappy friend. Those evening meetings on the edge of the coombe, where his lady-love had been wont to find him, had, no doubt, initiated Mlle. de Villenoix into the secrets of that vast and lofty spirit, as I had learned them all some years before.

But the thing that most occupied my mind, and gave to my pilgrimage the interest of intense curiosity, in addition to the almost pious feelings that led me onwards, was that

glorious faith of Mlle. de Villenoix's which the good priest had told me of. Had she in the course of time been infected with her lover's madness, or had she so completely entered into his soul that she could understand all its thoughts, even the most perplexed? I lost myself in the wonderful problem of feeling, passing the highest inspirations of passion and the most beautiful instances of self-sacrifice. That one should die for the other is an almost vulgar form of devotion. To live faithful to one love is a form of heroism that immortalized Mlle. Dupuis. When the great Napoleon and Lord Byron could find successors in the hearts of women they had loved, we may well admire Bolingbroke's widow; but Mlle. Dupuis could feed on the memories of many years of happiness, whereas Mlle. de Villenoix, having known nothing of love but its first excitement, seemed to me to typify love in its highest expression. If she were herself almost crazy, it was splendid; but if she had understood and entered into his madness, she combined with the beauty of a noble heart a crowning effort of passion worthy to be studied and honored.

When I saw the tall turrets of the château, remembering how often poor Lambert must have thrilled at the sight of them, my heart beat anxiously. As I recalled the events of our boyhood, I was almost a sharer in his present life and situation. At last I reached a wide, deserted courtyard, and I went into the hall of the house without meeting a soul. There the sound of my steps brought out an old woman, to whom I gave a letter written to Mlle. de Villenoix by M. Lefebvre. In a few minutes this woman returned to bid me enter, and led me to a low room, floored with black-and-white marble; the Venetian shutters were closed, and at the end of the room I dimly saw Louis Lambert.

"Be seated, monsieur," said a gentle voice that went to my heart.

Mlle. de Villenoix was at my side before I was aware of her presence, and noiselessly brought me a chair, which at first I would not accept. It was so dark that at first I saw Mlle. de Villenoix and Lambert only as two black masses perceived against the gloomy background. I presently sat down

under the influence of the feeling that comes over us, almost in spite of ourselves, under the obscure vault of a church. My eyes, full of the bright sunshine, accustomed themselves gradually to this artificial night.

"Monsieur is your old school-friend," she said to Louis.

He made no reply. At last I could see him, and it was one of those spectacles that are stamped on the memory forever. He was standing, his elbows resting on the cornice of the low wainscot, which threw his body forward, so that it seemed bowed under the weight of his bent head. His hair was as long as a woman's, falling over his shoulders and hanging about his face, giving him a resemblance to the busts of the great men of the time of Louis XIV. His face was perfectly white. He constantly rubbed one leg against the other, with a mechanical action that nothing could have checked, and the incessant friction of the bones made a doleful sound. Near him was a bed of moss on boards.

"He very rarely lies down," said Mlle. de Villenoix; "but whenever he does, he sleeps for several days."

Louis stood, as I beheld him, day and night with a fixed gaze, never winking his eyelids as we do. Having asked Mlle. de Villenoix whether a little more light would hurt our friend, on her reply I opened the shutters a little way, and could see the expression of Lambert's countenance. Alas! he was wrinkled, white-headed, his eyes dull and lifeless as those of the blind. His features seemed all drawn upwards to the top of his head. I made several attempts to talk to him, but he did not hear me. He was a wreck snatched from the grave, a conquest of life from death—or of death from life!

I stayed for about an hour, sunk in unaccountable dreams, and lost in painful thought. I listened to Mlle. de Villenoix, who told me every detail of this life—that of a child in arms.

Suddenly Louis ceased rubbing his legs together, and said slowly—

"The angels are white."

I cannot express the effect produced upon me by this utterance, by the sound of the voice I had loved, whose accents, so painfully expected, had seemed to be lost forever. My eyes filled with tears in spite of every effort. An involuntary

instinct warned me, making me doubt whether Louis had really lost his reason. I was indeed well assured that he neither saw nor heard me; but the sweetness of his tone, which seemed to reveal heavenly happiness, gave his speech an amazing effect. These words, the incomplete revelation of an unknown world, rang in our souls like some glorious distant bells in the depth of a dark night. I was no longer surprised that Mlle. de Villenoix considered Lambert to be perfectly sane. The life of the soul had perhaps subdued that of the body. His faithful companion had no doubt—as I had at that moment—intuitions of that melodious and beautiful existence to which we give the name of Heaven in its highest meaning.

This woman, this angel, always was with him, seated at her embroidery frame; and each time she drew the needle out she gazed at Lambert with sad and tender feeling. Unable to endure this terrible sight—for I could not, like Mlle. de Villenoix, read all his secrets—I went out, and she came with me to walk for a few minutes and talk of herself and of Lambert.

"Louis must, no doubt, appear to be mad," said she. "But he is not, if the term mad ought only to be used in speaking of those whose brain is for some unknown cause diseased, and who can show no reason in their actions. Everything in my husband is perfectly balanced. Though he did not actively recognize you, it is not that he did not see you. He has succeeded in detaching himself from his body, and discerns us under some other aspect—what that is, I know not. When he speaks, he utters wondrous things. Only it often happens that he concludes in speech an idea that had its beginning in his mind; or, he may begin a sentence and finish it in thought. To other men he seems insane; to me, living as I do in his mind, his ideas are quite lucid. I follow the road his spirit travels; and though I do not know every turning, I can reach the goal with him.

"Which of us has not often known what it is to think of some futile thing and be led on to some serious reflection through the ideas or memories it brings in its train? Not unfrequently, after speaking about some trifle, the simple

starting-point of a rapid train of reflections, a thinker may forget to be silent as to the abstract connection of ideas leading to his conclusion, and speak again only to utter the last link in the chain of his meditations.

"Inferior minds, to whom this swift mental vision is a thing unknown, who are ignorant of the spirit's inner workings, laugh at the dreamer; and if he is subject to this kind of obliviousness, regard him as a madman. Louis is always in this state; he soars perpetually through the spaces of thought, traversing them with the swiftness of a swallow; I can follow him in his flight. This is the whole history of his madness. Some day, perhaps, Louis will come back to the life in which we vegetate; but if he breathes the air of heaven before the time when we may be permitted to do so, why should we desire to have him down among us? I am content to hear his heart beat, and all my happiness is to be with him. Is he not wholly mine? In three years, twice at intervals he was himself for a few days; once in Switzerland, where we went, and once in an island off the wilds of Brittany, where he took some sea-baths. I have twice been very happy! I can live on memory."

"But do you write down the things he says?" I asked.

"Why should I?" said she.

I was silent; human knowledge was indeed as nothing in this woman's eyes.

"At those times, when he talked a little," she added, "I think I have recorded some of his phrases, but I left it off; I did not understand him then."

I asked her for them by a look; she understood me. This is what I have been able to preserve from oblivion:

I.

Everything here on earth is produced by an ethereal substance which is the common element of various phenomena, known inaccurately as electricity, heat, light, the galvanic fluid, the magnetic fluid, and so forth. The universal distribution of this substance, under various forms, constitutes what is commonly known as Matter.

II.

The brain is the alembic to which the Animal conveys what each of its organizations, in proportion to the strength of that vessel, can absorb of that Substance, which returns it transformed into Will.

The Will is a fluid inherent in every creature endowed with motion. Hence the innumerable forms assumed by the Animal, the results of its combinations with that Substance. The Animal's instincts are the product of the coercion of the environment in which it develops. Hence its variety.

III.

In Man the Will becomes a power peculiar to him, and exceeding in intensity that of any other species.

IV.

By constant assimilation, the Will depends on the Substance it meets with again and again in all its transmutations, pervading them by Thought, which is a product peculiar to the human Will, in combination with the modifications of that Substance.

V.

The innumerable forms assumed by Thought are the result of the greater or less perfection of the human mechanism.

VI.

The Will acts through organs commonly called the five senses, which, in fact, are but one—the faculty of Sight. Feeling and tasting, hearing and smelling, are Sight modified to the transformations of the Substance which Man can absorb in two conditions: untransformed and transformed.

VII.

Everything of which the form comes within the cognizance of the one sense of Sight may be reduced to certain simple

bodies of which the elements exist in the air, the light, or in the elements of air and light. Sound is a condition of the air; colors are all conditions of light; every smell is a combination of air and light; hence the four aspects of Matter with regard to Man—sound, color, smell, and shape—have the same origin, for the day is not far off when the relationship of the phenomena of air and light will be made clear.

Thought, which is allied to Light, is expressed in words which depend on sound. To man, then, everything is derived from the Substance, whose transformations vary only through Number—a certain quantitative dissimilarity, the proportions resulting in the individuals or objects of what are classed as Kingdoms.

VIII.

When the Substance is absorbed in sufficient number (or quantity) it makes of man an immensely powerful mechanism, in direct communication with the very element of the Substance, and acting on organic nature in the same way as a large stream when it absorbs the smaller brooks. Volition sets this force in motion independently of the Mind. By its concentration it acquires some of the qualities of the Substance, such as the swiftness of light, the penetrating power of electricity, and the faculty of saturating a body; to which must be added that it apprehends what it can do.

Still, there is in man a primordial and overruling phenomenon which defies analysis. Men may be dissected completely; the elements of Will and Mind may perhaps be found; but there still will remain beyond apprehension the *x* against which I once used to struggle. That *x* is the Word, the Logos, whose communication burns and consumes those who are not prepared to receive it. The Word is forever generating the Substance.

IX.

Rage, like all our vehement demonstrations, is a current of the human force that acts electrically; its turmoil when

liberated acts on persons who are present even though they be neither its cause nor its object. Are there not certain men who by a discharge of Volition can sublimate the essence of the feelings of the masses?

X.

Fanaticism and all emotions are living forces. These forces in some beings become rivers that gather in and sweep away everything.

XI.

Though Space *is*, certain faculties have the power of traversing it with such rapidity that it is as though it existed not. From your own bed to the frontiers of the universe there are but two steps: Will and Faith.

XII.

Facts are nothing; they do not subsist; all that lives of us is the Idea.

XIII.

The realm of Ideas is divided into three spheres: that of Instinct, that of Abstractions, that of Specialism.

XIV.

The greater part, the weaker part of visible humanity, dwells in the Sphere of Instinct. The *Instinctives* are born, labor, and die without rising to the second degree of human intelligence, namely, Abstraction.

XV.

Society begins in the sphere of Abstraction. If Abstraction, as compared with Instinct, is an almost divine power, it is nevertheless incredibly weak as compared with the gift

of Specialism, which is the formula of God. Abstraction comprises all nature in a germ, more virtually than a seed contains the whole system of a plant and its fruits. From Abstraction are derived laws, arts, social ideas, and interests. It is the glory and the scourge of the earth: its glory because it has created social life; its scourge because it allows man to evade entering into Specialism, which is one of the paths to the Infinite. Man measures everything by Abstractions: Good and Evil, Virtue and Crime. Its formula of equity is a pair of scales, its justice is blind. God's justice sees: there is all the difference.

There must be intermediate Beings, then, dividing the sphere of Instinct from the sphere of Abstractions, in whom the two elements mingle in an infinite variety of proportions. Some have more of one, some more of the other. And there are also some in which the two powers neutralize each other by equality of effect.

XVI.

Specialism consists in seeing the things of the material universe and the things of the spiritual universe in all their ramifications original and causative. The greatest human geniuses are those who started from the darkness of Abstraction to attain to the light of Specialism. (Specialism, *species*, sight; speculation, or seeing everything, and all at once; *Speculum*, a mirror or means of apprehending a thing by seeing the whole of it.) Jesus had the gift of Specialism; He saw each fact in its root and in its results, in the past where it had its rise, and in the future where it would grow and spread; His sight pierced into the understandings of others. The perfection of the inner eye gives rise to the gift of Specialism. Specialism brings with it Intuition. Intuition is one of the faculties of the Inner Man, of which Specialism is an attribute. Intuition acts by an imperceptible sensation of which he who obeys it is not conscious: for instance, Napoleon instinctively moving from a spot struck immediately afterwards by a cannon ball.

XVII.

Between the sphere of Abstraction and that of Specialism, as between those of Abstraction and Instinct, there are beings in whom the attributes of both combine and produce a mixture; these are men of genius.

XVIII.

Specialism is necessarily the most perfect expression of man, and he is the link binding the visible world to the higher worlds; he acts, sees, and feels by his inner powers. The man of Abstraction thinks. The man of Instinct acts.

XIX.

Hence man has three degrees. That of Instinct, below the average; that of Abstraction, the general average; that of Specialism, above the average. Specialism opens to man his true career; the Infinite dawns on him; he sees what his destiny must be.

XX.

There are three worlds—the Natural, the Spiritual, and the Divine. Humanity passes through the Natural world, which is not fixed either in its essence or its faculties. The Spiritual world is fixed in its essence and unfixed in its faculties. The Divine world is fixed in its faculties and its essence both. Hence there is necessarily a Material worship, a Spiritual worship, and a Divine worship: three forms expressed in action, speech, and prayer, or, in other words, in deed, apprehension, and love. Instinct demands deed; Abstraction is concerned with Ideas; Specialism sees the end, it aspires to God with presentiment or contemplation.

XXI.

Hence, perhaps, some day the converse of *Et Verbum caro factum est* will become the epitome of a new Gospel, which will proclaim that the Flesh shall be made the Word and become the Utterance of God.

XXII.

The Resurrection is the work of the Wind of Heaven sweeping over the worlds. The angel borne on the Wind does not say: "Arise, ye dead"; he says, "Arise, ye who live!"

Such are the meditations which I have with great difficulty cast in a form adapted to our understanding. There are some others which Pauline remembered more exactly, wherefore I know not, and which I wrote from her dictation; but they drive the mind to despair when, knowing in what an intellect they originated, we strive to understand them. I will quote a few of them to complete my study of this figure; partly, too, perhaps, because, in these last aphorisms, Lambert's formulas seem to include a larger universe than the former set, which would apply only to zoological evolution. Still, there is a relation between the two fragments, evident to those persons—though they be but few—who love to dive into such intellectual deeps.

I.

Everything on earth exists solely by motion and number.

II.

Motion is, so to speak, number in action.

III.

Motion is the product of a force generated by the Word and by Resistance, which is Matter. But for Resistance, Motion would have had no results; its action would have been infinite. Newton's gravitation is not a law, but an effect of the general law of universal motion.

IV.

Motion, acting in proportion to Resistance, produces a result which is Life. As soon as one or the other is the stronger, Life ceases.

V.

No portion of Motion is wasted; it always produces Number; still, it can be neutralized by disproportionate resistance, as in minerals.

VI.

Number, which produces variety of all kinds, also gives rise to Harmony, which in the highest meaning of the word, is the relation of parts to the whole.

VII.

But for Motion, everything would be one and the same. Its products, identical in their essence, differ only by Number, which gives rise to faculties.

VIII.

Man looks to faculties; angels look to the Essence.

IX.

By giving his body up to elemental action, man can achieve an inner union with the Light.

X.

Number is intellectual evidence belonging to man alone; by it he acquires knowledge of the Word.

XI.

There is a Number beyond which the impure cannot pass: the Number which is the limit of creation.

XII.

The Unit was the starting-point of every product: compounds are derived from it, but the end must be identical

with the beginning. Hence this Spiritual formula: the compound Unit, the variable Unit, the fixed Unit.

XIII.

The Universe is the Unit in variety. Motion is the means; Number is the result. The end is the return of all things to the Unit, which is God.

XIV.

Three and Seven are the two chief Spiritual numbers.

XV.

Three is the formula of created worlds. It is the Spiritual Sign of the creation, as it is the Material Sign of dimension. In fact, God has worked by curved lines only: the Straight Line is an attribute of the Infinite; and man, who has the presentiment of the Infinite, reproduces it in his works. Two is the number of generation. Three is the number of Life which includes generation and offspring. Add the sum of four, and you have Seven, the formula of Heaven. Above all is God; He is the Unit.

After going in to see Louis once more, I took leave of his wife and went home, lost in ideas so adverse to social life that, in spite of a promise to return to Villenoix, I did not go.

The sight of Louis had had some mysteriously sinister influence over me. I was afraid to place myself again in that heavy atmosphere, where ecstasy was contagious. Any man would have felt, as I did, a longing to throw himself into the infinite, just as one soldier after another killed himself in a certain sentry box where one had committed suicide in the camp at Boulogne. It is a known fact that Napoleon was obliged to have the hut burnt which had harbored an idea that had become a mortal infection.

Louis's room had perhaps the same fatal effect as that sentry box.

These two facts would then be additional evidence in favor

of his theory of the transfusion of Will. I was conscious of strange disturbances, transcending the most fantastic results of taking tea, coffee, or opium, of dreams or of fever—mysterious agents, whose terrible action often sets our brains on fire.

I ought perhaps to have made a separate book of these fragments of thought, intelligible only to certain spirits who have been accustomed to lean over the edge of abysses in the hope of seeing to the bottom. The life of that mighty brain, which split up on every side perhaps, like a too vast empire, would have been set forth in the narrative of this man's visions—a being incomplete for lack of force or of weakness; but I preferred to give an account of my own impressions rather than to compose a more or less poetical romance.

Louis Lambert died at the age of twenty-eight, September 25, 1824, in his true love's arms. He was buried by her desire in an island in the park at Villenoix. His tombstone is a plain stone cross, without name or date. Like a flower that has blossomed on the margin of a precipice, and drops into it, its colors and fragrance all unknown, it was fitting that he too should fall. Like many another misprized soul, he had often yearned to dive haughtily into the void, and abandon there the secrets of his own life.

Mlle. de Villenoix would, however, have been quite justified in recording his name on that cross with her own. Since her partner's death, reunion has been her constant, hourly hope. But the vanities of woe are foreign to faithful souls.

Villenoix is falling into ruin. She no longer resides there; to the end, no doubt, that she may the better picture herself there as she used to be. She had said long ago—

"His heart was mine; his genius is with God."

CHÂTEAU DE SACHÉ, *June-July* 1832.

GAMBARA

[The first appearance of *Gambara* was in the *Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris* during July and August 1837 in four chapters and a conclusion. In 1839 it was included in a book with the *Cabinet des Antiques.* Ten years later it was included as *Le Livre des Douleurs* with *Séraphita*, *Les Proscrits*, and *Massimilla Doni.* It took its place in the *Comédie* in 1846.]

GAMBARA

To M. le Marquis de Belloy.

NEW YEAR'S DAY 1831 was throwing around its packets of sugared-almonds; four o'clock was striking; great crowds thronged the Palais-Royal, and the restaurants were filling up. At this time a coupé stopped at the entrance and a young man of noble bearing alighted; a foreigner undoubtedly, or he would not have had as attendant an aristocratic chasseur wearing a plumed hat, neither would the panels have displayed the coat-of-arms, which the heroes of July still sought for the purpose of attack.

Our stranger entered the Palais-Royal and followed the crowd around the wooden galleries, evidently not caring to notice the slow progression he was compelled to make by the sauntering mass of humanity; he seemed born to the noble gait, called in derision the "ambassadors' strut," and yet his dignity had a touch of the theatrical. Although his face was grave and handsome, his hat, under which showed a mass of black, curling hair, tipped the least bit too much over his right ear, belying his gravity with a touch of rakishness. His inattentive, half-closed eyes let fall an occasional contemptuous glance upon the crowd.

"There's a handsome young fellow," said a grisette to another one in her company, as they drew aside to let him pass.

"And right well he knows it, too," responded aloud the companion, who was very plain.

After having made a turn through the arcades, the young man alternately looked at his watch and at the sky; he seemed to be impatient, and at last went into a tobacconist's store, lit a cigar, and stood for a moment before the mirror to glance over his apparel, which was more ornate than the French law of good taste could tolerate. He pulled down his collar and black velvet vest, over which hung many

festoons of those heavy gold chains made in Genoa; then, with one jerk of his left shoulder, he satisfactorily arranged his velvet-lined cloak in graceful folds, and resumed his promenade, paying not the slightest attention to the glances of the inquisitive bourgeois.

When the store windows began to be illuminated and the dusk seemed dark enough, he walked to the open square of the Palais-Royal with an appearance of avoiding recognition; he kept close to the wall as far as the fountain, under cover of the hackney-coaches, to thus reach the entrance of the Rue Froidmanteau, a dirty, dark, and disreputable street—a moral sewer which the police tolerate near the purified precincts of the Palais-Royal, the same as an Italian majordomo allows a negligent servant to leave the sweepings from a suite of rooms in a corner of the staircase.

The young man hesitated. He had something of the air of a middle-class wife in her Sunday best clothes when she fears to cross a gutter swollen by the rain; yet the hour was not ill-chosen in which to indulge some questionable whim. Earlier in the day he might have been detected; later, he might be cut out. To have been tempted by a glance more encouraging than alluring; to have followed a young and pretty woman for an hour, perhaps for a day; to set her on a pedestal in his own mind, giving a thousand flattering excuses for her light conduct; to find one's self believing in a sudden, irresistible affinity; to imagine under the flame of a passing excitement the beginning of a love-adventure at an epoch when romances are written because there no longer exists the slightest trace of romance; to have dreamed of balconies, guitars, stratagems, and bolts and Almaviva's mantle; to have written, in fancy, a poem in honor of this divinity; and, after all this, to stop at the door of a house of ill-fame; to find in the decorum of his Rosina a reticence enforced by the police, is surely a history, a delusion; is it not, I ask, an experience of many a man, much as he would desire to deny it?

great harm is done. With a foreigner, though, this is not so; he begins to think his Parisian education may cost him altogether too dear.

The saunterer was a noble of Milan, banished his country, where some pranks of liberalism had led the Austrian government to suspect him. The Comte Andrea Marcosini had been welcomed in Paris with that French cordiality always shown to one of a witty, amiable nature and of a high-sounding name, especially so when accompanied by an income of two hundred thousand francs a year and a prepossessing appearance. To such a man exile meant but a pleasure tour; his property was only sequestrated, and his friends took means to let him know that after the course of a year or two he could return to his own country without risk.

After rhyming *crudelli affami* with *i miei tiranni* in a dozen or so sonnets, after also assisting as many of the poorer Italian refugees, Comte Andrea, who for his misfortune was born a poet, thought himself released from patriotic concerns. So since his arrival he had given himself up without discretion to the pleasures of every kind that Paris so kindly offers gratis to everybody who may be rich enough to buy them. His talents and attractive person won him success with many women, whom he collectively loved, as was natural to his age, but among all of whom he had, as yet, not selected a particular one. Beside, in him the taste for such pleasures was subordinate to the love of music and poetry, gifts which he had assiduously cultivated since childhood; he thought success in these realms more difficult of attainment and more glorious than the triumphs of gallantry, since nature had spared him the difficulties which most other men take pride in vanquishing.

Of a complex nature, like many another man, he let himself be charmed by the comforts of luxury, without which he could hardly have lived; he held just as tenaciously to the social distinctions rejected by his political creed. Thus his theories as an artist, a thinker, and a poet were often in direct contradiction to his tastes, his feelings, and his habits as an opulent man of rank; but he consoled himself for this

seeming inconsistency by recognizing the same traits in many Parisians—men who are Liberals from self-interest and aristocrats by nature.

Hence it was not without some misgivings that he found himself on foot, on December 31st, in a thaw, following at the heels of a woman whose dress betrayed abject poverty—an inveterate, long-accustomed poverty—and who was not one whit handsomer than others to be seen on any evening at the Bouffons, the opera, or in society, and she certainly was not as handsome as Mme. de Manerville, with whom he had an assignation that self-same day, and who, most probably, was at that moment awaiting him.

But there was a something in the glance, half-wild, half-tender, rapid yet intense, which that woman's black eyes had furtively shot at him; a world of buried sorrows and stifled delights was there; she blushed so fiercely when, emerging from a store where she had lingered a little while, her eyes met those of Marcosini, who was outside awaiting her return, but her look met that of the Count with equal candor. There were, in short, so many incentives to curiosity that the Count, seized by one of those crazy temptations for which no language has a name, not even in that of the orgy, followed in pursuit of the woman exactly as an old Parisian runs a grisette to earth.

As he went along, sometimes before, sometimes in her rear, he examined the details of her person and dress; he tried to dislodge the absurd and frenzied desire that had taken possession of his brain; but soon his scrutiny felt a keener pleasure than he had experienced the day before as he stood gazing at the perfect shape of a woman he loved, as she took her bath. Sometimes the unknown fair, bending her head, would throw on him a glance like that of a kid tethered with its head near the ground; then, still finding him in pursuit, she hurried on as if to escape him. Nevertheless, when a block caused by carriages or persons crowded together brought Andrea beside her, he saw that she turned away from his gaze without any sign of annoyance. These signals of repressed emotions spurred on the unruly dreams which were running away with him, and he gave them a free

rein as far as the Rue Froidmanteau, down which, after many windings, she suddenly disappeared, trusting that her pursuer would thus find the scent killed for him; he was astonished at this move and had lost trace of her.

It was dark. Two highly rouged women, who were drinking a liqueur of black-currant in a grocery, saw the young woman and called to her. She paused a moment on the threshold, replied to their greeting by a few gentle words and passed on. Andrea, who was close behind her, saw her vanish in one of the darkest courts in the street, of which he knew not the name. The repulsive appearance of the house which the heroine of his romance had entered turned his stomach. He stepped back a few paces to examine the surroundings, when, finding a villainous-looking fellow at his elbow, he asked for information. The man rested one hand on a knotty stick, and ironically answered in two words:

"Droll dog!"

But catching a full view of the Italian, who stood in the light of a street lamp, his face suddenly assumed a wheedling expression.

"Ah! your excuses, monsieur," said he, at once changing his tune; "there's a restaurant in that house, a kind of table-d'hôte is there served, where the cooking is horribly bad and they put cheese in the soup. Monsieur, perhaps, is in search of that place—for it is easy to see that monsieur is an Italian—and Italians are fond of velvet and cheese. If monsieur would like to know of a better eating-house, I can show him one; my aunt lives near by, and she is very fond of foreigners."

Andrea drew his cloak as high as his nose and rushed out of the street, driven by the disgust he felt for this filthy creature, whose clothing and gestures were in keeping with the squalid house into which the unknown woman had disappeared. He returned with delight to the comforts and elegances of his suite of rooms, and passed the evening with the Marquise d'Espard, to cleanse himself, if possible, of the pollution of the fancy that had taken such hold upon him.

Nevertheless, afterward when he was in bed, in the silence of the night, his evening vision arose before him, brighter,

clearer, more vividly than the reality. Before him walked his divinity; at times as she crossed the street gutters she slightly raised her dress and displayed a shapely leg; and her beautifully molded hips swayed at every step. Once more Andrea wished to speak to her and dared not. He, Marcosini, a noble of Milan! Then he saw her once more enter the dark court and the wretched house, and blamed himself for not following her farther.

"For," said he to himself, "if it was that she avoided me and tried to put me off the scent, surely it is a sign of her loving me. With women of this kind coyness is proof of love. Possibly, though, if I had gone further with the adventure it might have ended in disgust. I'll just sleep in peace."

The Count was in the habit of analyzing his keenest sensations, as all men born with a good headpiece involuntarily do when their brain equals their heart; he was greatly surprised to still find himself thinking of the strange damsel, not in the ideal glamour of a vision, but in all the reality of the naked facts. And yet, if his fancy had stripped her of the misery of wretchedness, the woman herself would have been spoilt for him; for he wanted her, he desired her; he loved her—muddy stockings, broken shoes, her battered straw bonnet, all! He longed for her in that very house which he had seen her enter.

"Am I then enamored of vice?" he asked himself with horror. "Nay, I have not come to that, I am but three-and-twenty; there is nothing of the senile stage about me."

The very vehemence of the caprice of which he was the plaything seemed to somewhat reassure him. This curious struggle, these reflections, this love on a run may be an enigma to some persons who imagine they know the ways of Paris; but let such bear in mind that Comte Andrea Marcosini was not a Frenchman.

Brought up as he was by two pious abbés, by the instruction of a pious father, who had seldom permitted him out of their sight, Andrea had not fallen in love with a cousin at eleven, nor had he seduced his mother's waiting-maid at twelve; he had not studied at those colleges where the most consummate teaching is not prescribed by the State; he had

lived in Paris but a short time, and he was yet on the watch against those sudden and deep impressions against which the education and customs of a French education are such a powerful ægis.

In Southern lands great passions are often born at a glance. A Gascon gentleman who had tempered his sensibility by deep reflection, and owned a horde of little recipes against the sudden apoplexies of the head and heart, had one day advised Marcosini to indulge at least once a month in a wild sensual orgy, so he might avert those storms of the soul which, without such precautions, were apt to burst forth at inconvenient times. Andrea well remembered this advice, and, as he sank to sleep, muttered to himself:

"Well, I'll begin to-morrow, January the 1st."

This will explain why it was that the Comte Andrea Marcosini so furtively skirted the line of hackney-coaches to get at the entrance of the Rue Froidmanteau. The man of fashion hampered the lover; he hesitated for some time, but, after a final appeal to his courage, the lover advanced with a firm step to the house, which he easily recognized. There he again stopped. Was the woman what he took her to be? Might it not be that he was about taking a false step?

Just then he recollected the Italian table-d'hôte, and eagerly jumped at the middle course thus offered, and which seemed like to serve the ends of his desires and his repugnance.

He entered the place, intending to dine there; he made his way down a greasy passage, at the end of which he found, after groping about for some time, the damp and slimy steps of a stairway, and which, to an Italian nobleman, must have seemed little more than a ladder.

Attracted to the second floor by the light of a lamp placed on the floor, and by a strong scent of cooking, he pushed a door which stood ajar, and saw a large room dingy with smoke and grease, where a woman was engaged laying a table for about twenty customers. None of the guests had as yet arrived.

Glancing around the ill-lighted room, where the paper

hung in strips from the wall, the nobleman seated himself near a stove which rumbled and smoked in a corner.

The major-domo of the place, attracted by the noise the Count made in entering, now hustled into the room. Picture to yourself a thin, lank cook, very tall, blessed with a nose of extravagant dimensions, casting about him from time to time a feverish glance that he intended to seem cautious. At sight of Andrea, whose dress and appearance bespoke affluence, Signor Giardini bowed respectfully.

The Count expressed an intention of habitually dining there with his compatriots; he paid for a number of tickets in advance, and gave a friendly tone to the conversation to enable him to achieve his purpose the quicker.

He had scarcely alluded to the woman he was seeking than Signor Giardini made a grotesque gesture, looked knowingly at his customer with a wink, and let a smile curl his lip.

"*Basta!*" he exclaimed. "*Capisco!* You, signor, are brought hither by two appetites. The Signora Gambara will not have wasted her time if she has managed to interest a gentleman so generous as you seem to be. I can tell you in one word all that we know here of the woman, who is truly to be pitied.

"The husband was born, I think, at Cremona, but he came here from Germany, quite recently. He has been endeavoring to get the *Tedeschi* to try some new music and a new kind of instrument. It is pitiable, eh?" exclaimed Giardini, shrugging his shoulders. "Signor Gambara, who believes himself a great composer, does not seem to me to be particularly smart in other directions. A fine fellow enough, occasionally good-natured, full of common sense and wit, especially when he has drunk a glass or two of good wine—a not frequent occurrence, for he is frightfully poor. He toils night and day in composing imaginary operas instead of working for a living as he should do. His poor wife is reduced to working for all sorts of people, prostitutes and the like—sewing she does. Well, it can't be helped, she loves her husband like a father and cares for him like a baby.

"Lots of young men have come here to dine in hopes of being able to pay court to madame, but no one has as yet

succeeded," he said, with a significant emphasis on the last word. "La Signora Marianna is virtuous, sir; much too virtuous for her own good, worse luck. Nowadays men give nothing for nothing. The poor creature will die in poverty.

"You would naturally suppose that her husband would reward such fine devotion, wouldn't you? Bah, he doesn't even give her one smile. The cooking is done at the bakery, for, see you, this devil of a husband never earns a sou, but he spends his whole time in making instruments, which he cuts and lengthens, and shortens and fits, and sets up and takes to pieces again till they give out squeaks that would scare a cat; then only is he happy. And yet you will find him the kindest and gentlest of men; he's not a bit lazy, no indeed, he's always busy. To speak truth, he's mad and doesn't know it. I have seen monsieur filing and forging those instruments of his and chewing away on his black bread with an appetite that I have often envied—I, monsieur, who keep the best table in Paris.

"Your excellenza shall learn before an hour passes over your head the man I am. I have introduced a number of refinements into Italian cookery that will amaze you. Excellenza, I am Neapolitan, which is saying, a born cook. But of what good is instinct without science? Science? I have spent thirty years in acquiring it. See, then, to what it has brought me! My history is that of every man of talent. My efforts, my experiments, have ruined three restaurants in succession—one at Naples, the others at Parma and Rome. Again reduced in this city to making a trade of my art, I practice in my ruling passion more than before. Some of my finest ragouts I give to these poor refugees. I ruin myself. Folly! you would say? I know this, but, then, can I help myself? Genius is stronger than I; is it possible I can restrain myself from creating a dish that smilingly allures me? And they always know it, the scallawags! I can make oath to you that they know at once whether it was my wife or I who handled the ladles.

"And what now is the consequence? Out of the sixty or more guests whom I used to see at my table-d'hôte every day

when I first opened this wretched place, barely twenty remain, and most of these want credit.

"The Piedmontese, the Savoyards, have quit me, but the persons of taste, the Italians proper, remain. And for these what sacrifices would I not make! I often give them a dinner at five-and-twenty sous a head that has cost me double that to prepare."

Signor Giardini's little speech was so redolent of Neapolitan cunning that the Count was tickled immensely; he could have fancied himself back at Gerolamo's.

"If such be the case, my good host," said he familiarly to the chef, "and since accident, chance, and your good-nature have let me into the secrets of your daily sacrifices, permit me the honor of paying double."

Thus speaking, Andrea flung a forty-franc piece on the table, out of which Signor Giardini solemnly returned him two francs and fifty centimes in change, with a mysterious ceremony which enchanted the young man.

"In a few minutes," continued the signor, "you shall behold your *donnina*. I'll seat you next the husband; if you wish to get in his good graces, talk music; I have invited both of them for this evening, poor souls. For New Year's Day celebration I have prepared a dish for my guests in which I may say that I have surpassed myself."

The words of Signor Giardini were drowned in the noisy greetings of the said company, who streamed in singly or in pairs, irregularly, after the manner of tables-d'hôte. Giardini stood ostentatiously by the Count and pointed out to him the regular company. He was liberal with his quips and quirks, and tried by his humorous remarks to bring a smile to the lips of this man who, as his Neapolitan instinct assured him, was a wealthy patron who might be turned to account.

"That man," said he, "is a poor composer who would much like to leave the ballad line for the realm of opera; but he can't. He abuses managers, music publishers, everybody but himself, who is his own greatest enemy. Don't you catch on to his rubescent complexion, what jolly self-conceit, how little firmness he displays? He's only cut out for a

ballad-monger, and nothing else. The other man in his company, who looks like a match-vendor, is a great musical celebrity, Gigelmi—the greatest of Italian conductors. But he is now going deaf, and is ending his days most miserably, deprived as he is of all that is attractive to him. Ah! and here comes our Ottoboni the great, the most guileless old fellow on earth; and yet he is suspected of being the most vindictive of all those who are plotting for the regeneration of Italy. I should dearly like to know why ever they banished such a mild old gentleman——"

Here Giardini looked closely at the Count, who, aware that he was being pumped on the political question, kept an impassibility that was truly Italian.

"A man who cooks for all the world is denied political opinions, excellenza," went on this culinary genius. "But anyone seeing that worthy man, who looks more the lamb than the lion, would say as I do about him, even to the Austrian ambassador himself. Beside all, at this day liberty is no longer proscribed; it is *en route* again! At least that's what these good people here present fancy," he whispered in the Count's ear, "and I, why should I daunt their hopes? Though I myself do not hate an absolute government.

"All great talent is for absolutism. Well, though Ottoboni is choke-full of genius, he expends time and trouble in teaching Italy; he writes little books to teach the minds of children and the laboring classes, and he very cleverly gets them smuggled into Italy; he adopts every means to awaken a moral sense in our unlucky native land, where, after all, enjoyment is more desired than liberty—it may be they are right."

The Count still retained his impassiveness, and the cook was unable to learn any of his political opinions.

"Ottoboni," he went on, "is a saint; very benevolent and helpful; all the refugees love him, for you must know, excellenza, that even a Liberal may have his virtues. Ah! here we have a journalist!" he exclaimed, interrupting himself, and pointing out a man who wore the attire generally attributed, perhaps more conventionally than truthfully, to the garret

poet; his coat was threadbare, his shoes cracked, his hat shiny, his overcoat in senile decay. "Excellenza, that poor man is full of talent and incorruptibly honest! He was born in a wrong age! he tells the truth to the whole world; people detest him. He is the theatrical critic of two little journals, though he is smart enough to write for the great dailies. Poor fellow!

"The others are beneath your notice; your excellency will easily learn about them without my help," he hastily added, perceiving that the Count was no longer paying attention to him, as the wife of the composer entered the room.

Seeing Andrea there, Signora Marianna visibly started and a blush tinged her cheeks.

"Here he is," said Giardini in an undertone, pressing the Count's arm and motioning to a man of tall stature. "See how pale and grave he is, poor man! His hobby is evidently not cantering to his mind to-day."

Andrea's love-dream of Marianna was suddenly overpowered by the captivating grace which Gambara's presence exercised over every true lover of art. The composer was forty; but although his high forehead, from which the hair had flown, was furrowed with a few wrinkles, not deep, but in parallel lines, and in spite of the hollow temples where the blue veins showed through the clear, transparent skin, and of the sunken orbits of his dark eyes surmounted by heavy lids and light-colored lashes, the lower part of his face made him still appear young, so calm were the lips, so tranquil the outline. It could be recognized at a glance that in this man passion had been curbed to the advantage of the intellect; that he would only grow old from mental struggle.

Andrea stole a rapid glance at Marianna, who was watching him. The sight of her glorious Italian head, the exquisite proportion and rich coloring, revealed an organization where all the human forces were symmetrically balanced; he sounded the gulf which separated this pair accidentally joined together. More than pleased with this evidence of dissimilarity between husband and wife, he no longer combated the feelings which drew him to Marianna. But for the man whose only blessing she was, he already felt a touch

of respectful pity, seeing, as he could not help doing, the dignified and serene acceptance of ill-fortune that was expressed in Gambara's melancholy and mild eyes.

Expecting to find, from Giardini's description, one of those grotesque beings so often set before us by German novelists and libretto poets, instead he found, to his great astonishment, a simple, reserved man, whose manner and demeanor were aught but eccentric, and possessed a dignity all their own. The dress of the musician, though it showed no trace whatever of luxury, was more seemly than his extreme poverty would lead one to expect, while his linen bore testimony to the tender care which watched over even the minor details of his being.

Andrea raised his moistened eyes to Marianna, who did not blush, though a half-smile curled her lips, perhaps called forth by the pride she felt in the young man's mute homage. Too seriously fascinated not to watch for the slightest indication that his feelings were returned, the Count began to fancy himself beloved by her because he saw that she comprehended him. From this moment he set himself to the conquest of the husband rather than of the wife, directing all his batteries against poor Gambara, who unsuspectingly went on eating the *bocconi* of Signor Giardini without knowing their taste.

The Count opened the conversation with some general remark; but from the first he was conscious that the man's intellect, supposedly blind on one point at least, was extraordinarily clear-sighted on all others, and he saw that it would be far more important to understand his ideas than to attempt any flattery of his whims.

The remainder of the guests, a hungry crew, whose wits were only sharpened by the sight of a dinner, were it good or bad, betrayed a positive animosity to Gambara, and only waited the end of the first course to give vent to their satire. One refugee, whose frequent leers showed an ambitious scheme in connection with Marianna, and who seemed to fancy that he could intrench himself in her good graces by making her husband ridiculous, opened fire by trying to explain to Marcosini the lay of the land of the table-d'hôte.

"It is quite a long time since we have heard anything about the opera of *Mahomet*," he exclaimed, smiling at Marianna. "Can it be that Paolo Gambara is wholly given up to domestic affairs, the charms of the *pot-au-feu*,[1] and so neglects his superhuman genius, thus allowing his talent to grow cold and his imagination to stale?"

Gambara knew all the company; he felt that he lived in a sphere high above them; he therefore no longer took the trouble to repel their attacks, he made no answer.

"It is not given to everybody," said the journalist, "to have an intellect that can comprehend the musical efforts of M. Gambara; it is for this reason, doubtless, that our divine maestro hesitates to produce his works for the worthy Parisians."

"And yet," put in the ballad-monger, who up to now had only opened his mouth to cram into it all the food that was within reach, "I know some men of talent who think much of the judgment of these same Parisians. I myself have something of a reputation as a musician," he added diffidently; "I owe it solely to my little songs in vaudevilles, and the great success of my quadrille music in drawing-rooms; but I propose to very soon present to the world a Mass composed for the anniversary of the death of Beethoven, and I anticipate a better understanding in Paris than elsewhere. You, monsieur, may perhaps do me the honor of hearing it?" he said, addressing Andrea.

"Thank you," replied the Count, "I am afraid that I am not endowed with an understanding necessary for the appreciation of French music. But if you were dead, monsieur, and Beethoven had written your Mass, I should have pleasure in attending the performance."

This retort effectually stopped the skirmishing of the enemy, who wanted to start Gambara off on his hobby-horse so that his gambols might furnish amusement to the new guest. Already it was repugnant to Andrea's feelings to see a madness so gentle and pathetic, if madness it were, at the mercy of this vulgar wit. It was not then with any baseness that he carried on a desultory conversation, in the

[1] The stock-pot; really meaning the chimney-corner.

course of which Giardini's nose not infrequently interposed between two replies. When Gambara gave expression to a paradoxical idea, the cook would poke his head forward, to glance pityingly on the composer, and to wink knowingly at the Count as he whispered in his ear:

"*E matto!*"

Presently, though the second course demanded the attention of the chef, and as he attached extreme importance to this, he was interrupted in his sapient remarks. During his absence, which was only a short one, Gambara leaned toward Andrea and said in his ear:

"Our worthy host threatens us to-day with a dish of his own concoction, which I would advise your avoiding, though his wife has had her eye upon him. The honest fellow has a mania for innovations in cookery. He has ruined himself by experimenting; the last one compelled him to flee from Rome without a passport, a thing he never talks about. After buying the good-will of a famous restaurant, he was engaged to cater for a banquet given by a lately created cardinal, whose household was in an incomplete state. Giardini thought the time had come for him to distinguish himself; he succeeded. That very evening he was accused of trying to poison the whole conclave and was forced to leave Rome, and Italy, without packing his trunk. That misfortune was the last straw, and now——" and Gambara laid his forefinger on his forehead and shook his head.

"In other respects," he added, "he is a right good fellow. My wife can inform you that we are under numerous obligations to him."

And now came in Giardini, carefully carrying a dish, which, with much elaboration, he laid upon the center of the table; then he modestly resumed his seat by Andrea, who was first helped. When the Count took just one taste of the mess, he felt that an immeasurable abyss separated him from the next mouthful. He was much embarrassed, and, being anxious to avoid annoying the cook, he kept his eye upon him and studied. Though a French restaurateur may trouble himself but little about what his guests may think of his cooking, for which they must needs pay anyhow, it is other-

wise with an Italian *trattore*, who is scarcely satisfied with perfunctory praise.

To gain time, Andrea paid extravagant compliments to Giardini; he leaned over to whisper in his ear, and as he did this slipped into his hand a gold-piece, begging him to go out and himself purchase some champagne, giving him the freedom to announce to the company that it was his own treat.

When, after a while, the cook reappeared, every plate was cleared, and the room re-echoed with praises for the master-cook. Under the influence of the champagne the Italian tongues were soon unlimbered, and the conversation, till now more or less subdued in the stranger's presence, leaped the barriers of suspicious reserve, and wandered wildly hither and thither over the broad fields of political and artistic theories. Andrea, who was guiltless of all intoxicants but love and poetry, soon controlled the attention of the company, and cleverly led the discussion to matters musical.

"Monsieur will, perhaps, kindly inform me," he said to the composer of dance-music, "how it is that the Napoleon of petty tunes can bemean himself to a struggle with such people as Palestrina,[1] Pergolese, and Mozart—poor creatures, who must go, bag and baggage, on the advent of this stupendous Mass for the dead?"

"You see, monsieur," replied the composer, "a musician finds it difficult to reply when his answer needs the co-operation of a hundred skilled performers. Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven, without an orchestra, would have been no great shakes."

"No great shakes!" cried the Count. "Why, man, the whole world knows that the immortal composer of *Don Giovanni* and the *Requiem* was named Mozart; but I am so unhappy as to be in ignorance by what name the inventor of fashionable country dances is known——"

"Music is a being independent of its execution," said the ex-conductor of orchestras, who, despite his deafness, had caught a few words of the conversation. "Take the C-minor symphony by Beethoven, the musical mind is borne onward into Fancy's realm on the golden wings of the theme in

[1] Much of this composer's music is still popular in the United States.

G-natural, repeated by the cornets in E. He sees a whole nature illuminated in turn by dazzling jets of light darkened by clouds of melancholy, inspirited by heavenly strains."

"Beethoven is outclassed by the new school," said the ballad-monger scornfully.

"Beethoven is not yet understood," said the Count. "How, then, can he be excelled?"

Here Gambara drank a large glass of champagne, accompanying his libation with a covert glance of approval.

"Beethoven," the Count went on, "has extended the limits of instrumentation, and, as yet, none have followed in his path."

Gambara assented with a slight nod.

"His works are specially remarkable for simplicity of construction and for the manner in which the theme is worked out," continued the Count. "In the works of most composers the instrumentation is vague and at random, an incoherent blending for a specious effect; they do not carry forward the progression of the harmony in the movement by any regularity and system. Whereas, Beethoven assigns to each part its tone-quality from the inchoation. The same as various regiments assist by disciplined movements in the winning of a battle, so do the various orchestral scores of a symphony by Beethoven obey the general command for the interest of the whole, and are subordinate to an admirably conceived plan.

"In this respect he may be likened to another genius. We often find in Walter Scott's noble historical romances that the personage who appears to have less to do with the action of the story than any other character is, at the proper moment, brought forward, and leads up to the climax by threads woven into the plot."

"*E vero!*" said Gambara, whose common sense seemed to return inversely to his sobriety.

Being anxious to test the musician still further, Andrea for the nonce abandoned his own predilections and proceeded to attack Rossini's European reputation. He disputed the position which the Italian school had captured by storm, night after night for thirty years on a hundred stages. He

soon found he had enough on his hands. At his first words a strong murmur of disapproval arose; but neither interruptions nor exclamations, nor frowns, nor contemptuous looks were now able to check this determined advocate of Beethoven.

"Compare," said he, "the productions of the sublime composer with what is by common consent called the Italian school; what a paucity of ideas, what a limp in the style! Listen to those monotonous measures, those trite cadences, the endless bravura passages flung out haphazard irrespective of the dramatic situation, the ever-recurring *crescendo* brought into vogue by Rossini, and which is now become an essential in musical composition, and, last of all, those trills, vocal fireworks, all combined in a chattering, pattering, vaporous music, the sole merit of whch consists in the fluency of the singer and his agility in vocalization.

"The Italian school has lost sight of art's highest mission. Instead of elevating the world, it has condescended to the crowd; its fame is won by seeking the suffrages of the multitude, and by appealing to the perverted taste of the majority. Its fame is a street-corner celebrity.

"To say all, the compositions of Rossini, in which this music is embodied, as well as of those writers who derive more or less of their style from him, seem to me to be worthy only of collecting a street crowd around a barrel-organ or keeping step to the capers of a Punch-and-Judy show. I prefer French music even to that; I can't say more. Long live German music!" he cried, "—— when it is tuneful," he muttered ironically to himself.

This sally was the summing up of a long argument in which Andrea soared metaphysically with all the ease of a somnambulist on a roof. Gambara, keenly interested in such subtleties, had not missed a word of the argument. At the instant that Andrea dropped it he took it up, and the attention of the company was at once arrested; a few who were about leaving the room returned to listen.

"You attack the Italian school most vehemently," said Gambara, who was warmed to his work by the champagne he had supped, "but that to me is a matter of indifference.

Thank God, I stand outside all these frivolities of melodious frippery. Yet for a man of the world you show but little gratitude to the land from which Germany and France derived their first lessons. While the compositions of Carissimi, Cavalli, Scarlatti, Rossi, were being played through all Italy, the violinists of the French Opera enjoyed the singular privilege of being allowed to play their instruments with gloved hands. Lulli, who so much extended the realm of harmony, and who first gave the rule of discords, on arriving in France found only two men, a cook and a mason, who had voice and intelligence enough to execute his music; of the first he made a tenor, and the latter he made a bass. At that time Germans, always excepting Sebastian Bach, were ignorant of music. But, monsieur," added Gambara, in the humble tone of a man who realizes that his remarks will be received with scorn, if not ill-will, "you must, although young, have studied the higher questions of musical art for a long time, or you could not so clearly explain them."

These words caused a smile in many of the hearers, for they had not understood the fine distinction of Andrea's views. Giardini, convinced that the Count was only talking at random, nudged him warily, laughing in his sleeve at the hoax in which he thought himself an accomplice.

"There is much that strikes me as being very true in what you have said," Gambara went on; "but take care. Your argument, while it brands Italian sensualism, seems to incline somewhat to German idealism, which is a not less fatal error. If men of imagination and good taste, like yourself, desert one field only to stray into the other, if they cannot remain neutral between two extremes, we shall always be subject to the satire of the sophists who deny progress and liken human genius to—to this tablecloth, which, being too short to wholly cover Signor Giardini's table, decks one end at the expense of the other."

Giardini bounded in his chair as though he had been stung by a gad-fly, but quick reflection restored his dignity as a host; he raised his eyes to heaven and again poked the Count, who was beginning to think the cook more crazy than Gambara.

The serious and even religious manner in which the latter spoke of art interested Marcosini extremely. Seated between these two manias, one so noble, the other so vulgar, and making game of both, to the great amusement of the crowd, the Count felt as if he was continually being tossed about from the sublime to the ridiculous—the two extravaganzas of the comedy of human life. Suddenly breaking the chain of the fantastic events which had led him to this smoky den, he fancied himself the victim of some strange hallucination, and began to believe that Gambara and Giardini were two abstractions.

Presently, after a last piece of buffoonery on the part of the deaf orchestra leader, directed at Gambara, the company retired amid roars of laughter; Giardini went off to make coffee he intended offering his guests remaining and his distinguished patron; and his wife meanwhile cleared the table. The Count was seated near the stove and between Marianna and Gambara, and in the precise position that the latter had declared to be so desirable—midway between sensualism on the one hand and idealism on the other. Gambara, who for the first time met a man who did not laugh at him to his face, soon left off generalizing and began to speak of himself, his life, his toil, and his hopes of a final musical redemption of which he believed himself to be the Messiah.

"Hearken to me," said he, "ye that have thus far not laughed me to scorn; I will tell you my life—not that I may extol a constancy which does not emanate from my own self, but for the glory of One who has placed this force in my soul. You seem to be good and reverent; if you cannot believe in me, you at least can extend me your sympathy; pity comes of man, faith is God."

Andrea, who blushed crimson, turned and withdrew his foot which had been seeking Marianna's, and fixed his gaze upon her while he listened to her husband.

"I was born at Cremona," continued Gambara, "the son of an instrument-maker; a fairly good performer of music, but a far better composer. I had thus at an early age mastered the laws of composition in its dual aspect, the spiritual and material; and, with the natural curiosity of

my age, I paid attention to many things which I afterward applied in my more mature manhood.

"The French invasion drove us, my father and myself, from our home. We were ruined by the war. From the age of ten I began that wandering life to which all men are condemned who revolve in their brain reforms in art, science, or politics. Fate, or the natural instincts of their minds, which never gee with those of ordinary comprehension, leads them onward, providentially, to points where they receive instruction. Led by my passion for music I wandered through Italy from theater to theater, living on little, as men can live there. Sometimes I played the violoncello in orchestras; often I formed one of the chorus; or worked in the wings with the carpenters. Thus I studied music in its every aspect, learned the tones of the human voice and instruments, in what manner they differed from each other; I listened carefully to the scores and noted the harmonizing, always applying the rules taught by my father. Often, again, I traveled through the country mending instruments. It was a hard life in a land where the sun ever shines, where art permeates the air and money is not—at least for the artist, since Rome is no longer, save in name only, the sovereign of the Christian world.

"Sometimes I was gladly welcomed, at times driven forth because of my poverty; yet I never lost heart; I heard an inner voice foretelling fame. Music to me seemed but in its infancy. That opinion is still retained.

"All that we still have of the musical efforts anterior to the seventeenth century demonstrates to me that ancient composers knew melody only; they were ignorant of harmony and its vast resources. Music is both science and art. It is rooted in physics and mathematics, hence a science; its inspiration makes it an art, unconsciously employing the propositions of science. It derives from the physical by the very essence of the matter on which it subsists. Sound is air in motion; air is made up of elements which undoubtedly find within us analagous constituents which respond to them, which sympathize with and augment them by the power of the intellect. Thus air must contain as many varieties of

elastic molecules, capable of vibrating in as many diverse periods as there are tones in all sonorous bodies; and these particles, put in motion by the musician and received by the ear, respond to our ideas in accord with our several organizations. It is my opinion that the nature of sound is identical with that of light. Sound is light under a different form; both act by vibrations which are sentient to man, and which he transforms in his nerve-centers into ideas.

"Music is analogous to painting, making use of materials that possess the property of freeing this or that property of the birth substance in suggesting a picture. So in music the instruments perform this part, as does color in the painting. Now, as all sound produced by a reverberating body is invariably accompanied by its major third and fifth, whereby it acts on grains of sand spread upon a plain of stretched parchment and arranges them in geometrical figures—always the same in form according to the pitch—regular when the harmony is a true chord, but without definity under the influence of discords, I say that music is an art conceived in Nature's very womb."

Gambara's calm eyes were fixed upon Marcosini, who listened with rapt attention.

"It is that music is subject to both physical and mathematical laws," he went on. "The physical laws are but little understood, the mathematical laws are somewhat more fully comprehended; and, since their relationship has been more studied, it has enabled those creations of harmony to be effected which we owe to the genius of Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, and Rossini, men of glorious genius, whose music is unquestionably nearer perfection than that of their predecessors, for it must be admitted that the latter's genius is incontestable. The old masters could create melody, but they had none of the resources of art and science at command—that noble alliance which blends into a grand whole the beauties of melody and the power of harmony.

"Now, if a knowledge of the mathematical laws of music gave these four musicians to us, to what height may we not attain if we can succeed in discovering the physical laws by

virtue of which (please note this) we may store up in a greater or less quantity, according to the proportions required, a certain ethereal substance diffused in the air, which gives us music as it gives us light, the phenomena of vegetation and animal life! Do you grasp my meaning?

"These new laws would arm the composer with new powers; it would supply him with instruments superior to those now used, and, possibly, with a greater potency of harmony than that which dictates the realm of music at this time. If every modulation obeys a power, we must needs learn that power that we may be enabled to couple these forces in accordance with their appropriate laws. Just now composers are working on substances unknown to them.

"Why should an instrument of metal and one of wood, say a bassoon and a cornet, have so little resemblance of tone, though they act on the same matter, in the same manner, on the constituent gases of the atmosphere? Their dissimilarities must come either from some decomposition of these gases or by the assimilation of affinities, whence they return modified by the influence of some force unknown to us. Could we only discover what those faculties are, then science and art would be immense gainers. Whatever extends science enhances art.

"Well!" he exclaimed, after a short pause, "as to these discoveries! I have traced, I have made them! Yes," said Gambara, with more and more vehemence, "up to now man has noted the effect less than the cause. If he could but penetrate cause, music would be the greatest of the arts. Is it not the one that drives deepest in the soul? In painting you see no more than the picture shows; in poetry you hear only what the poet speaks; music goes far beyond this—it forms thought, it rouses torpid memory. Take a thousand souls present at a concert; a strain speeds forth from Pasta's throat, executing so masterly the thoughts that shone in Rossini's soul as he wrote the passage; that single phrase of the master, transmitted to attentive souls, develops in them as many diverse poems. To one it shows a woman long dreamed of and desired; to another some shore anon he traversed, where rising before him are the drooping wil-

lows, its clear waters, and the hopes that danced with him beneath the leafy coverts. This woman is recalled to the throng of feelings that tortured her in an hour of jealous rage; another one sees the unsatisfied longing of her heart, which is painted by her mind in the rich hues of a dream, the ideal lover to whom she would fain abandon herself with the rapture of the woman in the Roman mosaic, who is seen embracing a chimera; yet another dreams of desires about to be gratified, she plunges in anticipation into a torrent of delight whose raging waves of feeling surge about and break upon her burning bosom. Music alone has power to make us return unto ourselves; all other arts give but limited pleasures. But I am digressing.

"Such, then, were my first ideas, vague it may be, for an inventor in his inception only catches a faint glimpse of the dawn. I kept these glorious ideas at the bottom of my knapsack; they gave me spirit to eat the dry crusts as I gayly soaked them in the waters of a spring. I worked, I composed airs, and after I had played them on some instrument, the first one to hand, I resumed my travels through Italy. At last, when I was two-and-twenty, I settled in Venice, where for the first time I enjoyed rest and gained a fair competence. There I made the acquaintance of a Venetian nobleman, who was taken with my ideas; he encouraged me in my investigations and procured me employment at the Fenice Theater. In Venice living is cheap and lodgings cost but little. I had a room in the Palazzo Capello whence the celebrated Bianca issued one night to become the Grand Duchess of Tuscany and Queen of Cyprus.

"And there I would dream that at some future time my hidden fame would issue thence to be like her, crowned.

"My evenings were spent at the theater, my days in work. But disaster came. The representation of an opera, *The Martyrs*, in which I had experimented with my music, was a failure. No one could understand my score. Place Beethoven before the Italians and they cannot gauge him. No one had the patience to await an effect to be produced by the different *motifs* given out by each instrument, all intended to at last unite in one grand harmony.

"I had founded my hopes on the success of *The Martyrs*, for we ever discount success, we disciples of the azure goddess—Hope. When a man thinks himself destined to produce great thoughts, it become difficult to believe that they are not achieved; the cask has chinks through which the light will shine.

"In the same palace resided my wife's family; and the hope of winning Marianna, who frequently smiled on me from her window, had greatly stimulated my efforts.

"I now fell into a state of dark melancholy, as I sounded the depths of the abyss into which I had fallen; for before me I saw naught but a life of poverty—a ceaseless struggle in which love must perish.

"Marianna acted as genius does; she bounded over every obstacle, both feet at once. I will not speak of the slender happiness which gilded the early days of my misfortunes. Dismayed by my failure, I felt that Italy was but dull of comprehension and too much under the influence of the routine chorus to be prepared to receive the innovations I meditated; so I turned my thoughts to Germany.

"As I traveled to that country, which I did by way of Hungary, I paid heed to the manifold voices of nature; I tried to reproduce those sublime harmonies by the assistance of instruments which I wholly constructed or changed for the purpose. These experiments necessitated enormous outlay, and soon exhausted our slender savings. And still this was the happiest time of our lives; I was appreciated in Germany. Never was my life so glorious as then. I know of nothing to compare with the tumultuous joys that filled me in Marianna's presence, whose beauty was then in all its celestial radiancy and power. I was happy.

"More than once during these hours of weakness I expressed my passion in the language of terrestrial harmony. I even composed some of those melodies which resemble geometrical figures, which are so much prized in the world in which we live. But so soon as I gained success, insurmountable obstacles were placed in my path by rivals, envious or unappreciative.

"I had heard of France as a country which welcomed in-

novations; thither I resolved to go; my wife provided the means and we came to Paris.

"Before this no one had ever actually laughed in my face; but in this dreadful city I had to undergo this new form of torture, to which was added the keen anguish of miserable poverty. Compelled to sojourn in this fever-stricken quarter, for many months we have lived on Marianna's work; she does sewing for the wretched prostitutes who make this horrid street their stamping ground. Marianna tells me that she is treated with deference and generosity, which I, for my part, ascribe to the ascendency of a so pure virtue that even vice itself must needs respect it."

"Hope on," said Andrea. "Perhaps you have reached the end of your trials. My efforts shall be united to yours, and it may be that your labors will yet be seen in their true light; permit me, in the meanwhile, as a compatriot and an artist like yourself, to offer you in advance some part, however small, of your inevitable future gains."

"All that has to do with my material life is my wife's affair alone," replied Gambara. "She it is who must decide whether without humiliation we can accept the assistance of an honorable man, as you seem to be. For myself, who have been led to make you this long-drawn confidence, I must beg your permission to retire. A melody beckons me; it starts dancingly before me; bare, quivering, like a beautiful girl entreating her lover for the clothes he has hidden. Adieu, I go to dress my mistress. My wife I leave with you."

He hastened away like a man who blames himself for losing valuable time, and Marianna, somewhat embarrassed, prepared to follow him.

Andrea dared not detain her.

Giardini, however, came to the rescue.

"But, signorina," said he, "did not you hear your husband tell you to settle some business with the Signor Count?"

Marianna resumed her seat, but without looking at Andrea, who hesitated about addressing her.

"And will not Signor Gambara's confidence," he at length said, in a voice of emotion, "also win for me that of his

wife? Will *la bella* Marianna refuse to give me the history of her life?"

"My life?" answered Marianna; "my life, it is that of the ivy. If you would ask the story of my heart, you must suppose me equally devoid of pride and modesty after listening to what you have just heard."

"Of whom, then, shall I ask it?" cried the Count, whose passion was blinding his wit.

"Of yourself!" replied Marianna. "You have either understood me, or you never will. Ask yourself."

"I will, but you must listen to me. I take your hand; it is to lie in mine so long as I tell your story truthfully."

"I listen," said Marianna.

"The life of a woman begins with her first passion," said Andrea. "And my dear Marianna began to live only on the day when she first saw Paolo Gambara. Her nature needed a deep passion to afford it joy; more than all she needed some pathetic feebleness to sustain and protect. The lovely female nature with which she is endowed is perhaps less amenable to passion than maternity.

"You sigh, Marianna; have I then laid a finger on an open wound? You took upon yourself a noble part, young as you were, in protecting a noble, distraught intellect. You said to yourself: 'Paolo shall be my genius, I will be his common sense; between us we shall almost be that well-nigh divine being that men term angel; that sublime creature which enjoys and comprehends, while reason never stifles love.'

"In the first transports of youth, you heard the thousand voices of nature which your poet longed to reproduce. Enthusiasm seized your soul when Paolo spread before you those treasures of poetry as he vainly searched for their equivalent, striving to embody them in the sublime but limited language of his art. You admired him as an ecstatic rapture carried him high above you, for you loved to think that all this errant energy would finally fall and alight upon you as love. You did not realize the tyrannous and jealous empire which thought maintains over the minds of those who are subject to it. Gambara before he knew you was the

slave of that proud, vindictive mistress with whom you have been combating for him to this day. Once, for an instant, happiness was opened before you.

"Paolo, fallen from the lofty sphere where his mind was ever soaring, was amazed to find a reality so sweet; so sweet that you may well have believed that his mania would forever slumber in your arms. But erelong music clutched her prey. The dazzling vision which carried you suddenly into the thrilling delights of mutual passion made the solitary path on which you had started look only the more arid and desolate.

"In the story just narrated by your husband, as from the striking contrast between your person and his, I can readily divine the secret anguish of your life, the painful mysteries of that ill-assorted union in which you have taken the lot of suffering upon yourself alone. Marianna, though your conduct is and has been unfailingly heroic, and though fortitude never deserts you in the performance of your cruel duties, perhaps in the silence of your solitary nights the heart which only now is beating so violently in your breast may from time to time have rebelled.

"Your husband's worthiness is your worst torture. Had he been less noble, less pure, you might have deserted him; but your virtues are supported by his. It may be that you have at times speculated which of the two heroisms will first give way.

"You pursue the real grandeur of the task while Paolo is chasing his chimera. If you had only the love of duty to sustain and guide you, perhaps triumph might seem the easier; to kill your heart and carry your life into the region of abstractions might possibly suffice you; religion would absorb the rest; you would have lived for an idea, like those saintly women who extinguish at the foot of the Cross all the instincts of their nature. But the pervading charm of Paolo's person, the elevation of his soul, his rare and affecting proofs of tenderness, constantly drag you down from that ideal world where virtue tried to keep you; they have excited forces within you which are being incessantly exhausted in contending against the phantom of love. But now the time

has come in which you must no longer deceive yourself. You never suspected this. The faintest glimmer of hope kept you in the pursuit of this sweet dream.

"Year after year of disillusion has undermined your patience; an angel would long ago have lost it. To-day the phantom so long pursued is naught but a shadow without substance. Madness so closely allied to genius can never know a cure in this world. You have at last become aware of this fact, you have glanced backward on your vanished youth, lost, if not sacrificed; you bitterly perceive the blunder of nature that gave you a father only when you sought a husband. You ask yourself whether you have not gone beyond the duties of a wife in keeping yourself faithful to a man who knows no mistress but science. Marianna, let your hand remain in mine; all that I have told you is true. You have looked around you—but now you were in Paris, not in Italy, where only men know how to love——"

"Oh! let me finish the tale," cried Marianna; "it were better fitting that I say these things myself. I will be frank; I feel that I address my truest friend. Yes, I was in Paris when all you have so lucidly explained took place within me, for nowhere had I met the love I had dreamed of from childhood up.

"My poor dress, my so poor abode, concealed me from the notice of men like yourself. The few young men I met here, whose position did not allow of their insulting me, are odious to me; these scoff at my husband as a rambling old dotard; some only court him the more easily to betray him; all aim at getting me separated from him; none of them all can understand the adoration I have vowed to that soul which is so far away from us only because it is so much nearer heaven; nor the love I feel for that friend, that brother, whose handmaid I would ever be. You alone have understood the tie that binds me to him. Tell me that your interest in my Paolo is sincere, without an object——"

"I accept your praises," interrupted Andrea, "but do not go further; do not compel me to contradict you. I love you, Marianna, as we know how to love in that glorious country where you and I were born. I love you with all my soul,

with all my strength; but before I tender you this love, I intend to make myself worthy of your affection.

"I will make a last effort to give back to you the man you have loved since childhood, and whom, most probably, you will never cease to love. While awaiting success or defeat, accept, with no trace of shame, the modest comforts which I can give you both. To-morrow we will look out a suitable abode for him.

"Is your esteem sufficiently great to allow me to be a sharer in your guardianship?"

Marianna, astounded by such generosity, held out her hand to the Count; he took it, and departed, endeavoring to evade the civilities of Giardini and his wife.

Next day Andrea was taken up to the room in which Gambara and his wife lived. Though Marianna fully recognized the noble nature of her lover (for there are natures which can quickly read), she was too good a housewife not to show embarrassment on receiving so great a gentleman in so humble a chamber. But it was exquisitely clean. She had spent the morning in dusting her motley furniture, the handiwork of Signor Giardini, who had devoted his moments of leisure to constructing it from the woodwork of instruments which had been discarded by Gambara.

Never in his life had Andrea seen anything so amazing. To keep a sober countenance he was compelled to turn away his eyes from a bed, so grotesquely manufactured by the ingenious cook out of the case of an old harpsichord, to look at Marianna's narrow couch, of which the single mattress was covered with a white lawn counterpane, a circumstance which surcharged his mind with sad, but some sweet thoughts.

He wished to talk of his plans and morning's work; but the enthusiastic Gambara, who believed that he had at last found a willing auditor, seized upon the Count and made him listen to an opera which he had written for the Parisians.

"In the first place, monsieur," said Gambara, "allow me to explain the subject in two words. Here in Paris people who receive a musical impression do not work it out in their own minds, as religion teaches us to develop sacred texts, by

meditation and prayer. It is therefore very difficult to make them understand that there exists in nature an eternal theme, disturbed only by fluctuations independent of the Divine will, as passions are uncontrolled by the will of men.

"It became necessary that I should seek some vast framework in which to combine cause and effect, for my music aims at presenting a picture of the life of nations taken at its loftiest points of view. My opera, for I myself wrote the *libretto* (as no poet could have fittingly developed the subject), gives the life of Mahomet, a personage who unites the magic of ancient Sabæanism and the Oriental poetry of the Jewish Scriptures, resulting in one of the grandest of human epics—the dominion of the Arab.

"Mahomet, without a doubt, borrowed the idea of despotic government from the Jews, and the progressive movement which created the brilliant empire of the caliphs from the pastoral or Sabæan religions. The prophet's destiny was stamped upon him at his birth—his father was a pagan, his mother a Jewess. Ah! my dear Count, to be a great musician one must also be very learned. Without education there can be no local color; in fact, no musical ideas. The musician who only sings to sing is but an artisan, not an artist.

"This magnificent opera is a continuation of the great work I had already commenced. My first opera was called *The Martyrs;* I intend to write a third one on *Jerusalem Delivered.* You can of course discern the beauty of this triology and the manifold motives it affords. The Martyrs, Mahomet, Jerusalem! The God of the Occident, the God of the Orient, and the struggle of their religionists about a tomb. But let us not speak of my fame forever gone. Listen to the argument of my opera."

He paused.

"The first act," he went on, "shows Mahomet as a porter living in the house of Khadijah, a rich widow with whom his uncle has placed him. He is in love and ambitious. Driven from Mecca he flies to Medina, and dates his era from the time of his flight, the Hegira.

"The second act presents him as a prophet founding a religion militant. The third shows him disgusted with all

things; having exhausted life, he seeks to conceal his death that he may be deemed a god, last effort of human pride.

"Now you shall judge of my method of expressing in sound a great fact which poetry can only imperfectly render in words."

Gambara seated himself at the piano with a calm and collected air, and his wife brought the voluminous sheets of the score, which, however, he did not open.

"The whole opera," said he, "is founded on a bass as on a fruitful soil. Mahomet must therefore have a majestic bass voice, and necessarily his first wife must have a contralto one. Khadijah was quite old—twenty! Attention! Here is the overture. It begins *andante*, C-minor, triple time. Do you hear the sadness of the ambitious man whom love cannot satisfy? Through his plaints, by a modulation to E-flat, *allegro*, common time, are heard the cries of the epileptic lover, his ravings, mingled with certain warlike sounds; for the all-powerful scimitar of the caliphs begins to gleam before his eyes. The charms of the single wife give him that idea of the plurality of love which so forcibly impresses us in *Don Giovanni*. As you listen to this theme do you not already catch a glimpse of the paradise of Mahomet?

"Now we have, A-flat major, six-eight time, a *cantabile*, fit to create emotions of delight in those rebellious to all musical feeling; Khadijah comprehends Mahomet! Then Khadijah announces to the multitude the prophet's conferences with the angel Gabriel—*maestoso sostenuto*, in F-minor.

"The magistrates and priests, power and religion, feeling themselves attacked by the reformer, as Christ and Socrates attacked the effete, expiring religions and powers, turn upon Mahomet and drive him forth from Mecca—*stretto* in C-major. But now, pay heed! comes my glorious dominant—G, common time. Arabia hears her prophet, the horsemen gather—G-major, E-flat, B-flat, G-minor, still common time. the mass of men gathers like an avalanche. The false prophet practices on one tribe the deceptions he is so soon to impose upon a world—G-major.

"He promises universal dominion to the Arabs; they believe him because he is inspired. The *crescendo* begins—in

the dominant still. Listen to the fanfare of the trumpets—C-major; brass instruments woven into the harmony, strongly marked, and asserting themselves as an expression of the first triumphs of victory. Medina is conquered for the prophet, the whole army marches on Mecca—burst of martial music—still in C-major. The whole power of the orchestra is worked up to a conflagration; every instrument gives voice; do you hear the torrents of harmony?

"Suddenly the *tutti* is interrupted by a graceful air—minor third. You hear the last strains of devoted love! The woman who upheld the great man dies, concealing her despair; dies, dies at the triumph of the man in whom love had become too mighty to be content with one woman; she adores him enough to sacrifice herself to the grandeur that destroys her. Soul of flame!

"But now behold! The Desert invades the world—C-major again. The orchestra takes up the score in the terrific fifth of the fundamental bass which dies away—Mahomet is satiated; he has tasted all, he has exhausted all! But he craves to die a god. Arabia adores him in prayer; we fall back upon my first sad strain to which the curtain rose—C-minor.

"Do you not discern in this music," said Gambara, ceasing to play and turning toward the Count, "in this vivid, picturesque music, abrupt, jostling, melancholy, fantastic, but always grand, the expression of an epileptic frantic after enjoyment, unable to read or write, making his very defects a stepping-stone to his grandeur, transferring blunder and disaster into triumphs? Do you not obtain from this overture—an epitome of the opera—an idea of his seductive power over a greedy and lustful race?"

The face of the maestro, at first calm and stern, on which Andrea had been trying to divine the meaning of the ideas he was uttering with an inspired voice, though the chaotic flood of notes estopped his hearer from comprehending, grew even more animated until it took on an impassioned, fiery glow which infected Marianna and the cook. Marianna, deeply affected by the passages in which she read her own position, could not hide the agitation from Andrea.

Gambara wiped his forehead and threw his glance with such force to the ceiling that he seemed to pierce it and rise upward to the skies.

"You have seen the vestibule," said he; "now we enter the temple. The opera begins:

"ACT I. Mahomet, alone on the stage, sings an air—F-natural, common time, interrupted by a chorus of camel-drivers, who surround a well at the rear of the stage—contrary time, twelve-eight. What majestic grief! It touches the heart of the most frivolous woman, piercing the soul if she has no heart. Is not this the very expression of repressed genius?"

To Andrea's very great amazement (for Marianna was accustomed to it) Gambara contracted his larynx so violently that choking sounds issued thence, something like the attempted growl of a watch-dog which has lost its voice. A light froth arose on the composer's lips and caused Andrea to shudder.

"His wife appears—A-minor. Magnificent duet! In this number I make it known that Mahomet has the will, his wife the brains. Khadijah announces that she is about undertaking a work which will bereave her of the love of her young husband. Mahomet aspires to conquer the world; his wife divines his purpose; she seconds his endeavor by persuading the people of Mecca that her husband's epileptic fits are due to his commerce with the angels. Chorus of Mahomet's first disciples, who press forward to promise him their help—C-sharp minor, *sotto voce.* Mahomet goes forth to speak with the angel Gabriel—*recitative* in F-major. His wife encourages the chorus—*aria,* accompanied by chorus; gusts of chanting voices sustain Khadijah's grand, majestic song—A-major.

"Abdallah, the father of Ayesha, the only maiden that Mahomet has found to be a virgin, whose name he thereupon changes to Abu-Bekr, the father of the virgin, comes forward with Ayesha and sings against the chorus, taking up Khadijah's in contrapuntal treatment. Omar, father of Hafsah, another virgin who is to be Mahomet's concubine, follows Abu-Bekr's example; he and his daughter join in and

form a quintette. The virgin Ayesha is first soprano; Hafsah, mezzo soprano; Abu-Bekr is a bass; Omar a baritone.

"Mahomet returns inspired.

"He sings his first bravura *aria*, the beginning of the *finale*—E-major; he promises the empire of the world to those who believe in him. The prophet sees the two maidens, by a soft transition—from B-major to G-major—he turns to amorous tones. Ali, Mahomet's cousin, and Khâled, his greatest general, both tenors, now appear and announce the persecution; the magistrates, the soldiers, and rulers have banished the prophet—*recitative*.

"Mahomet now makes an invocation to the angel Gabriel in C. He declares that the angel is with him, and points out a pigeon flying above his head. The chorus of believers make reply in tones of devotion—modulating to B-major. The soldiers, magistrate, and officials arrive—*tempo di marcia*, B-major. Struggle between the two forces—*strette* in E-major. Mahomet, in a succession of diminished sevenths in a descending theme, yields to the storm and takes to flight. The savage, somber color of the *finale* is raised somewhat by the phrases of the three women, who utter predictions of Mahomet's triumph; and these *motifs* will be found further accentuated in the third act, where Mahomet is found enjoying the delights of splendor."

Tears arose in Gambara's eyes; he controlled his emotion and resumed:

"ACT II. Behold religion is now established. Arabs guard the prophet's tent, who confers with God—chorus in A-minor. Mahomet appears—prayer in F. What a majestic and noble strain underlies this chant in the bass voices, in which, I believe, I have enlarged the limits of melody! It seemed necessary to express the marvels of that immense uprising which created an architecture, a poetry, a music, with its own manners, customs, and morals.

"As you listen you walk beneath the arches of the Generalife and thread the vaulted portals of the Alhambra. The *fiorituri* of the melody paint the exquisite Moorish arabesques, the gallant and warlike religion which was presently to meet in battle the noble and valorous chivalry of Christianity. A

few brass instruments now sound the first notes of triumph—by a broken *cadenza.* The Arabs, on their knees, worship the prophet—E-flat major. Khâled, Amrou, and Ali enter—*tempo di marcia.* The armies of the Faithful have taken many towns and conquered the three Arabias. Such a sonorous *recitative!* Mahomet rewards his generals by giving them maidens.

"And here comes in," said Gambara, ruefully, "one of those wretched ballets which cut the thread of our finest musical tragedies. But Mahomet—B-minor—redeems it by his transcendent prophecy, which that poor M. de Voltaire describes in these words:

"'Arabia's day at last has come.'

"The chorus of Arabs breaks triumphant—six-eight time, *accelerando.* Now the tribes in multitude come on; horns and brass join in the orchestra. General rejoicings ensue, by degrees all the voices take part, and Mahomet declares polygamy.

"In the midst of all this triumph the woman who has done so much for Mahomet pours forth a magnificent *aria*—B-major. 'And I,' sings she, 'am I no longer loved?' 'We must part,' he responds. 'Thou art a woman, I am a prophet; slaves I may have, equals never.' Hearken to this duet—G-sharp minor. What anguish! The woman realizes the grandeur to which she has been the means of elevating Mahomet; she loves him enough to sacrifice herself to his glory, she adores him as a god, she judges not, she murmurs not. Poor woman! his first dupe, his first victim! What a subject for the *finale*—B-major.

"Behold the somber grief standing out against the acclamations of the chorus, mingling with the tones of Mahomet as he flings his wife aside as a used-out instrument, and yet causes us to understand that he can never forget her. What fireworks of triumph, what red fire of joyous, rippling songs gush from the voices of Ayesha and Hafsa (*première* and *mezzo* soprano), further sustained by Ali and his wife, by Omar and Abu-Bekr. Weep, rejoice! Triumph and tears! Of such is life."

Marianna could not restrain her sobs; Andrea was so

deeply moved that his eyes grew moist. The Neapolitan cook, shaken by the magnetic current of ideas generated by the spasmodic accents of Gambara's voice, was overcome by emotion like the rest.

The composer turned around to the group; he smiled.

"You understand me at last!" cried he.

No conqueror haled in triumph to the Capitol, amid the purple radiance of his glory and the acclamations of a nation, ever wore such an expression when the crown was placed upon his head as Gambara did at this time. His face had the halo of a martyred saint. None undeceived him. A dreadful smile flickered on Marianna's lips. The Count was appalled by the artless, blind insanity.

"ACT III.," said the rapt musician, again seating himself at the piano:

"Solo, *andantino*, Mahomet unhappy though in his seraglio surrounded by women. Quartette of houris—A-major. What pomp of harmony, what trills as those of a happy nightingale! It modulates into F-sharp minor. The theme is given on the dominant (E) and is then repeated in A-major. Here all delights are grouped visibly to the senses and produce a grand contrast to the somber *finale* of the first act.

"After the dances Mahomet arises and sings a grand *bravura*—F-minor. He regrets the singleness and devotion of his first wife, but acknowledges himself as wedded to polygamy. Never did musician have so grand a subject. The orchestra and women's chorus express the joys of the houri; meanwhile Mahomet reverts to the sad strain of the beginning.

"Where is Beethoven?" cried Gambara; "where, then, is that soul who only could understand the majestic overturning of my opera upon itself. See how completely all depends upon the bass; thus did Beethoven construct his symphony in C.

"But his heroic movement is purely instrumental, while mine is sustained by a sextette of glorious human voices, and a chorus of believers who are on guard at the gate of the sacred dwelling. I have here collected all the treasures of

melody and harmony, vocal and orchestral. Listen to the utterance of all human life, rich or poor: BATTLE, TRIUMPH, SATIETY.

"Ali enters; everywhere the Koran is triumphant—duet, D-minor. Mahomet places himself in the hands of his two fathers-in-law; he is weary of all; he will abdicate and die in secret after he has consolidated his religion. Magnificent sextette—B-flat major! He bids all farewell—solo in F-natural. His two fathers-in-law, appointed his vicars or caliphs, summon the people. A grand triumphal march. Prayer of the Arabs kneeling before the sacred dwelling, the Kasba, whence a pigeon takes its flight—same key. This prayer, sung by sixty voices and led by women—B-flat—crowns my stupendous work, which so well expresses the life of men and nations. Here you have heard every emotion, human or divine."

Andrea was overcome with sheer amazement. He was much affected by this good man's mania, he colored, and stole a glance at Marianna; while she became pallid and turned her eyes downward, silently weeping. Had he not been shocked by the irony which the man showed as he presented the feelings of Mahomet's wife and yet not perceiving the same emotions in Marianna, the madness of the husband was eclipsed by the craziness of the composer. There was not the least resemblance to musical or poetical ideas in the loud blathering which oppressed his ears. All the principles of harmony, the first rules of composition, were quite ignored in this formless creation. Instead of a theme scientifically worked out such as had been described by Gambara, his fingers had brought out a succession of fifths, sevenths, octaves, major thirds, progressions of fourths, minus the sixths in the bass—a jumble of discordant sound, randomly made, as though intended to destroy the ear of the least sensitive of listeners. It is impossible to attempt a description of this grotesque execution; new words must needs be coined to portray this impossible music.

During its execution he had closed his eyes in ecstasy; had smiled upon his piano; had frowned at it; put out his tongue after the manner of an inspired performer. He had been, in

fact, intoxicated by the poetry of the thoughts that peopled his brain—he had vainly endeavored the utterance of them. The strange discords had evidently been to him celestial harmonies. Beyond any doubt the vision of his inspired blue eyes in rapt enjoyment of another world; the rosy glow of his cheeks; above all, the heavenly serenity stamped upon his lofty features, would have led any deaf man to believe that he was present at the improvisation of some maestro. The illusion would have been the more perfect because the mechanical execution of this crazy music required immense skill in fingering. Gambara must have worked at it for years.

His hands were not alone employed; his feet were constant in the pedaling; perspiration streamed down his face as he labored to fully emphasize a *crescendo* by all the feeble means which a decrepit piano afforded. He stamped, snorted, puffed, and shouted; his fingers darted hither and thither like the forked fangs of a snake; finally, as the piano uttered its last growl, he flung himself backward and let his head rest on the back of the chair.

" *Per Bacco!* I am stunned, dizzy," cried Andrea, escaping from the chamber. " A child dancing on the keyboard would make better music."

" Certainly," said Giardini, " mere chance could not more successfully avoid hitting two notes in concord than that devil of a fellow has done during the hour now gone."

" How comes it that the regular features of Marianna's beauty remain? " muttered the Count to himself. " Such an incessant hearing of so hideous melody must change anything. She will grow ugly."

" Signor Count, she must be saved from that," cried Giardini.

" Yes," said Andrea, " I have been thinking of that. But to be sure that my plans are not built upon the sands, I must test my thoughts by yet another experiment. To-morrow I will return and examine the instruments he has invented; after dinner we will have a little supper (*medianoche*). I provide the wine and a few fancy dishes."

The cook bowed low.

The next day was spent by the Count in arranging the

suite of rooms in which he intended domiciling the poor household.

He returned in the evening to the Rue Froidmanteau and found the wine and so forth set out by Marianna and Giardini, displaying some little taste. Gambara with much pride showed him some little drums, on which lay grains of gunpowder, by which means he made observations on the pitch and temperament of the sounds emitted by his instruments.

"Do you see," said he, "by what simple means I am able to demonstrate a great proposition? Acoustics by this means reveal actions analogous to sound on every object which that sound affects. All harmonies start from a common center and always retain an intimate relation to each other; rather, harmony, like light, is decomposed by our art as a ray is by a prism."

Here Gambara proceeded to show Andrea the instruments constructed according to his principles, and he explained the changes he had made in their shape and material. Finally he announced, with gravity, that, to properly conclude this preliminary evening, which had thus far only gratified the curiosity of the eye, he would allow all then present to hear an instrument which was capable of taking the place of an entire orchestra; he called this the *panharmonicon*.

"If it is the arrangement in that case which causes a grumbling of all the neighbors," said Giardini, "when you are working on it, you won't do much playing thereon, for the police will interfere. Bear that in mind."

"If that unhappy idiot remains in the room," whispered Gambara in Andrea's ear, "it will be impossible that I should play."

The Count made a pretext to get rid of the cook by promising him a present if he would stay downstairs and prevent the police and neighbors from interfering. Giardini, who had not stinted his own allowance of wine while pouring out for the others, willingly complied.

The composer, while not intoxicated, was in that elevated condition when every function of the brain is over-excited; when the opaque walls become transparent, the garret roofless, and the soul takes flight into the world of spirits.

Marianna, not without difficulty, uncovered an instrument about the size of a grand piano; but with an upper manual and a great double case, not altogether unlike the boxing of an organ. This curious machine was also provided with stops for various instruments, and the bent elbows of a number of tubes or pipes.

"Will you play for me the prayer which you say is so fine, the *finale* of your opera?" asked the Count.

To Andrea's great astonishment and Marianna's surprise, Gambara commenced with a few chords in perfect harmony that proclaimed him a master; their astonishment was succeeded by admiration and in turn by complete rapture; they entirely lost sight of the place and performer. The effects of a full orchestra would have been less fine than the reedy tone of the wind instruments, which swelled like an organ and formed a marvelous blend with the string harmonies. But the unfinished state of this machine prevented the full development of the composer's ideas, which seemed the greater for the sense of incompleteness. It may be remarked that certain perfections in works of art seem rather to detract from than improve the unfinished sketch; for one may then add the deficiency by his own thoughts.

The purest and sweetest music that Andrea had ever heard rose from under the impact of Gambara's fingers like incense from an altar. The composer's voice became again youthful; so far from marring the fine melody, it expounded, supported, and directed it; as the quavering voice of a reader like Andrieux gives scope to the meaning of some great scene by Corneille or Racine by lending it a personal and sympathetic emotion.

This angelic music revealed the treasures that lay hidden in the grand opera which could never be understood so long as this man persisted in the endeavor to explain it in his normal state of dementia.

Marianna and Andrea, equally divided between delight of the music and surprise at the strange instrument with its hundred-voiced stops, in which a stranger might think a choir of young girls was hidden, so closely did some of the tones resemble the human voice, dared not exchange ideas either

by word or look. Marianna's countenance was radiant with a glow of hope, which revivified the beauty of her youth. This new birth of beauty, in connection with the luminosity of her husband's genius, cast a shadowy tinge of sadness over the pleasure that this mysterious hour had given the Count.

"You are our good spirit!" Marianna whispered to him. "I am tempted to think that you inspire him, for I, who am never away from his side, have never yet heard anything like this."

"Khadijah's farewell," said Gambara; who now sang the *cavatina* which he had the previous evening described as being sublime, and which now brought tears to the eyes of the lovers, so perfectly did it express the noblest sentiments of devoted love.

"Who can have inspired you with such music?" cried the Count.

"The spirit," answered Gambara. "When he appears, flame is all around me. I see the melodies face to face; fresh, beautiful, in floral coloring. They sparkle, they echo—I listen. But an infinity of time is necessary to reproduce them."

"Play on," said Marianna.

Gambara, who seemed not to feel fatigue, played without effort or untowardness. He executed the overture with such facility and skill, he showed such new and undiscovered musical effects, that the Count was dazzled by what he heard; he began to believe in some magic like that controlled by Liszt and Paganini—a genius of execution which can change all musical conditions and create of it a poetry transcendent of all conditions of music.

"Well, excellenza, and can you cure him?" asked Giardini, when at length Andrea went down.

"I shall soon be able to say," replied the Count. "The man's intellect has two windows: one is turned toward the earth and is closed; the other looks in upon heaven. The first is music, the second poetry. Until now he would stand stubbornly before the closed window; we must get him to the other. It was you, Giardini, that first put me on the track

of this truth, by letting me know that his mind was clearer after a few glasses of wine."

"Yes," cried the cook, "and I can guess your scheme, excellenza."

"If it is not too late to make poetry ring in his ears to the sound of a glorious harmony, vc must put him into a condition to hear and judge of it. Now it seems to me that only intoxication can bring this about. Will you assist me in this? You won't be any the worse for it, eh?"

"What is your excellency getting at?"

Andrea made no answer, but went away laughing at the perspicacity of the crazy mind of the Neapolitan.

On the following day Marcosini came to fetch away Marianna and show her the lodging he had secured. She had used the morning in fixing up a simple but decent dress, into which she had put the whole of her little savings. The change would have been the disillusion of a mere dangler; but the fancy of the Count had now become a settled passion.

Marianna, stripped of her picturesque poverty, was transformed outwardly into a mere bourgeoise, and gave Andrea visions of a wedded life; he gave her his hand in assisting her into the hackney-coach, and acquainted her with his ideas. She smiled and approved; she was happy at finding her admirer more lofty, more generous, more disinterested than she had dared to hope. He soon reached the new dwelling, where Andrea had endeavored to keep himself ever in her thoughts by adding a few of those little elegancies which beguile the most virtuous of women.

"I will never mention my love to you until we despair of Paolo's sanity," he said to her, as they returned to the Rue Froidmanteau. "You shall be witness to the sincerity of my efforts. If these prove successful, I may be unable to keep up my part as only your friend. If this happens I shall flee you, Marianna. I have firmness enough, I think, to work for your happiness, though I may not have enough to look upon it."

"Do not say such things," said Marianna, with difficulty keeping back her tears. "Has not generosity its dangers, also? But are you going so soon?"

"Yes," said Andrea, "seek your happiness without my drawback."

If Giardini is to be believed, the excellent change of air and living was favorable to both husband and wife. Every evening after his wine, Gambara appeared less absent-minded, talked more, and was more sedate; he even proposed to read the papers. Andrea quaked in his shoes at each manifestation of his success; but, though his distress made him aware of the strength of his passion, this did not cause him to relax his virtuous resolution. He now came every evening to learn the progress of this singular cure. On one occasion the state of the patient gave him satisfaction, but his pleasure was dazed by Marianna's beauty, for her life being rendered less onerous had restored her brilliant loveliness.

He joined each evening in the conversations, grave or gay, in which he argued coolly and dispassionately against Gambara's singular theories. He used the remarkable lucidity of the latter's mind, on every point that did not touch upon his malady, to make him clearly perceive and acknowledge principles in other branches of art and which he afterward demonstrated were equally applicable to music.

All went well so long as the composer's brain was under the influence of the fumes of wine; but just as soon as he became perfectly sober his reason was dethroned—he was again the maniac. And yet, in the main, Paolo was more easily aroused by impressions from the outer world; his mind even began to employ itself on a greater diversity of subjects.

Andrea, who took all an artist's interest in his semi-medical treatment, thought at length that it was about time to try a master-stroke. He resolved to give a dinner at his own house, to which he intended inviting Giardini for the purpose, as he told himself, of not separating the sublime and the ridiculous. He selected the day that *Robert le Diable*, an opera he had already heard in rehearsal, was for the first time given in public.

After the second course Gambara was already half-seas over, he was laughing at himself with a good grace, while

Giardini was admitting that his own culinary innovations were of the Devil.

Andrea had neglected no means to bring about this twofold miracle. Flagons of Orvieto and Montefiascone, expensive wines which are easily spoiled if carelessly carried; liqueurs of Lachrymæ Christi, and Giro, and other heady liqueurs of *la cara patria* or the beloved country, soon caused the double intoxication, in these excitable minds, of grape and reminiscence. At dessert the musician and the cook mutually abjured every heresy; one hummed a *cavatina* from Rossini, the other piled confectionery on his plate and washed them down with maraschino from Zara, to the honor of the *cuisine Française.*

The Count took advantage of Gambara's happy frame of mind to carry him off to the opera, whither he allowed himself to be led like a lamb.

With the first notes of the introduction Gambara's inebriety vanished, and gave place for the feverish excitement which at times brought his judgment and imagination into harmony; the habitual discord of which was the undoubted source of his insanity. The dominant idea of that great musical drama appeared to him in all its radiant simplicity, like a flash of lightning breaking through the clouds of darkness in which he lived. To his unsealed eyes the music seemed to sweep the immense horizons of a world in which he found himself for the first time, though he recognized it as what he had seen in his dreams.

He fancied himself transported to those slopes of his own dear native country where *la bella Italia* commences, and which Napoleon so appropriately termed the "glacis of the Alps." His memory took him back to the day when his young, vigorous brain was not yet troubled by the fervid imagination; he listened in reverent awe, unwilling to miss a word. The Count respected the travail of his soul. Till after twelve o'clock he sat so motionless that the opera-house audience might have taken him for a drunken man—which he was. On his way home the Count began to attack Meyerbeer's masterpiece, trying to arouse Gambara, who was now plunged in the half-torpid state of drunkenness.

"What is there in that incoherent score that it makes a somnambulist of you?" said Andrea, when they arrived at his house. "The story of *Robert le Diable* is not altogether without interest, I'll admit. Holtei has very happily worked out with much skill a well-written drama, full of strong and moving situations, but the French librettists have managed to make it the most absurd bundle of nonsense. No libretto of even Vesari or Schikaneder has ever equaled in absurdity the words of *Robert le Diable;* it becomes a dramatic nightmare, which oppresses the hearer without arousing any deep emotion.

"Meyerbeer's devil plays too prominent a part. Bertram and Alice represent the contest between right and wrong, the good and evil spirit. That antagonism offers a splendid opportunity to the composer. The sweetest melodies, placed side by side with harsh and crude airs, is the natural consequence of the libretto; but, unfortunately, in the score of the German composer the devils sing better than the saints.

"The heavenly inspirations give the lie to their origin; when the composer leaves the infernal lay for a moment, he returns as speedily as may be, worn out with the effort of trying to be rid of them. Melody, the golden thread that should never be broken in so vast a scheme, is often strained to the vanishing point in Meyerbeer's work. Sentiment is absolutely lacking; the heart has no part in it; we find few of those delightful inventions, those artless themes which touch our sympathies and leave a tender impression on the soul.

"Harmony reigns supreme, instead of being the groundwork from whence should issue the melodious groups of the musical picture. Those discordant notes, far from moving the hearer, only excite in him a sentiment similar to the one he would experience in seeing a tight-rope walker hanging, as it were, midway between life and death. The soothing *arias* never come at the right moment to quiet this nervous agitation. One might well believe that the composer had no other object in view than to produce a bizarre effect, not troubling himself about musical truth or unity; or about the capability

of the human voice, which is overwhelmed in this flood of instrumental hurly-burly."

"Hush, my friend!" said Gambara, "I am still under the influence of that glorious chorus of hell, made still more terrible by those long trumpets—a new instrumentation. The broken *cadenzas* which add such vigor to Robert's scene, the *cavatina* in the fourth act, the *finale* to the first, still hold me in the clutch of some superhuman power. No, even Gluck's compositions never produced so powerful an effect; I am amazed at such skill."

"Signor Maestro," said Andrea, smiling, "permit me to contradict you. Before Gluck wrote he pondered long; he calculated the chances and adopted plans which might afterward be modified under his inspirations in their details, but he never allowed himself to stray from the marked-out path. Therein lies his power of emphasis; that elocution of music which has life and truth in every beat.

"I agree with you that the science of Meyerbeer's opera is very great; but science becomes a defect when isolated from inspiration; I think I can see in that opera the painful work of a cultivated craftsman, who in his music has interlarded gems from many forgotten sources, or from damned operas; these he has extended, remodeled, or concentrated. But he has fallen into the usual error of the plagiarist, an abuse of good things. This clever gleaner in the harvest-fields of music is prodigal in discords, which, when too frequently introduced, end by annoying the ear; it becomes habituated to startling effects, such as a composer should be chary in giving, so that he may obtain the full benefit when the situation demands it.

"This inharmonic phrasing is repeated to satiety, and the abuse of the plagal cadence[1] detracts from the religious solemnity of the work.

"Of course I am well aware that every composer has his particular methods to which he will return again and again in spite of himself; but he should watch and guard himself against that blunder. A picture that had none but blues

[1] The chord of the sub-dominant followed by that of the dominant.—Trans.

and reds in it would be unfaithful to nature, beside fatiguing to the eyes. Thus the constantly recurring rhythm of the score of *Robert le Diable* gives monotony to the whole. As to the effect of the long trumpets, of which you speak, it has long been known in Germany, and what Meyerbeer gives us for novelty was constantly utilized by Mozart, who makes his chorus of devils in *Don Giovanni* sing in that manner."

By these contradictions and renewed libations Andrea strove to bring Gambara back to his proper musical senses; he endeavored to show him that his so-called mission to the world was not to regenerate an art beyond his powers, but to seek expression for his ideas under another form, by poetry, in fact.

"You, my dear Count, do not understand the least thing about that stupendous musical drama," said Gambara, airily.

He stood in front of Andrea's piano, struck the keys, listened to the tone, then seated himself, meditating for a few moment as if to collect his ideas.

"In the first place you must know," said he, "that a trained ear like mine perceived at once that labor of setting of which you speak. Yes, this music has been lovingly selected from the store of a rich and fertile imagination into which science has squeezed ideas which are to bring out the very essence of music.

"I will illustrate this."

He rose to move the wax-candles into the adjoining room, and, before returning to his seat, he drank a large glass of Giro, a wine of Sardinia, as full of fire as any old Tokay has ever been.

"It is this," said Gambara, "this music was not written for skeptics nor for those who know not love. If you have never in your life experienced the vehement assaults of an evil spirit, who ever moves the object at which you are about to take aim, who brings to a painful end your liveliest hopes—in one word, if you have never felt the Devil's tail whisking about the world—the opera of *Robert le Diable* must be to you what the Apocalypse is to those who think that all ends when they do. But if, persecuted and wretched, you understand that spirit of evil, that so great ape which hourly

is engaged in destroying the work of God; if you imagine him as not having loved, but of ravishing an almost divine woman, and gaining from that deed the joys of paternity; as so loving his son that he would rather have him miserable to all eternity that he might be with him, than to think of his being in eternal happiness with God; if, again, you can imagine the soul of the mother hovering around her son to draw him away from the atrocious temptations offered by his father, you, even then, will have but a faint idea of that stupendous poem, in which little is wanting for it to become the rival of Mozart's *Don Giovanni.*

"*Don Giovanni* is, I admit, the superior by the perfection of its form. *Robert le Diable* represents ideas; *Don Giovanni* arouses sensations. *Don Giovanni* is still the only musical work in which harmony and melody are exactly balanced. In this lies its superiority to *Robert le Diable*, for *Robert* is the richer work.

"But to what good are these comparisons, since both works are beautiful in their own way? To me, subject as I have been to the oft-repeated assaults of the demon, *Robert* speaks more powerfully than to you; I find it at once vast and concentrated.

"Thanks to you, I have been transported to the land of dreams, where our senses expand, where the universe unfolds in gigantic scale in comparison with man."

He was silent for a moment.

"I am still quivering," continued the unlucky artist, "at the sound of those four measures of the cymbals, which shook my very being when they open that short, abrupt introduction where the trombone solo, the flutes, oboes, and the clarionet cast a fantastic color over the soul. The *andante* in C-minor is a foretaste of the invocation of spirits in the abbey; it gives grandeur to the scene by its announcement of a purely spiritual struggle. I shuddered!"

Gambara struck the keys with a firm hand and developed Meyerbeer's theme in a masterly *fantasia*, a kind of explosion after the manner of Liszt. The instrument was no longer a piano, it was an orchestra they heard—the Genius of music rose before them.

"That is Mozart," he cried. "Hear how that German handles his chords; see through what intricate modulations he raises the image of terror to come to the dominant of C. I can hear all hell there!

"The curtain rises.

"What do I see? The only spectacle to which we can give the epithet infernal; an orgy of Knights in Sicily. The chorus in F contains every human passion let loose in that bacchanalian *allegro*. Every thread by which the Devil holds us is pulled. That is the kind of joy that comes over men when they dance on the verge of a precipice; they whirl themselves into vertigo. What 'go' in that chorus!

"From that chorus, the reality of life, an artless bourgeois of every-day existence stands out—G-minor—in the song by Raimbaut, full as it is of simplicity. That worthy man, who is the representative of the fresh verdure of plenteous Normandy, refreshes my soul as he recalls it to Robert's mind in the midst of his drunkenness. The sweetness of that beloved land shines like a thread of gold in the dark texture of the scene.

"Now comes the marvelous ballad in C-major, accompanied by the chorus in C-minor, so expressive of the theme. Then the outburst '*Je suis Robert*'—I am Robert. The rage of the prince offended by his vassal is no longer a natural fury; but presently it calms down, for memories of childhood arise, with those of Alice, in that gracefully pretty *allegro*—A-major.

"Do you not hear the cries of the persecuted innocent as it enters this infernal drama? 'No, no!'" sang Gambara, and making the piano echo him. "His native land and its sweet memories bloom anew in Robert's heart; his mother's shade now arises, bringing in its train soothing religious thoughts. Religion it is that inspires that beautiful song in E-major, with its miraculous progressions in harmony and melody, in the words:

"'Car dans les cieux, comme sur la terre,
Sa mère va prier pour lui.'

(For in the skies as on the earth
For him his mother prayeth.)

The struggle begins between the mysterious powers and the only human being who has the fire of hell in his veins to resist them. To make this quite clear, as Bertram comes on, the great musician gives the orchestra a *ritornello* reminiscent of Raimbaut's ballad. What art! What cohesion of every part! What strength of construction!

"The Devil is beneath all; he hides, he squirms. With the terror of Alice, who recognizes the devil of the image of St. Michael in her own Norman village, the conflict of the powers antagonistic begins. The musical theme develops—in what varied phrases! The antithesis so necessary in every opera is emphatically shown in a grand *recitative,* such as Gluck might have composed, between Bertram and Robert:

"'Tu ne sauras jamais à quel excès je t'aime.'

(Never wilt thou understand to what excess I love thee.)

In that diabolical C-minor, Bertram, in his terrible bass, which countermines and destroys every effort of the vehement, passionate man, is, to me, terribly appalling.

"Must the crime become possessed of the criminal? Will the executioner clutch his prey? Must misfortune swallow up the genius of the artist? Will the disease kill the patient? Can the guardian angel save the Christian?

"Now the *finale,* the gambling scene, in which he torments his son by rousing him to terrible emotions. Robert, despoiled, angry, destroying everything around him, eager for killing, breathing blood, fire, and sword, is his own son; the father sees the likeness. What horrid glee we note in Bertram's words, '*Je ris de tes coups!*' or, 'I laugh at thy blows!' How the Venetian *barcarole* tinges this *finale!* Through what bold transitions that infamous parent is brought on the stage again to drag Robert to once more throw the dice!

"This first act is overpowering to those who follow out such themes in the profundity of their thought and gives them the breadth of meaning the composer intends to convey.

"Love alone could be in contrast with that grand symphony of song, in which you cannot detect any monotony

nor twice the employment of the same means. It is one, it is many; it is characteristic of all that is grand and natural. I breathe freer; I reach the higher sphere of a chivalrous court; I hear Isabella in charming phrase, fresh, but always melancholy; and the female chorus in two divisions, echoing each other, with a suggestion, it seems, of the Moorish influence on Spain.

"Here the terrifying music is softened to a gentler tone, like a storm dying away, till it comes to this dainty flowery duet, so sweetly modulated and entirely unlike the preceding music. After the turmoil of a camp of martial heroes and free-lances comes a fair picture of love. Poet! I thank thee! My heart could not have borne more.

"If I could not here and there have plucked the daisies of a French light opera, if I had listened to the sweet gayety of a woman able alike to love and charm, I could not have endured that terrible, deep note with which Bertram reappears, as he says to his son: '*Si je le permets!*' (If I permit it); when Robert has promised, in his hearing, the princess he adores, that he will conquer with the arms she gives him.

"To the hope of the gambler reforming through love, the love of the exquisite Sicilian—do you not note that falcon eye?—to the hope of the man hell answers in that awful cry: '*À toi, Robert de Normandie!*'

"Does not the somber horror of those long-held, splendid notes excite your admiration in that: '*Dans la forêt prochaine*'? All the fascination of *Jerusalem Delivered* is to be found here, just as chivalry appears in that chorus with the Spanish movement; and in the *tempo di marcia.* What originality in that *allegro;* in the modulation of the four cymbals in C-D, C-G! What grace in the call to the lists! The movement of the whole heroic life of the period is there; the soul unites with it; I read in it a romance, a poem of chivalry.

"The exposition now ends; the resources of the art of music appear to have been exhausted; and yet it was a homogeneous whole. You have had human life set before you in its one, its only real aspect. 'Shall I be happy or un-

happy?' is the query of the philosopher. 'Shall I be saved or damned?' is that of the Christian."

Here Gambara struck the last chords of the chorus, which he brought forth in a lingering, melancholy way; he then rose and poured out and drank another large glass of Giro. This semi-African vintage again lit up the fires of his countenance, which had been somewhat paled by the passionate and wonderful sketch of Meyerbeer's opera that he had made.

"That nothing may be lacking to this composition," he resumed, "the great artist has given us the only *buffo* duet permissible for a devil to sing; that in which the unhappy troubadour is tempted. He puts a horror and a jest side by side, a jest that literally swallows up the only realism he had allowed himself in the weird opera—the pure, calm love of Alice and Raimbaut; their life is to be troubled by anticipatory evils. Only great souls can feel the nobility that animates these *buffo* airs.

"They have neither the gaudiness of our Italian music nor the vulgarity of our Parisian street favorites; they possess rather the divinity of Olympus. The bitter laugh of a divine being mocks the surprise of the Don-Juanized troubadour. Only for this dignity the return to the general tone of the opera would be too suddenly achieved, full as it is of terrible fury of diminished sevenths, and resolving into that infernal waltz, which at last brings us face to face with the howling demons.

"How vigorously Bertram's couplet detaches itself—B-minor—from the devils' chorus, in which is depicted the knowledge of paternity mingled in awful despair with demoniac voices! What an exquisite transition is the arrival of Alice, *ritornello* in B-flat. I still hear those voices of the angels in their heavenly freshness; it is the warble of the nightingale after the tempest.

"Thus is the leading idea of the whole worked out in detail; for what could better be done than the contrast with the tumult of demons in their den and the wonderful *aria* by Alice?

"The golden thread of the melody glides through the

entire length of the grand harmony like a hope of heaven; it is embroidered on it with marvelous skill. She sings:

"'Quand j'ai quitté la Normandie.'
(When I forsook my Normandy.)

"Genius can never lose hold on the science that guides it. Here Alice's song in B-flat is taken up to F-sharp, the dominant of the chorus of devils. Do you hear the *tremolo* of the orchestra? Robert is being bidden to the rout of devils.

"Here Bertram re-enters, and this is the culminating point of musical interest, a *recitative*, only comparable to the finest compositions of the greatest masters; comes the struggle in E-flat between the two combatants, Heaven and Hell—one in '*Oui, tu me connais!*' (Yes, thou knowest me!)—on a diminished seventh; the other in that sublime F, '*Le ciel est avec moi!*'—(Heaven is with me!) Hell and the Crucifix are face to face.

"Then we have Bertram's threats to Alice, the most awful pathos ever written; the Genius of Evil complacently making himself known, and, as usual, tempting through self-interest. The arrival of Robert gives us the magnificent trio, unaccompanied, in A-flat; this opens the struggle between the two rival forces for the possession of the man. Note how clearly this is effected," exclaimed Gambara, who epitomized the scene with such passion of execution as startled Andrea.

"All this avalanche of music, from the crash of the cymbals in common time, has rolled onwards to this contest of the three voices. The spell of Evil triumphs! Alice flees. You hear the duet between Bertram and Robert—in D. The Devil fixes his talons in Robert's heart; he renders it for his own; he descants on every feeling—honor, hope, eternal pleasure, all are in turn displayed before him; he carries him, as he did Jesus, to the pinnacle of the temple, he shows him all the treasures of the earth, that jewel-case of Sin. Finally he piques his courage, he stings him, and the noble instinct of the man is expressed in that cry:

"'Des chevaliers de ma patrie
L'honneur toujours fut le soutien.'

(To the knights of my native land,
Their mainstay was honor ever.)

To crown the whole opera comes in the same theme which so fatally prognosticated the work at its opening, that grand invocation to the dead:

"'Nonnes qui reposez sous cette froide pierre,
M'entendez-vous?'

(Nuns who sleep beneath that cold, cold stone,
Hear ye me?)

Carried most gloriously through the career of the music, it ends equally gloriously in the *allegro vivace* of the bacchanal —D-minor. Here is the triumph of hell! Roll on, harmony! Swathe us in thy manifold cloak! Roll on, bewitching!

"The powers of the infernal have seized their prey. They hold him while they dance around him. The noble genius born to vanquish, born to reign, is lost! Devils rejoice, genius is stifled by poverty, passion wrecks the knight."

Here Gambara improvised a *fantasia* himself, cleverly varying the *bacchanale*, and accompanying the piano in a soft tone of voice, as if to give utterance to the sufferings he had known.

"Do you hear the celestial plaints of neglected love?" said he. "Isabella calls Robert from the midst of that grand chorus of knights wending their way to the tournament, where the *motifs* of the second act reappear to emphasize the fact that the events of the third act happen in supernatural spheres. Here is real life again. The chorus fades away as the enchantments of hell approach, which are brought by Robert with his talisman. Now develop the deviltries of the third act. First the viola duet, where the rhythm plainly depicts the brutal desires of a man who is omnipotent, while the princess, in plaintive moans, endeavors to recall her lover to reason.

"Here the musician has placed himself in a position that is very difficult to be brought out; but he surmounts it by the sweetest gem in the whole work. What exquisite melody in the *cavatina* '*Grâce pour toi!*' (Mercy for thee!) That

one number would suffice to make any opera famous; for every woman feels that she is contending against a knight. Never yet was music so passionate, so dramatic.

"The whole world now rises against the reprobate. Some may object that the *finale* resembles too much that of *Don Giovanni;* but there is this immense difference: a noble faith inspires Isabella, a perfect love that will rescue Robert, who scornfully rejects the talisman of hell confided to him, while, on the other hand, Don Giovanni persists in his unbelief. Beside all, this accusation has been made against every composer who has written a *finale* since the time of Mozart. The *finale* to *Don Giovanni* is one of those classic forms that have been invented once for all time.

"At last we hear Religion, which arises omnipotent, in a voice that rules the universe, that calls all sorrow to come and be consoled, all repentances, that they may have peace.

"The whole house is stirred by the chorus:

"'Malheureux ou coupables,
Hâtez-vous d'accourir!'

(Now wretched, guilty men,
Haste to approach!)

Hitherto, in the fearful tumult of unchained passions, the Holy Voice had not been heard; but at this critical moment it booms out like thunder; the Catholic Church divine rises glorious in light. And I am astonished to here find at the close of such a lavish use of harmonic treasures a new vein of gold in that grand masterpiece of chorus: '*Gloire à la Providence!*' written in Handel's style.

"Robert, distracted, rushes on the stage with his heartrending cry: '*Si je pouvais prier!*' (Could I but pray!) But, constrained by the edict of hell, Bertram pursues his son and makes a final effort. Alice calls up the vision of the Mother. Now you hear the glorious trio to which the whole opera has gradually advanced, the triumph of soul over matter, the victory of the spirit of Good over the spirit of Evil. The strains of faith prevail over the chorus of hell; joy reappears in majesty. Here the music weakens. I but see a cathedral instead of hearing a concert of angels in bliss;

a divine prayer of souls delivered, consecrating the union of Robert and Alice. We ought not to be left under the spells of hell, we should be able to leave the scene with a heart of hope.

"Myself a Catholic and a musician, I needed for my soul another prayer like the one from *Moses in Egypt*. Also would I fain have seen Germany contending with Italy—what Meyerbeer could do to rival Rossini.

"However, the writer may say, in justification of this defect, that, after five hours of such solid, substantial music, a Parisian prefers a bon-bon to a musical masterpiece. You heard the applause that followed the performance; it will run five hundred nights. If the French really understand that music——"

"It is because they have ideas," said the Count.

"No, it is because it powerfully sets forth in definite shape an image of that struggle in which so many souls are worsted; and because all individual existences are connected with it by memory, as it were. Therefore is it that I, unhappy one, grieve that at the end I do not hear the sound of those celestial voices I have so often heard in dreams."

Here Gambara fell into a musical ecstasy; he improvised the most lovely, melodious, and harmonious *cavatina* that Andrea should ever hear; a song divinely sung, on a theme as graceful and full of charm as that of *O filii et filiæ;* but with added beauties such as none but musical genius of the highest order could have rendered.

The Count was lost in rapt admiration; the clouds were breaking; the celestial blue shone out; now angelic forms appeared and raised the veil that hid the sanctuary; the light of heaven descended.

Silence reigned again.

The Count, surprised at the music suddenly ceasing, looked up at Gambara, who, with fixed, staring eyes and rigid form, stammered the word: "God!"

The Count quietly awaited the moment when the composer returned from celestial glory, whither the prismatic wings of inspiration had borne him, resolving to illuminate his mind with the very truths that he himself should bring down.

"Well," said he, pouring out another bumper of wine and clinking glasses with him, "this German has written, as you say, a sublime opera without troubling himself about theory; whereas musicians who write grammars of music are, more than often, like literary critics—atrocious composers."

"Then you do not like my music?"

"I don't say that. But, if instead of perpetually dissecting the method of idea expression—which carries you beyond the mark—you would simply awaken our sensations, I feel sure that you would be better comprehended, unless, that is, you have not entirely mistaken your vocation. You are a great poet."

"What!" cried Gambara. "What, are five-and-twenty years of study simply wasted? Am I then to learn the imperfect utterance of man—I who hold the key to the language of heaven? Ah! should you be right—then I crave to die!"

"No, no, not you. You are great, you are strong. You shall begin a new life, and I, your friend, will sustain you. We will show to the world the rare and noble alliance of a rich man and an artist who comprehend each other."

"Do you speak truth?" asked Gambara, rigid in a sudden torpor.

"As I have already said, you are more poet than musician."

"A poet, poet! That is better than nothing. But truly tell me, whom do you most esteem, Mozart or Homer?"

"I admire them equally."

"On your honor?"

"On my honor."

"H'm! One word more. What think you of Meyerbeer and Byron?"

"You have judged them by naming them together."

The Count's carriage was at the door. The composer and his titled physician were driven to Gambara's residence. They ran upstairs and were soon in Marianna's presence.

As they entered Gambara threw himself into his wife's arms, who withdrew a step and averted her head. The husband also drew back, and, beaming on the Count, said, in a husky voice:

"You might at least have left me my madness, monsieur."

Then his head drooped and he fell.

"What have you done?" cried Marianna, casting a look at her husband, in which disgust and pity were equally blended. "He is dead drunk!"

The Count with the help of his valet raised Gambara and laid him upon the bed; then Andrea left the house, his heart glad in horrid rapture.

The next day he purposely let the hour of his daily visit pass by; he was beginning to fear that he had been duped by himself, and had paid too dearly for the comfort and virtue of that humble couple whose peace he had forever destroyed. At length Giardini came bringing him a note from Marianna.

"Come," she wrote, "the harm done is not so great as you desired, cruel man."

"Excellenza," said the cook, while Andrea was dressing, "you entertained right royally last night. But you must allow that, apart from the wines, which were excellent, your *maître d'hôtel* did not produce a single dish worthy an epicure's table. You won't deny, I suppose, that the dish placed before you, on the day you honored my table with your presence, was superlatively better than those that sullied your service of plate last evening? Consequently, when I awoke this morning, I remembered the promise you had made me to become your chef. I henceforth consider myself as one of your household."

"I have had the same thought in my mind for the past few days," replied Andrea. "I have mentioned your name to the Austrian ambassador, and you will be allowed to recross the Alps as soon as you please. In Croatia I have a castle which I seldom visit. There you may combine the offices of porter, butler, cook, and steward, with two hundred crowns a year. This emolument will also be that of your wife, who can do the rest of the work. You can there try all your experiments *in anima vili*—that is to say, on the stomachs of my vassals. Here is a check for the costs of your journey."

Giardini kissed the Count's hand, in the Neapolitan fashion.

"Excellenza," said he, "I accept the check, but not the position. It would be dishonoring in me to give up my art and lose the good opinion of the most perfect epicures, who are undoubtedly those of Paris."

When Andrea arrived at Gambara's apartments the composer arose and came forward to meet him.

"My generous friend," said he frankly, "either it is that you took advantage of the weakness of my head to play a joke on me last night, or else your brain is no whit stronger, when testing the heady fumes of our native Latium, than mine is. I choose the latter hypothesis; I prefer to doubt your stomach than your heart. Be this as it may, I from this renounce the use of wine—forever. Last evening the abuse of good liqueur led me into culpable folly. When I call to mind that I nearly degraded——" He glanced in terror at Marianna.

"As to that wretched opera you took me to hear, I have thought it over; it is naught but music made by very ordinary methods; a heap of piled-up notes—*verba et voces.* It is but the dregs of the nectar which I quaff in deep draughts as I reproduce the heavenly music that I hear. I know the origin of those patched-up phrases. That '*Gloire à la Providence!*' is too like Handel; the chorus of knights on their way to the lists is closely related to the Scotch air in *La Dame Blanche.* In short, if the opera is pleasing, it is simply because the music is borrowed from everybody and is therefore generally known.

"I must now leave you, my dear friend. Since morning I have had an idea seething in my brain which bids me rise to God on the wings of song; but I wished to see you and say this much to you. Adieu! I go to ask forgiveness of my Muse. We shall meet this evening at dinner; but no more wine—at least not for me. Oh! I am firmly resolved——"

"I give him up," said Andrea, blushing violently.

"You enlighten my conscience," said Marianna, "I dared not question it. My friend, my friend, the fault is not ours; he *won't* let us cure him."

Six years later, in January 1837, such musical artists as were unlucky enough to injure their wind or string instruments were in the habit of taking them to the Rue Froidmanteau, to a squalid, disreputable house where the said instruments were repaired by an old Italian named Gambara, who resided on the sixth floor.

For the past five years this man had lived alone, his wife having deserted him. An instrument, called by him a *panharmonicon*, from which he expected fame, had been sold at auction by the sheriff, on the Place du Châtelet, in addition to a great pile of musical manuscript thickly scrawled. The day after the sale, this said paper appeared in the markets wrapped around pats of butter, fish, and fruits.

In this manner the three grand operas—of which the poor man would often boast, though a once-celebrated Neapolitan cook, now a vendor of broken victuals, declared they were but a mass of rubbish—were scattered throughout Paris in the baskets of hucksters. But what matter?—the landlord had gotten his rent, the sheriff's men their fees.

The Neapolitan victual-monger, who had as regular customers the prostitutes of the Rue Froidmanteau for his warmed-up scraps, which were the crumbs from the fine banquets given by society on the previous night, was always ready to tell that Signora Gambara had gone off to Italy with a nobleman of Milan, and no one knew what had become of her. Weary of poverty and wretchedness, she was more than likely ruining the Count by a career of extravagant luxury, for they adored each other with so fierce a passion that he had never in all his Neapolitan experience beheld the like.

Toward the end of this same month, January, one evening as Giardini was chatting with a girl, who had chanced in to buy her supper, about the beautiful Marianna, so pure, so glorious, so nobly self-devoted, and who had, notwithstanding, gone the *way of all the rest*, the street-girl and the wife of Giardini noticed in the street a tall, thin woman, with a sunburnt, dusty face; a nervous walking skeleton, who was peering at all the numbers and trying to recognize a house.

"*Ecco la Marianna!*" cried Giardini.

Marianna recognized the one-time cook in the poor object, but gave no heed to the misfortunes which had reduced him to his present wretched trade as a dealer in second-hand food. She went in and sat down; she had walked from Fontainebleau; she had walked fourteen leagues that day, after begging her bread from Turin to Paris.

The sight of her horrified that miserable trio. Of all her marvelous loveliness naught now remained but a pair of fading, anguished eyes. The one thing faithful to her was misfortune.

The old mender of instruments heartily welcomed her; he greeted her with inexpressible joy.

"Here you are, my poor Marianna!" he said affectionately. "During your absence they sold my instrument and my operas."

It would have been a difficult job to kill the fatted calf for the prodigal returned; but Giardini produced the fag-end of a salmon, the street-walker paid for the wine, Gambara found the bread, Signora Giardini lent a tablecloth, and these diverse unfortunates supped together in the musician's garret.

When questioned about her adventures, Marianna refused to reply, but she raised her fine eyes to heaven and whispered to Giardini:

"He married a ballet-girl."

"And how do you mean to live?" asked the girl. "The journey from Milan has killed you and——"

"Made me an old woman," said Marianna. "No, it is not fatigue, not poverty, it is grief that has done this."

"Bah! why, then, did you never send your man here any money?"

Marianna only answered by a look, but it stabbed the woman to the heart.

"She ain't proud at all! oh, no!" she exclaimed. "But much good it has done her," she whispered in Giardini's ear.

That year it seemed that every musician took extraordinary care of his instrument, and the business of repairing them dropped to *nil*, or to less than sufficient to provide for the daily bread of that poor household. The wife earned little

by her needle, and they were compelled to turn their talents to account in the meanest occupation.

In the dusk they would go together to the Champs-Élysées and sing duets, and Gambara, poor soul, accompanied on a wretched guitar. On the way thither Marianna, who always concealed her head under a sort of veil of lawn, would take her husband to a grocery in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré and give him two or three nips of brandy to make him tipsy; otherwise he could not play but intolerably. Then they would stand up together before the gay world seated on chairs along the esplanade, and the greatest genius of the day, the unrecognized Orpheus of modern music, played fragments of his operas to the crowd. These were so remarkable that they were able to extract a few sous from Parisian supineness.

One day a *dilettante* of the Bouffons happened to be sitting there, and, not recognizing from what opera they were taken, questioned the woman in the Grecian head-dress, when she held out the stamped, round metallic plate on which she collected her charity.

"I say, my dear, from what music is that?"

"From the opera of *Mahomet*," Marianna replied.

As Rossini had composed an opera, *Mahomet II.*, the gentleman remarked to the lady:

"What a pity that they will not give us at the Italiens those works of Rossini that are known the least. Certain it is that this is glorious music."

Gambara smiled.

A few days ago it was necessary for this poor couple to pay the paltry sum of thirty-six francs as arrears of rent due on their miserable garret. The grocer refused to give credit for the brandy with which Marianna plied her husband to enable him to play. Gambara was thus so atrociously bad that it became insufferable; the ears of the rich were irresponsive—the tin bottle-stand remained empty.

It was nine o'clock in the evening when a beautiful Italian, the Principessa Massimilla di Varese,[1] took pity on the poor

[1] See *Massimilla Doni.*

creatures. She gave Marianna forty francs and questioned both, after discovering from the wife's thanks that she was a Venetian. Prince Emilio, who accompanied his wife, would learn the history of their distress, and Marianna detailed all, making no complaints against God or man.

"Madame," said Gambara, who was not drunk, "we are the victims of our own superiority. My music is good; but so soon as music rises from sensation to idea, only persons of genius should be the hearers, for only they are capable of responding to it! It has been my misfortune to hear the chorus of angels; I believed that men could understand those strains. It is thus with women when their love assumes a divine aspect: men can no longer comprehend them."

These words were well forth the forty francs bestowed by Massimilla; she drew out another gold-piece from her purse, saying, as she gave it to Marianna, that she would write Andrea Marcosini.

"Do not write him, madame!" exclaimed Marianna. "And God grant you may be beautiful forever!"

"Let us provide for them," said the princess to her husband; "this man has remained faithful to the IDEAL w[illegible] *we* have killed."

When Gambara saw the gold he wept; then there came to him a vague reminiscence of some old scientific experiment, and the wretched composer, as he wiped away his tears, uttered these words, which the attendant circumstances made piteous:

"Water is produced by burning."