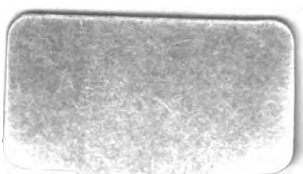
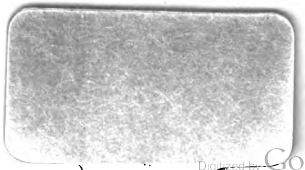
Legends of the commandments of God. Transl

Jacques Albin S. Collin de Plancy





T.TURNER DELT & LITH.

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QUEEN BERTHA OF THE LONG FOOT.

LEGENDS

OF THE

COMMANDMENTS OF GOD.

BY

J. COLLIN DE PLANCY.

Translated from the French.

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APPROBATION.

DENIS AUGUSTUS AFFRE, by the Divine Mercy and the Favor of the Holy Apostolic See, Archbishop of Paris.

Messieurs Paul Mellieur and Plon, publishers, having submitted for our approbation the works mentioned below, and which form part of a collection, entitled *The Library of Legends*, viz. *Legends of the Seven Capital Sins*, 1 vol.; *Legends of the Commandments of God*, 1 vol.,—

We have caused them to be examined, and have thought, from the report made to us, that they might be read with interest and without danger.

Given at Paris, under the seal of our Vicar-general, the seal of our arms, and the counter-seal of our secretary, October 18, 1844.

F. DUPANLOUP,

Vicar-general.

By order of His Grace the Archbishop of Paris,

E. HIRON,

Honorary Chancellor, Pro Sec.

*

PREFACE.

THE Author hopes that these Legends will be welcomed by those who seek recreation and instruction in such reading as is free from danger. He is confident that he has spared no pains in order to attain this end. He has dived into the chronicles of the middle ages, pressed into his service ancient works of legendary lore, collected local traditions, consulted collections, and borrowed from foreign literature, particularly from that of Flanders, the treasures of which are little known here.

These Legends are not imaginary narratives. They are all founded on history. The dates are exact. In no case are characters altered. History, as it has been given us to know it, is everywhere respected. The author contributes only the colouring, the arrangement, and details of the narrative. If he introduces a tale, he fails not to present it as such.

Several of the legends which compose this volume have appeared separately within the last twelve years, diffused throughout divers literary collections, and in divers organs of the periodical press, in Holland, Belgium, and France. Some even have been translated into German, Dutch, Spanish; and from these languages have occasionally returned to the French periodicals, which hence attributed to them a false origin. They have been revised and completed for the present publication.

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LEGENDS

OF

THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD.

FIRST COMMANDMENT.

One only God shalt thou adore,
And thou shalt love Him perfectly.

THE CANON OF LIÉGE.

"The crimes of men in high station are the greatest, because they generally have many accomplices."—*Puffendorf.*

I.

The emperor Henry VI., the son and successor of Frederic Babarossa, was a hateful prince. He had married Constance, the daughter of Roger, king of Sicily. Disputing the throne of his father-in-law with the natural brother of his wife, he set Sicily on fire in 1191. When victorious, he treated his enemies without pity. Some, say the historians, he deprived of sight; caused others to be strangled; and fastened the diadem, with long nails, on the head of him whom a party of the Sicilians had followed as king. He caused to be hanged or burnt all those who incurred his suspicion; mutilated and deprived of sight the Admiral Marghetti; and had the count of Acerra dragged through the streets, tied to a horse's tail.

The picture of the vindictive acts performed in Sicily by this cannibal prince would be frightful. Into that war of passions and crimes he had driven most of his vassals. But the duke of Brabant, Henry I. (of the house of Louvain), knowing the cruel intentions of the monarch, and little caring to harass his country by a distant expedition with-

out profit or honour, had not answered the appeal of his feudal lord-paramount. The tyrant could not forgive him this, and he thought how to take vengeance.

The duke of Brabant had enemies in Hainaut, Flanders, the provinces on the Rhine, and the county of Namur. He sought elsewhere for protectors. Radulph, the bishop of Liége, being dead, he proposed to the electors his brother Albert of Louvain. This was at the beginning of the year 1192. Albert was a pious and fine young man, full of virtues, intelligence, and goodness. He gained the majority of votes. But some canons, thinking that the emperor would never approve of that election, gave their voices in favour of Archdeacon Aubert, of Rethel.

The two elect sent deputies to the emperor, who was at Cologne. At first he did not give a decision. On the one hand, he wished firmly to reject Albert of Louvain, on account of the hatred he bore to the duke of Brabant; on the other, he did not dare, in spite of his despotism, to invest all at once Aubert of Rethel, who was named by a minority not sufficiently respectable. Thus embarrassed, he called for Diderich of Hostadt, his favourite counsellor, a German noble, made up of resources and tricks; an ambitious man, who was scared by no crime; a wily politician, perfectly worthy of the high favour he enjoyed with Henry VI.

"First," immediately said Diderich, "you are the master, sire; and ought especially to employ your sovereign power in heightening the dignity of your imperial crown. A valiant and victorious prince ought to have nothing to do but to give orders. Recollect, then, the whole conduct of those of the house of Louvain with respect to you. In the lifetime of your illustrious father, when your majesty was only king of the Romans, you have not forgotten that, in Liége itself, Duke Henry of Brabant showed himself your enemy, opposed to your august projects. Since the diadem of the holy empire has rested so worthily upon your head, Henry of Brabant has refused to follow you to the Sicilian war. Nay, this unfaithful vassal has been found blaming the actions of the emperor, his lord paramount. If his brother becomes prince of Liége, there is one more enemy for you; and for the house of Louvain such an increase of power as the interest of your majesty, well understood, cannot permit."

"You reason perfectly, Diderich!" answered the monarch, who had been struck with the whole of this speech.

"In spite of the immense majority which has elected him, we certainly will not invest Albert of Louvain. But what of the other?"

"Nor the other, neither," replied Diderich of Hostadt. "Aubert of Rethel is incapable. A man known only by his ignorance and want of tact; a man one would not venture to intrust with the least important place; whose devotedness to the emperor is neither solid nor sure: such a man cannot receive a superior authority, which requires ability of mind, dignity of character, and firmness against the enemies of the empire. Besides, he has obtained too few voices; and you could not risk the disapprobation which would follow the investiture of Aubert."

"But what is to be done, then, Diderich?"

"When there is doubt, and want of unanimity, as in this case, it seems to me that the emperor has the right of rejecting the two competitors, and imposing on the people of Liége a prince of his own private choice."

"If you think thus, I fully agree with you. What is this little turbulent principality compared to me? Nevertheless," added the emperor a little lower, "Aubert of Rethel has offered us 3,000 marks of silver, secretly, to induce us to confirm his election."

"No more than that?" said the favourite, drawing his breath. "I know a more suitable man, a man who will set all right, capable and devoted, who will pay your majesty the 3,000 marks. And at least it will not be said that you have favoured one of the elect, to the injury of the other."

"Who is this man?" asked Henry.

Diderich said a word in the emperor's ear.

"Ah, very well," said the monarch; "I'll think of it. I have to receive Albert of Louvain and Aubert of Rethel in three days. I'll think of it."

Diderich of Hostadt immediately sent a messenger to his brother Lothaire, who was provost of Bonn. This was he whom the favourite wished to raise to the see destined for the prince of Brabant. Lothaire made no delay; and on the very morning of the day on which the two elect were awaiting their audience, he sent the emperor the 3,000 marks of silver. Henry VI., covetous and prepossessed, hesitated no longer.

He received the two competitors with a composed look, and honoured their harangues with an appearance of atten-

tion. Then he said: "Sirs, I am sorry for it; but when there is a contested election, the nomination belongs to me. I annul, then, of my power as lord-paramount, everything which has been done in your matter."

The Liége clergy and its heads, who were all present, united against this pretension. Forty dignitaries had chosen Albert of Louvain; four or five only supported his rival. The first sustained their right with dignity; but this was all the answer: the emperor, presenting Lothaire, said, "There is your prince-bishop; it is to the provost of Bonn, and to him only, that we solemnly give the imperial investiture."

Every one remained dumb with surprise at these words, except Albert of Louvain, who coolly rose, saying, that he had not canvassed for his election; but that as it was canonical, no one could annul it, and that he appealed to the pope.

Henry swore furiously that no one should go out without having taken the oath of fidelity to Lothaire. He ordered all the doors to be shut. The anger which glowed in his eyes intimidated those who stood by. Aubert of Rethel himself submitted. Lothaire was acknowledged bishop of Liége. Albert of Louvain alone did not yield; and, having found means of escaping, took the road to Rome. The emperor sent emissaries to all his vassals, to enjoin them to arrest Albert; but the prince had disguised himself so well, and travelled in such by-ways, that he arrived, in spite of all the agents of Henry, at the feet of the sovereign pontiff.

Meantime Lothaire took possession of the country of Liége.

II.

The holy father, Celestine III., received the Brabantine prince with the greatest distinction, and declared his election good and valid. To give him more importance still, he created him cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, and sent an order to Lothaire to descend from the episcopal throne. Desiring, then, that the prince should be consecrated bishop, and knowing how much Henry VI. was feared, the pope sent Albert two briefs, the first for the archbishop of Cologne, the second for the archbishop of Rheims; in the hope that, if one of the two prelates

dared not obey, the other perhaps would have more courage.

Albert of Louvain repaired, then, to the Low Countries. He withdrew at first to the neighbourhood of the duke of Brabant, his brother. His party increased in Liége, by reason of the persecutions of which it was the victim.

When the emperor knew that he was at Louvain, he required Henry of Brabant to drive him from his states. Henry, disgusted with such an order, was determined to brave everything rather than submit to it. But Albert said to him, "I will not have your faithful Brabantines devoured by war on my account. The emperor would come, with a powerful army, if you resisted him, my brother, and would do here, perhaps, what he has done in Sicily."

The young and pious prelate took refuge then at the castle of Limbourg. Thence he sent the first brief to the archbishop of Cologne, who dared not expose himself to the rage of Henry VI. But the archbishop of Rheims, not being under the lordship-paramount of the emperor, received the second brief; invited Albert to come to him, and a few days afterwards solemnly consecrated him bishop of Liége, in his metropolitan church.

Talking of this ceremony, we read in the chronicles of the time a little fact which we cannot pass over in silence. It was still the custom, in weighty matters, to cast lots by the Holy Scriptures. A sacred book was taken—generally the Holy Bible or the Missal. The first sentence which presented itself at the opening of the book was read, and presages were drawn from it. This usage has since been interdicted by the Church. After he had consecrated Albert, then, the archbishop of Rheims took the book of the Holy Gospels, and opened it; and the first sentence which he read was this, St. Mark, vi. 27:—"King Herod sent one of his guards, with orders to bring him the head of John, in a basin; and this guard, having entered the prison, cut off his head." "My son," said the archbishop, much moved, while he looked, with eyes bathed in tears, upon the prince; "you are entering on the service of God: adhere to Him always in the ways of justice and fear, and prepare your soul for temptation, for you will be a martyr." These words completed the sadness of all that stood by.

Meanwhile the emperor, whose anger increased on his learning the consecration of Albert, arrived all on a sudden in the capital of the men of Liége, having in his mouth

nothing but words of vengeance. He was surrounded by wicked men; and those who saw him could expect nothing but what was terrible.

He began, an hour after his entrance into Liége, by razing to the ground all the houses of the partisans of Albert. Then he sent to the duke of Brabant an order to appear before him. He reproached him with loving his brother! Henry of Brabant, not being in a condition to resist the tyrant, complied with the insolent order he had just received. He found at the court of Henry VI., and among his intimate counsellors, the count of Hainaut, Hugh of Worms, Diderich of Hostadt, and other enemies, before whom the emperor took upon himself to impose on him the most revolting laws. He exacted first that he should declare his brother's election null; that he should acknowledge as good and valid the nomination of Lothaire; and lastly, that he should take to this latter the oath of faith and homage. Each of these injunctions was a dagger plunged more deeply into Henry's heart. He requested a delay to decide.

"I will be satisfied," said the monarch, "on all these points this very evening."

The astounded duke was followed all the day by the emperor's agents, who had orders to watch him, and to hinder him from quitting Liége. He saw he was besieged. His friends, whom he consulted, trembled. "We know," said they to him, "that your death is sworn if you resist: you are in the hands of the emperor; yield to violence."

This advice was insinuated in a low voice, and with a mysterious air, which gave it still more solemnity. After having long and sadly reflected, the duke of Brabant, at close of day, came back to the emperor's palace. He saw himself surrounded, on entering it, by a crowd of armed guards, who, dagger in hand, showed him the way with lights. They brandished and shook their torches above his head, repeating to him, with a gloomy voice, "Obey!" The historians say he answered, "You have already burnt my heart: would you also burn my head?" He appeared before the emperor in a state of agitation, difficult to describe.

All the court surrounded the monarch, as in expectation of some event which must be of public concern. The duke of Brabant, hardly knowing what he did, pronounced whatever was dictated to him by the emperor's officers. He

declared the election of his brother Albert null: he approved the nomination of Lothaire: with a cloud over his eyes, he allowed his hands to be put into those of Lothaire, to signify faith and homage. When all was done, the emperor said, "This is well: go!"

The poor prince immediately left the palace and the town, accompanied by some knights. He returned to Louvain with wounded soul and broken heart, protesting before God against all he had just done. He was far from suspecting that the despot was not yet satisfied.

As soon as he had left the hall where he had obeyed, the emperor, turning to his favourites, resumed:—"Here is already a victory. Albert of Louvain is no longer anything here, and you see his brother himself abandons him. But think you this prince-bishop (for in spite of us he takes this title) will ever be able to keep himself quiet?"

"No, never!" answered Hugh of Worms.

"What, then, must be done?"

"We must provide, before all things," said the inevitable Diderich, "for the interests of the empire, and those of the sceptre which you, sire, bear with so much glory."

"And what do these interests demand?"

"A limb must be cut off when it cannot be healed. We overturn an obstacle which we cannot remove. We destroy a rebel, get rid of a seditious person, and kill an enemy."

It was Hugh of Worms who spoke thus. After he had taken breath for a second, he added, "All these troubles will end with the head of Albert of Louvain."

Here there was a profound silence. The emperor broke it by saying, in a very low voice, "You have guessed my intentions. But we must have devoted men to proceed against a bishop; for he is consecrated."

Although these words had been spoken very softly, three German officers immediately advanced, their hand on their daggers, saying, "Here we are! give us a sign."

The emperor showed on his features a smile of satisfaction.

He was going to resume his speech, when a murmur stopped him. An old man, breaking the thick lines of courtiers, fell on his knees before Henry. This was an old canon of Liége, called Thomas. His venerable form, his white hair, his advanced age, and his humble posture, produced a singular sensation in the splendid assembly.

The three officers looked at him as three demons look at an angel who comes to dispute with them a Christian soul. The emperor knit his brow, and pressed his lips with a gesture of impatience and of dissatisfaction.

The old man was not frightened.

"No, sire," said he, "you will not give this sign which is required of you. You will not order the death of the Lord's anointed. You will not add sacrilege to murder. You will not again soil with blood, sire, your imperial mantle."

"Again!" cried the emperor, "What does that mean? Would you allude to our supreme justice in Sicily? And would your mouth dare condemn the acts of our will?"

The old canon cast his eyes on the ground: his forehead was covered with a blush: he felt he must not, at such a moment, provoke the tiger.

"Pardon, sire," replied he: "I am a feeble old man. My tongue may have offended you, when, nevertheless, my lips were opened but for prayer. But to a powerful monarch like you, who possesses the empire, who commands kingdoms, of what importance is the life of a servant of God?"

"It is important to such a person," said the emperor coldly, "that his orders be respected in silence, and that rebels be destroyed."

Then, turning towards the three officers, and giving them the sign for which they waited,—"You have understood me," said he: "those who serve me have alone a right to my good graces."

"O no, sire!" cried the canon: "you will hear me: you cannot in this manner order...."

"Crime—finish!" said the emperor quickly, with an eye full of wrath. "But, patience!" added he: "we will curb this troublesome spirit."

Henry, very much agitated, walked about with long steps. Thomas had relieved himself, by repressing with both hands the beatings of his heart.

Looking round him, he saw no more the three assassins. "Oh!" said he, with anguish, "they are already on the road to Rheims."

He was about to leave instantly, but the emperor observed him.

"Let that man be arrested and retained," said he.

The old canon then took hold of a lappet of the emperor's robe.

"You cannot seize me here," said he to the men of arms, who raised their arms against him; "I am in sanctuary. But you, sire, remember this day's work. You have been pitiless. Another day will expiate it; you will ask for mercy in your turn, and perhaps it will be refused you."

The old man pronounced this formidable prophecy in so imposing a tone, that Henry stopped, as if struck with a thunderbolt. The canon, immediately letting go his hold of the lappet, followed the archers, who shut him up in a dungeon. The emperor silently withdrew.

III.

The three German officers, accompanied by their attendants, took, at full speed, the road to Rheims, reflecting all the while on the importance of their mission. Crime marches swiftly; and that old allegory of Homer will never cease to be true: "Outrage is light-footed; reparation is lame."

The three assassins did not conceal from themselves that they were going to put to death a consecrated bishop, a cardinal of the Roman church. They felt that an anathema would be discharged against them, but they counted on time for repentance. They also knew what horror the murder of Albert of Louvain was likely to inspire, and thought on the measures they must take in order to reconcile their own safety with what they called the emperor's service.

Their whole plan was adjusted when they arrived at Rheims. They adopted the tone of great lords, spent much, and gave themselves out for three high barons, who had fallen into disgrace with the emperor. They were received all the better, in consequence of Henry VI. being detested. On the second day, as they were explaining, at the gate of St. Remigius's abbey, that they had been obliged to escape with precipitation from Liége, in order to avoid the tyrant's anger, and that they had come to Rheims, on learning that Bishop Albert had taken refuge there, because they held it an honour to share the retreat of so worthy a prelate, their ingenuous tone, their air of truth, imposed upon a good religious, who conducted them to the fugitive bishop. Albert received them as companions in misfortune, admitted

them to his table, and delivered himself into their hands with all that goodness which formed the foundation of his character. He conducted them to church, and joined them in their walks. His virtues and piety might well have touched them, but their resolution was not shaken. They only sought an opportunity of committing the murder with sufficient secrecy to give them time to escape after it; for they were now in a country which did not obey the emperor.

It was the month of November. One morning, before day, they went to wait for their prey at the gate of the great church of Our Lady, whither they knew Albert went to matins. A canon, who had a glimpse of them in the darkness, asked them, trembling, what they wanted?

"We are waiting for the prince-bishop, in order to accompany him," said they.

The canon, recognizing them, recovered his confidence. That day Albert did not come, because he was ill. Different fortuitous circumstances thus postponed the crime from day to day.

They proposed, then, a retired walk. Albert agreed to it, but borrowed a horse, for he found himself in a state of great weakness. We read, also, that he was sad and subdued, and seemed to foresee his death, looked on it as near, and was always preparing for it. But he by no means distrusted the three German officers, whom he called his friends.

On the 21st November, 1193, they went out of Rheims for their excursion with the bishop, and chose a path little frequented. They were followed by their four attendants, and had loaded their horses with their travelling-gear, like people who are preparing for a journey. The bishop, observing these peculiarities, asked them the reason.

"We are expecting messengers from our country," said they. "They ought to arrive this very evening. The way we are taking leads to where we meet them, and we bring bags to receive the articles they bring us."

The story was clumsy enough, but the pious Albert had no suspicions. There was no one with him but one of his canons, and an old domestic, who could never be induced to quit him.

The Germans had arranged all their plans. Two of their attendants walked one on each side of the canon, two others, one on each side of the domestic; two of the officers

went on the bishop's right and left, and the third preceded them by some steps. The fields around them were deserted. Lest the prelate should be aware of the length of the way they were taking him, and of the approach of night, the three Germans were still self-possessed enough to entertain him, without relaxing, by diverting tales and pleasant proposals.

Night, however, began to thicken, and the moon rose sadly in an ominous sky. The canon represented to the good bishop that it was time to return into the town.

"A few steps more," said the first officer, "and, if we don't find our people at this turning, we will go back."

They then went down a deep path, which led to a little ravine, very fit for cutting throats in.

It was, as we have said, the 21st of November. Four days before, the emperor had been frightened by a dream. He did not forget the words of the old canon, Thomas, nor his prophetic threat. His mind was troubled at them. He had no news of his three Germans. He saw round him the tranquillity of terror. "I have been wrong, perhaps," said he. "I might have managed otherwise. Let the old man be set at liberty."

And the liberated prisoner, having found a horse, had hastened to take the road to Rheims; hoping still to arrive soon enough, reckoning also that the conspiracy might have miscarried, for he was assured that Albert of Louvain was living. He entered Rheims this same 21st of November, at three in the afternoon.

No sooner had Thomas alighted than he made himself acquainted with Bishop Albert's residence, and hastened to it. He was informed that, for two hours back, the prelate was taking an excursion in the country with his friends.

"What friends?" asked he, full of anxiety.

"Three German lords, who have fallen into disgrace with the emperor."

"Three assassins!" cried the old man. "God grant I may have come quick enough to prevent them!"

He then related, to the great terror of his hearers, all that had passed at Liége. However, when he was told that the three Germans were with Albert every day, and might ten times already have killed him if they had wished, the old man breathed with confidence. "God has touched them, perhaps," said he. Then seeing night

advance, he became afraid again, and asked, "How many are there at this excursion?"

"Oh! all the three, with their four domestics."

"And who accompanies the prince?"

"A canon and an old attendant."

"Did they go armed?"

"Who? the Germans? knights? they are always armed. To-day, differently from their usual custom, they had their travelling-gear behind the saddle of their horses."

Thomas grew pale: he heard, with agitation, the hour at which the bishop generally returned from his walk.

"He ought to be home," said one, "for night is on."

"My friends," said the old man, "let us go to meet him. Who knows whether we shall not save him?"

Men's suspicions and fears had increased. Twelve men of Rheims offered to accompany the old canon, mounted their horses, and set out.

Before leaving the town, one of them stopped suddenly. "An idea occurs to me," said he, "which may either calm or redouble our anxieties. Let us enter the residence of the Germans, and see if they have carried every thing away."

They were passing, at that moment, before the house occupied by the emperor's officers. They learned with terror that, in fact, nothing was left, and that they had packed up their things like people who are leaving.

"We shall not arrive in time," said Thomas, drying his tears; and he hurried his horse along the road which the bishop and his assassins had taken.

It was not till after an hour's riding, that Thomas and his companions arrived at the little ravine. They were passing it, when at twenty paces from the road they heard a deep sigh. The moonlight showed a group which appeared immovable. No voice was raised to cry for help or succour. But a new sigh, more stifled, made them think that something mysterious was there. A young man ran to the place, and uttered a cry of horror. Bishop Albert was there, inanimate; his canon, stretched beside him, had a gag upon his mouth; the faithful domestic, pierced with wounds, and alike gagged, had risen, and was seeking to disengage his head, that he might assist his beloved master.

Thomas and all the others rushed headlong to the scene of carnage. They learnt from the canon and the do-

mestic all the horrible tragedy. The pious Albert had asked the first officer to go back at last to the town: that German turned immediately, threw himself on him, and struck him so violently as to break his head and throw him to the ground. There, while their attendants held down and ill-treated the canon and the domestic, the other two officers alighted, and plunged their daggers thirteen times into the bosom of their already dead victim; after which, they had fled across the fields, leading with them the prelate's horse.

"And for this hour back," added the domestic, "we have been thinking that God alone could come to help us."

"Thus," said old Thomas, weeping, "an hour sooner we might have saved him."

The twelve men of Rheims wished to run in pursuit of the murderers.

"But whither should we go," said they, "without knowing the direction they have taken, and when they are an hour before us?"

They could only, then, return to the town and render funeral honours to the holy prelate, and attend to the poor attendant, whose wounds were happily not mortal.

IV.

As soon as the crime which had been committed was known at Rheims the next morning, all the people betook themselves to the metropolitan church, in which the body was exposed. That murdered body had been again clothed with its pontifical dress, and all the clergy surrounded it in deep mourning.* The canon who had been witness of the crime left for Rome, to inform the sovereign pontiff of all that had just passed. Old Thomas, who could not pardon the duke of Brabant for having, so to speak, abandoned his brother, took the bloody robe of the martyr and appeared at Brussels.

He presented himself before Duke Henry.

"My Lord," said he, "what have you done with your brother? Deprived of your support, he has been devoured by a ferocious beast."

Thus saying, he spread out at the feet of the prince the

* This body, after remaining at Rheims, was at last granted to the prayers of the Archduke Albert. It arrived at Brussels on the 11th December, 1612, and was deposited in the new church of the Discalceate Carmelites, who still possess this holy relic.

torn and bloody robe. The duke of Brabant, at this sight, showed a violent despair.

"My brother's blood demands vengeance," cried he; "I have abandoned my brother! this innocent blood will be on me."

His grief became so sharp, they were obliged to console him by long efforts.

"I have not protected him living," said he at last; "I will avenge his death."

He made an appeal to his subjects, his vassals, relations, and friends. A cry of abomination had been raised in all the Low Countries against the assassination of Albert. All the princes, lords, and knights answered the appeal of Henry of Brabant. A formidable league rose against the murderers. The forced bishop, Lothaire, and his brother, Diderich, had rejoiced, it was said, at this death, which they were expecting. They marched against them. The emperor was so frightened at the general irritation produced by Albert's murder, that he dared no longer avow it. The canon, who had gone to Rome, came back with a brief of the pope, ranking Albert of Louvain in the number of holy martyrs honoured by the Church, anathematizing all who had taken part in the crime, cutting them off from the communion, and separating them from the society of the faithful.

Henry VI. was troubled, and drove the assassins from his court and states. He permitted the duke of Brabant, in concert with the men of Liége, to name a new bishop. He abandoned Lothaire and his brother to the public rage. Diderich of Hostadt counted on the support of Baldwin V., count of Hainaut. But Baldwin sent him orders to leave Maubeuge, to which he had withdrawn. Lothaire fled, and died soon afterwards in exile. The three assassins were put to death in Hungary. Diderich expired with rage far from his domains, which had been sacked by Henry of Brabant. Baldwin of Hainaut died the following year. All who had been the enemies of the holy bishop disappeared also in a short time. The emperor remained almost alone; he had taken the cross, and would make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, to appease Heaven. But God knew that virtue and piety had not re-entered his heart.

As he was at Messina, then, in 1197, always saying that he was going to set sail thence with his army for Palestine, but always putting off his departure, and completing the

exhaustion of Italy, which he had some years before so cruelly stained with blood, he found himself indisposed at his return from hunting. The empress his wife, Constance of Sicily, a princess of forty years of age, weary at length with the tyrannies with which her husband weighed down his unfortunate subjects, profited by this circumstance to form a conspiracy against him. She caused her son, the young Frederic, who was entering on his fourth year, to be crowned. She thought that, after overthrowing Henry VI., and shutting him up in a fortress, she should be able to reign with her child. The tyrant discovered the plot; and was contriving, with some trustworthy persons, punishments for his wife, when he was himself surprised. His palace was besieged: he was shut up in a tower, and Constance was going to declare his forfeiture, when he managed to obtain an interview with her. He appeared so disposed to a change of conduct, promised so solemnly to pardon all the heads of the revolt, and continue to them the posts in which the empress had placed them,—and, in short, dissembled so well, that Constance became reconciled to him.

But he had no sooner re-entered his palace, than, shutting himself up again with his favourite officers, he determined to rid himself of his enemies that very night, and bathe once more in blood.

Happily for Constance, she had gained in secret almost all the confidants of the emperor. She was warned; and when Henry, holding before him a parchment, on which he was writing with a gold pen the names of the victims, and of the various punishments destined for them, asked a drink, according to his custom, he was served with a flagon of poisoned wine. He drank without feeling anything, and pursued his task. He spoke in broken sentences as he wrote. Constance was to lose her sight and be shut up in a convent; one of the chiefs to be hanged between two dogs; another hanged head downwards; another burnt; another quartered; another tied to a horse's tail. He disposed thus of a hundred and eighty persons, whose death he was arranging, without any suspicion that death was laying hold upon himself.

Soon, however, his eyes troubled him, and his breast was on fire. He demanded refreshments, which did not quiet him. Physicians arrived, and announced a decomposition which they did not understand. "I am poisoned," cried he, in a piercing voice, and drew his dagger.

The favourites, who surrounded him, were so frightened at the sight of him, that they took flight. The tyrant threw himself on a physician, and said, holding him, "Save me, or I kill thee."

"Sire," answered the doctor, mastering his terror, "be calm: I go this instant for a potion which will quench the fire that devours you."

The physician escaped, and did not re-appear.

"The emperor, entirely alone, called all his household. No one was coming. He exhausted himself with howlings. He tried to walk, but his tottering limbs already supported him no more.

"A priest!" cried he, at last, in a gloomy voice; "A priest! I am going to die."

The deepest silence reigned around him. In his agony, the monarch shook on his imperial seat, still holding his dagger, and stammering out words without connection. After some minutes, however, he heard steps. A door opened, and a man appeared. The prince raised his head.

"Listen," said he, showing the parchment: "Cause all these guilty persons to be executed this instant. I wish to see blood again,—I wish to be cured; am I not the emperor?"

But he who had just entered was an old priest, bent beneath the weight of years and troubles.

"I thought," said he, "you called me, that you might confess your crimes."

"My crimes, say you? Who dares speak of my crimes?"

"The Sicilians, butchered, massacred, mutilated by you; Richard the Lion-hearted, that prince of the cross, shut up in a dungeon by your vengeance; the Church's dignities sold; the blood of the just shed, and the bloody lines of this parchment,—are not these crimes? And the blood of Albert of Louvain, have you expiated it? The day on which you ordered that sacrilegious murder, I said to you, 'Another day will come when this crime will rise up before you. You have refused grace; on that day, in your turn, you will ask it, and perhaps will not obtain it.' But no; the mercy of God is great,—it offers you forgiveness."

"O Heaven!" murmured Henry, "Who are you, then?"

"The canon Thomas. I bring you sad words; prepare for death."

"For death! I die without revenge! Where are my officers, my guards, my vassals, my knights, my attendants?"

"You no longer have any?"

"My crown?"

"It is no longer yours."

"And I must die thus," resumed Henry, passing all at once from rage to terror. "O mercy, father, I will confess all. You can do me grace; you are a holy man; you can reconcile me to God. Give me absolution, and God will receive me."

"Wretched prince! may repentance touch you,—but you have to make expiation. You, who have been inflexible, you see it now; here below all abandon you. Confess, then, your sins. May God speak to your heart at the moment when the tomb is about to open. . ."

But Henry VI. had become dumb.

This scene lasted only some moments. The emperor shook, writhed, uttered hoarse cries; and, not able to find, in either heart or mouth, a movement of true repentance, could not throw off the burden of his crimes. He yielded up his soul with a sort of frightful growl, and fell in disorder upon the floor. The old canon of Liége knelt by the dead, and said over him the last prayers. This was on the 28th September, 1197.

As Henry had died under an anathema, no one dared bury him in holy ground; but we read in the legend of St. Albert of Louvain (called also St. Albert of Liége), that, three months after, the good saint appeared to the pope, and said to him, "Since I have forgiven, forgive too." Then the sovereign pontiff gave permission to inter among Christians the corpse of the emperor. As to his name, it has remained on the dunghill of names accursed.

A TALE OF THE "BEGGARS."

BERLAIMONT.—"They are proud of their title of beggars."
NOIRCARMES.—"And yet there's no occasion."
Comedy of the Lean Cow.

BEFORE God wrote the Decalogue (which is the substance of the law) with His own hand, He had engraved its capital precepts on the heart of man; and, notwithstanding the wanderings of the children of Adam, they yet everywhere

knew that they had not made themselves, and they raised to Heaven their adorations and their homage. But this worship was perverted among the scattered nations, and each formed gods according to its fancy: Satan obtained adoration; idolatry, magic, superstitions, spread themselves abroad. As to atheism, that incredible negation, which has perhaps never existed, except as a piece of braggadocio, it was for a long time unknown.

God determined to preserve among a small and faithful nation the deposit of truth, and gave them the written law. The first of those Ten Commandments, which comprise it, obliges to the three primary virtues; namely, Faith, Hope, and Charity; and of all the commandments it is the greatest. If we were not hastening to our tale, but writing a dogmatic treatise, we would show how it establishes the worship of adoration which we owe to God, and the worship of honour which we owe to the holy Virgin, the angels, and the saints; how, in forbidding us to make idols *for the purpose of adoring them*, He does not forbid us to reverence relics, and images of the saints; how, on the contrary, He sees with approbation the homage we humbly tender to His faithful friends, who have become our intercessors with Him.

We shall tell how He reprobates and punishes those who attack, not only Himself, which is the height of insensate frenzy, but His saints, His temples, His ministers, and His worship. We are scarcely out of an epoch in which our eyes have seen God proscribed and his saints outraged: if we were to venture here on the sad catalogue of those puny wretches who, with an incredible madness, laid their bold hands upon the things of God, we should have to record so many visible chastisements, that the reader would be moved. He would bow before that great oracular sentence of St. Augustine, that if God does not inflict all His punishments here below, but resolves to remind us without ceasing that there is another life in which He will do justice, He yet punishes sufficiently before our eyes to show us that the temporal government of His Providence is not a vain word.

But it is not, perhaps, expedient to stir ashes which are not yet cold, and to cite names still familiarly sounded. Be it enough to record some facts of the time which has passed away. A gentleman of England, Henry Spelman, wrote, in 1632, a book on this subject;* and, though he

* "The History and Fate of Sacrilege." Feller has published an abridgment of this very curious work. We avail ourselves of his labours.

was an Anglican, he has shown, in good faith, what happened to the profaners of holy things, in the persecution raised by his party against the Catholics.

After having related several stories of foreign countries and old times, he shows what judgments overtook William the Conqueror, a distinguished spoiler of churches; and enumerates a great number of sacrileges punished in an evident manner. The seventh and eighth chapters, which present a rapid view of the sacrileges committed by the English schism, are full of traits so striking, that we will transcribe some passages.

"Henry VIII. had found in his father's coffers more than two million pounds sterling. The confiscation of the monasteries, the property of which he appropriated to himself, furnished him with more than quadruple the revenue of the crown lands; besides a magazine of treasure raised out of the money, plate, jewels, ornaments, and implements of churches, with their first-fruits and tenths. A man may justly wonder how such an ocean of wealth should come to be exhausted in so short a time of peace; but God's blessing, as it seemeth, was not upon it; for, within four years after he had received all this, and had ruined and sacked 376 of the monasteries, he was drawn so dry, that the parliament was constrained to supply his wants with the residue of all the monasteries of the kingdom,—645.

"This not serving his turn, he was yet driven not only to enhance his gold and silver money in the 36th year of his reign, but to coin base money.

"He had two sons and three daughters; whereof one of each kind died infants; the other three succeeding in the crown without posterity. His base son, the duke of Richmond, died also without issue; and in the 68th year after he began to sack the monasteries, with their churches, was his whole issue extinct, and his kingdom transferred to another nation.

"Let us cast our eyes upon what happened to the principal agents and contrivers of this business. The lord Cromwell, who in the 31st year was created earl of Essex, in the 32nd was beheaded. His grandchild, wasting the whole inheritance, left himself as little land as his grandfather left to the monasteries."

The secular lords who specially assisted Henry VIII. in the pillage of holy places were seventeen in number. Spel-

man gives their names, and relates their end. The greater part perished by the hand of the executioner; others by fatal accidents. Few among them left posterity; and it was extinct before the fourth generation.

The twenty-five barons who countenanced these lords met with an analogous destiny.

The Anglican author afterwards shows, from verified facts, that the unjust acquisition, and even the mere administration, of usurped church property inevitably draws down the curse of God upon the acquirers, administrators, and their posterity. He dwells particularly, in the eighth chapter, on the county of Norfolk; and says that, in 1615, in a circle of seventy-two miles, were enclosed twenty-five monasteries, and as many distinguished houses, which existed at the time of the dissolution in the year 1536; that is to say, seventy-nine years before the time at which he made this calculation. After some reliefs to conscience, he remarks, that all the possessions of the distinguished families mentioned, to the number of twenty-five, existed still in his time in the same families, which had all preserved their splendour and their name; but, with the exception of two monasteries, all the goods of the other abbeys had changed owners,—some at least three times, and many even as often as five or six. He adds, that these frequent changes had taken place, not only through failure of lineage, or by common sales, but more commonly through misfortunes and disasters happening to the possessors.

"I urge nothing," says he; "as not meddling with the secret judgments of God; but relate *rem gestam*, only as I have privately gotten notice of it."

He adds, that he may well be believed; since, having dwelt almost all his life in those districts, he was in a condition to know everything in detail and with the most exact certainty.

We shall not relate with him the particular history of each of the twenty-five monasteries and of their unfortunate possessors. We shall confine ourselves to a transcription of what he says of the abbey of Coxford, known afterwards under the name of Rotha. The duke of Norfolk, though a Catholic, was its first possessor. As he had declared himself in favour of Mary Stuart, whom he wished to marry, Elizabeth had him beheaded on the 2nd of June, 1572. The monastery, confiscated in consequence of this execution, was given to Edward, earl of

Oxford, who wasted all his estate. Roger Townsend bought it. He had two sons, one of whom died without children, and the other had a boy and a girl. The girl was married to John Spelman, who fought a duel with Matthew Brown; and both were left dead on the spot. The son, in another duel in the Low Countries, was mortally wounded; and thus Roger lived to see his posterity extinct.

Before the great sacrilege of Henry VIII., Cardinal Wolsey had asked of Rome the suppression of forty small monasteries, in order to the erection of two collegiate churches. The five persons principally employed by him in this work perished miserably. The first was assassinated by the second, who was hanged in his turn. The third was reduced from a state of wealth to the lowest beggary. The fourth drowned himself in a well. The fifth (Dr. Allen, promoted afterwards to a bishopric in Ireland) was horribly mutilated. Wolsey himself, who had amassed immense riches, was arrested for high treason, being conducted to the Tower, but died on the way; it is pretended that he was poisoned.

We might enlarge, without measure, a collection of parallel facts. A similar story will occur at the Fifth Commandment. Let us retrace a scene of the time of the disturbances in the sixteenth century.

When at Paris, in 1792, some caustic spirits adopted a tone of reproach toward the new deputies who had just filled the place of the Constituent Assembly, on account of their inelegant air and slovenly appearance, and one voice in particular had treated them to the term *sans culottes*, they proudly raised their heads, and made it a title of honour, which every citizen should be obliged to bear; and the article of dress referred to was even proscribed; there were festivals called *Sans-culottides;*—a name still given to the complimentary days of that absurd calendar in which the saints were replaced by the carrot, the cauliflower, the parsnip, the turkey, the dunghill, the hog, and the harrow.

This exaggeration has resulted at all times of great crises. When the Low Countries, under Philip II., were disturbed, through the secret agitation of the Reformed party, three hundred nobles of the provinces arrived at Brussels, with the declared pretence of representing the *Confederates*. This was the title taken by those who

called rebels by the court. They met at the palace of Margaret of Parma, then governor of the Low Countries; they were on horseback, proceeding two by two, and holding each other by the hand, in token of union. Marnix of St. Aldegonda was at their head. As the governor was frightened at their number, the count of Berlaimont, who was near her, and who saw them dirty and ill-equipped, said to the princess, "Why do you fear these people, madam? they are no better than *beggars*."

Some of the three hundred, having heard this injurious expression, cried as they went out "that if one was a beggar for defending his country's rights, they felt honoured by the title." They bought wooden porringers, and at their great dinner at the hotel of Culenburgh, they drank out of these porringers, crying, "*The beggars for ever!*" Next day, the three hundred and their numerous partisans ran through the streets of Brussels, clothed in grey, girt with a leathern strap, with a porringer hanging from it, and wearing that large-brimmed mendicant's hat, which the Flemish Revolution has since carried on the top of its pike, just as the Republic of 1793 carried the red cap. They had medals struck, which represented two hands joined over a wallet, with the legend, "*Even to the Wallet.*" And as soon as the beggars had formed armies, each soldier adorned his buttonhole with a little porringer of metal, of the size of a two-franc piece.

These details were necessary for those who do not happen to know the origin of the Beggars of history. The same men were called Huguenots in France.

The Beggars of the Low Countries were rapidly drawn farther, without doubt, than they had foreseen. This is the course of things. The most part separated from Philip II., and, uneasy under the restraints of Catholicism, adopted the new opinions of Luther and Calvin, made war on religion, and sacked the churches, in the name of liberty. The most important towns of the Low Countries, like those in which the Protestants domineered in France, were the theatres of scandalous scenes, which would have been laughable if they had not been still more hideous and bloody, and if, in these frightful *saturnalia*, people had not at once destroyed the monuments of the fine arts, and crushed without regard the most holy and precious thing men have in the world,—their religious belief. The beautiful church of St. Gudule, at Brussels, was thus

devastated. They broke the holy images, crosses, altars, baptistery, tabernacles: stalls, chairs, chapels, organs, were dashed to splinters; rich missals torn, and precious pictures cut in pieces. Chandeliers, censers, sacred vessels, were stolen and profaned. Drunken Beggars took the holy oils and greased their shoes with them.

Among these pillagings, there was acted a frightful comedy, mentioned by all historians. These men took Heaven on their side, and would have miracles. At the devastation of St. Gudule's, a tall Beggar, armed from head to foot, posted himself, as such do in all the churches, before a revered crucifix.

"If thou art the Son of God," said he to it, "cry, '*The Beggars for ever!*' and I will do nothing to thee."

As the holy image did not answer, the soldier replied, "Ah! thou wilt not cry, '*The Beggars for ever!*'—down with the enemies of union!"

And he struck the crucifix a great blow with his sabre. After this, other profaners put a rope round its neck, and tore it from the cross with cries. A silver crown, which had been placed by devotion on the head of the pious effigy, was divided among the performers, who, though they made loud pretences of being no robbers, took care to despise nothing that would sell.

In another part of the church, a group stopped before a picture of the Assumption. They declared to the holy Virgin that they would respect her, provided she would be of their party.

"If thou art the mother of God," said they to the holy likeness in their usual style, "cry, '*The Beggars for ever!*'"

And, as the picture did not cry, they cut it in pieces with their lances.

In a similar way they broke the painted glass, blotted the frescoes, mutilated the sculptures, and turned a splendid church into a place of desolation and ruins.

They treated in the same manner the relics of the saints, which they threw into the air; but they carried away the shrines of value.

Now, there was among the Beggars a Ghent man, who had preserved some veneration for his patron, St. Michael. Although, in his madness, he had abjured Catholicism, and destroyed the images of the saints, he excepted St. Michael out of his list of proscription. He perceived, above an altar, a large picture, which represented the holy archangel,

the protector of Brussels, striking the devil with a thunderbolt. He wished to save it. With such furious companions as those who surrounded him, he could not procure respect for a reason founded on feeling—a stratagem was needful. The idea struck him, to slip behind the picture, and answer for the image, when one should apostrophize it, a miracle, he thought, capable of heightening the reputation of his saint. He did not hesitate, but glided, without being seen, between the canvas and the wall, while his comrades were pillaging a little way off. Unfortunately for the Ghent man, he had been drunk for two days. He had no sooner arranged himself behind the saint, than he fell asleep; and, although his prominent corporation made the canvas swell a little, no one perceived him. The Beggars came in a quarter of an hour, all drunk too, but able to stand. The least intoxicated of the set impudently ordered the saint to cry, "*The beggars for ever!*"—an injunction which was repeated three times; after which, hearing nothing—for the Ghent man's snoring could not be heard for the tumult—the chief Beggar struck a great blow with his halberd, and thus pierced at once the picture of the archangel and the Ghent man's body. The blood spouted violently. Terror, like a clap of thunder, threw on their knees all the image-breakers, who thought themselves struck by a redoubtable miracle. But the canvas, already old, profited by the rent just made in it to yield to the weight of the Ghent Beggar. It split from top to bottom, and the expiring man ended with falling on the assailant, whom he killed with his fall. The other Beggars, recognizing the cause of their fright, recovered with impudent laughter, and, leaving the two dead men there, pursued their orgies.

What was the end of these wretches, we could not precisely say. But it is easy to suppose it, when one sees in what manner their leaders expired. The three names most renowned in those disturbances were Nassau, Horn, and d'Egmond. The first died assassinated, and his posterity was extinct in the middle of the following century. The other two left their heads upon the scaffold. The last descendant of Count Horn was broken on the wheel at Paris, in the Place de Grève; and the eleven children of Count d'Egmond have not been able to preserve his name upon the earth.

To these examples we might add, as we have already said, striking facts which are performing under our eyes—

the recompense of contemporary sacrileges. But it would be hard to collect them.

Luther himself has this expression in reference to the robbery of church estates: "Experience proves, that those who have appropriated to themselves the estates of the church have become poorer by it, and at last fallen into beggary."

He afterwards recites these words of John Hund, counsellor of the elector of Saxony: "We nobles have seized on the spoils of the monasteries. These monastic riches have eaten and devoured our feudal riches, or these have devoured those; so that there remains nothing to us of either the one or the other."

On this, Luther relates the apologue of the eagle, who, stealing meat from Jupiter's altar, carried off, at the same time, a coal, which set fire to her nest, and consumed her young ones.

THE MISSIONARY'S GUIDE;

A TALE OF SENEFFE.

"Expiation is sometimes as punctually the consequence of crime, as day follows night."—*Pithon.*

And you are astonished, good people of Seneffe, to see yourselves still scattered—a commune torn into seven or eight hamlets—instead of showing yourself off as a little, smiling village in your beautiful quarter of the picturesque Hainaut! But you forget what your fathers have left you. A crime has been committed among you. What have you done to expiate it? The sin which has troubled those very paths, in which you carelessly sport your fancies, was committed in the year 655. That is a long time ago. But long perfumes of virtue are necessary to entirely take away the pestilential vapours of bad actions.

The young King Clovis II. was just dead, and Bathilde, that gentle and pious queen, whom her virtues had raised from the condition of a slave to place her upon the throne, was about to govern us as regent—she who sought only God and solitude. But her sons, Clotaire III. and Childeric II., were yet children.

It was the 31st of October, 655.

A man of God, come from Ireland to bring the faith among our fathers, led in our savage countries the hard life of a missionary, everywhere offering peace, salvation, and consoling discourses, and receiving gross injuries, frightful threats, and bad treatment; traversing a country in which his brother had already met his death; treading a soil already bedewed with the blood of more than one martyr; and walking among men amid more dangers than beset the unarmed traveller in the forests inhabited by the tiger and the panther. Only, some monasteries having risen in certain localities, there were here and there resting-places where he met with brethren.

This man was of illustrious descent.* It is even said that the sovereign pontiff had conferred on him the dignity of bishop; and the Bollandists have preserved to us the touching history of his origin.

"At the time when the little children of Clovis reigned in the Gauls, there was in Ireland a king named Finnloga. The pious Bishop Breudan was his brother. Aedfin, one of the kings of Scotland, had a daughter wonderfully beautiful, named Gelgès, and who was secretly a Christian. King Finnloga's son was taken with her, and espoused her before the altars. The princess's mother alone had permitted this union, which it was necessary to conceal from King Aedfin, an implacable enemy of the faith. But he was soon informed of it, and had his daughter seized, and condemned her to be burnt alive. Neither prayers nor supplications could soften him. In vain his near relations, and personages the most venerated, represented to him that man could not separate those whom God had joined; he ordered the pile to be made ready.

"Then—whether a miracle was wrought by the goodness of Heaven, or some unexplained natural cause operated—the sad Gelgès had no sooner placed her foot upon the brands, than they were extinguished. Her father was not touched by this wonder. However, they obtained from him the life of his daughter, whom he condemned to perpetual exile. She retired with her spouse to good Bishop Breudan's, and gave birth in exile to three sons—Fursy, Foïllan, and Ultan. They were already grown up, when, their grandfather Finnloga being dead, they saw their

* "*Sed longè animo quam carne nobilior.*"
Corn. de Smet, in "Ghesquière."

father raised to the throne. Instead of following him in greatness, they resolved, by Breudan's instructions, to consecrate themselves entirely to the service of God, and they embarked for Gaul.

We have already said that Fursy had attained the end of his labours. Foïllan,* the second brother, was preparing, on the 31st October, 655, to leave Nivelles, where he had taken a little rest. During the three years that had elapsed since the death of the virtuous Iduberga, the spouse of Pepin of Landen, in the convent of Nivelles, which she had founded, it was her daughter Gertrude who was its abbess. She herself, still so young, was soon to pass to eternal life. Gertrude and her mother had given to Foïllan, in 633, the domain of Fosses: he had founded there a church and a monastery; and the tower he built has not yet disappeared.

Before going to rejoin his brother Ultan at the monastery of Fosses, over which he presided, Foïllan wished to celebrate the festival of All Saints, with the blessed Vincent Maldegher, his friend. He resumed his journey, and took, through the opening in those forests which covered the country, the route of Soignies, where he was to receive the hospitality of the night in the monastery of Vincent. He proceeded, praying with lips and heart.

After traversing intricate paths, traced with difficulty, in which he met with nothing but solitude and silence, he perceived at last some human habitations; roofs of straw, huts of wood,—farmhouses. This was Seneffe.

Some have said the name of this ancient territory was owing to the circumstance, that, from the time of the Roman domination, mustard was cultivated there for the dealers in that article. But an old popular ballad says that—

> "This country's called Seneffe,
> Because the *Senne* there makes an F."

This little river, however, makes an F there at present, only to get away from it; and we had rather trust to the legend itself of St. Foïllan, who calls the place *Soneffe;*† because it, as well as Soignies, was in the forest of Soigne;

* In the Latin legends, Foïllanus, sometimes Fullianus; in the old French writers, Foignan. The villagers call him St. Feuillen.

† "Sonefia," and, in a charter of Burchard, bishop of Cambray, in 1182, "Senopha."

the Celtic or Flemish name of which is derived from the sun, who was worshipped there.*

On arriving at Soneffe or Seneffe, Foïllan, who had lost his way a little, seeing that it was getting late, and that he had hardly completed the half of his journey, entered a hut, and asked for guides. The frightful appearance and fierce looks of the savage inabitants of the cabin would have disturbed any one but the missionary. But, like that glass, in Eastern tales, which did not reflect deformed objects, the heart of a saint cannot suspect evil.

Bargaining for a suitable recompense, two guides offered to conduct Foïllan. On their making a sign to two others of their robust companions, these also accompanied them; and the night came,—one of those dull and wintry nights which characterize November.

Foïllan spoke to his guides from time to time along the rough and unequal path; but they said little in reply. He soon found they were yet pagans, and he sighed. He conversed with them mildly about God, his goodness, clemency, gentleness, mercy, and the eternal reward he reserves above all for those who have suffered: he showed them those paternal arms always open to poor mortals; and said some penetrating words about the infinite sacrifice of the cross. He obtained no answer, but unintelligible grumblings, which fell sadly upon his heart. He then was silent, and prayed for these poor people: afterwards he resumed his mild converse. Alas! as blessed Denis, the Carthusian, says, it was throwing milk into a marsh, or honey on a heap of ashes.

The saint arrived, with his guides, at a part of the forest where a stupid and vain idol was worshipped; according to some, Apollo,—Theutates, according to others: perhaps it was Thor.

There, whether it was that these men, to whom Foïllan was offering the light, may have wished to force him to sacrifice, like them, to darkness, or whether they may have thought only of robbing him,† the four guides threw themselves upon him, and despatched him with their clubs; and, insensible to that voice whose last tones were those of prayer for them, they left the lifeless body, and resumed the road to their dens.

* Zon-Vosch, *wood of the sun.*

† "*Quamvis ex fidei Cutholicæ odio trucidatum nemo nos doceat.*"—*Corn. de Smet, in "Ghesquière."*

Night suddenly came on, colder and more severe. A violent wind began to howl in the old trees: a furious hail pursued the assassins, who threw themselves, without remorse, upon the straw of their coarse bed. Winter, hastening its march, broke out with rigour. Next morning a thick snow, which was not to melt for three months, covered the soil of that country. November and December passed without the sun's being again seen.

Meantime, the companions of Foïllan grew anxious about his prolonged absence. They were distressed at not having seen him at the feasts of Christmas, which he commonly celebrated at Fosses. His disappearance frightened the monasteries. Ultan, as he was at prayers, sadly repeating the name of his beloved brother, saw pass before his eyes a dove white as snow, but with wings reddened with a bloody fluid.

A similar vision astonished Gertrude; and, on the 15th January, 656, information was given to the pious abbess, in her cell of Nivelles, that in a spot of the forest of Soigne the snow was red. Next day she repaired thither, guided by a bloody vapour, which was seen a good way off, and which ascended to the sky, like a transparent column, from the place where the martyr reposed.

The body of Foïllan was discovered. It was carried with pomp to Nivelles, whose people wished to possess it. But Ultan desired it might be buried at Fosses, as he had often requested. To arrive at this monastery, it was necessary to cross the Sambre, then overflowed by a slight thaw. It is related that Gertrude ordered to leave the horses free which drew the hearse, and that they passed, followed by the crowd, into the place which has always since been called the Ford of St. Gertrude.

The inhabitants of the district in which the body of the martyr had remained undiscovered for seventy-eight days, raised on the same spot a chapel, which became afterwards a very beautiful church, and to which was added, in 1123, an abbey of Premonstratensians. The colour of the snow, which had revealed the place of the crime, had given to this place the name of Rood (red), in the Latin title Rodius: this is Le Rœux, an important lordship in the middle ages, and still at this day a pretty little village.

You will excuse yourselves perhaps, people of Seneffe, on the strength of what is said by some legend-writers, who, making no special charge against the inhabitants of

your huts, are satisfied with relating that the good saint, at a place where several roads meet in your territory, met with brigands, who assassinated him. But, although it is not said out of which of your cottages the felons came, take, all of you, upon yourselves, the fatal responsibility. If you have expiated, expiate still; or you will remain dislocated into cottages, among Le Rœux, Nivelles, and Soignies, which have become towns.

As to your infamous assassins, seek neither their huts nor their posterity. Their huts have disappeared, their posterity is extinct. God reigns and governs, and the race of the wicked is quickly snatched away. You will hear of honourable families who can count their genealogy for ten centuries, and who could go higher up if they had preserved their titles. But you will never find three generations of rascals. This is worthy of a little reflection.

THE STUDIO OF THE BROTHERS VAN EYCK.

"Invent, and thou shalt live."—*Lemierre.*

"The religious artists are the only ones who have any future; at least, hitherto there have been no great names, except among that class."—*Orsi.*

At a little distance from the great square called the Kautre, at Ghent, at the corner of Cow-street, and of the Bird-market, you stop before the elegant front of a house lately rebuilt, and decorated with two medallions, which represent the celebrated forms of the brothers Van Eyck. There, in fact, for more than four hundred years, these two immortal men have shed a glory upon their country; for it was the house of the first of the heads of the Flemish school, the fathers of painting in the Low Countries, the inventors of painting in oil. Their studio, which perhaps ought to have been respected as the sanctuary of the arts, has given place to some pretty saloons, where the great shades of Hubert and John Van Eyck would be glad, no doubt, of their good reception, but would still groan at no longer finding that inspiring irregularity, those varied and fantastical models, and those loud buzzings with which they were so long familiar.

I.

By the light of a fine May sun, in the year 1420, two men, and more than that, two artists, were seen in the vast studio. The first, who was fifty-four years old, had a mild, but serious and suffering aspect: this was Hubert Van Eyck. The second, younger by five-and-twenty years, and without doubt the son of a different mother,—mild, like the first, but with fine, large eyes, expressive of candour and serenity—was his brother John, and also his pupil. They were measuring, on large panels, the size and effect of a very complicated composition, the sketch of which was there, rough-drawn, in full. A young girl of twenty-two, beautiful and animated, with an artist's head, graceful and sprightly, seemed admitted to their labours. This was Margaret Van Eyck, their sister. Pupil, in her turn, of John, she devoted herself to her brothers, and shared their tastes. She steadfastly declined marriage; as much, no doubt, with a view to the pious life of Christian virgins, as in order to give herself up with more freedom to sacred painting.

"This great work, I take it," said Hubert Van Eyck at length, "vast, magnificent, and dazzling, will occupy twelve panels."

"Well, brother," answered John, mildly, "we will work at it twelve years."

"Twelve years! that's a long time for me," replied Hubert; "and yet it would be necessary that God should leave me them all entire."

"Oh! God will not refuse them to your talents, nor to our prayers," said Margaret: "God knows that your pencil is consecrated only to His glory. You have understood that genius, that gift of heaven, ought never to lose sight of its origin. Your labours are a worship. And then, brother, you will not tire yourself. John will zealously second you; and your pupils will work."……

"No pupils! masters alone in this noble work!" cried Hubert. "John alone shall touch it, and I will direct his hand."

"And I?" replied Margaret; "you will at least let me grind the colours?"

"Yes, my dear sister," answered Hubert, with a melancholy smile; "besides, you know all the secret of it."

"That secret," continued John, "bothers our brethren a little: they easily see that our colours are tempered with linseed oil, but have not divined the rest. This secret must immortalize us."

"It would be a poor immortality," added Hubert, coldly, "if our pictures were bad. But, twelve years!" resumed he, in a grave tone. "And yet this vast composition—I see it before me; it is there; it has life—is painted—is finished. Oh! thought is quick. Thought is the soul, which is like God; for it creates as He does, in an instant, by a simple volition. But the hand is matter; it is man, condemned, since his fall, to slow and painful labour."

As he was going on with his talk, the sound of a little bell was heard. Margaret went down. The two artists were not moved: they knew Margaret would not allow the sacred place of their labours to be entered by any profane persons, who might come to disturb them. She soon reappeared, followed by a young lord, who stepped with caution, as if he had respected the pavement which he trod. This young man was Josse de Wyts, lord of Pamele, of a patrician family of Ghent. He possessed a large fortune, which he spent nobly among artists. It was he that had ordered, from the brothers Van Eyck, the great composition which was now occupying them, and which was to be the first master-piece of the Flemish school, and of revived painting.

He approached the sketch.

"This will be," said he, "beyond what I hoped."

"It will be, indeed, very grand," said Hubert; "but we must have twelve years, my lord. We were just saying so."

"Twelve years! Then the price you had fixed will not be enough. I will double it, sirs; and 12,000 florins will not pay you as I should wish."

The two brothers slightly bowed.

"Here, in advance, is a bill of 500 florins, which may be useful to you. As for the rest, you know, my purse is open."

"But do we want money, sister?" said John Van Eyck, turning toward Margaret, with a slight blush.

The young girl had blushed too, for the hearts of artists always feel some shame at receiving even what is their due. She replied, however, "We should soon want some,—and then these panels are not yet paid for."

"Oh!" said Josse de Wyts, "all these little expenses are my affair, and I shall discharge them. I repeat, sirs, consider what I offer you as a brotherly division. 'Tis I who am your debtor."

"Do you know," resumed he soon, "that your discovery is making some noise? That all the artists wish to make use of your process? That all great subjects now are in nothing but oil?"

"They'll last the longer," said Hubert.

"That does you honour. My father-in-law, Jerome Borluut, as first officer of Ghent, has been just ordering the restoration of several old paintings in the great hall of the Hôtel de Ville. He has been treating with William Van Axpoele and John Martens, but has obliged them, by a deed in due form, to use nothing but oil-colours."

"They will do it," said Hubert, drawing himself up, "according to the method of Theophilus; for we have communicated nothing but that to the corporation of painters. Each time they put in a colour, they won't be able to lay another till the first is well dried. This plan may be good for copyists, but freezes a painter's imagination, and extinguishes his genius."

Then, putting a stop to the conversation, for fear his secret should be penetrated, which he preserved with a little pride, and which consisted, it is believed, in a certain use of melted wax, mixed with oil, Hubert drew Josse before his rough drawing.

"See," said he, "if you find nothing to blame in this plan."

"Nothing but matter of praise," replied the young lord. "But what space will you occupy?"

"You see,—eleven feet of height, and fourteen of breadth. God the Father will occupy the centre of the superior part, seated on his eternal throne, crowned with rubies and sapphires, clothed and surrounded with all the divine splendour; with one hand he will bless the world, and in the other will hold the sceptre which governs the created universe."

"That sceptre will be of gold, brother?" interrupted Margaret.

"Of crystal," answered John.

"Of diamond, if we can," added Hubert. "To the right of God," continued he, "you will see the Holy Virgin also on her throne, also crowned, also radiant; and you

will greet, I hope, the most beautiful, sweet, and heavenly head your eyes have seen.

"On the other side (this will be a noble contrast), the holy precursor of the God-man, the greatest of those who are born of woman, in all the austere severity of his divine mission. This book will be on his knees, and you will touch it, for you like illusion and relief.

"Below these three panels, will be the most extended, which will contain the subject of the work, the *Adoration of the Lamb*, described in the Apocalypse; you yourself prescribed it. It will have three hundred figures. We shall place on it, in four groups, the saints and angels around the heavenly Lamb, who will be in a blaze of light: light and breath can alike be seized by the pencil. The virgins, patriarchs, and prophets, will be on His right. On the left, we shall place the apostles, holy bishops, confessors, and the martyrs, with their palms. Among the prelates, we will not forget St. Livin, the good patron of the town of Ghent; and may he be our support!

"In the background will be seen, as you observe, the luminous towers of the heavenly Jerusalem."

"Doubtless," interrupted John Van Eyck, addressing in his turn the lord of Pamele, "you are trying to recollect this architecture,—you, who have travelled. We have imitated, in fact, the elegant towers of Maestricht."

"But more airy, more light, more perfect," said Margaret.

"This is because we were born at Maeseyck, my lord," resumed Hubert; "and, from the place where our first years were passed, we perceived those towers, which have left upon us a deep impression."

"Admirable!" cried Josse; "besides, to paint a thing well, one must feel it. And the architect of Maestricht will be proud in his tomb of the honour you pay him."

"And then," still added Margaret, "it is said that St. Lambert himself drew the plan of those beautiful towers."

"There will be next," interrupted Hubert, "four folding boards, which will fall forward upon what you have just seen. They will represent,—the first, a group of angels, with instruments of music. St. Cecilia will be there, with the features of our good sister Margaret."

"You can't choose better," said the lord of Pamele, trying a compliment.

"Below, another group of angels, singing before a rich desk. We shall not give them wings, because supreme creatures, who are all spirit, have no need of material means in order to support themselves in the element in which God has placed them.

"Here we must put Adam, our first father; Eve, whose sin had destroyed us all.

"On the panel consecrated to those warriors for whom the gates of heaven have been opened, will be seen St. Louis, our lord paramount, the valiant Godfrey of Bouillon, our compatriot, and the crusader-princes of Flanders. In another compartment, where you count ten cavaliers, you will recognize," continued the artist, smiling, "my brother's likeness and mine. Hermits and pilgrims will fill in the rest."

"Will you forget Mary Magdalene?" asked Josse.

"We bring her in among the holy hermits, and she shall have her vase of perfumes. The pilgrims will be guided by St. Christopher, with his giant stature."

"On the back of the shutters," continued John, "we shall paint the Annunciation. In perspective, we propose a view of Ghent, in which our house will be seen. The bottom will be consecrated to your likeness, my lord, and to that of Lady Isabella Borluut, your noble spouse."

Josse de Wyts, enchanted, grasped the hands of the two artists, and left them also delighted with him.

II.

Next day, Hubert and John, having prepared themselves with their sister by the Holy Communion, began, under the eye of God, the prodigious work they had conceived; and they pursued it with a perseverance of which great artists alone are capable. Never did Hubert design a revered head without having previously purified himself at the holy table. It was thither also that Margaret, when she sat to her brothers, went to draw that serenity which is admired in the virgin figures of the Van Eyck's.

But Hubert did not obtain the twelve years which he had hoped for what he called his picture. The first four panels, which make its capital part, were alone finished, when, on the 8th September, 1426, Hubert Van Eyck, worn out, died at Ghent, leaving to his brother the task of finishing alone a monument begun in common.

The Ghent men then proved that they were interested in the arts as well as the Italians; for they gave the artist a pompous funeral; and they exposed, for more than two centuries, to public veneration, the arm and hand which had held the religious pencil of Hubert Van Eyck.

John, discouraged by his brother's death, felt his pencil fail; and perhaps, without the lively entreaties of Josse, and the tender cares of Margaret, that great masterpiece would not have been finished.

It was only at the end of the twelfth year that one could enjoy this admirable composition. It bore this inscription, written in Latin verse:—

"Hubert, the greatest painter who ever existed, began this work; which his brother, the second in his art, took upon himself to finish, excited by the entreaties of Josse de Wyts. And these verses show you that it was on the 6th of May, 1432, that the finished picture was exposed to the view of the public."

From the time that the production, ordered by Josse de Wyts, was given to the eyes of the curious, it became the pride of the Ghent men, and one of the town's wonders. They encompassed with honours the memory of Hubert Van Eyck, and heaped distinctions on his brother John: Philip the Good became attached to him. He obtained the picture from Josse de Wyts, to give it to the country. And when Charles V. had the beautiful church of St. Bavon rebuilt, in the middle of the city, he destined a special chapel, still called the Chapel of the Lamb, for the picture of the brothers Van Eyck. The Ghent men placed in this same chapel the tomb of Hubert.

III.

But this celebrated picture had also its troubles and vicissitudes. M. L. de Bast has even written at Ghent its interesting history. Charles V.'s son, Philip II., saw it, like all the world, with a sentiment of profound admiration. Determined on residing in Spain, but attached to this picture because he had seen it, and desirous of seeing it again always, King Philip II. wished to have it: for a short time the town of Ghent seemed about to be deprived of it.

The clergy of St. Bavon then threw themselves into the breach. Resolved on defending their dearest ornament, the

men of the temple firmly opposed the requests of the monarch; and an obstinate struggle between some weak priests and a powerful king left the victory to those who had the right.

Philip II., obliged to yield, did so only on the town's engaging itself to give him a perfect copy of the masterpiece for the chapel of his old palace at Madrid. It was Michael Coxcie, a pupil of Van Orley and of Raphael, who was charged with this important labour. He consecrated two years to it; for which 4,000 florins were paid him.

But he had patriotism enough, while striving to reach his marvellous original (and sometimes he succeeded), not to make an entirely faithful copy. He wished that the amateur, curious to know the work of the brothers Van Eyck, should be obliged to travel into Flanders, for that purpose, from the bosom of Spain.

This copy was sent to Madrid, where it excited enthusiasm.

A little while afterwards, the picture of the Adoration of the Lamb, which had escaped the peril of being lost to the men of Ghent, incurred the danger, in spite of the ray of glory which surrounded it, of being lost to all nations. In 1566, as is well known, the "Beggars," or Huguenots, began to pillage the churches; breaking the statues of saints, destroying the precious pictures; men more injurious to the fine arts than to religion;—for the fine arts perish, but religion does not succumb. Admirable monuments, sculptures, panes of glass, paintings, altars above price, were torn, broken, burnt, annihilated, cut into shreds, in those days of scandal and of disturbance. A crowd of towns in the Low Countries thus saw their masterpieces perish without number. The pillage was beginning at Ghent, when a painter of the town, Luke de Heere, protected the picture of the brothers Van Eyck. He gave it an asylum in his house, which the factious, still respecting in him a talent dear to the country, did not dare to sack. Other works profited by the same refuge. Let the name of Luke de Heere remain in honour, since he preserved the first masterpiece of modern painting.

After the re-establishment of the Catholic worship, the composition of the brothers Eyck reappeared, more beautiful from its long exile. It was quite a festival. It seemed that the good fortune of the town watched over the keeping of that monument.

The town of Ghent enjoyed it quietly for more than two centuries, when the French Republic invaded Belgium in 1794. The four principal panels, on which Hubert Van Eyck had exhausted his genius, were transported to the Museum of the Louvre. The folding-boards had been hidden.

A Frenchman understood the grief of the Ghent men at the carrying off of their treasure. He was an officer of Dumourier, and named Belliard. He came back to Ghent in 1803, and saw that the place of the master-piece of the brothers Van Eyck remained empty; for Napoleon restored nothing. In 1808, at the taking of Madrid, Belliard, now become a general, stopped in the chapel of the old palace, before the celebrated copy of Michael Coxcie. He remembered the men of Ghent; and, when the twelve panels given to Philip II. were carried off, he sent them to Ghent, where they were received as a cherished shadow which half consoles.

But, in 1815, the French empire tottered, fell, and from its ruins the picture of the brothers Van Eyck came back to the church of St. Bavon. The four great panels, which Paris had admired for eight years, were restored to their place next year. An immense concourse came to greet them, and all Ghent had a long holiday.

However, the eight folding-boards, secured from the French commissioners, had not reappeared. An incredible thing. "In 1816," says M. Aug. Voisin, in his *Guide for Travellers to Ghent*, "these boards, so precious, were sold, by persons who did not know their value, to M. Van Niewenhuisen, of Brussels, for a bargain of 6,000 francs. He resold them for 100,000 to Mr. Solly, an Englishman, who took them to Prussia. Frederick-William III. paid 440,000 francs for them." In virtue of the law which annuls a sale where the loss exceeds seven-twelfths, the town wanted to invalidate this bargain, but did not succeed. Ghent, then, will not re-enter on the possession of these masterpieces, the loss of which its children deplore, except it conquer Prussia;—a thing not impossible.

SECOND COMMANDMENT.

By God in vain thou shalt not swear,
Nor other oath indiff'rently.

THE RATS' TOWER.

" Cor crudelis, abi tremens,
Deus enim te videbit:
Mors atra jam apparebit
Te stridulum illa ridens."
Old Prose of Lazarus.

ALL elevated souls have a profound contempt for those ignoble mouths and coarse lips which are never more willingly opened than to break the second commandment. But that great precept not only forbids the taking God's name in vain; it also condemns rash judgment, perjury, blasphemy, and imprecations. More parents than one supposes have owed to imprudent curses the calamities of their children. And how many disasters are there, the cause of which would be understood if we looked carefully into their origin! But, boast as we may of our pursuit of truth, we obstinately walk in ways which lead us from it. Old books are full of stories on this subject. When these are cited to us, we deny them, which is very easily done. Torquemada relates, in the third day of his *Hexameron*, that, "two travellers having lain down at the foot of a tree during a storm, one of the two remained there dead, and that, on examining him, it was found he had no tongue, a thunderbolt having torn it out." "It turned out," adds the narrator, "that this man was given to blasphemy." At this day, when material and physical facts only are observed, people will perhaps laugh at this remark. But why should it not be true?

Monstrelet relates that, on the 15th June, 1464, as a blaspheming cit was engaged in a lawsuit at Paris, when

the blasphemies charged against him were mentioned, the hall of the court trembled, a stone fell from the arch, and all the audience took flight. This was a chance—you will say, a coincidence—a singular accident. But are there not some chances *too* singular?

You probably know, at least by name, the two Poppiels, kings of Poland in the ninth century. They were merciless men, who treated the miserable with insensate blasphemies, instead of consolation. Poppiel I. ascended the throne in 816, and reigned only five years. The oath he was commonly fond of was this, "*May the rats eat me!*" This will give you a poor opinion of him, and yet he seems not to have been execrably bad. But his son, Poppiel II., who succeeded him, became an accomplished tyrant. He adopted the coarse expression of his father: whenever a poor man cried for charity from him, he answered, "May the rats eat me, if I give him a farthing!"

As he was young, his two uncles, experienced warriors, had been named as guardians for him; but he did not listen to them. He espoused, in spite of their advice, a woman who gained possession of his mind, governed him, hardened him still more; and who, feeling herself incommoded by the guardians, contrived to render them at first suspected by him, then odious, and at last insupportable; so that he determined on having them poisoned. "May the rats eat me," cried he, "if I am not delivered from them to-morrow!"

The court trembled, and the people were indignant, on learning the death of the king's uncles. Poppiel, with the audacity which characterizes great criminals, accused his guardians of treason; and, enraged at the silent reproaches addressed to him by all faces, said again, "May the rats eat me, if I let them have either funeral-pile or burial!"

The Poles, who loved these princes so basely assassinated, murmured afresh; and the poor, who had been fed by them in great numbers, went one night to bury the deserted bodies of the two old men. Poppiel, who knew of it, had these good people massacred. Then came vengeance.

From the two putrefied corpses there sallied forth an army of rats, which marched towards the court. All the world fled from them in horror. Poppiel II. remained alone with his wife in his palace, when the rats besieged them. They were devoured next day.

Poland, thus delivered, chose for its king the brave Piast, in 842. And this is only a preamble to the history of the Rats' Tower, which is contested by some writers, but which may, nevertheless, be seen solidly established in the Magdeburgh centuriators; just as the event we have been reading is formally recorded in the chronicles of the Poles.

As there were two Poppiels, kings of Poland, so there were two Hattons, archbishops of Mayence. There were even three of them. Hatton I. died honourably in 942; Hatton II. perished in 969, after having governed, for one year only, the church, or rather the principality, of Mayence; for these prelates were too often laics, temporal princes, who, under the shelter of an ecclesiastical title, inflicted great evils upon religion itself.

Hatton II. has given his name to an antique tower, which is seen to rise from the heart of the waves on the right bank of the Rhine, below Bingen, and which is called indifferently the Rats' Tower, or Hatton's Tower.

Those writers who despise the supernatural (they are in fashion at present), simply say that Hatton, at first abbot of Fulda, and afterwards archbishop of Mayence, built this tower in the tenth century, to serve as a light-house for navigators; for then, they add, the passage across those abysses of rocks was very dangerous. But, in the tenth century, people did not sail at night on the Rhine, which was subject to many tolls; and the following is what ancient traditions relate.

"Hatton II. was an avaricious and hard man, swollen with passion and anger, given up to blasphemy, and always shutting his hand when there was question of almsgiving. Now there came a great famine, which desolated Mayence, where Hatton held his court; and many of his subjects died miserably. Hungry beggars, from all parts of the principality, assembled in troops round the town, asking for bread; but the prince refused, although his granaries were full. At last, wearied with their complaints and cries of anguish, and fearing their despair, he ordered them to assemble in a vast barn situated on the border of the Rhine, saying that victuals should be distributed to them there. When they were all in, he had the doors barricaded outside, and ordered that the barn should be set on fire. It was, say the German legends, a spectacle at which the very stones might have wept. Hatton made game of it, saying, 'Do you hear the rats singing?' For he gave this injurious name to the poor beggars.

"While he was yet speaking, enormous swarms of rats inundated Hatton's palace, so that no one could defend himself from them, and their number augmented in proportion as one thought to destroy them. Everybody fled in terror. They appeared to spring in innumerable masses from the bosom of the earth, and darted upon Hatton, uttering a sort of cry of carnage, and climbing upon the prince with a ferocity that nothing could restrain. Hatton, dying with fright, escaped beyond his own domain, and, having arrived alone at Bingen, threw himself into a small boat, and took refuge in the tower he had just built. The rats, without quitting their prey for an instant, followed him swimming, ascended, skipping after him, the summit of the isolated tower, and there devoured him alive. Nor did they withdraw till they had gnawed out his name and emblems on all the tapestries and the walls."

Such is the fact. It is attested in all the chronicles, with a single variation. According to some accounts, the rats, issuing from the barn on fire, flung themselves into the Rhine, and gained, swimming, the tower Hatton had just built. The emperor, indignant at the ferocity of this petty prince, had him shut up in this same tower, where the rats mangled him alive. He was succeeded by Hatton III., the last of that name, of whom we have nothing to say.

If you visit the Rats' Tower, you will hear, through all the neighbourhood, that the spirit of Hatton often appeared, from time to time, on the top of the old edifice. Only, you will find it difficult to distinguish his features, for he shows himself under the form of a slight mist.

But, since we are upon supernatural narrations, let us tell, under the same head of false swearing, another legend, in which the rats still play their part.

THE FLUTE-PLAYER.

"It was a powerful music."
Hoffman.

You have had the fantastic in tales — history, also, has it to offer. She presents—few in number, it is true—prodigious adventures, which nothing has sufficiently explained, and before which the scepticism of critics and the

efforts of the learned have been broken as glass would be when dashed on granite.

Should you go through Lower Saxony some day, and enter Hamel-on-the-Weser, you will fall in with one of these surprising chronicles. We are now about simply to set it forth.

"In the year 1284, the inhabitants of Hamel were tormented by an immense number of rats and mice, so that, at length, they had not a single grain left undamaged. It was an unheard-of disaster — a general desolation. While the magistrates and citizens were eagerly seeking means of deliverance from so cruel a scourge, there arrived suddenly in the town a strange man, very tall, and whose aspect had something gloomy and frightful in it. No one could ever learn either his name, or what country he came from. He was dressed like a Bohemian; that is to say, in black and red, and wore at his side a large case, in which were two long flutes.

"He presented himself before the magistrates of Hamel, and told them that, knowing their annoyance, he was come to aid them; and that, for three hundred gold crowns, he undertook to drive all the rats and mice out of the town immediately.

"His offer was eagerly received, and he was promised the three hundred crowns. He exacted an oath, which was taken; and he then drew from his case a black flute, which he began to play to an unwonted and wild rhythm. Immediately all the rats and mice which were in the houses, under the roofs, in the floors, stables and poultry-yards, granaries and cellars, as if fascinated by the odd melody of the flute-player, issued forth in bands, in the full light of day, hurried tumultuously round the stranger, and followed him as far as the Weser; where, having tucked up his clothes, he entered the river, followed by the numberless army of captives round him, which were drowned in a few moments—so that the town was delivered.

"Having thus performed his promise, the stranger presented himself again, bold and confident, before the magistrates of Hamel. He asked the salary agreed upon, and promised on oath. But, without reflecting on the danger of irritating a man who had just displayed such a power, the magistrates pretended, with bad faith, that they had only promised three hundred *silver* crowns. The flute-player smiled disdainfully, and refused this sum, calmly threatening them with vengeance if he were not satisfied.

The relieved citizens laughed at his threats, and made game of him.

"Next morning the stranger reappeared, traversing the town, in a guise more sinister-looking than his former. He was dressed as a hunter, all clothed in red, with a purple hat upon his head and a red feather, and wearing scarlet boots. He played on another flute, also black, but different from the former, and the sound of which vibrated with such a magic, that all the children of the town, from four to twelve years old, spontaneously followed him, without its being possible for any one to stop or follow them. In the middle of their mothers' cries, he led them out of the frightened town, went away from Hamel, and entered with the children into a cavern hollowed out at the foot of a high mountain; and no one in Hamel has ever since seen any of the children, nor the magician who had carried them off."

What will you say of this story?

It has been painted by a contemporary on the windows of a church in Hamel, with some explanatory lines, which time has not yet effaced.

Another old monument celebrates this fact. It is a Latin inscription, which used to be read at the entrance into Hamel, on a gate of that town, and which attested that, in 1284, a magician ravished from the inhabitants, as we have seen, fifteen hundred children, and led them under the mountain called Coppenberg.

This prodigious story is farther supported by the custom, still preserved in Hamel, of reckoning their years *from the children's departure.*

Some connect this *departure of the children of Hamel* with that singular phenomenon, known in history under the name of the Children's Crusade. But the two events are separated by seventy years. And, in short, in the annals of Transylvania, you will read that, in 1284, some children, whose language was not understood, appeared all at once in the country, two hundred leagues from Hamel. These children, who had perhaps traversed a hollow mountain, like that of Maestricht, established themselves in the canton, and so perpetuated their idiom there, that to this day nothing but low Saxon is spoken.

What will you say of this story?

Ah, poor mothers! God keep your children from the flute-player!

THIRD COMMANDMENT.

The Sundays thou shalt ever keep,
By serving God devotedly.

FRIDOLIN, THE YOUNG PAGE OF THE KING OF PORTUGAL.

The following legend is an old, historical tradition, of which all modern nations have got hold. It is told in the South as well as in the North ; it is particularly popular in Lorrain, in Champagne, and on the borders of the Rhine; but it is no less so in the Iberian peninsula. Schiller heard it at Manheim, and made of it a little poem, which has become national among the Germans.

He was wrong, however, in attributing the deed to the count of Saverne, an imaginary personage, while he might have preserved the truth by respecting the real names of this beautiful story, which are,—Denys, the king of Portugal, a violent prince, whose reign began in 1279, and his wife, Elizabeth of Arragon, who was enrolled by the Holy See in the catalogue of the saints.

We have thought it right, while following as far as possible the touching and lively narrative of Schiller, to re-establish throughout the historic truth.

I.

Fridolin was a worthy servant, brought up in the fear of God by his mistress, the pious Queen Elizabeth, wife of King Denys, who reigned over Portugal. She was so mild, so good. But, had she had the caprices of pride, Fridolin would have forced himself to satisfy them joyfully, for the love of God.

So, in presence of all her household, the good queen praised him ; an inexhaustible commendation flowed from

her mouth. She did not look on him as a servant; her heart granted him the rights of a son, and her serene looks were fixed with pleasure on the youthful page.

These favours kindled envenomed hatred, and made envy boil in the bosom of Robert, the king's favourite huntsman.

One day, as the prince was returning from the chase, he approached him.

"How happy you are, Sire!" said he, perfidiously: "the sharp tooth of doubt does not snatch sweet slumber from you. It is true that you possess a noble and chaste spouse, and that Satan himself would not succeed in the attempt to tarnish such a virtue."

The king, who was rude and savage, knitted his gloomy brows. "What dost thou mean? Should I reckon on a virtue variable as the waves, and which can so easily be seduced by the voice of the flatterer?"

For Denys believed little in virtue.

The other replied, "You are right, Sire; but the madman who, born a vassal, raises his eyes to his queen, deserves nothing but contempt."

"Speakest thou of any one of my court?" interrupted the king, trembling.

"Yes, certainly; does what is in all mouths escape my lord? But if it is concealed from him with so much care, I ought perhaps to be silent about it."

"Speak, wretch," cried Denys, in a terrible voice; "who dares lift his eyes to Elizabeth?"

"Sire, the young page Fridolin. He does not want attractions. Have you not observed how he follows the queen's looks with his eyes? It is even said that he makes verses to her, full of tenderness. The noble princess, without doubt, conceals it from you through compassion. But I repent of what has escaped me. I cause you uneasiness, Sire, when, in fact, you need fear nothing."

II.

The king, bounding with fury, dived into the neighbouring wood, where burning furnaces were always lighted for his service; there his armour was fabricated, there the fire was kept in night and day by the active hand of forgemen; the sparks leaped forth, the blows rang, the heavy

hammers fell in cadence, and, under these powerful efforts, the iron was softened.

The king, gloomy and determined in his cruel resolution, perceives two black forgemen, makes a sign to them, and says,—

"The first person I shall send hither, and who will bring you these words, '*Have you executed the master's order?*'—throw him into that fire. Let him be reduced to ashes; and let no one ever see him again."

The coarse pair reply to this order by a satanic smile. The heart which beats in their bosom has become harder than the iron they shape.

Next morning, which was Sunday, at the dawn of day, Robert, with a hypocritical and deceitful air, says to the young page, "Quick, comrade, don't loiter. The king wants you instantly."

"Repair directly to the forge," said the king to Fridolin, and ask the workmen there, '*Have you executed the master's order?*'"

Fridolin answered, "It shall be done, Sire."

It was Sunday, then. Before departing, he presents himself before the queen. "I am sent to the forge," said he; "what are your orders, noble queen? Can I go directly? For, after God, my service belongs only to you."

The good queen answered, with sweetness,—

"My son there is ill. As you assist at the holy mass, pray for him and for me."

Happy at such a message, Fridolin departs directly. He had not gone far into the country, when the bell sent forth those joyous sounds which called the vigilant faithful to mass.

"Never leave the good God if He places himself in thy way;" and "Put not off to another moment, what thou oughtest to do for the Lord's service;"—Fridolin recollected these two proverbs. He could not miss the mass on a Sunday; and did he know whether he should be back soon enough to attend at the court chapel? He entered, then, the little church; it was, as yet, empty; seeing no one ready to serve the priest, he drew near, and piously fulfilled those holy functions for which God blesses the youthful age.

After hearing mass with recollection, he resumed his journey, bearing with him the quiet of a good conscience. He took the way toward the forge, sanctifying the holy

day by sweet prayers, and humble meditations on the greatness of God.

III.

Half an hour after the page had left the court, Robert, sent in his turn by the king, and impatient to know if his revenge was satisfied, had also taken the path to the forest. He arrived in sight of the burning furnaces as Fridolin was saying his last *Ave Maria*, before leaving the little church. Not suspecting the pious station he had made,—for Robert thought as little about Sunday as his master, he approached, without foreseeing aught, and asked the fierce workmen, whether they had done what the king had said? These men of horrid look, taking Robert for him whom they had been ordered to despatch, answered only by seizing him, without understanding his protests, and, in spite of his frightful cries, threw him in, and buried him with their iron pokers in the furnace, where nothing but the ends of his feet were seen when Fridolin arrived.

"Have you done," said he to the workmen, "what the king commanded?"

They, twisting their mouth with a triumphant air, showed him the burning gulf, and said, "It is done, and well done: the king will be satisfied with his servants."

Fridolin carried this reply diligently to his master, who would find it an enigma. Denys, seeing him come from far, could not believe his eyes.

"Wretch!" said he, "whence comest thou?"

"From the forge, sire."

"Impossible, unless thou didst stop by the way."

"Only, sire, long enough to assist at the Holy Mass, where I prayed for the queen, for your sick son, and for yourself."

The king fell into a profound astonishment, and said, as if struck with terror,—

"What answer did they give thee at the forge?—speak."

"Sire, the men's words are obscure: they showed me the furnace, and said smiling, '*It is done, and well done; and the king will be satisfied with his servants.*'"

"And Robert?" still asked Denys, while a cold shivering ran through his limbs, "Did he not meet thee? I had sent him, too, into the forest."

"My Lord, neither in the woods nor in the fields, did I see the least trace of him."

"Well!" said the king, in great consternation, "God himself in heaven has judged."

Then, with a goodness quite new to him, he took the page's hand, and led him with emotion to his spouse, who understood nothing of the matter.

"This child," said he, "is pure as the angels. He deserves all our good graces; for God keeps him, and His saints accompany him."

GERARD THE DEVIL.

"*Desiderium peccatorum peribit.*"
PSALM CXII.

THE melancholy story now before us, presents some points of resemblance to the ballad of Fridolin: the catastrophe is much the same; with this difference, that the struggle here is between two monsters.

About the middle of the thirteenth century, the town of Ghent was daily increasing, although the counts of Flanders preferred residing at Lille, and the government of Ghent was left in great measure to its lords of the manor;—a kind of elective magistrates at first, but afterwards hereditary; not known more than two centuries before, but who had accustomed themselves, by little and little, to power, tyranny, and invasions.

Philip of Alsace, in 1168, had made these lords of the manor so powerful, that, thirty years afterwards, one of them, Sohier I. (Sigerus, and in Flemish Zegher), wishing to become altogether sovereign of Ghent, revolted against Baldwin IX. This count subdued him, obliged him to shut himself up in a monastery, took from his successors their part in the fines and other rights they had usurped, and reduced them to the functions of simple lieutenants of the prince, or titular lords of the manor. Sohier II. governed thus. But he left two sons, Hugh and Gerard; who soon, while Baldwin was at the crusades, resumed the habit of encroachments, and caused more than one vexation to the court.

While Hugh, as the elder, succeeded Sohier II. in his dignity, Gerard, his brother, who is our present subject, had but a moderate share of limited power. It was well for the people of Ghent that they had not him for a master; for he was so wicked, as to go by no other appellation than Gerard the Devil.

He lived at Ghent, near the Reep, in a huge castle, which has not yet entirely disappeared. The entry to this manor is in the low street of l'Escaut. Built of blue stones, and flanked by two round towers, the middle of Gerard the Devil's castle was crowned by a large square tower. Long subterraneous passages, opened under this retreat, were, it is said, the theatre of numerous crimes. Though Gerard had not the supreme power, he was a free man; and his brother feared him too much to put him down.

Gerard the Devil was born in 1210. He had displayed, while yet very young, a great ferocity; striking and mutilating all that resisted him. His poor mother, Matilda of Fermonde, had died with grief at having given birth to so cruel a child. He was sixteen, when Sohier II., his father, having determined on sending him to the crusades, to get rid of him, was found one morning strangled in his bed. This murder was attributed to Gerard.

One distinctive feature, in this young man's character, was, say the chronicles, that he swore and blasphemed, and could never be persuaded to respect Sunday duties.

Hugh, who succeeded to the lordship, thought his only safety lay in granting Gerard the Devil whatever he desired. A remarkable particular is mentioned, however; viz., that Gerard, who loved nothing, seemed to love his brother Hugh; and he thought to prove his affection for him, on two occasions, by hanging up those who displeased him, so that the young lord of the manor dared no longer manifest his least thoughts before him.

Gerard had established himself in the castle above mentioned, and which has since borne his name. He lived there in continual orgies, surrounded by friends who were at once his companions and his victims; for he ill-treated them or admitted them to his table, according to his caprice. There are people who are satisfied with such amends, and who accommodate themselves to such a life.

Many times, in his hunting-parties, Gerard had been guilty of wrongs against the property and life of the pea-

sants, for which his brother made the best reparation in his power; and, but for the kind of deference he preserved towards Hugh, these would have been more numerous.

At thirty, he thought of marrying. He was taken with a young girl of good family, and asked her in an exacting tone. His name and fierce appearance inspired such terror, that the young girl, flying from the bosom of her frightened parents, put herself in safety at St. Nicholas, which enjoyed the right of sanctuary. He tore her thence with violence, brought her to his castle, and had the marriage blessed. She is known only by the name of Elizabeth. It is said he loved her passionately, and would not have her again leave his manor. As she was pious, he had a chapel built for her, which has been long called Gerard the Devil's Chapel (*de Capelle van Gerard den Dievel*). He himself never set foot in it; but Elizabeth passed there every day several hours in prayer.

She gave birth to a son, who took, like his father, the name of Gerard, and whom the people distinguished by calling him, from his swarthy complexion and black hair, Gerard the Moor.

Gerard the Devil's affection for his wife was now redoubled. We are even assured that he never struck her in his fits of rage. It is true, this moderation is attributed to the effect of a relic she always wore, and which her spouse could not see without being quieted. But one day that she had laid aside this sacred preservative, her husband, having come to her intoxicated, killed her with a kick. He consoled himself for this loss by horrible debaucheries, and became more wicked than ever.

Gerard the Moor, brought up by such a father, was soon, like him, a horrible man. At twenty, he had nothing for which to envy, in wickedness, the author of his days. This latter was delighted with what would have driven any other heart to despair. He encouraged his son in his behaviour, favoured his inclination toward evil, and kept him, like himself, far from the church.

If these atrocious characters appear incredible, let us recollect Robert the Devil, and some others whom the absence of religion had delivered to Satan. At present, such men are considered hideous monomaniacs, and perhaps it is so. In former days, such was not the opinion: the wicked man who had power was regarded as free in his choice of evil.

At twenty, Gerard the Moor conceived a passion for Jacqueline, of Sotteghem. He wished to espouse her, and spoke of it to his father. Gerard the Devil, now long a widower, having gone to Sotteghem to see Jacqueline, became at once the rival of his son. Passion quickly made deep ravages in that disordered heart. He notified to the young man the necessity of renouncing his love. Gerard the Moor was provoked and indignant; and when he knew the motive which actuated his father, he revolted against an authority he was not accustomed to respect. Shall we venture to write it? The father and the son abused and insulted each other; rushed upon one another, fought with teeth and hands; and the young man having refused, when flung upon the ground, to make any promise to his father, was left half dead upon the spot.

When he came to his senses and re-appeared before his father, this latter clearly saw that for the future he had everything to fear from his son. He resolved on concealing what he felt, prepared his plans in secret, put a good face on the matter before Gerard the Moor, and begged him to excuse his passion.

"I lost command over myself," said he; "but I acknowledge, my son, that Jacqueline suits you better than me. You shall marry her, then. However, as I could not see her without suffering, I will go away to-night. I will go to Zealand, where I have relatives."

The young man grew calm at these words. He promised his father to forget everything on these terms; and Gerard the Devil sent his most faithful messenger to the Red Tower (*den Rooden Toren*).

This was a very high building, so called because it was built of brick. It was situated near a bridge-gate, called indifferently the gate of the Red Tower, and the gate of Antwerp; and has left its name to the street, still called Red-Tower-street.

At the top of this tower was a room inhabited by two robust bargemen, who Gerard the Devil knew were fit for a bold stroke. They had often been the agents in his bad actions.

"This evening," said the messenger to them, "an hour after curfew, be up; but put out your lamp. You know my lord Gerard; he will send you a man, who will ask you, *Well, is it ready?* You will seize him, shut him up in a strong sack, and throw him into the Lys, which

flows at the foot of this tower. Here's a piece of gold, and more awaits you; drink gaily, and keep up your courage."

The two bargemen made their bow; their nod was worth a promise. Gerard the Devil's messenger returned, and Gerard was at supper with his son.

An hour after curfew, the tiger, putting constraint upon his nature, said, in a gentle and grave tone, "I am going to leave you, then, my son, and wish my departure to be kept secret. Go to the Red Tower; you will find two bargemen, who are to take me to Zealand. You will ascend their sleeping-place without noise. You have only to say to them, *Well, is it ready?* and they'll do the needful."

It was moonlight. The young man left, enchanted to see himself so soon rid of his father.

On the way he reflected, recalled something unusual in the paternal looks, felt distrust, and, by degrees fearing treachery, decided on not executing his commission. He entered a tavern secretly open for blackguards, in spite of regulations, and notwithstanding the unseasonable hour.

Meantime, the two bargemen had bought a cup of spiced wine. They were drinking, to give themselves courage, and expecting their tardy victim.

An hour after his son's departure, Gerard the Devil, anxious about the success of his stratagem, went out himself, to be assured of what had passed. He mounted the rude staircase of the Red Tower. The two drinkers no sooner heard the step of a man coming to them, than they rose tottering, for they were drunk. One of them took the sack, and held it open. A feeble ray of the moon gave them light through an aperture, and was just sufficient to distinguish objects. A man appeared at last at the top of the staircase, and said, on perceiving them, "*Well, is it done?*"

The two bargemen heard indistinctly; and their only answer was to seize Gerard behind, and push him into the sack. In spite of his cries, fury, and inarticulate protests, he was tightly tied in less than a minute, and thrown out of a window into the Lys.

Next day, no one could tell how Gerard the Devil had disappeared: he was never found.

His son, on re-entering the manor, could easily believe him gone, for there were no more news of him. He in-

herited his goods and his name, being called Gerard the Devil by the chroniclers. It is not known whether he managed to espouse Jacqueline of Sotteghem. But he died without posterity at the end of the thirteenth century.

As far down as the end of the seventeenth, his shade and that of his father were seen, it is said, of a frightful appearance, and quarrelling with each other in the corridors of the old castle. It was some time after the event that the adventure of the Red Tower became known, by the confession of one of the bargemen. This Tower served afterwards, among the men of Ghent, for the punishment of parricides, who were led to the summit and precipitated into the Lys.*

The lessons presented by these two legends do not give much encouragement to readers who laugh at the third commandment. It is true, that those are happily rare exceptions. But the contempt of Sunday has other results, more common, if less fatal; and they are expressed in that old proverb—*Sunday labour never made men rich.*

Look round about you at the prosperous houses. They are not commonly those which debase themselves to the state of mechanics by incessant labour; but those which ever and anon recollect themselves with God, and resume freshness and strength from a sanctified repose.

"One is not a notary to have coats of arms at one's door, but to register them," said a moralist: one is not a Christian because one bears the title, but because one fulfils the duties; and the special consecration of the Sunday is not a counsel, but a law.

No; Sunday labour is not blest. The bodies of workmen at Paris, who obstinately labour on that day, are always those who grow least rich. The overseers who reject the prescribed days of rest, to attain more quickly to fortune and idleness—that other excess—do not arrive at it more than those wrongheads for whom the Sunday is, by way of opposition, the busiest day.

Sanctity of manners, inward peace, and agreeable relations, are entire gainers by the observation of Sunday; provided always that the cessation from work be the effect of a Christian spirit;—for there are some who keep the

* Gerard the Devil's castle, after having long been a redoubtable dwelling, became a prison in 1633, and in 1773 an hospital for aliens. It has been made for some time past the barrack of mining engineers; and the safety of the endangered citizens now issues from a place which formerly inspired nothing but terror.

Sunday in such a manner, that we cannot do better than lay before them these words of John of Montluc, bishop of Valence, in the sixteenth century.*

"Sundays, and other festivals, are mostly among us days of good cheer; and, instead of employing in good and charitable works part of one's ordinary expenditure, with a view to sanctifying those days, it is on them, on the contrary, that expense is redoubled for farces, boatings, dances, and extravagances in dress; with contempt of the poor, gormandizings, cheatings, detractions, bargains, quarrels, and murders. The taverns, and other public houses, take the place of the church; and people meet in them, not to speak of God, or give him thanks for everything,—not to exhort each other to do good, to comfort, help, and assist each other, but to swear, blaspheme, deceive, get drunk, and lose in an hour what has been gained in a week; and all the while children die of hunger, and the wife cannot escape a good beating. This is the way in which the devil has taken to himself the day which had been dedicated to God for His service and honour!"

* "Christian Instructions of the Bishop of Valence on the Commandments, &c." Paris, 8vo. Vascovan, 1561.

FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

Thy sire and mother honour thou,
That thou mayst live continuedly.

ADOLPH D'EGMOND.

"I tremble at the thought: Despair and Crime!
It was my son that forged my chains."
Baron de Reiffenberg, Harpes.

ARNOLD D'EGMOND had inherited the duchy of Gueldres as representative of his grandmother. He had reigned forty years, when his son Adolph began to show the world the frightful spectacle of a son making war on his father. To the former, the life of the old man appeared too long.

In the year 1463, Philip the Good, sovereign of Burgundy and of the Low Countries, almost without exception, still hankered for the duchy of Gueldres. He was showing to his son Charles, on a map spread out before them, that principality, the states of which he wanted to increase, when a porter of the hotel came to announce to him the arrival of Rhinsault, a nobleman of Burgundy, whom he had despatched to Gueldres on a secret mission.

"Well, Rhinsault," said the good duke, "what news?"

"Excellent, my lord," said the agent; "Gueldres may soon acknowledge you. During these seven years that the father and the son have been quarrelling, the country has been growing weary. The old duke Arnold leagued against you in 1456, and this is not his first repentance for it. His wife, Catherine of Cleves, and his son Adolph, continue to make war upon him, and to raise up enemies against him. The people of Buremonde, however, still support him; but the citizens of Nimeguen are devoted to young Adolph. If you wish it, these two towns will fight afresh; for, in spite of Arnold's softness, which has ceded Nime-

guen and its revenues to the young prince, the latter is not quiet. He has even had two of his father's servants beheaded; and would have pushed his filial hatred farther, if the prelates had not enjoined him an expiatory journey to the Holy Land. He there got himself admitted a knight of St. John of Jerusalem; and here he is come back more desirous of reigning than ever."

"We will avail ourselves of these discords," said Philip, coldly, "to drive both father and son away at once."

Napoleon reasoned a little in this style, though the circumstances were not entirely similar, when he seized on Spain, in 1808.

"It would be horrible, father," said Charles the Bold, "to encourage this rebellious son. For my part, I could not bear to see him. You are a father, too, and ought to protect the old man."

"You speak wisely, my dear son," resumed Philip after a moment's silence. "On your account, we will wait. But the duchy of Gueldres suits us admirably; and if you do not have it till after me, I recommend Rhinsault to you, who knows the country."

Rhinsault here made a profound bow.

Next day, Adolph d'Egmond, prince of Gueldres, arrived at Brussels, where Philip was holding his court. He was presented to the good duke. But Charles refused to see him.

Philip the Good, who had received a lesson from his son, did not forget it. He deferred his hopes; and, leaving to time the care of serving him, invested Adolph with the collar of the Golden Fleece, on condition that he would be reconciled to his father: he retained him at his court; and gave him in marriage Catherine of Bourbon, his niece, making him promise that when duke he would acknowledge himself his vassal. He also had the address to induce Catherine of Cleves, whom history represents as a wicked woman, to make her peace with her husband. He knew the human heart too well, did the old duke Philip, not to be aware that this forced reconciliation would bring on a crisis.

A short time afterwards, in fact, the ducal family were celebrating at Grave, on the Epiphany of 1465, their happy re-union, and made a gala-day of it. Duke Arnold was delighted; although in drawing the cake, it was Adolph

who had had the bean ; the old duke embraced his son and forgot all his wife's bad conduct. He was provoked within himself at his astrologer, who had said to him, "since your son rises against you, it is because he is not your son, but has been changed ; and a foreign blood flows in his veins."

He secretly promised himself to banish, next day, the rash man of art.

He withdrew joyously to his chamber, leaving the young people absorbed in the pleasures of the feast. He was beginning to doze, wrapt in sweet dreams, when all on a sudden, heavy steps resounded through the corridor ; then followed a violent knocking.

"Let me sleep," said he, "I am too tired now for your rejoicings."

The only answer was a bursting open of the door.

"You are a prisoner!" cried an armed man, as he rushed with drawn sword towards the bed.

Arnold not recognizing the soldiers, who soon filled his chamber, imagined that the town and castle of Grave had been just surprised by some enemy.

"Has anything happened to my son?" Such, it is said, was his first question.

But at the same instant, Adolph himself entered. "Father," said he, "surrender : it is necessary." And without adding another word, he made the old prince rise. He had hardly time given him to dress,—was placed on horseback, and carried off.

He then knew he was in the hands of the archers of Nimeguen, to whom his wife and son had secretly opened the gates of the palace. He perceived that these men, his implacable enemies, were carrying him prisoner into their town. Tears of affright came into his eyes ; he supplicated, but all he could obtain from his son's satellites was to be conducted to the castle of Buren.

There he was shut up in a dungeon into which day hardly entered, overwhelmed with hardships and outrages, and refused clothes. They grudgingly gave him some coarse food ; for his keepers knew they were sure to please by treating him with harshness. It is even related, that his savage son was often seen, as he passed by the foot of the tower, to threaten the old duke through the bars of the window which let in a little light, and howl at his weeping father, the most infamous abuse.

This, unfortunately, is matter of history.

All Gueldres, nevertheless, except Ruremonde, had acknowledged the authority of Adolph.

The old duke had groaned six years in his frightful prison, when the duke of Cleves, his brother-in-law, and some of his relatives, able no longer to contain their indignation, took his part, and came in arms to deliver him. Adolph marched against them, and furious wars were kindled still on the strength of this hideous scandal. The criminal son had the advantage, and horror was spread wide. The pope and the emperor then wrote to the duke of Burgundy, praying him to put an end to these excesses. Philip the Good was dead; it was Charles, his son, who reigned. He recollected the impression he had received from his father's calculations and the aversion he had always felt toward the abominable son of Arnold d'Egmont. He sent, as lord paramount, to Duke Adolph, a formal order to release his father from prison immediately, and repair with him to his court. He still hoped to effect an arrangement between the father and son.

The duke of Gueldres, not daring to resist Charles the Bold, came, then, to meet him, carrying in a chariot his almost dying father.

The old man had come to rival his son in hatred. Perhaps he thought by this time that the astrologer had spoken true. These two enemies could not meet before the duke of Burgundy without overwhelming each other with abuse, in presence of the court assembled to judge them. Arnold, whom years and chains had turned into a miserable shadow, rose in his wrath, and threw his glove to his son, as a pledge of battle, demanding the lists against him. The duke of Burgundy in vain did all he could to assuage this mutual horror. He obtained, however, from the old man the promise to leave to his son the government of Gueldres, and content himself with the title of duke till his own death, with the town of Grave for a retreat, and six thousand florins for pension.

But he could not prevail over Adolph, who cried, "I would rather throw my father into a well head-foremost, and myself after him, than allow him anything. He has been duke more than four-and-forty years, and it's my turn now."

After all the representations made to him, he would only grant a pension of three thousand florins, with the

express clause that his father should never appear again in Gueldres.

The horror inspired by this young prince had attained its height. Charles declared, at last, for the old man.

Adolph then escaped from the court, and fled, under the habit of a Franciscan, to regain his states. But the duke of Burgundy, promptly informed of his flight, sent an order without delay to all the countries under his rule, to seize and imprison him. He was recognized at the bridge of Namur, as he was giving a florin to pay his passage; for a mendicant monk — whose appearance he had assumed, without being acquainted with his privileges—was exempt in that town from the toll-duty. He was arrested then, and shut up, by Charles's order, in the castle of Namur, where he was strictly confined.

On the 7th December, 1472, three months before his death, the old Duke Arnold, by acts in due form, ceded, without reserve, his Gueldres estates to Charles of Burgundy, who, faithful to his father's recommendation, sent into that duchy the Burgundian Rhinsault, with the title of governor.

In the May of the following year, a chapter of the order of the Golden Fleece, held at Valenciennes, declared the old duke's act good and valid, and condemned Adolph, for his impious conduct toward his father, to perpetual imprisonment. Adolph had two sons, the elder of whom was only eight. They were also disinherited; and the presence of Charles's armies soon pacified the country.

But, after the unhappy death of Charles the Rash, Adolph d'Egmond found means of escape from his prison at Namur. He dared to aspire to the hand of Mary of Burgundy, who needed a protector. He was living for the future, without thinking that the Divine justice was wearied out. A few days afterwards, in the first battle which saw him in arms, Adolph d'Egmond, wounded, thrust through, and murdered, was found no more but among the dead.

THE EXILED POET.

"A virtuous father is a precious boon,
Heaven gives but once, and takes away too soon."
Ducis.

We read, as follows, in a voyage to Morocco, published in 1690:—

"The territory of Enos, some leagues from Morocco, had long been infested by brigands. The cadi, Sidy-Molu, dispersed them; and, having seized on their chiefs, prepared to judge them. He was surrounded by soldiers, commanded by a young officer called Hamedi, and whom he loved for his bravery and zeal. The first brigand brought up was a man of fifty, father of this same Hamedi. From regard for the officer, the cadi would not condemn the father to the punishment of death; he only ordered him to lose a hand, in the place devoted to executions. The old brigand left the hall of audience, and a soldier was preparing to follow him, when Hamedi, addressing the cadi, asked, as a favour, the permission to execute the sentence himself.

"'Consider,' said the judge, surprised, 'that this man is your father.'

"'I know it. But he has become guilty, and I no longer look on myself as his son.' The officer blushed deeply as he spoke these words. 'I shall not again find,' added he, 'a similar opportunity of proving my devotion to you, and of showing my hatred toward your enemies.'

"These words made all that stood by tremble. The cadi, unable to shake the young man's resolution, gave him the horrible commission he solicited. But, while he was following his father, Sidy-Molu ordered a soldier to get ready his yataghan.

"Hamedi soon re-enters, bearing a lopped hand, which he tranquilly delivers to the judge. This latter, in his indignation, makes a sign, agreed on. A blow of the yataghan strikes off the young man's head, the corpse falls, and a hand is found wanting to it.

"He had asked to execute the sentence, only that he might save his father. He had said to him, 'Withdraw; the cadi, for my sake, is willing to pardon you.' Imme-

diately he had cut off one of his own hands; and, covering up the wound with his large burnoose, had returned with a quiet air to present to the cadi the bloody member he was expecting.

"Sidy-Molu contemplated this spectacle with profound horror. The old brigand, having learned all, re-entered with lifted hands, and threw himself on the body of his son, uttering cries of despair. Hamedi was buried with honour in a private place, near which a mosque was raised. His father did not long survive him."

Of the various instances of filial piety we find scattered in many volumes, that we have just related has seemed to us one of the least known, and most remarkable. To devote oneself for a virtuous father—to save infirm parents from the flame—to die for one's mother—these are only sweet and sacred duties. But, for a timid young girl to drink a glass of blood, that she may snatch from death the author of her days; or, for an honourable and virtuous young man to mutilate and degrade himself that he may spare a criminal father—this is heroism.

Filial love, however, has been made a virtue, only because there are monsters; and because unnatural sons are not, as yet, sufficiently rare exceptions.

Heaven, nevertheless, notes them; and offended parents cannot be ignorant that there is a God who takes in hand to avenge them. Often this vengeance is visible.

A young Russian lord, having become master of his estates, expelled his father from the house. As he was dragging him by the hair over the stone threshold, the old man's head knocked against the third step: "Stop, my son," cried he, "I did not drag my father beyond this."

A knight of Tyrol, impatient of the long life of his aged father, had banished him to a sort of dungeon at the bottom of the poultry-yard; and there, every morning, he sent him by his son, then a young child, a kind of broth in an earthen pot. The good man died; and the knight ordered the pot, which was a troublesome memorial to him, to be broken. "No, father," said the child, "let us keep it, on the contrary; it will still serve when you are old."

The story of *the horse-cloth cut in two* has the same moral. A nobleman, when his son married, had given him all his estate. His daughter-in-law, now become a mother, thought he lived very long, and the young lord opened his heart to such insinuations. After having overwhelmed his aged

father with insults, he drove him from the castle. The poor man, having asked for some garments, which were refused him, begs, at least, to keep the cold off him, a bad horse-cloth, that was in the stable. The youngest son, ten years old, is sent to fetch this horse-cloth, but brings only the half of it. His father, ashamed himself of this outrage, reproaches him with it. "I had kept the other half for you," said the child; "for, when you are old, I shall drive you out, in your turn, as you drive your father."

It is added that these words made the ungrateful son reflect. God grant that this may be the true catastrophe; and that his goodness may soften the hard hearts!

Let us now come to a modern anecdote; serious, sad in its effects upon the heart, and humbling to the human mind. We shall record it only with regret.

There was a great crowd at the French theatre in Paris on the 24th November, 1696. A new comedy in five acts was being represented for the first time; *The Flatterer*,—such was its title. The author was only twenty-five; but gave promise, it is said, of remarkable talent. It was added that, full of little weaknesses and open to adulation, he had, without thinking of it, painted himself in his work. The frequenters of the pit circulated through the house the name of the precocious great man: he was called Verniettes. But his friends knew that was a borrowed name. Some excused him by the example of Poquelin, who had called himself Molière; Boileau, who signed himself Despréaux; Jolyot, who became M. de Crébillon. Others laughed at the young poet, and did not like his appearing vexed with his origin, and ashamed of his father's name. Regnard, who had brought forward the *Gamester* the year before, communicated to Dufresny, to whom he had been reconciled, the anagram of this name of *Verniettes*, in which he found *Tu te renies.**

The house was full, as had always long been the custom at the first representations of the French theatre. The father of the poet who was to be judged, a worthy man, whom his son had neither informed, nor invited to the feast, had felt himself moved, nevertheless. The honest citizen felt, in the glory of his child, all the sweetness his heart could taste. It was by imposing upon himself long sacrifices and hard privations that he had been able to give him the education of which he was going to produce the

* *Thou deniest thyself.*

fruits. This good father had entered the theatre, for his money; and was listening, with a beating heart, in the very middle of the pit. At the applauses which burst forth, he swooned with joy; and made known, in his eager pride, to those around him, that he was the author's father. He soon saw himself the object of all sorts of looks; affectionate compliments, good-natured felicitations, completed his intoxication.

"How comes it," said one of his neighbours to him, "that, having the honour to be the father of the poet we are applauding, you are not placed there in the first box-circle?"

"I will tell you the truth," replied the excellent man. "My son had not informed me. Perhaps the poor child was afraid of a failure, which would have caused me pain. But in such a case, ought I not to have been the first to console him? Perhaps also he dreaded my not being at my ease before his friends, as would be very natural. It is well known I am not of the Academy. But I only want to be among the first that embrace him; and then I leave him to his society of wits."

One of those who received these ingenuous disclosures was the poet Lafosse, whose *Polyxene* had just been played, in expectation of *Manlius*. He was touched by so true a tenderness; and, though the man smelt of pitch, as some wags said in the distance, as soon as the performance was over, he led him to the green-room. The sole topic was the complete success of the work. The author appeared soon, surrounded by young lords, who congratulated him.

"Ah, my dear son!" cried all at once a voice full of emotion. And the honest spectator of the pit was seen making his way through the crowd, and darting with open arms toward the poet surrounded with incense.

But, alas! why does inflexible history oblige us to write it? Why does pride, that germ of so many miseries, reign so often like an obscure mist in the neighbourhood of merit? The poet of little weaknesses grew pale, fell back, stretched out his hands to prevent the old man's approach, and stammered out these words:

"Who are you? I do not know you."

"What, John Baptist!" resumed the good man in consternation, "you don't know your father! I am your father, John Baptist!"

But the author had fled, repeating "I do not know you," —and leaving his poor father in tears in the middle of a brilliant and dumb circle, who had not anticipated such a scene.

Some of the bystanders put to the worthy man, with a serious interest, questions to which his swollen heart did not permit him to reply. A charitable nobleman took him home in his carriage. All that was known was that the poet's father was an honest, but poor, shoemaker; and that that poet, who was thus beginning his reputation with a union of success and disgrace, was called, by his true name —John-Baptist Rousseau.

For some days his friends did not see him again. What was passing in his conscience? An expiation was beginning there; but he had not the courage to acknowledge himself at once, and make reparation. He thought what he had just done would be forgotten. He knew not that the world, loose as it is, is, nevertheless, inexorably severe on certain points of external morality, like that he had just outraged. His ingratitude was unfortunate for himself. His friends no longer gave him any other name than his own name of Rousseau, which he was obliged to bear. He became gloomy: it was in vain that his defenders said that his father had some workman's habits which might cause him humiliation: he clearly saw that everybody looked on him with a certain air, that good families avoided him, and that he was certainly marked with a stain.

Pride and bitterness agitated his heart: he made epigrams, and this procured him enemies. Reverses happened to him: the success of his comedy was not sustained: it was in prose: he thought to improve it by putting it into verse, but did not succeed. He produced other plays, which were indifferently received, and in the present day all these frivolous works are forgotten.

Meantime he had taken lodgings in a lonely part, and concealed his place of abode from his father. The poor shoemaker died sadly, without having seen his son again. At this news John-Baptist Rousseau lost some of his hardihood: the voice of his conscience stunned him: a revolution took place within him: broken by remorse, he felt how closely pride touches upon meanness. He recalled to memory his father, what he owed him, what he had cost him; his tenderness, his continual labours, his efforts to pay for that instruction which had been the means of

vexing his heart. The years of his childhood, his earliest days, cares, and caresses, all the images of the past, arrayed themselves before him. Then he would have been glad to make reparation, but the time was past: his father had died under the affront, and had no longer a voice to say, "It is forgotten."

O misery! misery! when death places itself between two hearts which have not been reconciled!

He wished to make expiation, but how to do this without sacrifices? God was not the only party offended by what he had done; that God who has said, "Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest live long on the land which I will give thee." This God, however, was his refuge: he prayed: he sought consolation in the reading of the Psalms and other holy books. He made his magnificent sacred odes; and the public, while admiring these great and sublime poems, said, "What a pity so high a genius should have committed so base an action!"

But he was not to live long on that land of France which God had given him. As we have said, he had made epigrams: thrown on his own resources after his fault, he had fallen into the society of writers who frequented the Procope coffee-house. His bitter and biting humour had made him dreaded and hated. He had been accused of tearing to pieces in secret those he flattered to their faces. A storm gathered against him. Imfamous couplets, directed against the grandees of the court, were then circulating in Paris. These couplets had been read, read again, retouched, applauded at the Procope coffee-house; and it was known and said that Rousseau had put his hand to them: others, however, were the really guilty parties. As no one avowed them, they were attributed to him: in vain did he deny it and defend himself: no one would believe him, and in 1712 he was banished from France.

He wandered at first in sober Germany, where nobody then spoke French. He was more fortunate at Vienna. His name, illustrious from his odes, obtained for him a reception from some great lords, whose generous hospitality a little consoled him. At their head was observed the count du Luc de Vintimille, a French noble, who declared himself his protector, and to whom he testified his gratitude by a celebrated ode. He sought to forget himself a little in throwing himself into the new society which was opening its arms to him; but he had not the principle necessary

to maintain himself in it. He lost his Christian sentiments, went back to his epigrams, and made new enemies. He lost the good graces of Prince Eugene, who was doing him good, but who reproached him with a want of sincerity.

Being no longer in great favour at Vienna, he left Germany, and passed, in 1722, to Brussels, with letters of recommendation. The marquis de Prié, plenipotentiary of Austria, received him, gave him a lodging at the court, and neglected nothing to render agreeable to him a sojourn in the Low Countries. But John-Baptist Rousseau, fallen back into the bad qualities of a heart little elevated, acknowledged the bounties of the marquis de Prié by writing against him. A dispute had risen between this lord and the count de Bonneval, another exile, to whom the poet wished to pay his court by ruining the plenipotentiary with Prince Eugene. It was himself that he ruined again. His lodging at the court was taken from him. He consoled himself for this; for at that moment fortune smiled upon him. The house of the duke of Arenberg was opened to him, and a cover always laid for him at that lord's table. Noblemen, at that time, were literary and lovers of letters. Through the intervention of the duke, Rousseau had sold to a London bookseller, for a bargain of 10,000 crowns, an edition of his works. He had placed this fund with the Ostend company, and he had ten per cent. of interest. The look of ostentation had come back to him. But, in 1726, he lost his little fortune by the failure of the company. He had attached himself to the count de Bonneval, one of those scamps who are in all times and countries the terror of respectable families. About this same time, Bonneval, who had had slippery dealings with all the courts of Europe, and was pointed at everywhere as a man without religion or morals, was expelled from the Low Countries, withdrew into Turkey, crowned the scandals of a disordered life by becoming a Mussulman; and Rousseau found himself in a state of isolation.

In all we say of this great poet, we treat only of his moral life. If we had to discuss his merit, far from following the critiques of the last fifteen years, we would maintain the judgments of La Harpe, and would always raise John-Baptist Rousseau to the first rank of lyric poets. But this is not the place for literary discussion; let us, then, leave the poet, and fall back upon the man.

He was permitted, after Louis XIV.'s death, to come to

Paris. The regent had even had him written to, in the year 1717, that he might re-enter France. The banished man's pride was not satisfied with this grace: he wished the process of the *couplets* to be revised, and that he should be cleared. It was not judged expedient to revive those scandals. Rousseau kept himself, then, proudly out of France, well knowing that, at Paris, he would by no means be received; and yet he travelled thither from time to time. He came thither in 1726. He addressed himself to Rollin, whom he had already visited sometimes, and in whose hands he wished to place his will. In this deed, he disowned the couplets anew. Rollin, full of indulgence and compassion, penetrated too with that doctrine of the theologians which M. de Lamartine has admitted into his verse,

"Repentance is another innocence,"

was well disposed not to believe him guilty; but he forbade him, in that will itself, to accuse Saurin, as he was doing; for he attributed the couplets to this person.

"You may," said the rector of the University of Paris to him, "exculpate yourself on the testimony of your conscience; but to accuse another, without proofs, of the wrongs you are expiating, would be to risk a frightful calumny."

That very day, Rousseau's host, to entertain him a little, had invited to supper a few respectable friends. Amid the splendour which surrounded him, Rollin was still simple and modest.

"You see these knives," said he to the poet as they sat down: "they are no longer fashionable; but I stick to them, and respect them, for it was my father who made them."

Then, before the first presidents and great lords, he did not think he lowered himself by speaking of his excellent father, an humble cutler of White Mantles Street; who must have polished and set many a blade to pay for his son's education.

"Ah, my God!" said a learned Englishman, who was among the guests, "great men have no need of birth. One of the poets who delight London is the son of a shoemaker, and made shoes before he made books. He has too great a heart to blush at it."

John-Baptist Rousseau became pale and trembled: he changed the conversation, and led it to his unhappy process.

John-Baptist Rousseau is an example of this remarkable fact—that there are often in great writers two men,—the public man, whose works charm, and the private man, whose actions shock us; as if genius must redeem itself by a sad counterpoise, which is a hard lesson for pride.

THE DEAD MAN CROWNED.

"Happy the child who merits without reserve the benedictions of his father."—*Kotzebue.*

THERE are hardly any amazing facts, wonders, and great historical actions, of which the glorious counterpart is not found in our annals. Our *fasti* are a rich and fruitful mine, which will not be exhausted for a long time.

You have read, perhaps, the touching history of Inez of Castro, celebrated by a thousand affecting recitals, by an episode in the Luciad, a tragedy of Lamothe, a drama of M. Lucian Arnault, and a picture of M. de Forbin. You know how (to speak after the manner of the chronicles) Don Pedro, of Portugal, son of Alphonso IV., was taken with the seducing Inez of Castro; how he obtained from the holy see the permission to unite himself to her by a secret marriage; how his father, informed of this union, did everything to dissolve it, and not succeeding, connived at the assassination of Inez; how the inconsolable Don Pedro, when king, expiated by cruel acts of vengeance the murder of a woman whom he ceased to lament only when he ceased to live.

He did more than avenge her. As soon as he had ascended the throne, in 1557, he assembled the estates of his kingdom, declared to them in presence of the nuncio his marriage with Inez, had a deed of it drawn up, and solemnly published throughout Portugal; had the children born of that marriage acknowledged as capable of succeeding to the crown; and, after having sworn an oath, which he kept, never to have another spouse, had the body of the unfortunate princess exhumed. He encompassed with the diadem the brow of the dead Inez, and ordered sovereign honours to her inanimate remains. All the bodies of the

state saluted her as queen; after which she passed from the throne into a pompous mausoleum, where she waited for Don Pedro.

A ceremony as imposing took place among us nearly three centuries before; only, there was nothing to be observed in it but the noblest sentiments of the soul, and the purest virtues; there were neither acts of revenge nor the shedding of blood. Hatred and fury did not mingle themselves with love.

We must take things a little farther back, in order to display the extraordinary soul we wish to parallel with Don Pedro.

Baldwin, of Constantinople, having died in 1206, imprisoned by the Bulgarians, it was Jane, his eldest daughter, who succeeded him in the rich counties of Flanders and Hainaut. Jane died in her turn in 1244, without leaving any children; and Margaret, her sister, became countess of Hainaut and Flanders.

This princess, whose life has not left an unspotted memory, and who was called, on account of her violence and fits of passion, Margaret the Enraged, Margaret the Gloomy, as frequently as Margaret of Constantinople or of Flanders, had espoused Bouchard d'Avesnes, her guardian, one of the first lords of Hainaut, descended from heroic ancestors, and esteemed for his wisdom and valour. She had had two sons by him, John and Baldwin. The court of France had done everything to favour this marriage, which prevented Margaret's giving her hand to an English prince; an alliance which England had projected, but which was matter of extreme dread to France.

Nevertheless, this marriage had something irregular in it. It was soon made known, that Bouchard d'Avesnes, destined for the church, had already entered into orders, received the sub-diaconate, which obliges to religious celibacy, and concealed this circumstance in order to espouse his ward. Whether this allegation was correct or exaggerated, it was made the foundation of a demand for the dissolution of the marriage. It appears, however, that there was just ground of reproach against Bouchard d'Avesnes, as his proceedings will soon show.

Margaret, either because she did not love her husband, or because her conscience was frightened, urged him to go to Rome and submit himself to the Holy See, the supreme judge of a situation like his. Bouchard went; the pope removed the obstacles, granted him the needful dispensa-

tions, and confirmed his marriage. But, by way of penance for his fault, he condemned him to one year's pilgrimage to the Holy Land; and ordered him to send back Margaret into the protection of her family.

Baldwin completed the pilgrimage, and died some time after, on a second journey he made into Italy. According to some, he was assassinated on the way; according to others, he died in a prison at Rupelmonde. But Pope Innocent IV. declared his children legitimate.

Some time after, Margaret espoused, for her second husband, William of Dampierre, by whom she had three sons. The first died of his wounds on returning from the great crusade of St. Louis. The other two became the objects of all their mother's affection; who, acting like a stepmother toward her sons by Bouchard of Avesnes, sought every means of dispossessing them of their portion of the inheritance; pushing her madness so far as to dispute the legitimacy of their birth,—she, their mother,—when the Holy See had pronounced upon it!

There soon arose bloody wars between the mother and the sons. King St. Louis strove to put an end to them, by a decree he issued as lord paramount. He adjudged Hainaut to the elder of the d'Avesnes, and Flanders to the eldest of the Dampierres; a sentence which was only half received by the mother and sons.

John d'Avesnes died in 1256, without having been solemnly acknowledged as Count Hainaut. He was interred without pomp at the entrance of the church of Leuze; his mother Margaret still reigned.

This woman's hatred was a little softened at the appearance of a grandchild, John II. d'Avesnes; a young prince who succeeded his father John the First, but was richer than he in virtues and in tenderness. He wept most bitterly his father's death, whom he had tenderly cherished. But he was too loving a son to murmur against his grandmother. The submission he showed, though he was known to be valiant-hearted and of an energetic soul, disarmed Margaret's rigours, who allowed him the title of Count Hainaut. He did not govern, however; and if he administered, it was only by obeying as long as the old countess lived; this was down to the year 1280.

Then, after twenty-four years, John II. had not forgotten the last moments of his father. As soon as he found himself saluted as sovereign of Hainaut, he gave expression to his first vow; which was for the re-establish-

ment, in some sort, of the sacred name of his father, whom alone he would be considered as succeeding.

Before consenting, then, to the pomp of his own installation, he piously rendered funeral honours to his grandmother Margaret. Then he departed, followed by all his numerous court, with the peers of Hainaut, the officers and the knights, the lords and the people, to the cemetery of Leuze. There, laying aside his cap, for he had not yet assumed his coronet as count, he knelt before his father's tomb.

"O my father," said he, "behold me sovereign of the beautiful country which was your domain. It is from you I hold it. During your life, which was too short, you could not be acknowledged as count of Hainaut: I will that, although dead, you should be so now; that the coronet should rest upon your cold head; that the sceptre and the sword should be touched by your icy hand; and that in our annals my name should be preceded and blest by yours."

After this address, he remained kneeling, praying, and weeping, while the remains of John d'Avesnes were exhumed in silence from the coffin, in which they rested for four and twenty years embalmed.

When the pale visage of the dead had been uncovered, the young prince rose, and covered it with kisses. He placed the coronet upon the brow, the count's mantle upon the shoulders, and, having had it placed in a rich litter, had it carried to Mons, following with head and feet bare.

At the gate of Mons, the magistrates and townsmen, carrying with one hand a sword, and with the other a torch, received with veneration the inanimate prince. On arriving at the great square, where homage was paid, John II. first saluted his father with the title of count of Hainaut. All the court, officers, knights, and people, proclaimed as sovereign count the deceased John d'Avesnes. The customary respect and honours were paid him, and next day the procession left, in the order of its arrival. The corpse went through all the towns, and was everywhere received as if it had been living. The public acts done in those days were registered in the name of John the First.

When it was time to put an end to a ceremony so mournful, John II. had his father magnificently buried

near Alice of Holland, his mother, in the choir of the Dominican church of Valenciennes. He was himself then acknowledged as sovereign through the whole country, in the midst of public rejoicings.

His reign realized what it promised. John II. made himself beloved, administered good justice to all, enlarged and improved the town of Mons, established order in the coinage, and granted numerous privileges to the people. He was very fortunate; for he joined Holland, Zetland, and Friesland to his dominions.

He had several children by his wife, Philippine of Luxembourg. His son William, who succeeded him, in 1304, and was surnamed the Good, was so dear to his subjects, and so honoured by his neighbours, that the electors, in an interregnum, named him Vicar of the Empire; and he might, it is said, have sat on the imperial throne, if he could have made up his mind to some necessary steps, and had not preferred remaining in his good country of Hainaut.

THE KNIGHT OF THE SWAN.

"Idol of noble hearts, great chivalry!"
Chaussard, Secondary Poetics.

THE Fourth Commandment not only embraces the reciprocal duties of fathers and children — it also extends to religious, political, and domestic governments. To these last duties belongs the following legend.

We see in Tacitus the usages, or, at least, the principles of chivalry in vigour among the Germans; and Boucicaut, in the preamble to his "Revolted Amazons," pretends that the companions of Theseus were already knights errant. But we shall content ourselves with the authority of Tacitus for admitting the possibility (for we submit only a presumption) of the establishment of the order of the Swan a little before the Christian era.

We read, in old chronicles, that Salvius Brabo, who, say they, gave his name to Brabant, and was invested by Julius Cæsar with the government of Belgic Gaul, wishing to establish concord among the chiefs or lords of his vast

domains, bound them by the oaths and vows of chivalry, and granted them for decoration a swan, the symbol of candour, attached to the neck by a chain of gold.

Some monuments of the fourteenth century represent the Knight of the Swan in his steel armour, with the little black cap, the long dark-grey mantle, the red plume over the ear, and the swan suspended at the neck. And, supposing we must not attribute to Salvius Brabo the honour of having instituted this order, other investigators grant it to Charlemagne. But here we are equally in want of certain documents. Madame de Genlis trusted only to vague traditions, when she placed the action of her romance, the *Knights of the Swan*, at the court of the immortal son of Pepin the Short. It appears evident, however, that chivalry existed, formally organized, under that great prince. He made Prince Louis, his son, come from Aquitaine, to arm him knight with the sword, the spurs, and all the equipage of a man of war; a ceremony of which we find examples in the history of our earliest chiefs. However, here is the most generally admitted legend of the Knight of the Swan:—

In the year of our Lord 711, Thierry, duke of Cleves, having taken part in the wars of Pepin of Herstal, was converted by a holy personage to Christian meekness. Coming to repentance, he left his estates to his only daughter Beatrice, who was but sixteen, and retired, by way of penance, into an unknown solitude.

The young duchess of Cleves would have done everything in the world to turn her father from his pious resolution. But she knew of it only through the will he left her at the time of his retreat. She there learned the old man's determination, and found a kind of letter which engaged all his vassals to protect her.

After several days given to tears, Beatrice set herself to think of the government of her states. She informed her vassals of her father's address to them; sent for them, and had them enjoined by a serjeant-at-arms to come and take the oath of homage to her according to law. But the lords, who had dreaded Thierry, but had little fear of a young girl, refused, for the most part, the feudal duty; and the neighbouring princes resolved to profit by these troubles, and despoil Beatrice of her duchy.

Seconded by some of the rebel lords, they came to arms. She called her faithful ones, and withdrew to the bank of the Rhine, in a little well-fortified castle, where her

enemies, having ravaged the country, determined on besieging her. She armed herself to encourage her people; but often appeared on the indented ramparts, wearing over her beautiful tresses, instead of a helmet, only a simple streamer of white gauze, which confined them at the top, and floated in the wind. Among the warriors who had risen against her, many could not see her without being taken with her, for she was beautiful and gentle: they offered her their hand, and discord soon entered the camp. No one of them, however, spoke to Beatrice's heart. Like Penelope in old time, the young duchess of Cleves never saw anything in her adorers but odious objects.

She asked them time to form a decision.

But after some delays they exacted a resolution which she had not strength enough to take, and these irritated rivals recommenced the siege, which they carried on with such fury that, at the end of a month's efforts, the walls, destroyed, offered a frightful breach. Beatrice was expecting to see her retreat in the enemy's power next day: her faithful defenders had almost all succumbed; and she had determined to die rather than give her hand to any of her persecutors, when heaven seemed to come to her assistance.

The old Duke Thierry had retired, under the pious habit of a hermit, into a place, little accessible, in the forest of Ardennes. There he was praying to God on the edge of a pond; and had with him a young lord of Luxembourg, named Erlim, who, having met him in the forest, came to see him every day. While they were engaged in contemplation, they saw a young swan pursued by birds of prey: the beautiful bird escaped from them for a long time; but, at last, exhausted, he took refuge below the feet of Erlim, uttering cries of distress. This was for Thierry a ray of light: he seized Erlim's hand:—

"Young man," said he, "the moment is come to tell you who I am. My name is Thierry: when I lived in the world, I was duke of Cleves. I left only one daughter: her neighbours and vassals are in arms against her: young man, you must be her support. Go and take your arms."

Erlim rose at the old man's order, and soon came back armed. Duke Thierry put into his hands two letters for Beatrice; one which he was to present on appearing before her, the other which he was to make use of only in case he

saved her. He gave him the *accolade*, dubbed him knight, and blessed him. After this the young man, having assembled in haste some brave companions, left with them in a vessel, and went down the Rhine.

Beatrice, then, was sadly seated on the highest tower of her desolate retreat, preparing for her last hour: she was contemplating with a melancholy eye the majestic river flowing at her feet. All at once, in the silence of a fine summer night, which the moon enlightened with its purest rays, she perceives a long vessel advancing at full sail: soon she can distinguish the warriors it brings; the mast swings, surmounted by a swan of dazzling whiteness; a vast scutcheon with the same arms is suspended a little lower. Below is a knight of handsome appearance, whose eyes seem fixed on Beatrice. A herald with a powerful voice utters this cry—

"A messenger from Duke Thierry!"

At this word, which wakes the hostile camp only to scatter terror through it, the young girl descends distractedly. She has the gates opened; seats herself on her ducal throne to worthily receive her father's friend. Never had knight of so noble port appeared before her. He tells his name, and delivers the hermit's letter, which contained only these words:—

"May he I send you, my daughter, be your liberator!"

Beatrice kissed the letter, covering it with tears of tenderness and joy; happy to know that her father yet lived, but sad at being no longer under his powerful protection.

She fulfilled, with as much grace as nobleness, toward Erlim and his companions, the duties of hospitality.

After a substantial repast, at which she herself waited on her guests, they slept for some hours, when the cry of alarm announced the enemy's coming to the assault. Erlim, whom the insurgents called the Knight of the Swan, because of his buckler and helmet, which bore that emblem, soon appeared at the head of his friends. He repulsed the besiegers; and, making a bold sally, wasted their camp, burned their palisades and tents, and put them entirely to the rout. After this, he published through the whole country this proclamation: That every knight who should pretend to the hand or estates of the duchess of Cleves might present himself in the lists.

During forty days Erlim combated without intermission

the princes of the coalition and the rebellious lords; and the Knight of the Swan was still the victor.

Then all the enemies of Beatrice asked for peace, and the duchy of Cleves was rescued. Then also Erlim presented Thierry's second letter. It was written in these terms:—

"Let him who has saved your estates, my daughter, be still their defender. If it is Erlim, he is worthy of your hand."

The young girl was moved at the reading of this, though she had read only with the eyes. She made an effort over herself; and, presenting the letter to the knight, was content to tell him that she obeyed her father. The happy Erlim became duke of Cleves, and gave the swan for emblem to the knights who had seconded him; and since his time the arms of Cleves have always been a swan.

FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

A murderer thou shalt not be
In deed, nor even willingly.

THE MONK'S LAST WORD.

"O yes, certainly, the last word of a man who dies as in the presence of God, is carried on high all entire."—*F. Englegrave.*

"God, who sees all, will see this too."—*Song of the Blind.*

THE Ash Wednesday of the year 1649 was darkening the city of Rome with its aspect, so melancholy and yet so cherished among the Catholic nations; and yet at noon, that same day, in a vast room which served as studio to a painter, and which looked upon the Tiber, five joyous strangers were just going to seat themselves before a festive table.

It was clear that the Roman carnival, so bustling, so lively (a childish joy which the northern nations obscure with scandals and orgies), had not been enough for the five guests; for they were going to prolong it on that day of penance when the Catholic Church prays, asking the forgiveness of excesses, and reminding the faithful, by putting the ashes on their foreheads, that man is dust, and that the mortal part of his being must return to dust; *Memento, homo, quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris.*

The room into which we are introducing the reader was raised one story above the Tiber, which washed the foot of the house. Three large windows opened on the river, which was swollen by the winter rains; and the artist who inhabited this dwelling might enjoy, without leaving his house, the calm pleasure of angling; as he sometimes did.

He had copiously decked his abode with sketches and objects of art. But it was seen, from the character of these objects, that their master was not one of those be-

lieving painters of whom Rome is always the country. Nothing of that sublime magnificence which faith inspires warmed the cold representations of material nature displayed upon those walls. The sketches were of feasts, hunting-parties, attacks of robbers, rural diversions, and grotesque scenes.

In the middle of these compositions, varied, however, and often full of life, strutted a fiddler with his bow. The artist was also a musician, and was wont to put himself into spirits by playing an air before seizing his pencil. Ill-shaped, a little hunchbacked, like an ape in the length of his arms and legs, proud of his rough moustaches drawn up like hooks on the two sides of his nose, and which threatened the sky, this painter, nice and correct in design, vigorous and transparent in his colouring, redeemed the disgrace of his outward form by a jovial spirit, a noisy good humour, and appreciated talents. He was named Peter van Laar. The Italians had surnamed him *Puppet*, either on account of the singularity of his mind and form, or of certain of his pictures still described as *Puppet-paintings*.

Puppet was thirty-six, and had lived for sixteen years in Rome. Poussin, Claude Lorraine, and Sandrart were his friends. But it was not with them that he practised his irregularities. His guests on that day were Roelant van Laar, his elder brother; Claes van Laar, his younger, born, like him, near Naarden, in Holland; Andrew Both, born at Utrecht, and John, Andrew's brother; two artists of renown, who were about Peter's age. The five young painters were thus all Dutchmen. Let us add, that all the five were of the sect of Calvin.

A little more good sense would have made them feel, however, that, although they had no faith, yet, at a time when their country did not tolerate the children of the Roman Church, they ought at least to have respected in Rome, while enjoying its hospitality, the laws of its sovereign; and these laws make Ash-Wednesday a fast-day there. But accustomed to the mildness of the Roman clergy, they went without fear in their own ways; and their table was served with many dishes reserved from the preceding day, and among the rest shone an enormous ham from the Tyrol.

"Before we begin," said Andrew Both, inspecting the table, "Peter is going to play upon his violin a little and rather lively air, to put life into us."

"True," added Claes, "we shall be more in cue."

The others supported the proposition so well, that Puppet, who had not the fault of wanting to be pressed, began to play, with contortions and gambols, a burlesque dance, which had complete success. At half-past twelve, the five artists at table began their dinner, to the noise of bursts of laughter, which presaged a tumult at the end, and some broken glasses at the dessert.

"We are wrong to excite ourselves so strongly," said Puppet, however. "Let us have a little more respect for the usages of the country in which we dwell. See how quiet all our neighbourhood is."

"Bah! bah!" replied Roelant; "it is known we don't give in to the Roman superstition. Artists are free. Send round the wine."

And the noise went on increasing.

At four, the five friends were more than half intoxicated: some sang detestable songs, others disputed or whistled; and the hall resounded with the hoarse tumult of their confused voices.

At the same hour, a poor Franciscan monk, passing in front of the house, was struck with this mixture of savage cries. Not suspecting that Christians could be feasting on such a day, he fancied there was a quarrel there, and made haste to enter, with the hope of recommending peace. Directed by the noise, he arrived at the door, opened it, and recoiled with horror at the sight of such orgies.

"Enter, father," said John Both with effrontery, and stammering with drunkenness; "you supply me with a good model; come and drink a round."

And as the monk did not come forward, John Both rose briskly, ran to him, took him by the arm, and led him in front of the table.

"Sirs," said the religious, gravely, "I thought I was coming among Christians. But I see I was mistaken."

He made a movement toward the door.

"We are Christians as well as you, father," replied Roelant, retaining him; "but we don't think we offend God in eating a slice of ham."

"What enters the body can't be a defilement," said John Both, in a doctoral tone.

Claes van Laar added with a careless air, "Was it not said to the Apostles, 'Eat what you find?'"

"You seem to me hardly in a condition to reason, my

brethren," answered the monk. "Forgive me for telling it you so freely. But, even were you cool, I should confine myself to telling you, that when the Church commands, it is for her children to obey, and not to dispute. One augurs ill of a family where the children dispute, of a house where the servants reason, and of an army in which the soldiers deliberate. As for the rest, it is well known that it is not any kind of food that defiles, but disobedience to lawful authority."

"It seems to me," said Andrew Both, in a voice all at once become gloomy, "that the Capuchin father is insulting us."

"No, my brethren, I pity you," replied the monk; "and on such a day I beseech you to abstain from giving scandal. If instead of me one of the fathers of the Holy Office saw you, you would probably be subjected to fifteen days' penance in one of their convents."

"He is right," curtly replied Puppet: "let the father go, and let us leave the table."

"Not at all," cried Roelant; "but what thou sayest frightens me; and if he is right, as thou pretendest, this monk is going to denounce us. John, shut the door. Claes, lay hold of the father. It is not fifteen days' imprisonment we should have to undergo; we should be shut up till Easter; I know the usages."

"And who knows," pursued Andrew Both, "whether we shouldn't be banished from Rome? We are Calvinists."

At this word the monk's face was contracted with grief. Claes, however, held him forcibly by the arm, though he made no resistance.

"We must be sure," said he, "that he won't sell us. And this can only be by making him do as we do. Roelant, fill the glasses; John, give the father a slice of ham."

These words were received with applauses. But at the same instant the visage of the monk, so mild and simple, seemed impressed with a marvellous dignity. He repelled, with the hand which remained free to him, the dish which was offered him; and, after the drunken artists had emptied their glasses in drinking his health with a mocking voice, he said to them,

"If it is true that you have deserted our common mother, the holy Roman Church, if you are no longer in her

bosom, I ought only to pray and weep for you. But you cannot be ignorant that children who have remained faithful obey."

"That shan't prevent," said Roelant, striking the table with his fist, "his eating the slice of ham."

"He shall eat it," continued Claes; and, taking up on the dish the morsel that was cut, he brought it near the lips of the monk, who recoiled with horror.

A frightful scene developed itself at that moment, and such as one cannot well describe. The night came on; the sky was streaked with gloomy clouds; a stormy wind arose, and had just violently opened a window. The table, loaded with fragments, presented a scene of frightful disorder. The five heated artists bore, in their dull eyes, husky voices, glances, movements by turns tottering and violent, all the hideous marks of drunkenness. To these were added the fear of being denounced, proud malice, and hateful anger. The good religious, in their hands, was the object of an obstinate vengeance. Now up, now held down on a seat, stretched on the ground, driven against the table, he no longer heard anything but threatening words, or saw anything but ill-omened gestures.

Andrew Both pressed to his lips a glass of wine; Roelant brought the slice of ham close to his teeth; Peter van Laar, more gentle, tried to persuade him; and Claes sought to open his mouth with violence to make him eat it by force. The monk silently resisted; and, when an instant of relaxation was granted him, was content with repeating these words, "My God, forgive them, and save me!"

After this frightful struggle had lasted half an hour, Puppet, who alone preserved a lingering ray of reason, sought to put an end to these excesses. "We are going too far," said he; "let us leave the father at liberty, or else we shall repent it. Let us be satisfied with his promise not to betray us."

"No, no," cried Claes: "after what we have just done we are too much compromised. Besides the violation of the laws of his church, he will accuse us of outrage on his person. He must sin along with us, or become acquainted with the points of our daggers."

He drew his own while thus speaking. Roelant, John, and Andrew Both imitated him.

"A murder!" cried Peter van Laar in Dutch, "you

would meditate a murder! you would be assassins! But you are destroying yourselves, my friends."

The daggers were arrested in their progress at this short speech.

"Sirs," then said the Franciscan, "though you may have deserted the Holy Church, you still, perhaps, know the gospel. Well, God is here: He sees you, and it is he who has said, 'Whoever shall use the sword shall perish by the sword.'"

"The father is right," replied Peter, troubled: "down with the daggers! you shall not stain this dwelling with blood, you shall not be infamous murderers."

"Ah!" pursued Claes, whose excitement was not lessening, "the Tiber!"

And pointing to the window, below which rolled the river swollen by the hurricane, he was dragging the poor monk in that direction.

"Ah, the monk will sell us!" said Andrew Both, springing up.

"Ah, he will deliver us up to the Inquisition!" added John and Roelant.

And, all the three uniting their efforts to those of Claes, they pushed the religious to the edge of the window.

"My God!" cried the monk, divining their project—

What he said more was carried off by the wind of the storm: the Franciscan had fallen into the Tiber, into which the four artists had thrown him.

Peter, struck with horror, took no active part in the crime; but he did not prevent it.

And when his four friends had withdrawn from the window, smitten with a sudden terror, which chilled them and recalled their senses, he went as if to see whether the river were not giving back its victim, who might yet demand vengeance.

But he saw nothing but the gloomy night. He remained some minutes bending over the flood. Reassured at last by seeing nothing float, and hoping the crime had no witnesses, he returned toward his companions, all fixed on their seats in a melancholy silence.

A quarter of an hour passed without any one opening his mouth. At last Puppet regained the power of speech.

"What have you done?" said he.

No one answered except Claes, who said,

Roelant, [illegible] to pray and weep for you. But *you* cannot be ignorant that children who have remained faithful [illegible]."

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But he saw nothing but the gloomy night. He remained some minutes [illegible] by seeing nothing [illegible] ness, he returned [illegible] their seats [illegible]

[illegible]

"It is unfortunate; but at least we are delivered from fear."

"Provided," resumed Peter, "the crime be not discovered."

"The crime!" repeated the others, looking at him with stupor, and fell back anew into their motionless attitude.

Thus a frightful murder had been committed, at the end of a debauch, by five eminent artists.

Peter van Laar had an extended reputation: his works were in request, and high prices given for them. All the amateurs wished to have from him a rural feast, or an encounter with brigands, or an anglers' scene, or a hunting-party. His compositions, full of life, the truth of his skies and landscapes, the delicacy and spirit of his figures, the charm of his colouring, were all admired. The museum of the Louvre, at Paris, is still proud of possessing two of his pictures.

His brothers, Claes and Roelant, painted in his style. Less perfect than he, they also had a flattering celebrity.

John and Andrew Both, pupils of Bloemart, and emulous of Claude Lorraine, who saw them rival his successes, have left works which will always be praised for fine execution, striking effects of light, lively and brilliant colouring, and figures full of spirit and delicacy. United by nature, friendship, and talent, these two brothers worked always together, and formed, so to speak, but one artist, John painting the landscape, and Andrew the figures. The connoisseurs have never ceased to look upon *a view of Italy at sunset*, painted by these two masters, as a capital picture and a masterpiece.

And these were the men who, at the end of a drinking-bout, were the assassins of an inoffensive monk.

They separated, on the evening of the murder, in a condition of mind which could not be without disquietude and terror. It was not till two days after that the lifeless body of the Franciscan was found, a little lower down. The certainty of not being even suspected did not bring back serenity to the brow of the culprits. Without doubt they were the subjects of remorse: but what is remorse without expiation and penance?

Sad and grave, the five artists, formerly so joyous, spoke no more of festivities nor of rejoicings. Instead of seeking each other, as before, they fled from each other; and Puppet soon announced that, long wanted in his own

country, he was going to return to it. The others, to whom a residence in Rome had become painful, declared that they would leave also; and they began to set their affairs in order.

"It is at least fortunate," said Peter sadly, "that you did not embrue your hands in his blood. For he said, 'He who uses the sword shall perish by the sword;' and the last words of a dying person are terrible."

"Ah, bah!" answered Claes, "superstition! According to thy doctrine, because we drowned him we shall perish by drowning also." He began to laugh aloud. But his gaiety had no echo. A gloomy cloud passed over the brow of the others, who said as they rose, "Let us speak no more of that, and let us go hence: the sooner the better."

If we were inventing a story, what follows would seem very odd. We might be accused of leisurely constructing a chronicle of violence, to support the imposing opinion of Joseph de Maistre on the temporal government of Providence. But we are here only simple narrators of historical facts, real, known, authentic, avowed, incontestable, and which can be verified by all the world. We shall relate them unembellished by any ornament.

The day after this last conversation the five friends dispersed. Claes van Laar went to find, in his villa near Rome, an old lord, who was to pay him the price of a picture. He was mounted on an ass. In passing over a little wooden bridge, which joined two rocks, the ass stumbled, and precipitated himself with Claes into a torrent just formed by a storm-flood. The body of his drowned brother was brought to Puppet as he was packing up.

After he had had him interred, he hastened to Holland with John Both.

Roelant van Laar and Andrew Both, under particular engagements, had set out, one for Genoa, the other for Venice. They had payments to get in these two towns. Neither was destined to see his country again. Six months after, Puppet was settled at Haarlem, when he received the news that his brother had just been drowned at Genoa.

In the spring of the following year (1650), John Both, who was opening a studio at Utrecht, found, in a packet brought from Italy, the statement of his brother Andrew's death, who was drowned at Venice.

Struck with terror and giddiness at reading this, John

Both, out of his senses, fled from his house, flew like a madman across the country, and precipitated himself into the Rhine, where he perished.

There remained only Peter van Laar.

Devoured by a black melancholy, and become, say the historians, insupportable to himself and others,—he, who had been known so easy and so gay,—Peter lived, because God, perhaps, was leaving him a little time for repentance. But, on the Ash-Wednesday of the year 1673, his cook-maid having served him up a ham at dinner, he rose, uttering a cry, and went and threw himself into a well, whence he was taken out drowned.

What will our friends the philosophers say to all this?

ONE-BY-ONE-STREET:

A CHRONICLE OF THE STREETS OF BRUSSELS.

1777.

"That murder'd man's unhappy shade,
The wound thy ruthless arm has made,
Still in thy memory shall dwell,
And ceaseless make thy present hell.
The blood that by thy hand was shed
Asks vengeance on thy guilty head."

Jacques-Jacques, the Faut-Mourir.

ONE-BY-ONE-STREET, now more obscurely called at Brussels, One-Person-street, because it is not easy for two to pass in it abreast,—that more than narrow lane which, crossing the old Skinners'-market, leads by crooked paths from the Herb-market to the long street of the butchers, was in 1777 the theatre of an event which perhaps does not deserve to sleep wholly in oblivion.

About the middle of February in that famous year, in which commerce so boldly and splendidly developed its powers, and speculation, contrivance, despatch, and arduous preparations, all had their turn; the year in which the booksellers particularly took an unheard-of flight, and abundance brought in the taste for travels;—a man who found himself, as it were, crowded in the public messen-

gers' office came down to the suburbs of St. Giles, not wishing to take coach at the gate of Hal, where he was doubtless afraid of being inspected on his appearance in Brussels. This gate, one of the most ancient monuments of the capital of Belgium, and the only remnant of its second enclosure; a structure neither Gothic nor Roman, a mass of styles without any precise character; this curious gate of Hal had then become a prison,—as was also the case with the gate at Anderlecht, now demolished, and as had been the case before 1759, with the Steen-gate and the old gate of Traurenberg.*

This prison of the gate of Hal gave a lugubrious aspect to the entry into Brussels. One felt, as one passed under its arch, that above one, like an immense weight, were a crowd of wretches who could only breathe a little air through narrow gratings. Some of these were seen eagerly stretching their arms and legs through the cross-bars of blackened iron, as if to gain some vigour from a contact with the air. Others, with the help of a string, let down, from the high windows, a frail little basket, and asked an alms of the passengers.

The man we have seen stop at St. Giles's was a Bohemian, who appeared to be about thirty years of age. His name was Schulman. Although he had the pale-red eye, his appearance altogether was pretty good; and no one but an experienced observer could see in him anything but what he called himself. He announced himself simply as a travelling merchant. He drank a small pot of beer at the neighbouring tavern; and then, determined to walk into the town, he raised his eyes toward the highest stories of the gate-prison, from which he was surprised to hear a voice, which he knew, call him by his name of Georges. He who thus hailed him had at the same time let down, tied to a cord of which he held the end, an old tobacco-box. Schulman made a sign of intelligence, put four pieces of small coin into the box, and rapidly passed on. He had recognized in the prisoner his old friend Ripp.

While he is pensively pursuing his way along the High-street, we will transport ourselves into an ancient house of l'Étuve-street, built by the Spaniards, and which still shows with some pride its projecting front, adorned with

* It owed to this its name of Traurenberg (Mountain of tears). It was previously called the Gate of Cologne.

arabesques, carved niches, and irregular volutes, which are not destitute of grace. There were found united round a little table the worthy Louis de Vogel, a tradesman of Nuremberg, with whom Schulman had done business on his last journey; Mary-Anne, his wife; their two children; honest Mathias, the ringer of St. Gudule, and his young wife, Clara de Parck, fair, sweet, and lively, everywhere admired, but exclusively attached to her husband and her duties.

After having got through some marvellous stories, all these peaceable personages were gravely entertaining themselves with those chimes of the collegiate church, which had been completed only ten years, but which at length left them nothing to envy in the other towns; an innocent music, a joyous monotony, an honest pleasure, which most towns no longer enjoy; a gratuitous harmony for the whole of a great city, but for which one must now go to Mechlin, Ghent, Antwerp, or Tournay.

At this moment the door-bell was rung with violence. It was almost night.

"By Medard and Benedict!" cried the ringer, swearing by the two bells he loved most of all his chimes, "your ring, mynheer, has something of the sound of my little drone of a Gabriel."

"At least, he who pulls rings like a master," cried Louis de Vogel, as he went to open.

It was a footman in grand livery, who brought, on the part of Count Louis of Cobenzl, son of the deceased plenipotentiary to the government of the Low Countries, a small sealed parcel. The young count, born at Brussels, loved that town, often came back to it, and gave himself passionately up to the culture of the mulberry-tree, and the breeding of silk-worms, wishing to introduce into the countries of his birth an important branch of French industry. He was amiable and lively. Though only twenty-four, he wrote poetry, and composed light dramas, which he made people play on a little stage, at the parties to which he admitted the citizen-families. Not having been able to observe, without being struck with her, the fresh and ravishing Clara, he sent, for a representation which was to take place that very evening, four tickets to Madame de Vogel and her husband, and the ringer and his wife. Clara, young and light, leaped with joy, and paid no attention to the sad look of her husband, who had to sound his chimes all the

evening for an interment of some distinction fixed for the morrow.

Then a ring of the bell, much more modest than the former, announced a new visit. It was Schulman. He was received like a joyous companion.

"I would have asked you to supper," said the master of the house to him briskly; "but we are going to the play."

"The Court-play," added his wife.

Schulman congratulated them. After this he went to salute Clara, who blushed as she recognized him; for she had already seen him on his former journey. Wishing to conceal the embarrassment caused her by this man, she turned towards her husband, whose pre-occupation she at length observed. When he had explained why he could not accompany his wife, the good Mary-Anne, without taking time to reflect, said quickly,

"Very well, M. Schulman has arrived just in time: he will avail himself of your ticket, and we shall at least pass the evening with him."

Clara blushed anew, and said she had rather deprive herself of a pleasure which could not be shared by her husband.

"But, Mathias," said Louis de Vogel, altering his mind, "why don't you get a substitute at your chimes?"

"I!" cried the ringer, raising his head, "I get a substitute! I trust anybody with my bells! And who'll become security for the substitute? And suppose he were to crack Medard for me, or Benedict, or Gertrude, or Gabriel? I would not let any one even come near Gudule, who weighs three thousand. Think, then, that my little Medard is hardly nine hundred and fifty in weight. You yourself, my excellent Louis, should not, with my consent, touch the clapper of my fat Mary, who weighs upwards of ten thousand. I trust anybody with my bells! No, no. But," continued he, taking his wife's hand, "the proposal is a good one: M. Schulman shall occupy my place."

"I would rather," said she again, "remain with you."

"Thou seest well that is impossible, since I am engaged all the evening. Only, if they don't make too much noise at this theatre, whenever thou hearest the sound of Medard, remember I am thinking of thee. Come, my child, go and dress: our friends will take thee."

The young wife parted with her husband, not daring to

confess to him that she dreaded, out of his presence, the society of Schulman, who already had pursued her with odious attentions, and declarations which were burdensome to her. She lived in Moving-Sand street, now called Loxum-street. Her toilette was very soon finished, for she was no coquette. She had to wait an hour for M. and Madame de Vogel. Schulman accompanied them. He had gone with all haste to take back his portmanteau from the public carriage, and had put on his finest clothes.

In going to the hotel of the young count of Cobenzl, it was Louis de Vogel who gave his arm to Clara. Schulman made up for this vexation during the play: he teazed the young woman with his addresses, for he was taken with her. He seized upon her arm to take her back; and, thinking, from her timid answers, he had made great way into her heart, fooled himself with guilty hopes.

But, whether Clara had at last made a confidant of her husband, or for some other reason, Schulman had no longer an opportunity of seeing or speaking to her on the following days. Full of his passion, he went in vain to Louis de Vogel's, to whom he sold some goods. He rambled without effect in Loxum-street: he could not see her. He wrote, and his letters were returned to him.

"I cannot be displeasing to her," said he to himself: "but either her husband shuts her up, or she is a virtuous woman. If she were still a girl, I should be able to marry her,—and why not?"

On this, there came across him a terrible thought. He remembered his friend Ripp, whom he had forgotten for twelve days. He furnished himself with four smooth files, a long rope, and a ball of string, and went to the gate of Hal. He whistled after a certain manner; and put, in passing, half a crown and a little parcel in the prisoner's box. The whole arrived safely at Ripp's window, who was confined there for robbery.

Following the instructions in the little letter which he found along with the ball of string beside the half-crown, Ripp, when evening was come, at the last stroke of six, threw before the door of the neighbouring tavern a stone attached to the string, of which he held the end. Schulman picked up the stone, and tied on the four files and the end of the long rope, which he unrolled in silence. The cord passed, by favour of the profound darkness, above the sentinel, and brought the prisoner a hope of escape.

Afterwards, Schulman, not wishing to be observed, re-entered Brussels by the port of Namur. This gate, like that of the shore, was guarded by the confraternities of Brussels, who had also the privilege of guarding the Town Hotel, while the other gates were under the surveillance of the Austrian troops.

Two days after, early in the morning, it was announced that the bars of a window, at the prison of the gate of Hal, had been sawn through, and that a famous robber, suspected of having made one of a gang of stiflers, had escaped during the night of rain, while the sentinel was stiffening in his box;—an escape effected by means of a long rope, which was seen still hanging. This was Ripp, who was then sleeping quietly enough in Schulman's bed.

The prudent Bohemian disguised his friend with a false beard made perfectly to fit, covered him with a mendicant friar's gown, recommended him to accustom himself to walk a little bent, and took great care of him some days for the occasion he was waiting for.

By chance, one evening, being at Louis de Vogel's, he met there Mathias and Clara. The reception he received from them completed his enlightenment; for the young woman did not speak to him, and the ringer hardly saluted him. He hardened himself, then, in his design. He learned with joy that Mathias was to go and dine with the tradesman on the following Thursday, alone, and without his wife; and Clara had promised to pass that evening with her parents, who lived in Little Dominican-street. He obtained accurate information of the road which the ringer took to go from Vogel's house, and take back his wife to the street where old De Parck's house was: he knew he generally chose, as the shortest way, One-by-One-street; and he prepared his plans for that day. Assured that Mathias, who was enjoying a party at piquet with his friend, would not leave till about ten to go for his wife, take her home, and then sound his tattoo, he posted his friend Ripp, in his monk's dress, in One-by-One-street, fifteen paces from Long Butcher's-street. Two persons could not meet there without running against each other.

"In a quarter of an hour," said he to him, "I will come back with him. Thou hast all that's needful."

"Yes," answered the brigand: "here's the pitch-mask, and there's the dagger. Be easy."

"When I arrive, thou wilt know me; I shall cough in this manner."

"Very good. Will the ringer be before or behind? for the night 's as dark as an oven."

"I will walk before him: it is more sure."

"Just the thing. At this hour, and in this weather, no one passes by this lane. I see no door in it. Besides, thou'lt cough and go by; and the second person" . . . .

He made a horrible gesture, which, in the profound darkness, discovered itself only by the mocking groan with which he accompanied it; and after this short scene, which would be taken, if it were not true, for a situation in a melodrama, Schulman went away, saying,

"In an hour she will be a widow: nothing can betray me. Ripp will know how to escape. And, when she has mourned for him, I am sure I shall obtain her hand."

Schulman was a young man who had passed through all trades. He had been a soldier, a merchant, and a smuggler. He had worked with some German gangs, who robbed passengers on the high road. He had joined some companies of sharpers who did business in Paris. No one had ever known his family name. His deficient education had encouraged his passions, and he shrank from nothing in order to their gratification.

Half an hour after, in spite of a prodigious shower, he was walking, to warm himself, before the door of Louis de Vogel, when at length that door opened.

"I will not accompany you home," said the tradesman.

"No, no," said the ringer: "It's frightful weather,—hail, and such a wind! you won't hear the tattoo. What a night!"

"Good evening, Mathias! you won't have the lantern?"

"Thank you, I know the way. Good evening!"

And Mathias began to step out, having Schulman before him,—whose heart was palpitating beyond doubt,—but not recognizing him. After having passed Star-street, and crossed the great square and the Herb-market, the ringer, following his assassin almost without seeing him, ran in, at some paces from him, into One-by-One-street, which offered him for some moments a sort of shelter.

As he reached the little angle from which one sees in the daytime the long street of the butchers, Ripp, who did not feel the cold,—for he had filled his stomach with gin—but who began to lose patience, heard a repeated cough. He

placed himself, according to his agreement, so as to let the first person pass; and, taking the other by the head, covered his face with his pitch-mask to stifle his cries, struck him to the heart with a blow of the dagger, which discovered a practised hand, and took flight, leaving on his victim the two instruments of the murder.

But the person who had passed first, hearing a suppressed groan, returned briskly, to the great astonishment of Ripp: he arrested the false monk, who was disarmed, and uttered a cry, which brought to the spot four tall soldiers, who were busy drinking in a neighbouring tavern. They laid hold of Ripp.

The brigand in vain sought to escape: a lantern was brought: they lifted up, with horror, a dead man, whose face was covered with a stifling-mask. But it was not Mathias.

On the other hand, the good ringer was seen leaning over the corpse; and, at that first movement, he was arrested also as suspected of murder.

Ripp, seeing another prisoner, availed himself of his Capuchin's dress, and complained with effrontery of the outrage done him. He was taken, notwithstanding, to the prison of the archbishop of Mechlin, who, as abbot of Affighen, had at Brussels a prison and a tribunal. The ringer was transferred to the Amigo.*

Meantime the person who without knowing it had saved poor Mathias, was Count Louis of Cobenzl. He was coming out at the only door then in One-by-One-street,—at the residence of an old man of learning, whom the young count was fond of consulting. He was walking in the dark, by a happy chance, some steps before the Bohemian. The rain and wind prevented his being heard: he had knocked against Ripp, and Schulman, the second passer, had been faithfully killed.

Clara was frightened when she knew her husband was in prison under a charge of murder. She passed the night with her parents, to whose house the count of Cobenzl, next morning, came to find her. He told her what he had seen, and his reflections were favourable to Mathias. She, on her part, on learning that the taking off of the mask had discovered the Bohemian, exposed with simplicity, to the man who seemed likely to be a support to her, all the

* That is, to the town-hotel of Brussels, the place where every man is put who is arrested.

attempts of Schulman. Her suspicions threw some light on the night's adventure; and it must be said, to the praise of Clara and the young lord, that he found her so virtuous and modest, that he then sincerely renounced all thought of an intrigue with her. He immediately took active steps with the judges of Brussels. Ripp, stripped of his beard, was recognized as the robber who had escaped from the gate of Hal. He confessed, at the torture, his crime of the preceding evening, which had occasioned the omission of the tattoo that night. He was hanged. Perhaps it is this adventure which has furnished the plot of the melodrama entitled *The Woman with Two Husbands.*

After twenty-four hours' imprisonment, Mathias again found himself at home with his wife, vowing to himself never more to pass through One-by-One-street, and swearing that if ever the young count of Cobenzl came to die, he would give him the honours of his bells as no emperor ever has them.

THE CONSPIRATOR-ARTISTS.

"You are a liberal?"
"No, Sir."
"A royalist?"
"No, Sir?"
"What are you, then?"
"I am a sculptor."
Moreau: "The Osages."

How happens it that judges endowed with common sense (and all pretend to have some) have so often, in accusations of confederacy, admitted artists? people who love liberty, assuredly, but are too much out of the way of the things of this world to know how to conspire; who are believed guilty because they express all they feel, but who have never caused political revolutions, and who only need be sent back when they meddle out of place with human affairs, to their pencil, poetry, graving-tool, or piano.

And yet all times of crisis have had some victims among the artists: 1793 was the death of many of them in France; good artists who were not so dangerous as their judges,

and whom one might have treated in the style of that tyrant whose name I have forgotten, but who, seeing a painter in a conspiracy, ordered him out of the ranks, and said to him, "As for you, you are going to do my likeness." And the painter did a superb tyrant.

At the time of the troubles in the Low Countries, when the destroyers of churches were breaking statues and burning pictures, not a bit more respect was paid to artists;—and here is a sad and cruel story.

It is known that Peter de Vos had two sons: Martin, the elder, was born at Antwerp in 1519: Lawrence, the younger, came into the world three years after. Peter was a painter, and enjoyed high consideration at Antwerp: he brought up Martin to the art. Lawrence showed more taste for music, and his father got him into the confraternity of St. Cecilia.

Martin rapidly became a great painter. He went into Italy, stopped at Venice, bound himself to Tintoretto, and worked with that master. Pictures are yet in request, in which the pencil of the Antwerpian and that of the Venetian were united to produce masterpieces.

The love of fatherland led Martin back into the Low Countries. His reputation, great throughout Italy, preceded him; he was received with lasting honours, and the Antwerp Academy of Painting admitted him into its bosom by acclamation. This was in the year 1559. The artist, already so illustrious in his portraits of the Medici, his beautiful landscapes, and his historical pictures, was yet only forty years old.

He found his brother Lawrence given up to music, as he himself was to painting. Composers then had only the Church. But is it not religion that has inspired the greatest wonders of harmony? The arts generally become the almost exclusive passion of those who cultivate them with partiality. To have a free field of exercise, Lawrence de Vos had entered into orders; he composed motetts, carols, and, in his hours of relaxation, songs. Everything that came out of that happy head, in grave or sparkling notes, was widely resounded. These works have been printed; and Lacroix du Maine, in his Bibliotheca, cites them with commendation.

The churches of Antwerp were proud of the two artists. Lawrence enlivened them with his chants, and Martin enriched them with his pictures. You may still admire, in

the cathedral of Antwerp, the Nuptials of Cana, the Incredulity of St. Thomas, and other works of Martin de Vos; you may also hear, on the days of the great solemnities, some of the motetts of Lawrence; they have not all perished.

A great lord of the Low Countries, Messire Louis de Berlaymont, who knew how to appreciate the two brothers, having been nominated archbishop of Cambray, obtained from Martin a fine picture for his metropolitan church. He obtained more from Lawrence; he took him with him, made him master of the music in his church, and settled him among the ravished people of Cambray. Surrounded by choir-children and chanters, who made up as it were his little kingdom, the good Lawrence de Vos found himself as happy as he had ever wished to be—when the troubles broke out. This was for him, as for his brother, the reign of the desolation announced in the Apocalypse. The churches were shut, the pulpits and tabernacles broken up, the holy pictures torn in pieces, and the pious chants interdicted; war was made against the arts as well as against religion.

Martin complained loudly, and smote the destroyers with his maledictions; but he was long protected in Antwerp. At last, however, his friends advised him to absent himself. The reformer-republicans showed themselves neither tolerant nor generous. Because Martin complained, he was accused of conspiring. He withdrew, then, into Germany; and the Museum at Vienna owes to his abode in that capital some pictures of value.

But a painter can take his implements and depart, like a poet, repeating the saying of Bias, *Omnia mea mecum porto*. It is not thus with a musician; one does not put one's organ in one's pocket. Archbishop Louis de Berlaymont was gone, and people had tried to induce Lawrence de Vos also to leave Cambray; but he could not make up his mind to it. His organ, choir-children, and chanters—everything retained him.

He groaned over the persecution which was then overwhelming the churches, and his complaints were accounted crimes. At the end of the year 1579, Louis de Berlaymont was with many other prelates at Mons, where Catholicism ventured to re-appear. Lawrence de Vos openly made vows for the prelate whom he loved. At that time a hard and bloody man, such as are found at all periods

of political disorganization—the baron of Inchy, of an old family of rebel-lords of Hainaut, a partisan of the duke of Alençon's, who opposed the reformed in France and the Catholics in the Low Countries—this baron of Inchy had made himself master of Cambray on behalf of the Protestants.

He reigned there like a despot, sought for confederacies, imagined them, and saw traitors everywhere, even in artists, whose life presents us with few treasons. Some words of the good Lawrence, who was only asking back his music, seemed to him wicked attempts. The artist had been unwilling to leave his motetts; they were taken from him, and he was put in prison. What could you do among these men of turbulence, poor child of God and of the Muses!

All similar epochs produce the same absurd results. Singular things, supposed to have taken place only in France and in 1793, were, however, only repetitions and recollections. The baron of Inchy, in 1579, had established at Cambray a revolutionary tribunal, with immediate judgments, like the famous tribunals of the Terror. It was the citizens Leleu, Dubois, Lehale, Joseph, &c., who composed this areopagus. Lawrence de Vos was brought before them as a traitor, and they were to decide his case before rising.

He was a priest of fifty-seven, white-haired, and of a mild appearance. His look announced a soul absorbed in things far removed from earth. All his choir-children, all his chanters, had followed him to the trial. The women and old men wept; the children and young girls wept also. "What evil has he done, then?" was the question. "He has composed music," answered some timid voices. For then also it was common to see a whole town trembling before a few men, who had done nothing but pull back their shirt-sleeves and assume a threatening air. The mass of mankind is cowardly.

One of the agents of the baron of Inchy, a butcher, then made this horrid play of words:—"He wants singing, but he will have to sing small himself."

The judges were seated. One of them pronounced verbally the act of accusation, which represented Lawrence de Vos as conspiring with Louis de Berlaymont. The son of Antwerp, thinking he could defend himself, asked on what proofs he was accused.

"Thou hast not the liberty of speaking," cried the judge Dubois.

And his colleagues, comparing the consternation of the people with the calm appearance of the accused, consulted together. They did not forget that they had orders to condemn.

"If that man speaks," said Leleu, "I see how the thing will go; people are on the point of revolting."

"And if they do," added the judge Joseph, "good bye to our places."

The president asked no more opinions, but resumed the sitting. "Turn the prisoner out," said he then.

Thus, what was thought an innovation at the revolutionary tribunal of Paris in 1794, had taken place at the condemnation of Lawrence de Vos. He was judged without being present; his sentence was pronounced without his having been able to say a word in his own justification. After this, one of the executioners was sent to announce to him that he would be strangled and hanged by the neck next day, in the great market-place of Cambray.

In the proceedings of 1794, which we remember, they went about things exactly in this style. You see there is nothing new in the business of this world.

On the 30th of January, 1580, a gibbet was being made ready, in the middle of an immense concourse, in the square of the great market of Cambray. A numerous troop of choir-children and singers surrounded, weeping, the instrument of punishment. At eleven in the morning, Lawrence de Vos was brought out, having been condemned only the day before. He set foot on the ladder; a complete silence reigned around. At that moment the chanters intoned the motett of the Resurrection, composed by Lawrence, and his most cherished work.

The sufferer stopped for some seconds. His pale face was suffused; his eyes kindled; he mounted the fatal ladder, assisted by the executioner.

At the moment when the rope of death was going to be tied about his neck, he turned toward the bystanders, made the sign of the cross, and opened his mouth. Doubtless he wished to pray, or perhaps to unite for the last time his trembling voice to the melodious voices which were chanting beneath him. It was thought he was going to speak to the people, and protest his innocence. Indeed, a few words would then have sufficed to move the crowd, who with a

breath could have broken the gibbet, and deprived death of its victim. But the soldiers of the baron of Inchy were there with their drums; and, again, exactly as Santerre did at the death of Louis XVI., a roll of the drums was ordered, which stifled the old priest's voice.

On a sign which was given, Lawrence de Vos, strangled by the executioner, was launched into eternity.

A long while afterwards, on the 16th October, 1595, Louis de Berlaymont, when solemnly re-entering his archiepiscopal see, had at his side a venerable old man; it was Martin de Vos. He had long mourned for his good brother. Before his death, he wished at least to pay him the last honours; he collected his remains in a rich coffin, and had them buried in the church of the Cordeliers of Cambray. After this, he raised in his little garden an expiatory mausoleum; it was a stone, which bore in relief the features of Lawrence and his own, with this inscription:

"He was a musician, and I a painter; and it was pretended that we had conspired."

If you are curious to know what became of the assassins of Lawrence de Vos, see what became of their counterparts, the executioners of 1793.

SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

Libidinous thou shalt not be
In body or consentingly.

THE TWO WIVES OF OTHO III.

Non mœchaberis.
"Decalogue."

1. Mary of Arragon.

This is an old legend of the middle ages: we give it in its simplicity.

The Emperor Otho III. had married the daughter of the king of Arragon, who conceived a criminal passion for a lord of the court. This count, whose name we have not been able to find, being pious and chaste, would not, says the legendary author, become a rebel to God, a traitor to the emperor, and unfaithful to his own spouse; for he was married. The empress then began to hate him, and accused him to the emperor of having endeavoured to corrupt her. Otho believed her words, and, in his anger, ordered an executioner to behead the count.

At the moment of execution, the count said to his wife, "I am not guilty, and I beg you will prove my innocence after my death. Do with all confidence what justice shall prescribe to you, seeing that God is a judge always equitable."

The desolate spouse promised to do what was recommended to her at a moment so solemn: she had such a confidence in her husband, that she would have tried on the spot the judiciary proof and saved him. But the emperor was from home, and the executioner could not delay. She wept, then, with despair and anguish.

A few days after, as the emperor was sitting in his court, rendering justice with other princes and lords, she came before him and said,

"Sir Emperor, what does he deserve who has unjustly killed my husband?"

The emperor answered, "He deserves death."

"Sir emperor, it is you," replied the lady. "You have iniquitously put to death the count, who was my spouse; which I will prove in the manner which shall be prescribed."

"The count," said the emperor again, "was rightly executed; his crime justly inferred death."

"I call upon the law," resumed the widow, "and I request to be told how I am to prove he was innocent."

"The law," replied Otho, "enjoins you to carry a red-hot iron."

This was the custom of the time.

The lady prayed to God and cried for justice before all the people who were present, and then carried, safe and sound, the burning iron over all the space marked out.

The emperor was terrified, as were all the judges. He then said to the lady, "The judgment of God does you right: I give myself up to your mercy."

"If you wish to live and die like a true emperor," cried she, "if you will do and suffer justly, you ought to perish in your turn."

And she requested the first judge to behead the emperor.

But the startled lords interposed, and granted Otho a term of ten days, that the lady might take counsel with her friends.

After the ten days had run out, they re-appeared in the place of justice: the lady kept to her first words. The court again decreed a term of eight days. When this delay had expired, the count's widow continued without pity, and persisted in demanding Otho's head. The lords asked a third term of seven days.

"If you wish to preserve the emperor's life," said the lady, then "let the empress die: she is the true culprit, and it is at this price only that the emperor can redeem himself."

Meantime, Otho III. had been informed of the truth: he had assured himself of the count's innocence, and that Mary of Arragon, the empress, had entertained culpable intimacies. The judges pronounced sentence against the empress; she was burned, and her body reduced to ashes.

Take warning from this, empresses, queens, and great ladies; and you, princes, know that one ought not to be too prompt to judge in anger.

This curious legend, extracted from a chronicle written in Hesse in the fifteenth century,* explains two celebrated pictures of Thierry Stuerbout, the subject of which defied conjecture.

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2. Stephanie.

We are a very little way advanced in history. We know almost nothing, and most frequently have to doubt about the pickings offered us. There is Otho III., who according to some had two wives, and according to others died unmarried, because, say they, this prince left no children. But Ferdinand VII. of Spain had children only by his fourth wife. If Otho was not married, what will you do with Mary of Arragon, that princess so infamous for her debaucheries, as says Moreri?

We believe the clear and precise legend we have just transcribed, and its singular details. Otho III. was then four-and-twenty. The preceding year he had supported the election of Pope Gregory V., who in return had put the imperial crown upon his head at Rome; and hence the false pretence of Gregory's having conferred on the German nations the exclusive right of nominating the popes for the future,—an absurd pretension, which has done great harm.

In 998, Crescentius, who, under the title of consul, had long exercised authority in Rome, and was seeking to reconstitute the ancient republic, wishing to set up a competitor against Gregory V., procured the election, under the name of John XVI., of a Greek of good birth who was devoted to him; after which he marched upon Rome. But Otho III. anticipated him with a powerful army. Crescentius took possession of the castle of St. Angelo, and fortified it. Otho seized upon John, who disappeared; but he offered Crescentius a capitulation, and put him to death as soon as he got hold of him.

Crescentius's widow, Stephanie, an amiable and pretty young person, was abused, it is said, by the German officers: she mourned for her shame and for the death of her spouse; but she meditated revenge.

In the year 1001, the Emperor Otho III., finding him-

* Discovered in the *Ghent Messenger of Knowledge*, by Professor Rousmann.

self seriously ill, in consequence of some excesses, and no physician able to cure him, Stephanie presented herself as a young Greek girl, skilful in the art of Hippocrates. She easily obtained approach to the emperor, to whom she restored health.

After having admired her talent, Otho was taken with her charms: he became so ravished with them as to espouse her, whatever the enemies of his two marriages may write.

But the evening of his nuptials, Stephanie gave him a pair of perfumed gloves, which set him to sleep, and which, instilling into his veins a subtile poison, made him expire slowly, in grievous agony, on the 17th January, 1002, at the age of twenty-nine.

Take warning from this. The passions are obstinate; but (as most poisons have their antidote, which ought to be discovered) they bring almost always with them their concealed punishment.

SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

The goods of others take thou not,
Neither retain them knowingly.

THE CROSS OF SAINT JOHN.

"Thou shalt not steal."
Decalogue.

I.

After Charles V. had destroyed the village of St. Bavon, at Ghent, in order to place there his old citadel, the space now occupied by those solid buildings still called the *Spaniard's Castle*, though at present quite dismantled, was in some sort a city by itself, in which were erected, under the jurisdiction of the abbot of St. Bavon, three or four small houses, which enjoyed several privileges. Narrow and crooked streets let a little air into these dwellings, which in general were not luxurious. There were seen, however, in the village, some tall houses of opulent men: situated in a better air, and accompanied by little gardens, they were healthier, prouder, and haughtily domineered over their neighbourhood.

Such was the house of the Green Bear, so named from its ensign cut and painted above the door, between the two Gothic windows of the first story. This house belonged to Master Balthasar Merx, an honest Ghent merchant, who, in 1535, the period of the following tale, was fifty years' old.

Balthasar was a man of tall stature, and strongly made: broad shoulders, thick-set limbs, and a hairy chest, demonstrated his vigour: his light-chestnut hair was not yet grey; his face was long and full, and strongly marked with the small-pox; his green, small, and deep-set eyes shone brilliantly beneath two thick brows. Everything in that

face announced firmness and perseverance, and accordingly he had made a large fortune. But, if the physiognomists are right, his rounded nose and full lips indicated passionate feelings; and it must be confessed that the science which pretends to read the signs of character in men's features was not altogether deceived in Balthasar.

He was a leather-merchant; and had begun with a very small stock, left him by his father, an honest ropemaker of Antwerp-street. At twenty-eight, when travelling into Normandy, he had espoused Catherine, the only daughter of a rich grazier. She had brought him a son, who was become the object of his tenderest love. A year after, Catherine died of an epidemic sickness, which fell heavily on the quarter of St. Bavon; and Balthasar, to give himself up entirely to paternal tenderness, had resolved not to marry again.

In 1535, young Simeon Merx was twenty. He was his mother's image;—a fresh, rosy face, round and animated; mild eyes, but which could not look one in the face—a defect which was attributed to timidity, but which, perhaps, showed a tendency to dissimulation. Though he loved gaming, dissipation, and pleasure, his father, who idolized him, saw in him only perfections, and could refuse nothing to his expensive tastes.

Balthasar was very rich. There were only, however, in his house with him and his son three other persons, who seemed to make up his family. We must give the first place to good Michelle, a fat Flemish wench, one of those beings whose homely outside does not indicate valuable qualities, and who may be compared to the old leathern purses which yet enclose gold pieces. She was of a squat make: her feet were misshapen, her hands horny, her fingers knotty, her face pimpled, and adorned with three or four warts; her large eyes came out of her head, and had no expression. But under this coarse cover there was a heart full of devotedness and affection.

Michelle was forty. She had entered Balthasar's service at the time of his wife's death, and had brought up his son. Children, at least while little, cherish those who love them, without looking for outward attractions; and Michelle had become deeply attached to her young master. She had concentrated on little Simeon all the loving fibres of her heart. She looked upon herself as his mother, and the child was so happy as never to feel his loss. And so the

merchant had promised Michelle that she should never leave his house, or die in the hospital.

The second personage admitted into Balthasar's interior was old Bonaventure, a clerk of fifty-five, who for many years had kept the leather-merchant's books, and conducted his correspondence. Bonaventure did not like Michelle, finding her too much devoted to the little interests of the household, and too economical in firing and beer. He had a wife, and sometimes thought that if the wench were sent away, his wife might be introduced as housekeeper. But Michelle had good supports in Balthasar's gratitude and Simeon's attachment.

The third place in this family was filled by a young cousin on the mother's side, who had come from Normandy two years ago. His name was Theodore Mauville, a young man hardly eight-and-twenty, and full of life. He had passed three years in Paris, where he had wasted all his fortune; and then had decided on acting the part of second clerk to Balthasar. The merchant, seeing in him a relative of his wife's, whom he had tenderly loved, and a cousin of his son's, treated him with great regard. His wit, his songs, the jovial anecdotes which he told with a roguish air, prepossessed people in his favour. Besides, he had seen the world: he played tricks, knew all the little games, mimicked all the actors, and was what is called an amusing man. At the same time, he talked reason and morals on the proper occasions. The old merchant soon considered him an excellent Mentor for his son, whom he commended to him, at the same time increasing his salary.

The florid face and ardent eyes of Theodore discovered violent passions. But Balthasar was a better leather-merchant than physiognomist, or, at all events, he was, on this point, a worse observer than the old chronicler, from whom we take these details.

Be this as it may, for the last year and a half the merchant had intrusted his son to Theodore, who frequently had nice pleasure-parties made for him. Simeon was enchanted with his cousin, and, as a natural consequence, Balthasar was delighted with his second clerk.

Bonaventure did not dare to hate Theodore, whom he saw so highly favoured by the son of the family. He paid his court by approving without reserve the conduct of the two young people. Sometimes he asked, in an

insinuating tone, whether M. Simeon would not soon take some part in his father's business. But Balthasar stopped his mouth, and answered,

"When he likes: let him enjoy his youth."

For the rest, Bonaventure was a dry fellow, a man of ciphering and calculations, all for his own interest, but who watched over that of his master, because he knew his own position and maintenance depended on his diligence.

Michelle liked Theodore all the more that she saw him indispensable to Simeon. Besides, the Norman Mentor was liberal, and often gave the good wench *something to drink*. Though she was as disinterested as upright, the poor creature was not insensible to little presents honourably received: she made, besides, a noble use of them. All the money she gained or could heap up, she sent to her mother, who lived at Totteghem, and who was old and infirm. In spite of so many virtues in this pious servant, we shall see that the circumstances to be developed made her suspected.

Theodore had gained a great ascendancy over Simeon by flattering his inclinations and approving his tastes: he had insensibly come to manage him. A complete intimacy was established between the two young people, who speedily frequented the worst society.

Balthasar liberally supplied his son's desires. But these funds, which might have sufficed for the pleasures of ten regular young men, soon seemed too limited. Simeon got into debt.

This young man, who was ruining himself, did not destroy himself all at once. He returned to himself for once. Knowing his father's strictness, and trembling lest he should discover his difficulties, he kept himself in for a month, practised saving, and resolved to set limits to his expenses till he should have paid what he owed. Unfortunately, one evening, at a meeting of dissipated youths, he could not resist Theodore, who had led him into a gaming-house, where he wanted to try a throw of the dice. The two friends played, and came back with empty pockets.

Simeon passed a cruel night. Dreading lest his creditors might come in his absence and apply to his father; he did not go out next day, but entered the counting-house with Theodore and set himself to work. His father was delighted.

At half-past eleven, just before dinner, Michelle came to tell M. Balthasar that one of his friends wanted to pay his respects; Bonaventure was gone out. Ten minutes after, the two young people shut the door of the counting-house, gave the key to the servant, and went out, saying they would not be home till the evening. Balthasar kept his friend to dinner; and nothing extraordinary was observed in the house. Four months passed away. It is probable that during that time, Simeon Merx paid his debts, for his father did not hear him speak of them. He had not even the least suspicion of the derangement of his son's affairs. But other anxieties had been corroding him for some time; till, on the 24th of February, 1535, having shut himself up in his closet with Bonaventure, he opened to him his heart:

"You do not know, old man, what has happened to me," said he, "I must tell it you; for it is not you that are the thief."

"The thief, sir!" replied Bonaventure, leaping upon his stool, "is there a thief?"

"I tell you it isn't you, old man, so don't make a noise. Besides, how could you have robbed me?"

"Robbed you, sir! has any one robbed you?"

"You shall hear. You see this large key, so cleverly wrought: you know it, don't you?"

"Know it! I've seen it, but never touched it."

"My God! I know that, Bonaventure. You are as restive to-day as pig's skin. Well, this is the key of my chest. It never leaves me: by day it is chained to my girdle, and by night sleeps under my pillow; and yet my chest has been opened."

"Oh, sir, your chest!"

"My chest," said Balthasar. "Twice already have I been robbed, three times perhaps, and perhaps four. But at least I am sure of the two."

"And were the thefts considerable?" said Bonaventure, pale as a white wall.

"A thousand florins each time."

"Oh, sir! that must have been done in the night."

"But how is it the thief did not empty the chest? How is it he only took the tenth or twentieth part of its contents?"

"Oh, sir, that's terrible; the thief must have hoped you would not see . . . ."

"As you said, old man, the robbery must have been in the night. My key must have been taken. I suspect Michelle, and I blame myself for suspecting her."

"Michelle, sir? Oh, the cunning minx! However, she looks to me like a woman who fears God. But she is ugly enough to have easily conceived a bad thought."

"I can hardly think it: I wish I could carry my suspicions somewhere else; but it is only she, who, when I have taken too much at supper, could have entered my chamber and taken my key."

"Oh, sir! we must not proceed lightly in so serious a business," said Bonaventure, pretending to fall back from the prepossession he had taken up.

"An idea strikes me," resumed Balthasar. "I will try this wench. To-morrow, I shall have found out the truth."

After he had dined, the leather-merchant dressed; then, leaving visibly on his bed the key of his chest, he said to the servant,

"I am going to sleep at Alost, Michelle, and I do not return till to-morrow: my son and his friend are at Brussels. So you remain alone with the two mastiffs. Take care to put the iron bars on the doors."

"Be easy, sir," replied the Flemish woman; "with Hassan and Muley your house is well guarded."

II.

As soon as her master was gone, Michelle, having begun to put the chamber to rights, was much troubled at finding on the bed the key of the chest.

"He will be uneasy about it," said she. And, to prevent all chance of losing so precious a deposit, she tied it under her apron to the string which fastened her girdle. Bonaventure, to whom the merchant had given plenty of commissions, went out, and did not come back again that day. It was, as we have said, the 24th of February. At five o'clock, although it was not yet dark, Michelle shut all the doors; she quietly did her evening work, and knitted for two hours; then, when nine struck at the Abbey, she set about going to bed, after having said her prayers, and slept holding, as was her custom, her rosary in her hand.

The house she had to guard consisted, on the ground-

floor, of an eating-room, a kitchen, and a huge warehouse. On the first floor, two rooms looked upon the street; one in which Balthasar slept; the other that of Simeon and his friend. On the garden side, separated by a large corridor, were two other places; the first formed a large office or closet, which contained the chest; the second, much smaller, was Michelle's bedroom.

In spite of the winter, she left the door a little open, to hear, in case of need, the bark of the dogs, and be able, at a moment's warning, to call the neighbourhood by running to her master's window. The two dogs, Hassan and Muley, who had a formidable look, were lying in the warehouse, the door of which was not shut; so that if they were called, they could spring with one leap to the first story, and bring aid should the robbers enter by the windows, which was not very easy, seeing they were strongly barred.

At eleven at night, Michelle was fast asleep, when a very loud barking of the dogs made her start out of her sleep. Not knowing what hour it was, but a little assured by the moonlight, and no longer hearing the dogs, she was beginning to think they had only barked after some benighted passengers, when she distinctly heard a knocking at the door.

"'Tis doubtless my master, who will be uneasy," said she.

She ran to open one of the little divisions of Balthasar's window, and asked who was knocking.

"It is we, Michelle."

She recognized Simeon's voice. He had just arrived from Brussels with his friend. She made haste to go and open to them.

"What hour is it, then?" asked she.

"Thou wast asleep," said Simeon. "But it is hardly eleven. Is my father gone to bed?"

"He is at Alost."

"Capital," said Theodore, in a low voice, while the servant was striking a light, and the two dogs were caressing their young master.

After she had lighted a lamp, she noticed the pale and disordered look of the two young men, and anxiously asked them what was the matter.

"Oh! nothing," said Theodore. "We are a little exhausted with cold and fatigue. Rest will make us all right."

"You are going to have some supper," said the good creature, poking the grate; "you must be in want of some. There's a cold chicken left."

"Thank you. Just give us two glasses of gin."

"You are wrong to take nothing but that," pursued Michelle. "You cannot surely be ill?"

"No; we supped at Alost. I wonder we didn't meet my father there."

The servant brought two glasses and a pitcher of gin.

The two young men sat down in front of the fireplace, and began to drink hard; and Michelle, a little troubled about their singular manner, returned to her room and went to bed again. But she could not sleep again.

Two hours afterwards, however, a drowsy dulness was beginning to take possession of her head, when she was driven out of it afresh by a certain movement which she heard; she arose again, thinking that Simeon was indisposed, and, not wishing to alarm him, she left her little room in silence. The young people were no longer in theirs. They were speaking in a low voice, without a light, in a room where the chest was. A feeling of uneasiness and terror seized her; she approached softly, and almost fell dead at the sight before her.

The two young people had lost at play in Brussels all that they possessed. They had lost afterwards on credit, and they came back in haste. The chest was open—the chest of which Michelle had the key at her girdle. But Theodore had found means to procure a duplicate of it; and the two friends were disputing, because Simeon would not take more than a bag of a thousand florins, as in the preceding robberies, while his companion showed him that more was necessary.

"We have nothing remaining," said he, "and we want twelve hundred florins."

"We will pay nine hundred of them," replied Simeon, "and will ask a little time for the rest."

"Time for debts of play! debts of honour! we shall be ruined."

"My father will find out all: we have already taken five thousand."

"Very well," said Theodore, "let us take five more. We shall regain our losses, and make good the deficits without any one's being the wiser. Thy father doesn't count."

"But if he should?"

"He is from home. We shall come back to-morrow evening. I have a calculation which assures us of enormous gains, but it requires a good sum."

"But if we lose?"

"Impossible."

"But suppose it?"

"Then you would write to your father, and confess all. You would sacrifice me, and he would forgive you."

"I can't make up my mind to it."

He was finishing these words, when Michelle entered.

"Ah! M. Simeon!" cried she, throwing herself on her knees ——

"All is lost!" interrupted Theodore, in a violent tone, and letting fall two bags he had been holding.

Young Merx became as pale as a spectre.

"Ah! M. Simeon," resumed the servant, all in tears, "what are you doing? Does your father let you want money? And will you damn your soul? Oh! if you do not shudder at the crime, kill me at least. No one will know any thing of it: I am alone here; it will be thought robbers have broken in: your poor father will not have the misery of suspecting his son. And may God soon give you repentance!"

While she was speaking with sobs, and stretching out her hands, Theodore was pacing up and down the office.

"She is right," said he at last, in a gloomy tone, drawing a dagger concealed in his doublet: "she must be killed; for she will ruin us, and we must compromise her."

He advanced at the same time upon Michelle, who said nothing but "O my poor mother!" and resigned herself to death.

But Simeon, enraged, had thrown himself in front of the dagger.

"Back!" said his comrade to him; "seest thou not her life is already poisoned? If we kill her, thy father will not accuse us: and we shall be able to carry off the whole chest, which contains fourteen thousand florins."

"I will not have her killed," said Simeon boldly. "Thou shalt kill me before her. Let us go."

"Since all is found out," resumed the other, "we have nothing to care about. Take, then, these two bags, and let us go if thou wilt."

And, handing to Simeon two loads of florins, which the latter took with an indifferent air, Theodore made him a sign to go out. But the young man would not leave his companion alone with Michelle. The servant did not cease to supplicate and weep: she spoke of her master; and reminded the two culprits of the principles of probity and honour: she besought them in the name of God, who sees all, and threatened them with the vengeance of Heaven. But, without listening to her, and without being perceived by Simeon, who was exhausting himself in reassuring her, Theodore had emptied the chest. Loaded with all that his young cousin had refused to take, he took Simeon's arm.

"Let us go," said he to him; "we are out of our difficulties: we will go to Madrid, and write to thy father. He can't help forgiving."

"Oh!" said Simeon, "Michelle won't betray us: she'll say robbers have broken in. Adieu, Michelle: pity me."

Then the poor creature made a new effort. Detaining her young master by the arm,—"Do not rob," said she, "in the Lord's name, do not rob your worthy father. If you have got into scrapes, poor young man, if you want money, ask it of M. Balthasar: confide your troubles to him, he will not reject you; and if he did, I would beseech him to listen to you, and to give you my future wages: I would serve him for nothing the rest of his days. My child, I have been as a mother to you, listen to me."

Theodore, while she was speaking, drew Simeon on the other side, eager for flight. Michelle threw herself before him.

"It is you," said she, "who are ruining me and my young master. For whom shall I accuse? Were I to name you, you would have your support in the son of the house. But God will punish you: you see him there threatening you."

As she said this, she pointed through the window to the full moon, cut in four by a black cross, which seemed laid upon her disk of silver. Theodore recoiled a step, but in a second his confidence returned. This appearance, which had seemed a prodigy to him, was produced by the cross of St. John's church, seen in the distance, and behind which the moon was passing. This cross, elevated four hundred feet above the ground, formed the termination of an elegant spire which no longer exists, but

which then rose, light and graceful, on the the tower of St. John's, now St. Bavon's.

"That sign which you despise shall avenge me," said Michelle again, in despair.

Theodore, with a sardonic smile, uttered a gloomy oath, and violently pushed back the servant, who fell against the door, and remained in a swoon.

The day was beginning to break; when she returned to herself she found herself alone, and remembered all that had passed as a frightful dream. But the chest, wide open, would not let her doubt of her misfortune. Her heart was rent, and she bitterly wept anew.

"I am ruined," said she, "ruined for ever."

Her head wandered: she no longer felt strength to support her master's look; and, without knowing what she was doing, she took flight, proceeding like a machine as far as Zotteghem, where she arrived at her mother's; who, seeing her discomposed and unable to speak, made her go to bed.

III.

Theodore and Simeon, eager to leave Ghent, went through the town in silence, loaded with the considerable sum which was the fruit of their robbery, and the greater part of which was in gold.

As they passed below the belfry, in the light of the moon, Theodore turned his head in spite of himself, and could not help casting a look upon the high cross of St. John, which projected into the sky. Then, making an effort to brave Michelle's threat, "It is not that which I fear," said he, pointing to the iron cross; "though the way it was placed on the moon's surface troubled me for an instant. What I dread is some indiscretion on the part of that wench. However, thou didst well in hindering me from killing her, if thou art sure she will not betray us."

"Betray us!" replied Simeon, breaking at last the profound silence to which he seemed to have condemned himself: "she would die sooner, poor Michelle!"

"At any rate," said the young Norman again, "we shall do well to leave the country for some days. If thy father learns what we have done, there will be still time to excuse thyself."

Simeon answered nothing, and the two companions left the town.

After walking for some length, they entered a farm, where they hired horses, and proceeded on their way to France.

On the morning which succeeded that criminal night, while Simeon and Theodore were flying as fast as they could, and at the very hour when the servant was taking refuge at her mother's, at Zotteghem, Balthasar was leaving Alost, on his return to Ghent, his mind filled with sad forebodings.

"I should have done better," said he, "not to try this proof. I ought to have confined myself to changing the secret of my chest. If that woman is guilty, she will necessarily be ruined by me."

The good merchant was far from suspecting his son.

He arrived, at ten in the morning, at the door of his house. He knocked in the way he was habitually known to do, but no one came to open to him. His dogs alone gave token of presence by caressing tones. Balthasar knocked again—the same silence.

"Can real robbers have come," said he, "and assassinated Michelle? But Hassan and Muley would not have suffered it."

As he was growing impatient at these perplexities, a neighbour showed his head at the window.

"Have you not seen Michelle?" the leather-merchant asked him.

"At daybreak," answered the neighbour, "as I was opening my door, I saw her go out. She was going I know not whither, and walking like a fool."

This account shook Balthasar's heart. Other neighbours, who came up, also said they had seen the servant, and that she had taken the Zotteghem road.

"This is unheard of," said the merchant; "and I can't get into my house again."

Bonaventure, who had come before and knocked several times, then arrived. He became pale and trembled, when he saw how the matter was, and as soon as a word from Balthasar had made him understand that he had absented himself in order to prove Michelle, according to his plan.

The old clerk was going to speak, but Balthasar interrupted him.

"Let us not suspect too lightly," said he: "let us

wait for the proofs, old man; and go for a smith, for this door won't open without."

Many people were now assembled in front of the leather-merchant's house. The provost of St. Bavon, who happened to pass, stopped there too.

When the door was opened, Bonaventure followed Balthasar: some neighbours entered, and the provost slipped in among them. The merchant went straight up to the chest, which he found open and empty. He uttered a loud cry.

"I am robbed," said he, "robbed of all! Fourteen thousand florins! I am not surprised at her care in disappearing. She must be found again."

"My ministry becomes necessary, as I foresaw," said the provost, showing himself. "What proofs have you?"

"We accuse," said Bonaventure—

The merchant stepped to silence him; but hesitated, went back, and the old clerk spoke.

"We accuse Michelle"—

"Of a robbery of fourteen thousand florins—a housebreaking. Is that your key?" continued the provost, taking out that which remained in the lock of the chest.

"No," replied the merchant: "that is a false key. I had not seen it before. So I have been long duped. The wretch! She has had a false key made. Where will the other be?"

He sought, and found nothing.

The provost, looking everywhere about, picked up from the ground a sleeve-button.

"A man has been here," said he.

"She had an accomplice!"

"And here's another proof of it," cried Bonaventure, entering the two young people's room. "These two glasses and this empty bottle show that the two culprits put courage into them before proceeding."

"I am no longer surprised," said a neighbour, "at the easy circumstances in which Michelle's mother lives at Zotteghem. A family of robbers!"

"And you say," asked the provost, "that this woman was seen on her way to Zotteghem?"

"Precisely."

"We will immediately go thither with a *posse-comitatus*, Master Balthasar. It is only four leagues. If she hasn't had wings, we shall overtake her, and your fourteen

thousand florins won't be all lost. But it is a thrice capital crime."

At this word the provost went away, leaving Balthasar in deep dejection, and Bonaventure half angry and half pleased, because he hoped thenceforth to introduce his wife into the house. He sent for her, in fact, to take care of the overwhelmed merchant; and from that day forth she was installed in the place of poor Michelle.

Balthasar wrote to his son, whom he supposed to be yet at Brussels, and begged him to come and comfort him. He told him all that had just taken place, as he understood it. But the express charged with this letter did not find Simeon; who, not being yet wholly lost, would doubtless have been struck with it, and might have repented. On the contrary, through a merchant who was going to Ghent, the young man wrote a letter to his father from Mons, announcing a journey of three weeks into France. This letter did not arrive till some days after the catastrophe, and Balthasar was not sorry for the step his son had taken.

"My poor child could not have borne the thought of Michelle's crime," said he, "it is better he should know nothing of it. At his return, we'll consider."

Meantime the provost, escorted by six archers on horseback, arrived at Zotteghem. He went alone before them to the house of Michelle's mother.

"Where is your daughter?" said he to the old woman.

"Ah! worthy sir, don't make a noise," answered the good woman. "She is ill."

"Asleep, no doubt," replied the man of justice. "That is not surprising, after a night like that she has passed. I must speak to her."

He entered without ceremony, and saw Michelle inundated with tears on her mother's bed.

"You must come with us, my pretty child," said he, jeeringly; "and in the first place, let us look at the fourteen thousand florins."

"The fourteen thousand florins!" repeated she, with a wandering air. "Oh, my God! I was sure I should be accused."

"'Tis always thus," said the provost. "If one listened to them, there could never be robbers."

"Robbers, sir!" cried the old woman "Who dares to say my daughter has robbed?"

"I say it, the provost of St. Bavon. We must have the

fourteen thousand florins, and the accomplices' names, and she must come with us."

The old woman fell backward on the uneven floor of her little house. The man of justice whistled: the six archers entered. Michelle, afraid of violence, silently rose.

"I will follow you," said she.

"You can't," interrupted the curate of Zotteghem, coming up. "This poor girl is very ill," added he, turning toward the provost.

"She has been guilty of robbery," replied the latter; "let her restore the sum, and tell her associates, and we'll leave her here for some days under the guard of our men."

"Heaven is my witness that I have nothing, and have taken nothing," answered Michelle, trembling.

"Then, who has committed the robbery? You know the robbers, name them."

"I cannot."

"And what is this key?" resumed the provost, snatching from Michelle's girdle the key of the merchant's chest.

"That is not the key which was made use of in the commission of the crime."

"I know it; you had a false one made; two were necessary for you. But you have lost your head."

"Are you guilty, Michelle?" said the curate.

The servant looked at him sadly; then, bursting into tears, she answered, "No, father."

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," resumed the old man, "Michelle, answer me, do you know the robbers?"

"Father, I am innocent."

"And will you name the culprits?" asked the provost.

"Never!"

"Not even to God?" said the priest.

"Not even to God; He knows them."

"Torture will make you speak, my beauty," interrupted the chief officer. "We have clever tortures which have untied tongues more restive than yours. Let us go."

"My child," said the good curate, "if you are innocent, God, without doubt, will not desert you. May His hand support you! I will come and see you in prison. But," continued he, addressing the archers, "don't take her to Ghent; she wouldn't get there alive."

"That wouldn't be our business," replied the provost: "we must have discoveries, and the fourteen thousand florins."

He made a sign. Then one of the archers, having covered Michelle with a large cloak, set her before him on his horse, and the party returned to Ghent, while the good curate devoted himself to the consolation of the poor mother.

On the evening of that day Michelle was shut up in one of the dungeons of the village of St. Bavon.

IV.

Who would do us justice, if we had not God in heaven? For the sentences of men are very often the fruit of error. It would take us long to enumerate the bloody cases in which human justice has been deceived. It would, perhaps, be easy to show that the number of innocents condemned is almost as great as that of culprits acquitted.

As soon as poor Michelle was in the officers' gripe, there was no thought of calmly inquiring into all those favourable presumptions of her previous life which might plead in her favour, but only of attending to such circumstances as were likely to blacken it. Judges then, like hangmen, were paid so much for each condemned. The executioner worked by the piece: he complained when he had nothing to do; and the passers of sentences shaped out work for him. A judge is reported to have said, "If we condemn nobody, how will the hangman live, who has his family to support?" Though this was a Swiss and Calvinist judge, I had rather believe, for my part, that this horrible sentence was made for him.

The provost of St. Bavon made active preparations for the hearing of the servant's cause. Her master, ill with grief, no longer busied himself about her. It was remarked that Michelle's mother had not died of hunger. This singular fact, which did credit to the poor girl, was turned against her. The fruit of the robbery was seen in what were called the easy circumstances of the old woman. There was neatness, economy, and sobriety: her cottage had not the hideous look of vicious poverty: new conclusions were drawn from these virtues, and the old woman was all but imprisoned as her daughter's receiver.

The curate of Zotteghem came at the end of two days, as he had promised, to visit Michelle in her prison. He was convinced of her innocence. But she would not name the authors of the robbery. He exhorted her to patience,

and commended her to the gaolers, telling them that the prisoner had not committed the crime, and that God would not fail to discover the culprits. The keeper of the prison had some respect for the words of the man of God. But the judges who were following out the preparation had the heart of which Horace speaks,—wrapped up in triple brass. They kept hold of their prey: nothing could take it from them, or bring them to pity her.

Michelle was interrogated every day; and every day her answers were the same: she was innocent: she knew the culprits; but she could not tell their names. It was even suspected,—for there are some black hearts to which nothing is repugnant,—that the poor servant had an intrigue with some man unknown, as an accomplice of whom she had committed the robbery, and whom she refused to compromise.

After eight days had passed, without their being able to draw from her the confessions they required,—that is to say, the place in which the fourteen thousand florins were, and the names of her accomplices; as it was seen that resignation had gotten the upper hand with her, and that she was better, it was decided that she should be subjected to the torture. She had to undergo what was called the wedge-question. The executioner's assistant brought four small oaken boards of great thickness. Each of Michelle's feet was placed between two pieces: in the middle was thrust the sharp end of a long wedge, and the whole was fastened with bars and cramp-irons. Then the executioner, armed with a mallet, drove the wedge; which, forcibly repelling the two boards from the middle, compressed the feet, made the blood spout, and crushed the flesh. Michelle, uttering lamentable cries, fainted at last without making any declaration; and the torture ceased. Her wounds were dressed: she was thrown on the straw of her dungeon; and the sworn surgeon, who had legally assisted at the question, declared that in three days she would be able to undergo another.

The unfortunate woman's agonies soon woke her; and were so lively and cruel that, desiring only death, she resolved on avoiding a prolongation of punishment. On the morrow, and the day after, she saw no other person but the gaoler, who was ordered to bring her every morning a little pitcher of water, and a morsel of black bread. On the third day she had to leave her dungeon, and undergo

the trial of the buskin. This was an iron stocking, which was attached to the foot, and then placed upon a burning fire-pan. She could neither walk nor stand, such horrible sufferings had the preceding question left behind it. At the sight of the new tortures preparing for her, Michelle declared, in a feeble tone, that she was going to confess all.

Resolved to immolate herself for her young master, whose crime she felt, besides, that it would be difficult for her to prove, even if she should reveal it, the servant made the sign of the cross, and began to pray in secret, asking forgiveness from God for the falsehood she was going to tell. But at that moment, though the poor creature had been little instructed, she felt, by a supernatural light, that falsehood was not permitted in any case, and that she could not, without offending God, hasten the moment of her death. She confined herself, then, submissive and resigned, to praying that the Lord would help her, and direct her tongue; and she awaited the interrogatories.

"Are you guilty?" asked the provost.

"It is possible," said she, "that I may be; for I might have prevented the robbery."

"Who committed it? Who took away the fourteen thousand florins?"

"A young man."

"One whom you love?"

"I love one of the two," replied Michelle, blushing; for she saw the word was understood in a different sense from that she gave to it.

"One of the two!" resumed the provost briskly: "they were two?"

"They were."

"Independently of you?"

"Yes."

"And you could have prevented the crime?"

"Yes, for I was present; and if I had called for help, I should have been found innocent."

"Very well, child?" said the provost, with a satisfied air; "and now the names of these men?"

"I cannot tell them."

"Whither do you think they may have retreated?"

"I do not know."

"Do you think they may have remained in this country?"

"I do not believe it."

"And you refuse to name them?"

"You may kill me, but I cannot tell their names."

"Let this woman be taken back to her dungeon."

Then, when he found himself alone among his men, the provost said, "She confesses herself guilty: that's a great point gained. As to her accomplices, we know they are two. I'll take upon myself to find them. But this business is detaining us, and there are other causes."

He thought for some minutes, and drew up against Michelle the sentence of death.

On the evening of that day the curate of Zotteghem, by whom she wished to be confessed for the last time, came to announce to her that she was to die on the morrow. She was glad of it: she asked absolution for what might be reprehensible in the answers she had made to avoid question by the buskin. The good priest saw her calm when he had assured her that God forgave her, and that she might receive the Holy Communion next morning.

The day of execution was the 15th of March, 1535. While they were coolly preparing the rope which was to strangle Michelle, and afterwards to hang her body from the gibbet, shut up as high as the neck in a bag of red cloth, what became of the two criminals, whose wicked action was so hardly expiated by the poor Flemish woman?

They had gone as far as Paris, and had lived there for eight days the most dissolute life; deafening themselves with noise, and seeking, in a continual whirlwind of pleasures, to repel remorse. Frightful ideas, however, tormented Simeon: he saw, in dreams, Michelle accused; but he did not suppose, on waking, that that soul, so honest, could be suspected,—when one day, in the capital of France, as he was visiting the garden of the Tournelles, which was at the place where the Royal Square has since been built, he unexpectedly encountered Michel Vander Haegen, a Ghent merchant, a friend of his father's, and who had just arrived in Paris. It was the 8th of March.

"You are amusing yourself here," said the merchant to him, "while your father is under the weight of a bitter sorrow."

"What sorrow?" asked the young man, beginning to blush.

"Don't you know? His chest has been robbed, and his servant is going to be hanged."

Simeon staggered at this. The merchant attributed his

change of features to natural feeling. He comforted him, and made him promise to return to Ghent next day.

The two young people had already spent or lost half of the enormous sum they had taken. The hope of refunding and setting all right induced them to play still in the evening. But they lost almost all that remained to them; and, as Simeon declared he would return to Ghent, throw himself at his father's knees, confess all, and save poor Michelle, Theodore agreed to accompany him, on the express condition of the young man's swearing to him to take all upon himself and accuse himself of all the robberies. The companion knew Balthasar possessed an immense fortune, and he perhaps had his plans. After the old man's death, this large fortune must belong entirely to Simeon. Who knows whether Theodore was not calculating on the possibility of hastening this succession? If these suppositions are considered odious, let us reflect on the consequences of a first crime. The evil way always widens. Besides, Theodore, Simeon's accomplice, robbed him himself; and had still upon him two thousand florins in gold, in his girdle, pretending all the while that nothing remained. He who lies and steals does not stop there. Travelling then was not so quick as it is now. The two young men did not arrive at Ghent till the morning of the 15th of March. They left their horses in the suburb, in order to be less observed, and cleared at ten the city-gate. Michelle was to be executed at noon. Theodore had for some time been raising his eyes toward the high cross of St. John.

"That's what is to punish us," he said, laughing. "We were wrong perhaps to come back into this country. But," added he, "who would not endanger himself for his friend?"

Simeon said nothing. He was thinking, as he walked, of the manner in which he would declare everything to his father, who would withdraw his accusation, and say he had found his money and the robbers, and that the culprits had left the country. Simeon and Theodore might even have the honour of its being published that this discovery was owing to them.

The weather that day was such as is common in March. A high wind had suddenly risen at the moment when Simeon and Theodore were reaching the heart of the town. The sky was veiled by gloomy clouds, which rolled against each other like armies. The wind loosened the roofs, and

strewed the streets with tiles and brickbats; its voice blew hoarse and threatening, and every one wrapt himself in his mantle.

The two friends were all but carried off as they crossed Calendar-square. Theodore looked at that moment a little frightened at the iron cross, which he could not, with all his sarcasms, banish from his thoughts.

As they were turning out of this square into the street which leads to the pavement before St. John's, now St. Bavon's, a deeper howl of the hurricane was heard; the earth seemed to shake, and all at once the high iron cross loosened from its strong spire, fell on the two robbers, after having injured the roof of the chapter-house, and threw them down. Theodore's body was cut in two. He could only say, "She was right," and expired.

Simeon, bruised, lived still. Two priests of the chapter came up to him. In their presence and before the crowded assembly, the young man confessed the crime Michelle was going to expiate. He was carried on a chairman's horse, with the body of his friend, to the village of St. Bavon. He renewed his confessions and expired. They found on Theodore the 2,000 florins he had concealed, with a third key of the chest, cogged dice, and other indications. The bodies of the robbers were hung on the gibbet, and the curate of Zotteghem was ordered to bring Michelle out of her prison to assist at the honourable reparation made her by the judges, by order of the abbot of St. Bavon.

When Balthasar knew what had happened, he tore his hair and left the country, leaving Michelle a perpetual pension of two thousand florins a year. The poor creature withdrew to the Beguinage, for her mother had just died. She herself did not live long.

That street of Ghent in which Michelle's prophecy had been realized by a kind of miracle, was always afterwards called *Cross-street*.

A NIGHT ROBBERY.

"Debauchery leads to evil."
Proverbs of John-Robert.

When the beloved sovereign of the Low Countries, the Infanta Isabella, was beginning to breathe a little,

victorious over the troubles which had for half a century desolated her states, there was at Lille, in the year 1605, a rich merchant, named Joseph Annesens, and who was what would be now called a speculator. He had furnished supplies in the late wars; he possessed a large capital; he was enterprising, and fortune had constantly smiled on him. He had experienced, in his whole life, but two smarting sorrows, one of which was weakening every day. This was the loss of his wife; for grief spends itself as time goes on. The other was still burning: its cause was in the disposition and bad inclinations of his only son.

This young man, who was called John, was only twenty, and already quite corrupted. The worst habits were ascribed to him; intimacies avoided by all the world were those which had the gift of pleasing him. In debaucheries of every kind he luxuriated and dilated as in his proper element. He got intoxicated and entered into quarrels. He had disgraceful intrigues, fought at taverns, and cheated at play. Many times he had even stolen, though his father did not let him want money. These grave delinquencies were stifled with gold. The good people, who perhaps judged rashly between father and son, said Joseph had always been hard, owed to usury the great bulk of his fortune, had ruined many a family, and was now undergoing punishment in his son.

At the siege of Ostend, John had been enlisted; he had so conducted himself as to be drummed out of the army, and the merchant saw no other means of escaping from the sufferings he inflicted on him than that of sending him beyond the seas.

Joseph Annesens was old, but free from any sour peculiarities. His son was getting into debt, borrowing from usurers, and devouring in advance the enormous inheritance which was to fall to him. The money he thus procured was lost at play or in orgies. If the merchant had known it, he would have disinherited his son; or rather he would have made such a change in his property as to leave something between John and want;—for he loved the profligate in spite of his vices;—but he knew not of these details when he decided on sending him to the East Indies.

The young man, who saw a good sum of money ready for his departure, a pleasant voyage before him, and a rich seaman's venture on his arrival in the New World, appeared satisfied, and made his preparations without regret.

He soon left for Antwerp, fortified with letters of recommendation; and the vessel in which his place had been taken set sail.

The father, a little lightened, began to breathe again. He put a better face on matters, and diverted himself with his old friends.

He had gotten rid of his son just eight days, when he received, on the 12th of December, 1605, at four o'clock in the afternoon, the following letter.

"My dear Joseph,—These few words will surprise you. My Brussels correspondent has just failed. I had in his hands the half of my fortune. I thus lose a hundred thousand florins. I want ten thousand to appear to-morrow morning and make good my payments. I am compromised and dishonoured unless you send me them this evening."

This letter was signed "Victor Castiau." He was Joseph's dearest friend. The old man did not hesitate: "Assure Victor," said he briskly to the bearer of the letter, "that I will this evening myself send him what he asks, and that he may reckon upon it. Let him expect me to supper at seven."

Joseph had not with him all the sum wanted, but he soon got it together; and, more affected by his friend's misfortune than with his own fatigue, he arranged the ten thousand florins, well counted, in two parcels, had the little horse saddled which he commonly mounted, and set out at six in the evening of a very gloomy night. His friend lived in the most distant quarter of the town.

He had just cleared, without having been stopped, an isolated lane, and was entering the deserted street in which Castiau lived. This was the end of his ride. He thought it attained, when his horse backed suddenly, and almost threw him. A man had seized it by the bridle; and, presenting a naked weapon, the edge of which shone in the darkness, this man said, in a low voice, to the merchant,

"Your money, or you are a dead man!"

Old Joseph did not pretend to courage. Trembling with fright, he was going to unhook from the saddle-bows the two bags he carried, when all of a sudden he thought of his friend's difficulties.

"If he has not the ten thousand florins," said he to himself, "he is ruined; and if I tell him I have been robbed, he will take my excuse for a pretext."

These two reflections, which smote rapidly on the mer-

chant's heart, gave him an instant's energy: he suddenly raised his whip, and struck a vigorous blow with it across the bandit's face; and, this movement having made the robber recoil with a cry of pain, the little horse galloped in a minute as far as Victor's door, the knocker of which resounded under Joseph's hand, so as to make all the house shake. The door was quickly opened, and the merchant received, pale and beside himself: he told his adventure in two words; and, while all the people of the house ran in search of the robber, he took out the florins, gave them to his friend, and threw himself on a seat.

He had a bed made up for him, to give him confidence.

"How can you live in so deserted a quarter?" said he.

"All quarters are dangerous at night when one carries money," replied Victor. "But I counted on you, and you might have come to-morrow morning."

"You would not have slept quietly," replied Joseph.

His friend grasped his hand. The old merchant soon got into spirits again, satisfied with himself and his intrepidity. There was a little delay in getting ready for supper.

Two domestics came to announce that a watch-patrol had arrested the robber, who would be ever distinguished by the scar which the stroke of the whip had made across his face.

The robber lay in prison, as was right. His name, gang, accomplices, country, were all demanded; but he would answer nothing.

Next morning a municipal officer went to receive Joseph Annesens's deposition. Justice set herself to work upon the intended crime of which he had all but been the victim.

The blow with the whip became a terrible proof. The robber, not being able easily to explain the origin of the wound which disfigured him, was obliged to confess his entire crime, which he attributed to imperious necessity, despair, and drunkenness. But it was a night-robbery, with arms, and an attempt at murder; and he was given to understand he would do well to prepare himself for death. At that time, the encouraging interest now lavished on criminals was not shown them.

He at first appeared frightened, then much moved, and asked for a confessor. A good Franciscan was brought to him, who probed with patience the wounds of that gangrened soul, and went out quite discomposed.

It was supposed, from the agitation of the religious, that

he knew the culprit's name, and attempts were made to make him tell it. "A secret deposited in the tribunal of penance does not belong to me," replied he; "and I must be silent."

He went, however, to find Joseph Annesens.

"I come to beg of you," said he, "to withdraw your complaint, if there is still time, and to interest yourself in the abandoned man who attacked you on the 12th of December: he is penitent. He feels all the horror of his faults, and he belongs to an honourable family of this town."

"Ah! you know him at last," said the rigid old merchant. "I interest myself about him! Never! Robbery must be punished. But, since you know his name, you will tell it."

"I cannot; it is not to me, but to God, that this young man has spoken. Confession is sealed with a brazen seal, which God alone can break."

Joseph was irritated: he was little of a theologian. He cited the monk into court, to make him reveal what he knew. The judges pronounced in favour of the religious: the secret was kept.

The discussions commenced, and every hope was lost for the culprit.

However, when for the first time, in order that the business might be decided according to law, and the sentence legally founded, the old merchant appeared before the robber, he changed countenance; appeared to recognize with horror the man with the scar, and asked leave to make in his turn secret revelations. He made eager efforts to stifle the business. He stammered, answered at random, and could not take his eyes off the robber, who was hiding his face in his hands. It was evident there was something extraordinary. But nothing could arrest the course of justice: the robber was hanged in the great market-place of Lille.

Joseph Annesens died six months afterwards; having given all his goods to the poor, and founded a service of a hundred years in St. Peter's church, for the repose of the criminal's soul. People sought an explanation of these circumstances. It was said that John, who never re-appeared, had not embarked at Antwerp, and had been seen in a tavern at Lille, on the evening of the 12th of December.

THE CONFRATERNITY OF ST. IVES.

"Are the wrong and loss which an advocate causes by his negligence a robbery?—Yes; sometimes."—*Versoris.*

"It is thought that charity plunders herself!—No, she sows."
The Abbé de Boulogne.

ALTHOUGH the tower of St. Michael's, at Ghent, which was to be four hundred feet high, is not finished; although the French ideologists, in 1795, made of this monument the ephemeral temple of law, and in spite of other and previous profanations, St. Michael's is, nevertheless, one of the most beautiful churches in the celebrated town where Charles V. was born. It possesses an "Annunciation" by Lens, a "St. Gregory," by Philip of Champagne, and a "Christ on the Cross," by Vandyk, whom the English call the prince of painters, and rank with Raphael. Its new organs, arranged on a Gothic plan, throw into the shade by their perfection the ancient rows of three thousand pipes which St. Michael's formerly possessed;—for this church has also its remembrances and its regrets.

Among the splendours which adorned it in the last century, one is mentioned which, it seems to us, might be revived. It was a confraternity, under the patronage of St. Ives, or Ivoy, the special patron of advocates: it was called the confraternity of St. Ives. It was necessary, in order to be admitted into it, that one should be a registered advocate, should be distinguished in his profession, should have given proof of talent, and enjoy, as to morals, an unblemished reputation. It is a surprising thing that this confraternity fell just on the very day which saw St. Michael's church become the temple of law. The religion of 1795 had no need of all those virtues which Christianity requires.

The confraternity of St. Ives was not an empty name. Every Sunday a third part of the members repaired to the sacristy, and there afforded the poor gratuitous consultations. They also took on them to carry on the causes for the hearing of which they there prepared, however long, grave, and expensive they might be. The chest of the confraternity furnished the costs of these proceedings; and a

hundred times have poor people obtained justice for which they might have hoped in vain, but for the confraternity of St. Ives.

This was noble and beautiful; and every year, on the festival of the holy patron, an advocate of the confraternity mounted a pulpit, where, in a Latin discourse, he recalled the services rendered throughout the year, to induce the members to redouble their charity and zeal.

At a period of the last century not exactly ascertained, several members appeared in the sacristy of St. Michael, absorbed, attentive, occupied in listening to the recitals of the good people. Some were laying claim to little sums, great for them, which were the hire of several months' toils, and which they could not get paid them; others, pursued in actions of taxes or police, remained without defence, unless they found an advocate who, for the love of God and of the good St. Ives, would plead their cause. Poor women were laying open their sad grievances and family dissensions, which the members most frequently made up by good counsels. Man is wicked till he suffers: he is base if he is not restrained. There were harsh men who left off ill-treating their wives when they thought of the advocates of St. Michael as the support of every oppressed person, and as not even waiting for complaints in order to prosecute the brutal husband, tyrannical master, or unnatural son. Thus these advocates went about surrounded with all the respect of which they were worthy.

Now, on the day we rather vaguely refer to, there presented herself, among the applicants, a woman whose features did not betoken one who breathed the native air of poverty. It was evident that this woman, who looked fifty, but was hardly forty, was rather a broken oak than an humble plant.

A member of the confraternity, whose name was Peter Mertens, and who was only twenty-seven, came near her, and asked on what she wanted advice. The unfortunate woman, after having stilled the beatings of her heart, related with some disorder the causes of her distress. She was a Fleming by birth, but had married a foreign merchant. Fearing to see her dowry risked in her husband's business, she had wished it to be invested in real property in her own country; and an estate had been bought in her name near Ghent. Her apprehensions were realized. Involved in several failures, her husband had disappeared a

year ago, taking with him their only child, and she had heard no news of them since. During this time, the creditors had attacked, seized, and put to sale the property of the poor lady, who was fallen into an abyss of profound misery. She had hastened to meet her difficulties; but, despoiled of all, ill, devoured by grief, and not knowing how to arrest the consummation of her ruin, her only resource was the confraternity of St. Ives.

Mertens, having gone into a detail of the circumstances, felt convinced that the prosecutions raised against this poor lady's property were unjust; for she had in no respect been mixed up with her husband's business. He even saw a favourable opportunity for him to acquire celebrity, assured his client that he took up her cause, promised to follow out her interests warmly, and set himself to the work next day. He consulted several of his fellow-members, his seniors at the bar, and they all confirmed him in the opinion that he could not fail to gain his cause easily and gloriously. The stake in question was forty thousand florins, which would restore to the ruined lady a pleasant and happy existence. The member of St. Ives felt so convinced of success, that he offered the poor lady advances of money. She was able to take a more decent lodging, and dress respectably. She found her health come back as she awoke again to hope. One only but cruel sorrow remained,—the want of intelligence about all she loved on earth, her husband and her child.

The process opened against the creditors went on with vigour. But it was a complicated affair; and, if it appeared easy and sure in the eyes of the old advocates, it required none the less of ability and labour. Mertens, who spoke easily, and shone without effort, was a little of what is called a man of pleasure, going to feasts and frequenting company. But as genius does not give experience, which is acquired only by study, he deceived himself. The particulars of the blunder he committed would be without interest to every reader who is not an advocate. Contrarily to the expectation of the friends of Mertens, while the creditors were very skilfully defended, he brought forward his arguments badly, only half explained the documents, deduced his conclusions badly, and paid for his negligence and levity by the loss of that cause which he thought himself certain of gaining; because judges pronounce on the facts laid before them, and do not form conjectures.

This was a thunderbolt for the poor advocate. Soon, as by a cruel enchantment, his eyes opened: he understood all his errors, and was crushed by them. He had a generous soul, and formed his resolution on the spot. He ran to a notary, and made him register a deed by which he obliged himself in an annual sum of two thousand florins for the benefit of his client. He took this deed to her, and said, as he presented it, "It is through my blunder that your cause is lost: my fortune does not permit me to repair all at once the evil I have done to you, but I shall bring you the yearly revenue of the property which has been taken from you."

The astonished lady refused to receive it. Then there followed between the client and the advocate a disinterested contest. Mertens triumphed, but only by showing that the sacrifice did not inconvenience him. It was all his fortune, however. But he proposed to work after this. He renounced for life his enjoyments and pleasure-parties: study became his only constant occupation, and he gathered the fruits. At the end of the year he had doubled his income: at the end of five, he was mentioned as one of the first advocates of Ghent.

He punctually paid the lady, every three months, the allowance he had made her; and he went to see her every week: this was his most faithful distraction; for from that time he was overwhelmed with business, and his reputation increased every day.

One evening there arrived at the town of Ghent a rich equipage, which went down to the hotel of the count d'Egmont, a very famous inn at that time. There was seen step out of the carriage, supported by several domestics, a fat man, who had no one with him but a young girl of eighteen, graceful, modest, and beautiful as an angel: he took the principal apartments in the hotel, and gave out that he was an American.

Next morning he signified his desire to consult an advocate, and, as he asked for the most able, the hotel-keeper went for Mertens.

The advocate, on entering, was struck with Jenny's look, for this was the name of the strange young lady. He recovered himself as he best could, and paid his respects to the fat man.

"I should wish," said Jenny's father, "to purchase an estate in the neighbourhood of your town." He soon

particularized the very property which had been the cause of the process Mertens had lost and of the interest he paid. "I must have this property," resumed he: "how much do you think is asked for it?"

"It was sold for forty thousand florins," said the advocate with a sigh.

"Buy it for fifty, sixty, or a hundred thousand, if necessary," replied the American. "I must have it: I want it directly, and I give you an unlimited commission."

On this, he said good-bye to Mertens, adding, "I expect your answer this evening."

The advocate came back in the evening. The proprietor asked sixty thousand florins, which the fat man paid. He had left India with some millions, paid all his debts, redeemed all his property now, and was looking for his wife. For, if you have not guessed it, this was the husband of the poor client; who, at last, recovered her fortune, her husband, and her charming daughter.

Informed of the conduct of Mertens, the astonished American gave him Jenny, who made no opposition, and who united to all her charms the dowry of a million. The marriage went off at St. Michael's, and the whole confraternity of St. Ives was at the wedding-feast.

The moral which advocates may draw from this story is, that generous probity is a means of success, and one which, we may add, at least is not worn out.

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

False witness thou shalt never bear,
Nor tell, at all, a falsity.

THE DEMON OF ALOST.

"All rogues are Satan's game."
Ph. Picard.

If you find, good people, anything extraordinary in the following legend, we beg of you to consider that it is a popular tradition, which we are not permitted to alter, and that we do not give it as authentic history. For the rest, it is neither the history of the fairy Cancangrogne, nor the tale of Gigot-mon-Ange, nor the misfortunes of King Bonbenin-Bonbenet-Bonbeninguet, nor the high deeds of Gargantua, that we relate here. It is a simple chronicle, in which the devil takes one of those parts he has more than once fancied. And if you do not think the belief of our ancestors sufficient to give some authority to the facts which follow, we will tell you moreover that the learned Chassanion mentions the adventure, a little stripped of details, in his book of the *Great and Terrible Judgments of God.* It is true that, taking up the fact from an heretical German, he has altered time and place.

You must know, then, that the town of Alost, dismantled in 1667, appeared before that time more considerable than since. It was the capital of a rich county. At a period a little distant, Baldwin the Squinter, count of Alost, having died, his only daughter Beatrice inherited this noble patrimony. But having espoused Henry, castellan of Bourbourg, in Flanders, she was little occupied with her good county of Alost; and Baldwin of Guines, to whom it afterwards fell, yielded it by treaty to Ferdinand, count of Flanders. It was in 1232, then, the said Ferdinand being count of Alost, that, on a dull evening

of November, there arrived at that town, from Ninove, a Brabantine soldier, named John Spitaels.

Having taken up, on his journey, the defence of a Ghentish lady, whom some scurvy rascals were insulting, John Spitaels had been wounded. But he had saved the lady, a young widow of respectable appearance, who had poured out her thanks, and whom her groom had very hastily taken back to Ninove.

Spitaels attributed his victory partly to the happy thought which had struck him of invoking St. Martin of Alost. So, though it was already late, he would not pass the church of the holy patron of brave men without throwing himself on his knees before the porch, and offering his thanksgivings. Then, not judging it expedient to enter the hospital, seeing he was decently provided with money, he went and knocked at an inn kept by Ghislain Mercx, in front of the great entrance of the Beguinage.

He was favourably received.

He sent for a surgeon; his wounds were not serious; and finding himself quite well at the end of fifteen days, he determined to set out for Alost, occupied, as it were in spite of himself, with an idea which was getting stronger possession of him every day. For on the evening when he rendered good service to the young lady of Ghent, he had only yielded, in exposing his life for her, to the generous emotion felt by every good Christian, who ought to help his neighbour. But afterwards, recalling the face and figure of the said lady, he became insensibly taken up with her, so that he no longer thought of anything else, and dreamed only of her. All he knew of her was, that she was a widow, and lived at Ghent, near the belfry. He resolved to go and find her, throw himself on his knees, and avow the passion with which he was smitten.

Now, on entering the hotel of Ghislain Mercx, fearing he might be dragged into foolish expenses with some of the confraternity of Alost crossbow-men, who were his friends, John Spitaels had secretly given a tolerably furnished purse in keeping to the landlord. It was all his fortune, and he was less disposed than ever to waste it in entertainments and debaucheries, since the sentiment with which he fed his heart gave him hope of a possible marriage, which would crown all his wishes with happiness.

Before setting out, he asked back from his landlord's wife the money he had intrusted him with. But the sight

of gold inspires evil designs, in proportion to the largeness of the sum. This woman had already deliberated with her husband about retaining the soldier's purse, since he had put it into their hands unwitnessed. To John's great surprise, she denied the deposit, and impudently asked him if he was a fool, or wished to injure her house.

John Spitaels, alarmed at first, soon became furious; and the innkeeper, in concert with his wife, drove him out of the house. The soldier, who had drawn his sword, and was no longer master of himself, beat the door so vigorously that it seemed likely to burst open. Meantime, Ghislain Mercx cried "Thief" so powerfully, and complained so loudly of the Brabantine's wanting to force the door, that the head bailiff of Alost, who happened to pass officially at that moment, had John Spitaels arrested by his archers and taken to prison.

Some days afterwards, whether the said bailiff had been gained over by the innkeeper, or the unbridled frenzy of the soldier had appeared very criminal, there was talk of condemning him to death. A stranger in the country, he could obtain little redress.

At that time all Alost was taken up with a demon who had appeared to divers persons of the town, but was not very much dreaded, because he had not yet done any great and notorious harm. The morning of the day on which the judge was about to pronounce sentence on John Spitaels, this same demon penetrated into his dungeon and said to him, "You are going to be condemned to death: it is unjust, but such are men. Nevertheless, if you will give yourself to me, I come to assure you no wrong shall be done you."

"And who are you?" said the soldier, after a moment's silence.

"Don't be frightened; I am the demon of Alost."

"The demon of Alost!" cried John. "A demon! I give myself to a demon! I had rather die innocent, than be delivered by the loss of my soul."

"But think that in two hours it will be too late. You are young, and have years to live. I can also get your money back for you. And that young window of Ghent! She is here, in Alost, and wishes to see you again."

These last words produced on the soldier part of the effect the demon appeared to expect from them. He rose

in extreme agitation. "She is here!" said he. "But, no matter! I cannot be thine. No; I had rather die. And since she is here, it is happy news. For this joy thou bringest me, I forgive thee, demon. At least I shall see her, for she will come to the hearing; and if they condemn me, may I only, before dying, be permitted to tell her I had hopes of becoming her husband."

The grief and resignation of the soldier had something so touching about them, that the demon of Alost, who, in appearance at least, was not altogether of the worst kind, was even himself struck with them. At last he opened his mouth.

"Well," said he, "though you won't be mine, I will be generous to-day, and you sha'n't speak ill of me, for I'll help you disinterestedly. I flatter myself I can even save you. Follow my counsels, then. When you are called, presently, before the head-bailiff, strongly assert your innocence, and ask (what can't be refused you) to have for an advocate him you'll see there present, with a blue cap on his head. That will be myself."

The prisoner was delighted. And you, good people, for whom one sometimes plans high-wrought romances, to manage surprises for you, you doubtless think already that the demon of Alost was some worthy emissary of the young Ghent lady, who was come to try the soldier. Undeceive yourselves. It was a real demon, and one who did not calculate badly, as you will see.

An hour after this conversation, the Brabantine soldier was taken from his dungeon, and led into his judge's presence. The charge of having designed to murder the innkeeper and his wife, after having slandered them, was so well supported, that John Spitaels was going to be condemned to the gallows; when, having cast his eyes round the assembly, he perceived, two paces from him, an advocate, with a sharp eye and a pale complexion, and a small pointed beard, who had on his head a blue velvet cap. He resumed confidence and courage, strongly asserted his innocence, and asked to have his cause pleaded by the advocate he pointed at, and who had secretly offered himself to him.

This favour was granted him, though no one in court knew the doctor with the blue cap. He was, as you know, the demon of Alost. He set himself to plead so ably and cunningly, that he first proved the soldier was wrongly judged; then told the whole story of the deposit of money,

with circumstances the soldier himself had forgotten; offered to bring witnesses from Ninove, who would show that on leaving their town John Spitaels really carried the money he claimed back; and, when he saw the innkeeper gradually disturbed, finished by giving him the last blow, and discovered to the assembly the precise spot where the stolen money lay hidden at that moment.

The landlord, quite past self-control, got up again with vehemence, defended himself more boldly than ever, denied everything, like a man long corrupted, protested that the hidden money belonged to him, and swore *he would give himself to the devil*, if he had not told the truth. This was what the demon was expecting. "I ask no more," said he, taking off his cap, under which was seen in his hair something like two little horns. His eyes emitted flames. The crowd divided before him: he approached Ghislain Mercx, grasped him as his property, and carried him so far away (or, according to others, lifted him up so high), that nobody ever heard news of him more.

The frightened landlady fell on her knees, to ask for grace, and restored the deposit. John Spitaels was free, when he perceived at the bottom of the court the lady of Ghent, who said to him, "I had come, in hopes to save you in my turn."

They went to Ghent, where Count Ferdinand, having heard the Brabantine soldier's adventure, took him into his service, and had him married to his beautiful widow.

This shows you, good people, that it is always inexpedient to steal, improper to lie, and imprudent to give oneself to the devil.

THE LEGEND OF GENEVIEVE OF BRABANT.

"Great God! a mother's heart
Is a fair work of thine."
Berquin.

I.

Among the children of Henry III., the first of the counts of Louvain who took the title of count of Brabant, were distinguished Ida and Geneviève, his two daughters, both beautiful and graceful. Ida had just been married to the young count of Hainaut; and the palatine of the Rhine,

Henry II., having seen Geneviève, whom all the chronicles paint as a model of beauty, piety, and sweetness, spoke of her with great praise to his brother Sigefrid, or Siffroi. The palatine was residing at Aix-la-Chapelle, which then still formed part of the Low Countries. Siffroi repaired to Louvain, had the happiness of pleasing at the same time that he himself became enamoured, and espoused Geneviève, the pearl of Brabant.

It is thought this marriage took place in 1095, at the time when all Europe was beginning to rouse itself to the crusades.

Geneviève was only eighteen. Although she loved him whom she had accepted, she wept bitterly on leaving her father, for she had a presentiment that she was to see him no more here below.

She arrived, then, sad and doleful, at the court of Aix-la-Chapelle. Siffroi's love shed a soothing balm over her affectionate soul, without driving away its melancholy. But, recollected and devoted, she no longer lived, after God, but for her husband, who forgot in her society both his ancient pleasures and his passionate taste for hunting.

Alas! the felicities of this world are not of long duration.

The preaching of the crusade had excited the knights. Every man who would be called a man of faith and honour was taking the cross. Age was hardly an admitted dispensation: every knight was covered with contempt who seemed to hesitate between his own repose and the glory of delivering the sepulchre of Jesus Christ. The princes were setting the example. Godfrey of Bouillon alienated his domains for the holy war; the counts of Flanders and Hainaut were occupied only in assembling their warriors; and Godfrey of Louvain, the brother of Ida and Geneviève, was already gone with a crowd of others. The voice of love and of the tender affections was everywhere stifled by the austere voice of duty. The palatine, Henry II., smitten with a serious illness, could not take the cross, and Siffroi, among the princes, had to take the place of his brother.

Painful struggles were necessary to snatch himself from the tenderness of his young spouse A dreadful misfortune came, in addition, to smite Geneviève's heart. At the moment Siffroi was going to separate from her, a messenger brought her the sad news of the death of her father, who was killed at a tournament by a knight of Tornmaisis.

Siffroi could not console her: she wept on his bosom, kissed his cuirass and his arms; and, too pious to ask him to renounce the holy pilgrimage, begged him to permit her to accompany him into the camp. But the warrior knew too well its perils and fatigues. When the knights, his friends, came to call him to rejoin Godfrey of Bouillon, he left with them, strongly commending Geneviève to his servants, and, above all, to Golo, his steward.

II.

The army of the cross set out from the Low Countries, on the 15th of August, 1096. From that time, alone, uneasy, and trembling, Geneviève found quiet only in retreat and prayer. An old religious, named Drago,* for many years attached to her father's house, had followed her to Aix-la-Chapelle, and he now read to her every day those holy writings which re-animate and console.

Geneviève had as yet borne no children to her husband. A few days after Siffroi's departure, she found she was pregnant. The sweet thought of being a mother restored her courage and strength; smiling ideas came back to her; she fed herself with the hope of soon seeing her dear spouse again, and rejoiced in the happiness he would feel at the auspicious news with which she would greet his return.

Meantime, Golo had not been able to see the beautiful countess without feeling a guilty love for her. Invested with the entire confidence of his master, he had concealed till then a sentiment which might have proved his ruin. Siffroi's absence, on so long a journey and in so perilous a war, appeared to him a favourable circumstance. Forgetting his condition, the distance which separated him from his mistress, and, above all, forgetting Geneviève's piety and virtues, he soon ventured to confess to her his adulterous flame. At first, the young countess did not comprehend him. When she saw the blackness of his hopes, she indignantly forbade him to appear again before her. But this prohibition was vain: this Golo, or Golon, whose name has become an expression of horror, was at the manor the depositary of the count's authority. He did not despond; but, as modesty had prevented Gene-

* In several popular traditions, Dragant.

vièvе's giving full scope to her virtuous anger, kept alive his hope of consummating the seduction.

During more than three months, no opportunity was neglected by him. When he saw that insinuations and prayers only drew on him contempt, he employed threats; for, clothed with all the master's power, he was powerful himself. Geneviève, not knowing enough of the baseness of the human heart to be the subject of serious fears, despised the threats too, and continued to live in prayer, confident in God and in the future. But God sometimes gives up to cruel trials those whom he designs to purify in this world, which is only a passage.

The love of Golo, the steward, no longer fed with any hope, soon changed into a kind of profound hatred. A black jealousy took possession of his soul: he would not have her, who could never be his, be again another's. He resolved to destroy Geneviève. As a last effort, he determined on letting her know it. She remained calm, not thinking the spirit of evil could be so bold, choosing to die pure, rather than live polluted, and reckoning, besides, on some defender. She had lost her father; she knew not whether her uncle Godfrey of Louvain, who had set off for Jerusalem, was still living; and the Count Palatine, her husband's brother, was dying on a bed of pain. She wrote to her mother, to her sister of Hainaut, and to her husband: she announced to Siffroi her already advanced pregnancy, and confided to him her troubles with the unfaithful steward, and begged of him to hasten his return. Golo intercepted the letters; and, no longer keeping any terms, boldly accused the countess of leading a criminal life, and betraying the faith she owed her spouse and lord. He insinuated—the wretch—that her pious conversations with Drago were a mere pretence for assignations, and that the child she was carrying in her bosom was the fruit of the adultery.

A little while after, one day as Geneviève was alone with the old religious, occupied in reading the Holy Scriptures, Golo presented himself rudely before her, accompanied by vile men who were in his pay: he insulted the countess by the most odious imputations; accused the pious Drago of the debasing crimes which he himself had meditated; and, without venturing to sustain the looks of his victims, had them violently separated. Geneviève was seized by hired hands and thrown into a dungeon,

while two murderers dragged the good monk out of the oratory, to put him to death.

When the countess found herself alone in her prison, she thought herself the prey of horrible dreams; but she soon found her misery was real.

They brought her every day a pitcher of water and coarse food, but no one spoke to her. The gaoler, who gave her the water and the bread, had orders not to answer when questioned by her. She bore all with resignation, and from love for her child, who was near its birth. But she often bitterly wept; and recovered strength after these fits of anguish only in casting herself into the arms of the Virgin Mary, in whom she had great faith and a sweet confidence.

One day she heard a confused noise of horns and trumpets. She imagined it was her dear Siffroi re-entering his domains. She hoped, but in vain: no one opened the door of her dungeon, and all was again silence.

The next night, her time having arrived, she gave birth, alone and without assistance, to a son, whom she named Benoni, on account of her sorrow. She baptized him with the water from her pitcher, and put him under the Virgin Mary's protection. In the morning, the gaoler seemed moved on hearing the cries of the young stranger; but he did not speak, however, and made no change in the rude nourishment he brought the prisoner.

The flourishes which had struck the ear of the countess did not announce the palatine's return, but only a messenger he sent to his wife, to announce to her his happy arrival at Constantinople. It was Golo who received Siffroi's envoy. He related to him, with a composed countenance, what he called the crimes and the hypocrisy of Geneviève; and intrusted him with a letter for his master, in which he accused the countess of the blackest infidelities.

Long days and nights passed away without Geneviève's receiving any token of interest: it seemed to her, at the bottom of her dungeon, that she was in a tomb, shut out from the world. She was astonished at not seeing her dear mother or her sister Ida come to her aid. She did not yet suspect her letters had been intercepted; that her mother was detained by the regency of the county of Louvain, which she exercised since the death of Henry III., in the name of her second son Godfrey, whose fate was not

known; that her sister Ida was gone, cross on shoulder, to seek after her husband; that ill-omened reports were spreading about the destiny of the soldiers of the crusade.

III.

The messenger who had taken Golo's letter did not come back till eight months after, bearing the terrible answer of the palatine. Siffroi, who idolized his wife, on learning her infidelity—for he did not doubt his steward—had fallen from extreme love into the most furious jealousy. Scarcely giving his envoy time to change horse, he had charged him with a written order for Golo, formally enjoining that Geneviève and the fruit of her adultery should be put to death.

This was what the traitor had hoped. He triumphed. He sent for the countess out of her dungeon: she appeared before him, holding her child to her breast, from whom she could not be separated.

"You see," said Golo, "you are in my hands."

He showed her the count's order. While she was reading it with terror,—"All may be yet repaired," added he: "if your heart will be mine, I will restore your power, and your son shall resume his rank."

Geneviève did not raise her eyes.

"I had rather die," said she: "I only ask grace for my son, who could not offend you, and who is your master's blood. But who will justify me with my spouse?"

She cast a look round her, and saw she was alone with her enemy. At the bottom of the hall, keeping the door a little open, she perceived only two ill-omened figures, who seemed to her two executioners.

"No one," replied Golo, "will justify you. You are going to die, and your memory will be dishonoured."

After a moment's silence, she said, "God will judge us. But my son ——" resumed she again, with an entreating look,—

"He will die with you."

She stifled a long sob, and said, as she embraced her son, whom she covered with tears, "We shall die together, then: poor child! your father will only see you in heaven."

She had wrapped him in a lappet of her faded robe, having no other garment. This was in the month of November, 1097.

Golo, seeing her inflexible, seemed to make a violent

effort over himself. He called the two satellites, whose cruelty he well knew, and ordered them to take the countess with her child, at the hour of midnight, into a distant part of the forest, to put her and her son to death, to bury their remains in the lake, and, as a proof of this execution, say the chronicles, to bring him back the eyes of Geneviève.

Night came on ; and, the countess having sent Golo no petition for grace, the two executioners came and took her at midnight. They went, with her and the child, into the forest. They marched in silence, but God, doubtless, followed them with His look.

The night was cold, the sky calm and clear, the trees loaded with icicles and hoar-frost. Geneviève was thinly clad, but was accustomed to suffering.

Arrived at the place of punishment, the two assassins stopped. Geneviève knelt down to pray, while they were drawing from the sheath their large daggers. Then the child, insensible to this scene of murder, took innocently his mother's breast. The young countess lost strength at this movement, and began to weep.

"Oh! I conjure you," said she, descending to supplications, "grant yet a moment to my poor child."

The two executioners turned away their eyes, and remained dumb, but their hands seemed to shake. Geneviève thought she might touch them. "I am innocent," said she to them : "promise me to say so to my spouse before your death—for you, too, will die ;—and, if I was formerly a good and compassionate mistress to you, grant me this day one grace which is in your power. Kill me before my child. I will forgive you, on this condition. I will ask God to forgive you."

A big tear shone in the night, like a glow-worm, on the cheek of one of the executioners. He was shaken. Drawing his companion aside, "It is a real crime we are going to commit there," said he. She has been our mistress ; she was sweet and affable to us, as well as to the great ; and, if we saved her,—perhaps she'll do us good one day."

The other assassin, striving against his conscience, objected Golo's will, and, above all, the formal order of the count. Yet mercy carried it in his heart, too. They offered to let Geneviève off with life, if she would swear upon the cross to live hidden in a cavern, and never appear again. Maternal love was too strong in Geneviève

for her not to eagerly embrace this proposal. Her son was her universe: she thanked the men, calling them her preservers; and she dived into the forest as far as the district of Zulpich, or Tolbiac, in the county of Cologne; while the two satellites of Golo, having killed a poor dog they had met, carried its eyes to the steward, as a proof of the death of Geneviève.

The young countess, having walked all night, stopped exhausted in front of a cavern which appeared to her an asylum. She rested there: the sun had risen; and all around her was desertion and silence. Soon a sudden noise in the foliage made her tremble; she saw a hind coming with its young fawn, for this cavern was their retreat. The hind seemed frightened at seeing her; but the little fawn having begun to play with her, the hind took courage, and advanced too. The countess looked upon this incident as a succour from heaven; for she had hardly any milk to nurse her child. In a few days, the hind accustomed itself so well to the company of Geneviève as to let itself be sucked by the little Benoni, and divide its tenderness between its fawn and the palatine's son. The countess lived only on plants she gathered in the forest, on roots, acorns, and wild fruits. A little spring near at hand gave her pure water. She slept with her son on a bed of dry leaves, beside the hind and the young fawn.

Siffroi, after the cruel order he had given, had felt himself smitten with remorse. The innocence and purity of Geneviève had recurred to his memory; and he had repelled as infamous the idea that she could have been polluted with a crime. A second messenger had been sent by him, to countermand the frightful sentence which his anger had dictated. He was only three days after the first, but he arrived too late. He went back to tell his master that all was done.

The crusaders at that time were quitting conquered Antioch, in order to march upon Jerusalem. Siffroi, smitten by despair, suddenly grew old in a manner, became gloomy and sad, and no longer sought anything but death in those numerous combats in which the army of the cross was engaged. But death seemed to disdain his rash ardour. He in vain confronted perils; in vain, at the long siege of Jerusalem, was he seen always first in the assaults: he still lived. And when the warriors of the crusade reembarked for Europe, he was one of the last to set sail;

and seemed to fear the renewed sight of those places in which he had loved his dear Geneviève.

He re-entered the Low Countries in the middle of January, 1100, and crossed Flanders and Brabant without stopping, sadly reaching Aix-la-Chapelle again.

It was only at Brussels that he heard his brother Henry had just died, and that he succeeded him in the dignity of Count Palatine of the Rhine. Power and sovereignty, which he could no longer share with his beloved spouse, appeared a burden to him.

Golo, informed of his arrival, went as far as Liége to meet him. The miscreant was in mourning. He hypocritically brought forward so many proofs of Geneviève's crime, that Siffroi remained persuaded that, in ordering her death, he had done nothing but avenge his own honour. He entered his castle, nevertheless, with a soul full of grief, for he found in it a frightful solitude. Everything recalled Geneviève to him, and the happiness she had caused him.

Then, again, he could not believe her perfidy. He had not strength to pass the night in that manor, but went to dwell, from the day of his arrival, in the castle of the counts palatine, of which the death of his brother had made him heir.

But there another object of remorse followed him: Golo incessantly presented himself to his sight: that man's look irritated him; he hated him without being able to tell himself why, and treated him with harshness. The steward complained, like a faithful servant whose devotedness is unappreciated. In the hope of bringing back some serenity to his master's brow, he wished to induce him to take another wife. But, if Geneviève had deceived him, what angel could make him happy? Siffroi expressed the irrevocable resolution of living for ever single.

Two days after his arrival, he returned to his castle; and fell, as if in spite of himself, into the habit of going thither every day, requesting that no person should follow him. He wandered in all the places which recalled Geneviève to him. One morning, more agitated than usual, he would visit the dungeon in which Golo had shut her up. His heart was paralyzed on entering it, as he thought that there she had become a mother. By the light of a torch, which was borne before him, he read these words on the wall: "Oh, my dear Siffroi, I am going to die, and it is you who will it. You will weep

over me. But if you read this, know that I forgive you as Jesus our Lord forgave, and that my heart is always yours."

"Oh, God!" cried he, "she was innocent! My God, grant I may not be convinced of it!"

IV.

Siffroi found no relief from his violent grief but in the exercise of hunting. He gave himself up to it without reserve; and from that time was seen wandering in the woods, no longer speaking, or occupying himself with the government of his states, but living like a man who is forced to live, and cannot entirely shake off his chain. He had no suspicion that he often passed within an arrow's flight of the retreat of Geneviève.

One day, in the month of November, 1104, the count was pursuing a hind which fled swiftly from him; he let his suite pass, and the hind led him to the grotto inhabited by Geneviève. The countess, no longer having clothes, fled for shelter, at the sight of a man, to the extremity of the cavern. The little Benoni, who was gathering roots for his mother, ran also to hide himself. Siffroi stopped, astonished.

"Who are you?" said he. "Do you worship Jesus Christ?"

It was the first time, for seven years, that Geneviève heard the tones of a human voice, except her son's. She answered, after a moment's emotion,

"I am a woman and a Christian."

"If you are unfortunate," resumed Siffroi, "why do you hide yourself?"

"My clothes are worn out," said she, "and I cannot appear before a man."

The count palatine, taking off his rich mantle, threw it into the grotto. Geneviève, covering herself with it, came forward. But in spite of the cross of red cloth, which still shone on the crusader's shoulder, she did not recognize her spouse, whose noble features had grown old with despair.

He, on his part, not suspecting it could be his dear Geneviève, began to say,

"How, poor woman, you are here without clothes! and how, then, do you subsist?"

"On the roots and wild fruits of this forest," answered she.

"And this child?" said the count.

"He is my son and the son of a noble knight. But his father has disowned him, and I have promised not to name him."

"Can you, too, have been the victim of perfidy?"

"My mouth, my lord, was always a stranger to falsehood. A traitor, who wished to take away my honour, destroyed me, to be avenged on my refusals. I came, young and courted, from Brabant—"

She stopped at this word.

"Oh, heaven!" cried Siffroi, falling on his knees, "you are Geneviève."

The countess had recovered her spouse. In each other's arms, they remembered no more the horrors of the past. A cry of terror from the little child recalled them to the present. While the count palatine was covering his son with kisses and with tears, the hunters who accompanied him were come near, stupified with the scene that was passing before them; and the child was frightened. Golo was there, and, on hearing Geneviève named, became pale as a spectre, and attempted flight. Two squires, comprehending all the horrible mystery, quickly arrested him.

A litter was hastily brought, to carry the countess back in triumph. Before leaving that consecrated place, the palatine made a vow to build a chapel to the Virgin Mary on the little hill where he had recovered his wife and son. That is the origin of the church of Our Lady's Mount (Frauenberg), round which a pretty village has been formed. He then sounded his horn three times; all the woods re-echoed, and all the neighbouring hamlets obeyed the summons.

He took his son in his arms and followed his wife's rustic litter, amid cries of joy from all his vassals. Geneviève thus re-entered the castle, which had not been inhabited since her absence.

It is related that the hind, accustomed to live with her, would not quit her, or the child it had nourished with its milk; but followed the procession, marching on one side of Geneviève, from whom it did not take off its looks.

The two assassins who had spared Geneviève were found, and loaded with presents; while four untamed bulls

tore Golo in pieces, and his horrible remains were thrown into the lay-stall.

Siffroi seemed to revive every hour: all his troubles had vanished. But, say the holy legendaries, he was to expiate more severely still the crime he had committed in a transport of unworthy anger, in ordering, on false evidence, the death of his wife. The good countess, in spite of the entertainments given her, the tender cares with which she was surrounded, and all her spouse's love, was with difficulty tied again to life. Her sufferings, so long and so incessant, had killed her long ago. She had, in some sort, lived only for her son. A little more than a year after her re-union with Siffroi, on the 2nd of April, 1106, Geneviève began her holy rest, holding with one hand the wooden cross which had consoled her grotto, and with the other the hand of her spouse, whom she blessed with her prayers to her last breath.

It is said that the faithful hind wept a whole day at the foot of Geneviève's coffin, and was found dead in the morning, near her to whom she had been devoted.

On the 2nd April, 1113, an old man, white-haired before his time, his brow furrowed with wrinkles which tears had hollowed, supported by a child of sixteen, whose features were also faded by sorrow, came and knelt at the chapel of Frauenberg, before the Virgin Mary's altar: the young man fell on his knees, too, and both slowly pronounced the words which detach from earth, while a priest, doubtless inspired, sang *Sancta Genoveva, ora pro nobis!*

They took the monastic habit, and the world heard no more of these two solitaries. They were the palatine and his son.

NINTH COMMANDMENT.

The flesh's work thou shalt desire
In wedlock's bond exclusively.

DOG-KENNEL POND.

"Oh! say, what demon has inspired thy rage?"
***Ph. Lesbroussart.*—"Black Duncan."**

THE Legend of Geneviève of Brabant, which we have just heard, presents some points of analogy with the following, in the incidents and the moral. The reader will easily be made aware of these relations.

When the emperor Charlemagne, that prodigious prince, as Montesquieu calls him, came in 804, accompanied by the beautiful Regina, his spouse, to take some days' rest in the country where Brussels has since sprung up, he brought with him the holy pope, Leo III., who had crowned him emperor of the West. The empress, the pope, and the emperor, lodged in a castle, the traces of which it would now be difficult to find, and which was situated on the mountain partly occupied by the old corn-market, in the capital of Brabant.

Born in these beautiful provinces, Charlemagne loved to live in them. He was then sixty-two, but looked young yet. His majestic port, easy gait, agreeable countenance, nose a little aquiline, eyes large and full of fire, soft chestnut hair, and pleasant and accessible manner were all admired.

It was the month of March. The emperor wore only a doublet of otter's skin, over a white tunic trimmed with red silk, manufactured in the country of Liége. A blue mantle covered his shoulders. His stockings, made of tricoloured fillets, resembled the Scotch hose.

He was coming from Soissons, and returning to Aix-la-Chapelle, occupied by his wars with the Saxons.

He left Regina at the Brabantine castle, called the *Val des Roses*, a name still preserved, but which now designates only a narrow street in Brussels.*

A natural brother of Charlemagne's, and whom the chronicles called Tallen, and others Wenneman, had followed the emperor so far. Secretly enamoured for a long time of the beautiful Regina, he thought the occasion favourable to his plans. He managed to remain with the empress, and, although she united the greatest virtues to the rarest beauty, he ventured to confess his criminal love. In vain did Regina remind him she was the spouse of Charlemagne, and that he was wishing to dishonour his brother: his passion had become so violent, that he was not discouraged. Younger by twenty years than the emperor, he had the impudence to improve this advantage, and declared that if the princess did not receive his love, she must expect from him nothing but hatred and vengeance. Regina had recourse to feigning, the only means of gaining time till her spouse's return.

She cultivated with her own hands the flowers of the Val des Roses. In hope of some respite from the persecutions of Wenneman, she requested him to have constructed in the midst of these flowers a little pavilion in which she might afterwards give him the meeting without being suspected. This pavilion was raised more quickly than she had thought for. Wenneman asked her to repair thither. She followed him, but as soon as he had entered, she shut the door and took out the key.

"You are my prisoner," said she to him, "till the emperor, my master and yours, shall have returned from Saxony."

Wenneman, furious and disconcerted, was obliged for the time to suppress his anger. At the end of some days, as he knew Charlemagne's return was not yet far off, he supplicated Regina, in so submissive a tone, to restore his freedom, and not ruin him with the emperor, and so solemnly promised to trouble her no more with his addresses, that the princess consented to open the door to him.

The traitor, however, was no sooner outside, than casting on Regina an ill-omened glance, he said to her,

* Some legends, on which M. Alexander Dumas has relied, put Hildegarde, in this story, in place of Regina.

"You shall repent of having trifled with me." He set off immediately for Charles's presence, and, having rejoined him at Aix-la-Chapelle, with the utmost effrontery accused the empress of adultery.

Formerly, among the yet savage Gauls, the husband of the guilty woman had the right of inflicting the punishment on her himself, which consisted in cutting off her hair, pulling off her clothes in the presence of her relatives, and whipping her through the town. And we read in our old historians that in so frightful an exigency the unfortunate woman found no one to receive her. The gospel had mitigated these cruel usages, but still, however, the noble husbands preserved the right of absolute power over their wives. The indignant emperor ordered, says the chronicle, that Regina should be put to death. Some agents of Wenneman were charged to throw her alive into one of the ponds which then abounded about Brussels. The order was executed in a dark night.

But at the moment when the princess, in the middle of the waves, was commending to God her innocent soul, she saw coming to her the dog of an old hermit, lately deceased. The good man had lived near there, in a hut, since converted into a mill. His dog, left alone, had taken shelter on the banks of the lake of which we are speaking. He had just sprung to the empress's aid; he seized her by her long hair, and dragging her to the shore, laid her down in his kennel.

The princess soon came to life again. The dog restored warmth to her, and consoled her with his caresses; and Regina placed her fate in the hands of Providence. To avoid being recognized, she set out before day and took the road to Rome, where she hoped to obtain justice from Pope Leo III., who had returned into Italy.

After long fatigues, she arrived at the eternal city. With the produce of some rings which had remained on her fingers, she had bought herself a pilgrim's gown: she repaired to St. Peter's church, which was not yet the sumptuous basilic of Michael Angelo. The pope came thither, and Regina was in his path. Leo III. recognized her, for she had a figure not to be forgotten: and when she had told her story,—

"Remain here, my daughter," said the sovereign pontiff to her: "you have entered Rome as a pilgrim; you shall leave it as an empress."

Regina had had, from her youth, a particular taste for the study of plants, the hidden virtues of which she knew. She set herself to compose medicaments, which cured divers diseases. Blessed by the holy father, her hand tried no treatment without success, and her reputation soon spread far. It was, above all, against the diseases of the eyes that she was powerful.

It was now a year since she had left Brabant, where her death had excited one sentiment of horror. Wenneman, having come back into that country, and being occupied with the remembrance of his crime, went mechanically to walk on the banks of the pond, since called Dog-kennel Pond. While he was wandering alone, a prey to gloomy thoughts, the hermit's dog, who had saved Regina, driven by his instinct, sprang with fury on the traitor. Wenneman, frightened, took flight, and fell into a sunk marsh, out of which his grooms took him up blind. But this punishment did not touch him. He only sought the means of cure, but no physician could succeed with him.

The emperor, who loved Wenneman, and did not suspect his villany, having heard speak of the miraculous woman of Rome, and wishing to see Pope Leo III. again, took his guilty brother into the capital of the Christian world. The blind man went and found Regina at her cell: she recognized him, and said to him—

"Come to-morrow to St. Peter's, at the moment the pope and the emperor repair thither."

Wenneman went, led by Charlemagne. Leo III. was present; and the empress, veiled, took the blind man's hand.

"You have on your heart a frightful crime," said she to him. "At the very place where you have lost your sight you betrayed the emperor. Confess the crime; after which, God will cure you."

The culprit, at these words, seemed greatly troubled. Charlemagne, uneasy and agitated, pressed him to confess his guilt. Wenneman, on his knees, owned all the iniquity committed at Brussels.

The emperor, in despair, wept for his dear Regina; who, however, washing Wenneman's eyes with a balsamic water, restored his sight.* At the same time, she removed her veil.

* This incident is cut, in relieved figures, two feet high, on the fillet of the left front of the splendid metropolitan church of Rheims.

Charlemagne, on his knees, asked forgiveness of her; offering to avenge her by the death of the frightened culprit. Leo III. calmed him: the princess herself implored grace for Wenneman; she went back to Gaul with her spouse. She took pleasure in seeing the Valley of Roses again, and the old dog, her preserver, who never left her. As to Wenneman, he was banished into a Dutch island, where he died soon after.

THE COFFIN-ORDEAL.

"And must we not, by many a certain sign,
The perfidy of human hearts divine?"
Racine.—"Phaedra."

UNDER the administration of the commandant of Castile, Don Louis de Requesens, whom Philip II. had appointed governor-general of the Low Countries after the duke of Alva, one observed everywhere in the towns some of those violent hatreds and deep antipathies which are always the fatal consequences of political troubles. The different parties looked with an evil eye upon each other. Those who had held with the Beggars avoided all contact with the friends of the king of Spain. All relations were altered; and more than once a young girl was seen led to the altar, tied to the hand of a man she did not love, because her parents could not suffer the opinions of the object of her preference.

This was not, however, the lot of Magdalen Jacmart, the daughter of an ardent and faithful Catholic. Two young Antwerpers had paid their addresses to her. Andrew Vinck, the richer, had been repulsed;—he followed the so-called reformed religion: Joseph Rans, less handsome, less clever, and less favoured by fortune, had seen himself preferred; for Magdalen's father, who found in him the sentiments he wished in his son-in-law, had given him his daughter.

Andrew had made vain efforts to touch Magdalen's heart: he had met only with a cold compassion. Not imagining, in his pride, that he was not loved, but attributing to filial deference the conduct of the young girl of Antwerp, he did not stifle his love, but continued to think of her after she

was married; and, in spite of the young woman's prudent and virtuous conduct, persisted in persecuting her with his letters and protestations,—attempts which did not for an instant shake her virtue, resting as it did on a profound piety. But she said nothing to her husband, from a fear of disturbing his happiness;—she herself would have enjoyed the sweetest lot, but for the persecutions of Andrew.

People have declaimed much against the passions, but we can never raise our voice high enough against their deplorable consequences. Andrew, given up to his violent ardour, lost his peace, and almost his reason. He had come to the point of writing to poor Magdalen threatening letters; decided as he was, said he, to go the last extremities, if she did not take pity on his guilty love. The frightened young wife found strength, against the agitations and terrors caused her by Andrew's frenzy, only in religious consolations.

She lived with her husband in a little retired street. One evening of October, 1575, when she was a little more tranquil, because she had heard no more news of her persecutor for eight days, she went out with her attendant, stayed two hours at her mother's, and came back, calm and satisfied, in a fine moonlight, without feeling the least presentiment of the lot which awaited her on her return. It was eight in the evening when she returned home. The attendant observed, with surprise, that the door was open, and the house without light. Magdalen called her husband, who did not answer. A certain terror began to take possession of her: she thought of robbers, who, in those times of disasters, were even more common than now; and, the attendant having lighted a candle, what was Magdalen's horror at perceiving, in a corner of the hall, her husband stretched out, bathed in his blood—assassinated!

She got the better, for a moment, of her lively anguish, to bend over her dear Joseph's body; and saw that his heart had been pierced with a dagger, that his blood was not yet cold, and that the crime had just that instant been committed. She uttered cries of despair: the neighbours ran in, and began to make a search; but nothing was discovered.

As nothing had been stolen, a thousand suppositions were made; the wisest of which were, that the robbers had, doubtless, fled on seeing the mistress of the house return. But Magdalen, remembering Andrew's threats,

gave way to the most horrible suspicions, and bitterly reproached herself for her fatal security. Not daring to mention what she thought, and equally unable to command her fears, she sent for Andrew Vinck. She was thrown into a new perplexity by hearing he had been at Mons for eight days. Worn out by the cruelty of her position, she at length became senseless, as if nature had wished to compel her into repose.

She did not come to herself again till two in the morning. Her husband's obsequies were going on, and a good old monk was watching near the body. She threw herself on Joseph Rans, bursting into tears; opened the winding-sheet to embrace once more him whom she had loved; and, observing that he held his right hand pressed against his heart, she perceived he had in that hand something that sparkled. She was told that no effort had been sufficient to snatch this object from between the fingers of the corpse, and she again became pensive and perplexed.

The old monk, who was watching the body, asked her whether she did not suspect any one of her husband's murder.

"Alas!" said she, "I suspect wrongly, perhaps; but I cannot make an accusation."

"My daughter," said the religious, "I hope we are now going back into the ways of God, and that heaven is becoming pacified towards us. Formerly, in obscure cases, God sometimes gave his judgment in a visible manner. You are devoted to him, perhaps he will grant you a favour. It is not long since our fathers had still the custom of finding out an unknown assassin by the trial of the coffin. This is an ordeal often practised with success in many parts of Germany.

"When a murderer is unknown, the victim's body is stripped," continued the monk; "it is placed in a coffin, and all suspected of having had part in the crime are obliged to touch it. If any disarrangement is observed in the corpse, any change in the eyes, mouth, or any other part of the body; above all, if the wound bleeds, he who is touching the dead at the instant when this extraordinary movement takes place, is suspected, and almost always on good grounds.

"Great examples are cited of the terrible effects of this judiciary trial," the religious went on to say. "Richard

of the Lion's Heart, king of England, had revolted against Henry II., his father, whom he succeeded; and it is related, that after Henry's death, King Richard having repaired to Fontevrault, where his father was being buried, at the rebel son's approach, the body of the unfortunate father spouted out blood upon Richard, at the mouth and nose. You can try this means, and who knows whether it will not reveal to you the criminal?"

Many female neighbours, who were present at this discourse, were so forcibly struck with it, as to improve upon what the good monk had said. An hour afterwards, the corpse of Joseph Rans was exposed in its coffin, in the vestibule of the house.

All those in the least degree suspected were brought in, but the body remained cold and motionless: all who had been known as the deceased's enemies withdrew acquitted. But Andrew Vinck had not appeared. It was known, on the evening of that day, that he had just returned from Antwerp.

A female neighbour, who had observed that young man's unbounded passion, and who was suspicious, zealous, and curious, went to find Andrew, and said to him, with a cunning kind of reserve,

"You know what has happened to Magdalen: her husband is dead."

She observed the young man grow pale, and change countenance at these words; and, although Magdalen had not confided her thoughts to her, the fears of the young widow soon became a conviction to the neighbour.

"If it is true that you have loved her," resumed she, "why don't you come to comfort her? I know she has not responded to your addresses; but perhaps she had not then the power."

Andrew followed the woman, and was taken up with singular thoughts. He was soon introduced into a well-lighted vestibule, with the corpse surrounded with tapers, and with assistants at prayers. Seeing before him the sad Magdalen, seated, in mourning, by her husband's pillow, and fixing her penetrating looks upon him, he wished to advance toward her. But a quick and convulsive shaking seized on him when he recognized the dead: he trembled in all his members; his knees bent; he was like a spectre, and had no power, either to advance or to go back.

Before the monk, who was preparing to speak, could

say a word, Andrew, seeking some support, fell on his knees before the coffin: by an involuntary movement, he put his hand on the leg of the corpse: immediately the dead man's eyes turned twice; the wound re-opened and bled: the fingers, which no one had been able to unclasp, separated, and let fall a gilt button, belonging to Andrew Vinck's doublet.

An exclamation of horror rose from all the assembly. Magdalen fainted anew. Andrew, put in arrest, confessed the murder, which he had committed only as the means of obtaining her he loved. He was condemned to death, and the widow took the veil in a religious house.

We relate this fact, without warranting its details. It is a popular tradition, which we may receive with whatever degree of confidence we please.

TENTH COMMANDMENT.

Thy neighbour's goods desire thou not,
Them to possess unrighteously.

THE LEGEND OF THE WATERGRAVE.

"A great, mighty, and most redoubtable justiciary."
Ronsard.

I.

Baldwin VII., to whom it is first necessary to introduce you, was the son of Robert of Jerusalem, and was acknowledged as count of Flanders in the year of our salvation 1111. He was called Baldwin of the Axe, because he always carried, hung at his side, a battle-axe of thirty pounds weight, with which he did prompt justice; for he was a strong man, and a great and valiant lord, although only eighteen years old when he began to reign. He lived at a time in which laws and equity seemed every now and then to have deserted the earth. The lords and the wealthy had no longer any bridle to restrain them; one sole right subsisted, that of the strongest; and, notwithstanding the peace his father had made men swear, the poor were enslaved, oppressed, pillaged, and put to death by the lords of the manor without resource or aid. The knights, who were in the habit of robbing passengers on the highways and living in crime, while the men of honour were combating in Asia under the banners of the cross, knew hardly any other laws than those which they made themselves, each according to his wont. The voice of the ministers of the Lord, who remained in very small numbers, was powerless against disorders now carried to their height.

Baldwin had a generous soul. He determined to put an end, in his hereditary states, to all the evils which were

crushing the people. He convoked, then, a meeting of all the lords, whose paramount he was,—barons, nobles, and others of the country of Flanders; as Oudegherst says, he assembled the populous town of Ypres, and spoke to them as follows:—

"My friends and good vassals, I have assembled you in order to redress the wounds which are desolating our country. It belongs to us, who are the first among the people, to make a peace which may at last give breathing-time to inoffensive men. I beseech you, then, in the name of Almighty God, who has given us the good things we enjoy, to direct your attention to this matter, to examine into what is wrong, and contrive a remedy. I declare to you I will follow your loyal advice, but I want a solid and lasting justice. You can consult with each other on the subject at your leisure, and in a month from this day I will expect you at my castle of Wynendaele, where we will adopt resolutions which shall become law."

At the expiry of the month, all the knights appeared at the appointed place. The oldest of them thus began:—

"Sire, the prelates, barons, and other noblemen, your vassals, here present, have weighed your harangue. They feel and acknowledge that justice is dead in your dominions, and that a firm hand is necessary to re-establish it.

"With so even a balance," says Baldwin, rising, "that the weakness of the small be no longer henceforth oppressed by force. In spite of the promises made by my noble father, you have seen, in our fields, misery and despair on one side, and on the other rapine and violence. By the name of God most high, and I myself here adjure that dreadful name, no one, if you are knights, shall leave this castle without having made oath to give peace and truce to the poor people, to protect the feeble, and to punish crime, whoever be its author."

As he said these words, Baldwin laid his axe upon the leathern cushion before him.

"I swear," resumed he, "to punish with my own hand (*manu propriâ*), and that with death, whoever shall infringe upon this peace. If there are any among you who refuse this oath, let them rise, and let us know our enemies."

All the assembly was intimidated, and kept silence.

"I rejoice," said the young count again, "to see you all in agreement with me. Let all the faults of the past fall

and die in a complete oblivion! But the future is ours."

All the barons, knights, and prelates, or abbots, swore, then, on the hands of the provost of St. Donatus of Bruges, by the cross, and by the arm of St. George, a holy relic which Robert of Jerusalem had brought home from Palestine, the oath which Baldwin called, according to the usage of the time, a peace or truce, but which was only the promise of a return to justice. In those horrible times religion alone could soften ferocious manners. It was only in honour of God that a truce to disorders was obtained from the powerful. These truces were called peace of God, or truces of the Lord.

After all had sworn to give good peace to churchmen, labourers, villains, and clowns, even in time of war, the count resumed his axe, and said, brandishing it with vigour, "By the memory of my father, this peace shall be maintained. To me, then, and to my safeguard, come the orphan and the widow, and all who need justice and defence!"

During the sitting, many charters and ordinances, reformatory of abuses, were adopted, and among others that which appointed that no man thenceforth, of whatever condition, should have the right of going armed, except he were a prince's officer or deputy for the guard or defence of the country and of the towns. The lords parted from their count, all persuaded they had a severe watcher of their actions. So, during some months, the knights appeared more moderate, and the good people, breathing at last, blessed Baldwin of the Axe.

Soon, however, a great crime made the need of his justice felt.* In the year 1112, twelve months after the oath of Wynendaele, three jewellers, who might be Jews, and who were known for orientals by their costume, arrived at Bruges, and went to lodge at a tavern in Stone-street, which had for its sign the Gold Key. They were going to Thourout fair.

There were already a great number of people in the inn, among others Henry of Calloo, of the country of Waes, one of its richest men, and with him nine of his friends. Learning there that the foreign merchants were carrying with them jewels of great value, these knights, who yet

* This anecdote is specially taken from the *Chronicles and Traditions of Flanders*, published by M. Octave Delepierre.

had a short time ago sworn the peace, concerted together, and conceived the design of assassinating the foreigners, and getting possession of their treasures.

The three merchants, being ready to set out, sent their grooms on before them, and charged them to have lodgings prepared at Thourout. Henry of Calloo, seizing the opportunity of joining in conversation with them, said to the foreigners that his intention also was to go to the fair with his friends, and that, as there would be a great crowd there, he would beg of them to have lodging secured for them all. Delighted to travel with powerful men, who could protect them, the three merchants hastened to agree to the wishes of the Sire de Calloo. They soon set out together, but in crossing a wood half-way between Bruges and Thourout, Henry of Calloo and his friends fell unexpectedly upon the merchants, assassinated them, and, having stripped them, threw the three corpses into the ditches which were on the roadside.

Meantime the jewellers' servants were expecting their masters at the entrance to Thourout. Seeing the Flemish knights arrive without them, they asked news of them. Henry of Calloo pretended to be astonished. "They left Bruges a little before us," said he, "but we heard no more of them."

The uneasiness of the servants became greater when they learned a murder had been committed near a wood on the way. They directed their steps thither with all haste, and recognized the bodies of their unfortunate masters. Without losing a moment, they repaired to Wynendaele, where Baldwin of the Axe then was, and informed him of the crime.

After having listened to them, the count of Flanders asked them if they had no suspicions, and whom they had last seen in company with their masters. They hesitated a moment; and then confessed they could not help thinking the Flemish knights had something to do with the assassination. Baldwin ordered an eye to be kept on the accusers in his castle, and set out for Thourout without permitting any one to accompany him.

Having arrived at the inn where the murderers lodged, he made himself known, and, entering the apartment from which Henry of Calloo and his friends were momentarily absent, ordered the locks of their coffers to be broken open. The jewels of the oriental merchants were found there.

The count had the Sire de Calloo and his accomplices immediately arrested in Thourout: they were conducted to Wynendaele, judged in his presence, and all the ten were soon hanged from the beams of the armory and trees of the court.

Baldwin, some time after, inflicted the same punishment on some squires who had carried off a young girl. He went through the country announcing his presence, and inviting the oppressed to come and claim his justice. He killed several brigands with his own axe. He had a good number of manor-houses demolished, of which the possessors had made dens of thieves.

Among the powerful men who refused to respect the peace, Gauthier, count of Hesdin, and Hugh Champd'Avaine, count of St. Pol, were the most formidable. They devastated the countries which have since formed French Flanders. Baldwin marched against them in arms, razed their castles, beat them, and subdued them by force.

But it was only in 1117 that the people he governed breathed quite freely.

The powerful men he frightened in their bad designs had several times wished to induce him, by cunning insinuations, to go like his father and gather laurels in Palestine. But Baldwin, judging his presence too necessary in Flanders, satisfied himself with sending, to the help of the crusaders, his cousin Charles of Denmark, who was to be his successor. He also made some knights go who had crimes to expiate, and on whom he imposed this pilgrimage.

Let us relate one more feature of the terrible justice of Baldwin of the Axe. One day as he was dining at Bruges, one came to tell him a good woman was lamenting in great despair, because a knight, of those even who were attached to his person, Peter, lord of Oostcamp, had just carried off from the field two cows which made all her wealth. It was market-day. Baldwin rose instantly from table without finishing his dinner. He repaired to the place where the poor villager in tears was demanding back her two cows, which she had recognized, and which were being exposed to sale. All the people crowded round the count. He sent for Peter of Oostcamp, and cast on him a formidable look. The robber, beginning to tremble, confessed his shameful larceny. There was on the market-ground, two paces off, a vast boiling caldron, into which a

dyer was going to put his pieces of stuffs. Baldwin, in presence of all the people, threw Peter of Oostcamp into this burning caldron, clothes, spurs, and all. This so frightened oppressors, say the chronicles, that they no longer dared touch the poor country people.*

Now that you can form to yourselves an idea of the man, here is the legend.

II.

"The Watergrave is a powerful man, my child. Beware of him: in a time like ours, and a place like our good town of Ghent, one is not count and lord of the waters† for nothing. He manages our rivers and streams, inspects our dikes, reigns over our bridges, opens or shuts the sluices, stops or sets a-going our mills, decides like a sovereign upon alluvions and polders; in short, continues or suspends navigation. I repeat, the Watergrave is a powerful man, and our lord Count Baldwin of the Axe gave this great public function to Master Matthias Brower, only because he saw in him a firm and stable character."

"Let him be as stable and firm as he likes," replied Brice Coppens, the young cattle-breeder, "provided he be just. Count Baldwin is of an unshaken firmness; no one complains of his justice: instead of which his Watergrave——."

"Remember," resumed the first speaker, an honest brewer of Ghent, "he is one of the great officers of Flanders."

"What matter? The count has shown us he makes as much of the lowest of his subjects as the highest head in his states. And I will have justice."

"How will you obtain it? The Watergrave has appearances in his favour. You were in possession, on the right bank of the Lys, of two bonniers of land. The Lys changes its bed, and carries one of them off from you; and Matthias Brower takes it, in maintenance of his right, which gives him the alluvions."

"This is not an alluvion. I had two bonniers on the right of the Lys; now I have one on the right, and one on

* Two other deeds of Baldwin of the Axe may be seen in the legends of the "Seven Capital Sins;" the "Duels of Ypres;" and the "Legend of the Door Keeper's Horse."

† This is the meaning of *Watergrave*.

the left. I will prove the river has changed its bed, because the Watergrave, at the corner of a little field, of which he was in possession opposite me, planted willows and stakes, which have opposed the current. I claim also, in compensation for the new bed I furnish on my land, the old bed of the river; this is what no one can contest with me."

"You will not gain," said the brewer. "The bailiff and judges of Ghent are Matthias's friends. Your betrothed, Melanie Ghierts, is still what your heart most clings to; to have her again, give up the rest."

"I ought not to do it. The carrying her off is the most abominable of iniquities. But are the men of Ghent become serfs too? Does Count Baldwin VII. no longer reign? Are the laws dead? Has his justice gone to sleep? How! Melanie goes with her boat to take up her sick father's bow nets; it is a work she has never done; she makes a mistake, and takes some pounds' weight of fish in the Watergrave's preserves. If this was an offence, it only deserves a fine. Instead of that, he shuts her up in his prison. Let him judge her at least. As he knows she's my betrothed, he wants to frighten me. Now he has seen she is so pretty, he wants to seduce her, and take her from me; I know it; and you think I'll suffer it?"

"But what will you do, Brice?"

"Do? If I have not justice by to-morrow, I'll go and find the count. He is terrible only for the guilty. He has put lords to death who had robbed the poor, and has always doubly punished the exactions of the public officers. The small, in his eyes, are as good as the great. And then he has a heart. His union with his cousin Agnes, of Brittany, whom he tenderly loved, was dissolved on account of relationship; and though he's only five-and-twenty, he does not marry again."

"God and St. Peter be your help!" said the brewer.

Next day, the 5th of March, 1117, Brice Coppens, having again found the Watergrave's doors shut against him, courageously set off for Deynze, whither Count Baldwin of the Axe had just come from his castle of Wynendaele, to put an end to some disorders. After the example of Charlemagne, whose blood flowed in his veins, Baldwin traversed without stopping, from south to north, and from east to west, his states of Flanders, raising the fallen,

punishing all crimes, rendering justice to all, but never doing grace.

On arriving at Deynze, Brice repaired to the bailiff's, where the count then was. He had just sat down to supper. Brice was nevertheless introduced; for at every hour and place Baldwin was accessible to the lowest of his subjects who asked for justice.

On seeing this young prince, with his grave air and austere eye, popular, nevertheless, in spite of his severity, Brice, the cattle-breeder, felt intimidated. The count of Flanders was supping alone.

"What do you want?" said he, softly, in Ghentish.

"Justice, Sire," answered Brice Coppens.

"Sit down," resumed the count, pointing to an oak stool before him.

The young man obeyed; and, soon growing bold, opened all his grievances. The prince listened to him without interrupting. When the recital was finished, he kept silence for some moments.

"Certain reports," said he, then, "have been already made me about the Watergrave, Matthias Brower. If what you say is true, punishment shall not be delayed. But if you are deceiving me, yours is no less certain."

"I submit to it, Sire."

"Enough. You shall have justice. To-morrow, at eleven o'clock, you will be at the door of the Watergrave's house, and till that time you will be silent."

Brice Coppens, a little agitated, made a sign of respectful assent, rose, and went back to Ghent, where he arrived pretty late. He went to bed without saying a word to any one; and next morning, all the questions of his neighbour, the brewer, could not extort a word from him.

But, at eleven o'clock, he was at the door of the Watergrave's house, when he saw arrive, on a big horse, from Furne-Ambacht,* a man who had at a distance the appearance of a young and good-looking farmer. There was observed, however, under the lappets of his coat, a heavy battle-axe; and Brice had no difficulty in recognizing the count of Flanders, who was keeping his word to him.

Baldwin nimbly alighted, and knocked at the Watergrave's door. A domestic came and opened. The count drew from his purse a piece of silver, which might be worth

* Furne-Ambacht, or rather Veurne-Ambacht, a quarter or district of Furne, renowned for its large-sized horses.

one of our florins; he slipped it into the groom's hand, and said, "Here's a silver penny for you. I am a stranger in the town, and want to speak to your master on matter of urgent business in his department."

The domestic re-entered. Two minutes afterwards, he came back and said the Watergrave had just sat down to table, and at such times he put himself out for nobody, whatever the business might be.

"Here are two silver pence," said the count, rummaging again in his purse: "return to your master, and tell him I come from Gend-Hof, which is the prince's land; that the dyke of Baesrode is half burst; that aid must be dispatched immediately, and that I can't wait."

The groom re-entered, encouraged by the unknown's liberality, but re-appeared as quickly as before.

"My master answers," said he, "that the dyke must have patience, that you'll have to come back in two hours, and that if you teaze him any more he'll set the dogs loose on you."

"That's what he said!" replied the count, coolly; "here are three silver pence, for which I ask no more than a slight service. Just tell the Watergrave, Matthias Brower, that I'm Pier-Jan-Claes."

This name was no sooner pronounced in the Watergrave's hearing, than he ran all in confusion, and, as it were, out of his senses. That formidable name of Pier-Jan-Claes, which has since become so singularly popular in the Low Countries, was the secret name under which Baldwin of the Axe announced himself to his officers when he arrived as a judge. He intrusted the keeping of his horse to the groom, who had served him as messenger, and entered, accompanied by Brice, into the house of the Watergrave.

"I see," said he, in a severe tone, "that the complaints made me are well founded. You have rendered a bad account of the water-tolls; the inundations which have enriched you, have been sometimes caused by you, in the management of the sluices; you have robbed orphans and widows, though you knew they were under my safeguard. What concerns me, I forgive you. But your robbery of this young man shall not be forgiven you. You do not know what our laws pronounce on a secure robbery like yours. And now send for the young girl you are retaining in your prison by iniquitous violence."

"Sire!" cried the Watergrave, with a convulsive quiver, "she has committed an offence."

"Which made her liable to a fine, perhaps. We will interrogate her."

The Watergrave's servants guessed, at length, from their master's countenance, they had before them the dreaded Count Baldwin, their sovereign. They hastened to obey him; and Melanie appeared, pale, and worn with her tears. A flash of joy shone in her eye when she saw her betrothed before her; and a rapid instinct made her feel, from the appearance of the persons who surrounded her, that Brice came to deliver her.

Baldwin himself was struck with the modest beauty and simple graces of the young girl. "Speak, without fear, my child," said he. "You are free. You are going to be united to him you love, and justice shall be done. But tell us what were the Watergrave's conditions of your deliverance?"

Melanie Ghiert's face was covered with a deep blush: she cast down her eyes, and answered, after a moment's hesitation, "Sire, I could not venture to tell them."

"They are guilty ones, then. What answer do you make?" added the count, turning toward Matthias Brower.

The Watergrave fell on his knees, distracted. "Ah, Sire!" said he, "will you punish a weakness? I am ready to make reparation."

"So you shall, certainly," said Baldwin. "You have no heirs; all your property, from this moment, belongs to this young girl. Your house shall be razed; a public way, where people shall go freely about, shall cross your dishonoured manor. So much for reparation. But you call weakness what ought to be called crime. Confess your sins, for now comes justice."

So saying, he half-opened his doublet of coarse cloth, drew from it a thick rope, and gave it to the grooms, while a monk, whom he had sent for, now entered to give spiritual aid to the criminal.

When the poor monk had fulfilled his painful functions, on a sign made by the count to the Watergrave's grooms, they hanged their master at his own door.

All the bystanders trembled in fearful and icy silence. As soon as he saw the Watergrave was dead, Baldwin of the Axe, without saying a word more, remounted his big horse, and set off.

Brice and Melanie, palpitating with different emotions, had not yet recovered strength to stir, when Joseph Barth, just appointed Watergrave in the place of the defunct, arrived, according to the prince's orders, put the young betrothed girl in possession of Matthias Brower's property, had his house levelled and a public way drawn across in the form of a gallows. This way has since been called Watergrave-street.

Eight days after, Brice and Melanie were married ; and the brewer said, " Count Baldwin is just, but he is a terrible man."

The mysterious name of Pier-Jan-Claes, which he took at certain times, has since his time become a bugbear ; and, by a common enough abuse, this name has been applied to a fictitious personage, who subdues everything by force, destroys, and knocks on the head. This is the Flemish Punchinello, as jovial in another style as the Italian, as rude as the French, and more moral than the British.

Thus Jeannot and Lapalisse, who were great generals, have become, in the popular ideas, ridiculous personages. Thus, in Holland, people frighten children with the great and glorious name of Piet Hein. Names have also their fatalities.

THE FIDDLER OF ECHTERNACH.

" Ohe ! Sint-Jan !
Heu ! eh ! ohe ! "
Songs of the Epidemic Dancers.

1. The Violin.

Before entering on the singular narrative which is to follow, it is useful, by way of oratorical precaution, to say a word of inquiry on a musical instrument widely spread in our days, but which the learned pretend was not known before the revival of letters. It is of the violin that we wish to speak.

In truth, the violins of ancient times had not, perhaps, exactly the shape of those we are permitted to hear now. Perhaps, also, our fathers of the middle ages did not possess players like Viotti, Lafont, Kreutzer, Beriot, Hauman, or

Paganini. Who knows, however? Let us not be too vain, or disdain our fathers. There are still in the domain of the arts some fields they have more ably reaped than we.

However, M. Fetis has said that the violin was only a diminutive and variety of the viol; that it only began to flourish about the first years of the sixteenth century; that the French lute-makers first fabricated this instrument. He grounds this opinion on the mode of speaking then employed by the Italians, who called the violin a *little viol after the French mode.* He then combats those who carry back the violin to the eleventh century, because, says he, they confound it with the rebec; and he adds, "The rebec had very nearly the shape of a laundress's battlet, hollowed at the extremities; in its construction there were neither arches nor concave sides; the sounding-board, in the middle of which was a *rosace,* was glued all along to the sides of the instrument."

On this description, which is obscure enough, he cries out, "This was not, then, a violin!" as if the shape always entirely involved the principle. But Chanot's violins, though they had not quite the shape of the Stradivaris, the Amatis, or Steiners, are no less violins, proclaimed by the class of the fine arts in the Institute of France superior to all the so-vaunted ancient lutes of Italy.

The generality of amateurs have always adopted the idea that the violin has not been in existence four hundred years; that it was born at the beginning of the sixteenth century; that it was at its height in the seventeenth and eighteenth; and that, if the art now prospers, the instrument is verging towards its decline. Thus the violins of the Amatis are passionately sought for; and ten, twelve, and fifteen thousand francs are paid for a Stradivari. People even cite this story of the count of Frautmansdorf, a lord of the emperor Charles VI.'s court, who bought of the lute-maker, Jacob Steiner, an excellent violin, on the following conditions:—1st, That he should pay him eight hundred francs down. 2nd, That he should order him a good dinner every day. 3rd, That he should furnish him every year with a dress laced with gold, two tuns of beer, twelve baskets of fruit for himself, twelve for his old nurse; and, 4th, That he should pay him twenty francs a month till his death. The seller lived sixteen years after this bargain, so that the violin was bought for twenty thousand francs.

One must see in this excessive price nothing but a folly,

and in the clauses of the bargain, an odd originality, which is not without example.

We shall not agree, then, with M. Fetis. We prefer those antiquaries who carry back the violin to the earliest times of the monarchy of the Franks. Montfaucon has collected traces of the violin in some old Merovingian monuments. St. Julian of the Fiddlers was sculptured at Paris, on the portal of his church, with a violin: and this statue went back to the year 1335. In the thirteenth century, the Brabantine poet Adenès, and Thibaut of the Songs, count of Champagne, used this instrument. They are represented playing on the violin in manuscripts of their time. Women accompanied themselves on the violin: in the narratives of the crusades this is plainly expressed. M. de Reiffenberg, in his letter to M. Fetis, on music, supports this assertion. He also speaks of Louis of Vaelbeke, a Brussels artist, celebrated player and fabricator of violins, who flourished in 1294.

It is true that these violins were called rebecs in France. But, though they varied in certain parts of their configuration, and had often only three strings instead of four, as now, it is not the less the same bow-instrument. The viol, which has seven strings, had only six before the seventeenth century. All we can say is, that the violin has been brought to perfection and its name may be new. As to its existence, if this is contested at the epoch of King Dagobert, who was mischievous enough to play on it, Montfaucon must be burnt, and the venerable monuments of antiquity he has engraved must be hidden.

We had need of this preamble to fortify us beforehand against the criticism of the archæologists, in relation to the chronicle which follows.

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2. The Fiddler.

Echternach, called also Epternach, is a little town of Luxembourg, with from three to four thousand inhabitants. It is built at the foot of several small mountains, where some vines grow, which joyously produce a light, sourish wine, adorned with the splendid name of Rhenish. It is watered by the Sure, a river without pretension, which loses itself in the Moselle, at Wasserbilich. This romantic region is the Switzerland of the Low Countries.

The church of Echternach is now raised on a rocky peak, ascended by two winding staircases of two or three hundred steps. From it is discovered a varied landscape, an horizon full of points of interest. Formerly, the situation was as in our days; for nature, the work of God, admits few changes. But the labours of man, after some centuries, are seen no more: old monuments are replaced by new edifices: and it would be difficult for us to say what Echternach was eleven hundred years ago.

It was, nevertheless, at that distant epoch that the adventure of the fiddler took place. Few details are known about the localities of that time; except that the little town subsisted, a borough or village, in which numerous inhabitants were bestirring themselves. The greater part of the people of those regions had already embraced the Christian faith; but Echternach remained obstinately idolatrous, attached to the worship of the old Gaulish divinities, when good St. Willibrod, the apostle of Friesland and first bishop of Utrecht, came to convert these pagans. But, all regenerate as they soon became, their hearts were still wild.

A young man from among them, more enlightened, had set out, fifteen years back, for the pilgrimage to the Holy Land, a work then much recommended, and which he had resolved to undertake after having received baptism. His name was Guy: and, according to the custom of the time, his appearance had been characterized by a nickname: he was called Long Guy. He had taken with him his young wife, who had become a Christian after his example. No one, during so long a time, having brought news of them, they were believed to be dead; and their relations, who were numerous, divided their property. They were, therefore, much surprised when, on Easter-day, in 729, it was announced to them that Guy had just reappeared. It could not be doubted: Guy's conformation was not a thing ever to be forgotten, and all the village perfectly recognized him. He was still, as at his departure, a very tall man, excessively thin and light, a real skeleton, suitably clothed with skin, muscles, and nerves. He had long legs, which the people compared to the props of their vines; immense feet, hands with no end of bony fingers, and a head as long as a winter night, as a wit of the country expressed it. He took enormous strides, or rather leaps; and, in short, was quoted

as the most miserable-looking, nimble, and disjointed being ever seen.

In spite of all, his expression was pleasing, and his look soft; and, such as he was, he had succeeded in gaining the heart of the young woman who had accompanied him on his pilgrimage, but whom he did not bring back. He had some of the qualities which are conspicuous in those men whom we call artists, but who were then called fools. He experienced frequent movements of enthusiasm; sang with deep feeling; and, before his departure, all the world knew he played to admiration on a sort of flute.

His relations felt little joy at his return. As coarse as he was gentle, they became sad at the thought of their being obliged to restore his property. Not knowing what to say, they spoke to him of his wife, whom he had taken with him, when, in a moment of fervour, he had set out for the Holy Land, and whom they saw no more.

"I have lost her," said he, mournfully; "and as to myself, after escaping from a thousand perils, I have brought back nothing but this, which sometimes consoles me."

He showed an instrument unknown to his countrymen, —a violin (a rebec, if you will; but allow me to give it its modern name). He could not have related without shuddering how the Saracens had massacred his beloved companion, on account of her faith: so he contented himself with announcing that the armies of infidels were soon going to pour in upon the West. Then, seeing that he was not understood, he changed the subject, and asked if his vines had been taken care of; appearing quite disposed to re-enter on his possessions.

Guy's relatives assembled in the evening to advise. At the end of a long consultation, they conceived something odious and ferocious: namely, to accuse him of having killed his wife.

"By this means," said one of them, "the judges will rid us of him, and we shall keep what is in our hands."

The accusation was brought next day. Three of the strongest amongst the accusers offered to support the charge by duel, according to the old customs of the country. It was a mode of trial commonly used; and which had at least this much of good in it, that it

dispensed with advocates. Guy was cited : he heard with surprise the prosecution begun against him, but accepted the judiciary combat, though he was unfit for these kinds of jousts. Some forms were quickly filled up ; and he then had forty days given him to find champions, and was put in prison. As his violin was left him, he was not disconsolate. But no one offered to defend him, for there was nothing to support the presumption of his innocence ; and the three adversaries cupidity had raised up against him were dreaded in all the environs of Echternach.

The duel took place on Whit-Monday, at noon. It lasted but an instant. At the first shock, Guy was overthrown. His vigorous relative put foot upon his neck ; and, as he was vanquished, he was declared guilty, condemned to be hanged next day, and led back to prison.

At the time of taking him to the gallows, they were about to tie his hands behind his back. Previously to this he had borne all ; but he now entreated them to spare him a needless humiliation, and asked, as one last favour, to be permitted to fetch his violin, and play on it once more upon the ladder. His accusers, who were impatient for his death, wished this slight grace to be refused him ; but the crowd were on his side on this point, which promised them a pleasure, and it was done as he had requested.

On Whit-Tuesday, then, in the year 729, at bright midday, there arrived, escorted by the executioner and his assistants, at the foot of the hill, on which was built a chapel, now replaced by the church of Echternach, Guy the fiddler, on his way to death. His bare head let his long hair float in the wind ; he walked with an air of indifference ; his long arms with difficulty balanced each other ; his violin, tied by a woollen riband, was thrown on his back, and the bow hung at his girdle. It was seen, from the motion of his eyes and lips, that he was praying, governed by some inspiration.

He stepped in silence up to the middle of the ladder. Then he took his violin, lifted his bow, and resting his bony chin on the beloved instrument, sent forth on the spot, without any prelude, a volume of brilliant notes ; executing what would now be called variations upon a popular plaintive air. He owed to the East, and still more to his own soul, the magnificent art he was displaying before a rude assembly. At first the crowd was astonished, struck, stunned, and disturbed, then they became the sub-

jects of emotion. As soon as he saw it, he made the strings vibrate with more expression; drew sobs and tears from his violin—made it weep and groan with anguish. He had softened his auditors' nerves; he now shook and tortured them violently. He soon saw their foreheads rise, their eyes dart looks of madness, their hands wring. The executioner, who was above him, tottered, let fall his rope, and came down distracted, no longer able to support himself upon the gibbet.

Guy still played on; his skilful bow seemed to produce sparks; and the crowd nailed there, immoveable, subdued, had no longer either thought or will. It was entirely subjected to the sensations given it by the artist. In one short moment he changed the tone, and this was a repose. He passed to softer modulations; he prayed. The sonorous strings took up the voice of supplication; all the bystanders fell upon their knees. Guy's heart was praying too; his lips were speaking; his large eyes, raised to heaven, were dropping tears. God, doubtless, heard the harmonious prayer of the poor fiddler, and, turning away His face from the criminal crowd, gave up to him his cruel accusers.

Immediately, then, the prisoner, resuming his vehement rhythm, played, in a kind of delirium, the most animated, lively, skipping, winning, and joyous air which ever had struck the vault of heaven. All the people, mechanically agitated, were up and balancing themselves, as if for a dance. It was, at first, a great composed and measured ball, but soon an eager dance. Men and women, old men and young girls, fathers and children—everybody was dancing. Long Guy's relatives were dancing round his ladder; the judges were dancing at the side; the executioner was dancing under the gallows. The domestic animals, drawn from their pastures, set themselves to dance, too. Everything that had life in Echternach and its territory, was seized with an harmonious agitation which nothing could calm.

The fiddler, who had just fascinated his assassins so, then came down (still playing) to the foot of his ladder, crossed the crowd, which could not stop him, and slowly withdrew. At the end of a quarter of an hour, the modulations of his magical instrument were still heard; but Guy had disappeared, and was never more seen again in the country.

All the borough danced till sunset. Then each retired sore, exhausted, oppressed, and as if waking from an overwhelming dream. But Guy's eighteen relatives did not stop there; for the legend, which perhaps exaggerates a little, says they danced for a year, without eating, drinking, or taking rest, about the ladder. Already had they sunk into the earth up to their knees, when the report of this wonder came to Utrecht, whither news did not then arrive quickly. (We continue to follow the tradition, without guaranteeing it.) Good Bishop Willibrord came, took pity on the sinners, and delivered them from their punishment. After a profound sleep of five days, the three principal accusers returned to their senses, acknowledged their crime, made a penitent confession, and died soon after. The other fifteen, it is added, were all their lives troubled with a shaking, which never allowed them to forget their wicked conduct.

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3. The Dancing Epidemic.

This disease, which compelled people to dance, re-appeared afterwards, and, by a coincidence for which we cannot account, the victims of this evil were placed under the protection of a saint, who bore the fiddler's name. This dancing affection, then, is called St. Guy's dance. It was also named St. John's, because it appeared principally about the festival of the holy precursor, and the power of curing it was attributed to this saint.

This power could not be refused St. Willibrord. So, after his death, which took place in 740, the inhabitants of Echternach, having obtained his body, placed it in their church;* he became the object of a celebrated pilgrimage; many princes repaired thither in state; and Maximilian, the spouse of Mary of Burgundy, offered to St. Willibrord a wax candle, which weighed three hundred and fifty pounds, and which was still at Echternach in 1794. We do not know whether he made this present for having been cured of the dancing madness.

In 1015, there were seen near Bernbourg, in the principality of Anhalt, some dancers whom nothing could stop,

* Since 1839, the relics of St. Willibrord, the revered apostle of the Netherlands, have been translated to the Hague, where they are honoured in a church erected very recently under his invocation.

and who were cured by a pilgrimage to St. Willibrord. In 1237, at Erfurt, a hundred children were possessed of the dancing epidemic. In 1278, on the great bridge of Utrecht, two hundred persons danced on the 17th of June, and did not stop till they fell down exhausted, and without consciousness. This singularity, which at least in Italy is produced by the bite of the tarantula, has not been sufficiently explained. Was it, in the Low Countries and in Germany, the effect of a certain remorse, awakened by the recital of Long Guy's story? We read, in an old chronicle of Limbourg, that St. Guy's dance was very contagious in 1374. In several districts on the banks of the Rhine, people were seen dancing two and two, as if they had been mad, during a whole day, falling afterwards on the ground, and not rising again till some one had stepped over their bodies. "They ran from one town to another," continues the chronicle, "and the number of these dancers so increased, that as many as five hundred have been seen at Cologne." Holding one another by the hand, and forming immense circles, they invaded the public squares and the sacred edifices, to give themselves up to their furious dances. When they fell, exhausted, they complained of violent pains, which were relieved by punches and kicks in the belly. After the fit, they almost all told of odd visions they had had during the dance. Some said it had seemed to them that they were marching in a sea of blood, and that it was to escape from these horrible waves that they gave themselves up to disordered leaps; others related that they had seen a corner of heaven open before them, and that their dance had been the expression of a happy ecstasy.

If these dancers were visionaries, adds M. Rabon, in his inquiries into the dance of St. John and St. Guy, it was well done to exorcise them, since generally exorcisms cured them. Thus it was in 1374, at Utrecht, Liége, and Tongres, for that year the dancing epidemic extended very far; people counted at Metz, as many as eleven hundred frenzied dancers, who were all leaping at once, and whose fits were redoubled by music, instead of being calmed. They were delivered only by exorcising them. Let the philosophers give us their deep reasonings on this matter. In the absence of exorcism, there was no remedy for the dancing transports but kicks and punches vigorously applied,—a very simple remedy, and very cheap besides; one which

the dancers easily found everywhere, and which was lavished on them with an eager obligingness.

This incomprehensible evil is still met with sometimes, with varying symptoms, which are all put down to the account of shaken nerves. But it is now sporadic, and no longer epidemical.

We may add, that in our days the pilgrimage of Echternach is made every year, the importance of which place, thanks to the absence of St. Willibrord's relics, diminishes each year more and more. But the gigantic stairs leading to his church are always ascended, and the round of the holy edifice is made, dancing. Those who, in their measured dance, have respect to old traditions, ought in every three steps to advance two and retire one. Thus they go three by three; and this festival, joyous and picturesque, is no longer ended by anything sad. Napoleon—we know not why—resolved to suppress it. The men-at-arms he sent to stop the dancers of Echternach, where Long Guy's violin seems still to resound on the festival, which is Whit-Tuesday, danced with the pilgrims. Things have since been let alone, and are doing well.

SUMMARY.

QUEEN BERTHA OF THE LONG FOOT.

" These miscreants, who rob and kill,
Traitors to God, and false to men,
Despise the law, transgressing still—
As Death they mock—its precepts ten.
But Death will come—sad epilogue!
Then faithless, heartless, past recall,
What will they do, condemn'd in all
The breaches of the Decalogue."

Peyrard.

I.

On a fine day in September, 737, in a little room of the castle of Laon, handsomely furnished for that period, two young girls were conversing, one with simplicity, and the other with some affectation.

The castle of the counts of Laon was nothing, at the first view, but a fortress rudely constructed in a rock, covered with flags of stone, laid over like tiles, and supported by an enormous piece of timber. Painted boards, placed upon long beams, formed the ceiling of the apartments, which were all on the same floor: trophies of arms had long constituted the only ornament of the whitened walls: an uneven pavement composed the floor; and high, narrow windows, the corners of which were a little rounded, were pierced in the thick walls. The posterns were heavy and massive: the entry-door, clasped with iron, was still farther protected by a double portcullis. This was the feudal manor-house, for feudalism had then begun. But what then distinguished the castle of Laon from the residences of that sort was, that Count Charibert, to whom Charles Martel had given that town, having followed the duke of Austrasia in all his wars, had found

means of collecting some rich objects, which gave the interior of his fort the appearance of a palace. At the taking of the camp of the Saracens in the plains of Tours, he had carried off carpets and valuable furniture: he had obtained, from the pillage of the Roman towns in southern Gaul, jewels unknown to the Franks; and his only daughter, who was his pride, was decorated with the ornaments of the most elegant Gaulish ladies.

Bertha, in fact, the beloved daughter of Count Charibert, was a charming angel. She was entering on her eighteenth year, with her thick hair of darkish blonde, her blue eyes full of tenderness, her fresh and brilliant complexion, and that plumpness which is so graceful and attractive in a young girl. She had a cultivated mind, a generous heart, a great and brave soul under a timid manner. Better than that, she was pious; and her piety was of that solid kind which gives an immoveable virtue. She was so good, that to please her father and mother, and in spite of her modest repugnance, she consented to be a little of a coquette, but only of the dignified and graceful kind.

She was dressed, on that day, in a long robe of oriental silk, adorned with gold embroidery. A girdle of precious stones marked her shape: pearl bracelets drew out the slight carnation of her rounded arms, which were entirely seen through her long sleeves of an excessive fulness; flowered ornaments of gold fell back over her shoulders; and a coral necklace, from which hung a gold cross and a small reliquary, fastened her robe, without folds, around the neck. She wore the noble mantle of the Franks, which consisted of a piece of stuff, narrow above and very wide below—a species of triangle, the point of which hung down behind. It was fixed on the shoulders by two small chains clasped over the bosom. Precious stones and light little figures, in goldsmith's work, were scattered over this stiff garment. Bertha's head was bare; her long hair formed round her face small ringlets, terminated by curls, which were kept in order by gold pins. When she went out, she wore, to support her veil, a sort of flat turban, finished with large streamers, which fell back round her head, short before, hanging on the sides, and pretty full behind, like the lappets of a bishop's mitre. Fine stockings of red wool, and shoes of the same stuff, pointed and high, completed her attire.

She was seated on a stool with a back, a sort of heavy arm-chair, covered with very bright yellow leather. She had under feet a Smyrna carpet, and before her a small table, incrusted with silver arabesque, on which was, beside a little missal, a ball of violet worsted, stuck with knitting-needles; for she was making her father's stockings. In a corner, were her wheel and her distaff; and she spun, it was said, like the fairies.

The other young girl, who was seated opposite on a footstool, was Aude, Bertha's foster-sister, older by six months, pretty too, but in a ruder style, which was perhaps the effect of a soul less pure. Bertha had wished to have her dear Aude and her nurse, who were of servile condition, always near her; and the count and countess of Laon had agreed to it. Aude was almost as much dressed as her young mistress, but had neither mantle nor precious stones. Her gown, worn as high as the neck, without folds at the waist, was of linen stuff, with small black flowers thinly scattered over a rose-coloured ground. Aude's hair had more of the chestnut in it than Bertha's; her face had a pleasing smartness, and she was well made. She was a little taller than the princess. Her look was bold; but, whether from the lowness of her origin or from natural dissimulation, she habitually sought to conceal what her eyes might express. She had in her soul a cruel passion—envy. She was inwardly jealous of her young mistress; and in this disordered state of mind, which her situation rendered inexplicable, she suffered from the thought that she was only a serf's daughter, while Bertha, the offspring of a count, was destined to command.

Bertha had no suspicions of the shameful secret feelings of her friend. She freely conversed with her about her joys and pleasures, treated her like a sister, and showed her the jewels her father gave her.

"But," said Aude to her, "the duke of Austrasia is quiet at present. There are no more conquests, nor plunder."

"Charles Martel is not the man who can ever be said to be quiet," answered Bertha. "My father has not followed him, because his wounds keep him back. But have we not enough? Five years ago, in that great battle which annihilated the Saracens on the plains of Tours, my father brought back all his war-chariots filled with

valuable things. His battle-axe was decorated with gold collars and ornamented crowns, and the rich handle of a king's scimitar now shines upon his sword. In Aquitain, too, he acquired, at Charles Martel's side, treasures and jewels which make this castle a glorious abode. May God grant, and may his Holy Mother obtain it for us, that my father may not leave us for new wars."

As Bertha was finishing, there was heard, at the gate of the castle of Laon, a blast on the horn hung at the outer post of the drawbridge. This sound was repeated thrice.

"Here is assuredly," said Aude, "an important message. My mother is bringing his news."

"I know nothing yet," replied the nurse as she entered the little room. "But it is a herald from our powerful lord-paramount, the duke of Austrasia. The lion-banner is floating above him."

"An envoy from Charles Martel!" cried Bertha. "My God! Does he come again to call for my father's arm?"

The impatient young girl opened the narrow window and looked out into the court. She perceived the count of Laon, who, while the portcullises were being raised, went himself, from deference to his lord-paramount, whom he loved, to receive his envoy upon the bridge. He held the stirrup for him while he alighted, led him by the hand to the state room, and sent for his daughter. Already a banquet was being hastily prepared.

On entering the room, Bertha saw the herald was clad in a purple dalmatic, the lappets of which were slashed below and festooned. He was accompanied by a squire, who held his banner.

"My daughter," said Count Charibert, "you will help me to worthily receive the guest our duke has sent us."

Bertha carried an ewer, in which the herald washed his hands; the countess of Laon offered him an embroidered napkin; after which, Charibert made him sit alone at the high table, which was quickly covered with meats and fruits. The reverend chaplain blessed the meal; the count, his family, and all his officers remained standing, to serve the herald, who received all these honours without remark. It was the custom. He was representing his master, sovereign-in-chief of the Low Countries, and of the kingdoms occupied by the Franks.

The count of Laon filled a large gold cup with a generous wine; he drank the third part of it to his guest's health,

and presented it to him. The herald, before carrying it to his lips, gravely rose and offered the cup to Bertha, which caused some surprise.

The young girl blushed, made the sign of the cross, and drank a mouthful, and gave back the heavy vase, with trembling hand, to the herald, who emptied it at a draught, saying, "To you, young lady!"

After this singular formality, he dined, without adding a word, and without any one's doing aught but wait upon him.

His squire, surrounded by four of the count's officers, was dining apart in the same room, at a small sideboard.

Meantime, the count and countess of Laon could think of nothing but the honour the herald had done their daughter; and Charibert was beginning to doubt whether it were a military mission that the envoy had to fulfil.

When he had finished his repast, the herald invited Bertha, her father, and mother, who had waited on him, and the reverend chaplain, to seat themselves at his table; and he drank anew to their prosperity.

"And to Charles Martel's," answered the count of Laon.

"God has heard you," added the herald; and then resumed: "I must at present fulfil the duty which has brought me hither. The duke of the Franks, the powerful Charles Martel, always victorious; he whom all the Gauls obey, from the mouth of the Meuse to the Pyrenees, and from the sources of the Rhine to the ocean; he to whom all the neighbouring nations are tributary as far as the Danube; Charles, wishing to give the young and valiant Pepin, his second son, a noble spouse, has sent me to you, my lord, count of Laon, you, one of his most devoted vassals, you, one of his most illustrious chiefs; you, who, like him, have grown great upon the battle-field, and set off your nobility by the deeds of the sword."

The herald made a pause. Bertha, her forehead covered with blushes, had her eyes cast down, in deep anxiety; she knew the renown of the young Pepin, whose fine appearance and noble qualities had more than once been cried up to her. She already had reason to think her hand was in question. The count and countess of Laon, full of a silent joy, held their tongues with a kind of pride, and waited for a formal explanation from Charles Martel's messenger.

He took from his squire's hands a box of chased silver,

wrought by St. Eloy, it was said, for Queen Nantilde, Dagobert's spouse. It contained a marriage-ring, a gold penny, and a silver *denier*, for earnest of the betrothal, a necklace of pearls, bracelets, and ear-rings. Holding this box with both his hands, the messenger resumed :

" Charles Martel, my master and your lord-paramount, my lord, asks of you, for his son Pepin, the hand of your daughter Bertha, whose fame has reached him."

Charibert, trembling with delight, was going to reply, that his daughter, as his blood, was Charles Martel's. But on seeing the countess of Laon, who had thrown herself on her daughter's neck, and was embracing her and weeping for joy, he also felt his voice stifled with emotion. The herald understood this silent language ; he bent one knee to the ground before Bertha, and presented her with the box.

" Do you accept these betrothal presents, young lady ?" said he.

Bertha, wiping away her tears, a little ashamed of her deep blushes, and encouraged by her father's and mother's joy, turned towards the chaplain, and said,

" Father, what shall I do ?"

" What your heart tells you, my daughter," replied the good priest.

She answered, " I accept these pledges."

Then she kissed the messenger on the cheek ; and, having signed herself with the ring, put it on her finger. After which, she withdrew into the chapel of the palace, where she offered her thanksgivings to God and the Holy Virgin, praying the Universal Father to protect her future life.

Meantime, the old count, a little quieted, ordered that everything in the castle and the town should assume a festive aspect. He had distributions made to the poor. He gave the squire a sumptuous robe, heaped presents on the herald ; and, as soon as he saw his daughter again, bade her be ready in two days to set off for the court of Austrasia.

II.

Bertha, still accompanied by her dear Aude, giving her arm to her mother, her approaching separation from whom she felt with grief, occupied herself, then, with preparations for her departure.

Aude, to whom the scene which had just taken place, had at once given joy, hope, and jealousy, was suffering, as the envious suffer from all the good which does not come their way, as she reflected that her young mistress was going to become a princess-paramount; but at the same time she was thinking that Bertha would doubtless take her with her to the court of Austrasia, where she hoped her own charms would find for her, too, some noble spouse. "Who knows?" said she to herself: "Tredegonda was a wool-carder's daughter, and she became queen of Neustria."

The nurse, mother of the ambitious Aude, had thoughts as vain. More dangerous than her daughter, more deeply dissembling, as she affected an air of simplicity and devoted submission, she was a woman that would shrink from no means of attaining her ends. The last Merovingian kings had afforded so many examples of girls of base extraction placed upon the throne, that such ideas had nothing extraordinary. Only the nurse and her daughter were too eager, perhaps, to see themselves great ladies.

As if to realize the first hope of her foster-sister, Bertha asked her mother to be allowed to take her with her, as well as her nurse. This favour, after the messenger had been consulted, who approved of it in his master's name, was the more easily granted, that the count of Laon, in consequence of his wounds, could not accompany his daughter, any more than the countess, whose attentions were needed by her spouse; and Charibert felt less anxious about the long journey Bertha was going to take, as he reflected that she had a support in her nurse, on whom her affection made her look as a second mother.

Bertha, in her goodness, then asked of her father another grace: this was the enfranchisement of her foster-sister and nurse, a blessing she had promised them for the period of her marriage.

"If you have said it, my daughter," answered the count of Laon, "your word shall not be belied. But I wish this enfranchisement to take place before the altars, on the very day you are the spouse of Pepin."

"It shall be according to your desire, father," answered Bertha.

All the clothes, jewels, trinkets, and trousseau of the bride were packed up next day in large trunks, which loaded eighteen waggons. Early on the following day, Bertha,

having heard the holy mass, and recited the prayers for a traveller, was clasped by her father and mother in a long embrace, and tenderly blessed by them, was commended to the angels of heaven by the good chaplain, and then went, escorted by the clergy of the town, down the steep paths of the fortress, and took leave of Laon, carrying with her the vows and acclamations of all her father's vassals.

As soon as she had cleared the enclosure of the town, she began her journey, protected by a hundred men-at-arms, all old soldiers devoted to the count of Laon. The rude warriors, charged with this honourable mission, rejoiced particularly in this journey, because it gave them a hope of at last seeing the features of their princess. Like many young girls of high family in Austrasia, who never went out unveiled till the day of their marriage, Bertha, outside of the castle, had not yet uncovered her face. The brave men's hope was frustrated. The young girl, indeed, was in the middle of them, on a white horse ; but her nurse had wrapt her up in veils so thick, that nothing of her graceful countenance could be distinguished. Aude, veiled like the noble young lady, was with her mother in a covered waggon. The herald and his squire were riding beside Bertha : half the men-at-arms preceded the cortège, and the other half went behind.

They made, during the day's ride, three stoppages, of an hour each, for meals. But then an elegant tent was erected, which the count of Laon had acquired from the Saracens. Bertha shut herself up in it with her women, and did not come out of it till the trumpet of departure was sounded, to re-mount her beautiful Arab horse, another present which Charles Martel's victory had made the Gaul's. The camp was pitched for the night ; and on the second day the cortège entered the forest of Ardennes, which it was necessary to cross, in order to arrive at the palace of Herstal, on the Meuse, where Pepin, impatient, was expecting the young princess.

III.

Bertha's nurse was a woman of forty, of servile origin, but become ambitious, as has been said, in the castle of Laon. When she heard the history of Queen Bathilda, and of so many others, who, from the most humble origin had seen themselves elevated to the throne, she regretted

not being younger; and as she contemplated her daughter, pretty and seducing, she gave herself up to singular imaginations. She fancied sometimes, in her dreams of fortune, that she would be saluted one day as mother of a queen.

Meantime, the days went on. Aude was already more than eighteen, and the prince who was to be in love with her, had not turned up. But how could he, in a castle little frequented, and with a count who held no court? All was now to change.

The nurse had often imparted her ideas to her daughter. Aude received them so much the more greedily, that a fortune-teller of the country of the Moors, who had been brought among the Saracen prisoners, had foretold her, from the inspection of the interior lines of her left hand, that she would share the throne of a sovereign prince. Her proud ambition was too like her mother's.

In the silence and meditation of a long journey, a temptation, infernal, no doubt, came to the nurse. She thought she might assist fortune, and profit by a happy opportunity. Pepin's bride was in her power. She abandoned herself to horrible calculations, worked them, cherished them; and, by the morning of the second day, she had prepared all her plans with an ability of which the wicked alone are capable.

While the trustful Bertha was on her elegant palfrey, occupied inwardly, as young girls will be, in drawing the portrait of her bridegroom, fancying him out before her, and adorning him according to the suggestions of her own pure heart, the nurse, devoted to her project, was entertaining the herald and the squire, studying their souls, sounding their hearts, and weighing their consciences. She soon found that the messenger had an upright soul and a devoted heart. She observed in the squire inclinations less noble, and a conscience to which she might find her way with gold. She was decided.

What follows may seem extraordinary, but it is the exact chronicle, and no one to this day has dreamt of doubting it.

On the evening of that second day, the tent was erected in the forest. The men-at-arms, after prayers, slept around the waggons. The herald lay across the door, before the tent in which Bertha, her nurse, and her foster-sister were reposing.

There were, among the waggon-drivers, two coarse and

strong men, with whom the nurse was acquainted, and whom she knew to be fit for her purpose. At midnight, while all the world was fast asleep, she left the tent in silence, went and woke Kokkes and Servais, those two men, and asked them if they would like all at once to make a great fortune. The two waggoners rubbed their eyes, and stretched their hands.

"Here," said she, showing them a small casket of jewels, "is your first recompense, and in a month I will give each of you twenty gold livres."

"What is to be done?" briskly asked Kokkes, as he spread out his rude face, and sought to read, by the light of the stars, the nurse's motions.

"A bold action," answered she.

"What bold action?" replied, with a sort of hesitation, the second accomplice.

"A blow with an axe, struck by each of you. Let us speak low."

"We should not be old warriors," resumed Kokkes, "if a little blood frightened us. 'Tis well. But what blood is to be shed for so high a price?"

"You will shed it without peril. You must, in order to comprehend me, know my project. The prince of Austrasia does not know his bride. In her place, I mean to give him Aude. Bertha's jewels, too, are ours. And when my daughter is Pepin's spouse, gold will be as easy for me to pay, as it is now easy for you to help me."

"I see," said Servais; "and the first thing necessary is, that the lord count's daughter should disappear,—that no one should hear more of her. But what will the count of Laon say?"

"He will never know it. Before long, he will die of his wounds."

"And the good countess?"

"How should she learn it? My daughter will bear the name of Bertha, when she appears at Herstal. If the countess of Laon came to see her some day, we would then think of new resources. But she will never venture to undertake such a journey."

"As for ourselves," added Kokkes, "after such a blow as you contemplate, good lady, we should make for Lombardy with our booty, and should not be sought for there. But what will the escort think?"

"None of the men-at-arms who compose it have seen Bertha's features; my daughter is veiled like her."

"We come, then," said Servais, "to the two blows with the axe; I have guessed whom you mean—the herald and the squire."

"Not so," replied the nurse. "I undertake the squire; he will be on our side. On arriving at the court of Austrasia, we shall want, at least, to testify at need who we are, one of the Prince's two officers. As to the herald, his is the first blood that must be shed."

"Hum," said Kokkes, "an officer who bears the ensigns of the sovereign."

"Who will know it? You will now find him asleep before the tent. All the others are plunged in a profound sleep. One sabre-blow, applied by that vigorous arm, will easily hinder that head from speaking, by severing it from the body."

"It surely must be Satan that inspires you! But what will the men-at-arms say?"

"I undertake them too."

There was a moment's silence.

"And now," resumed Servais, "who is the other person that troubles you?"

"You want me to mention the name? You have not understood me?"

"I dare not understand you," said Kokkes.

"You do, though. You have heard that Bertha must disappear."

"But not in that way," murmured Servais. "One can put her into a convent, a prison, or a tower."

"No," said the nurse, with impatience: "we should always be in trouble. It is necessary ——"

She added some words in a very low voice.

"Our lord-paramount's daughter! This is too much," grumbled Kokkes.

"So good a princess!" said Servais, agitated, in a half-whisper.

"Who'll know it?" resumed the nurse: "in a moment you'll fly——."

All this history, we repeat, would seem too horrible for belief, were it not generally attested by all the old traditions.

After some minutes more of fearful converse, all was arranged. The two brigands cut off the head of the

sleeping herald so cleverly and so quick, that he could not even fetch a sigh. They received the jewels, and the formal promise of twenty gold livres for each of them. They carried Bertha off gently, without waking her, and took her far into the forest. The nurse had pointed out to them a pond where they might throw the body, after having disfigured it. They were also to bring back, for proof of the deed's having been done, the princess's chemise, dyed with her blood.

While the nurse was waking the squire, and making him enter into her frightful project, the two assassins were on their secret way with their burden. At the distance of a quarter of a league from their halt, they found themselves on the edge of the pond. Then they woke Bertha, who thought herself the sport of a horrible dream, when she perceived, by the light of the moon just bursting on her a little, that she was almost naked, in a wood, in front of a gloomy lake, and between two ill-omened forms.

"Where am I?" asked she, distracted.

"On the brink of the grave," replied Kokkes in a fierce tone. "Prepare for death, young lady. Our determination to kill you cost us a struggle; and since you are said to be good, we will let you make your prayer."

At these fatal words the young girl fell on her knees, crying, "Oh, my God!" She took in her hands the cross and small relic she had at her neck, and began to pray and tremble. Then, seeing the other brigand, who did not speak, she dragged herself to him.

"Oh, defend me," said she to him. "Let me not be killed so young. Are you Saracens, then?"

"No," replied the other. "But I cannot be your defender: you are condemned."

Bertha thought she recognized this voice. "It is you, Servais," said she. "I am not deceived: you will protect me. You will protect your count's daughter."

The waggon-driver, who had become an assassin for a little gold, was moved at this. "Poor princess!" said he: "she knew me again by my voice. Well, no," added he, briskly, "she shall not be killed."

The other ruffian advanced: "What sayest thou?" cried he. "Can we do otherwise? Is not the messenger dead already? Have you not promised upon our oaths?"

"True. But she sha'n't be killed."

"She must." And, as he spoke, the murderer, making a

violent effort, sprang upon Bertha with lifted axe. Servais threw himself before the blow, parried it, seized his comrade's axe, and, more prompt perhaps than he would have wished to be, drove him back with so violent a blow that he stretched him at his feet.

The princess was still upon her knees, in terror.

"Can I have killed him?" said Servais, bending over the corpse of Kokkes. "He is almost dead," continued he.

He immediately cut off the ruffian's head and swung it into the lake. After this he added,

"Do not be afraid, young lady. But if you escape this danger, many others environ you."

He meditated a moment, so as to contrive a story, and then resumed. "The powerful Charles Martel, duke of Austrasia, has had your hand asked of my lord the count of Laon, your noble father. But you must know that Prince Pepin, his son, for whom he destines you, has already a wife, whom he married in Saxony, and will not leave. He therefore sent men who have surprised us and killed the herald, and who were charged by him to put you to death. I mixed myself up among them, young lady, in the vague hope of protecting you. I have saved you. But we are here in Prince Pepin's domains, and I have just killed one of his faithful servants. It is necessary, for my safety and yours, that you should swear to me before God, on the relic of St. Martin and the gold cross which are attached to your necklace, to appear again no more at your father's court, to forget your name and quality of princess, never to reclaim your rights from Pepin, but to live in obscurity where you can. At this price only you shall continue to live."

Bertha listened to all this singular discourse, buried in the bitterest thoughts, not knowing whether she ought to rejoice at escaping from so cruel a man as Pepin (for she believed Servais), or to despair at being now alone in the world; a destiny of the miseries of which she had no suspicion.

"What shall I do?" said she at length, without thinking much what.

"I who have saved you," resumed the ruffian, "am ruined if you re-appear. Swear, then, since it must be so, never to contradict those who will make you pass for dead."

Bertha, thus pressed, swore by the strongest oaths all Servais dictated to her. The ruffian, re-assured, began

then to strip his comrade: he commanded the princess to disguise herself in the garments of Kokkes and give him her chemise.

"I must show it bloody," said he, "to prove you are dead."

The young girl obeyed, weeping. Servais soaked the chemise of fine linen in the blood of his slaughtered comrade: he then raised the yet warm body and sent it into the pond to rejoin the head. He gave the princess some silver deniers, showed her the way she must follow to find dwellings, in a direction opposite to the route of the cortège, and hastened to leave her.

The wretch regained the halting-place, where the silence of slumber had not yet been disturbed. He congratulated himself upon his deed, which was all the better for him that the casket of jewels remained to him all entire.

He entered the tent: the anxious nurse had awakened her daughter, who was much agitated. These two women conversed in whispers with the squire, who had become their accomplice for the bait of great rewards. Seeing Servais alone, the nurse's first words were,

"Where is the other?"

The assassin was obliged to make a new story. Having already taken all the jewels, he pretended to have the sole right to the forty gold livres, for he alone had done all, he said: the princess, seeing she must die, had shown herself all at once the heroic daughter of the valiant count of Laon, had seized his comrade's axe, struck him down, and would have killed him herself, he added, if he had not struck her on the head as she was struggling with the other. As a last argument, he threw at the nurse's feet the chemise soaked in blood.

"I forgot," said she, as she examined this witness by the light of a small lamp, "that it was necessary also to bring back the nuptial ring, the gold cross, and the relic."

"I did not think of it either," replied Servais. "As for the cross and relic, which are blessed, I should not have ventured to touch them. But the ring is in the lake: I know where I threw the body; and," added he, impudently, "give me a companion, and I can go and get it for you."

"It is too late," said the nurse, who was completely tranquillized by these last words, and the tone in which they were said. "The day will soon appear."

The squire made a hole in the ground with his sword, and buried in it Bertha's chemise. After that, Aude, her mother, and their accomplices, having uttered loud cries, all the men-at-arms awoke, and were up in a moment, inquiring the cause of the alarm. The nurse had clad her daughter in Bertha's dress and veil: she said, sobbing, to the warriors and waggon-drivers, that some brigands had just entered the tent to steal the princess's jewels; that they had killed the herald, and were carrying off her daughter.

The half of the cortège formed in a circle round the tent to protect Bertha, whose absence these brave men did not suspect; the other half spread through the forest. During that time, the squire, assuming heirship to the herald, had stripped him, and was having him buried too. The men-at-arms, who had sprung forward to seek the pretended bandits, returned at the end of half an hour, having discovered nothing. The day had dawned, and the march must be resumed. The captain of the men-at-arms, to whom the remark had been just made, that one of the waggon-drivers had disappeared too, availed himself of this incident. Bertha's safety being everything to him, he told the nurse that, as the robust Kokkes did not re-appear, he was without any doubt following her child's footsteps, would certainly find her again, and bring her back to her, but that his duty was to give orders for departure. The nurse asked no more; she answered only by the feigned tears of a mother who sacrifices herself. The cortège set itself again in motion.

They arrived, without new adventure, but only on the sixth day, at the gate of Herstal. The palace of Herstal was a charming residence upon the Meuse. Charles Martel liked it, and his son Pepin loved to repose there from the fatigues of war.

Pepin the Short owed his surname to his small stature, which was the same, however, as Alexander the Great's. His figure was slight and graceful, and he had fine and noble features. His cultivated mind has been mentioned already: it announced the man whose political ability was to become a proverb. He was valiant; and worthy, by his courage, of the hero who had given him life. He had distinguished himself in several battles, and opportunities had not been wanting to him; for the twenty-seven years of Charles Martel's reign are, perhaps, the period of our annals most fruitful in fighting, and certainly the

richest in victories. Thus, Charles Martel, though he did not bear the name of king, was the most powerful sovereign of his time: all Europe trembled before him. His alliance was therefore a noble one. And yet he would have his sons espouse, not foreign princesses, but the daughters of his faithful vassals.

Pepin was twenty-two. Independently of his princely rank, any young girl might have loved him. His father had let him choose among several illustrious matches, and he had decided in favour of Bertha, whom he had never seen, but whose grace, piety, modesty, wisdom, wit, and beauty had been strongly represented to him. He was expecting her, as we have said, with impatience.

At length, half an hour in advance of the cortège, the squire, who had spurred forward his horse, came and announced to him that his bride was on the point of arrival.

Pepin hastened to meet her, kissed her hand, and, eager to behold her, escorted her as far as the court of the palace of Herstal, where she alighted.

During the route, as he was looking for his herald, the squire had told him the forest-adventure, according to the arrangement agreed on. Pepin groaned at this misfortune. But his principal feeling on the subject was that of self-felicitation on Bertha's safety; for he took Aude for the daughter of the count of Laon.

All the vassals of Pepin's following were assembled in the large hall of the castle to receive their chieftain's bride. On her arrival thither, Pepin made her sit upon an elevated seat, which formed a throne, and begged her to remove her veil. Aude obeyed. She was so much moved, at that solemn moment, that a deep blush covered all her features, and rendered them softer and more touching. All the court expressed its admiration of her beauty by a flattering murmur. But Pepin, though he found in the sham Bertha a pretty creature, was less enthusiastically taken with her. We may well believe he did not recognize in her the young spouse of whom he had painted to himself so charming a picture. It was not the angelic figure of which he had been dreaming. The nurse, in this first interview, was intently observing her daughter, who was much agitated and very uneasy. Pepin promptly repressed his own embarrassment; and, afraid his bride might have observed what was passing in him, showed

himself more ardent. He found Aude accomplished, and that she spoke well and with propriety; his prejudices were a little softened, and the nurse triumphed.

The sham Bertha, after half an hour's converse, was conducted with her mother into the apartment destined for her. She rested for some moments, and then dressed for the banquet. The nurse took so much pains in decorating her with the ornaments of the daughter of Charibert, that she was more beautiful than ever; and when Pepin took her back into the hall there were new acclamations. The young prince's faithful servants entertained him so with the charms of his bride, that at last he went with the tide, and persuaded himself that he was quite in love.

After the joyous dinner, the squire, an accomplice of the crime committed in the forest, was largely recompensed for what was called his devotedness; for he boasted of having saved the princess. Pepin then sent him to Maestricht, where Charles Martel was, to inform him of Bertha's arrival.

Charles, who loved the count of Laon, but had never seen his daughter, arrived in two days at Herstal to embrace her. This hero, whose fine height may also have been a reason for applying to his son the nickname of Short or *Little*, was the most remarkable personification which history presents of the warrior of the middle ages. Embracing Aude with transport, he squeezed her so tight as to make her think for an instant that he was choking her. For always equipped for war, which was his passion, he came to a feast with cuirass, helm, greaves, and iron boots. Gauntlets, covered with iron plates, shut up his hands. An enormous sword glittered, without ornaments, at his left side, and a heavy axe hung at his right. He was forty-eight. Vanquished in his first battle, in 714, he had always been victor since. All the countries round Austrasia had served as the theatre of his exploits. There were few days in the year which he could not mark with a victory, and his sword had glittered in all the countries of Europe.

He brought with him his brother Childebrand, the conqueror of Avignon, a brave and accomplished prince, who had our annals written. He brought also the bishop of Auxerre, who had been his companion in arms at the famous defeat of the Saracens. What would appear sin-

gular in our day, the evangelical man wore a sword at his prelate's girdle, and a small brass helmet was beneath his mitre. But he was armed, he said, only against infidels. With this exception, he was a minister of peace.

Like the vassals, Charles Martel found the false Bertha charming. Her somewhat hard look only made her more worthy of being a warrior's daughter. Charles saw no other glory than that of the military kind. He was moved with whatever brought him back to the sword. His sons, friends, and all who would please him, must be always ready to march at the first call of the trumpet.

He ordered the marriage of Pepin and Bertha to be celebrated immediately. No one ventured to object that the princess must be fatigued by her long journey: he did not understand fatigue. The bride was adorned with all the most brilliant spoils of the Saracens. Charles Martel, wishing to make her a noble present, gave her an oriental dagger and an Arab horse of great value. She was obliged to place the poniard in her girdle, and mount the noble courser; Charles led her to the palace-chapel, where the bishop of Auxerre united her to Pepin, enjoining her to be heroic, and the young prince to be valiant, and to make the cross triumph.

The rest of the day was holiday for all. The nurse was at the height of happiness.

Next day, a good monk was sent to Laon to announce to Bertha's father and mother their daughter's arrival and the happy celebration of her marriage.

IV.

Soon after, Pepin took his wife with him to Maestricht. He showed her Jupille, Landen, Nivelles, Cologne, and all his father's royal residences. The first month was one of enchantment, especially for Aude and her mother; for Pepin did not ardently love his young spouse. He did not find in the companion of his life that elevation of soul, dignity of heart, high reach of mind, or solid and true piety, which he had been led to hope for. Beauty does not long enchain when it is not seconded by other charms.

But Aude and her mother, ravished with their lot, did not perceive the growing lukewarmness of Pepin's feelings. Aude was a princess: she already knew that, in the division of his vast estates, Charles Martel, who reigned over

the Low Countries and Gaul an undisputed sovereign with the title of duke, was to give Austrasia to Carloman, and Neustria to Pepin. She saw she would one day be a duchess or a queen. What cared she for aught else?

One single fear disturbed her pride. If chance or some duty brought to the court a vassal of the count of Laon, she might be recognized. But long journeys were so dangerous and rare that she recovered her confidence.

Her fears, however, were not vain. She found this sooner than she thought for.

One morning as, joyous and triumphant, Aude and her mother were walking out alone at Herstal, on the banks of the Meuse, a stranger woman approached them, soliciting an alms. She was a Moor, of that race of Egyptians who formed part of the great Saracen irruption. She had fled from the house of a Frank, with whom she had been a slave. Her glowing eye had recognized the false Bertha, whose good fortune she had formerly told; for the children of Egypt still boasted of possessing, among other superstitious sciences, the gift of making horoscopes, and a profound acquaintance with chiromancy, which is the art of judging and predicting from the inspection of the lines of the hand.

"You have forgotten me," said she to Aude; "but I announced at the castle of Laon that, though you were a serf, you would share a prince's bed; and now you have in your coif a little crown."

Those flattering predictions which fortune-tellers make are never disagreeable. They are always well received, and when good luck realizes them, they become quite a triumph.

While the gipsy was bridling up with haughtiness, the nurse shuddered with terror at seeing her daughter recognized.

"Silence!" said she, putting a piece of gold into the old woman's hand. "That's for this day's alms. This evening you shall receive a sum which will put you out of the reach of want for the future, if you will come to the garden tent and examine the princess's hand again."

"I will be there," said the Moorish woman.

"You'll keep the secret?"

"I will. I must be secret on my own account, for I am a fugitive."

"Very well: if any one troubles you, say you belong to the Princess Bertha."

In pronouncing this name, the nurse had intrepidly designated her daughter. The gipsy understood or guessed the whole mystery. She had withdrawn two steps, hoping easily to find in the district some materials for the new horoscope required of her; but feeling herself sufficiently enlightened, she came near again to the nurse, and said,

"Why don't we go directly whither you say? the day is still long enough. With the money you'll give me, if you can add to it a little billet of safe-conduct, I will take, this very day, the route for Spain."

"She is right," said the nurse; "the prince is hunting."

Emboldened again by the thought that she was not losing sight of this woman, and relieved, as it were, from a weight upon her heart, the nurse returned to the palace, accompanied by her daughter and the Moor. She re-entered by a little gate, which opened into the gardens; and, absenting herself a moment, charged Aude to conduct the old woman to the tent.

The pavilion, called the garden-tent, was built close upon the bank of the Meuse, which washed its foot. At the bottom of a stair which led down from the tent, there was always a handsome barge, for excursions on the water; and opposite, at the distance of from twelve to fifteen fathoms, a little artificial island, covered with bushes, which concealed from all eyes what might be passing in the pavilion.

The nurse soon rejoined her daughter there; she brought a large flagon, a basket of cakes, and a purse; she placed them all upon a little table, and remained silent, for the fortune-teller was already holding the false Bertha's hand.

"All goes well," said the sorceress. "There remains, however, one witness of the deed that was done in the great wood, and he will ruin you."

"Explain yourself," said the terrified nurse, "to what deed do you refer?"

"I do not see it clearly," resumed the Moor, "but you know what it was, and I see a formidable witness of it."

"One witness," repeated Aude, palpitating: "one only?"

"More, perhaps, but only one who can hurt you."

"One only!" muttered the nurse, unable longer to dissemble, or restrain herself—"is it Servais, or the squire?"

She was buried in thought. Then she resumed, shaking her head to recall her ideas, "You see nothing else?"

"Nothing but happy fortune," replied the old woman.

She predicted happiness, festivals, children, and all that Aude could wish.

Then the nurse began to count money, begging the Moor at the same time to eat a cake, and swallow a draught of old wine, which she herself poured out. The mendicant ate and drank, without suspecting, in spite of her insight into the future, that the wine was poisoned with an enormous dose of opium, or some other heavy narcotic.

As soon as she was overcome, the fillets of her outlandish head-dress became the instrument of her death; the nurse used them to fasten to her neck one of the heavy andirons with which the tent chimney was furnished; and then obliging her daughter, who could not get used to so much ferocity, to lend her aid, she opened the little door which opened upon the river, took down the gipsy into the boat, and silently sank her to the bottom of the Meuse.

After this expedition, so promptly terminated, the nurse, imposing silence on the scruples which agitated Aude, sent for Servais, now a man-at-arms in Pepin's household. He had already received twenty gold livres, and for the last eight days he had been urging the payment of the rest; he did not appear at ease, and wished to go and breathe more freely, with his fortune, in another region.

"What is still due to you is all ready," said the mother of the sham Bertha, "and the sum shall be even doubled. But the work must be finished."

Servais grew pale, and faltered. Aude then went out, overcome with emotion.

"What must be done, then?" said he, with a sort of terror.

"Fear'st thou danger already? There is none. But we have a witness whose hand has not been imbrued in the blood. Thou know'st him. We have been forced to share our secrets with him, in order that he might attest what we report. It is the squire. He must die, or he will sell us."

Servais cried out. The nurse resumed.

"What hast thou to dread? Thou wilt seek a quarrel with him, and kill him as a consequence. The law allows a composition in money for these murders. If thou art discovered, I will pay what is ordered. Know'st thou not thy destiny is tied to ours? Go, then, without fear."

Servais reflected, hesitated an instant, groaned, and made up his mind.

He looked, as he went out, at the flagon of wine, like a man who needed to draw courage from it, and who was vexed to see that none was offered him. For crime establishes a brutal familiarity among those who commit it in common. The nurse had not let this movement pass unnoticed.

That same day, an hour, perhaps, after he had left the tent, Servais laid a snare for the squire, and killed him in secret; and no one discovered the author of this new murder.

He went immediately to rejoin the nurse, eager for his hire.

"Repair," said she to him, "to the garden-tent. I will be there in a moment."

The murderer entered the pavilion, seated himself on a mossy seat, and seeing on the table the basket of cakes, unceremoniously took one up and ate it.

The flagon which had poisoned the gipsy was not half empty. Thinking he had as much right as the nurse to recruit himself with this good old wine, he could not resist the temptation, and took a draught. He found it so good that he repeated it; the happy news he brought rendered him bold, too.

At the end of a quarter of an hour, when the nurse arrived, the flagon was empty, and Servais asleep. Aude having refused her assistance in acts of violence so rapidly following one another, her mother was obliged to finish alone the fatal execution of her plan. She dragged Servais to the staircase, stammering out some words to him on the necessity of taking air, took him down into the boat, went and fetched the other andiron, tied it to his neck, and pushed the body into the river, where he fell beside the gipsy.

When Pepin's spouse, all uneasy, came at length to rejoin her mother, she found her still in the boat, where she seemed assuring herself that the waves securely kept their victims. With a silent but triumphant gesture, she pointed, to her daughter, at the bottom of the river, as if to tell her that no one now existed who could betray them, but all who had been concerned in their criminal fraud had perished. She embraced and congratulated Aude—for she had no doubt of Bertha's having died in the Ardennes.

For an increase of happiness, fifteen days after this formidable morning's work, Aude found she was pregnant. This news set all the palace rejoicing.

What was become, all this time, of the true Bertha?

At the moment that Servais had left the pond which had served for a grave to his slaughtered companion, the night was still gloomy. Bertha, under the coarse garments of the waggon-driver, did not begin to breathe freely till she saw herself completely alone. She returned deep thanksgivings to God, and ardently prayed Him to protect her.

At the least noise, a thousand terrors began to subdue her, and when the day re-appeared, it gave her no confidence; her piety alone sustained her. She thought she saw the ground before her stained with a long track of blood. She did not know what judgment to form about Servais, who had defended her only on the cruel condition of passing for dead. She had sworn it; and so must no more see again her tender father, nor her mother so affectionate and good, nor her nurse, nor her sister Aude, whom she still loved. She was far from suspecting the inexplicable plot in which she was involved.

After moments so painful, an uneasiness took hold of her; she was cold; she began to walk, ashamed and cramped in her ignoble dress, agitated by the fear of being recognized, and of falling into a new snare of her enemies, weeping at every moment, forcing herself to hate Pepin the Short, worn with sobbing, and recovering a little courage only in prayer. She advanced timidly, going still straight on, and following the direction Servais had pointed out to her.

She perceived some houses, and turned off. Everything that could bring her near mankind, in these first hours, frightened her. Hunger and fatigue obliged her at last to seek for help. She directed her steps to a little isolated hut, where a wood-cutter's wife gave her some black bread and cherry wine. She was so exhausted that she accepted the offer of rest which was made her. When evening was come, the woman's husband and children returned home; they took Bertha for a young boy, for whom they felt pity; for her beautiful and expressive face gained all hearts. She asked her who she was. She answered she was going on pilgrimage, and was ordered to keep her name secret. These good people were satisfied with this reason, and Bertha passed the night in their hut.

Next morning she resumed her route, a little strengthened; she had formed in her heart the project of repairing to Herstal, where, without being known, she wished to see, once at least, her cruel bridegroom, whose ring she had preserved.

At the end of a ten days' journey, often uncertain and always wearisome, she was obliged, from exhaustion, to stop at Jupille. She did not know the name of this pretty village, where one of Charles Martel's country seats was building. She asked hospitality from a miller, who had his mill upon the Meuse, and who lived there, happy and tranquil, with his already old wife and his two daughters. The good woman had compassion on the young traveller; she called her two daughters, and said to them, "Do you think there is anything so handsome as that child in all Jupille?"

On hearing this name, Bertha felt her heart beat. She blessed Heaven, who had guided her; for she knew Pepin often came thither, and that she might see him there; she wished, therefore, to make it her abode. So, after the miller had gone to bed, the two girls and their mother asking Bertha whence she came, she determined to confide to her hostesses all that her oath did not oblige her to keep secret.

"I come from a great distance," said she to them, "and can let you know only a part of my secret. I am a young girl, obliged to fly. Can you, without seeking to know more, receive me with you, and give me garments which belong to my sex? I will not be any expense to you; for I know how to spin flax well, and have been taught all woman's work."

The miller's wife, astonished, felt her interest in Bertha redouble. She hastened to dress her in a gown of her youngest daughter, and embraced her, asking no other questions. Among the hospitable virtues of the old inhabitants of Gaul, the most delicate discretion was uppermost. The princess was welcomed also by the miller's two daughters, happy to have a new companion.

Next day the wondering goodman approved of all his wife's arrangements. Bertha was considered the third daughter of the house. She assisted the miller's wife in all the domestic labours, spun wonderfully well, knitted stockings for the miller, taught his daughters fine embroidery, and made herself as dear by her useful talents as by her piety, sweetness, and grace.

She had been some days in the honest family who had adopted her, when it was announced that Prince Pepin was coming with his young spouse to the castle of Jupille. This news made her start. From the story Servais had told her, she had thought Pepin was long married. She asked what princess he had espoused.

"Bertha, of Laon," was the answer. Her heart leaped, and her embarrassment became greater. She had this name twice repeated to her, thought she was dreaming, and was long absorbed in sad and deep meditation. She came out of it, saying,

"I should like much to see the prince."

"It is easy," said the miller, "the castle is only a quarter of a league from here. Our daughters will take you to it."

On the morning of the day on which Pepin was to arrive, Bertha, with her simple villager's ornaments, attended, perhaps without thinking, a little more carefully to her toilet. She then went with her companions, and placed herself on the border of the approach by which the youthful court was to pass. She perceived the brilliant escort which came before the prince. She had conceived strange suspicions. Not to be recognized, she retreated behind her two friends, and thinking herself secure, made her observations.

She remarked the graces of Pepin. She even thought she met a look from the prince, whose glance rested on her with a certain expression of surprise; but all her attention was soon absorbed in the sight which terminated her uncertainties. She saw Aude occupying her place, understood the crime of which she was the victim, and feeling her heart sink, leant against a tree for support.

All the court was already far past, when the miller's daughters, returning to Bertha's side, observed her paleness. A cloud seemed spread over her eyes. Their anxious cares brought her to herself. But she did not say a word; she recollected her oath—turned her eyes again in the direction of the castle of Jupille—and came back to the miller's house. She explained her weakness as she best could, attributing it to the extraordinary sight which had so interested her; the people were satisfied with the little she was disposed to say, and thenceforward she went out no more, except to go to church on the Sundays and holidays.

She congratulated herself on not having been seen by Aude, nor by her mother, the thought of whom made her tremble. She excused Pepin; and though she felt she loved him

tenderly, she determined no more to make attempts to see him. Besides, as a woman, she felt humbled, she knew not why, at the mere idea that he was another's spouse; and as a Christian, something told her she could no longer be anything to him, since he was married.

Bertha accustomed herself, in silence and sadness, to her new condition, always good and gentle, trying not to distress her friends with the weight of her trouble, and piously resigned to the will of God.

But, as we see, she was living at a short distance from Aude and her mother, at the very time when these two women, in the garden-tent of Herstal, thought themselves delivered from all the witnesses of their crime.

V.

Time went on. Next year public rejoicings took place throughout the country, because the sham Bertha had just given birth to a son, who had the name of Leo given him. This news opened a new wound in the heart of the miller's adoptive daughter.

Two more years passed, during which Pepin the Short was almost constantly occupied in his father's wars.

In the year 741 there were some months of peace; and Pepin, whom four years of marriage had still farther cooled toward the haughty Aude, gave himself up to the relaxation of hunting at the residences of Herstal, Landen, and Jupille. One day, as he was taking rest at this last castle, he was surprised to find again in his mind a recollection of the graceful villager whom he had seen at the period of his nuptials. It was Bertha, whose features had forcibly struck him. Often had the thought of this young girl, whose birth he was far from suspecting, occupied his heart. But, independently of the sacred ties of marriage, which constituted a restraint, the numerous duties to which he was obliged by Charles Martel's activity, had not permitted him to look after her. He now availed himself of the opportunity of inquiring for her. He had left Aude at Herstal.

He learned that there was, in fact, at the miller's of Jupille, a charming young girl, who seldom showed herself, and whose hand none of the villagers ventured to ask, though she was good and accessible. He immediately set off for the mill, accompanied only by his astrologer.

On the way, he asked the old sage what he was able to find out for him concerning the young girl who had struck his fancy.

"The miller is not her father," answered the astrologer. All the world knew it.

He stopped, however, for an instant, examined the state of the heavens, set his scheme, and declared, without being much attended to, that among the three girls who were at that moment at the miller's table, the middle one was infallibly destined for something great.

These are the words of the chronicle.

Pepin entered. At his appearance the miller rose, as also did all his family. The prince cast his eyes on the fortunate young girl at whom the horoscope pointed: it was clearly she whom he was seeking, the object of his three years' dreams. The princess blushed excessively, and was much confused. Pepin begged her to be seated. The miller, astonished at this scene, and suspecting some secret between his lord and Bertha, thought proper to go a little way off. He left the table, and withdrew into a corner of the room with his wife and daughters. The astrologer and Pepin remained standing before the princess.

Bertha had promptly recollected herself; but Pepin, intimidated by a charm he could not define, found no words. He had drawn near to the young girl. On her hand, smaller and more delicate than those of the village girls, he perceived a ring, which had attracted his attention. He took, with a respect at which he himself doubtless was astonished, that trembling hand, and recognized, not without great surprise, the bridal ring he had sent to the daughter of the count of Laon. How came that ring there? And what could be the meaning of so wonderful a coincidence?

Before any explanation, something unaccountable in Pepin's heart seemed to say to him that she who wore this jewel was necessarily betrothed to him. Aude, to explain its loss, had said that, having laid her ring, before going to bed, among her other trinkets, the brigands who had attacked the tent had carried it off.

"You ought to have known," Pepin had answered, "that a marriage-ring never leaves the finger which has received it."

And there had been nothing more said about the circumstance.

The presence of this ring on the finger of the fair unknown was plunging Pepin into a perplexity from which he feared he should come out with sorrow. Was she he saw before him a brigand's wife or daughter? Oh, no! her noble and touching beauty far repelled such shame. Was she the nurse's daughter, carried off by the banditti? But she could not have been born in the condition of a serf. He at last opened his mouth, however, to ask her—Whether she were not Aude?

"I am not that woman," said she, with a singular expression of disdain or pride, with which, in such gentle features, the prince was forcibly struck. She added, "A very sacred oath does not permit me to tell my name."

After Pepin, whose doubts could not obtain any precise solution, had made up his mind about all this mystery, he turned towards his astrologer.

"Surely," said he to him, "this ring must have been sold or lost."

The astrologer made no answer.

"From whom had you this ring?" then said the prince, approaching the young girl.

"From a hand which was very dear to me."

"You have been married?"

"Never."

"It is a lover's gift, then?"

Bertha made no reply.

"Does this man live?" resumed Pepin.

"I am a stranger to him."

"And you received this present from him?"

"Till this day I never spoke to him."

The prince, who was surprised at every word, put many other questions, to which Bertha timidly answered,

"I cannot say anything more."

He strode up and down the room, without paying attention to the miller's family, who could not but be astonished by all these movements. Then he again took the young girl's hand, and, not daring to avow all he felt (for Bertha, by her candour and innocence, impressed him with deep respect), he let that hand fall, and confronted the astrologer, who was continuing impassible, like a man who had no concern in the scene.

At last the prince seized once more the hand of the fair unknown, pressed it softly, and said to her, in a hurried tone,

"I feel I love you, and that my life is in your hands."

And immediately, as if fearful he had offended her, he fled. The astrologer hastened to rejoin him.

When the miller and his family found themselves alone with Bertha, there were a thousand consultations upon what had just taken place. According to the manners of the time, which were still a little rude, it was not uncommon to see a prince, forgetting, in the heat of passion, the laws of God and of the church, espouse more than one woman.

"Oh, certainly," said the miller, who considered, in spite of his good qualities, only the material interest of the things of this world, "if the prince is in love with you, we shall all be rich and happy."

Bertha slightly shuddered, but made no reply. But all the rest of the evening and all night she did nothing but think of Pepin with extreme uneasiness. She acknowledged that she loved him, and this feeling terrified her conscience. At one moment, to avoid the danger of a flame which seemed criminal to her, she thought of escaping again. But she resisted this idea.

"I am his lawful bride," said she to herself: "Have I not more right over him than she who occupies my place at his court?"

Yet she hesitated respecting the plan of conduct she should adopt. Before forming a resolution, she wished to assure herself that nothing in her proceedings should be such as to offend her Christian faith. She went, then, as she was often in the habit of doing, to confide her troubles and doubts to an old and holy religious, who lived near a chapel of Our Lady, a short way from Jupille. There, after having besought her who suffered so much and soothed so many sufferings, she discovered, under the seal of confession, to the good solitary, all she was, her secret, her vow, and painful adventures; well knowing that the silence she had promised was not broken thus, but that she was depositing her confidence in a closed sepulchre, and thus not violating her vow.

"My daughter," said the astonished religious, "what you tell me is serious. The oath you took binds you; and, even if you could be released from it, the prince's marriage is sacred. Continue, then, to keep silence, finish the sacrifice, and walk incessantly as in the sight of God, who has His designs."

Pepin came back on the morrow and the following days,

more tender, more ardent, and at the same time more respectful in proportion as he thought himself nearer becoming familiar. The astrologer, repeating to him his imposing words,—"Destined for something great!" still more ennobled this love in his eyes. He at the same time gave him hope; for he set a horoscope, which formally declared no other than Pepin should ever touch the young girl's heart.

Bertha, nevertheless, gave the prince no hope. But so much virtue and sweetness united were inflaming him to such a degree, that the distressed princess grew frightened, and asked no more from God than strength to fly suddenly from a prince for whom she felt a guilty inclination.

Meanwhile, a serious illness on the part of Charles Martel obliged Pepin to absent himself some months. Charles had been growing weaker for two years; and, though he was only fifty-two, he felt he was going to die, worn out, like Clovis, that other warrior, who died of old age or toil at forty-five.

After having piously put himself under St. Denis's protection, Charles divided his dominions among his children, and gave up his soul, near Compiegne, on the 21st of October, 741.

When the mourning-time for so revered a father was expired, Pepin, still sad, went to see Bertha again, who started at his return, but begged him to offend her no more by an impossible love, from which her engagements would oblige her to fly.

VI.

While the agitated Pepin did not venture either to resist Bertha, or promise to forget her, the count and countess of Laon, who received news of their daughter twice a year—an attention the sham Bertha was all the more eager to pay, because she did not wish those whom she called her illustrious father and noble mother to send her, in their anxiety, messengers who had known the true princess—the count and countess, I say, had long cherished the sweet project of seeing again, and embracing once more their dear Bertha, and clasping their grandson in their arms. The old count's wounds were completely healed; and he was preparing for a journey to Herstal, when Charles Martel's death came to hasten his departure. It was necessary for

him to do homage to Carloman, his new sovereign. Knowing the tender friendship which united Carloman and Pepin, he was sure that, being the younger prince's father-in-law, he could not fail of being well received. The countess of Laon, who was to accompany him on this long journey, could no longer resist the maternal desire to press once more, before dying, her much-loved daughter to her heart.

Charibert and his wife set off, then, with a suitable escort. They crossed the Ardennes, and before repairing to Cologne, the abode of Carloman, they directed their route to Herstal, not knowing that Carloman, their lord-paramount, was going before them; and preceded, themselves, by a courier, who announced them to Pepin. The nurse's terror was unbounded at this unforeseen news. She ran to find her daughter, who, luckily at that moment was in her bedroom. Aude grew pale, and trembled like a criminal.

"All is discovered," said she; "we must fly."

"Let us not lose courage thus," said the nurse. "It is a last trial to undergo. If thou wilt second me, my daughter, we shall be able to deceive the countess herself. Thou goest to bed directly; I run for the physician; I shall say thou art ill. He will attest it. The light is dim in this alcove; the countess of Laon will only half see thee, and will take thee for Bertha, if thou call her mother, counterfeiting the princess's sweet and tender voice, as thou knewest how to do when we were with her. To secure Pepin, we will say it is a new pregnancy. More than four years have passed since we left the castle of Laon; the countess must have forgotten the other's features a little. Thou art not so different in her princess's clothes. She will take thee for her daughter."

Aude, who was not so confident—for she had some remorse—appeared, however, to understand her mother, and hastened to put off her clothes, cover herself up with night-gear, and go to bed. She deceived the physician by a recital of imaginary pains. The report of this indisposition was spread through the palace, and it was said to be caused by emotion, joy, and surprise. Pepin was gone, with his beloved brother, to meet the count of Laon, repressing as well as he could the disappointment he felt at the spouse he had given him, a disappointment his new passion was rendering heavier.

When he re-entered the palace, as the count and coun-

tess were looking for their beloved Bertha, surprised at not seeing her run to meet them, it was announced that the princess, struck with too lively an emotion, had felt all at once indisposed. The distressed countess requested to be immediately shown to her daughter's bed. The nurse appeared, and, remembering her duty to the countess of Laon, knelt and kissed her hand. Then she took courage, begged her not to make the princess speak much, made her embrace the little Leo, and introduced her into the sham invalid's room. Count Charibert, having taken into his arms the infant prince, whom he thought his grandson, loaded him with caresses, and followed, in a state of great emotion, his noble spouse.

The countess, on entering the room of her who passed for her daughter, ran and leant over the bed, folded the sham Bertha in a long embrace, and received from her such eager caresses that she did not at first think of looking at her attentively. Charibert embraced his daughter in his turn with tenderness, and perceived nothing. Then the lady of Laon bent anew over Aude, and in spite of the dimness which reigned in the alcove, and the tears of joy which veiled her eyes, she thought her daughter changed.

"It is her emotion," said the nurse.

Pepin added, "The princess has always been wonderfully well."

The countess had yet heard, from the mouth of her she was treating as her daughter, nothing but words hardly articulate. She began to put to her those questions which overflow from a mother's heart after a long absence.

"Canst thou have suffered, my daughter?" said she; "it seems to me thy features have become less delicate."

"It is her emotion," said the nurse.

"Is this true, my child?" resumed the countess.

"Yes, my mother," replied Aude, in a voice which had not the sweetness of Bertha's.

"Thy hair was lighter, my Bertha."

"I was four years younger, mother; and then the dimness may make it appear darker to you."

"Thou didst speak, my child, with a softer and more harmonious accent."

"It is her emotion, noble lady," said the nurse.

"I have such a cold," added Aude.

"Do not make her speak more, the dear child," said Charibert, as he went and embraced her again.

The physician relieved the countess. He expressed an opinion that after an agitation like that the princess had experienced, she should be left to sleep a little.

Pepin the Short led his noble guests into the great hall, where a sumptuous banquet had been prepared. There Carloman was to receive the count's homage. Aude found herself, then, alone with her mother; she breathed more freely. The two women held counsel.

"Thou wilt not be recognized, my child?" said the nurse. "All will go well, only keep thy presence of mind, and trust to my vigilance. I will pay attention to everything."

The young woman rose, talking all the while to her mother with a distracted air. She drew from her trunk the box which contained her jewels, and began to look at them.

"It would be a pity to leave all this," said she.

The nurse recovered her confidence. As soon as she perceived the banquet was over, she made her a new sign. Aude returned to bed, buried herself in it, and put her dear casket near her. The countess of Laon re-entered. She was surprised to find her daughter still asleep.

"It is her emotion," said the nurse, "she slept thus on her long journey."

And again, to distract the attention of this uneasy mother, she put her grandson into her arms, and the good lady loaded him again with kisses, not suspecting that the child was a stranger to her.

Aude appeared to wake two or three times, continuing to play her part with her who thought herself her mother, and evening came.

During supper, the sham invalid had a new respite. After this last meal, the count and countess of Laon, fatigued by such a day's work, and oppressed by the need of repose, went to bed. But the poor mother did not sleep. She felt something gloomy in her heart, and could not account for it. It seemed to her as if an evil dream had been agitating her since the morning. She had seen her daughter again, and felt as if she had not found her. It was a mouth less fresh, a face more bony, a skin less polished, and rougher hands.

A horrible thought crossed her. "Can my daughter have been changed?"

She very soon repelled this fancy, and reasoned thus:

Had not Bertha been Pepin's spouse for four years? She was ill, and might indeed be affected by her emotion. Besides, had not she always been under the safeguard of her good nurse,—that woman so devoted?

These ideas put heart in her again.

But, other thoughts linking themselves to these, as she thought of the nurse, she recollected that,—entirely taken up with the happiness of again seeing her daughter,—she had not even addressed a word of compassion to the poor woman on the cruel loss of Bertha's foster-sister. She was also astonished that neither Bertha nor the nurse had spoken to her of Aude. These reflections troubled the good countess all night.

By degrees the remembrance of Aude came back to her: she appeared to her in some measure. She seemed to see before her that young girl, who had darker hair, a coarser face, hands more robust, and a voice less clear than her dear Bertha's. A sort of delirium, like a violent nightmare, weighed on the breast of the countess.

"But she I have so embraced," said she, "is more like to Aude than to my daughter. If it were my Bertha whom the brigands carried off! And if the nurse had put her daughter in my child's place,—to spare me the grief of being told of her loss,—to prevent my going down to the tomb in despair!"

A confused mixture of a thousand ideas dashed against each other in the diseased head of the countess of Laon.

All of a sudden, she forms her plan, rises, is determined to be sure: she has a certain means of recognizing her offspring: Bertha has one foot longer than the other.

The day was beginning to break. The countess of Laon repairs to the room of the princess, who was awake, but again pretended to be asleep. Without noticing the nurse, who, lying in another corner, anxiously assumes a sitting posture, she runs to her daughter's bed, takes the clothes off it at the bottom,—ardent, silent, palpitating,—seizes the sham Bertha's feet, measures them, finds them equal, flies off, crying, "It is not my daughter!" and immediately falls into a swoon in the gloomy corridor.

"All is lost this time!" were the only words Aude murmured, as she hastily rose to quit the room, in spite of the nurse's supplications.

But the cries of the countess of Laon had been heard. Charibert, Pepin, Carloman, ran to the spot. All the

court was soon up. The poor mother was not recovering her senses. In vain were the most anxious cares lavished upon her. It was only at the end of two hours that she again opened her eyes. She related, bursting into tears, her cruel discovery. Immediately Pepin, Charibert, and all their officers, repaired to the room of the sham Bertha. The princess's bed was empty. She was sought for throughout the palace, but was no longer there. The nurse, who was escaping by the gardens, was stopped. Anxieties were felt respecting the spouse who had usurped Pepin's bed. It was feared for an instant that she might have thrown herself into the Meuse. The horror increased when it was perceived she had carried off her son, the little Leo. But they recovered their coolness on learning that with her had disappeared the casket of jewels, her rich oriental dagger, and the Arab horse, which Charles Martel had given her.

The morning passed in these investigations and troubles. The nurse was put to the torture; she avowed the whole series of crimes which had raised her daughter to the rank of princess. Nothing could express the despair of the countess of Laon, and the fury of Charibert, who demanded this wicked woman's blood. But Pepin would not have the mother of her who had been his wife undergo an infamous death. He condemned her to perpetual imprisonment. But the nurse hanged herself in her dungeon an hour after she had entered it.

VII.

While the countess of Laon was giving herself up to tears of anguish, which seemed never likely to dry up, and Charibert's rude sighs showed the old warrior's grief, the thought of the young girl of the mill came to shed in the heart of Pepin the short ray of hope which transported him. There was so much mystery in this young girl: she possessed the ring he had sent his bride. Perhaps she knew something, and would consent to speak in such grave circumstances: perhaps, even Bertha, escaped from the assassins..... He did not venture to finish the course of his presentiment.

Leaving the poor countess to the care of Carloman, and the good bishop of Auxerre, who had come with him, he insensibly led Charibert away, lavishing upon him con-

soling words. He conducted him as far as the mill of Jupille. Bertha, as he approached, was sitting at the door. From the first moment he perceived the young girl, Charibert experienced an extraordinary sensation. He rubbed his eyes,—thought in his turn that he was dreaming. Bertha was more sure: she sprang and threw herself on the old warrior's neck, and cried, "My father!"

A tear of happiness filled Pepin's eye. His heart palpitated with extreme violence. On retiring to hide his agitation, he found behind him his astrologer, who, taking his arm, repeated, in his grave tone, "Destined for something great!"

Pepin, delighted to find his true spouse in her he loved, and who was so worthy of him, fully re-assured by a smile from Bertha, made her mount his horse in her villager's dress, and holding himself the noble palfry by the bridle, led her to Herstal.

She rode beside her happy father, who could not take his eyes off her all the way.

Runners were sent before to inform the wretched mother. The transition from excess of grief to so great a joy caused a momentary apprehension for her life. But there is strength in a maternal heart.

We shall not paint the happiness of the mother and daughter. Pompous feasts were going to be ordered by Pepin, who partook of their transports. But as to the pious Bertha, after the lively effusions of filial love, and the happy tears of tenderness and joy, there all at once arose, amid the ardent eagerness of Pepin, a new and painful anxiety. He she loved, whose bride she was, and whom inflexible duty had hitherto obliged her to repulse, was now offering himself as a spouse. "Alas, sire!" said she, suddenly enlightened by a sorrowful reflection, "ties which nothing can break, for the church has blessed them, still separate us: Aude is your spouse."

All hearts were frozen at these words. Bertha was known to be too religious to trifle with her conscience. The old monk, in whose bosom she had lodged her fears and scruples, arrived at the palace of Herstal, drawn by the report of the event. He confirmed what Bertha had said.

"But," interrupted the bishop of Auxerre, rising, "there is nevertheless a chance,—without waiting for an attestation of the fugitive's death,—of whom, perhaps, you

will never have news. According to the laws of the Franks, which the canonical discipline respects and follows in this point, Prince Pepin's former marriage is void, if Aude, as is probable, was a serf, and has not been enfranchised. Moreover, there was error in the person."

Acclamations of joy escaped from all breasts to welcome this ray of light.

Bertha then recollected that, in fact, at her father's request, Aude's enfranchisement had been put off till the day of the marriage, which had not taken place. Immediately she stretched out her hand to Pepin, blessing this circumstance, which was the saving of her happiness.

The nuptials of Pepin and Bertha were celebrated with extraordinary pomp, and the festivities were prolonged during a whole month.

Bertha showed herself, when wearing the crown, as noble, worthy, and, at the same time, affable and good, as she had been seen at the miller's. She sent for her wheel and distaff from the mill, declaring she would herself spin the flax for her husband's shirts, and saying a woman ought, even on the throne, to set an example of work, which is a virtue, since religion has made it a duty.

The nations have not forgotten this saying of the good princess; and when those old family virtues, which are becoming rare, are recalled, it is still said that they especially shone at the time when Queen Bertha spun.

The miller and his wife were loaded with benefits. The two girls were richly married, and continued to be the friends of that princess whom they had treated as a sister.

Jupille became Bertha's favourite residence, and her mother would leave it no more. Charibert also gave up his county of Laon to remain near his son-in-law. In that great year, 742, Bertha lay in of a son. This son, one day, will be called Charlemagne.

Four years after Bertha's marriage, Carloman, disgusted with the world, left his states to his brother Pepin, who became sole sovereign of all the regions occupied by the Franks. In 752, he was proclaimed and crowned king: in 754, Pope Stephen III., having come into the country of the Franks, performed the sacred rite on King Pepin the Short and Queen Bertha of the Long Foot. During this time Carloman had taken the religious habit at Monte-Casino, near Rome. Aude, who also had taken refuge in Italy, knowing his retreat, sent him her son Leo, and finished

her days in penance in the depth of a convent. Leo was holily brought up, and never knew his origin. When pope, under the name of Leo III., says the chronicle, it was he who, in 800, crowned Charlemagne emperor in Rome. And it is doubtless to Charlemagne that the astrologer alluded, when he said of Bertha, "Destined for something great!"

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