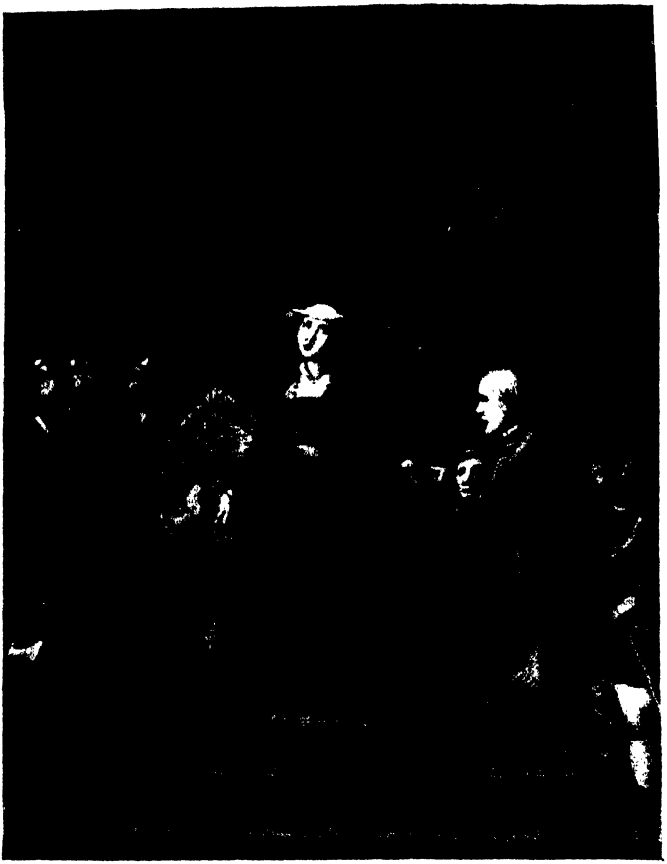


L. Boulanger, del. *N. Desmadryl, sculp.*

MARY STUART ON THE SCAFFOLD

THE CRIMES OF THE MARQUISE DE BRINVILLIERS

AND OTHERS

BY

ALEXANDRE DUMAS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
R. S. GARNETT

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	ix
THE MARQUISE DE BRINVILLIERS . . .	1
MARTIN GUERRE	75
THE MARQUISE DE GANGES	125
MARY STUART	183
VANINKA	391

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

MARY STUART ON THE SCAFFOLD . .	*Frontispiece*	
THE MARQUISE DE BRINVILLIERS TRYING HER POISONS ON THE PATIENTS OF THE HÔTEL-DIEU . . .	*Facing page*	14
MARTIN GUERRE'S WIFE RECOGNISES HER TRUE HUSBAND . . .	„	120
MADAME VOISIN FORETELLING A VIOLENT DEATH TO THE MARQUISE DE GANGES	„	127
THE MURDER OF THE MARQUISE DE GANGES BY POISON . . .	„	150
MARY STUART AND THE HANDSOME RIZZIO	„	185
FLIGHT OF MARY STUART FROM LOCHLEVEN CASTLE. . . .	„	311
VANINKA AND FOEDOR . . .	„	433

INTRODUCTION

MR. ANDREW LANG has well said that the true collaborators of Dumas were human nature and history. And indeed it is an excellent plan for the novelist to model his characters on the Mr. A. and Mrs. B. and Miss C. of his acquaintance, or on a La Brinvilliers and a La Voisin. We have always especially admired the chapters in *Les Trois Mousquetaires* which are devoted to Miladi's imprisonment in the castle near Portsmouth, her conquest of her puritanic young gaoler Felton, and her escape with him. This episode in her career is entirely of the author's invention, the *Mémoires d'Artagnan*, by Gatien de Courtilz de Sandras, being silent respecting it; and it is apparent to us that Miladi's claim to be a successful character in a classical work of fiction owes much to Dumas' study of La Brinvilliers. Happily Miladi failed in her attempt to poison d'Artagnan, but she succeeded only too completely with Madame Bonacieux; and although in the end both Miladi and La Brinvilliers met with shameful deaths, they, demons though they were, convinced the pious men about them that they were saints. Female warders, or indeed women in general, might have been so unobliging as to persevere in an attitude of scepticism. Certainly Madame de Sévigné was under no illusion concerning her contemporary. Indeed, her letters to her daughter describing the sufferings of La Brinvilliers seem really brutal. Most people are puzzled by this exhibition; to them it appears that a gentle, cultivated lady of blameless life, who has been chatting gaily of the Court, of new books, of the pleasures of country life, suddenly

and astonishingly forgets herself. Our theory is that Madame de Sévigné not only felt humiliated that a series of odious crimes had been committed by a lady, her social equal, but that she was afraid of her. She seems to us to strike a note of uneasy joy when she returns again and again to Madame Brinvilliers, to tell more horrid anecdotes and to describe yet more dreadful sufferings. In truth people *were* afraid of La Brinvilliers. Saint-Croix and she had menaced society at large, and while she yet lived no one felt safe. Of course in those days the crime of poisoning was far more difficult of detection than now. Had her time been a little earlier, the Marquise de Brinvilliers would have been tried not as a poisoner but as a sorceress. She and her almost equally celebrated contemporary La Voisin have this additional distinction in the annals of crime, that their deeds were the cause of the passing of a royal edict creating a *Chambre Ardente* for the trial and punishment of poisoners.

We have compared Dumas' study with the *Histoire du Procès de la Marquise de Brinvilliers* contained in Richer's collection of *Causes Célèbres*, and in spite of the dramatic talent of our author have found it very exact. For dramatic impressiveness our readers nevertheless will note particularly the vivid opening scene and the strikingly powerful description of Saint-Croix's introduction to the arch-poisoner Exili in the Bastille. No one but Dumas could have made this latter so effective. Doubtless he was right, and the Marquise was absolutely bad. It may be conceded to Saint-Croix that he was unfortunate in his friends: to fall in love with a demon and to be imprisoned with a devil is a hard fate, and too much for mortal man to withstand.

Although the *Crimes Célèbres* filled eight large volumes, the public was by no means satiated, and Dumas received a host of communications from different parts of the country, as though, as he says, every province of France was eager to furnish its sheaf to the bloody harvest. He accepted and

re-wrote one narrative, *Le Curé Chambard.*[1] This must have been sent to him *à propos* of the argument of La Brinvilliers' advocate, that it would be contrary to precedent were her confession used as evidence against her.

Dramatists and novelists have frequently made use of the resemblance existing between two people to evolve comic or tragic situations. If these seem far-fetched, it should be remembered that real life affords extraordinary perplexities occasioned by the impersonation of one individual by another. Several instances are to be found in history; of these none is more remarkable than the story of Martin Guerre. Comedy and tragedy are inextricably mingled in it; fresh situations and with them fresh perplexities are continually introduced, until the reader is as much at a loss as the characters themselves. Dumas, who, as we have seen, supplemented Courtilz de Sandras' sketch of Miladi by using La Brinvilliers to complete the portrait, laid hold of the two Martin Guerres, the real and the false, and some others of the persons of the drama besides, and transplanted them into his romance, *Les Deux Diane*, where they shine with great effect. Those who care to follow them will find some ingenious variations of the true story told in the present volume. It is a matter of some surprise and regret to us that Dumas never dramatised *Martin Guerre.*

The history of the Marquise de Ganges, which follows, is one that decidedly we would rather *not* see presented on the stage. One is glad to know that even in the time of Louis XIV the events in which the Abbé de Ganges took the leading part spread a gloom over the Court. The Abbé no doubt considered himself a choice specimen of the gallants of the day; yet his methods were such as Gil Blas' robbers would have scorned to adopt. Two interesting questions will not fail to suggest themselves to the reader,—Was the murderers' only object the acquisition of the lady's property? and was her husband innocent or guilty?

[1] See *The Reminiscences of Antony* and *Marianna.*

Unlike *Martin Guerre*, which exhibits little trace of Dumas' pen, and is, we believe, mainly the work of a collaborator, the study upon the Marquise de Ganges is evidently his. The opening scene, which passes in the house of La Voisin, is in particular an excellent specimen of his manner; but the whole study is instinct with life and colour. When, many years after the visit of the Marquise to it, the vipers' nest in which La Voisin carried on her trade was raided by the police, books registering the names of her clients were found there. Many of these people were by no means innocent as was the Marquise. Lesgrais, who trapped Madame Brinvilliers and brought her to Paris, was instrumental also in the capture of La Voisin, and Paris rang with his name. It is recorded by M. Richer that a lady was sitting by the domestic hearth one evening with her husband, when a servant announced that M. Lesgrais had called to see her. The dame straightway fell on her knees confessing herself one of La Voisin's clients and begging for mercy. The stern husband ordered Lesgrais to be admitted, when lo and behold! he proved to be an upholsterer of that name. The chronicler says that Paris was much exhilarated by this adventure.

The inclusion of Mary Stuart in the *Celebrated Crimes* will excite resentment in the minds of some readers, until the reflection occurs to them that Dumas' title was intended to include cases in which the subjects were the victims rather than the perpetrators of crimes. Urbain Grandier[1] committed no offence, but his case was a "Celebrated Crime." The case of Mary Stuart may be differentiated from it, perhaps, but it fitly has a place in the collection. We must not omit to mention the fact that towards 1840, when he undertook to write the *Crimes Célèbres*, Dumas was composing his chronicle of the Stuarts. Having read both, we can say that either the study in the present volume is a skilfully arranged extract from such chronicle, or the latter is an expansion of the matter here

[1] See *The Crimes of Urbain Grandier and Others.*

presented. Brantôme and Sir Walter Scott were Dumas' chief authorities for *Mary Stuart.*

Another book which Dumas had in hand at about the same time as *Les Stuarts* was his *Mémoires d'un Maître d'Armes, ou Dix-huit Mois à St. Petersbourg.*[1] The material largely consisted of MS. notes handed to him by his friend Grisier, the Maître d'armes in question, but our author collected round him various volumes about Russia, from which he filled in historical matter and anecdotes at discretion. One of these books was Dupré de St. Maure's *L'Hermite en Russie* (Paris, 1829). There he found *Varinka, ou le Cabaret rouge.* Any reader who has the idea that Dumas was content merely to transcribe the work of another should refer to Dupré de St. Maure's work. He will see with some astonishment that Dumas' version is not only the more dramatic of the two, but that it is incomparably the more vivid and natural. It is he who appears to have witnessed the events he describes, it is Dupré de St. Maure who seems to relate them at second hand. The tragic story of Vaninka (as Dumas spells the name) is one of the most striking of the whole collection of "Crimes."

R. S. GARNETT

[1] See *The Fencing Master.*

THE MARQUISE DE BRINVILLIERS

THE MARQUISE DE BRINVILLIERS

TOWARDS the end of the year 1665, on a fine autumn evening, there was a considerable crowd assembled on the Pont-Neuf where it makes a turn down to the rue Dauphine. The object of this crowd and the centre of attraction was a closely shut carriage. A police official was trying to force open the door, and two out of the four sergeants who were with him were holding the horses back and the other two stopping the driver, who paid no attention to their commands, but only endeavoured to urge his horses to a gallop. The struggle had been going on some time, when suddenly one of the doors was violently pushed open, and a young officer in the uniform of a cavalry captain jumped down, shutting the door as he did so, though not too quickly for the nearest spectators to perceive a woman sitting at the back of the carriage. She was wrapped in cloak and veil, and judging by the precautions she had taken to hide her face from every eye, she must have had her reasons for avoiding recognition.

"Sir," said the young man, addressing the officer with a haughty air, "I presume, till I find myself mistaken, that your business is with me alone; so I will ask you to inform me what powers you may have for thus stopping my coach; also, since I have alighted, I desire you to give your men orders to let the vehicle go on."

"First of all," replied the man, by no means intimidated by these lordly airs, but signing to his men that they must not release the coach or the horses, "be so good as to answer my questions."

"I am attending," said the young man, controlling his agitation by a visible effort.

"Are you the Chevalier Gaudin de Sainte-Croix?"

"I am he."

"Captain of the Tracy regiment?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then I arrest you in the king's name."

"What powers have you?"

"This warrant."

Sainte-Croix cast a rapid glance at the paper, and instantly recognised the signature of the minister of police: he then apparently confined his attention to the woman who was still in the carriage; then he returned to his first question.

"This is all very well, sir," he said to the officer, "but this warrant contains no other name than mine, and so you have no right to expose thus to the public gaze the lady with whom I was travelling when you arrested me. I must beg of you to order your assistants to allow this carriage to drive on; then take me where you please, for I am ready to go with you."

To the officer this request seeemed a just one: he signed to his men to let the driver and the horses go on; and they, who had waited only for this, lost no time in breaking through the crowd, which melted away before them; thus the woman escaped for whose safety the prisoner seemed so much concerned.

Sainte-Croix kept his promise and offered no resistance; for some moments he followed the officer, surrounded by a crowd which seemed to have transferred all its curiosity to his account; then, at the corner of the Quai de d'Horloge, a man called up a carriage that had not been observed before, and Sainte-Croix took his place with the same haughty and disdainful air that he had shown throughout the scene we have just described. The officer sat beside him, two of his men got up behind, and the other two, obeying no doubt their master's orders, retired with a parting direction to the driver, "The Bastille!"

Our readers will now permit us to make them more fully acquainted with the man who is to take the first place in the story. The origin of Gaudin de Sainte-Croix was not known: according to one tale, he was the natural son of a great lord;

another account declared that he was the offspring of poor people, but that, disgusted with his obscure birth, he preferred a splendid disgrace, and therefore chose to pass for what he was not. The only certainty is that he was born at Montauban, and in actual rank and position he was captain of the Tracy regiment. At the time when this narrative opens, towards the end of 1665, Sainte-Croix was about twenty-eight or thirty, a fine young man of cheerful and lively appearance, a merry comrade at a banquet, and an excellent captain: he took his pleasure with other men, and was so impressionable a character that he enjoyed a virtuous project as well as any plan for a debauch; in love he was most susceptible, and jealous to the point of madness even about a courtesan, had she once taken his fancy; his prodigality was princely, although he had no income; further, he was most sensitive to slights, as all men are who, because they are placed in an equivocal position, fancy that everyone who makes any reference to their origin is offering an intentional insult.

We must now see by what a chain of circumstances he had arrived at his present position. About the year 1660, Sainte-Croix, while in the army, had made the acquaintance of the Marquis de Brinvilliers, maître-de-camp of the Normandy regiment. Their age was much the same, and so was their manner of life: their virtues and their vices were similar, and thus it happened that a mere acquaintance grew into a friendship, and on his return from the field the marquis introduced Sainte-Croix to his wife, and he became an intimate of the house. The usual results followed. Madame de Brinvilliers was then scarcely eight-and-twenty: she had married the marquis in 1651—that is, nine years before. He enjoyed an income of 30,000 livres, to which she added her dowry of 200,000 livres, exclusive of her expectations in the future. Her name was Marie-Madeleine; she had a sister and two brothers: her father, M. de Dreux d'Aubray, was civil lieutenant at the Châtelet de Paris. At the age of twenty-eight the marquise was at the height of her beauty: her figure was small but perfectly proportioned; her rounded face was charmingly

pretty; her features, so regular that no emotion seemed to alter their beauty, suggested the lines of a statue miraculously endowed with life: it was easy enough to mistake for the repose of a happy conscience the cold, cruel calm which served as a mask to cover remorse.

Sainte-Croix and the marquise loved at first sight, and she was soon his mistress. The marquis, perhaps endowed with the conjugal philosophy which alone pleased the taste of the period, perhaps too much occupied with his own pleasures to see what was going on before his eyes, offered no jealous obstacle to the intimacy, and continued his foolish extravagances long after they had impaired his fortunes: his affairs became so entangled that the marquise, who cared for him no longer, and desired a fuller liberty for the indulgence of her new passion, demanded and obtained a separation. She then left her husband's house, and henceforth abandoning all discretion, appeared everywhere in public with Sainte-Croix. This behaviour, authorised as it was by the example of the highest nobility, made no impression upon the Marquis of Brinvilliers, who merrily pursued the road to ruin, without worrying about his wife's behaviour. Not so M. de Dreux d'Aubray: he had the scrupulosity of a legal dignitary. He was scandalised at his daughter's conduct, and feared a stain upon his own fair name: he procured a warrant for the arrest of Sainte-Croix wheresoever the bearer might chance to encounter him. We have seen how it was put in execution when Sainte-Croix was driving in the carriage of the marquise, whom our readers will doubtless have recognised as the woman who concealed herself so carefully.

From one's knowledge of the character of Sainte-Croix, it is easy to imagine that he had to use great self-control to govern the anger he felt at being arrested in the middle of the street; thus, although during the whole drive he uttered not a single word, it was plain to see that a terrible storm was gathering, soon to break. But he preserved the same impassibility both at the opening and shutting of the fatal gates, which, like the gates of hell, had so often bidden those who entered

abandon all hope on their threshold, and again when he replied to the formal questions put to him by the governor. His voice was calm, and when they gave him the prison register he signed it with a steady hand. At once a gaoler, taking his orders from the governor, bade him follow: after traversing various corridors, cold and damp, where the daylight might sometimes enter but fresh air never, he opened a door, and Sainte-Croix had no sooner entered than he heard it locked behind him.

At the grating of the lock he turned. The gaoler had left him with no light but the rays of the moon, which, shining through a barred window some eight or ten feet from the ground, shed a gleam upon a miserable truckle-bed and left the rest of the room in deep obscurity. The prisoner stood still for a moment and listened; then, when he had heard the steps die away in the distance and knew himself to be alone at last, he fell upon the bed with a cry more like the roaring of a wild beast than any human sound: he cursed his fellow-man who had snatched him from his joyous life to plunge him into a dungeon; he cursed his God who had let this happen; he cried aloud to whatever powers might be that could grant him revenge and liberty.

Just at that moment, as though summoned by these words from the bowels of the earth, a man slowly stepped into the circle of blue light that fell from the window—a man thin and pale, a man with long hair, in a black doublet, who approached the foot of the bed where Sainte-Croix lay. Brave as he was, this apparition so fully answered to his prayers (and at the period the power of incantation and magic were still believed in) that he felt no doubt that the arch-enemy of the human race, who is continually at hand, had heard him and had now come in answer to his prayers. He sat up on the bed, feeling mechanically at the place where the handle of his sword would have been but two hours since, feeling his hair stand on end, and a cold sweat begin to stream down his face as the strange fantastic being step by step approached him. At length the apparition paused, the prisoner and he stood face to face for a

moment, their eyes riveted; then the mysterious stranger spoke in gloomy tones.

"Young man," said he, "you have prayed to the devil for vengeance on the men who have taken you, for help against the God who has abandoned you. I have the means, and I am here to proffer it. Have you the courage to accept?"

"First of all," asked Sainte-Croix, "who are you?"

"Why seek you to know who I am," replied the unknown, "at the very moment when I come at your call, and bring what you desire?"

"All the same," said Sainte-Croix, still attributing what he heard to a supernatural being, "when one makes a compact of this kind, one prefers to know with whom one is treating."

"Well, since you must know," said the stranger, "I am the Italian Exili."

Sainte-Croix shuddered anew, passing from a supernatural vision to a horrible reality. The name he had just heard had a terrible notoriety at the time, not only in France but in Italy as well. Exili had been driven out of Rome, charged with many poisonings, which, however, could not be satisfactorily brought home to him. He had gone to Paris, and there, as in his native country, he had drawn the eyes of the authorities upon himself; but neither in Paris nor in Rome was he, the pupil of René and of Trophana, convicted of guilt. All the same, though proof was wanting, his enormities were so well accredited that there was no scruple as to having him arrested. A warrant was out against him: Exili was taken up, and was lodged in the Bastille. He had been there about six months when Sainte-Croix was brought to the same place. The prisoners were numerous just then, so the governor had his new guest put up in the same room as the old one, mating Exili and Sainte-Croix, not knowing that they were a pair of demons. Our readers now understand the rest. Sainte-Croix was put into an unlighted room by the gaoler, and in the dark had failed to see his companion: he had abandoned himself to his rage, his imprecations had revealed his state of mind to Exili, who at once seized the occasion for gaining a devoted and powerful disciple, who once out of prison

might open the doors for him, perhaps, or at least avenge his fate should he be incarcerated for life.

The repugnance felt by Sainte-Croix for his fellow-prisoner did not last long, and the clever master found his pupil apt. Sainte-Croix, a strange mixture of qualities good and evil, had reached the supreme crisis of his life, when the powers of darkness or of light were to prevail. Maybe, if he had met some angelic soul at this point, he would have been led to God; he encountered a demon, who conducted him to Satan.

Exili was no vulgar poisoner: he was a great artist in poisons, comparable with the Medici or the Borgias. For him murder was a fine art, and he had reduced it to fixed and rigid rules: he had arrived at a point when he was guided not by his personal interest but by a taste for experiment. God has reserved the act of creation for Himself, but has suffered destruction to be within the scope of man: man therefore supposes that in destroying life he is God's equal. Such was the nature of Exili's pride: he was the dark, pale alchemist of death: others might seek the mighty secret of life, but he had found the secret of destruction.

For a time Sainte-Croix hesitated: at last he yielded to the taunts of his companion, who accused Frenchmen of showing too much honour in their crimes, of allowing themselves to be involved in the ruin of their enemies, whereas they might easily survive them and triumph over their destruction. In opposition to this French gallantry, which often involves the murderer in a death more cruel than that he has given, he pointed to the Florentine traitor with his amiable smile and his deadly poison. He indicated certain powders and potions, some of them of dull action, wearing out the victim so slowly that he dies after long suffering; others violent and so quick, that they kill like a flash of lightning, leaving not even time for a single cry. Little by little Sainte-Croix became interested in the ghastly science that puts the lives of all men in the hand of one. He joined in Exili's experiments; then he grew clever enough to make them for himself; and when, at the year's end, he left the Bastille, the pupil was almost as accomplished as his master.

Sainte-Croix returned into that society which had banished him, fortified by a fatal secret by whose aid he could repay all the evil he had received. Soon afterwards Exili was set free—how it happened is not known—and sought out Sainte-Croix, who let him a room in the name of his steward, Martin de Breuille, a room situated in the blind alley off the Place Maubert, owned by a woman called Brunet.

It is not known whether Sainte-Croix had an opportunity of seeing the Marquise de Brinvilliers during his sojourn in the Bastille, but it is certain that as soon as he was a free man the lovers were more attached than ever. They had learned by experience, however, of what they had to fear; so they resolved that they would at once make trial of Sainte-Croix's newly acquired knowledge, and M. d'Aubray was selected by his daughter for the first victim. At one blow she would free herself from the inconvenience of his rigid censorship, and by inheriting his goods would repair her own fortune, which had been almost dissipated by her husband. But in trying such a bold stroke one must be very sure of results, so the marquise decided to experiment beforehand on another person. Accordingly, when one day after luncheon her maid, Françoise Roussel, came in to her room, she gave her a slice of mutton and some preserved gooseberries for her own meal. The girl unsuspiciously ate what her mistress gave her, but almost at once felt ill, saying she had severe pain in the stomach, and a sensation as though her heart were being pricked with pins. But she did not die, and the marquise perceived that the poison needed to be made stronger, and returned it to Sainte-Croix, who brought her some more in a few days' time.

The moment had come for action. M. d'Aubray, tired with business, was to spend a holiday at his castle called Offemont. The marquise offered to go with him. M. d'Aubray, who supposed her relations with Sainte-Croix to be quite broken off, joyfully accepted. Offemont was exactly the place for a crime of this nature. In the middle of the forest of Aigue, three or four miles from Compiègne, it would be impossible to get efficient help before the rapid action of the poison had made it useless.

M. d'Aubray started with his daughter and one servant only. Never had the marquise been so devoted to her father, so specially attentive, as she was during this journey. And M. d'Aubray, like Christ—who though He had no children had a father's heart—loved his repentant daughter more than if she had never strayed. And then the marquise profited by the terrible calm look which we have already noticed in her face: always with her father, sleeping in a room adjoining his, eating with him, caring for his comfort in every way, thoughtful and affectionate, allowing no other person to do anything for him, she had to present a smiling face, in which the most suspicious eye could detect nothing but filial tenderness, though the vilest projects were in her heart. With this mask she one evening offered him some soup that was poisoned. He took it; with her eyes she saw him put it to his lips, watched him drink it down, and with a brazen countenance she gave no outward sign of that terrible anxiety that must have been pressing on her heart. When he had drunk it all, and she had taken with steady hands the cup and its saucer, she went back to her own room, waited and listened . . .

The effect was rapid. The marquise heard her father moan; then she heard groans. At last, unable to endure his sufferings, he called out to his daughter. The marquise went to him. But now her face showed signs of the liveliest anxiety, and it was for M. d'Aubray to try to reassure her about himself! He thought it was only a trifling indisposition, and was not willing that a doctor should be disturbed. But then he was seized by a frightful vomiting, followed by such unendurable pain that he yielded to his daughter's entreaty that she should send for help. A doctor arrived at about eight o'clock in the morning, but by that time all that could have helped a scientific inquiry had been disposed of: the doctor saw nothing in M. d'Aubray's story but what might be accounted for by indigestion; so he dosed him, and went back to Compiègne.

All that day the marquise never left the sick man. At night she had a bed made up in his room, declaring that no one else must sit up with him; thus she was able to watch the progress

of the malady and see with her own eyes the conflict between death and life in the body of her father. The next day the doctor came again: M. d'Aubray was worse; the nausea had ceased, but the pains in the stomach were now more acute; a strange fire seemed to burn his vitals; and a treatment was ordered which necessitated his return to Paris. He was soon so weak that he thought it might be best to go only so far as Compiègne, but the marquise was so insistent as to the necessity for further and better advice than anything he could get away from home, that M. d'Aubray decided to go. He made the journey in his own carriage, leaning upon his daughter's shoulder; the behaviour of the marquise was always the same: at last M. d'Aubray reached Paris. All had taken place as the marquise desired; for the scene was now changed: the doctor who had witnessed the symptoms would not be present at the death; no one could discover the cause by studying the progress of the disorder; the thread of investigation was snapped in two, and the two ends were now too distant to be joined again. In spite of every possible attention, M. d'Aubray grew continually worse; the marquise was faithful to her mission, and never left him for an hour. At last, after four days of agony, he died in his daughter's arms, blessing the woman who was his murderess. Her grief then broke forth uncontrolled. Her sobs and tears were so vehement that her brothers' grief seemed cold beside hers. Nobody suspected a crime, so no autopsy was held; the tomb was closed, and not the slightest suspicion had approached her.

But the marquise had only gained half her purpose. She had now more freedom for her love affairs, but her father's dispositions were not so favourable as she expected: the greater part of his property, together with his business, passed to the elder brother and to the second brother, who was Parliamentary councillor; the position of the marquise was very little improved in point of fortune.

Sainte-Croix was leading a fine and joyous life. Although nobody supposed him to be wealthy, he had a steward called Martin, three lackeys called George, Lapierre, and Lachaussée,

and besides his coach and other carriages he kept ordinary bearers for excursions at night. As he was young and good-looking, nobody troubled about where all these luxuries came from. It was quite the custom in those days that a well-set-up young gentleman should want for nothing, and Sainte-Croix was commonly said to have found the philosopher's stone. In his life in the world he had formed friendships with various persons, some noble, some rich: among the latter was a man named Reich de Penautier, receiver-general of the clergy and treasurer of the States of Languedoc, a millionaire, and one of those men who are always successful, and who seem able by the help of their money to arrange matters that would appear to be in the province of God alone. This Penautier was connected in business with a man called d'Alibert, his first clerk, who died all of a sudden of apoplexy. The attack was known to Penautier sooner than to his own family: then the papers about the conditions of partnership disappeared, no one knew how, and d'Alibert's wife and child were ruined. D'Alibert's brother-in-law, who was Sieur de la Magdelaine, felt certain vague suspicions concerning this death, and wished to get to the bottom of it; he accordingly began investigations, which were suddenly brought to an end by his death.

In one way alone Fortune seemed to have abandoned her favourite: Maître Penautier had a great desire to succeed the Sieur of Mennevillette, who was receiver of the clergy, and this office was worth nearly 60,000 livres. Penautier knew that Mennevillette was retiring in favour of his chief clerk, Messire Pierre Hannyvel, Sieur de Saint-Laurent, and he had taken all the necessary steps for buying the place over his head: the Sieur de Saint-Laurent, with the full support of the clergy, obtained the reversion for nothing—a thing that never happened before. Penautier then offered him 40,000 crowns to go halves, but Saint-Laurent refused. Their relations, however, were not broken off, and they continued to meet. Penautier was considered such a lucky fellow that it was generally expected he would somehow or other get some day the post he coveted so highly. People who had no faith in the mysteries of

alchemy declared that Sainte-Croix and Penautier did business together.

Now, when the period for mourning was over, the relations of the marquise and Sainte-Croix were as open and public as before: the two brothers d'Aubray expostulated with her by the medium of an older sister who was in a Carmelite nunnery, and the marquise perceived that her father had on his death bequeathed the care and supervision of her to her brothers. Thus her first crime had been all but in vain: she had wanted to get rid of her father's rebukes and to gain his fortune; as a fact the fortune was diminished by reason of her elder brothers, and she had scarcely enough to pay her debts; while the rebukes were renewed from the mouths of her brothers, one of whom, being civil lieutenant, had the power to separate her again from her lover. This must be prevented. Lachaussée left the service of Sainte-Croix, and by a contrivance of the marquise was installed three months later as servant of the elder brother, who lived with the civil lieutenant. The poison to be used on this occasion was not so swift as the one taken by M. d'Aubray: so violent a death happening so soon in the same family might arouse suspicion. Experiments were tried once more, not on animals—for their different organisation might put the prisoner's science in the wrong—but as before upon human subjects; as before, a *corpus vili* was taken. The marquise had the reputation of a pious and charitable lady; seldom did she fail to relieve the poor who appealed: more than this, she took part in the work of those devoted women who are pledged to the service of the sick, and she walked the hospitals and presented wine and other medicaments. No one was surprised when she appeared in her ordinary way at l'Hôtel-Dieu. This time she brought biscuits and cakes for the convalescent patients, her gifts being, as usual, gratefully received. A month later she paid another visit, and inquired after certain patients in whom she was particularly interested: since the last time she came they had suffered a relapse; the malady had changed in nature, and had shown graver symptoms. It was a kind of deadly fatigue, killing them by a slow, strange



Bouvier, del. *Mme. Albites, sculp.*

THE MARQUISE DE BRINVILLIERS TRYING HER POISONS ON THE PATIENTS OF THE HÔTEL-DIEU

decay. She asked questions of the doctors, but could learn nothing: this malady was unknown to them, and defied all the resources of their art. A fortnight later she returned. Some of the sick people were dead, others still alive, but desperately ill; living skeletons, all that seemed left of them was sight, speech, and breath. At the end of two months they were all dead, and the physicians had been as much at a loss over the post-mortems as over the treatment of the dying.

Experiments of this kind were reassuring; so Lachaussée had orders to carry out his instructions. One day the civil lieutenant rang his bell, and Lachaussée, who served the councillor, as we said before, came up for orders. He found the lieutenant at work with his secretary, Cousté—what he wanted was a glass of wine and water. In a moment Lachaussée brought it in. The lieutenant put the glass to his lips, but at the first sip pushed it away, crying, "What have you brought, you wretch? I believe you want to poison me." Then handing the glass to his secretary, he added, "Look at it, Cousté: what is this stuff?" The secretary put a few drops into a coffee-spoon, lifting it to his nose and then to his mouth: the drink had the smell and taste of vitriol. Meanwhile Lachaussée went up to the secretary and told him he knew what it must be: one of the councillor's valets had taken a dose of medicine that morning, and without noticing he must have brought the very glass his companion had used. Saying this, he took the glass from the secretary's hand, put it to his lips, pretending to taste it himself, and then said he had no doubt it was so, for he recognised the smell. He then threw the wine into the fireplace.

As the lieutenant had not drunk enough to be upset by it, he soon forgot this incident and the suspicions that had been aroused at the moment in his mind. Sainte-Croix and the marquise perceived that they had made a false step, and at the risk of involving several people in their plan for vengeance, they decided on the employment of other means. Three months passed without any favourable occasion presenting itself; at last, on one of the early days of April 1670, the

lieutenant took his brother to his country place, Villequoy, in Beauce, to spend the Easter vacation. Lachaussée was with his master, and received his instructions at the moment of departure.

The day after they arrived in the country there was a pigeon-pie for dinner: seven persons who had eaten it felt indisposed after the meal, and the three who had not taken it were perfectly well. Those on whom the poisonous substance had chiefly acted were the lieutenant, the councillor, and the commandant of the watch. He may have eaten more, or possibly the poison he had tasted on the former occasion helped, but at any rate the lieutenant was the first to be attacked with vomiting: two hours later, the councillor showed the same symptoms; the commandant and the others were a prey for several hours to frightful internal pains; but from the beginning their condition was not nearly so grave as that of the two brothers. This time again, as usual, the help of doctors was useless. On the 12th of April, five days after they had been poisoned, the lieutenant and his brother returned to Paris so changed that anyone would have thought they had both suffered a long and cruel illness. Madame de Brinvilliers was in the country at the time, and did not come back during the whole time that her brothers were ill. From the very first consultation in the lieutenant's case the doctors entertained no hope. The symptoms were the same as those to which his father had succumbed, and they supposed it was an unknown disease in the family. They gave up all hope of recovery. Indeed, his state grew worse and worse; he felt an unconquerable aversion for every kind of food, and the vomiting was incessant. The last three days of his life he complained that a fire was burning in his breast, and the flames that burned within seemed to blaze forth at his eyes, the only part of his body that appeared to live, so like a corpse was all the rest of him. On the 17th of June 1670 he died: the poison had taken seventy-two days to complete its work. Suspicion began to dawn: the lieutenant's body was opened, and a formal report was drawn up. The operation was performed in the

presence of the surgeons Dupré and Durant, and Gavart, the apothecary, by M. Bachot, the brothers' private physician. They found the stomach and duodenum to be black and falling to pieces, the liver burnt and gangrened. They said that this state of things must have been produced by poison, but as the presence of certain bodily humours sometimes produces similar appearances, they durst not declare that the lieutenant's death could not have come about by natural causes, and he was buried without further inquiry.

It was as his private physician that Dr. Bachot had asked for the autopsy of his patient's brother. For the younger brother seemed to have been attacked by the same complaint, and the doctor hoped to find from the death of the one some means for preserving the life of the other. The councillor was n a violent fever, agitated unceasingly both in body and mind: he could not bear any position of any kind for more than a few minutes at a time. Bed was a place of torture; but if he got up, he cried for it again, at least for a change of suffering. At the end of three months he died. His stomach, duodenum, and liver were all in the same corrupt state as his brother's, and more than that, the surface of his body was burnt away. This, said the doctors, was no dubious sign of poisoning; although, they added, it sometimes happened that a *cacochyme* produced the same effect. Lachaussée was so far from being suspected, that the councillor, in recognition of the care he had bestowed on him in his last illness, left him in his will a legacy of a hundred crowns; moreover, he received a thousand francs from Sainte-Croix and the marquise.

So great a disaster in one family, however, was not only sad but alarming. Death knows no hatred: death is deaf and blind, nothing more, and astonishment was felt at this ruthless destruction of all who bore one name. Still nobody suspected the true culprits, search was fruitless, inquiries led nowhere: the marquise put on mourning for her brothers, Sainte-Croix continued in his path of folly, and all things went on as before. Meanwhile Sainte-Croix had made the acquaintance of the Sieur de Saint-Laurent, the same man from whom Penautier had

asked for a post without success, and had made friends with him. Penautier had meanwhile become the heir of his father-in-law, the Sieur Lesecq, whose death had most unexpectedly occurred; he had thereby gained a second post in Languedoc and an immense property: still, he coveted the place of receiver of the clergy. Chance now once more helped him: a few days after taking over from Sainte-Croix a man-servant named George, M. de Saint-Laurent fell sick, and his illness showed symptoms similar to those observed in the case of the d'Aubrays, father and sons; but it was more rapid, lasting only twenty-four hours. Like them, M. de Saint-Laurent died a prey to frightful tortures. The same day an officer from the sovereign's court came to see him, heard every detail connected with his friend's death, and when told of the symptoms said before the servants to Sainfray the notary that it would be necessary to examine the body. An hour later George disappeared, saying nothing to anybody, and not even asking for his wages. Suspicions were excited; but again they remained vague. The autopsy showed a state of things not precisely to be called peculiar to poisoning cases: the intestines, which the fatal poison had not had time to burn as in the case of the d'Aubrays, were marked with reddish spots like flea-bites. In June 1669, Penautier obtained the post that had been held by the Sieur de Saint-Laurent.

But the widow had certain suspicions which were changed into something like certainty by George's flight. A particular circumstance aided and almost confirmed her doubts. An abbé who was a friend of her husband, and knew all about the disappearance of George, met him some days afterwards in the rue des Maçons, near the Sorbonne. They were both on the same side, and a hay-cart coming along the street was causing a block. George raised his head and saw the abbé, knew him as a friend of his late master, stooped under the cart and crawled to the other side, thus at the risk of being crushed escaping from the eyes of a man whose appearance recalled his crime and inspired him with fear of punishment. Madame de Saint-Laurent preferred a charge against George, but

though he was sought for everywhere, he could never be found. Still the report of these strange deaths, so sudden and so incomprehensible, was bruited about Paris, and people began to feel frightened. Sainte-Croix, always in the gay world, encountered the talk in drawing-rooms, and began to feel a little uneasy. True, no suspicion pointed as yet in his direction; but it was as well to take precautions, and Sainte-Croix began to consider how he could be freed from anxiety. There was a post in the king's service soon to be vacant, which would cost 100,000 crowns; and although Sainte-Croix had no apparent means, it was rumoured that he was about to purchase it. He first addressed himself to Belleguise to treat about this affair with Penautier. There was some difficulty, however, to be encountered in this quarter. The sum was a large one, and Penautier no longer required help; he had already come into all the inheritance he looked for, and so he tried to throw cold water on the project.

Sainte-Croix thus wrote to Belleguise:—

"DEAR FRIEND,—Is it possible that you need any more talking to about the matter you know of, so important as it is, and, maybe, able to give us peace and quiet for the rest of our days! I really think the devil must be in it, or else you simply will not be sensible: do show your common sense, my good man, and look at it from all points of view; take it at its very worst, and you still ought to feel bound to serve me, seeing how I have made everything all right for you: all our interests are together in this matter. Do help me, I beg of you; you may feel sure I shall be deeply grateful, and you will never before have acted so agreeably both for me and for yourself. You know quite enough about it, for I have not spoken so openly even to my own brother as I have to you. If you can come this afternoon, I shall either be at the house or quite near at hand, you know where I mean, or I will expect you to-morrow morning, or I will come and find you, according to what you reply.—Always yours with all my heart."

The house meant by Sainte-Croix was in the rue des Bernardins, and the place near at hand where he was to wait for

Belleguise was the room he leased from the widow Brunet, in the blind alley out of the Place Maubert. It was in this room and at the apothecary Glazer's that Sainte-Croix made his experiments; but in accordance with poetical justice, the manipulation of the poisons proved fatal to the workers themselves. The apothecary fell ill and died; Martin was attacked by fearful sickness, which brought him to death's door. Sainte-Croix was unwell, and could not even go out, though he did not know what was the matter. He had a furnace brought round to his house from Glazer's, and ill as he was, went on with the experiments. Sainte-Croix was then seeking to make a poison so subtle that the very effluvia might be fatal. He had heard of the poisoned napkin given to the young dauphin, elder brother of Charles VII, to wipe his hands on during a game of tennis, and knew that the contact had caused his death; and the still discussed tradition had informed him of the gloves of Jeanne d'Albret; the secret was lost, but Sainte-Croix hoped to recover it. And then there happened one of those strange accidents which seem to be not the hand of chance but a punishment from Heaven. At the very moment when Sainte-Croix was bending over his furnace, watching the fatal preparation as it became hotter and hotter, the glass mask which he wore over his face as a protection from any poisonous exhalations that might rise up from the mixture, suddenly dropped off, and Sainte-Croix dropped to the ground as though felled by a lightning stroke. At supper-time, his wife finding that he did not come out from his closet where he was shut in, knocked at the door, and received no answer; knowing that her husband was wont to busy himself with dark and mysterious matters, she feared some disaster had occurred. She called her servants, who broke in the door. Then she found Sainte-Croix stretched out beside the furnace, the broken glass lying by his side. It was impossible to deceive the public as to the circumstances of this strange and sudden death: the servants had seen the corpse, and they talked. The commissary Picard was ordered to affix the seals, and all the widow could do was to remove the furnace and the fragments of the glass mask.

The noise of the event soon spread all over Paris. Sainte-Croix was extremely well known, and the news that he was about to purchase a post in the court had made him known even more widely. Lachaussée was one of the first to learn of his master's death; and hearing that a seal had been set upon his room, he hastened to put in an objection in these terms:—

"Objection of Lachaussée, who asserts that for seven years he was in the service of the deceased; that he had given into his charge, two years earlier, 100 pistoles and 100 white crowns, which should be found in a cloth bag under the closet window, and in the same a paper stating that the said sum belonged to him, together with the transfer of 300 livres owed to him by the late M. d'Aubray, councillor; the said transfer made by him at Laserre, together with three receipts from his master of apprenticeship, 100 livres each: these moneys and papers he claims."

To Lachaussée the reply was given that he must wait till the day when the seals were broken, and then if all was as he said, his property would be returned.

But Lachaussée was not the only person who was agitated about the death of Sainte-Croix. The marquise, who was familiar with all the secrets of this fatal closet, had hurried to the commissary as soon as she heard of the event, and although it was ten o'clock at night had demanded to speak with him. But he had replied by his head clerk, Pierre Frater, that he was in bed; the marquise insisted, begging them to rouse him up, for she wanted a box that she could not allow to have opened. The clerk then went up to the Sieur Picard's bedroom, but came back saying that what the marquise demanded was for the time being an impossibility, for the commissary was asleep. She saw that it was idle to insist, and went away, saying that she should send a man the next morning to fetch the box. In the morning the man came, offering fifty louis to the commissary on behalf of the marquise, if he would give her the box. But he replied that the box was in the sealed room, that it would have to be opened, and that if the objects

claimed by the marquise were really hers, they would be safely handed over to her. This reply struck the marquise like a thunderbolt. There was no time to be lost: hastily she removed from the rue Neuve-Saint-Paul, where her town house was, to Picpus, her country place. Thence she posted the same evening to Liège, arriving the next morning, and retired to a convent.

The seals had been set on the 31st of July 1672, and they were taken off on the 8th of August following. Just as they set to work a lawyer charged with full powers of acting for the marquise, appeared and put in the following statement: "Alexandre Delamarre, lawyer acting for the Marquise de Brinvilliers, has come forward, and declares that if in the box claimed by his client there is found a promise signed by her for the sum of 30,000 livres, it is a paper taken from her by fraud, against which, in case of her signature being verified, she intends to lodge an appeal for nullification." This formality over, they proceeded to open Sainte-Croix's closet: the key was handed to the commissary Picard by a Carmelite called Friar Victorin. The commissary opened the door, and entered with the parties interested, the officers, and the widow, and they began by setting aside the loose papers, with a view to taking them in order, one at a time. While they were thus busy, a small roll fell down, on which these two words were written: "My Confession." All present, having no reason to suppose Sainte-Croix a bad man, decided that this paper ought not to be read. The deputy for the attorney-general on being consulted was of this opinion, and the confession of Sainte-Croix was burnt. This act of conscience performed, they proceeded to make an inventory. One of the first objects that attracted the attention of the officers was the box claimed by Madame de Brinvilliers. Her insistence had provoked curiosity, so they began with it. Everybody went near to see what was in it, and it was opened. We shall let the report speak: in such cases nothing is so effective or so terrible as the official statement.

"In the closet of Sainte-Croix was found a small box one foot square, on the top of which lay a half-sheet of paper entitled

'My Will,' written on one side and containing these words: 'I humbly entreat any into whose hands this chest may fall to do me the kindness of putting it into the hands of Madame the Marquise de Brinvilliers, resident in the rue Neuve-Saint-Paul, seeing that all the contents concern and belong to her alone, and are of no use to any person in the world apart from herself: in case of her being already dead before me, the box and all its contents should be burnt without opening or disturbing anything. And lest anyone should plead ignorance of the contents, I swear by the God I worship and by all that is most sacred that no untruth is here asserted. If anyone should contravene my wishes that are just and reasonable in this matter, I charge their conscience therewith in discharging my own in this world and the next, protesting that such is my last wish.

"'Given at Paris, the 25th of May after noon, 1672. Signed by Sainte-Croix.'

"And below were written these words: 'There is one packet only addressed to M. Penautier which should be delivered.'"

It may be easily understood that a disclosure of this kind only increased the interest of the scene; there was a murmur of curiosity, and when silence again reigned, the official continued in these words:—

"A packet has been found sealed in eight different places with eight different seals. On this is written: 'Papers to be burnt in case of my death, of no consequence to anyone. I humbly beg those into whose hands they may fall to burn them. I give this as a charge upon their conscience; all without opening the packet.' In this packet we find two parcels of sublimate.

"*Item*, another packet sealed with six different seals, on which is a similar inscription, in which is found more sublimate, half a pound in weight.

"*Item*, another packet sealed with six different seals, on which is a similar inscription, in which are found three parcels, one containing half an ounce of sublimate, the second 2½ ozs. of Roman vitriol, and the third some calcined prepared vitriol.

In the box was found a large square phial, one pint in capacity, full of a clear liquid, which was looked at by M. Moreau, the doctor; he, however, could not tell its nature until it was tested.

"*Item*, another phial, with half a pint of clear liquid with a white sediment, about which Moreau said the same thing as before.

"*Item*, a small earthenware pot containing two or three lumps of prepared opium.

"*Item*, a folded paper containing two drachms of corrosive sublimate powdered.

"Next, a little box containing a sort of stone known as infernal stone.

"Next, a paper containing one ounce of opium.

"Next, a piece of pure antimony weighing three ounces.

"Next, a packet of powder on which was written: 'To check the flow of blood.' Moreau said that it was quince flower and quince buds dried.

"*Item*, a packet sealed with six seals, on which was written, 'Papers to be burnt in case of death.' In this twenty-four letters were found, said to have been written by the Marquise de Brinvilliers.

"*Item*, another packet sealed with six seals, on which a similar inscription was written. In this were twenty-seven pieces of paper on each of which was written: 'Sundry curious secrets.'

"*Item*, another packet with six more seals, on which a similar inscription was written. In this were found seventy-five livres, addressed to different persons. Besides all these, in the box there were two bonds, one from the marquise for 30,000, and one from Penautier for 10,000 francs, their dates corresponding to the time of the deaths of M. d'Aubray and the Sieur de St. Laurent."

The difference in the amount shows that Sainte-Croix had a tariff, and that parricide was more expensive than simple assassination. Thus in his death did Sainte-Croix bequeath the poisons to his mistress and his friend; not content with his own crimes in the past, he wished to be their accomplice in the future.

The first business of the officials was to submit the different substances to analysis, and to experiment with them on animals.

The report follows of Guy Simon, an apothecary, who was charged to undertake the analysis and the experiments:—

"This artificial poison reveals its nature on examination. It is so disguised that one fails to recognise it, so subtle that it deceives the scientific, so elusive that it escapes the doctor's eye: experiments seem to be at fault with this poison, rules useless, aphorisms ridiculous. The surest experiments are made by use of the elements or upon animals. In water, ordinary poison falls by its own weight. The water is superior, the poison obeys, falls downwards, and takes the lower place.

"The trial by fire is no less certain: the fire evaporates and disperses all that is innocent and pure, leaving only acrid and sour matter which resists its influence. The effect produced by poison on animals is still more plain to see: its malignity extends to every part that it reaches, and all that it touches is vitiated; it burns and scorches all the inner parts with a strange, irresistible fire.

"The poison employed by Sainte-Croix has been tried in all the ways, and can defy every experiment. This poison floats in water, it is the superior, and the water obeys it; it escapes in the trial by fire, leaving behind only innocent deposits; in animals it is so skilfully concealed that no one could detect it; all parts of the animal remain healthy and active; even while it is spreading the cause of death, this artificial poison leaves behind the marks and appearance of life. Every sort of experiment has been tried. The first was to pour out several drops of the liquid found into oil of tartar and sea water, and nothing was precipitated into the vessels used; the second was to pour the same liquid into a sanded vessel, and at the bottom there was found nothing arid or acid to the tongue, scarcely any stains; the third experiment was tried upon an Indian fowl, a pigeon, a dog, and some other animals, which died soon after. When they were opened, however, nothing was found but a little coagulated blood in the ventricle of the heart. Another experiment was giving a white powder to a cat, in a morsel of mutton. The cat vomited for half an hour, and was found

dead the next day, but when opened no part of it was found to be affected by the poison. A second trial of the same poison was made upon a pigeon, which soon died. When opened, nothing peculiar was found except a little reddish water in the stomach."

These experiments proved that Sainte-Croix was a learned chemist, and suggested the idea that he did not employ his art for nothing; everybody recalled the sudden, unexpected deaths that had occurred, and the bonds from the marquise and from Penautier looked like blood-money. As one of these two was absent, and the other so powerful and rich that they dared not arrest him without proofs, attention was now paid to the objection put in by Lachaussée.

It was said in the objection that Lachaussée had spent seven years in the service of Sainte-Croix, so he could not have considered the time he had passed with the d'Aubrays as an interruption to this service. The bag containing the thousand pistoles and the three bonds for a hundred livres had been found in the place indicated; thus Lachaussée had a thorough knowledge of this closet: if he knew the closet, he would know about the box; if he knew about the box, he could not be an innocent man. This was enough to induce Madame Mangot de Villarceaux, the lieutenant's widow, to lodge an accusation against him, and in consequence a writ was issued against Lachaussée, and he was arrested. When this happened, poison was found upon him.

The trial came on before the Châtelet. Lachaussée denied his guilt obstinately. The judges thinking they had no sufficient proof, ordered the preparatory question to be applied. Mme. Mangot appealed from a judgment which would probably save[1] the culprit if he had the strength to resist the torture and own to nothing; so, in virtue of this appeal, a judgment, on

[1] There were two kinds of question, one before and one after the sentence was passed. In the first, an accused person would endure frightful torture in the hope of saving his life, and so would often confess nothing. In the second, there was no hope, and therefore it was not worth while to suffer additional pains.

March 4th, 1673, declared that Jean Amelin Lachaussée was convicted of having poisoned the lieutenant and the councillor; for which he was to be broken alive on the wheel, having been first subjected to the question both ordinary and extraordinary, with a view to the discovery of his accomplices. At the same time Madame de Brinvilliers was condemned in default of appearance to have her head cut off.

Lachaussée suffered the torture of the boot. This was having each leg fastened between two planks and drawn together in an iron ring, after which wedges were driven in between the middle planks; the ordinary question was with four wedges, the extraordinary with eight. At the third wedge Lachaussée said he was ready to speak; so the question was stopped, and he was carried into the choir of the chapel stretched on a mattress, where, in a weak voice—for he could hardly speak—he begged for half an hour to recover himself. We give a verbatim extract from the report of the question and the execution of the death-sentence:—

"Lachaussée, released from the question and laid on the mattress, the official reporter retired. Half an hour later Lachaussée begged that he might return, and said that he was guilty; that Sainte-Croix told him that Madame de Brinvilliers had given him the poison to administer to her brothers; that he had done it in water and soup, had put the reddish water in the lieutenant's glass in Paris, and the clear water in the pie at Villequoy; that Sainte-Croix had promised to keep him always, and to make him a gift of 100 pistolets; that he gave him an account of the effect of the poisons, and that Sainte-Croix had given him some of the waters several times. Sainte-Croix told him that the marquise knew nothing of his other poisonings, but Lachaussée thought she did know, because she had often spoken to him about his poisons; that she wanted to compel him to go away, offering him money if he would go; that she had asked him for the box and its contents; that if Sainte-Croix had been able to put anyone into the service of Madame d'Aubray, the lieutenant's widow, he would possibly have had her poisoned also; for he had a fancy for her daughter."

This declaration, which left no room for doubt, led to the judgment that came next, thus described in the Parliamentary register: "Report of the question and execution on the 24th of March 1673, containing the declarations and confessions of Jean Amelin Lachaussée; the court has ordered that the persons mentioned, Belleguise, Martin, Poitevin, Olivier, Veron père, the wife of Quesdon the wig-maker, be summoned to appear before the court to be interrogated and heard concerning matters arising from the present inquiry, and orders that the decree of arrest against Lapierre and summons against Penautier decreed by the criminal lieutenant shall be carried out. In Parliament, 27th March 1673." In virtue of this judgment, Penautier, Martin, and Belleguise were interrogated on the 21st, 22nd, and 24th of April. On the 26th of July, Penautier was discharged; fuller information was desired concerning Belleguise, and the arrest of Martin was ordered. On the 24th of March, Lachaussée had been broken on the wheel. As to Exili, the beginner of it all, he had disappeared like Mephistopheles after Faust's end, and nothing was heard of him. Towards the end of the year Martin was released for want of sufficient evidence.

But the Marquise de Brinvilliers remained at Liège, and although she was shut up in a convent she had by no means abandoned one, at any rate, of the most worldly pleasures. She had soon found consolation for the death of Sainte-Croix, whom, all the same, she had loved so much as to be willing to kill herself for his sake. But she had adopted a new lover, Théria by name. About this man it has been impossible to get any information, except that his name was several times mentioned during the trial. Thus, all the accusations had, one by one, fallen upon her, and it was resolved to seek her out in the retreat where she was supposed to be safe. The mission was difficult and very delicate. Desgrais, one of the cleverest of the officials, offered to undertake it. He was a handsome man, thirty-six years old or thereabouts: nothing in his looks betrayed his connection with the police; he wore any kind of dress with equal ease and grace, and was familiar with every grade in the

social scale, disguising himself as a wretched tramp or a noble lord. He was just the right man, so his offer was accepted.

He started accordingly for Liège, escorted by several archers, and, fortified by a letter from the king addressed to the Sixty of that town, wherein Louis XIV demanded the guilty woman to be given up for punishment. After examining this letter, which Desgrais had taken pains to procure, the council authorised the extradition of the marquise.

This was much, but it was not all. The marquise, as we know, had taken refuge in a convent, where Desgrais dared not arrest her by force, for two reasons: first, because she might get information beforehand, and hide herself in one of the cloister retreats whose secret is known only to the superior; secondly, because Liège was so religious a town that the event would produce a great sensation: the act might be looked upon as a sacrilege, and might bring about a popular rising, during which the marquise might possibly contrive to escape. So Desgrais paid a visit to his wardrobe, and feeling that an abbé's dress would best free him from suspicion, he appeared at the doors of the convent in the guise of a fellow-countryman just returned from Rome, unwilling to pass through Liège without presenting his compliments to the lovely and unfortunate marquise. Desgrais had just the manner of the younger son of a great house: he was as flattering as a courtier, as enterprising as a musketeer. In this first visit he made himself attractive by his wit and his audacity, so much so that more easily than he had dared to hope, he got leave to pay a second call. The second visit was not long delayed: Desgrais presented himself the very next day. Such eagerness was flattering to the marquise, so Desgrais was received even better than the night before. She, a woman of rank and fashion, for more than a year had been robbed of all intercourse with people of a certain set, so with Desgrais the marquise resumed her Parisian manner. Unhappily the charming abbé was to leave Liège in a few days; and on that account he became all the more pressing, and a third visit, to take place next day, was formally arranged. Desgrais was punctual: the marquise

was impatiently waiting him; but by a conjunction of circumstances that Desgrais had no doubt arranged beforehand, the amorous meeting was disturbed two or three times just as they were getting more intimate and least wanting to be observed. Desgrais complained of these tiresome checks; besides, the marquise and he too would be compromised: he owed concealment to his cloth. He begged her to grant him a rendezvous outside the town, in some deserted walk, where there would be no fear of their being recognised or followed: the marquise hesitated no longer than would serve to put a price on the favour she was granting, and the rendezvous was fixed for the same evening.

The evening came: both waited with the same impatience, but with very different hopes. The marquise found Desgrais at the appointed spot: he gave her his arm, then holding her hand in his own, he gave a sign, the archers appeared, the lover threw off his mask, Desgrais was confessed, and the marquise was his prisoner. Desgrais left her in the hands of his men, and hastily made his way to the convent. Then, and not before, he produced his order from the Sixty, by means of which he opened the marquise's room. Under her bed he found a box, which he seized and sealed; then he went back to her, and gave the order to start.

When the marquise saw the box in the hands of Desgrais, she at first appeared stunned; quickly recovering, she claimed a paper inside it which contained her confession. Desgrais refused, and as he turned round for the carriage to come forward, she tried to choke herself by swallowing a pin. One of the archers, called Claude Rolla, perceiving her intention, contrived to get the pin out of her mouth. After this, Desgrais commanded that she should be doubly watched.

They stopped for supper. An archer called Antoine Barbier was present at the meal, and watched so that no knife or fork should be put on the table, or any instrument with which she could wound or kill herself. The marquise, as she put her glass to her mouth as though to drink, broke a little bit off with her teeth; but the archer saw it in time, and forced her to put

it out on her plate. Then she promised him, if he would save her, that she would make his fortune. He asked what he would have to do for that. She proposed that he should cut Desgrais' throat; but he refused, saying that he was at her service in any other way. So she asked him for pen and paper, and wrote this letter:—

"DEAR THÉRIA,—I am in the hands of Desgrais, who is taking me by road from Liège to Paris. Come quickly and save me."

Antoine Barbier took the letter, promising to deliver it at the right address; but he gave it to Desgrais instead. The next day, finding that this letter had not been pressing enough, she wrote him another, saying that the escort was only eight men, who could be easily overcome by four or five determined assailants, and she counted on him to strike this bold stroke. But, uneasy when she got no answer and no result from her letters, she despatched a third missive to Théria. In this she implored him by his own salvation, if he were not strong enough to attack her escort and save her, at least to kill two of the four horses by which she was conveyed, and to profit by the moment of confusion to seize the chest and throw it into the fire; otherwise, she declared, she was lost. Though Théria received none of these letters, which were one by one handed over by Barbier to Desgrais, he all the same did go to Maestricht, where the marquise was to pass, of his own accord. There he tried to bribe the archers, offering as much as 10,000 livres, but they were incorruptible. At Rocroy the cortège met M. Palluau, the councillor, whom the Parliament had sent after the prisoner, that he might put questions to her at a time when she least expected them, and so would not have prepared her answers. Desgrais told him all that had passed, and specially called his attention to the famous box, the object of so much anxiety and so many eager instructions. M. de Palluau opened it, and found among other things a paper headed "My Confession." This confession was a proof that the guilty feel great need of discovering their crimes either to mankind or to a merciful God. Sainte-Croix, we know, had made a confession that was

burnt, and here was the marquise equally imprudent. The confession contained seven articles, and began thus, "I confess to God, and to you, my father," and was a complete avowal of all the crimes she had committed.

In the first article she accused herself of incendiarism;

In the second, of having ceased to be a virgin at seven years of age

In the third, of having poisoned her father;

In the fourth, of having poisoned her two brothers;

In the fifth, that she had tried to poison her sister, a Carmelite nun.

The two other articles were concerned with the description of strange and unnatural sins. In this woman there was something of Locusta and something of Messalina as well: antiquity could go no further.

M. de Palluau, fortified by his knowledge of this important document, began his examination forthwith. We give it verbatim, rejoicing that we may substitute an official report for our own narrative.

Asked why she fled to Liège, she replied that she left France on account of some business with her sister-in-law.

Asked if she had any knowledge of the papers found in the box, she replied that in the box there were several family papers, and among them a general confession which she desired to make; when she wrote it, however, her mind was disordered; she knew not what she had said or done, being distraught at the time, in a foreign country, deserted by her relatives, forced to borrow every penny.

Asked as to the first article, what house it was she had burnt, she replied that she had not burnt anything, but when she wrote that she was out of her senses.

Asked about the six other articles, she replied that she had no recollection of them.

Asked if she had not poisoned her father and brothers, she replied that she knew nothing at all about it.

Asked if it were not Lachaussée who poisoned her brothers, she replied that she knew nothing about it.

Asked if she did not know that her sister could not live long, having been poisoned, she said that she expected her sister to die, because she suffered in the same way as her brothers; that she had lost all memory of the time when she wrote this confession; admitted that she left France by the advice of her relations.

Asked why her relations had advised her thus, she replied that it was in connection with her brothers' affairs; admitted seeing Sainte-Croix since his release from the Bastille.

Asked if Sainte-Croix had not persuaded her to get rid of her father, she replied that she could not remember; neither did she remember if Sainte-Croix had given her powders or other drugs, nor if Sainte-Croix had told her he knew how to make her rich.

Eight letters having been produced, asked to whom she had written them, she replied that she did not remember.

Asked why she had promised to pay 30,000 livres to Sainte-Croix, she replied that she intended to entrust this sum to his care, so that she might make use of it when she wanted it, believing him to be her friend; she had not wished this to be known, by reason of her creditors; that she had an acknowledgment from Sainte-Croix, but had lost it in her travels; that her husband knew nothing about it.

Asked if the promise was made before or after the death of her brothers, she replied that she could not remember, and it made no difference.

Asked if she knew an apothecary called Glazer, she replied that she had consulted him three times about inflammation.

Asked why she wrote to Théria to get hold of the box, she replied that she did not understand.

Asked why, in writing to Théria, she had said she was lost unless he got hold of the box, she replied that she could not remember.

Asked if she had seen during the journey with her father the first symptoms of his malady, she replied that she had not noticed that her father was ill on the journey, either going or coming back in 1666.

Asked if she had not done business with Penautier, she replied that Penautier owed her 30,000 livres.

Asked how this was, she replied that she and her husband had lent Penautier 10,000 crowns, that he had paid it back, and since then they had had no dealings with him.

The marquise took refuge, we see, in a complete system of denial: arrived in Paris, and confined in the Conciergerie, she did the same; but soon other terrible charges were added, which still further overwhelmed her.

The sergeant Clüet deposed: that, observing a lackey to M. d'Aubray, the councillor, to be the man Lachaussée, whom he had seen in the service of Sainte-Croix, he said to the marquise that if her brother knew that Lachaussée had been with Sainte-Croix he would not like it, but that Madame de Brinvilliers exclaimed, "Dear me, don't tell my brothers; they would give him a thrashing, no doubt, and he may just as well get his wages as anybody else." He said nothing to the d'Aubrays, though he saw Lachaussée paying daily visits to Sainte-Croix and to the marquise, who was worrying Sainte-Croix to let her have her box, and wanted her bill for two or three thousand pistoles. Otherwise, she would have had him assassinated. She often said that she was very anxious that no one should see the contents of the box; that it was a very important matter, but only concerned herself. After the box was opened, the witness added, he had told the marquise that the commissary Picard said to Lachaussée that there were strange things in it; but the lady blushed, and changed the subject. He asked her if she were not an accomplice. She said, "What! I?" but then muttered to herself, "Lachaussée ought to be sent off to Picardy." The witness repeated that she had been after Sainte-Croix a long time about the box, and if she had got it she would have had his throat cut. The witness further said that when he told Briancourt that Lachaussée was taken and would doubtless confess all, Briancourt, speaking of the marquise, remarked, "She is a lost woman." That d'Aubray's daughter had called Briancourt a rogue, but Briancourt had replied that she little knew what obligations she was under to him; that they had wanted to poison both her and the lieutenant's widow, and he alone had hindered it. He had heard

from Briancourt that the marquise had often said that there are means to get rid of people one dislikes, and they can easily be put an end to in a bowl of soup.

The girl Edme Huet, a woman of Brescia, deposed that Sainte-Croix went to see the marquise every day, and that in a box belonging to that lady she had seen two little packets containing sublimate in powder and in paste: she recognised these, because she was an apothecary's daughter. She added that one day Madame de Brinvilliers, after a dinner party, in a merry mood, said, showing her a little box, "Here is vengeance on one's enemies: this box is small, but holds plenty of successions!" That she gave back the box into her hands, but soon changing from her sprightly mood, she cried, "Good heavens, what have I said? Tell nobody." That Lambert, clerk at the palace, told her he had brought the packets to Madame from Sainte-Croix; that Lachaussée often went to see her; and that she herself, not being paid ten pistoles which the marquise owed her, went to complain to Sainte-Croix, threatening to tell the lieutenant what she had seen; and accordingly the ten pistoles were paid; further, that the marquise and Sainte-Croix always kept poison about them, to make use of, in case of being arrested.

Laurent Perrette, living with Glazer, said that he had often seen a lady call on his mistress with Sainte-Croix; that the footman told him she was the Marquise de Brinvilliers; that he would wager his head on it that they came to Glazer's to make poison; that when they came they used to leave their carriage at the Foire Saint-Germain.

Marie de Villeray, maid to the marquise, deposed that after the death of M. d'Aubray the councillor, Lachaussée came to see the lady and spoke with her in private; that Briancourt said she had caused the death of worthy men; that Briancourt every day took some electuary for fear of being poisoned, and it was no doubt due to this precaution that he was still alive; but he feared he would be stabbed, because she had told him the secret about the poisoning; that d'Aubray's daughter had to be warned; and that there was a similar design against the tutor of M. de Brinvilliers' children. Marie de Villeray added

that two days after the death of the councillor, when Lachaussée was in Madame's bedroom, Cousté, the late lieutenant's secretary, was announced, and Lachaussée had to be hidden in the alcove by the bed. Lachaussée brought the marquise a letter from Sainte-Croix.

François Desgrais, officer, deposed that when he was given the king's orders he arrested the marquise at Liège; that he found under her bed a box which he sealed; that the lady had demanded a paper which was in it, containing her confession, but he refused it; that on the road to Paris the marquise had told him that she believed it was Glazer who made the poisons for Sainte-Croix; that Sainte-Croix, who had made a rendezvous with her one day at the cross Saint-Honoré, there showed her four little bottles, saying, "See what Glazer has sent me." She asked him for one, but Sainte-Croix said he would rather die than give it up. He added that the archer Antoine Barbier had given him three letters written by the marquise to Théria; that in the first she had told him to come at once and snatch her from the hands of the soldiers; that in the second she said that the escort was only composed of eight persons, who could be worsted by five men; that in the third she said that if he could not save her from the men who were taking her away, he should at least approach the commissary, and killing his valet's horse and two other horses in his carriage, then take the box, and burn it; otherwise she was lost.

Laviolette, an archer, deposed that on the evening of the arrest the marquise had a long pin and tried to put it in her mouth; that he stopped her, and told her that she was very wicked; that he perceived that people said the truth and that she had poisoned all her family; to which she replied, that if she had, it was only through following bad advice, and that one could not always be good.

Antoine Barbier, an archer, said that the marquise at table took up a glass as though to drink, and tried to swallow a piece of it; that he prevented this, and she promised to make his fortune if only he would save her; that she wrote several letters to Théria; that during the whole journey she tried all

she could to swallow pins, bits of glass, and earth; that she had proposed that he should cut Desgrais' throat, and kill the commissary's valet; that she had bidden him get the box and burn it, and bring a lighted torch to burn everything; that she had written to Penautier from the Conciergerie; that she gave him the letter, and he pretended to deliver it.

Finally, Françoise Roussel deposed that she had been in the service of the marquise, and the lady had one day given her some preserved gooseberries; that she had eaten some on the point of her knife, and at once felt ill. She also gave her a slice of mutton, rather wet, which she ate, afterwards suffering great pain in the stomach, feeling as though she had been pricked in the heart, and for three years had felt the same, believing herself poisoned.

It was difficult to continue a system of absolute denial in face of proofs like these. The marquise persisted, all the same, that she was in no way guilty; and Maître Nivelle, one of the best lawyers of the period, consented to defend her cause.

He combated one charge after another, in a remarkably clever way, owning to the adulterous connection of the marquise with Sainte-Croix, but denying her participation in the murders of the d'Aubrays, father and sons: these he ascribed entirely to the vengeance desired by Sainte-Croix. As to the confession, the strongest and, he maintained, the only evidence against Madame de Brinvilliers, he attacked its validity by bringing forward certain similar cases, where the evidence supplied by the accused against themselves had not been admitted by reason of the legal action: *Non auditur perire volens.* He cited three instances, and as they are themselves interesting, we copy them verbatim from his notes.

First Case

Dominicus Soto, a very famous canonist and theologian, confessor to Charles v, present at the first meetings of the Council of Trent under Paul III, propounds a question about a man who had lost a paper on which he had written down his sins. It happened that this paper fell into the hands of an

ecclesiastical judge, who wished to put in information against the writer on the strength of this document. Now this judge was justly punished by his superior, because confession is so sacred that even that which is destined to constitute the confession should be wrapped in eternal silence. In accordance with this precedent, the following judgment, reported in the *Traité des Confesseurs*, was given by Roderic Acugno. A Catalonian, native of Barcelona, who was condemned to death for homicide and owned his guilt, refused to confess when the hour of punishment arrived. However strongly pressed, he resisted, and so violently, giving no reason, that all were persuaded that his mind was unhinged by the fear of death. Saint-Thomas of Villeneuve, Archbishop of Valencia, heard of his obstinacy. Valencia was the place where his sentence was given. The worthy prelate was so charitable as to try to persuade the criminal to make his confession, so as not to lose his soul as well as his body. Great was his surprise, when he asked the reason of the refusal, to hear the doomed man declare that he hated confessors, because he had been condemned through the treachery of his own priest, who was the only person who knew about the murder. In confession he had admitted his crime and said where the body was buried, and all about it; his confessor had revealed it all, and he could not deny it, and so he had been condemned. He had only just learned, what he did not know at the time he confessed, that his confessor was the brother of the man he had killed, and that the desire for vengeance had prompted the bad priest to betray his confession. Saint-Thomas, hearing this, thought that this incident was of more importance than the trial, which concerned the life of only one person, whereas here the honour of religion was at stake, with consequences infinitely more important. He felt he must verify this statement, and summoned the confessor. When he had admitted the breach of faith, the judges were obliged to revoke their sentence and pardon the criminal, much to the gratification of the public mind. The confessor was adjudged a very severe penance, which Saint-Thomas modified because of his prompt avowal of his fault, and still more because

he had given an opportunity for the public exhibition of that reverence which judges themselves are bound to pay to confessions.

Second Case

In 1579 an innkeeper at Toulouse killed with his own hand, unknown to the inmates of his house, a stranger who had come to lodge with him, and buried him secretly in the cellar. The wretch then suffered from remorse, and confessed the crime with all its circumstances, telling his confessor where the body was buried. The relations of the dead man, after making all possible search to get news of him, at last proclaimed through the town a large reward to be given to anyone who would discover what had happened to him. The confessor, tempted by this bait, secretly gave word that they had only to search in the innkeeper's cellar and they would find the corpse. And they found it in the place indicated. The innkeeper was thrown into prison, was tortured, and confessed his crime. But afterwards he always maintained that his confessor was the only person who could have betrayed him. Then the Parliament, indignant with such means of finding out the truth, declared him innocent, failing other proof than what came through his confessor. The confessor was himself condemned to be hanged, and his body was burnt. So fully did the tribunal in its wisdom recognise the importance of securing the sanctity of a sacrament that is indispensable to salvation.

Third Case

An Armenian woman had inspired a violent passion in a young Turkish gentleman, but her prudence was long an obstacle to the lover's desires. At last he went beyond all bounds, and threatened to kill both her and her husband if she refused to gratify him. Frightened by this threat, which she knew too well he would carry out, she feigned consent, and gave the Turk a rendezvous at her house at an hour when she said her husband would be absent; but by arrangement the

husband arrived, and although the Turk was armed with a sabre and a pair of pistols, it so befell that they were fortunate enough to kill their enemy, whom they buried under their dwelling unknown to all the world. But some days after the event they went to confess to a priest of their nation, and revealed every detail of the tragic story. This unworthy minister of the Lord supposed that in a Mahomedan country, where the laws of the priesthood and the functions of a confessor are either unknown or disapproved, no examination would be made into the source of his information, and that his evidence would have the same weight as any other accuser's. So he resolved to make a profit and gratify his own avarice. Several times he visited the husband and wife, always borrowing considerable sums, and threatening to reveal their crime if they refused him. The first few times the poor creatures gave in to his exactions; but the moment came at last when, robbed of all their fortune, they were obliged to refuse the sum he demanded. Faithful to his threat, the priest, with a view to more reward, at once denounced them to the dead man's father. He, who had adored his son, went to the vizier, told him he had identified the murderers through their confessor, and asked for justice. But this denunciation had by no means the desired effect. The vizier, on the contrary, felt deep pity for the wretched Armenians, and indignation against the priest who had betrayed them. He put the accuser into a room which adjoined the court, and sent for the Armenian bishop to ask what confession really was, and what punishment was deserved by a priest who betrayed it, and what was the fate of those whose crimes were made known in this fashion. The bishop replied that the secrets of confession are inviolable, that Christians burn the priest who reveals them, and absolve those whom he accuses, because the avowal made by the guilty to the priest is prescribed by the Christian religion, on pain of eternal damnation. The vizier, satisfied with the answer, took the bishop into another room, and summoned the accused to declare all the circumstances: the poor wretches, half dead, fell at the vizier's feet. The woman spoke, explaining that the necessity of defending life

and honour had driven them to take up arms to kill their enemy. She added that God alone had witnessed their crime, and it would still be unknown had not the law of the same God compelled them to confide it to the ear of one of His ministers for their forgiveness. Now the priest's insatiable avarice had ruined them first and then denounced them. The vizier made them go into a third room, and ordered the treacherous priest to be confronted with the bishop, making him again rehearse the penalties incurred by those who betray confessions. Then, applying this to the guilty priest, he condemned him to be burnt alive in a public place;—in anticipation, said he, of burning in hell, where he would assuredly receive the punishment of his infidelity and crimes. The sentence was executed without delay.

In spite of the effect which the advocate intended to produce by these three cases, either the judges rejected them, or perhaps they thought the other evidence without the confession was enough, and it was soon clear to everyone, by the way the trial went forward, that the marquise would be condemned. Indeed, before sentence was pronounced, on the morning of July 16th, 1676, she saw M. Pirot, doctor of the Sorbonne, come into her prison, sent by the chief president. This worthy magistrate, foreseeing the issue, and feeling that one so guilty should not be left till the last moment, had sent the good priest. The latter, although he had objected that the Conciergerie had its own two chaplains, and added that he was too feeble to undertake such a task, being unable even to see another man bled without feeling ill, accepted the painful mission, the president having so strongly urged it, on the ground that in this case he needed a man who could be entirely trusted. The president, in fact, declared that, accustomed as he was to dealing with criminals, the strength of the marquise amazed him. The day before he summoned M. Pirot, he had worked at the trial from morning to night, and for thirteen hours the accused had been confronted with Briancourt, one of the chief witnesses against her. On that very day, there had been five hours more,

and she had borne it all, showing as much respect towards her judges as haughtiness towards the witness, reproaching him as a miserable valet, given to drink, and protesting that as he had been dismissed for his misdemeanours, his testimony against her ought to go for nothing. So the chief president felt no hope of breaking her inflexible spirit, except by the agency of a minister of religion; for it was not enough to put her to death, the poisons must perish with her, or else society would gain nothing. The doctor Pirot came to the marquise with a letter from her sister, who, as we know, was a nun bearing the name of Sister Marie at the convent Saint-Jacques. Her letter exhorted the marquise, in the most touching and affectionate terms, to place her confidence in the good priest, and look upon him not only as a helper but as a friend.

When M. Pirot came before the marquise, she had just left the dock, where she had been for three hours without confessing anything, or seeming in the least touched by what the president said, though he, after acting the part of judge, addressed her simply as a Christian, and showing her what her deplorable position was, appearing now for the last time before men, and destined so soon to appear before God, spoke to her such moving words that he broke down himself, and the oldest and most obdurate judges present wept when they heard him. When the marquise perceived the doctor, suspecting that her trial was leading her to death, she approached him, saying—

"You have come, sir, because——"

But Father Chavigny, who was with M. Pirot, interrupted her, saying—

"Madame, we will begin with a prayer."

They all fell on their knees invoking the Holy Spirit; then the marquise asked them to add a prayer to the Virgin, and, this prayer finished, she went up to the doctor, and, beginning afresh, said:

"Sir, no doubt the president has sent you to give me consolation: with you I am to pass the little life I have left. I have long been eager to see you."

"Madame," the doctor replied, "I come to render you any

spiritual office that I can; I only wish it were on another occasion."

"We must have resolution, sir," said she, smiling, "for all things."

Then turning to Father Chavigny, she said—

"My father, I am very grateful to you for bringing the doctor here, and for all the other visits you have been willing to pay me. Pray to God for me, I entreat you; henceforth I shall speak with no one but the doctor, for with him I must speak of things that can only be discussed *tête-à-tête*. Farewell, then, my father; God will reward you for the attention you have been willing to bestow upon me."

With these words the father retired, leaving the marquise alone with the doctor and the two men and one woman always in attendance on her. They were in a large room in the Montgomery tower, extending throughout its whole length. There was at the end of the room a bed with grey curtains for the lady, and a folding-bed for the custodian. It is said to have been the same room where the poet Théophile was once shut up, and near the door there were still verses in his well-known style written by his hand.

As soon as the two men and the woman saw for what the doctor had come, they retired to the end of the room, leaving the marquise free to ask for and receive the consolations brought her by the man of God. Then the two sat at a table side by side. The marquise thought she was already condemned, and began to speak on that assumption; but the doctor told her that sentence was not yet given, and he did not know precisely when it would be, still less what it would be; but at these words the marquise interrupted him.

"Sir," she said, "I am not troubled about the future. If my sentence is not given yet, it soon will be. I expect the news this morning, and I know it will be death: the only grace I look for from the president is a delay between the sentence and its execution; for if I were executed to-day I should have very little time to prepare, and I feel I have need for more."

The doctor did not expect such words, so he was overjoyed to learn what she felt. In addition to what the president had said, he had heard from Father Chavigny that he had told her the Sunday before that it was very unlikely she would escape death, and indeed, so far as one could judge by reports in the town, it was a foregone conclusion. When he said so, at first she had appeared stunned, and said with an air of great terror, "Father, must I die?" And when he tried to speak words of consolation, she had risen and shaken her head, proudly replying—

"No, no, father; there is no need to encourage me. I will play my part, and that at once: I shall know how to die like a woman of spirit."

Then the father had told her that we cannot prepare for death so quickly and so easily, and that we have to be in readiness for a long time, not to be taken by surprise; and she had replied that she needed but a quarter of an hour to confess in, and one moment to die.

So the doctor was very glad to find that between Sunday and Thursday her feelings had changed so much.

"Yes," said she, "the more I reflect the more I feel that one day would not be enough to prepare myself for God's tribunal, to be judged by Him after men have judged me."

"Madame," replied the doctor, "I do not know what or when your sentence will be; but should it be death, and given to-day, I may venture to promise you that it will not be carried out before to-morrow. But although death is as yet uncertain, I think it well that you should be prepared for any event."

"Oh, my death is quite certain," said she, "and I must not give way to useless hopes. I must repose in you the great secrets of my whole life; but, father, before this opening of my heart, let me hear from your lips the opinion you have formed of me, and what you think in my present state I ought to do."

"You perceive my plan," said the doctor, "and you anticipate what I was about to say. Before entering into the secrets of your conscience, before opening the discussion of your affairs with God, I am ready, madame, to give you certain

definite rules. I do not yet know whether you are guilty at all, and I suspend my judgment as to all the crimes you are accused of, since of them I can learn nothing except through your confession. Thus it is my duty still to doubt your guilt. But I cannot be ignorant of what you are accused of: this is a public matter, and has reached my ears; for, as you may imagine, madame, your affairs have made a great stir, and there are few people who know nothing about them."

"Yes," she said, smiling, "I know there has been a great deal of talk, and I am in every man's mouth."

"Then," replied the doctor, "the crime you are accused of is poisoning. If you are guilty, as is believed, you cannot hope that God will pardon you unless you make known to your judges what the poison is, what is its composition and what its antidote, also the names of your accomplices. Madame, we must lay hands on all these evil-doers without exception; for if you spared them, they would be able to make use of your poison, and you would then be guilty of all the murders committed by them after your death, because you did not give them over to the judges during your life; thus one might say you survive yourself, for your crime survives you. You know, madame, that a sin in the moment of death is never pardoned, and that to get remission for your crimes, if crimes you have, they must die when you die: for if you slay them not, be very sure they will slay you."

"Yes, I am sure of that," replied the marquise, after a moment of silent thought; "and though I will not admit that I am guilty, I promise, if I am guilty, to weigh your words. But one question, sir, and pray take heed that an answer is necessary. Is there not crime in this world that is beyond pardon? Are not some people guilty of sins so terrible and so numerous that the Church dares not pardon them, and if God, in His justice, takes account of them, He cannot for all His mercy pardon them? See, I begin with this question, because, if I am to have no hope, it is needless for me to confess."

"I wish to think, madame," replied the doctor, in spite of himself half frightened at the marquise, "that this your first

question is only put by way of a general thesis, and has nothing to do with your own state. I shall answer the question without any personal application. No, madame, in this life there are no unpardonable sinners, terrible and numerous howsoever their sins may be. This is an article of faith, and without holding it you could not die a good Catholic. Some doctors, it is true, have before now maintained the contrary, but they have been condemned as heretics. Only despair and final impenitence are unpardonable, and they are not sins of our life but in our death."

"Sir," replied the marquise, "God has given me grace to be convinced by what you say, and I believe He will pardon all sins—that He has often exercised this power. Now all my trouble is that He may not deign to grant all His goodness to one so wretched as I am, a creature so unworthy of the favours already bestowed on her."

The doctor reassured her as best he could, and began to examine her attentively as they conversed together. "She was," he said, "a woman naturally courageous and fearless; naturally gentle and good; not easily excited; clever and penetrating, seeing things very clearly in her mind, and expressing herself well and in few but careful words; easily finding a way out of a difficulty, and choosing her line of conduct in the most embarrassing circumstances; light-minded and fickle; unstable, paying no attention if the same thing were said several times over. For this reason," continued the doctor, "I was obliged to alter what I had to say from time to time, keeping her but a short time to one subject, to which, however, I would return later, giving the matter a new appearance and disguising it a little. She spoke little and well, with no sign of learning and no affectation, always mistress of herself, always composed and saying just what she intended to say. No one would have supposed from her face or from her conversation that she was so wicked as she must have been, judging by her public avowal of the parricide. It is surprising, therefore—and one must bow down before the judgment of God when He leaves mankind to himself—that a mind evidently

of some grandeur, professing fearlessness in the most untoward and unexpected events, an immovable firmness and a resolution to await and to endure death if so it must be, should yet be so criminal as she was proved to be by the parricide to which she confessed before her judges. She had nothing in her face that would indicate such evil. She had very abundant chestnut hair, a rounded, well-shaped face, blue eyes very pretty and gentle, extraordinarily white skin, good nose, and no disagreeable feature. Still, there was nothing unusually attractive in the face: already she was a little wrinkled, and looked older than her age. Something made me ask at our first interview how old she was. 'Monsieur,' she said, 'if I were to live till Sainte-Magdelaine's day I should be forty-six. On her day I came into the world, and I bear her name. I was christened Marie-Magdelaine. But near to the day as we now are, I shall not live so long: I must end to-day, or at latest to-morrow, and it will be a favour to give me the one day. For this kindness I rely on your word.' Anyone would have thought she was quite forty-eight. Though her face as a rule looked so gentle, whenever an unhappy thought crossed her mind she showed it by a contortion that frightened one at first, and from time to time I saw her face twitching with anger, scorn, or ill-will. I forgot to say that she was very little and thin. Such is, roughly given, a description of her body and mind, which I very soon came to know, taking pains from the first to observe her, so as to lose no time in acting on what I discovered."

As she was giving a first brief sketch of her life to her confessor, the marquise remembered that he had not yet said mass, and reminded him herself that it was time to do so, pointing out to him the chapel of the Conciergerie. She begged him to say a mass for her and in honour of Our Lady, so that she might gain the intercession of the Virgin at the throne of God. The Virgin she had always taken for her patron saint, and in the midst of her crimes and disorderly life had never ceased in her peculiar devotion. As she could not go with the priest, she promised to be with him at least in the spirit. He left her at half-past ten in the morning, and after four hours spent alone

together, she had been induced by his piety and gentleness to make confessions that could not be wrung from her by the threats of the judges or the fear of the question. The holy and devout priest said his mass, praying the Lord's help for confessor and penitent alike. After mass, as he returned, he learned from a librarian called Seney, at the porter's lodge, as he was taking a glass of wine, that judgment had been given, and that Madame de Brinvilliers was to have her hand cut off. This severity—as a fact, there was a mitigation of the sentence—made him feel yet more interest in his penitent, and he hastened back to her side.

As soon as she saw the door open, she advanced calmly towards him, and asked if he had truly prayed for her; and when he assured her of this, she said, "Father, shall I have the consolation of receiving the viaticum before I die?"

"Madame," replied the doctor, "if you are condemned to death, you must die without that sacrament, and I should be deceiving you if I let you hope for it. We have heard of the death of the constable of Saint-Paul without his obtaining this grace, in spite of all his entreaties. He was executed in sight of the towers of Notre-Dame. He offered his own prayer, as you may offer yours, if you suffer the same fate. But that is all: God, in His goodness, allows it to suffice."

"But," replied the marquise, "I believe M. de Cinq-Mars and M. de Thou communicated before their death."

"I think not, madame," said the doctor; "for it is not so said in the pages of Montrésor or any other book that describes their execution."

"But M. de Montmorency?" said she.

"But M. de Marillac?" replied the doctor.

In truth, if the favour had been granted to the first, it had been refused to the second, and the marquise was specially struck thereby, for M. de Marillac was of her own family, and she was very proud of the connection. No doubt she was unaware that M. de Rohan had received the sacrament at the midnight mass said for the salvation of his soul by Father Bourdaloue, for she said nothing about it, and hearing the doctor's answer, only sighed.

"Besides," he continued, "in recalling examples of the kind, madame, you must not build upon them, please: they are extraordinary cases, not the rule. You must expect no privilege; in your case the ordinary laws will be carried out, and your fate will not differ from the fate of other condemned persons. How would it have been had you lived and died before the reign of Charles VI? Up to the reign of this prince, the guilty died without confession, and it was only by this king's orders that there was a relaxation of this severity. Besides, communion is not absolutely necessary to salvation, and one may communicate spiritually in reading the word, which is like the body; in uniting oneself with the Church, which is the mystical substance of Christ; and in suffering for Him and with Him, this last communion of agony that is your portion, madame, and is the most perfect communion of all. If you heartily detest your crime and love God with all your soul, if you have faith and charity, your death is a martyrdom and a new baptism."

"Alas, my God," replied the marquise, "after what you tell me, now that I know that the executioner's hand was necessary to my salvation, what should I have become had I died at Liège? Where should I have been now? And even if I had not been taken, and had lived another twenty years away from France, what would my death have been, since it needed the scaffold for my purification? Now I see all my wrong-doings, and the worst of all is the last—I mean my effrontery before the judges. But all is not yet lost, God be thanked; and as I have one last examination to go through, I desire to make a complete confession about my whole life. You, sir, I entreat specially to ask pardon on my behalf of the first president; yesterday, when I was in the dock, he spoke very touching words to me, and I was deeply moved; but I would not show it, thinking that if I made no avowal the evidence would not be sufficiently strong to convict me. But it has happened otherwise, and I must have scandalised my judges by such an exhibition of hardihood. Now I recognise my fault, and will repair it. Furthermore, sir, far from feeling angry with the president for the judgment he to-day passes against me, far from complaining

of the prosecutor who has demanded it, I thank them both most humbly, for my salvation depends upon it."

The doctor was about to answer, encouraging her, when the door opened: it was dinner coming in, for it was now half-past one. The marquise paused and watched what was brought in, as though she were playing hostess in her own country house. She made the woman and the two men who watched her sit down to the table, and turning to the doctor, said, "Sir, you will not wish me to stand on ceremony with you; these good people always dine with me to keep me company, and if you approve, we will do the same to-day. This is the last meal," she added, addressing them, "that I shall take with you." Then turning to the woman, "Poor Madame du Rus," said she, "I have been a trouble to you for a long time; but have a little patience, and you will soon be rid of me. To-morrow you can go to Dravet; you will have time, for in seven or eight hours from now there will be nothing more to do for me, and I shall be in the gentleman's hands; you will not be allowed near me. After then, you can go away for good; for I don't suppose you will have the heart to see me executed." All this she said quite calmly, but not with pride. From time to time her people tried to hide their tears, and she made a sign of pitying them. Seeing that the dinner was on the table and nobody eating, she invited the doctor to take some soup, asking him to excuse the cabbage in it, which made it a common soup and unworthy of his acceptance. She herself took some soup and two eggs, begging her fellow-guests to excuse her for not serving them, pointing out that no knife or fork had been set in her place.

When the meal was almost half finished, she begged the doctor to let her drink his health. He replied by drinking hers, and she seemed to be quite charmed by his condescension. "To-morrow is a fast day," said she, setting down her glass, "and although it will be a day of great fatigue for me, as I shall have to undergo the question as well as death, I intend to obey the orders of the Church and keep my fast."

"Madame," replied the doctor, "if you needed soup to keep you up, you would not have to feel any scruple, for it will be

no self-indulgence, but a necessity, and the Church does not exact fasting in such a case."

"Sir," replied the marquise, "I will make no difficulty about it, if it is necessary and if you order it; but it will not be needed, I think: if I have some soup this evening for supper, and some more made stronger than usual a little before midnight, it will be enough to last me through to-morrow, if I have two fresh eggs to take after the question."

"In truth," says the priest in the account we give here, "I was alarmed by this calm behaviour. I trembled when I heard her give orders to the concierge that the soup was to be made stronger than usual and that she was to have two cups before midnight. When dinner was over, she was given pen and ink, which she had already asked for, and told me that she had a letter to write before I took up my pen to put down what she wanted to dictate." The letter, she explained, which was difficult to write, was to her husband. She would feel easier when it was written. For her husband she expressed so much affection, that the doctor, knowing what had passed, felt much surprised, and wishing to try her, said that the affection was not reciprocated, as her husband had abandoned her the whole time of the trial. The marquise interrupted him :—

"My father, we must not judge things too quickly or merely by appearances. M. de Brinvilliers has always concerned himself with me, and has only failed in doing what it was impossible to do. Our interchange of letters never ceased while I was out of the kingdom; do not doubt but that he would have come to Paris as soon as he knew I was in prison, had the state of his affairs allowed him to come safely. But you must know that he is deeply in debt, and could not appear in Paris without being arrested. Do not suppose that he is without feeling for me."

She then began to write, and when her letter was finished she handed it to the doctor, saying, "You, sir, are the lord and master of all my sentiments from now till I die; read this letter, and if you find anything that should be altered, tell me."

This was the letter:—

"When I am on the point of yielding up my soul to God, I wish to assure you of my affection for you, which I shall feel until the last moment of my life. I ask your pardon for all that I have done contrary to my duty. I am dying a shameful death, the work of my enemies: I pardon them with all my heart, and I pray you to do the same. I also beg you to forgive me for any ignominy that may attach to you herefrom; but consider that we are only here for a time, and that you may soon be forced to render an account to God of all your actions, and even your idle words, just as I must do now. Be mindful of your worldly affairs, and of our children, and give them a good example; consult Madame Marillac and Madame Cousté. Let as many prayers as possible be said for me, and believe that in my death I am still ever yours,

"D'AUBRAY."

The doctor read this letter carefully; then he told her that one of her phrases was not right—the one about her enemies. "For you have no other enemies," said he, "than your own crimes. Those whom you call your enemies are those who love the memory of your father and brothers, whom you ought to have loved more than they do."

"But those who have sought my death," she replied, "are my enemies, are they not, and is it not a Christian act to forgive them?"

"Madame," said the doctor, "they are not your enemies, but you are the enemy of the human race: nobody can think without horror of your crimes."

"And so, my father," she replied, "I feel no resentment towards them, and I desire to meet in Paradise those who have been chiefly instrumental in taking me and bringing me here."

"Madame," said the doctor, "what mean you by this? Such words are used by some when they desire people's death. Explain, I beg, what you mean."

"Heaven forbid," cried the marquise, "that you should understand me thus! Nay, may God grant them long pro-

sperity in this world and infinite glory in the next! Dictate a new letter, and I will write just what you please."

When a fresh letter had been written, the marquise would attend to nothing but her confession, and begged the doctor to take the pen for her. "I have done so many wrong things," she said, "that if I only gave you a verbal confession, I should never be sure I had given a complete account."

Then they both knelt down to implore the grace of the Holy Spirit. They said a *Veni Creator* and a *Salve Regina*, and the doctor then rose and seated himself at a table, while the marquise, still on her knees, began a *Confiteor* and made her whole confession. At nine o'clock, Father Chavigny, who had brought Doctor Pirot in the morning, came in again. The marquise seemed annoyed, but still put a good face upon it. "My father," said she, "I did not expect to see you so late; pray leave me a few minutes longer with the doctor." He retired. "Why has he come?" asked the marquise.

"It is better for you not to be alone," said the doctor.

"Then do you mean to leave me?" cried the marquise, apparently terrified.

"Madame, I will do as you wish," he answered; "but you would be acting kindly if you could spare me for a few hours. I might go home, and Father Chavigny would stay with you."

"Ah!" she cried, wringing her hands, "you promised you would not leave me till I am dead, and now you go away. Remember, I never saw you before this morning, but since then you have become more to me than any of my oldest friends."

"Madame," said the good doctor, "I will do all I can to please you. If I ask for a little rest, it is in order that I may resume my place with more vigour to-morrow, and render you better service than I otherwise could. If I take no rest, all I say or do must suffer. You count on the execution for to-morrow; I do not know if you are right; but if so, to-morrow will be your great and decisive day, and we shall both need all the strength we have. We have already been working for thirteen or fourteen hours for the good of your salvation; I

am not a strong man, and I think you should realise, madame, that if you do not let me rest a little, I may not be able to stay with you to the end."

"Sir," said the marquise, "you have closed my mouth. To-morrow is for me a far more important day than to-day, and I have been wrong: of course you must rest to-night. Let us just finish this one thing, and read over what we have written."

It was done, and the doctor would have retired; but the supper came in, and the marquise would not let him go without taking something. She told the concierge to get a carriage and charge it to her. She took a cup of soup and two eggs, and a minute later the concierge came back to say the carriage was at the door. Then the marquise bade the doctor good-night, making him promise to pray for her and to be at the Conciergerie by six o'clock the next morning. This he promised her.

The day following, as he went into the tower, he found Father Chavigny, who had taken his place with the marquise, kneeling and praying with her. The priest was weeping, but she was calm, and received the doctor in just the same way as she had let him go. When Father Chavigny saw him, he retired. The marquise begged Chavigny to pray for her, and wanted to make him promise to return, but that he would not do. She then turned to the doctor, saying, "Sir, you are punctual, and I cannot complain that you have broken your promise; but oh, how the time has dragged, and how long it has seemed before the clock struck six!"

"I am here, madame," said the doctor; "but first of all, how have you spent the night?"

"I have written three letters," said the marquise, "and, short as they were, they took a long time to write: one was to my sister, one to Madame de Marillac, and the third to M. Cousté. I should have liked to show them to you, but Father Chavigny offered to take charge of them, and as he had approved of them, I could not venture to suggest any doubts. After the letters were written, we had some conversation and prayer; but when the father took up his breviary and I my rosary with the

same intention, I felt so weary that I asked if I might lie on my bed; he said I might, and I had two good hours' sleep without dreams or any sort of uneasiness; when I woke we prayed together, and had just finished when you came back."

"Well, madame," said the doctor, "if you will, we can pray again; kneel down, and let us say the *Veni Sancte Spiritus*."

She obeyed, and said the prayer with much unction and piety. The prayer finished, M. Pirot was about to take up the pen to go on with the confession, when she said, "Pray let me submit to you one question which is troubling me. Yesterday you gave me great hope of the mercy of God; but I cannot presume to hope I shall be saved without spending a long time in purgatory; my crime is far too atrocious to be pardoned on any other conditions; and when I have attained to a love of God far greater than I can feel here, I should not expect to be saved before my stains had been purified by fire, without suffering the penalty that my sins have deserved. But I have been told that the flames of purgatory where souls are burned for a time are just the same as the flames of hell where those who are damned burn through all eternity: tell me, then, how can a soul awaking in purgatory at the moment of separation from this body be sure that she is not really in hell? how can she know that the flames that burn her and consume not will some day cease? For the torment she suffers is like that of the damned, and the flames wherewith she is burned are even as the flames of hell. This I would fain know, that at this awful moment I may feel no doubt, that I may know for certain whether I dare hope or must despair."

"Madame," replied the doctor, "you are right, and God is too just to add the horror of uncertainty to His rightful punishments. At that moment when the soul quits her earthly body the judgment of God is passed upon her: she hears the sentence of pardon or of doom; she knows whether she is in the state of grace or of mortal sin; she sees whether she is to be plunged for ever into hell, or if God sends her for a time to purgatory. This sentence, madame, you will learn at the very instant when

the executioner's axe strikes you; unless, indeed, the fire of charity has so purified you in this life that you may pass, without any purgatory at all, straight to the home of the blessed who surround the throne of the Lord, there to receive a recompense for earthly martyrdom."

"Sir," replied the marquise, "I have such faith in all you say that I feel I understand it all now, and I am satisfied."

The doctor and the marquise then resumed the confession that was interrupted the night before. The marquise had during the night recollected certain articles that she wanted to add. So they continued, the doctor making her pause now and then in the narration of the heavier offences to recite an act of contrition.

After an hour and a half they came to tell her to go down. The registrar was waiting to read her the sentence. She listened very calmly, kneeling, only moving her head; then, with no alteration in her voice, she said, "In a moment: we will have one word more, the doctor and I, and then I am at your disposal." She then continued to dictate the rest of her confession. When she reached the end, she begged him to offer a short prayer with her, that God might help her to appear with such becoming contrition before her judges as should atone for her scandalous effrontery. She then took up her cloak, a prayer-book which Father Chavigny had left with her, and followed the concierge, who led her to the torture chamber, where her sentence was to be read.

First, there was an examination which lasted five hours. The marquise told all she had promised to tell, denying that she had any accomplices, and affirming that she knew nothing of the composition of the poisons she had administered, and nothing of their antidotes. When this was done, and the judges saw that they could extract nothing further, they signed to the registrar to read the sentence. She stood to hear it: it was as follows:—

"That by the finding of the court, d'Aubray de Brinvilliers is convicted of causing the death by poison of Maître Dreux d'Aubray, her father, and of the two Maîtres d'Aubray, her

brothers, one a civil lieutenant, the other a councillor to the Parliament, also of attempting the life of Thérèse d'Aubray, her sister; in punishment whereof the court has condemned and does condemn the said d'Aubray de Brinvilliers to make the rightful atonement before the great gate of the church of Paris, whither she shall be conveyed in a tumbril, barefoot, a rope on her neck, holding in her hands a burning torch two pounds in weight; and there on her knees she shall say and declare that maliciously, with desire for revenge and seeking their goods, she did poison her father, cause to be poisoned her two brothers, and attempt the life of her sister, whereof she doth repent, asking pardon of God, of the king, and of the judges; and when this is done, she shall be conveyed and carried in the same tumbril to the Place de Grève of this town, there to have her head cut off on a scaffold to be set up for the purpose at that place; afterwards her body to be burnt and the ashes scattered; and first she is to be subjected to the question ordinary and extraordinary, that she may reveal the names of her accomplices. She is declared to be deprived of all successions from her said father, brothers, and sister, from the date of the several crimes; and all her goods are confiscated to the proper persons; and the sum of 4000 livres shall be paid out of her estate to the king, and 400 livres to the Church for prayers to be said on behalf of the poisoned persons; and all the costs shall be paid, including those of Amelin called Lachaussée. In Parliament, 16th July 1676."

The marquise heard her sentence without showing any sign of fear or weakness. When it was finished, she said to the registrar, "Will you, sir, be so kind as to read it again? I had not expected the tumbril, and I was so much struck by that that I lost the thread of what followed."

The registrar read the sentence again. From that moment she was the property of the executioner, who approached her. She knew him by the cord he held in his hands, and extended her own, looking him over coolly from head to foot without a word. The judges then filed out, disclosing as they did so the various apparatus of the question. The marquise firmly gazed upon the racks and ghastly rings, on

which so many had been stretched crying and screaming. She noticed the three buckets of water [1] prepared for her, and turned to the registrar—for she would not address the executioner—saying, with a smile, "No doubt all this water is to drown me in? I hope you don't suppose that a person of my size could swallow it all." The executioner said not a word, but began taking off her cloak and all her other other garments, until she was completely naked. He then led her up to the wall and made her sit on the rack of the ordinary question, two feet from the ground. There she was again asked to give the names of her accomplices, the composition of the poison and its antidote; but she made the same reply as to the doctor, only adding, "If you do not believe me, you have my body in your hands, and you can torture me."

The registrar signed to the executioner to do his duty. He first fastened the feet of the marquise to two rings close together fixed to a board; then making her lie down, he fastened her wrists to two other rings in the wall, distant about three feet from each other. The head was at the same height as the feet, and the body, held up on a trestle, described a half-curve, as though lying over a wheel. To increase the stretch of the limbs, the man gave two turns to a crank, which pushed the feet, at first about twelve inches from the rings, to a distance of six inches. And here we may leave our narrative to reproduce the official report.

"On the small trestle, while she was being stretched, she said several times, 'My God! you are killing me! And I only spoke the truth.'

"The water was given: she turned and twisted, saying, 'You are killing me!'

"The water was again given.

"Admonished to name her accomplices, she said there was

[1] The torture with the water was thus administered. There were eight vessels, each containing 2½ pints of water. Four of these were given for the ordinary, and eight for the extraordinary. The executioner inserted a horn into the patient's mouth, and if he shut his teeth, forced him to open them by pinching his nose with the finger and thumb.

only one man, who had asked her for poison to get rid of his wife, but he was dead.

"The water was given; she moved a little, but would not say anything.

"Admonished to say why, if she had no accomplice, she had written from the Conciergerie to Penautier, begging him to do all he could for her, and to remember that his interests in this matter were the same as her own, she said that she never knew Penautier had had any understanding with Sainte-Croix about the poisons, and it would be a lie to say otherwise; but when a paper was found in Sainte-Croix's box that concerned Penautier, she remembered how often she had seen him at the house, and thought it possible that the friendship might have included some business about the poisons; that, being in doubt on the point, she risked writing a letter as though she were sure, for by doing so she was not prejudicing her own case; for either Penautier was an accomplice of Sainte-Croix or he was not. If he was, he would suppose the marquise knew enough to accuse him, and would accordingly do his best to save her; if he was not, the letter was a letter wasted, and that was all.

"The water was again given; she turned and twisted much, but said that on this subject she had said all she possibly could; if she said anything else, it would be untrue."

The ordinary question was at an end. The marquise had now taken half the quantity of water she had thought enough to drown her. The executioner paused before he proceeded to the extraordinary question. Instead of the trestle two feet and a half high on which she lay, they passed under her body a trestle of three and a half feet, which gave the body a greater arch; and as this was done without lengthening the ropes, her limbs were still further stretched, and the bonds, tightly straining at wrists and ankles, penetrated the flesh and made the blood run. The question began once more, interrupted by the demands of the registrar and the answers of the sufferer. Her cries seemed not even to be heard.

"On the large trestle, during the stretching, she said several times, 'O God, you tear me to pieces! Lord, pardon me! Lord, have mercy upon me!'

"Asked if she had nothing more to tell regarding her accomplices, she said they might kill her, but she would not tell a lie that would destroy her soul.

"The water was given; she moved about a little, but would not speak.

"Admonished that she should tell the composition of the poisons and their antidotes, she said that she did not know what was in them; the only thing she could recall was toads; that Sainte-Croix never revealed his secret to her; that she did not believe he made them himself, but had them prepared by Glazer; she seemed to remember that some of them contained nothing but rarefied arsenic; that as to an antidote, she knew of no other than milk; and Sainte-Croix had told her that if one had taken milk in the morning, and on the first onset of the poison took another glassful, one would have nothing to fear.

"Admonished to say if she could add anything further, she said she had now told everything; and if they killed her, they could not extract anything more.

"More water was given; she writhed a little, and said she was dead, but nothing more.

"More water was given; she writhed more violently, but would say no more.

"Yet again water was given; writhing and twisting, she said, with a deep groan, 'O my God, I am killed!' but would speak no more."

Then they tortured her no further: she was let down, untied, and placed before the fire in the usual manner. While there, close to the fire, lying on the mattress, she was visited by the good doctor, who, feeling he could not bear to witness the spectacle just described, had asked her leave to retire, that he might say a mass for her, that God might grant her patience and courage. It is plain that the good priest had not prayed in vain.

"Ah," said the marquise, when she perceived him, "I have

long been desiring to see you again, that you might comfort me. My torture has been very long and very painful, but this is the last time I shall have to treat with men; now all is with God for the future. See my hands, sir, and my feet, are they not torn and wounded? Have not my executioners smitten me in the same places where Christ was smitten?"

"And therefore, madame," replied the priest, "these sufferings now are your happiness; each torture is one step nearer to heaven. As you say, you are now for God alone; all your thoughts and hopes must be fastened upon Him; we must pray to Him, like the penitent king, to give you a place among His elect; and since nought that is impure can pass thither, we must strive, madame, to purify you from all that might bar the way to heaven."

The marquise rose with the doctor's aid, for she could scarcely stand; tottering, she stepped forward between him and the executioner, who took charge of her immediately after the sentence was read, and was not allowed to leave her before it was completely carried out. They all three entered the chapel and went into the choir, where the doctor and the marquise knelt in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. At that moment several persons appeared in the nave, drawn by curiosity. They could not be turned out, so the executioner, to save the marquise from being annoyed, shut the gate of the choir, and let the patient pass behind the altar. There she sat down in a chair, and the doctor on a seat opposite; then he first saw, by the light of the chapel window, how greatly changed she was. Her face, generally so pale, was inflamed, her eyes glowing and feverish, all her body involuntarily trembling. The doctor would have spoken a few words of consolation, but she did not attend. "Sir," she said, "do you know that my sentence is an ignominious one? Do you know there is fire in the sentence?"

The doctor gave no answer; but, thinking she needed something, bade the gaoler to bring her wine. A minute later he brought it in a cup, and the doctor handed it to the marquise, who moistened her lips and then gave it back. She then noticed that her neck was uncovered, and took out her hand-

kerchief to cover it, asking the gaoler for a pin to fasten it with. When he was slow in finding a pin, looking on his person for it, she fancied that he feared she would choke herself, and shaking her head, said, with a sad smile, "You have nothing to fear now; and here is the doctor, who will pledge his word that I will do myself no mischief."

"Madame," said the gaoler, handing her the pin she wanted, "I beg your pardon for keeping you waiting. I swear I did not distrust you; if anyone distrusts you, it is not I."

Then kneeling before her, he begged to kiss her hand. She gave it, and asked him to pray to God for her. "Ah yes," he cried, sobbing, "with all my heart." She then fastened her dress as best she could with her hands tied, and when the gaoler had gone and she was alone with the doctor, said—

"Did you not hear what I said, sir? I told you there was fire in my sentence. And though it is only after death that my body is to be burnt, it will always be a terrible disgrace on my memory. I am saved the pain of being burnt alive, and thus, perhaps, saved from a death of despair, but the shamefulness is the same, and it is that I think of."

"Madame," said the doctor, "it in no way affects your soul's salvation whether your body is cast into the fire and reduced to ashes or whether it is buried in the ground and eaten by worms, whether it is drawn on a hurdle and thrown upon a dung-heap, or embalmed with Oriental perfumes and laid in a rich man's tomb. Whatever may be your end, your body will arise on the appointed day, and if Heaven so will, it will come forth from its ashes more glorious than a royal corpse lying at this moment in a gilded casket. Obsequies, madame, are for those who survive, not for the dead."

A sound was heard at the door of the choir. The doctor went to see what it was, and found a man who insisted on entering, all but fighting with the executioner. The doctor approached and asked what was the matter. The man was a saddler, from whom the marquise had bought a carriage before she left France; this she had partly paid for, but still owed him two hundred livres. He produced the note he had had

from her, on which was a faithful record of the sums she had paid on account. The marquise at this point called out, not knowing what was going on, and the doctor and executioner went to her. "Have they come to fetch me already?" said she. "I am not well prepared just at this moment; but never mind, I am ready."

The doctor reassured her, and told her what was going on. "The man is quite right," she said to the executioner; "tell him I will give orders as far as I can about the money." Then, seeing the executioner retiring, she said to the doctor, "Must I go now, sir? I wish they would give me a little more time; for though I am ready, as I told you, I am not really prepared. Forgive me, father; it is the question and the sentence that have upset me: it is this fire burning in my eyes like hell-flames. Had they left me with you all this time, there would now be better hope of my salvation."

"Madame," said the doctor, "you will probably have all the time before nightfall to compose yourself and think what remains for you to do."

"Ah, sir," she replied, with a smile, "do not think they will show so much consideration for a poor wretch condemned to be burnt. That does not depend on ourselves; but as soon as everything is ready, they will let us know, and we must start."

"Madame," said the doctor, "I am certain that they will give you the time you need."

"No, no," she replied abruptly and feverishly, "no, I will not keep them waiting. As soon as the tumbril is at this door, they have only to tell me, and I go down."

"Madame," said he, "I would not hold you back if I found you prepared to stand before the face of God, for in your situation it is right to ask for no time, and to go when the moment is come; but not everyone is so ready as Christ was, who rose from prayer and awaked His disciples that He might leave the garden and go out to meet His enemies. You at this moment are weak, and if they come for you just now I should resist your departure."

"Be calm; the time is not yet come," said the executioner,

who had heard this talk. He knew his statement must be believed, and wished as far as possible to reassure the marquise. "There is no hurry, and we cannot start for another two or three hours."

This assurance calmed the marquise somewhat, and she thanked the man. Then turning to the doctor, she said, "Here is a rosary that I would rather should not fall into this person's hands. Not that he could not make good use of it; for, in spite of their trade, I fancy that these people are Christians like ourselves. But I should prefer to leave this to somebody else."

"Madame," said the doctor, "if you will tell me your wishes in this matter, I will see that they are carried out."

"Alas!" she said, "there is no one but my sister; and I fear lest she, remembering my crime towards her, may be too horrified to touch anything that belonged to me. If she did not mind, it would be a great comfort to me to think she would wear it after my death, and that the sight of it would remind her to pray for me; but after what has passed, the rosary could hardly fail to revive an odious recollection. My God, my God! I am desperately wicked; can it be that you will pardon me?"

"Madame," replied the doctor, "I think you are mistaken about Mlle. d'Aubray. You may see by her letter what are her feelings towards you, and you must pray with this rosary up to the very end. Let not your prayers be interrupted or distracted, for no guilty penitent must cease from prayer; and I, madame, will engage to deliver the rosary where it will be gladly received."

And the marquise, who had been constantly distracted since the morning, was now, thanks to the patient goodness of the doctor, able to return with her former fervour to her prayers. She prayed till seven o'clock. As the clock struck, the executioner without a word came and stood before her; she saw that her moment had come, and said to the doctor, grasping his arm, "A little longer; just a few moments, I entreat."

"Madame," said the doctor, rising, "we will now adore the divine blood of the Sacrament, praying that you may be thus cleansed from all soil and sin that may be still in your heart. Thus shall you gain the respite you desire."

The executioner then tied tight the cords round her hands that he had let loose before, and she advanced pretty firmly and knelt before the altar, between the doctor and the chaplain. The latter was in his surplice, and chanted a *Veni Creator*, *Salve Regina*, and *Tantum ergo*. These prayers over, he pronounced the blessing of the Holy Sacrament, while the marquise knelt with her face upon the ground. The executioner then went forward to get ready a shirt, and she made her exit from the chapel, supported on the left by the doctor's arm, on the right by the executioner's assistant. Thus proceeding, she first felt embarrassment and confusion. Ten or twelve people were waiting outside, and as she suddenly confronted them, she made a step backward, and with her hands, bound though they were, pulled the headdress down to cover half her face. She passed through a small door, which was closed behind her, and then found herself between the two doors alone, with the doctor and the executioner's man. Here the rosary, in consequence of her violent movement to cover her face, came undone, and several beads fell on the floor. She went on, however, without observing this; but the doctor stopped her, and he and the man stooped down and picked up all the beads, which they put into her hand. Thanking them humbly for this attention, she said to the man, "Sir, I know I have now no worldly possessions, that all I have upon me belongs to you, and I may not give anything away without your consent; but I ask you kindly to allow me to give this chaplet to the doctor before I die: you will not be much the loser, for it is of no value, and I am giving it to him for my sister. Kindly let me do this."

"Madame," said the man, "it is the custom for us to get all the property of the condemned; but you are mistress of all you have, and if the thing were of the very greatest value you might dispose of it as you pleased."

The doctor, whose arm she held, felt her shiver at this gallantry, which for her, with her natural haughty disposition, must have been the worst humiliation imaginable; but the movement was restrained, and her face gave no sign. She now

came to the porch of the Conciergerie, between the court and the first door, and there she was made to sit down, so as to be put into the right condition for making the *amende honorable.* Each step brought her nearer to the scaffold, and so did each incident cause her more uneasiness. Now she turned round desperately, and perceived the executioner holding a shirt in his hand. The door of the vestibule opened, and about fifty people came in, among them the Countess of Soissons, Madame du Refuge, Mlle. de Scudery, M. de Roquelaure, and the Abbé de Chimay. At the sight the marquise reddened with shame, and turning to the doctor, said, "Is this man to strip me again, as he did in the question chamber? All these preparations are very cruel; and, in spite of myself, they divert my thoughts from God."

Low as her voice was, the executioner heard, and reassured her, saying that they would take nothing off, only putting the shirt over her other clothes. He then approached, and the marquise, unable to speak to the doctor with a man on each side of her, showed him by her looks how deeply she felt the ignominy of her situation. Then, when the shirt had been put on, for which operation her hands had to be untied, the man raised the headdress which she had pulled down, and tied it round her neck, then fastened her hands together with one rope and put another round her waist, and yet another round her neck; then, kneeling before her, he took off her shoes and stockings. Then she stretched out her hands to the doctor.

"Oh, sir," she cried, "in God's name, you see what they have done to me! Come and comfort me."

The doctor came at once, supporting her head upon his breast, trying to comfort her; but she, in a tone of bitter lamentation, gazing at the crowd, who devoured her with all their eyes, cried, "Oh, sir, is not this a strange, barbarous curiosity?"

"Madame," said he, the tears in his eyes, "do not look at these eager people from the point of view of their curiosity and barbarity, though that is real enough, but consider it part of the humiliation sent by God for the expiation of your crimes.

God, who was innocent, was subject to very different opprobium, and yet suffered all with joy; for, as Tertullian observes, He was a victim fattened on the joys of suffering alone."

As the doctor spoke these words, the executioner placed in the marquise's hands the lighted torch which she was to carry to Notre-Dame, there to make the *amende honorable*, and as it was too heavy, weighing two pounds, the doctor supported it with his right hand, while the registrar read her sentence aloud a second time. The doctor did all in his power to prevent her from hearing this by speaking unceasingly of God. Still she grew frightfully pale at the words, "When this is done, she shall be conveyed on a tumbril, barefoot, a cord round her neck, holding in her hands a burning torch two pounds in weight," and the doctor could feel no doubt that in spite of his efforts she had heard. It became still worse when she reached the threshold of the vestibule and saw the great crowd waiting in the court. Then her face worked convulsively, and crouching down, as though she would bury her feet in the earth, she addressed the doctor in words both plaintive and wild: "Is it possible that, after what is now happening, M. de Brinvilliers can endure to go on living?"

"Madame," said the doctor, "when our Lord was about to leave His disciples, He did not ask God to remove them from this earth, but to preserve them from all sin. 'My Father,' He said, 'I ask not that You take them from the world, but keep them safe from evil.' If, madame, you pray for M. de Brinvilliers, let it be only that he may be kept in grace, if he has it, and may attain to it if he has it not."

But the words were useless: at that moment the humiliation was too great and too public; her face contracted, her eyebrows knit, flames darted from her eyes, her mouth was all twisted. Her whole appearance was horrible; the devil was once more in possession. During this paroxysm, which lasted nearly a quarter of an hour, Lebrun, who stood near, got such a vivid impression of her face that the following night he could not sleep, and with the sight of it ever before his eyes made the fine

drawing which is now in the Louvre, giving to the figure the head of a tiger, in order to show that the principal features were the same, and the whole resemblance very striking.

The delay in progress was caused by the immense crowd blocking the court, only pushed aside by archers on horseback, who separated the people. The marquise now went out, and the doctor, lest the sight of the people should completely distract her, put a crucifix in her hand, bidding her fix her gaze upon it. This advice she followed till they gained the gate into the street where the tumbril was waiting; then she lifted her eyes to see the shameful object. It was one of the smallest of carts, still splashed with mud and marked by the stones it had carried, with no seat, only a little straw at the bottom. It was drawn by a wretched horse, well matching the disgraceful conveyance.

The executioner bade her get in first, which she did very rapidly, as if to escape observation. There she crouched like a wild beast, in the left corner, on the straw, riding backwards. The doctor sat beside her on the right. Then the executioner got in, shutting the door behind him, and sat opposite her, stretching his legs between the doctor's. His man, whose business it was to guide the horse, sat on the front, back to back with the doctor and the marquise, his feet stuck out on the shafts. Thus it is easy to understand how Madame de Sévigné, who was on the Pont Notre-Dame, could see nothing but the headdress of the marquise as she was driven to Notre-Dame.

The cortège had only gone a few steps, when the face of the marquise, for a time a little calmer, was again convulsed. From her eyes, fixed constantly on the crucifix, there darted a flaming glance, then came a troubled and frenzied look which terrified the doctor. He knew she must have been struck by something she saw, and, wishing to calm her, asked what it was.

"Nothing, nothing," she replied quickly, looking towards him; "it was nothing."

"But, madame," said he, "you cannot give the lie to your

own eyes; and a minute ago I saw a fire very different from the fire of love, which only some displeasing sight can have provoked. What may this be? Tell me, pray; for you promised to tell me of any sort of temptation that might assail you."

"Sir," she said, "I will do so, but it is nothing." Then, looking towards the executioner, who, as we know, sat facing the doctor, she said, "Put me in front of you, please; hide that man from me." And she stretched out her hands towards a man who was following the tumbril on horseback, and so dropped the torch, which the doctor took, and the crucifix, which fell on the floor. The executioner looked back, and then turned sideways as she wished, nodding and saying, "Oh yes, I understand." The doctor pressed to know what it meant, and she said, "It is nothing worth telling you, and it is a weakness in me not to be able to bear the sight of a man who has ill-used me. The man who touched the back of the tumbril is Desgrais, who arrested me at Liège, and treated me so badly all along the road. When I saw him, I could not control myself, as you noticed."

"Madame," said the doctor, "I have heard of him, and you yourself spoke of him in confession; but the man was sent to arrest you, and was in a responsible position, so that he had to guard you closely and rigorously; even if he had been more severe, he would only have been carrying out his orders. Jesus Christ, madame, could but have regarded His executioners as ministers of iniquity, servants of injustice, who added of their own accord every indignity they could think of; yet all along the way He looked on them with patience and more than patience, and in His death He prayed for them."

In the heart of the marquise a hard struggle was passing, and this was reflected on her face; but it was only for a moment, and after a last convulsive shudder she was again calm and serene; then she said—

"Sir, you are right, and I am very wrong to feel such a fancy as this: may God forgive me; and pray remember this fault on the scaffold, when you give me the absolution you promise,

that this too may be pardoned me." Then she turned to the executioner and said, "Please sit where you were before, that I may see M. Desgrais." The man hesitated, but on a sign from the doctor obeyed. The marquise looked fully at Desgrais for some time, praying for him; then, fixing her eyes on the crucifix, began to pray for herself: this incident occurred in front of the church of Sainte Geneviève des Ardents.

But, slowly as it moved, the tumbril steadily advanced, and at last reached the place of Notre-Dame. The archers drove back the crowding people, and the tumbril went up to the steps, and there stopped. The executioner got down, removed the board at the back, held out his arms to the marquise, and set her down on the pavement. The doctor then got down, his legs quite numb from the cramped position he had been in since they left the Conciergerie. He mounted the church steps and stood behind the marquise, who herself stood on the square, with the registrar on her right, the executioner on her left, and a great crowd of people behind her, inside the church, all the doors being thrown open. She was made to kneel, and in her hands was placed the lighted torch, which up to that time the doctor had helped to carry. Then the registrar read the *amende honorable* from a written paper, and she began to say it after him, but in so low a voice that the executioner said loudly, "Speak out as he does; repeat every word. Louder, louder!" Then she raised her voice, and loudly and firmly recited the following apology:—

"I confess that, wickedly and for revenge, I poisoned my father and my brothers, and attempted to poison my sister, to obtain possession of their goods, and I ask pardon of God, of the king, and of my country's laws."

The *amende honorable* over, the executioner again carried her to the tumbril, not giving her the torch any more: the doctor sat beside her: all was just as before, and the tumbril went on towards La Grève. From that moment, until she arrived at the scaffold, she never took her eyes off the crucifix, which the doctor held before her the whole time, exhorting her with religious words, trying to divert her attention from the

terrible noise which the people made around the car, a murmur mingled with curses.

When they reached the Place de Grève, the tumbril stopped at a little distance from the scaffold. Then the registrar M. Drouet, came up on horseback, and, addressing the marquise, said, "Madame, have you nothing more to say? If you wish to make any declaration, the twelve commissaries are here at hand, ready to receive it."

"You see, madame," said the doctor, "we are now at the end of our journey, and, thank God, you have not lost your power of endurance on the road; do not destroy the effect of all you have suffered and all you have yet to suffer by concealing what you know, if perchance you do know more than you have hitherto said."

"I have told all I know," said the marquise, "and there is no more I can say."

"Repeat these words in a loud voice," said the doctor, "so that everybody may hear."

Then in her loudest voice the marquise repeated—

"I have told all I know, and there is no more I can say."

After this declaration, they were going to drive the tumbril nearer to the scaffold, but the crowd was so dense that the assistant could not force a way through, though he struck out on every side with his whip. So they had to stop a few paces short. The executioner had already got down, and was adjusting the ladder. In this terrible moment of waiting, the marquise looked calmly and gratefully at the doctor, and when she felt that the tumbril had stopped, said, "Sir, it is not here we part: you promised not to leave me till my head is cut off. I trust you will keep your word."

"To be sure I will," the doctor replied; "we shall not be separated before the moment of your death: be not troubled about that, for I will never forsake you."

"I looked for this kindness," she said, "and your promise was too solemn for you to think for one moment of failing me. Please be on the scaffold and be near me. And now, sir, I

would anticipate the final farewell,—for all the things I shall have to do on the scaffold may distract me,—so let me thank you here. If I am prepared to suffer the sentence of my earthly judge, and to hear that of my heavenly Judge, I owe it to your care for me, and I am deeply grateful. I can only ask your forgiveness for the trouble I have given you." Tears choked the doctor's speech, and he could not reply. "Do you not forgive me?" she repeated. At her words, the doctor tried to reassure her; but feeling that if he opened his mouth he must needs break into sobs, he still kept silent. The marquise appealed to him a third time. "I entreat you, sir, forgive me; and do not regret the time you have passed with me. You will say a *De Profundis* at the moment of my death, and a mass for me to-morrow: will you not promise?"

"Yes, madame," said the doctor in a choking voice; "yes, yes, be calm, and I will do all you bid me."

The executioner hereupon removed the board, and helped the marquise out of the tumbril; and as they advanced the few steps towards the scaffold, and all eyes were upon them, the doctor could hide his tears for a moment without being observed. As he was drying his eyes, the assistant gave him his hand to help him down. Meanwhile the marquise was mounting the ladder with the executioner, and when they reached the platform he told her to kneel down in front of a block which lay across it. Then the doctor, who had mounted with a step less firm than hers, came and knelt beside her, but turned in the other direction, so that he might whisper in her ear—that is, the marquise faced the river, and the doctor faced the Hotel de Ville. Scarcely had they taken their place thus when the man took down her hair and began cutting it at the back and at the sides, making her turn her head this way and that, at times rather roughly; but though this ghastly toilet lasted almost half an hour, she made no complaint, nor gave any sign of pain but her silent tears. When her hair was cut, he tore open the top of the shirt, so as to uncover the shoulders, and finally bandaged her eyes, and lifting her face by the chin,

ordered her to hold her head erect. She obeyed, unresisting, all the time listening to the doctor's words and repeating them from time to time, when they seemed suitable to her own condition. Meanwhile, at the back of the scaffold, on which the stake was placed, stood the executioner, glancing now and again at the folds of his cloak, where there showed the hilt of a long, straight sabre, which he had carefully concealed for fear Madame de Brinvilliers might see it when she mounted the scaffold. When the doctor, having pronounced absolution, turned his head and saw that the man was not yet armed, he uttered these prayers, which she repeated after him: "Jesus, Son of David and Mary, have mercy upon me; Mary, daughter of David and Mother of Jesus, pray for me; my God, I abandon my body, which is but dust, that men may burn it and do with it what they please, in the firm faith that it shall one day arise and be reunited with my soul. I trouble not concerning my body; grant, O God, that I yield up to Thee my soul, that it may enter into Thy rest; receive it into Thy bosom, that it may dwell once more there, whence it first descended; from Thee it came, to Thee returns; Thou art the source and the beginning; be thou, O God, the centre and the end!"

The marquise had said these words when suddenly the doctor heard a dull stroke like the sound of a chopper chopping meat upon a block: at that moment she ceased to speak. The blade had sped so quickly that the doctor had not even seen a flash. He stopped, his hair bristling, his brow bathed in sweat; for, not seeing the head fall, he supposed that the executioner had missed the mark and must needs start afresh. But his fear was short-lived, for almost at the same moment the head inclined to the left, slid on to the shoulder, and thence backward, while the body fell forward on the crossway block, supported so that the spectators could see the neck cut open and bleeding. Immediately, in fulfilment of his promise, the doctor said a *De Profundis*.

When the prayer was done and the doctor raised his head, he saw before him the executioner wiping his face. "Well, sir," said he, "was not that a good stroke? I always put up

a prayer on these occasions, and God has always assisted me; but I have been anxious for several days about this lady. I had six masses said, and I felt strengthened in hand and heart." He then pulled out a bottle from under his cloak, and drank a dram; and taking the body under one arm, all dressed as it was, and the head in his other hand, the eyes still bandaged, he threw both upon the faggots, which his assistant lighted.

"The next day," says Madame de Sévigné, "people were looking for the charred bones of Madame de Brinvilliers, because they said she was a saint."

In 1814, M. d'Offemont, father of the present occupier of the castle where the Marquise de Brinvilliers poisoned her father, frightened at the approach of the allied troops, contrived in one of the towers several hiding-places, where he shut up his silver and such other valuables as were to be found in this lonely country in the midst of the forest of Laigue. The foreign troops were passing backwards and forwards at Offemont, and after a three months' occupation retired to the farther side of the frontier.

Then the owners ventured to take out the various things that had been hidden; and tapping the walls, to make sure nothing had been overlooked, they detected a hollow sound that indicated the presence of some unsuspected cavity. With picks and bars they broke the wall open, and when several stones had come out they found a large closet like a laboratory, containing furnaces, chemical instruments, phials hermetically sealed full of an unknown liquid, and four packets of powders of different colours. Unluckily, the people who made these discoveries thought them of too much or too little importance; and instead of submitting the ingredients to the tests of modern science, they made away with them all, frightened at their probably deadly nature.

Thus was lost this great opportunity—probably the last—for finding and analysing the substances which composed the poisons of Sainte-Croix and Madame de Brinvilliers.

MARTIN GUERRE

MARTIN GUERRE

WE are sometimes astonished at the striking resemblance existing between two persons who are absolute strangers to each other, but in fact it is the opposite which ought to surprise us. Indeed, why should we not rather admire a Creative Power so infinite in its variety that it never ceases to produce entirely different combinations with precisely the same elements? The more one considers this prodigious versatility of form, the more overwhelming it appears.

To begin with, each nation has its own distinct and characteristic type, separating it from other races of men. Thus there are the English, Spanish, German, or Slavonic types; again, in each nation we find families distinguished from each other by less general but still well-pronounced features; and lastly, the individuals of each family, differing again in more or less marked gradations. What a multitude of physiognomies! What variety of impression from the innumerable stamps of the human countenance! What millions of models and no copies! Considering this ever changing spectacle, which ought to inspire us with most astonishment—the perpetual difference of faces or the accidental resemblance of a few individuals? Is it impossible that in the whole wide world there should be found by chance two people whose features are cast in one and the same mould? Certainly not; therefore that which ought to surprise us is not that these duplicates exist here and there upon the earth, but that they are to be met with in the same place, and appear together before our eyes, little accustomed to see such resemblances. From Amphitryon down to our own days, many fables have owed their origin to this fact, and history also has provided a few examples, such as the false

Demetrius in Russia, the English Perkin Warbeck, and several other celebrated impostors, whilst the story we now present to our readers is no less curious and strange.

On the 10th of August 1557, an inauspicious day in the history of France, the roar of cannon was still heard at six in the evening in the plains of St. Quentin; where the French army had just been destroyed by the united troops of England and Spain, commanded by the famous Captain Emanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy. An utterly beaten infantry, the Constable Montmorency and several generals taken prisoner, the Duke d'Enghien mortally wounded, the flower of the nobility cut down like grass,—such were the terrible results of a battle which plunged France into mourning, and which would have been a blot on the reign of Henry II, had not the Duke of Guise obtained a brilliant revenge the following year.

In a little village less than a mile from the field of battle were to be heard the groans of the wounded and dying, who had been carried thither from the field of battle. The inhabitants had given up their houses to be used as hospitals, and two or three barber surgeons went hither and thither, hastily ordering operations which they left to their assistants, and driving out fugitives who had contrived to accompany the wounded under pretence of assisting friends or near relations. They had already expelled a good number of these poor fellows, when, opening the door of a small room, they found a soldier soaked in blood lying on a rough mat, and another soldier apparently attending on him with the utmost care.

"Who are you?" said one of the surgeons to the sufferer. "I don't think you belong to our French troops."

"Help!" cried the soldier, "only help me! and may God bless you for it!"

"From the colour of that tunic," remarked the other surgeon, "I should wager the rascal belongs to some Spanish gentleman. By what blunder was he brought here?"

"For pity's sake!" murmured the poor fellow: "I am in such pain."

"Die, wretch!" responded the last speaker, pushing him with his foot. "Die, like the dog you are!"

But this brutality, answered as it was by an agonised groan, disgusted the other surgeon.

"After all, he is a man, and a wounded man who implores help. Leave him to me, René."

René went out grumbling, and the one who remained proceeded to examine the wound. A terrible arquebus-shot had passed through the leg, shattering the bone: amputation was absolutely necessary.

Before proceeding to the operation, the surgeon turned to the other soldier, who had retired into the darkest corner of the room.

"And you, who may you be?" he asked.

The man replied by coming forward into the light: no other answer was needed. He resembled his companion so closely that no one could doubt they were brothers—twin brothers, probably. Both were above middle height; both had olive-brown complexions, black eyes, hooked noses, pointed chins, a slightly projecting lower lip; both were round-shouldered, though this defect did not amount to disfigurement: the whole personality suggested strength, and was not destitute of masculine beauty. So strong a likeness is hardly ever seen; even their ages appeared to agree, for one would not have supposed either to be more than thirty-two; and the only difference noticeable, besides the pale countenance of the wounded man, was that he was thin as compared with the moderate fleshiness of the other, also that he had a large scar over the right eyebrow.

"Look well after your brother's soul," said the surgeon to the soldier, who remained standing; "if it is in no better case than his body, it is much to be pitied."

"Is there no hope?" inquired the Sosia of the wounded man.

"The wound is too large and too deep," replied the man of science, "to be cauterised with boiling oil, according to the ancient method. 'Delenda est causa mali,' the source of evil must be destroyed, as says the learned Ambrose Paré; I

ought therefore 'secareferro,'—that is to say, take off the leg. May God grant that he survive the operation!"

While seeking his instruments, he looked the supposed brother full in the face, and added—

"But how is it that you are carrying muskets in opposing armies, for I see that you belong to us, while this poor fellow wears Spanish uniform?"

"Oh, that would be a long story to tell," replied the soldier, shaking his head. "As for me, I followed the career which was open to me, and took service of my own free will under the banner of our lord king, Henry II. This man, whom you rightly suppose to be my brother, was born in Biscay, and became attached to the household of the Cardinal of Burgos, and afterwards to that of the cardinal's brother, whom he was obliged to follow to the war. I recognised him on the battle-field just as he fell; I dragged him out of a heap of dead, and brought him here."

During his recital this individual's features betrayed considerable agitation, but the surgeon did not heed it. Not finding some necessary instruments, "My colleague," he exclaimed, "must have carried them off. He constantly does this, out of jealousy of my reputation; but I will be even with him yet! Such splendid instruments! They will almost work of themselves, and are capable of imparting some skill even to him, dunce as he is! . . . I shall be back in an hour or two; he must rest, sleep, have nothing to excite him, nothing to inflame the wound; and when the operation is well over, we shall see! May the Lord be gracious to him!"

Then he went to the door, leaving the poor wretch to the care of his supposed brother.

"My God!" he added, shaking his head, "if he survive, it will be by the help of a miracle."

Scarcely had he left the room, when the unwounded soldier carefully examined the features of the wounded one.

"Yes," he murmured between his teeth, "they were right in saying that my exact double was to be found in the hostile army. . . . Truly one would not know us apart! . . . I might

be surveying myself in a mirror. I did well to look for him in the rear of the Spanish army, and, thanks to the fellow who rolled him over so conveniently with that arquebus-shot, I was able to escape the dangers of the mêlée by carrying him out of it."

"But that's not all," he thought, still carefully studying the tortured face of the unhappy sufferer; "it is not enough to have got out of that. I have absolutely nothing in the world, no home, no resources. Beggar by birth, adventurer by fortune, I have enlisted, and have consumed my pay; I hoped for plunder, and here we are in full flight! What am I to do? Go and drown myself? No, certainly: a cannon-ball would be as good as that. But can't I profit by this chance, and obtain a decent position by turning to my own advantage this curious resemblance, and making some use of this man whom Fate has thrown in my way, and who has but a short time to live?"

Arguing thus, he bent over the prostrate man with a cynical laugh: one might have thought he was Satan watching the departure of a soul too utterly lost to escape him.

"Alas! alas!" cried the sufferer; "may God have mercy on me! I feel my end is near."

"Bah! comrade, drive away these dismal thoughts. Your leg pains you—well, they will cut it off! Think only of the other one, and trust in Providence!"

"Water, a drop of water, for Heaven's sake!" The sufferer was in a high fever. The would-be nurse looked round and saw a jug of water, towards which the dying man extended a trembling hand. A truly infernal idea entered his mind. He poured some water into a gourd which hung from his belt, held it to the lips of the wounded man, and then withdrew it.

"Oh! I thirst—that water!... For pity's sake, give me some!"

"Yes, but on one condition—you must tell me your whole history."

"Yes . . . but give me water!"

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and fortune, and compelled him to answer by keeping before his eyes the water which alone could relieve the fever which devoured him. After this often interrupted interrogation, the sufferer sank back exhausted, and almost insensible. But, not yet satisfied, his companion conceived the idea of reviving him with a few drops of brandy, which quickly brought back the fever, and excited his brain sufficiently to enable him to answer fresh questions. The doses of spirit were doubled several times, at the risk of ending the unhappy man's days then and there. Almost delirious, his head feeling as if on fire, his sufferings gave way to a feverish excitement, which took him back to other places and other times: he began to recall the days of his youth and the country where he lived. But his tongue was still fettered by a kind of reserve: his secret thoughts, the private details of his past life were not yet told, and it seemed as though he might die at any moment. Time was passing, night already coming on, and it occurred to the merciless questioner to profit by the gathering darkness. By a few solemn words he aroused the religious feelings of the sufferer, terrified him by speaking of the punishments of another life and the flames of hell, until to the delirious fancy of the sick man he took the form of a judge who could either deliver him to eternal damnation or open the gates of heaven to him. At length, overwhelmed by a voice which resounded in his ear like that of a minister of God, the dying man laid bare his inmost soul before his tormentor, and made his last confession to him.

Yet a few moments, and the executioner—he deserves no other name—hangs over his victim, opens his tunic, seizes some papers and a few coins, half draws his dagger, but thinks better of it; then, contemptuously spurning the victim, as the other surgeon had done—

"I might kill you," he says, "but it would be a useless murder; it would only be hastening your last sigh by an hour or two, and advancing my claims to your inheritance by the same space of time."

And he adds mockingly—

"Farewell, my brother!"

The wounded soldier utters a feeble groan; the adventurer leaves the room.

. . . . . .

Four months later, a woman sat at the door of a house at one end of the village of Artigues, near Rieux, and played with a child about nine or ten years of age. Still young, she had the brown complexion of Southern women, and her beautiful black hair fell in curls about her face. Her flashing eyes occasionally betrayed hidden passions, concealed, however, beneath an apparent indifference and lassitude, and her wasted form seemed to acknowledge the existence of some secret grief. An observer would have divined a shattered life, a withered happiness, a soul grievously wounded.

Her dress was that of a wealthy peasant; and she wore one of the long gowns with hanging sleeves which were in fashion in the sixteenth century. The house in front of which she sat belonged to her, so also the immense field which adjoined the garden. Her attention was divided between the play of her son and the orders she was giving to an old servant, when an exclamation from the child startled her.

"Mother!" he cried, "mother, there he is!" She looked where the child pointed, and saw a young boy turning the corner of the street.

"Yes," continued the child, "that is the lad who, when I was playing with the other boys yesterday, called me all sorts of bad names."

"What sort of names, my child?"

"There was one I did not understand, but it must have been a very bad one, for the other boys all pointed at me, and left me alone. He called me—and he said it was only what his mother had told him—he called me a wicked bastard!"

His mother's face became purple with indignation. "What!" she cried, "they dared! . . . What an insult!"

"What does this bad word mean, mother?" asked the child, half frightened by her anger. "Is that what they call poor children who have no father?"

His mother folded him in her arms. "Oh!" she continued, "it is an infamous slander! These people never saw your father, they have only been here six years, and this is the eighth since he went away, but this is abominable! We were married in that church, we came at once to live in this house, which was my marriage portion, and my poor Martin has relations and friends here who will not allow his wife to be insulted——"

"Say rather, his widow," interrupted a solemn voice.

"Ah! uncle!" exclaimed the woman, turning towards an old man who had just emerged from the house.

"Yes, Bertrande," continued the new-comer, "you must get reconciled to the idea that my nephew has ceased to exist. I am sure he was not such a fool as to have remained all this time without letting us hear from him. He was not the fellow to go off at a tangent, on account of a domestic quarrel which you have never vouchsafed to explain to me, and to retain his anger during all these eight years! Where did he go? What did he do? We none of us know, neither you nor I, nor anybody else. He is assuredly dead, and lies in some graveyard far enough from here. May God have mercy on his soul!"

Bertrande, weeping, made the sign of the cross, and bowed her head upon her hands.

"Good-bye, Sanxi," said the uncle, tapping the child's cheek. Sanxi turned sulkily away.

There was certainly nothing specially attractive about the uncle: he belonged to a type which children instinctively dislike, false, crafty, with squinting eyes which continually appeared to contradict his honeyed tongue.

"Bertrande," he said, "your boy is like his father before him, and only answers my kindness with rudeness."

"Forgive him," answered the mother; "he is very young, and does not understand the respect due to his father's uncle. I will teach him better things; he will soon learn that he ought to be grateful for the care you have taken of his little property."

"No doubt, no doubt," said the uncle, trying hard to smile. "I will give you a good account of it, for I shall only have to reckon with you two in future. Come, my dear, believe me,

your husband is really dead, and you have sorrowed quite enough for a good-for-nothing fellow. Think no more of him."

So saying, he departed, leaving the poor young woman a prey to the saddest thoughts.

Bertrande de Rolls, naturally gifted with extreme sensibility, on which a careful education had imposed due restraint, had barely completed her twelfth year when she was married to Martin Guerre, a boy of about the same age, such precocious unions being then not uncommon, especially in the Southern provinces. They were generally settled by considerations of family interest, assisted by the extremely early development habitual to the climate. The young couple lived for a long time as brother and sister, and Bertrande, thus early familiar with the idea of domestic happiness, bestowed her whole affection on the youth whom she had been taught to regard as her life's companion. He was the Alpha and Omega of her existence; all her love, all her thoughts, were given to him, and when their marriage was at length completed, the birth of a son seemed only another link in the already long existing bond of union. But, as many wise men have remarked, a uniform happiness, which only attaches women more and more, has often upon men a precisely contrary effect, and so it was with Martin Guerre. Of a lively and excitable temperament, he wearied of a yoke which had been imposed so early, and, anxious to see the world and enjoy some freedom, he one day took advantage of a domestic difference, in which Bertrande owned herself to have been wrong, and left his house and family. He was sought and awaited in vain. Bertrande spent the first month in vainly expecting his return, then she betook herself to prayer; but Heaven appeared deaf to her supplications, the truant returned not. She wished to go in search of him, but the world is wide, and no single trace remained to guide her. What torture for a tender heart! What suffering for a soul thirsting for love! What sleepless nights! What restless vigils! Years passed thus; her son was growing up, yet not a word reached her from the man she loved so much. She spoke often of him to the uncomprehending child, she

sought to discover his features in those of her boy, but though she endeavoured to concentrate her whole affection on her son, she realised that there is suffering which maternal love cannot console, and tears which it cannot dry. Consumed by the strength of the sorrow which ever dwelt in her heart, the poor woman was slowly wasting, worn out by the regrets of the past, the vain desires of the present, and the dreary prospect of the future. And now she had been openly insulted, her feelings as a mother wounded to the quick; and her husband's uncle, instead of defending and consoling her, could give only cold counsel and unsympathetic words!

Pierre Guerre, indeed, was simply a thorough egotist. In his youth he had been charged with usury; no one knew by what means he had become rich, for the little drapery trade which he called his profession did not appear to be very profitable. After his nephew's departure it seemed only natural that he should pose as the family guardian, and he applied himself to the task of increasing the little income, but without considering himself bound to give any account to Bertrande. So, once persuaded that Martin was no more, he was apparently not unwilling to prolong a situation so much to his own advantage.

Night was fast coming on; in the dim twilight distant objects became confused and indistinct. It was the end of autumn, that melancholy season which suggests so many gloomy thoughts and recalls so many blighted hopes. The child had gone into the house. Bertrande, still sitting at the door, resting her forehead on her hand, thought sadly of her uncle's words; recalling in imagination the past scenes which they suggested, the time of their childhood, when, married so young, they were as yet only playmates, prefacing the graver duties of life by innocent pleasures; then of the love which grew with their increasing age; then of how this love became altered, changing on her side into passion, on his into indifference. She tried to recollect him as he had been on the eve of his departure, young and handsome, carrying his head high, coming home from a fatiguing hunt and sitting by his son's cradle; and then

also she remembered bitterly the jealous suspicions she had conceived, the anger with which she had allowed them to escape her, the consequent quarrel, followed by the disappearance of her offended husband, and the eight succeeding years of solitude and mourning. She wept over his desertion, over the desolation of her life, seeing around her only indifferent or selfish people, and caring only to live for her child's sake, who gave her at least a shadowy reflection of the husband she had lost. "Lost—yes, lost for ever!" she said to herself, sighing, and looking again at the fields whence she had so often seen him coming at this same twilight hour, returning to his home for the evening meal. She cast a wandering eye on the distant hills, which showed a black outline against a yet fiery western sky, then let it fall on a little grove of olive trees planted on the farther side of the brook which skirted her dwelling. Everything was calm; approaching night brought silence along with darkness: it was exactly what she saw every evening, but to leave which required always an effort.

She rose to re-enter the house, when her attention was caught by a movement amongst the trees. For a moment she thought she was mistaken, but the branches again rustled, then parted asunder, and the form of a man appeared on the other side of the brook. Terrified, Bertrande tried to scream, but not a sound escaped her lips; her voice seemed paralysed by terror, as in an evil dream. And she almost thought it was a dream, for notwithstanding the dark shadows cast around this indistinct semblance, she seemed to recognise features once dear to her. Had her bitter reveries ended by making her the victim of a hallucination? She thought her brain was giving way, and sank on her knees to pray for help. But the figure remained; it stood motionless, with folded arms, silently gazing at her! Then she thought of witchcraft, of evil demons, and superstitious as every one was in those days, she kissed a crucifix which hung from her neck, and fell fainting on the ground. With one spring the phantom crossed the brook and stood beside her.

"Bertrande!" it said in a voice of emotion. She raised her

head, uttered a piercing cry, and was clasped in her husband's arms.

The whole village became aware of this event that same evening. The neighbours crowded round Bertrande's door, Martin's friends and relations naturally wishing to see him after this miraculous reappearance, while those who had never known him desired no less to gratify their curiosity; so that the hero of the little drama, instead of remaining quietly at home with his wife, was obliged to exhibit himself publicly in a neighbouring barn. His four sisters burst through the crowd and fell on his neck weeping; his uncle examined him doubtfully at first, then extended his arms. Everybody recognised him, beginning with the old servant Marguérite, who had been with the young couple ever since their wedding-day. People observed only that a riper age had strengthened his features, and given more character to his countenance and more development to his powerful figure; also that he had a scar over the right eyebrow, and that he limped slightly. These were the marks of wounds he had received, he said, which now no longer troubled him. He appeared anxious to return to his wife and child, but the crowd insisted on hearing the story of his adventures during his voluntary absence, and he was obliged to satisfy them. Eight years ago, he said, the desire to see more of the world had gained an irresistible mastery over him; he yielded to it, and departed secretly. A natural longing took him to his birthplace in Biscay, where he had seen his surviving relatives. There he met the Cardinal of Burgos, who took him into his service, promising him profit, hard knocks to give and take, and plenty of adventure. Some time after, he left the cardinal's household for that of his brother, who, much against his will, compelled him to follow him to the war and bear arms against the French. Thus he found himself on the Spanish side on the day of St. Quentin, and received a terrible gun-shot wound in the leg. Being carried into a house in an adjoining village, he fell into the hands of a surgeon, who insisted that the leg must be amputated immediately, but who left him for a moment, and never

returned. Then he encountered a good old woman, who dressed his wound and nursed him night and day. So that in a few weeks he recovered, and was able to set out for Artigues, too thankful to return to his house and land, still more to his wife and child, and fully resolved never to leave them again.

Having ended his story, he shook hands with his still wondering neighbours, addressing by name some who had been very young when he left, and who, hearing their names, came forward now as grown men, hardly recognisable, but much pleased at being remembered. He returned his sisters' caresses, begged his uncle's forgiveness for the trouble he had given in his boyhood, recalling with mirth the various corrections received. He mentioned also an Augustinian monk who had taught him to read, and another reverend father, a Capuchin, whose irregular conduct had caused much scandal in the neighbourhood. In short, notwithstanding his prolonged absence, he seemed to have a perfect recollection of places, persons, and things. The good people overwhelmed him with congratulations, vying with one another in praising him for having the good sense to come home, and in describing the grief and the perfect virtue of his Bertrande. Emotion was excited, many wept, and several bottles from Martin Guerre's cellar were emptied. At length the assembly dispersed, uttering many exclamations about the extraordinary chances of Fate, and retired to their own homes, excited, astonished, and gratified, with the one exception of old Pierre Guerre, who had been struck by an unsatisfactory remark made by his nephew, and who dreamed all night about the chances of pecuniary loss augured by the latter's return.

It was midnight before the husband and wife were alone and able to give vent to their feelings. Bertrande still felt half stupefied; she could not believe her own eyes and ears, nor realise that she saw again in her marriage chamber her husband of eight years ago, him for whom she had wept, whose death she had deplored only a few hours previously. In the sudden shock caused by so much joy succeeding so much grief, she had not been able to express what she felt; her

confused ideas were difficult to explain, and she seemed deprived of the powers of speech and reflection. When she became calmer and more capable of analysing her feelings, she was astonished not to feel towards her husband the same affection which had moved her so strongly a few hours before. It was certainly himself, those were the same features, that was the man to whom she had willingly given her hand, her heart, herself, and yet now that she saw him again a cold barrier of shyness, of modesty, seemed to have risen between them. His first kiss, even, had not made her happy: she blushed and felt saddened—a curious result of the long absence! She could not define the changes wrought by years in his appearance: his countenance seemed harsher, yet the lines of his face, his outer man, his whole personality, did not seem altered, but his soul had changed its nature, a different mind looked forth from those eyes. Bertrande knew him for her husband, and yet she hesitated. Even so Penelope, on the return of Ulysses, required a certain proof to confirm the evidence of her eyes, and her long absent husband had to remind her of secrets known only to herself.

Martin, however, as if he understood Bertrande's feeling and divined some secret mistrust, used the most tender and affectionate phrases, and even the very pet names which close intimacy had formerly endeared to them.

"My queen," he said, "my beautiful dove, can you not lay aside your resentment? Is it still so strong that no submission can soften it? Cannot my repentance find grace in your eyes? My Bertrande, my Bertha, my Bertranilla, as I used to call you."

She tried to smile, but stopped short, puzzled; the names were the very same, but the inflexion of voice quite different.

Martin took her hands in his. "What pretty hands! Do you still wear my ring? Yes, here it is, and with it the sapphire ring I gave you the day Sanxi was born."

Bertrande did not answer, but she took the child and placed him in his father's arms.

Martin showered caresses on his son, and spoke of the time

when he carried him as a baby in the garden, lifting him up to the fruit trees, so that he could reach and try to bite the fruit. He recollected one day when the poor child got his leg terribly torn by thorns, and convinced himself, not without emotion, that the scar could still be seen.

Bertrande was touched by this display of affectionate recollections, and felt vexed at her own coldness. She came up to Martin and laid her hand in his. He said gently—

"My departure caused you great grief: I now repent what I did. But I was young, I was proud, and your reproaches were unjust."

"Ah!" said she, "you have not forgotten the cause of our quarrel?"

"It was little Rose, our neighbour, whom you said I was making love to, because you found us together at the spring in the little wood. I explained that we met only by chance,—besides, she was only a child,—but you would not listen, and in your anger——"

"Ah! forgive me, Martin, forgive me!" she interrupted, in confusion.

"In your blind anger you took up, I know not what, something which lay handy, and flung it at me. And here is the mark," he continued, smiling, "this scar, which is still to be seen."

"Oh, Martin!" Bertrande exclaimed, "can you ever forgive me?"

"As you see," Martin replied, kissing her tenderly.

Much moved, Bertrande swept aside his hair, and looked at the scar visible on his forehead.

"But," she said, with surprise not free from alarm, "this scar seems to me like a fresh one."

"Ah!" Martin explained, with a little embarrassment; "it reopened lately. But I had thought no more about it. Let us forget it, Bertrande; I should not like a recollection which might make you think yourself less dear to me than you once were."

And he drew her upon his knee. She repelled him gently.

"Send the child to bed," said Martin. "To-morrow shall be for him; to-night you have the first place, Bertrande, you only."

The boy kissed his father and went.

Bertrande came and knelt beside her husband, regarding him attentively with an uneasy smile, which did not appear to please him by any means.

"What is the matter?" said he. "Why do you examine me thus?"

"I do not know—forgive me, oh! forgive me! . . . But the happiness of seeing you was so great and unexpected, it is all like a dream. I must try to become accustomed to it; give me some time to collect myself; let me spend this night in prayer. I ought to offer my joy and my thanksgiving to Almighty God——"

"Not so," interrupted her husband, passing his arms round her neck and stroking her beautiful hair. "No; 'tis to me that your first thoughts are due. After so much weariness, my rest is in again beholding you, and my happiness after so many trials will be found in your love. That hope has supported me throughout, and I long to be assured that it is no illusion." So saying, he endeavoured to raise her.

"Oh," she murmured, "I pray you leave me."

"What!" he exclaimed angrily. "Bertrande, is this your love? Is it thus you keep faith with me? You will make me doubt the evidence of your friends; you will make me think that indifference, or even another love——"

"You insult me," said Bertrande, rising to her feet.

He caught her in his arms. "No, no; I think nothing which could wound you, my queen, and I believe your fidelity, even as before, you know, on that first journey, when you wrote me these loving letters which I have treasured ever since. Here they are." And he drew forth some papers, on which Bertrande recognised her own handwriting. "Yes," he continued, "I have read and re-read them. See, you spoke then of your love and the sorrows of absence. But why all this trouble and terror? You tremble, just as you did when I first received you from your father's hands. . . . It was here, in this

very room. . . . You begged me then to leave you, to let you spend the night in prayer; but I insisted, do you remember? and pressed you to my heart, as I do now."

"Oh," she murmured weakly, "have pity!"

But the words were intercepted by a kiss, and the remembrance of the past, the happiness of the present, resumed their sway; the imaginary terrors were forgotten, and the curtains closed around the marriage-bed.

The next day was a festival in the village of Artigues. Martin returned the visits of all who had come to welcome him the previous night, and there were endless recognitions and embracings. The young men remembered that he had played with them when they were little; the old men, that they had been at his wedding when he was only twelve. The women remembered having envied Bertrande, especially the pretty Rose, daughter of Marcel, the apothecary, she who had roused the demon of jealousy in the poor wife's heart. And Rose knew quite well that the jealousy was not without some cause; for Martin had indeed shown her attention, and she was unable to see him again without emotion. She was now the wife of a rich peasant, ugly, old, and jealous, and she compared, sighing, her unhappy lot with that of her more fortunate neighbour. Martin's sisters detained him amongst them, and spoke of their childish games and of their parents, both dead in Biscay. Martin dried the tears which flowed at these recollections of the past, and turned their thoughts to rejoicing. Banquets were given and received. Martin invited all his relations and former friends; an easy gaiety prevailed. It was remarked that the hero of the feast refrained from wine; he was thereupon reproached, but answered that on account of the wounds he had received he was obliged to avoid excess. The excuse was admitted, the result of Martin's precautions being that he kept a clear head on his shoulders, while all the rest had their tongues loosed by drunkenness.

"Ah!" exclaimed one of the guests, who had studied a little medicine, "Martin is quite right to be afraid of drink. Wounds which have thoroughly healed may be reopened and

inflamed by intemperance, and wine in the case of recent wounds is deadly poison. Men have died on the field of battle in an hour or two merely because they had swallowed a little brandy."

Martin Guerre grew pale, and began a conversation with the pretty Rose, his neighbour. Bertrande observed this, but without uneasiness; she had suffered too much from her former suspicions, besides her husband showed her so much affection that she was now quite happy.

When the first few days were over, Martin began to look into his affairs. His property had suffered by his long absence, and he was obliged to go to Biscay to claim his little estate there, the law having already laid hands upon it. It was several months before, by dint of making judicious sacrifices, he could regain possession of the house and fields which had belonged to his father. This at last accomplished, he returned to Artigues, in order to resume the management of his wife's property, and with this end in view, about eleven months after his return, he paid a visit to his uncle Pierre.

Pierre was expecting him; he was extremely polite, desired Martin to sit down, overwhelmed him with compliments, knitting his brows as he discovered that his nephew decidedly meant business. Martin broke silence.

"Uncle," he said, "I come to thank you for the care you have taken of my wife's property; she could never have managed it alone. You have received the income in the family interest: as a good guardian, I expected no less from your affection. But now that I have returned, and am free from other cares, we will go over the accounts, if you please."

His uncle coughed and cleared his voice before replying, then said slowly, as if counting his words—

"It is all accounted for, my dear nephew; Heaven be praised! I don't owe you anything."

"What!" exclaimed the astonished Martin, "but the whole income?"

"Was well and properly employed in the maintenance of your wife and child."

"What! a thousand livres for that? And Bertrande lived alone, so quietly and simply! Nonsense! it is impossible."

"Any surplus," resumed the old man, quite unmoved, —"any surplus went to pay the expenses of seed-time and harvest."

"What! at a time when labour costs next to nothing?"

"Here is the account," said Pierre.

"Then the account is a false one," returned his nephew.

Pierre thought it advisable to appear extremely offended and angry, and Martin, exasperated at his evident dishonesty, took still higher ground, and threatened to bring an action against him. Pierre ordered him to leave the house, and suiting actions to words, took hold of his arm to enforce his departure. Martin, furious, turned and raised his fist to strike.

"What! strike your uncle, wretched boy!" exclaimed the old man.

Martin's hand dropped, but he left the house uttering reproaches and insults, among which Pierre distinguished:

"Cheat that you are!"

"That is a word I shall remember," cried the angry old man, slamming his door violently.

Martin brought an action before the judge at Rieux, and in course of time obtained a decree, which, reviewing the accounts presented by Pierre, disallowed them, and condemned the dishonest guardian to pay his nephew four hundred livres for each year of his administration. The day on which this sum had to be disbursed from his strong box the old usurer vowed vengeance, but until he could gratify his hatred he was forced to conceal it, and to receive attempts at reconciliation with a friendly smile. It was not until six months later, on the occasion of a joyous festivity, that Martin again set foot in his uncle's house. The bells were ringing for the birth of a child, there was great gaiety at Bertrande's house, where all the guests were waiting on the threshold for the godfather in order to take the infant to church, and when Martin appeared, escorting his uncle, who was adorned with a huge bouquet for the occasion, and who now came forward and took the hand of

Rose, the pretty godmother, there were cries of joy on all sides. Bertrande was delighted at this reconciliation, and dreamed only of happiness. She was so happy now, her long sorrow was atoned for, her regret was at an end, her prayers seemed to have been heard, the long interval between the former delights and the present seemed wiped out as if the bond of union had never been broken, and if she remembered her grief at all, it was only to intensify the new joys by comparison. She loved her husband more than ever; he was full of affection for her, and she was grateful for his love. The past had now no shadow, the future no cloud, and the birth of a daughter, drawing still closer the links which united them, seemed a new pledge of felicity. Alas! the horizon which appeared so bright and clear to the poor woman was doomed soon again to be overcast.

The very evening of the christening party, a band of musicians and jugglers happened to pass through the village, and the inhabitants showed themselves liberal. Pierre asked questions, and found that the leader of the band was a Spaniard. He invited the man to his own house, and remained closeted with him for nearly an hour, dismissing him at length with a refilled purse. Two days later the old man announced to the family that he was going to Picardy to see a former partner on a matter of business, and he departed accordingly, saying he should return before long.

The day on which Bertrande again saw her uncle was, indeed, a terrible one. She was sitting by the cradle of the lately-born infant, watching for its awakening, when the door opened, and Pierre Guerre strode in. Bertrande drew back with an instinct of terror as soon as she saw him, for his expression was at once wicked and joyful—an expression of gratified hate, of mingled rage and triumph, and his smile was terrible to behold. She did not venture to speak, but motioned him to a seat. He came straight up to her, and raising his head, said loudly—

"Kneel down at once, madame—kneel down, and ask pardon from Almighty God!"

"Are you mad, Pierre?" she replied, gazing at him in astonishment.

"You, at least, ought to know that I am not."

"Pray for forgiveness — I — ! and what for, in Heaven's name?"

"For the crime in which you are an accomplice."

"Please explain yourself."

"Oh!" said Pierre, with bitter irony, "a woman always thinks herself innocent as long as her sin is hidden; she thinks the truth will never be known, and her conscience goes quietly to sleep, forgetting her faults. Here is a woman who thought her sins nicely concealed; chance favoured her: an absent husband, probably no more; another man so exactly like him in height, face, and manner that everyone else is deceived! Is it strange that a weak, sensitive woman, wearied of widowhood, should willingly allow herself to be imposed on?"

Bertrande listened without understanding; she tried to interrupt, but Pierre went on—

"It was easy to accept this stranger without having to blush for it, easy to give him the name and the rights of a husband! She could even appear faithful while really guilty; she could seem constant, though really fickle; and she could, under a veil of mystery, at once reconcile her honour, her duty—perhaps even her love."

"What on earth do you mean?" cried Bertrande, wringing her hands in terror.

"That you are countenancing an impostor who is not your husband."

Feeling as if the ground were passing from beneath her, Bertrande staggered, and caught at the nearest piece of furniture to save herself from falling; then, collecting all her strength to meet this extraordinary attack, she faced the old man.

"What! my husband, your nephew, an impostor!"

"Don't you know it?"

"I!!"

This cry, which came from her heart, convinced Pierre that

she did not know, and that she had sustained a terrible shock. He continued more quietly—

"What, Bertrande, is it possible you were really deceived?"

"Pierre, you are killing me; your words are torture. No more mystery, I entreat. What do you know? What do you suspect? Tell me plainly at once."

"Have you courage to hear it?"

"I must," said the trembling woman.

"God is my witness that I would willingly have kept it from you, but you must know; if only for the safety of your soul entangled in so deadly a snare, . . . there is yet time, if you follow my advice. Listen: the man with whom you are living, who dares to call himself Martin Guerre, is a cheat, an impostor——"

"How dare you say so?"

"Because I have discovered it. Yes, I had always a vague suspicion, an uneasy feeling, and in spite of the marvellous resemblance I could never feel as if he were really my sister's child. The day he raised his hand to strike me—yes, that day I condemned him utterly. . . . Chance has justified me! A wandering Spaniard, an old soldier, who spent a night in the village here, was also present at the battle of St. Quentin, and saw Martin Guerre receive a terrible gunshot wound in the leg. After the battle, being wounded, he betook himself to the neighbouring village, and distinctly heard a surgeon in the next room say that a wounded man must have his leg amputated, and would very likely not survive the operation. The door opened, he saw the sufferer, and knew him for Martin Guerre. So much the Spaniard told me. Acting on this information, I went on pretence of business to the village he named, I questioned the inhabitants, and this is what I learned."

"Well?" said Bertrande, pale, and gasping with emotion.

I learned that the wounded man had his leg taken off, and, as the surgeon predicted, he must have died in a few hours, for he was never seen again."

Bertrande remained a few moments as if annihilated by this appalling revelation; then, endeavouring to repel the horrible thought—

"No," she cried, "no, it is impossible! It is a lie intended to ruin him—to ruin us all."

"What! you do not believe me?"

"No, never, never!"

"Say rather you pretend to disbelieve me: the truth has pierced your heart, but you wish to deny it. Think, however, of the danger to your immortal soul."

"Silence, wretched man! . . . No, God would not send me so terrible a trial. What proof can you show of the truth of your words?"

"The witnesses I have mentioned."

"Nothing more?"

"No, not as yet."

"Fine proofs indeed! The story of a vagabond who flattered your hatred in hope of a reward, the gossip of a distant village, the recollections of ten years back, and finally, your own word, the word of a man who seeks only revenge, the word of a man who swore to make Martin pay dearly for the results of his own avarice, a man of furious passions such as yours! No, Pierre, no, I do not believe you, and I never will!"

"Other people may perhaps be less incredulous, and if I accuse him publicly——"

"Then I shall contradict you publicly!" And coming quickly forward, her eyes shining with virtuous anger—

"Leave this house, go," she said; "it is you yourself who are the impostor—go!"

"I shall yet know how to convince everyone, and will make you acknowledge it," cried the furious old man.

He went out, and Bertrande sank exhausted into a chair. All the strength which had supported her against Pierre vanished as soon as she was alone, and in spite of her resistance to suspicion, the terrible light of doubt penetrated her heart, and extinguished the pure torch of trustfulness which had guided her hitherto—a doubt, alas! which attacked at once her honour and her love, for she loved with all a woman's tender affection. Just as actual poison gradually penetrates and circulates through the whole system, corrupting the blood

and affecting the very sources of life until it causes the destruction of the whole body, so does that mental poison, suspicion, extend its ravages in the soul which has received it. Bertrande remembered with terror her first feelings at the sight of the returned Martin Guerre, her involuntary repugnance, her astonishment at not feeling more in touch with the husband whom she had so sincerely regretted. She remembered also, as if she saw it for the first time, that Martin, formerly quick, lively, and hasty tempered, now seemed thoughtful, and fully master of himself.

This change of character she had supposed due to the natural development of age, she now trembled at the idea of another possible cause. Some other little details began to occur to her mind—the forgetfulness or abstraction of her husband as to a few insignificant things; thus it sometimes happened that he did not answer to his name of Martin, also that he mistook the road to a hermitage, formerly well known to them both, and again that he could not answer when addressed in Basque, although he himself had taught her the little she knew of this language. Besides, since his return, he would never write in her presence, did he fear that she would notice some difference? She had paid little or no attention to these trifles; now, pieced together, they assumed an alarming importance. An appalling terror seized Bertrande: was she to remain in this uncertainty, or should she seek an explanation which might prove her destruction? And how discover the truth—by questioning the guilty man, by noting his confusion, his change of colour, by forcing a confession from him? But she had lived with him for two years, he was the father of her child, she could not ruin him without ruining herself, and, an explanation once sought, she could neither punish him and escape disgrace, nor pardon him without sharing his guilt. To reproach him with his conduct and then keep silence would destroy her peace for ever; to cause a scandal by denouncing him would bring dishonour upon herself and her child. Night found her involved in these hideous perplexities, too weak to surmount them; an icy chill came over her, she went to bed, and awoke

in a high fever. For several days she hovered between life and death, and Martin Guerre bestowed the most tender care upon her. She was greatly moved thereby, having one of those impressionable minds which recognise kindness fully as much as injury. When she was a little recovered and her mental power began to return, she had only a vague recollection of what had occurred, and thought she had had a frightful dream. She asked if Pierre Guerre had been to see her, and found he had not been near the house. This could only be explained by the scene which had taken place, and she then recollected all—the accusation Pierre had made, her own observations which had confirmed it, all her grief and trouble. She inquired about the village news. Pierre, evidently, had kept silence—why? Had he seen that his suspicions were unjust, or was he only seeking further evidence? She sank back into her cruel uncertainty, and resolved to watch Martin closely, before deciding as to his guilt or innocence.

How was she to suppose that God had created two faces so exactly alike, two beings precisely similar, and then sent them together into the world, and on the same track, merely to compass the ruin of an unhappy woman! A terrible idea took possession of her mind, an idea not uncommon in an age of superstition, namely, that the Enemy himself could assume human form, and could borrow the semblance of a dead man in order to capture another soul for his infernal kingdom. Acting on this idea, she hastened to the church, paid for masses to be said, and prayed fervently. She expected every day to see the demon forsake the body he had animated, but her vows, offerings, and prayers had no result. But Heaven sent her an idea which she wondered had not occurred to her sooner. "If the Tempter," she said to herself, "has taken the form of my beloved husband, his power being supreme for evil, the resemblance would be exact, and no difference, however slight, would exist. If, however, it is only another man who resembles him, God must have made them with some slight distinguishing marks."

She then remembered, what she had not thought of before,

having been quite unsuspicious before her uncle's accusation, and nearly out of her mind between mental and bodily suffering since. She remembered that on her husband's left shoulder, almost on the neck, there used to be one of those small, almost imperceptible, but ineffaceable birth-marks. Martin wore his hair very long, it was difficult to see if the mark were there or not. One night, while he slept, Bertrande cut away a lock of hair from the place where this sign ought to be—it was not there!

Convinced at length of the deception, Bertrande suffered inexpressible anguish. This man whom she had loved and respected for two whole years, whom she had taken to her heart as a husband bitterly mourned for—this man was a cheat, an infamous impostor, and she, all unknowing, was yet a guilty woman! Her child was illegitimate, and the curse of Heaven was due to this sacrilegious union. To complete the misfortune, she was already expecting another infant. She would have killed herself, but her religion and the love of her children forbade it. Kneeling before her child's cradle, she entreated pardon from the father of the one for the father of the other. She would not bring herself to proclaim aloud their infamy.

"Oh!" she said, "thou whom I loved, thou who art no more, thou knowest no guilty thought ever entered my mind! When I saw this man, I thought I beheld thee; when I was happy, I thought I owed it to thee; it was thee whom I loved in him. Surely thou dost not desire that by a public avowal I should bring shame and disgrace on these children and on myself."

She rose calm and strengthened: it seemed as if a heavenly inspiration had marked out her duty. To suffer in silence, such was the course she adopted,—a life of sacrifice and self-denial which she offered to God as an expiation for her involuntary sin. But who can understand the workings of the human heart? This man whom she ought to have loathed, this man who had made her an innocent partner in his crime, this unmasked impostor whom she should have beheld only with

disgust, she—loved him! The force of habit, the ascendancy he had obtained over her, the love he had shown her, a thousand sympathies felt in her inmost heart, all these had so much influence, that, instead of accusing and cursing him, she sought to excuse him on the plea of a passion to which, doubtless, he had yielded when usurping the name and place of another. She feared punishment for him yet more than disgrace for herself, and though resolved to no longer allow him the rights purchased by crime, she yet trembled at the idea of losing his love. It was this above all which decided her to keep eternal silence about her discovery; one single word which proved that his imposture was known would raise an insurmountable barrier between them.

To conceal her trouble entirely was, however, beyond her power; her eyes frequently showed traces of her secret tears. Martin several times asked the cause of her sorrow; she tried to smile and excuse herself, only immediately sinking back into her gloomy thoughts. Martin thought it mere caprice; he observed her loss of colour, her hollow cheeks, and concluded that age was impairing her beauty, and became less attentive to her. His absences became longer and more frequent, and he did not conceal his impatience and annoyance at being watched; for her looks hung upon his, and she observed his coldness and change with much grief. Having sacrificed all in order to retain his love, she now saw it slowly slipping away from her.

Another person also observed attentively. Pierre Guerre since his explanation with Bertrande had apparently discovered no more evidence, and did not dare to bring an accusation without some positive proofs. Consequently he lost no chance of watching the proceedings of his supposed nephew, silently hoping that chance might put him on the track of a discovery. He also concluded from Bertrande's state of melancholy that she had convinced herself of the fraud, but had resolved to conceal it.

Martin was then endeavouring to sell a part of his property, and this necessitated frequent interviews with the lawyers of the

neighbouring town. Twice in the week he went to Rieux, and to make the journey easier, used to start on horseback about seven in the evening, sleep at Rieux, and return the following afternoon. This arrangement did not escape his enemy's notice, who was not long in convincing himself that part of the time ostensibly spent on this journey was otherwise employed.

Towards ten o'clock on the evening of a dark night, the door of a small house lying about half a gunshot from the village opened gently for the exit of a man wrapped in a large cloak, followed by a young woman, who accompanied him some distance. Arrived at the parting point, they separated with a tender kiss and a few murmured words of adieu; the lover took his horse, which was fastened to a tree, mounted, and rode off towards Rieux. When the sounds died away, the woman turned slowly and sadly towards her home, but as she approached the door a man suddenly turned the corner of the house and barred her way. Terrified, she was on the point of crying for help, when he seized her arm and ordered her to be silent.

"Rose," he whispered, "I know everything: that man is your lover. In order to receive him safely, you send your old husband to sleep by means of a drug stolen from your father's shop. This intrigue has been going on for a month; twice a week, at seven o'clock, your door is opened to this man, who does not proceed on his way to the town until ten. I know your lover: he is my nephew."

Petrified with terror, Rose fell on her knees and implored mercy.

"Yes," replied Pierre, "you may well be frightened: I have your secret. I have only to publish it and you are ruined for ever."

"You will not do it!" entreated the guilty woman, clasping her hands.

"I have only to tell your husband," continued Pierre, "that his wife has dishonoured him, and to explain the reason of his unnaturally heavy sleep."

"He will kill me!"

"No doubt: he is jealous, he is an Italian, he will know how to avenge himself—even as I do."

"But I never did you any harm," Rose cried in despair. "Oh! have pity, have mercy, and spare me!"

"On one condition."

"What is it?"

"Come with me."

Terrified almost out of her mind, Rose allowed him to lead her away.

Bertrande had just finished her evening prayer, and was preparing for bed, when she was startled by several knocks at her door. Thinking that perhaps some neighbour was in need of help, she opened it immediately, and to her astonishment beheld a dishevelled woman whom Pierre grasped by the arm. He exclaimed vehemently—

"Here is thy judge! Now, confess all to Bertrande!"

Bertrande did not at once recognise the woman, who fell at her feet, overcome by Pierre's threats.

"Tell the truth here," he continued, "or I go and tell it to your husband, at your own home!"

"Ah! madame, kill me," said the unhappy creature, hiding her face; "let me rather die by your hand than his!"

Bertrande, bewildered, did not understand the position in the least, but she recognised Rose.

"But what is the matter, madame? Why are you here at this hour, pale and weeping? Why has my uncle dragged you hither? I am to judge you, does he say? Of what crime are you guilty?"

"Martin might answer that, if he were here," remarked Pierre.

A lightning flash of jealousy shot through Bertrande's soul at these words, all her former suspicions revived.

"What!" she said, "my husband! What do you mean?"

"That he left this woman's house only a little while ago, that for a month they have been meeting secretly. You are betrayed: I have seen them, and she does not dare to deny it."

"Have mercy!" cried Rose, still kneeling.

The cry was a confession. Bertrande became pale as death. "O God!" she murmured, "deceived, betrayed—and by him!"

"For a month past," repeated the old man.

"Oh! the wretch," she continued, with increasing passion; "then his whole life is a lie! He has abused my credulity, he now abuses my love! He does not know me! He thinks he can trample on me—me, in whose power are his fortune, his honour, his very life itself!"

Then, turning to Rose—

"And you, miserable woman! by what unworthy artifice did you gain his love? Was it by witchcraft? or some poisonous philtre learned from your worthy father?"

"Alas! no, madame; my weakness is my only crime, and also my only excuse. I loved him, long ago, when I was only a young girl, and these memories have been my ruin."

"Memories? What! did you also think you were loving the same man? Are you also his dupe? Or are you only pretending, in order to find a rag of excuse to cover your wickedness?"

It was now Rose who failed to understand; Bertrande continued, with growing excitement—

"Yes, it was not enough to usurp the rights of a husband and father, he thought to play his part still better by deceiving the mistress also. . . . Ah! it is amusing, is it not? You also, Rose, you thought he was your old lover! Well, I at least am excusable, I the wife, who only thought she was faithful to her husband!"

"What does it all mean?" asked the terrified Rose.

"It means that this man is an impostor and that I will unmask him. Revenge! revenge!"

Pierre came forward. "Bertrande," he said, "so long as I thought you were happy, when I feared to disturb your peace, I was silent, I repressed my just indignation, and I spared the usurper of the name and rights of my nephew. Do you now give me leave to speak?"

"Yes," she replied in a hollow voice.

"You will not contradict me?"

By way of answer she sat down by the table and wrote a few hasty lines with a trembling hand, then gave them to Pierre, whose eyes sparkled with joy.

"Yes," he said, "vengeance for him, but for her pity. Let this humiliation be her only punishment. I promised silence in return for confession, will you grant it?"

Bertrande assented with a contemptuous gesture.

"Go, fear not," said the old man, and Rose went out. Pierre also left the house.

Left to herself, Bertrande felt utterly worn out by so much emotion; indignation gave way to depression. She began to realise what she had done, and the scandal which would fall on her own head. Just then her baby awoke, and held out its arms, smiling, and calling for its father. Its father, was he not a criminal? Yes! but was it for her to ruin him, to invoke the law, to send him to death, after having taken him to her heart, to deliver him to infamy which would recoil on her own head and her child's and on the infant which was yet unborn? If he had sinned before God, was it not for God to punish him? if against herself, ought she not rather to overwhelm him with contempt? But to invoke the help of strangers to expiate this offence, to lay bare the troubles of her life, to unveil the sanctuary of the nuptial couch—in short, to summon the whole world to behold this fatal scandal, was not that what in her imprudent anger she had really done? She repented bitterly of her haste, she sought to avert the consequences, and notwithstanding the night and the bad weather, she hurried at once to Pierre's dwelling, hoping at all costs to withdraw her denunciation. He was not there: he had at once taken a horse and started for Rieux. Her accusation was already on its way to the magistrates!

At break of day the house where Martin Guerre lodged when at Rieux was surrounded by soldiers. He came forward with confidence and inquired what was wanted. On hearing the accusation, he changed colour slightly, then collected him-

self, and made no resistance. When he came before the judge, Bertrande's petition was read to him, declaring him to be "an impostor, who falsely, audaciously, and treacherously had deceived her by taking the name and assuming the person of Martin Guerre," and demanding that he should be required to entreat pardon from God, the king, and herself.

The prisoner listened calmly to the charge, and met it courageously, only evincing profound surprise at such a step being taken by a wife who had lived with him for two years since his return, and who only now thought of disputing the rights he had so long enjoyed. As he was ignorant both of Bertrande's suspicions and their confirmation, and also of the jealousy which had inspired her accusation, his astonishment was perfectly natural, and did not at all appear to be assumed. He attributed the whole charge to the machinations of his uncle, Pierre Guerre; an old man, he said, who, being governed entirely by avarice and the desire of revenge, now disputed his name and rights, in order the better to deprive him of his property, which might be worth from sixteen to eighteen hundred livres. In order to attain his end, this wicked man had not hesitated to pervert his wife's mind, and at the risk of her own dishonour had instigated this calumnious charge—a horrible and unheard-of thing in the mouth of a lawful wife. "Ah! I do not blame her," he cried; "she must suffer more than I do, if she really entertains doubts such as these; but I deplore her readiness to listen to these extraordinary calumnies originated by my enemy."

The judge was a good deal impressed by so much assurance. The accused was relegated to prison, whence he was brought two days later to encounter a formal examination.

He began by explaining the cause of his long absence, originating, he said, in a domestic quarrel, as his wife well remembered. He then related his life during these eight years. At first he wandered over the country, wherever his curiosity and the love of travel led him. He then had crossed the frontier, revisited Biscay, where he was born, and having entered the service of the Cardinal of Burgos, he passed thence

into the army of the King of Spain. He was wounded at the battle of St. Quentin, conveyed to a neighbouring village, where he recovered, although threatened with amputation. Anxious to again behold his wife and child, his other relations and the land of his adoption, he returned to Artigues, where he was immediately recognised by everyone, including the identical Pierre Guerre, his uncle, who now had the cruelty to disavow him. In fact, the latter had shown him special affection up to the day when Martin required an account of his stewardship. Had he only had the cowardice to sacrifice his money and thereby defraud his children, he would not to-day be charged as an impostor. "But," continued Martin, "I resisted, and a violent quarrel ensued, in which anger perhaps carried me too far; Pierre Guerre, cunning and revengeful, has waited in silence. He has taken his time and his measures to organise this plot, hoping thereby to obtain his ends, to bring justice to the help of his avarice, and to acquire the spoils he coveted, and revenge for his defeat, by means of a sentence obtained from the scruples of the judges." Besides these explanations, which did not appear wanting in probability, Martin vehemently protested his innocence, demanding that his wife should be confronted with him, and declaring that in his presence she would not sustain the charge of personation brought against him, and that her mind not being animated by the blind hatred which dominated his persecutor, the truth would undoubtedly prevail.

He now, in his turn, demanded that the judge should acknowledge his innocence, and prove it by condemning his calumniators to the punishment invoked against himself; that his wife, Bertrande de Rolls, should be secluded in some house where her mind could no longer be perverted, and, finally, that his innocence should be declared, and expenses and compensation awarded him.

After this speech, delivered with warmth, and with every token of sincerity, he answered without difficulty all the interrogations of the judge. The following are some of the questions and answers, just as they have come down to us:—

"In what part of Biscay were you born?"

"In the village of Aymes, province of Guipuscoa."

"What were the names of your parents?"

"Antonio Guerre and Marie Toreada."

"Are they still living?"

"My father died June 15, 1530; my mother survived him three years and twelve days."

"Have you any brothers and sisters?"

"I had one brother, who only lived three months. My four sisters, Inèz, Dorothea, Marietta, and Pedrina, all came to live at Artigues when I did; they are there still, and they all recognised me."

"What is the date of your marriage?"

"January 10, 1539."

"Who were present at the ceremony?"

"My father-in-law, my mother-in-law, my uncle, my two sisters, Maître Marcel and his daughter Rose; a neighbour called Claude Perrin, who got drunk at the wedding feast; also Giraud, the poet, who composed verses in our honour."

"Who was the priest who married you?"

"The old curé, Pascal Guérin, whom I did not find alive when I returned."

"What special circumstances occurred on the wedding-day?"

"At midnight exactly, our neighbour, Catherine Boëre, brought us the repast which is known as 'medianoche.' This woman has recognised me, as also our old Marguerite, who has remained with us ever since the wedding."

"What is the date of your son's birth?"

"February 10, 1548, nine years after our marriage. I was only twelve when the ceremony took place, and did not arrive at manhood till several years later."

"Give the date of your leaving Artigues."

"It was in August 1549. As I left the village, I met Claude Perrin and the curé Pascal, and took leave of them. I went towards Beauvais, and I passed through Orleans, Bourges, Limoges, Bordeaux, and Toulouse. If you want the names of people whom I saw and to whom I spoke, you can have them. What more can I say?"

Never, indeed, was there a more apparently veracious statement! All the doings of Martin Guerre seemed to be most faithfully described, and surely only himself could thus narrate his own actions. As the historian remarks, alluding to the story of Amphitryon, Mercury himself could not better reproduce all Sosia's actions, gestures, and words, than did the false Martin Guerre those of the real one.

In accordance with the demand of the accused, Bertrande de Rolls was detained in seclusion, in order to remove her from the influence of Pierre Guerre. The latter, however, did not waste time, and during the month spent in examining the witnesses cited by Martin, his diligent enemy, guided by some vague traces, departed on a journey, from which he did not return alone.

All the witnesses bore out the statement of the accused; the latter heard this in prison, and rejoiced, hoping for a speedy release. Before long he was again brought before the judge, who told him that his deposition had been confirmed by all the witnesses examined.

"Do you know of no others?" continued the magistrate. "Have you no relatives except those you have mentioned?"

"I have no others," answered the prisoner.

"Then what do you say to this man?" said the judge, opening a door.

An old man issued forth, who fell on the prisoner's neck, exclaiming, "My nephew!"

Martin trembled in every limb, but only for a moment. Promptly recovering himself, and gazing calmly at the newcomer, he asked coolly—

"And who may you be?"

"What!" said the old man, "do you not know me? Dare you deny me?—me, your mother's brother, Carbon Barreau, the old soldier! Me, who dandled you on my knee in your infancy; me, who taught you later to carry a musket; me, who met you during the war at an inn in Picardy, when you fled secretly. Since then I have sought you everywhere; I have spoken of you, and described your face and person, until a

worthy inhabitant of this country offered to bring me hither, where indeed I did not expect to find my sister's son imprisoned and fettered as a malefactor. What is his crime, may it please your honour?"

"You shall hear," replied the magistrate. "Then you identify the prisoner as your nephew? You affirm his name to be——?"

"Arnauld du Thill, also called 'Pansette,' after his father, Jacques Pansa. His mother was Thérèse Barreau, my sister, and he was born in the village of Sagias."

"What have you to say?" demanded the judge, turning to the accused.

"Three things," replied the latter, unabashed: "this man is either mad, or he has been suborned to tell lies, or he is simply mistaken."

The old man was struck dumb with astonishment. But his supposed nephew's start of terror had not been lost upon the judge, also much impressed by the straightforward frankness of Carbon Barreau. He caused fresh investigations to be made, and other inhabitants of Sagias were summoned to Rieux, who one and all agreed in identifying the accused as the same Arnauld du Thill who had been born and had grown up under their very eyes. Several deposed that as he grew up he had taken to evil courses, and become an adept in theft and lying, not fearing even to take the sacred name of God in vain, in order to cover the untruth of his daring assertions. From such testimony the judge naturally concluded that Arnauld du Thill was quite capable of carrying on an imposture, and that the impudence which he displayed was natural to his character. Moreover, he noted that the prisoner, who averred that he was born in Biscay, knew only a few words of the Basque language, and used these quite wrongly. He heard later another witness who deposed that the original Martin Guerre was a good wrestler and skilled in the art of fence, whereas the prisoner, having wished to try what he could do, showed no skill whatever. Finally, a shoemaker was interrogated, and his evidence was not the least damning. Martin Guerre, he declared, required

twelve holes to lace his boots, and his surprise had been great when he found those of the prisoner had only nine. Considering all these points, and the cumulative evidence, the judge of Rieux set aside the favourable testimony, which he concluded had been the outcome of general credulity, imposed on by an extraordinary resemblance. He gave due weight also to Bertrande's accusation, although she had never confirmed it, and now maintained an obstinate silence; and he pronounced a judgment by which Arnauld du Thill was declared "attainted and convicted of imposture, and was therefore condemned to be beheaded; after which his body should be divided into four quarters, and exposed at the four corners of the town."

This sentence, as soon as it was known, caused much diversity of opinion in the town. The prisoner's enemies praised the wisdom of the judge, and those less prejudiced condemned his decision; as such conflicting testimony left room for doubt. Besides, it was thought that the possession of property and the future of the children required much consideration, also that the most absolute certainty was demanded before annulling a past of two whole years, untroubled by any counter claim whatever.

The condemned man appealed from this sentence to the Parliament of Toulouse. This court decided that the case required more careful consideration than had yet been given to it, and began by ordering Arnauld du Thill to be confronted with Pierre Guerre and Bertrande de Rolls.

Who can say what feelings animate a man who, already once condemned, finds himself subjected to a second trial? The torture scarcely ended begins again, and Hope, though reduced to a shadow, regains her sway over his imagination, which clings to her skirts, as it were, with desperation. The exhausting efforts must be recommenced; it is the last struggle—a struggle which is more desperate in proportion as there is less strength to maintain it. In this case the defendant was not one of those who are easily cast down; he collected all his energy, all his courage, hoping to come victoriously out of the new combat which lay before him.

The magistrates assembled in the great hall of the Parliament, and the prisoner appeared before them. He had first to deal with Pierre, and confronted him calmly, letting him speak, without showing any emotion. He then replied with indignant reproaches, dwelling on Pierre's greed and avarice, his vows of vengeance, the means employed to work upon Bertrande, his secret manœuvres in order to gain his ends, and the unheard-of animosity displayed in hunting up accusers, witnesses, and calumniators. He defied Pierre to prove that he was not Martin Guerre, his nephew, inasmuch as Pierre had publicly acknowledged and embraced him, and his tardy suspicions only dated from the time of their violent quarrel. His language was so strong and vehement, that Pierre became confused and was unable to answer, and the encounter turned entirely in Arnauld's favour, who seemed to overawe his adversary from a height of injured innocence, while the latter appeared as a disconcerted slanderer.

The scene of his confrontation with Bertrande took a wholly different character. The poor woman, pale, cast down, worn by sorrow, came staggering before the tribunal, in an almost fainting condition. She endeavoured to collect herself, but as soon as she saw the prisoner she hung her head and covered her face with her hands. He approached her and besought her in the gentlest accents not to persist in an accusation which might send him to the scaffold, not thus to avenge any sins he might have committed against her, although he could not reproach himself with any really serious fault.

Bertrande started, and murmured in a whisper, "And Rose?"

"Ah!" Arnold exclaimed, astonished at this revelation.

His part was instantly taken. Turning to the judges—

"Gentlemen," he said, "my wife is a jealous woman! Ten years ago, when I left her, she had formed these suspicions; they were the cause of my voluntary exile. To-day she again accuses me of guilty relations with the same person; I neither deny nor acknowledge them, but I affirm that it is the blind passion of jealousy which, aided by my uncle's suggestions, guided my wife's hand when she signed this denunciation."

Bertrande remained silent.

"Do you dare," he continued, turning towards her,—"do you dare to swear before God that jealousy did not inspire you with the wish to ruin me?"

"And you," she replied, "dare you swear that I was deceived in my suspicions?"

"You see, gentlemen," exclaimed the prisoner triumphantly, "her jealousy breaks forth before your eyes. Whether I am, or am not, guilty of the sin she attributes to me, is not the question for you to decide. Can you conscientiously admit the testimony of a woman who, after publicly acknowledging me, after receiving me in her house, after living two years in perfect amity with me, has, in a fit of angry vengeance, thought she could give the lie to all her words and actions? Ah! Bertrande," he continued, "if it only concerned my life I think I could forgive a madness of which your love is both the cause and the excuse, but you are a mother, think of that! My punishment will recoil on the head of my daughter, who is unhappy enough to have been born since our reunion, and also on our unborn child, which you condemn beforehand to curse the union which gave it being. Think of this, Bertrande, you will have to answer before God for what you are now doing!"

The unhappy woman fell on her knees, weeping.

"I adjure you," he continued solemnly, "you, my wife, Bertrande de Rolls, to swear now, here, on the crucifix, that I am an impostor and a cheat."

A crucifix was placed before Bertrande; she made a sign as if to push it away, endeavoured to speak, and feebly exclaimed, "No," then fell to the ground, and was carried out insensible.

This scene considerably shook the opinion of the magistrates. They could not believe that an impostor, whatever he might be, would have sufficient daring and presence of mind thus to turn into mockery all that was most sacred. They set a new inquiry on foot, which, instead of producing enlightenment, only plunged them into still greater obscurity. Out of thirty wit-

nesses heard, more than three-quarters agreed in identifying as Martin Guerre the man who claimed his name. Never was greater perplexity caused by more extraordinary appearances. The remarkable resemblance upset all reasoning: some recognised him as Arnauld du Thill, and others asserted the exact contrary. He could hardly understand Basque, some said, though born in Biscay, was that astonishing, seeing he was only three when he left the country? He could neither wrestle nor fence well, but having no occasion to practise these exercises he might well have forgotten them. The shoemaker who made his shoes aforetime, thought he took another measure, but he might have made a mistake before or be mistaken now. The prisoner further defended himself by recapitulating the circumstances of his first meeting with Bertrande on his return, the thousand and one little details he had mentioned which he only could have known, also the letters in his possession, all of which could only be explained by the assumption that he was the veritable Martin Guerre. Was it likely that he would be wounded over the left eye and leg as the missing man was supposed to be? Was it likely that the old servant, that the four sisters, his uncle Pierre, many persons to whom he had related facts known only to himself, that all the community in short, would have recognised him? And even the very intrigue suspected by Bertrande, which had aroused her jealous anger, this very intrigue, if it really existed, was it not another proof of the verity of his claim, since the person concerned, as interested and as penetrating as the legitimate wife, had also accepted him as her former lover? Surely here was a mass of evidence sufficient to cast light on the case. Imagine an impostor arriving for the first time in a place where all the inhabitants are unknown to him, and attempting to personate a man who had dwelt there, who would have connections of all kinds, who would have played his part in a thousand different scenes, who would have confided his secrets, his opinions, to relations, friends, acquaintances, to all sorts of people; who had also a wife—that is to say, a person under whose eyes nearly his whole life would be passed, a person

who would study him perpetually, with whom he would be continually conversing on every sort of subject. Could such an impostor sustain his impersonation for a single day, without his memory playing him false? From the physical and moral impossibility of playing such a part, was it not reasonable to conclude that the accused, who had maintained it for more than two years, was the true Martin Guerre?

There seemed, in fact, to be nothing which could account for such an attempt being successfully made unless recourse was had to an accusation of sorcery. The idea of handing him over to the ecclesiastical authorities was briefly discussed, but proofs were necessary, and the judges hesitated. It is a principle of justice, which has become a precept in law, that in cases of uncertainty the accused has the benefit of the doubt; but at the period of which we are writing, these truths were far from being acknowledged; guilt was presumed rather than innocence; and torture, instituted to force confession from those who could not otherwise be convicted, is only explicable by supposing the judges convinced of the actual guilt of the accused; for no one would have thought of subjecting a possibly innocent person to this suffering. However, notwithstanding this prejudice, which has been handed down to us by some organs of the public ministry always disposed to assume the guilt of a suspected person,—notwithstanding this prejudice, the judges in this case neither ventured to condemn Martin Guerre themselves as an impostor, nor to demand the intervention of the Church. In this conflict of contrary testimony, which seemed to reveal the truth only to immediately obscure it again, in this chaos of arguments and conjectures which showed flashes of light only to extinguish them in greater darkness, consideration for the family prevailed. The sincerity of Bertrande, the future of the children, seemed reasons for proceeding with extreme caution, and this once admitted, could only yield to conclusive evidence. Consequently the Parliament adjourned the case, matters remaining *in statu quô*, pending a more exhaustive inquiry. Meanwhile, the accused, for whom several relations and friends gave

surety, was allowed to be at liberty at Artigues, though remaining under careful surveillance.

Bertrande therefore again saw him an inmate of the house, as if no doubts had ever been cast on the legitimacy of their union. What thoughts passed through her mind during the long *tête-à-tête*? She had accused this man of imposture, and now, notwithstanding her secret conviction, she was obliged to appear as if she had no suspicion, as if she had been mistaken, to humiliate herself before the impostor, and ask forgiveness for the insanity of her conduct; for, having publicly renounced her accusation by refusing to swear to it, she had no alternative left. In order to sustain her part and to save the honour of her children, she must treat this man as her husband and appear submissive and repentant; she must show him entire confidence, as the only means of rehabilitating him and lulling the vigilance of justice. What the widow of Martin Guerre must have suffered in this life of effort was a secret between God and herself, but she looked at her little daughter, she thought of her fast approaching confinement, and took courage.

One evening, towards nightfall, she was sitting near him in the most private corner of the garden, with her little child on her knee, whilst the adventurer, sunk in gloomy thoughts, absently stroked Sanxi's fair head. Both were silent, for at the bottom of their hearts each knew the other's thoughts, and, no longer able to talk familiarly, nor daring to appear estranged, they spent, when alone together, long hours of silent dreariness.

All at once a loud uproar broke the silence of their retreat; they heard the exclamations of many persons, cries of surprise mixed with angry tones, hasty footsteps, then the garden gate was flung violently open, and old Marguerite appeared, pale, gasping, almost breathless. Bertrande hastened towards her in astonishment, followed by her husband, but when near enough to speak she could only answer with inarticulate sounds, pointing with terror to the courtyard of the house. They looked in this direction, and saw a man standing at the threshold; they approached him. He stepped forward, as if to place himself between them. He was tall, dark; his clothes were

torn; he had a wooden leg; his countenance was stern. He surveyed Bertrande with a gloomy look: she cried aloud, and fell back insensible; . . . she recognised her real husband!

Arnauld du Thill stood petrified. While Marguerite, distracted herself, endeavoured to revive her mistress, the neighbours, attracted by the noise, invaded the house, and stopped, gazing with stupefaction at this astonishing resemblance. The two men had the same features, the same height, the same bearing, and suggested one being in two persons. They gazed at each other in terror, and in that superstitious age the idea of sorcery and of infernal intervention naturally occurred to those present. All crossed themselves, expecting every moment to see fire from heaven strike one or other of the two men, or that the earth would engulf one of them. Nothing happened, however, except that both were promptly arrested, in order that the strange mystery might be cleared up.

The wearer of the wooden leg, interrogated by the judges, related that he came from Spain, where first the healing of his wound, and then the want of money, had detained him hitherto. He had travelled on foot, almost a beggar. He gave exactly the same reasons for leaving Artigues as had been given by the other Martin Guerre, namely, a domestic quarrel caused by jealous suspicion, the desire of seeing other countries, and an adventurous disposition. He had gone back to his birthplace, in Biscay; thence he entered the service of the Cardinal of Burgos; then the cardinal's brother had taken him to the war, and he had served with the Spanish troops; at the battle of St. Quentin his leg had been shattered by an arquebus ball. So far his recital was the counterpart of the one already heard by the judges from the other man. Now they began to differ. Martin Guerre stated that he had been conveyed to a house by a man whose features he did not distinguish, that he thought he was dying, and that several hours elapsed of which he could give no account, being probably delirious; that he suffered later intolerable pain, and on coming to himself, found that his leg had been amputated. He remained long between life and death, but he was cared for by peasants who probably saved

his life; his recovery was very slow. He discovered that in the interval between being struck down in the battle and recovering his senses, his papers had disappeared, but it was impossible to suspect the people who had nursed him with such generous kindness of theft. After his recovery, being absolutely destitute, he sought to return to France and again see his wife and child: he had endured all sorts of privations and fatigues, and at length, exhausted, but rejoicing at being near the end of his troubles, he arrived, suspecting nothing, at his own door. Then the terror of the old servant, a few broken words, made him guess at some misfortune, and the appearance of his wife and of a man so exactly like himself stupefied him. Matters had now been explained, and he only regretted that his wound had not at once ended his existence.

The whole story bore the impress of truth, but when the other prisoner was asked what he had to say he adhered to his first answers, maintaining their correctness, and again asserted that he was the real Martin Guerre, and that the new claimant could only be Arnauld du Thill, the clever impostor, who was said to resemble himself so much that the inhabitants of Sagias had agreed in mistaking him for the said Arnauld.

The two Martin Guerres were then confronted without changing the situation in the least; the first showing the same assurance, the same bold and confident bearing; while the second, calling on God and men to bear witness to his sincerity, deplored his misfortune in the most pathetic terms.

The judges' perplexity was great: the affair became more and more complicated, the question remained as difficult, as uncertain as ever. All the appearances and evidences were at variance; probability seemed to incline towards one, sympathy was more in favour of the other, but actual proof was still wanting.

At length a member of the Parliament, M. de Coras, proposed as a last chance before resorting to torture, that final means of examination in a barbarous age, that Bertrande should be placed between the two rivals, trusting, he said, that in such a case a woman's instinct would divine the truth.



MARTIN GUERRE'S WIFE RECOGNISES HER TRUE HUSBAND

Consequently the two Martin Guerres were brought before the Parliament, and a few moments after Bertrande was led in, weak, pale, hardly able to stand, being worn out by suffering and advanced pregnancy. Her appearance excited compassion, and all watched anxiously to see what she would do. She looked at the two men, who had been placed at different ends of the hall, and turning from him who was nearest to her, went and knelt silently before the man with the wooden leg; then, joining her hands as if praying for mercy, she wept bitterly. So simple and touching an action roused the sympathy of all present; Arnauld du Thill grew pale, and everyone expected that Martin Guerre, rejoiced at being vindicated by this public acknowledgment, would raise his wife and embrace her. But he remained cold and stern, and in a contemptuous tone—

"Dry your tears, madame," he said; "they do not move me in the least, neither can you seek to excuse your credulity by the examples of my sisters and my uncle. A wife knows her husband more intimately than his other relations, as you prove by your present action, and if she is deceived it is because she consents to the deception. You are the sole cause of the misfortunes of my house, and to you only shall I ever impute them."

Thunderstruck by this reproach, the poor woman had no strength to reply, and was taken home more dead than alive.

The dignified language of this injured husband made another point in his favour. Much pity was felt for Bertrande, as being the victim of an audacious deception; but everybody agreed that thus it beseemed the real Martin Guerre to have spoken. After the ordeal gone through by the wife had been also essayed by the sisters and other relatives, who one and all followed Bertrande's example and accepted the new-comer, the court, having fully deliberated, passed the following sentence, which we transcribe literally:—

"Having reviewed the trial of Arnauld du Thill or Pansette, calling himself Martin Guerre, a prisoner in the Conciergerie, who appeals from the decision of the judge of Rieux, etc.,

"We declare that this court negatives the appeal and defence

of the said Arnauld du Thill; and as punishment and amends for the imposture, deception, assumption of name and of person, adultery, rape, sacrilege, theft, larceny, and other deeds committed by the aforesaid du Thill, and causing the above-mentioned trial; this court has condemned and condemns him to do penance before the church of Artigue, kneeling, clad in his shirt only, bareheaded and barefoot, a halter on his neck, and a burning torch in his hand, and there he shall ask pardon from God, from the King, and from justice, from the said Martin Guerre and Bertrande de Rolls, husband and wife: and this done, the aforesaid du Thill shall be delivered into the hands of the executioners of the King's Justice, who shall lead him through the customary streets and cross-roads of the aforesaid place of Artigues, and, the halter on his neck, shall bring him before the house of the aforesaid Martin Guerre, where he shall be hung and strangled upon a gibbet erected for this purpose, after which his body shall be burnt: and for various reasons and considerations thereunto moving the court, it has awarded and awards the goods of the aforesaid Arnauld du Thill, apart from the expenses of justice, to the daughter born unto him by the aforesaid Bertrande de Rolls, under pretence of marriage falsely asserted by him, having thereto assumed the name and person of the aforesaid Martin Guerre, by this means deceiving the aforesaid de Rolls; and moreover the court has exempted and exempts from this trial the aforesaid Martin Guerre and Bertrande de Rolls, also the said Pierre Guerre, uncle of the aforesaid Martin, and has remitted and remits the aforesaid Arnauld du Thill to the aforesaid judge of Rieux, in order that the present sentence may be executed according to its form and tenor. Pronounced judicially this 12th day of September 1560."

This sentence substituted the gallows for the decapitation decreed by the first judge, inasmuch as the latter punishment was reserved for criminals of noble birth, while hanging was inflicted on meaner persons.

When once his fate was decided, Arnauld du Thill lost all his audacity. Sent back to Artigues, he was interrogated in prison

by the judge of Rieux, and confessed his imposture at great length. He said the idea first occurred to him when, having returned from the camp in Picardy, he was addressed as Martin Guerre by several intimate friends of the latter. He then inquired as to the sort of life, the habits and relations of this man, and having contrived to be near him, had watched him closely during the battle. He saw him fall, carried him away, and then, as the reader has already seen, excited his delirium to the utmost in order to obtain possession of his secrets. Having thus explained his successful imposture by natural causes, which excluded any idea of magic or sorcery, he protested his penitence, implored the mercy of God, and prepared himself for execution as became a Christian.

The next day, while the populace, collecting from the whole neighbourhood, had assembled before the parish church of Artigues in order to behold the penance of the criminal, who, barefoot, attired in a shirt, and holding a lighted torch in his hand, knelt at the entrance of the church, another scene, no less painful, took place in the house of Martin Guerre. Exhausted by her suffering, which had caused a premature confinement, Bertrande lay on her couch of pain, and besought pardon from him whom she had innocently wronged, entreating him also to pray for her soul. Martin Guerre, sitting at her bedside, extended his hand and blessed her. She took his hand and held it to her lips; she could no longer speak. All at once a loud noise was heard outside: the guilty man had just been executed in front of the house. When finally attached to the gallows, he uttered a terrible cry, which was answered by another from inside the house. The same evening, while the body of the malefactor was being consumed by fire, the remains of a mother and child were laid to rest in consecrated ground.

THE MARQUISE DE GANGES



J. Boulanger, sc. *N. Desmarais, exc.*

MADAME VOISIN FORETELLING A VIOLENT DEATH TO THE MARQUISE DE [illegible]

THE MARQUISE DE GANGES

TOWARDS the close of the year 1657, a very plain carriage, with no arms painted on it, stopped, about eight o'clock one evening, before the door of a house in the rue Hautefeuille, at which two other coaches were already standing. A lackey at once got down to open the carriage door; but a sweet, though rather tremulous voice stopped him, saying, "Wait, while I see whether this is the place."

Then a head, muffled so closely in a black satin mantle that no feature could be distinguished, was thrust from one of the carriage windows, and looking around, seemed to seek for some decisive sign on the house front. The unknown lady appeared to be satisfied by her inspection, for she turned back to her companion.

"It is here," said she. "There is the sign."

As a result of this certainty, the carriage door was opened, the two women alighted, and after having once more raised their eyes to a strip of wood, some six or eight feet long by two broad, which was nailed above the windows of the second storey, and bore the inscription, "*Madame Voisin, midwife*," stole quickly into a passage, the door of which was unfastened, and in which there was just so much light as enabled persons passing in or out to find their way along the narrow winding stair that led from the ground floor to the fifth storey.

The two strangers, one of whom appeared to be of far higher rank than the other, did not stop, as might have been expected, at the door corresponding with the inscription that had guided them, but, on the contrary, went on to the next floor.

Here, upon the landing, was a kind of dwarf, oddly dressed

after the fashion of sixteenth-century Venetian buffoons, who, when he saw the two women coming, stretched out a wand, as though to prevent them from going farther, and asked what they wanted.

"To consult the spirit," replied the woman of the sweet and tremulous voice.

"Come in and wait," returned the dwarf, lifting a panel of tapestry and ushering the two women into a waiting-room.

The women obeyed, and remained for about half an hour, seeing and hearing nothing. At last a door, concealed by the tapestry, was suddenly opened; a voice uttered the word "Enter," and the two women were introduced into a second room, hung with black, and lighted solely by a three-branched lamp that hung from the ceiling. The door closed behind them, and the clients found themselves face to face with the sibyl.

She was a woman of about twenty-five or twenty-six, who, unlike other women, evidently desired to appear older than she was. She was dressed in black; her hair hung in plaits; her neck, arms, and feet were bare; the belt at her waist was clasped by a large garnet which threw out sombre fires. In her hand she held a wand, and she was raised on a sort of platform which stood for the tripod of the ancients, and from which came acrid and penetrating fumes; she was, moreover, fairly handsome, although her features were common, the eyes only excepted, and these, by some trick of the toilet, no doubt, looked inordinately large, and, like the garnet in her belt, emitted strange lights.

When the two visitors came in, they found the soothsayer leaning her forehead on her hand, as though absorbed in thought. Fearing to rouse her from her ecstasy, they waited in silence until it should please her to change her position. At the end of ten minutes she raised her head, and seemed only now to become aware that two persons were standing before her.

"What is wanted of me again?" she asked, "and shall I have rest only in the grave?"

"Forgive me, madame," said the sweet-voiced unknown, "but I am wishing to know——"

"Silence!" said the sibyl, in a solemn voice. "I will not know your affairs. It is to the spirit that you must address yourself; he is a jealous spirit, who forbids his secrets to be shared; I can but pray to him for you, and obey his will."

At these words, she left her tripod, passed into an adjoining room, and soon returned, looking even paler and more anxious than before, and carrying in one hand a burning chafing dish, in the other a red paper. The three flames of the lamp grew fainter at the same moment, and the room was left lighted up only by the chafing dish; every object now assumed a fantastic air that did not fail to disquiet the two visitors, but it was too late to draw back.

The soothsayer placed the chafing dish in the middle of the room, presented the paper to the young woman who had spoken, and said to her—

"Write down what you wish to know."

The woman took the paper with a steadier hand than might have been expected, seated herself at a table, and wrote:—

"Am I young? Am I beautiful? Am I maid, wife, or widow? This is for the past.

"Shall I marry, or marry again? Shall I live long, or shall I die young? This is for the future."

Then, stretching out her hand to the soothsayer, she asked—

"What am I to do now with this?"

"Roll that letter around this ball," answered the other, handing to the unknown a little ball of virgin wax. "Both ball and letter will be consumed in the flame before your eyes; the spirit knows your secrets already. In three days you will have the answer."

The unknown did as the sibyl bade her; then the latter took from her hands the ball and the paper in which it was wrapped, and went and threw both into the chafing pan.

"And now all is done as it should be," said the soothsayer. "Comus!"

The dwarf came in.

"See the lady to her coach."

The stranger left a purse upon the table, and followed Comus. He conducted her and her companion, who was only a confidential maid, down a back staircase, used as an exit, and leading into a different street from that by which the two women had come in; but the coachman, who had been told beforehand of this circumstance, was awaiting them at the door, and they had only to step into their carriage, which bore them rapidly away in the direction of the rue Dauphine.

Three days later, according to the promise given her, the fair unknown, when she awakened, found on the table beside her a letter in an unfamiliar handwriting; it was addressed "To the beautiful Provençale," and contained these words:—

"You are young; you are beautiful; you are a widow. This is for the present.

"You will marry again; you will die young, and by a violent death. This is for the future. THE SPIRIT."

The answer was written upon a paper like that upon which the questions had been set down.

The marquise turned pale and uttered a faint cry of terror; the answer was so perfectly correct in regard to the past as to call up a fear that it might be equally accurate in regard to the future.

The truth is that the unknown lady wrapped in a mantle whom we have escorted into the modern sibyl's cavern was no other than the beautiful Marie de Rossan, who before her marriage had borne the name of Mademoiselle de Châteaublanc, from that of an estate belonging to her maternal grandfather, M. Joannis de Nochères, who owned a fortune of five to six hundred thousand livres. At the age of thirteen—that is to say, in 1649—she had married the Marquis de Castellane, a gentleman of very high birth, who claimed to be descended from John of Castille, the son of Pedro the Cruel, and from Juana de Castro, his mistress. Proud of his young wife's beauty, the Marquis de Castellane, who was an officer of the

king's galleys, had hastened to present her at court. Louis XIV, who at the time of her presentation was barely twenty years old, was struck by her enchanting face, and to the great despair of the famous beauties of the day danced with her three times in one evening. Finally, as a crowning touch to her reputation, the famous Christina of Sweden, who was then at the French court, said of her that she had never, in any of the kingdoms through which she had passed, seen anything equal to "the beautiful Provençale." This praise had been so well received, that the name of "the beautiful Provençale" had clung to Madame de Castellane, and she was everywhere known by it.

This favour of Louis XIV and this summing up of Christina's had been enough to bring the Marquise de Castellane instantly into fashion; and Mignard, who had just received a patent of nobility and been made painter to the king, put the seal to her celebrity by asking leave to paint her portrait. That portrait still exists, and gives a perfect notion of the beauty which it represents; but as the portrait is far from our readers' eyes, we will content ourselves by repeating, in its own original words, the one given in 1667 by the author of a pamphlet published at Rouen under the following title: *True and Principal Circumstances of the Deplorable Death of Madame the Marquise de Ganges*:[1]—

"Her complexion, which was of a dazzling whiteness, was illumined by not too brilliant a red, and art itself could not have arranged more skilfully the gradations by which this red joined and merged into the whiteness of the complexion. The brilliance of her face was heightened by the decided blackness of her hair, growing, as though drawn by a painter of the finest taste, around a well proportioned brow; her large, well

[1] It is from this pamphlet, and from the *Account of the Death of Madame the Marquise de Ganges, formerly Marquise de Castellane*, that we have borrowed the principal circumstances of this tragic story. To these documents we must add—that we may not be constantly referring our readers to original sources—the *Celebrated Trials* by Guyot de Pitaval, the *Life of Marie de Rossan*, and the *Lettres galantes* of Madame Desnoyers.

opened eyes were of the same hue as her hair, and shone with a soft and piercing flame that rendered it impossible to gaze upon her steadily; the smallness, the shape, the turn of her mouth, and the beauty of her teeth were incomparable; the position and the regular proportion of her nose added to her beauty such an air of dignity, as inspired a respect for her equal to the love that might be inspired by her beauty; the rounded contour of her face, produced by a becoming plumpness, exhibited all the vigour and freshness of health; to complete her charms, her glances, the movements of her lips and of her head, appeared to be guided by the graces; her shape corresponded to the beauty of her face; lastly, her arms, her hands, her bearing, and her gait were such that nothing further could be wished to complete the agreeable presentment of a beautiful woman."[1]

It is easy to understand that a woman thus endowed could

[1] All her contemporaries, indeed, are in agreement as to her marvellous beauty; here is a second portrait of the marquise, delineated in a style and manner still more characteristic of that period:—

"You will remember that she had a complexion smoother and finer than a mirror, that her whiteness was so well commingled with the lively blood as to produce an exact admixture never beheld elsewhere, and imparting to her countenance the tenderest animation; her eyes and hair were blacker than jet; her eyes, I say, of which the gaze could scarce, from their excess of lustre, be supported, which have been celebrated as a miracle of tenderness and sprightliness, which have given rise, a thousand times, to the finest compliments of the day, and have been the torment of many a rash man, must excuse me, if I do not pause longer to praise them, in a letter; her mouth was the feature of her face which compelled the most critical to avow that they had seen none of equal perfection, and that, by its shape, its smallness, and its brilliance, it might furnish a pattern for all those others whose sweetness and charms had been so highly vaunted; her nose conformed to the fair proportion of all her features; it was, that is to say, the finest in the world; the whole shape of her face was perfectly round, and of so charming a fullness that such an assemblage of beauties was never before seen together. The expression of this head was one of unparalleled sweetness and of a majesty which she softened rather by disposition than by study; her figure was opulent, her speech agreeable, her step noble, her demeanour easy, her temper sociable, her wit devoid of malice, and founded upon great goodness of heart."

not, in a court where gallantry was more pursued than in any other spot in the world, escape the calumnies of rivals; such calumnies, however, never produced any result, so correctly, even in the absence of her husband, did the marquise contrive to conduct herself; her cold and serious conversation, rather concise than lively, rather solid than brilliant, contrasted, indeed, with the light turn, the capricious and fanciful expressions employed by the wits of that time; the consequence was that those who had failed to succeed with her, tried to spread a report that the marquise was merely a beautiful idol, virtuous with the virtue of a statue. But though such things might be said and repeated in the absence of the marquise, from the moment that she appeared in a drawing-room, from the moment that her beautiful eyes and sweet smile added their indefinable expression to those brief, hurried, and sensible words that fell from her lips, the most prejudiced came back to her and were forced to own that God had never before created anything that so nearly touched perfection.

She was thus in the enjoyment of a triumph that backbiters failed to shake, and that scandal vainly sought to tarnish, when news came of the wreck of the French galleys in Sicilian waters, and of the death of the Marquis de Castellane, who was in command. The marquise on this occasion, as usual, displayed the greatest piety and propriety: although she had no very violent passion for her husband, with whom she had spent scarcely one of the seven years during which their marriage had lasted, on receipt of the news she went at once into retreat, going to live with Madame d'Ampus, her mother-in-law, and ceasing not only to receive visitors but also to go out.

Six months after the death of her husband, the marquise received letters from her grandfather, M. Joannis de Nochères, begging her to come and finish her time of mourning at Avignon. Having been fatherless almost from childhood, Mademoiselle de Châteaublanc had been brought up by this good old man, whom she loved dearly; she hastened accordingly to accede to his invitation, and prepared everything for her departure.

This was at the moment when la Voisin, still a young woman,

and far from having the reputation which she subsequently acquired, was yet beginning to be talked of. Several friends of the Marquise de Castellane had been to consult her, and had received strange predictions from her, some of which, either through the art of her who framed them, or through some odd concurrence of circumstances, had come true. The marquise could not resist the curiosity with which various tales that she had heard of this woman's powers had inspired her, and some days before setting out for Avignon she made the visit which we have narrated. What answer she received to her questions we have seen.

The marquise was not superstitious, yet this fatal prophecy impressed itself upon her mind and left behind a deep trace, which neither the pleasure of revisiting her native place, nor the affection of her grandfather, nor the fresh admiration which she did not fail to receive, could succeed in removing; indeed, this fresh admiration was a weariness to the marquise, and before long she begged leave of her grandfather to retire into a convent and to spend there the last three months of her mourning.

It was in that place, and it was with the warmth of these poor cloistered maidens, that she heard a man spoken of for the first time, whose reputation for beauty, as a man, was equal to her own, as a woman. This favourite of nature was the sieur de Lenide, Marquis de Ganges, Baron of Languedoc, and governor of Saint-André, in the diocese of Uzès. The marquise heard of him so often, and it was so frequently declared to her that nature seemed to have formed them for each other, that she began to allow admission to a very strong desire of seeing him. Doubtless, the sieur de Lenide, stimulated by similar suggestions, had conceived a great wish to meet the marquise; for, having got M. de Nochères—who no doubt regretted her prolonged retreat—to entrust him with a commission for his granddaughter, he came to the convent parlour and asked for the fair recluse. She, although she had never seen him, recognised him at the first glance; for having never seen so handsome a cavalier as he who now presented himself before

her, she thought this could be no other than the Marquis de Ganges, of whom people had so often spoken to her.

That which was to happen, happened: the Marquise de Castellane and the Marquis de Ganges could not look upon each other without loving. Both were young, the marquis was noble and in a good position, the marquise was rich; everything in the match, therefore, seemed suitable: and indeed it was deferred only for the space of time necessary to complete the year of mourning, and the marriage was celebrated towards the beginning of the year 1558. The marquis was twenty years of age, and the marquise twenty-two.

The beginnings of this union were perfectly happy; the marquis was in love for the first time, and the marquise did not remember ever to have been in love. A son and a daughter came to complete their happiness. The marquise had entirely forgotten the fatal prediction, or, if she occasionally thought of it now, it was to wonder that she could ever have believed in it. Such happiness is not of this world, and when by chance it lingers here a while, it seems sent rather by the anger than by the goodness of God. Better, indeed, would it be for him who possesses and who loses it, never to have known it.

The Marquis de Ganges was the first to weary of this happy life. Little by little he began to miss the pleasures of a young man; he began to draw away from the marquise and to draw nearer to his former friends. On her part, the marquise, who for the sake of wedded intimacy had sacrificed her habits of social life, threw herself into society, where new triumphs awaited her. These triumphs aroused the jealousy of the marquis; but he was too much a man of his century to invite ridicule by any manifestation; he shut his jealousy into his soul, and it emerged in a different form on every different occasion. To words of love, so sweet that they seemed the speech of angels, succeeded those bitter and biting utterances that foretell approaching division. Before long, the marquis and the marquise only saw each other at hours when they could not avoid meeting; then, on the pretext of necessary journeys, and presently without any pretext at all, the marquis would go away for three-

quarters of the year, and once more the marquise found herself widowed. Whatever contemporary account one may consult, one finds them all agreeing to declare that she was always the same—that is to say, full of patience, calmness, and becoming behaviour—and it is rare to find such a unanimity of opinion about a young and beautiful woman.

About this time the marquis, finding it unendurable to be alone with his wife during the short spaces of time which he spent at home, invited his two brothers, the chevalier and the abbé de Ganges, to come and live with him. He had a third brother, who, as the second son, bore the title of comte, and who was colonel of the Languedoc regiment, but as this gentleman played no part in this story we shall not concern ourselves with him.

The abbé de Ganges, who bore that title without belonging to the Church, had assumed it in order to enjoy its privileges: he was a kind of wit, writing madrigals and *bouts-rimés*[1] on occasion, a handsome man enough, though in moments of impatience his eyes would take a strangely cruel expression; as dissolute and shameless to boot, as though he had really belonged to the clergy of the period.

The chevalier de Ganges, who shared in some measure the beauty so profusely showered upon the family, was one of those feeble men who enjoy their own nullity, and grow on to old age inapt alike for good and evil, unless some nature of a stronger stamp lays hold on them and drags them like faint and pallid satellites in its wake. This was what befell the chevalier in respect of his brother: submitted to an influence of which he himself was not aware, and against which, had he but suspected it, he would have rebelled with the obstinacy of a child, he was a machine obedient to the will of another mind and to the passions of another heart, a machine which was all the more terrible in that no movement of instinct or of reason could, in his case, arrest the impulse given.

Moreover, this influence which the abbé had acquired over the chevalier extended, in some degree also, to the marquis.

[1] *Bouts-rimés* are verses written to a given set of rhymes.

Having as a younger son no fortune, having no revenue, for though he wore a Churchman's robe he did not fulfil a Churchman's functions, he had succeeded in persuading the marquis, who was rich, not only in the enjoyment of his own fortune, but also in that of his wife, which was likely to be nearly doubled at the death of M. de Nochères, that some zealous man was needed who would devote himself to the ordering of his house and the management of his property, and had offered himself for the post. The marquis had very gladly accepted, being, as we have said, tired by this time of his solitary home-life; and the abbé had brought with him the chevalier, who followed him like his shadow, and who was no more regarded than if he had really possessed no body.

The marquise often confessed afterwards that when she first saw these two men, although their outward aspect was perfectly agreeable, she felt herself seized by a painful impression, and that the fortune-teller's prediction of a violent death, which she had so long forgotten, flashed out like lightning before her eyes. The effect on the two brothers was not of the same kind: the beauty of the marquise struck them both, although in different ways. The chevalier was in ecstasies of admiration, as though before a beautiful statue, but the impression that she made upon him was that which would have been made by marble, and if the chevalier had been left to himself the consequences of this admiration would have been no less harmless. Moreover, the chevalier did not attempt either to exaggerate or to conceal this impression, and allowed his sister-in-law to see in what manner she struck him. The abbé, on the contrary, was seized at first sight with a deep and violent desire to possess this woman—the most beautiful whom he had ever met; but being as perfectly capable of mastering his sensations as the chevalier was incapable, he merely allowed such words of compliment to escape him as weigh neither with him who utters nor her who hears them; and yet, before the close of this first interview, the abbé had decided in his irrevocable will that this woman should be his.

As for the marquise, although the impression produced by

her two brothers-in-law could never be entirely effaced, the wit of the abbé, to which he gave, with amazing facility, whatever turn he chose, and the complete nullity of the chevalier brought her to entertain feelings of less repulsion towards them: for indeed the marquise had one of those souls which never suspect evil, as long as it will take the trouble to assume any veil at all of seeming, and which only recognise it with regret when it resumes its true shape.

Meanwhile the arrival of these two new inmates soon spread a little more life and gaiety through the house. Furthermore, greatly to the astonishment of the marquise, her husband, who had so long been indifferent to her beauty, seemed to remark afresh that she was too charming to be despised; his words accordingly began little by little to express an affection that had long since gradually disappeared from them. The marquise had never ceased to love him; she had suffered the loss of his love with resignation, she hailed its return with joy, and three months elapsed that resembled those which had long ceased to be more to the poor wife than a distant and half-worn-out memory.

Thus she had, with the supreme facility of youth, always ready to be happy, taken up her gladness again, without even asking what genius had brought back to her the treasure which she had thought lost, when she received an invitation from a lady of the neighbourhood to spend some days in her country house. Her husband and her two brothers-in-law, invited with her, were of the party, and accompanied her. A great hunting party had been arranged beforehand, and almost immediately upon arriving everyone began to prepare for taking part in it.

The abbé, whose talents had made him indispensable in every company, declared that for that day he was the marquise's cavalier, a title which his sister-in-law, with her usual amiability, confirmed. Each of the huntsmen, following this example, made choice of a lady to whom to dedicate his attentions throughout the day; then, this chivalrous arrangement being completed, all present directed their course towards the place of meeting.

That happened which almost always happens: the dogs

hunted on their own account. Two or three sportsmen only followed the dogs; the rest got lost. The abbé, in his character of esquire to the marquise, had not left her for a moment, and had managed so cleverly that he was alone with her—an opportunity which he had been seeking for a month previously with no less care than the marquise had been using to avoid it. No sooner, therefore, did the marquise believe herself aware that the abbé had intentionally turned aside from the hunt than she attempted to gallop her horse in the opposite direction from that which she had been following; but the abbé stopped her. The marquise neither could nor would enter upon a struggle; she resigned herself, therefore, to hearing what the abbé had to say to her, and her face assumed that air of haughty disdain which women so well know how to put on when they wish a man to understand that he has nothing to hope from them. There was an instant's silence; the abbé was the first to break it.

"Madame," said he, "I ask your pardon for having used this means to speak to you alone; but since, in spite of my rank of brother-in-law, you did not seem inclined to grant me that favour if I had asked it, I thought it would be better for me to deprive you of the power to refuse it me."

"If you have hesitated to ask me so simple a thing, monsieur," replied the marquise, "and if you have taken such precautions to compel me to listen to you, it must, no doubt, be because you knew beforehand that the words you had to say to me were such as I could not hear. Have the goodness, therefore, to reflect, before you open this conversation, that here as elsewhere I reserve the right—and I warn you of it—to interrupt what you may say at the moment when it may cease to seem to me befitting."

"As to that, madame," said the abbé, "I think I can answer for it that whatever it may please me to say to you, you will hear to the end; but indeed the matters are so simple that there is no need to make you uneasy beforehand: I wished to ask you, madame, whether you have perceived a change in the conduct of your husband towards you."

"Yes, monsieur," replied the marquise, "and no single day has passed in which I have not thanked Heaven for this happiness."

"And you have been wrong, madame," returned the abbé, with one of those smiles that were peculiar to himself; "Heaven has nothing to do with it. Thank Heaven for having made you the most beautiful and charming of women, and that will be enough thanksgiving without despoiling me of such as belong to my share."

"I do not understand you, monsieur," said the marquise in an icy tone.

"Well, I will make myself comprehensible, my dear sister-in-law. I am the worker of the miracle for which you are thanking Heaven; to me therefore belongs your gratitude. Heaven is rich enough not to rob the poor."

"You are right, monsieur: if it is really to you that I owe this return, the cause of which I did not know, I will thank you in the first place; and then afterwards I will thank Heaven for having inspired you with this good thought."

"Yes," answered the abbé, "but Heaven, which has inspired me with a good thought, may equally well inspire me with a bad one, if the good thought does not bring me what I expect from it."

"What do you mean, monsieur?"

"That there has never been more than one will in the family, and that will is mine; that the minds of my two brothers turn according to the fancy of that will like weathercocks before the wind, and that he who has blown hot can blow cold."

"I am still waiting for you to explain yourself, monsieur."

"Well, then, my dear sister-in-law, since you are pleased not to understand me, I will explain myself more clearly. My brother turned from you through jealousy; I wished to give you an idea of my power over him, and from extreme indifference I have brought him back, by showing him that he suspected you wrongly, to the ardours of the warmest love. Well, I need only tell him that I was mistaken, and fix his wandering suspicions upon any man whatever, and I shall take him away from you,

even as I have brought him back. I need give you no proof of what I say; you know perfectly well that I am speaking the truth."

"And what object had you, in acting this part?"

"To prove to you, madame, that at my will I can cause you to be sad or joyful, cherished or neglected, adored or hated. Madame, listen to me: I love you."

"You insult me, monsieur!" cried the marquise, trying to withdraw the bridle of her horse from the abbé's hands.

"No fine words, my dear sister-in-law; for, with me, I warn you, they will be lost. To tell a woman one loves her is never an insult; only there are a thousand different ways of obliging her to respond to that love. The error is to make a mistake in the way that one employs—that is the whole of the matter."

"And may I inquire which you have chosen?" asked the marquise, with a crushing smile of contempt.

"The only one that could succeed with a calm, cold, strong woman like you, the conviction that your interest requires you to respond to my love."

"Since you profess to know me so well," answered the marquise, with another effort, as unsuccessful as the former, to free the bridle of her horse, "you should know how a woman like me would receive such an overture; say to yourself what I might say to you, and above all, what I might say to my husband."

The abbé smiled.

"Oh, as to that," he returned, "you can do as you please, madame. Tell your husband whatever you choose; repeat our conversation word for word; add whatever your memory may furnish, true or false, that may be most convincing against me; then, when you have thoroughly given him his cue, when you think yourself sure of him, I will say two words to him, and turn him inside out like this glove. That is what I had to say to you, madame. I will not detain you longer. You may have in me a devoted friend or a mortal enemy. Reflect."

At these words the abbé loosed his hold upon the bridle of

the marquise's horse and left her free to guide it as she would. The marquise put her beast to a trot, so as to show neither fear nor haste. The abbé followed her, and both rejoined the hunt.

The abbé had spoken truly. The marquise, notwithstanding the threat which she had made, reflected upon the influence which this man had over her husband, and of which she had often had proof: she kept silence, therefore, and hoped that he had made himself seem worse than he was, to frighten her. On this point she was strangely mistaken.

The abbé, however, wished to see, in the first place, whether the marquise's refusal was due to personal antipathy or to real virtue. The chevalier, as has been said, was handsome; he had that usage of good society which does instead of mind, and he joined to it the obstinacy of a stupid man; the abbé undertook to persuade him that he was in love with the marquise. It was not a difficult matter. We have described the impression made upon the chevalier by the first sight of Madame de Ganges; but, knowing beforehand the reputation of austerity that his sister-in-law had acquired, he had not the remotest idea of paying court to her. Yielding, indeed, to the influence which she exercised upon all who came in contact with her, the chevalier had remained her devoted servant; and the marquise, having no reason to mistrust civilities which she took for signs of friendliness, and considering his position as her husband's brother, treated him with less circumspection than was her custom.

The abbé sought him out, and, having made sure they were alone, said, "Chevalier, we both love the same woman, and that woman is our brother's wife; do not let us thwart each other: I am master of my passion, and can the more easily sacrifice it to you that I believe you are the man preferred; try, therefore, to obtain some assurance of the love which I suspect the marquise of having for you; and from the day when you reach that point I will withdraw, but otherwise, if you fail, give up your place civilly to me, that I may try, in my turn, whether her heart is really impregnable, as everybody says."

The chevalier had never thought of the possibility of winning the marquise; but from the moment in which his brother, with no apparent motive of personal interest, aroused the idea that he might be beloved, every spark of passion and of vanity that still existed in this automaton took fire, and he began to be doubly assiduous and attentive to his sister-in-law. She, who had never suspected any evil in this quarter, treated the chevalier at first with a kindliness that was heightened by her scorn for the abbé. But, before long, the chevalier, misunderstanding the grounds of this kindliness, explained himself more clearly. The marquise, amazed and at first incredulous, allowed him to say enough to make his intentions perfectly clear; then she stopped him, as she had done the abbé, by some of those galling words which women derive from their indifference even more than from their virtue.

At this check, the chevalier, who was far from possessing his brother's strength and determination, lost all hope, and came candidly to own to the latter the sad result of his attentions and his love. This was what the abbé had awaited, in the first place for the satisfaction of his own vanity, and in the second place for the means of carrying out his schemes. He worked upon the chevalier's humiliation until he had wrought it into a solid hatred; and then, sure of having him for a supporter and even for an accomplice, he began to put into execution his plan against the marquise.

The consequence was soon shown in a renewal of alienation on the part of M. de Ganges. A young man whom the marquise sometimes met in society, and to whom, on account of his wit, she listened perhaps a little more willingly than to others, became, if not the cause, at least the excuse of a fresh burst of jealousy. This jealousy was exhibited as on previous occasions, by quarrels remote from the real grievance; but the marquise was not deceived: she recognised in this change the fatal hand of her brother-in-law. But this certainty, instead of drawing her towards him, increased her repulsion; and thenceforward she lost no opportunity of showing him not only that repulsion but also the contempt that accompanied it.

Matters remained in this state for some months. Every day the marquise perceived her husband growing colder, and although the spies were invisible she felt herself surrounded by a watchfulness that took note of the most private details of her life. As to the abbé and the chevalier, they were as usual; only the abbé had hidden his hate behind a smile that was habitual, and the chevalier his resentment behind that cold and stiff dignity in which dull minds enfold themselves when they believe themselves injured in their vanity.

In the midst of all this, M. Joannis de Nochères died, and added to the already considerable fortune of his granddaughter another fortune of from six to seven hundred thousand livres.

This additional wealth became, on accruing to the marquise, what was then called, in countries where the Roman law prevailed, a *paraphernal* estate—that is to say that, falling in after marriage, it was not included in the dowry brought by the wife, and that she could dispose freely both of the capital and the income, which might not be administered even by her husband without a power of attorney, and of which she could dispose at pleasure, by donation or by will. And in fact, a few days after the marquise had entered into possession of her grandfather's estate, her husband and his brothers learned that she had sent for a notary in order to be instructed as to her rights. This step betokened an intention of separating this inheritance from the common property of the marriage; for the behaviour of the marquis towards his wife—of which within himself he often recognised the injustice—left him little hope of any other explanation.

About this time a strange event happened. At a dinner given by the marquis, a cream was served at dessert: all those who partook of this cream were ill; the marquis and his two brothers, who had not touched it, felt no evil effects. The remainder of this cream, which was suspected of having caused illness to the guests, and particularly to the marquise, who had taken of it twice, was analysed, and the presence of arsenic in it demonstrated. Only, having been mixed with milk, which is its antidote, the poison had lost some of its power, and had

produced but half the expected effect. As no serious disaster had followed this occurrence, the blame was thrown upon a servant, who was said to have mistaken arsenic for sugar, and everybody forgot it, or appeared to forget it.

The marquis, however, seemed to be gradually and naturally drawing nearer again to his wife; but this time Madame de Ganges was not deceived by his returning kindness. There, as in his alienation, she saw the selfish hand of the abbé: he had persuaded his brother that seven hundred thousand livres more in the house would make it worth while to overlook some levities of behaviour; and the marquis, obeying the impulse given, was trying, by kind dealing, to oppose his wife's still unsettled intention of making a will.

Towards the autumn there was talk of going to spend that season at Ganges, a little town situated in Lower Languedoc, in the diocese of Montpellier, seven leagues from that town, and nineteen from Avignon. Although this was natural enough, since the marquis was lord of the town and had a castle there, the marquise was seized by a strange shudder when she heard the proposal. Remembrance of the prediction made to her returned immediately to her mind. The recent and ill explained attempt to poison her, too, very naturally added to her fears. Without directly and positively suspecting her brothers-in-law of that crime, she knew that in them she had two implacable enemies. This journey to a little town, this abode in a lonely castle, amid new, unknown neighbours, seemed to her of no good omen; but open opposition would have been ridiculous. On what grounds, indeed, could she base resistance? The marquise could only own her terrors by accusing her husband and her brothers-in-law. And of what could she accuse them? The incident of the poisoned cream was not a conclusive proof. She resolved accordingly to lock up all her fears in her heart, and to commit herself to the hands of God.

Nevertheless, she would not leave Avignon without signing the will which she had contemplated making ever since M. de Nochères' death. A notary was called in who drew up the document. The Marquise de Ganges made her mother,

Madame de Rossan, her sole inheritor, and left in her charge the duty of choosing between the testatrix's two children as to which of them should succeed to the estate. These two children were, one a boy of six years old, the other a girl of five. But this was not enough for the marquise, so deep was her impression that she would not survive this fatal journey; she gathered together, secretly and at night, the magistrates of Avignon and several persons of quality, belonging to the first families of the town, and there, before them, verbally at first, declared that, in case of her death, she begged the honourable witnesses whom she had assembled on purpose, not to recognise as valid, voluntary, or freely written anything except the will which she had signed the day before, and affirmed beforehand that any later will which might be produced would be the effect of fraud or of violence. Then, having made this verbal declaration, the marquise repeated it in writing, signed the paper containing it, and gave the paper to be preserved by the honour of those whom she constituted its guardians. Such a precaution, taken with such minute detail, aroused the lively curiosity of her hearers. Many pressing questions were put to the marquise, but nothing could be extracted from her except that she had reasons for her action which she could not declare. The cause of this assemblage remained a secret, and every person who formed part of it promised the marquise not to reveal it.

On the next day, which was that preceding her departure for Ganges, the marquise visited all the charitable institutions and religious communities in Avignon; she left liberal alms everywhere, with the request that prayers and masses should be said for her, in order to obtain from God's grace that she should not be suffered to die without receiving the sacraments of the Church. In the evening, she took leave of all her friends with the affection and the tears of a person convinced that she was bidding them a last farewell; and finally she spent the whole night in prayer, and the maid who came to wake her found her kneeling in the same spot where she had left her the night before.

The family set out for Ganges; the journey was performed

without accident. On reaching the castle, the marquise found her mother-in-law there; she was a woman of remarkable distinction and piety, and her presence, although it was to be but temporary, reassured the poor fearful marquise a little. Arrangements had been made beforehand at the old castle, and the most convenient and elegant of the rooms had been assigned to the marquise; it was on the first floor, and looked out upon a courtyard shut in on all sides by stables.

On the first evening that she was to sleep here, the marquise explored this room with the greatest attention. She inspected the cupboards, sounded the walls, examined the tapestry, and found nothing anywhere that could confirm her terrors, which, indeed, from that time began to decrease. At the end of a certain time, however, the marquis's mother left Ganges to return to Montpellier. Two days after her departure, the marquis talked of important business which required him to go back to Avignon, and he too left the castle. The marquise thus remained alone with the abbé, the chevalier, and a chaplain named Perette, who had been attached for five-and-twenty years to the family of the marquis. The rest of the household consisted of a few servants.

The marquise's first care, on arriving at the castle, had been to collect a little society for herself in the town. This was easy: not only did her rank make it an honour to belong to her circle, her kindly graciousness also inspired at first sight the desire of having her for a friend. The marquise thus endured less dulness than she had at first feared. This precaution was by no means uncalled for; instead of spending only the autumn at Ganges, the marquise was obliged, in consequence of letters from her husband, to spend the winter there. During the whole of this time the abbé and the chevalier seemed to have completely forgotten their original designs upon her, and had again resumed the conduct of respectful, attentive brothers. But with all this, M. de Ganges remained estranged, and the marquise, who had not ceased to love him, though she began to lose her fear, did not lose her grief.

One day the abbé entered her room suddenly enough to

surprise her before she had time to dry her tears; the secret being thus half surprised, he easily obtained a knowledge of the whole. The marquise owned to him that happiness in this world was impossible for her so long as her husband led this separate and hostile life. The abbé tried to console her; but amid his consolations he told her that the grief which she was suffering had its source in herself; that her husband was naturally wounded by her distrust of him—a distrust of which the will, executed by her, was a proof, all the more humiliating because public, and that, while that will existed, she could expect no advances towards reconciliation from her husband. For that time the conversation ended there.

Some days later, the abbé came into the marquise's room with a letter which he had just received from his brother. This letter, supposed confidential, was filled with tender complaints of his wife's conduct towards him, and showed, through every sentence, a depth of affection which only wrongs as serious as those from which the marquis considered himself to be feeling could counterbalance. The marquise was, at first, very much touched by this letter; but having soon reflected that just sufficient time had elapsed since the explanation between herself and the abbé for the marquis to be informed of it, she awaited further and stronger proofs before changing her mind.

From day to day, however, the abbé, under the pretext of reconciling the husband and wife, became more pressing upon the matter of the will, and the marquise, to whom this insistence seemed rather alarming, began to experience some of her former fears. Finally, the abbé pressed her so hard as to make her reflect that since, after the precautions which she had taken at Avignon, a revocation could have no result, it would be better to seem to yield rather than irritate this man, who inspired her with so great a fear, by constant and obstinate refusals. The next time that he returned to the subject she accordingly replied that she was ready to offer her husband this new proof of her love if it would bring him back to her, and having ordered a notary to be sent for, she made a new will, in the presence of the abbé and the chevalier, and constituted the marquis her

residuary legatee. This second instrument bore date the 5th of May 1667. The abbé and the chevalier expressed the greatest joy that this subject of discord was at last removed, and offered themselves as guarantees, on their brother's behalf, of a better future. Some days were passed in this hope, which a letter from the marquis came to confirm; this letter at the same time announced his speedy return to Ganges.

On the 16th of May, the marquise, who for a month or two had not been well, determined to take medicine; she therefore informed the chemist of what she wanted, and asked him to make her up something at his discretion and send it to her the next day. Accordingly, at the agreed hour in the morning, the draught was brought to the marquise; but it looked to her so black and so thick that she felt some doubt of the skill of its compounder, shut it up in a cupboard in her room without saying anything of the matter, and took from her dressing-case some pills, of a less efficacious nature indeed, but to which she was accustomed, and which were not so repugnant to her.

The hour in which the marquise was to take this medicine was hardly over when the abbé and the chevalier sent to know how she was. She replied that she was quite well, and invited them to a collation which she was giving about four o'clock to the ladies who made up her little circle. An hour afterwards the abbé and the chevalier sent a second time to inquire after her; the marquise, without paying particular attention to this excessive civility, which she remembered afterwards, sent word as before that she was perfectly well.

The marquise had remained in bed to do the honours of her little feast, and never had she felt more cheerful. At the hour named all her guests arrived; the abbé and the chevalier were ushered in, and the meal was served. Neither one nor the other would share it; the abbé indeed sat down to table, but the chevalier remained leaning on the foot of the bed. The abbé appeared anxious, and only roused himself with a start from his absorption; then he seemed to drive away some dominant idea, but soon the idea, stronger than his will, plunged him again into a reverie, a state which struck everyone the more

particularly because it was far from his usual temper. As to the chevalier, his eyes were fixed constantly upon his sister-in-law, but in this there was not, as in his brother's behaviour, anything surprising, since the marquise had never looked so beautiful.

The meal over, the company took leave. The abbé escorted the ladies downstairs; the chevalier remained with the marquise; but hardly had the abbé left the room when Madame de Ganges saw the chevalier turn pale and drop in a sitting position—he had been standing—on the foot of the bed. The marquise, uneasy, asked what was the matter; but before he could reply, her attention was called to another quarter. The abbé, as pale and as disturbed as the chevalier, came back into the room, carrying in his hands a glass and a pistol, and double-locked the door behind him. Terrified at this spectacle, the marquise half raised herself in her bed, gazing voiceless and wordless. Then the abbé approached her, his lips trembling, his hair bristling and his eyes blazing, and, presenting to her the glass and the pistol, "Madame," said he, after a moment of terrible silence, "choose, whether poison, fire, or"—he made a sign to the chevalier, who drew his sword—"or steel."

The marquise had one moment's hope: at the motion which she saw the chevalier make she thought he was coming to her assistance; but being soon undeceived, and finding herself between two men, both threatening her, she slipped from her bed and fell on her knees.

"What have I done," she cried, "oh, my God! that you should thus decree my death, and after having made yourselves judges should make yourselves executioners? I am guilty of no fault towards you except of having been too faithful in my duty to my husband, who is your brother."

Then seeing that it was vain to continue imploring the abbé, whose looks and gestures spoke a mind made up, she turned towards the chevalier.

"And you too, brother," said she, "oh, God, God! you, too! Oh, have pity on me, in the name of Heaven!"



THE MURDER OF THE MARQUISE DE GANGES BY POISON

But he, stamping his foot and pressing the point of his sword to her bosom, answered—

"Enough, madam, enough; take your choice without delay; for if you do not take it, we will take it for you."

The marquise turned once again to the abbé, and her forehead struck the muzzle of the pistol. Then she saw that she must die indeed, and choosing of the three forms of death that which seemed to her the least terrible, "Give me the poison, then," said she, "and may God forgive you my death!"

With these words she took the glass, but the thick black liquid of which it was full aroused such repulsion that she would have attempted a last appeal; but a horrible imprecation from the abbé and a threatening movement from his brother took from her the very last gleam of hope. She put the glass to her lips, and murmuring once more, "God! Saviour! have pity on me!" she swallowed the contents.

As she did so a few drops of the liquid fell upon her breast, and instantly burned her skin like live coals; indeed, this infernal draught was composed of arsenic and sublimate infused in *aqua-fortis*; then, thinking that no more would be required of her, she dropped the glass.

The marquise was mistaken: the abbé picked it up, and observing that all the sediment had remained at the bottom, he gathered together on a silver bodkin all that had coagulated on the sides of the glass and all that had sunk to the bottom, and presenting this ball, which was about the size of a nut, to the marquise, on the end of the bodkin, he said, "Come, madame, you must swallow the holy-water sprinkler."

The marquise opened her lips, with resignation; but instead of doing as the abbé commanded, she kept this remainder of the poison in her mouth, threw herself on the bed with a scream, and clasping the pillows, in her pain, she put out the poison between the sheets, unperceived by her assassins; and then turning back to them, folded her hands in entreaty and said, "In the name of God, since you have killed my body, at least do not destroy my soul, but send me a confessor."

Cruel though the abbé and the chevalier were, they were no doubt beginning to weary of such a scene; moreover, the mortal deed was accomplished: after what she had drunk, the marquise could live but a few minutes; at her petition they went out, locking the door behind them. But no sooner did the marquise find herself alone than the possibility of flight presented itself to her. She ran to the window: this was but twenty-two feet above the ground, but the earth below was covered with stones and rubbish. The marquise, being only in her nightdress, hastened to slip on a silk petticoat; but at the moment when she finished tying it round her waist she heard a step approaching her room, and believing that her murderers were returning to make an end of her, she flew like a madwoman to the window. At the moment of her setting foot on the window ledge, the door opened: the marquise, ceasing to consider anything, flung herself down, head first. Fortunately, the new-comer, who was the castle chaplain, had time to reach out and seize her skirt. The skirt, not strong enough to bear the weight of the marquise, tore; but its resistance, slight though it was, sufficed nevertheless to change the direction of her body: the marquise, whose head would have been shattered on the stones, fell on her feet instead, and beyond their being bruised by the stones, received no injury. Half stunned though she was by her fall, the marquise saw something coming after her, and sprang aside. It was an enormous pitcher of water, beneath which the priest, when he saw her escaping him, had tried to crush her; but either because he had ill carried out his attempt or because the marquise had really had time to move away, the vessel was shattered at her feet without touching her, and the priest, seeing that he had missed his aim, ran to warn the abbé and the chevalier that the victim was escaping.

As for the marquise, she had hardly touched the ground, when with admirable presence of mind she pushed the end of one of her long plaits so far down her throat as to provoke a fit of vomiting; this was the more easily done that she had eaten heartily of the collation, and happily the presence of food had prevented the poison from attacking the coats of the stomach

so violently as would otherwise have been the case. Scarcely had she vomited when a tame boar swallowed what she had rejected, and falling into a convulsion, died immediately.

As we have said, the room looked upon an enclosed court-yard; and the marquise at first thought that in leaping from her room into this court she had only changed her prison; but soon perceiving a light that flickered from an upper window of one of the stables, she ran thither, and found a groom who was just going to bed.

"In the name of Heaven, my good man," said she to him, "save me! I am poisoned! They want to kill me! Do not desert me, I entreat you! Have pity on me, open this stable for me; let me get away! Let me escape!"

The groom did not understand much of what the marquise said to him; but seeing a woman with disordered hair, half naked, asking help of him, he took her by the arm, led her through the stables, opened a door for her, and the marquise found herself in the street. Two women were passing; the groom put her into their hands, without being able to explain to them what he did not know himself. As for the marquise, she seemed able to say nothing beyond these words: "Save me! I am poisoned! In the name of Heaven, save me!"

All at once she escaped from their hands and began to run like a mad woman; she had seen, twenty steps away, on the threshold of the door by which she had come, her two murderers in pursuit of her.

Then they rushed after her; she shrieking that she was poisoned, they shrieking that she was mad; and all this happening amid a crowd which, not knowing what part to take, divided and made way for the victim and the murderers. Terror gave the marquise superhuman strength: the woman who was accustomed to walk in silken shoes upon velvet carpets, ran with bare and bleeding feet over stocks and stones, vainly asking help, which none gave her; for, indeed, seeing her thus, in mad flight, in a nightdress, with flying hair, her only garment a tattered silk petticoat, it was difficult not to think that this woman was, as her brothers-in-law said, mad.

At last the chevalier came up with her, stopped her, dragged her, in spite of her screams, into the nearest house, and closed the door behind them, while the abbé, standing at the threshold with a pistol in his hand, threatened to blow out the brains of any person who should approach.

The house into which the chevalier and the marquise had gone belonged to one M. Desprats, who at the moment was from home, and whose wife was entertaining several of her friends. The marquise and the chevalier, still struggling together, entered the room where the company was assembled: as among the ladies present were several who also visited the marquise, they immediately arose, in the greatest amazement, to give her the assistance that she implored; but the chevalier hastily pushed them aside, repeating that the marquise was mad. To this reiterated accusation—to which, indeed, appearances lent only too great a probability—the marquise replied by showing her burnt neck and her blackened lips, and wringing her hands in pain, cried out that she was poisoned, that she was going to die, and begged urgently for milk, or at least for water. Then the wife of a Protestant minister, whose name was Madame Brunel, slipped into her hand a box of orviétan, some pieces of which she hastened to swallow, while another lady gave her a glass of water; but at the instant when she was lifting it to her mouth, the chevalier broke it between her teeth, and one of the pieces of glass cut her lips. At this, all the women would have flung themselves upon the chevalier; but the marquise, fearing that he would only become more enraged, and hoping to disarm him, asked, on the contrary, that she might be left alone with him: all the company, yielding to her desire, passed into the next room; this was what the chevalier, on his part, too, asked.

Scarcely were they alone, when the marquise, joining her hands, knelt to him and said in the gentlest and most appealing voice that it was possible to use, "Chevalier, my dear brother, will you not have pity upon me, who have always had so much affection for you, and who, even now, would give my blood for your service? You know that the things I am saying are not

merely empty words; and yet how is it you are treating me, though I have not deserved it? And what will everyone say to such dealings? Ah, brother, what a great unhappiness is mine, to have been so cruelly treated by you! And yet—yes, brother—if you will deign to have pity on me and to save my life, I swear, by my hope of heaven, to keep no remembrance of what has happened, and to consider you always as my protector and my friend."

All at once the marquise rose with a great cry and clasped her hand to her right side. While she was speaking, and before she perceived what he was doing, the chevalier had drawn his sword, which was very short, and using it as a dagger, had struck her in the breast; this first blow was followed by a second, which came in contact with the shoulder blade, and so was prevented from going farther. At these two blows the marquise rushed towards the door of the room into which the ladies had retired, crying, "Help! He is killing me!"

But during the time that she took to cross the room the chevalier stabbed her five times in the back with his sword, and would no doubt have done more, if at the last blow his sword had not broken; indeed, he had struck with such force that the fragment remained embedded in her shoulder, and the marquise fell forward on the floor, in a pool of her blood, which was flowing all round her and spreading through the room.

The chevalier thought he had killed her, and hearing the women running to her assistance, he rushed from the room. The abbé was still at the door, pistol in hand; the chevalier took him by the arm to drag him away, and as the abbé hesitated to follow, he said—

"Let us go, abbé; the business is done."

The chevalier and the abbé had taken a few steps in the street when a window opened and the women who had found the marquise expiring called out for help: at these cries the abbé stopped short, and holding back the chevalier by the arm, demanded—

"What was it you said, chevalier? If they are calling help, is she not dead, after all?"

"*Ma foi*, go and see for yourself," returned the chevalier. "I have done enough for my share; it is your turn now."

"*Pardieu*, that is quite my opinion," cried the abbé; and rushing back to the house, he flung himself into the room at the moment when the women, lifting the marquise with great difficulty, for she was so weak that she could no longer help herself, were attempting to carry her to bed. The abbé pushed them away, and arriving at the marquise, put his pistol to her heart; but Madame Brunel, the same who had previously given the marquise a box of orviétan, lifted up the barrel with her hand, so that the shot went off into the air, and the bullet instead of striking the marquise lodged in the cornice of the ceiling. The abbé then took the pistol by the barrel and gave Madame Brunel so violent a blow upon the head with the butt that she staggered and almost fell; he was about to strike her again, but all the women uniting against him, pushed him, with thousands of maledictions, out of the room, and locked the door behind him. The two assassins, taking advantage of the darkness, fled from Ganges, and reached Aubenas, which is a full league away, about ten in the evening.

Meanwhile the women were doing all they could for the marquise. Their first intention, as we have already said, was to put her to bed, but the broken sword blade made her unable to lie down, and they tried in vain to pull it out, so deeply had it entered the bone. Then the marquise herself showed Madame Brunel what method to take: the operating lady was to sit on the bed, and while the others helped to hold up the marquise, was to seize the blade with both hands, and pressing her knees against the patient's back, to pull violently and with a great jerk. This plan at last succeeded, and the marquise was able to get to bed; it was nine in the evening, and this horrible tragedy had been going on for nearly three hours.

The magistrates of Ganges, being informed of what had happened, and beginning to believe that it was really a case of murder, came in person, with a guard, to the marquise. As soon as she saw them come in she recovered strength, and

raising herself in bed, so great was her fear, clasped her hands and besought their protection; for she always expected to see one or the other of her murderers return. The magistrates told her to reassure herself, set armed men to guard all the approaches to the house, and while physicians and surgeons were summoned in hot haste from Montpellier, they on their part sent word to the Baron de Trissan, provost of Languedoc, of the crime that had just been committed, and gave him the names and the description of the murderers. That official at once sent people after them, but it was already too late: he learned that the abbé and the chevalier had slept at Aubenas on the night of the murder, that there they had reproached each other for their unskilfulness, and had come near cutting each other's throats, that finally they had departed before daylight, and had taken a boat, near Agde, from a beach called the "Gras de Palaval."

The Marquis de Ganges was at Avignon, where he was prosecuting a servant of his who had robbed him of two hundred crowns, when he heard news of the event. He turned horribly pale as he listened to the messenger's story, then falling into a violent fury against his brothers, he swore that they should have no executioners other than himself. Nevertheless, though he was so uneasy about the marquise's condition, he waited until the next day in the afternoon before setting forth, and during the interval he saw some of his friends at Avignon without saying anything to them of the matter. He did not reach Ganges until four days after the murder, then he went to the house of M. Desprats and asked to see his wife, whom some kind priests had already prepared for the meeting; and the marquise, as soon as she heard of his arrival, consented to receive him. The marquis immediately entered the room, with his eyes full of tears, tearing his hair, and giving every token of the deepest despair.

The marquise received her husband like a forgiving wife and a dying Christian. She scarcely even uttered some slight reproaches about the manner in which he had deserted her; moreover, the marquis having complained to a monk of these

reproaches, and the monk having reported his complaints to the marquise, she called her husband to her bedside, at a moment when she was surrounded by people, and made him a public apology, begging him to attribute the words that seemed to have wounded him to the effect of her sufferings, and not to any failure in her regard for him. The marquis, left alone with his wife, tried to take advantage of this reconciliation to induce her to annul the declaration that she had made before the magistrates of Avignon; for the vice-legate and his officers, faithful to the promises made to the marquise, had refused to register the fresh donation which she had made at Ganges, according to the suggestions of the abbé, and which the latter had sent off, the very moment it was signed, to his brother. But on this point the marquise was immovably resolute, declaring that this fortune was reserved for her children and therefore sacred to her, and that she could make no alteration in what had been done at Avignon, since it represented her genuine and final wishes. Notwithstanding this declaration, the marquis did not cease to remain beside his wife and to bestow upon her every care possible to a devoted and attentive husband.

Two days later than the Marquis de Ganges arrived Madame de Rossan: great was her amazement, after all the rumours that were already in circulation about the marquis, at finding her daughter in the hands of him whom she regarded as one of her murderers. But the marquise, far from sharing that opinion, did all she could, not only to make her mother feel differently, but even to induce her to embrace the marquis as a son. This blindness on the part of the marquise caused Madame de Rossan so much grief that notwithstanding her profound affection for her daughter she would only stay two days, and in spite of the entreaties that the dying woman made to her, she returned home, not allowing anything to stop her. This departure was a great grief to the marquise, and was the reason why she begged with renewed entreaties to be taken to Montpellier. The very sight of the place where she had been so cruelly tortured continually brought before her, not

only the remembrance of the murder, but the image of the murderers, who in her brief moments of sleep so haunted her that she sometimes awoke suddenly, uttering shrieks and calling for help. Unfortunately, the physician considered her too weak to bear removal, and declared that no change of place could be made without extreme danger.

Then, when she heard this verdict, which had to be repeated to her, and which her bright and lively complexion and brilliant eyes seemed to contradict, the marquise turned all her thoughts towards holy things, and thought only of dying like a saint after having already suffered like a martyr. She consequently asked to receive the last sacrament, and while it was being sent for, she repeated her apologies to her husband and her forgiveness of his brothers, and this with a gentleness that, joined to her beauty, made her whole personality appear angelic. When, however, the priest bearing the viaticum entered, this expression suddenly changed, and her face presented every token of the greatest terror. She had just recognised in the priest who was bringing her the last consolations of Heaven the infamous Perette, whom she could not but regard as an accomplice of the abbé and the chevalier, since, after having tried to hold her back, he had attempted to crush her beneath the pitcher of water which he had thrown at her from the window, and since, when he saw her escaping, he had run to warn her assassins and to set them on her track. She recovered herself quickly, however, and seeing that the priest, without any sign of remorse, was drawing near to her bedside, she would not cause so great a scandal as would have been caused by denouncing him at such a moment. Nevertheless, bending towards him, she said, "Father, I hope that, remembering what has passed, and in order to dispel fears that I may justifiably entertain, you will make no difficulty of partaking with me of the consecrated wafer; for I have sometimes heard it said that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, while remaining a token of salvation, has been known to be made a principle of death."

The priest inclined his head as a sign of assent.

So the marquise communicated thus, taking a sacrament that she shared with one of her murderers, as an evidence that she forgave this one like the others and that she prayed God to forgive them as she herself did.

The following days passed without any apparent increase in her illness, the fever by which she was consumed rather enhancing her beauties, and imparting to her voice and gestures a vivacity which they had never had before. Thus everybody had begun to recover hope, except herself, who, feeling better than anyone else what was her true condition, never for a moment allowed herself any illusion, and keeping her son, who was seven years old, constantly beside her bed, bade him again and again look well at her, so that, young as he was, he might remember her all his life and never forget her in his prayers. The poor child would burst into tears and promise not only to remember her but also to avenge her when he was a man. At these words the marquise gently reproved him, telling him that all vengeance belonged to the king and to God, and that all cares of the kind must be left to those two great rulers of heaven and of earth.

On the 3rd of June, M. Catalan, a councillor, appointed as a commissoner by the Parliament of Toulouse, arrived at Ganges, together with all the officials required by his commission; but he could not see the marquise that night, for she had dozed for some hours, and this sleep had left a sort of torpor upon her mind, which might have impaired the lucidity of her depositions. The next morning, without asking anybody's opinion, M. Catalan repaired to the house of M. Desprats, and in spite of some slight resistance on the part of those who were in charge of her, made his way to the presence of the marquise. The dying woman received him with an admirable presence of mind, that made M. Catalan think there had been an intention the night before to prevent any meeting between him and the person whom he was sent to interrogate. At first the marquise would relate nothing that had passed, saying that she could not at the same time accuse and forgive; but M. Catalan brought her to see that justice required truth

from her before all things, since, in default of exact information, the law might go astray, and strike the innocent instead of the guilty. This last argument decided the marquise, and during the hour and a half that he spent alone with her she told him all the details of this horrible occurrence. On the morrow M. Catalan was to see her again ; but on the morrow the marquise was, in truth, much worse. He assured himself of this by his own eyes, and as he knew almost all that he wished to know, did not insist further, for fear of fatiguing her.

Indeed, from that day forward, such atrocious sufferings laid hold upon the marquise, that notwithstanding the firmness which she had always shown, and which she tried to maintain to the end, she could not prevent herself from uttering screams mingled with prayers. In this manner she spent the whole day of the 4th and part of the 5th. At last, on that day, which was a Sunday, towards four o'clock in the afternoon, she expired.

The body was immediately opened, and the physicians attested that the marquise had died solely from the power of the poison, none of the seven sword cuts which she had received being mortal. They found the stomach and bowels burned and the brain blackened. However, in spite of that infernal draught, which, says the official report, "would have killed a lioness in a few hours," the marquise struggled for nineteen days,—so much, adds an account from which we have borrowed some of these details, so much did nature lovingly defend the beautiful body that she had taken so much trouble to make.

M. Catalan, the very moment he was informed of the marquise's death, having with him twelve guards belonging to the governor, ten archers, and a poqueton, despatched them to the marquis's castle with orders to seize his person, that of the priest, and those of all the servants except the groom who had assisted the marquise in her flight. The officer in command of this little squad found the marquis walking up and down, melancholy and greatly disturbed, in the large hall of the castle, and when he signified to him the order of which

he was the bearer, the marquis, without making any resistance, and as though prepared for what was happening to him, replied that he was ready to obey, and that moreover he had always intended to go before the Parliament to accuse the murderers of his wife. He was asked for the key of his cabinet, which he gave up, and the order was given to conduct him, with the other persons accused, to the prisons of Montpellier. As soon as the marquis came into that town, the report of his arrival spread with incredible rapidity from street to street. Then, as it was dark, lights came to all the windows, and people coming out with torches formed a torchlight procession, by means of which everybody could see him. He, like the priest, was mounted on a sorry hired horse, and entirely surrounded by archers, to whom, no doubt, he owed his life on this occasion; for the indignation against him was so great that everyone was egging on his neighbours to tear him limb from limb, which would certainly have come to pass had he not been so carefully defended and guarded.

Immediately upon receiving news of her daughter's death, Madame de Rossan took possession of all her property, and, making herself a party to the case, declared that she would never desist from her suit until her daughter's death was avenged. M. Catalan began the examination at once, and the first interrogation to which he submitted the marquis lasted eleven hours. Then soon afterwards he and the other persons accused were conveyed from the prisons of Montpellier to those of Toulouse. A crushing memorial by Madame de Rossan followed them, in which she demonstrated with absolute clearness that the marquis had participated in the crime of his two brothers, if not in act, in thought, desire, and intention.

The marquis's defence was very simple: it was his misfortune to have had two villains for brothers, who had made attempts first upon the honour and then upon the life of a wife whom he loved tenderly; they had destroyed her by a most atrocious death, and to crown his evil fortune, he, the innocent, was accused of having had a hand in that death. And, indeed, the examinations in the trial did not succeed in bringing any

evidence against the marquis beyond moral presumptions, which, it appears, were insufficient to induce his judges to award a sentence of death.

A verdict was consequently given, upon the 21st of August 1667, which sentenced the abbé and the chevalier de Ganges to be broken alive on the wheel, the Marquis de Ganges to perpetual banishment from the kingdom, his property to be confiscated to the king, and himself to lose his nobility and to become incapable of succeeding to the property of his children. As for the priest Perette, he was sentenced to the galleys for life, after having previously been degraded from his clerical orders by the ecclesiastical authorities.

This sentence made as great a stir as the murder had done, and gave rise, in that period when "extenuating circumstances" had not been invented, to long and angry discussions. Indeed, the marquis either was guilty of complicity or was not: if he was not, the punishment was too cruel; if he was, the sentence was too light. Such was the opinion of Louis XIV, who remembered the beauty of the Marquise de Ganges; for, some time afterwards, when he was believed to have forgotten this unhappy affair, and when he was asked to pardon the Marquis de la Douze, who was accused of having poisoned his wife, the king answered, "There is no need for a pardon, since he belongs to the Parliament of Toulouse, and the Marquis de Ganges did very well without one."

It may easily be supposed that this melancholy event did not pass without inciting the wits of the day to write a vast number of verses and *bouts-rimés* about the catastrophe by which one of the most beautiful women of the century was carried off. Readers who have a taste for that sort of literature are referred to the journals and memoirs of the times.

Now, as our readers, if they have taken any interest at all in the terrible tale just narrated, will certainly ask what became of the murderers, we will proceed to follow their course until

the moment when they disappeared, some into the night of death, some into the darkness of oblivion.

The priest Perette was the first to pay his debt to Heaven: he died at the oar on the way from Toulouse to Brest.

The chevalier withdrew to Venice, took service in the army of the Most Serene Republic, then at war with Turkey, and was sent to Candia, which the Mussulmans had been besieging for twenty years; he had scarcely arrived there when, as he was walking on the ramparts of the town with two other officers, a shell burst at their feet, and a fragment of it killed the chevalier without so much as touching his companions, so that the event was regarded as a direct act of Providence.

As for the abbé, his story is longer and stranger. He parted from the chevalier in the neighbourhood of Genoa, and crossing the whole of Piedmont, part of Switzerland, and a corner of Germany, entered Holland under the name of Lamartellière. After many hesitations as to the place where he would settle, he finally retired to Viane, of which the Count of Lippe was at that time sovereign; there he made the acquaintance of a gentleman who presented him to the count as a French religious refugee.

The count, even in this first conversation, found that the foreigner who had come to seek safety in his dominions possessed not only great intelligence but a very solid sort of intelligence, and seeing that the Frenchman was conversant with letters and with learning, proposed that he should undertake the education of his son, who at that time was nine years old. Such a proposal was a stroke of fortune for the abbé de Ganges, and he did not dream of refusing it.

The abbé de Ganges was one of those men who have great mastery over themselves: from the moment when he saw that his interest, nay, the very safety of his life required it, he concealed with extreme care whatever bad passions existed within him, and only allowed his good qualities to appear. He was a tutor who supervised the heart as sharply as the mind, and succeeded in making of his pupil a prince so accomplished in both respects, that the Count of Lippe, making use of such

wisdom and such knowledge, began to consult the tutor upon all matters of state, so that in course of time the so-called Lamartellière, without holding any public office, had become the soul of the little principality.

The countess had a young relation living with her, who though without fortune was of a great family, and for whom the countess had a deep affection; it did not escape her notice that her son's tutor had inspired this poor young girl with warmer feelings than became her high station, and that the false Lamartellière, emboldened by his own growing credit, had done all he could to arouse and keep up these feelings. The countess sent for her cousin, and having drawn from her a confession of her love, said that she herself had indeed a great regard for her son's governor, whom she and her husband intended to reward with pensions and with posts for the services he had rendered to their family and to the State, but that it was too lofty an ambition for a man whose name was Lamartellière, and who had no relations nor family that could be owned, to aspire to the hand of a girl who was related to a royal house; and that though she did not require that the man who married her cousin should be a Bourbon, a Montmorency, or a Rohan, she did at least desire that he should be somebody, though it were but a gentleman of Gascony or Poitou.

The Countess of Lippe's young kinswoman went and repeated this answer, word for word, to her lover, expecting him to be overwhelmed by it; but, on the contrary, he replied that if his birth was the only obstacle that opposed their union, there might be means to remove it. In fact, the abbé, having spent eight years at the prince's court, amid the strongest testimonies of confidence and esteem, thought himself sure enough of the prince's goodwill to venture upon the avowal of his real name.

He therefore asked an audience of the countess, who immediately granted it. Bowing to her respectfully, he said, "Madame, I had flattered myself that your Highness honoured me with your esteem, and yet you now oppose my happiness: your Highness's relative is willing to accept me as a husband,

and the prince your son authorises my wishes and pardons my boldness; what have I done to you, madame, that you alone should be against me? and with what can you reproach me during the eight years that I have had the honour of serving your Highness?"

"I have nothing to reproach you with, monsieur," replied the countess; "but I do not wish to incur reproach on my own part by permitting such a marriage: I thought you too sensible and reasonable a man to need reminding that, while you confined yourself to suitable requests and moderate ambitions, you had reason to be pleased with our gratitude. Do you ask that your salary shall be doubled? The thing is easy. Do you desire important posts? They shall be given you; but do not, sir, so far forget yourself as to aspire to an alliance that you cannot flatter yourself with a hope of ever attaining."

"But, madame," returned the petitioner, "who told you that my birth was so obscure as to debar me from all hope of obtaining your consent?"

"Why, you yourself, monsieur, I think," answered the countess in astonishment; "or if you did not say so, your name said so for you."

"And if that name is not mine, madame?" said the abbé, growing bolder; "if unfortunate, terrible, fatal circumstances have compelled me to take that name in order to hide another that was too unhappily famous, would your Highness then be so unjust as not to change your mind?"

"Monsieur," replied the countess, "you have said too much now not to go on to the end. Who are you? Tell me. And if, as you give me to understand, you are of good birth, I swear to you that want of fortune shall not stand in the way."

"Alas, madame," cried the abbé, throwing himself at her feet, "my name, I am sure, is but too familiar to your Highness, and I would willingly at this moment give half my blood that you had never heard it uttered; but you have said it, madame, I have gone too far to recede. Well, then, I am that unhappy abbé de Ganges whose crimes are known, and of whom I have more than once heard you speak."

"The abbé de Ganges!" cried the countess in horror,—"the abbé de Ganges! You are that execrable abbé de Ganges whose very name makes one shudder? And to you, to a man thus infamous, we have entrusted the education of our only son? Oh, I hope, for all our sakes, monsieur, that you are speaking falsely; for if you were speaking the truth I think I should have you arrested this very instant and taken back to France to undergo your punishment. The best thing you can do, if what you have said to me is true, is instantly to leave not only the castle, but the town and the principality; it will be torment enough for the rest of my life whenever I think that I have spent seven years under the same roof with you."

The abbé would have replied; but the countess raised her voice so much, that the young prince, who had been won over to his tutor's interests and who was listening at his mother's door, judged that his protégé's business was taking an unfavourable turn, and went in to try and put things right. He found his mother so much alarmed that she drew him to her by an instinctive movement, as though to put herself under his protection, and beg and pray as he might, he could only obtain permission for his tutor to go away undisturbed to any country of the world that he might prefer, but with an express prohibition of ever again entering the presence of the Count or the Countess of Lippe.

The abbé de Ganges withdrew to Amsterdam, where he became a teacher of languages, and where his lady-love soon after came to him and married him: his pupil, whom his parents could not induce, even when they told him the real name of the false Lamartellière, to share their horror of him, gave him assistance as long as he needed it; and this state of things continued until upon his wife attaining her majority he entered into possession of some property that belonged to her. His regular conduct and his learning, which had been rendered more solid by long and serious study, caused him to be admitted into the Protestant consistory; there, after an exemplary life, he died, and none but God ever knew whether it was one of hypocrisy or of penitence.

As for the Marquis de Ganges, who had been sentenced, as we have seen, to banishment and the confiscation of his property, he was conducted to the frontier of Savoy and there set at liberty. After having spent two or three years abroad, so that the terrible catastrophe in which he had been concerned should have time to be hushed up, he came back to France, and as nobody—Madame de Rossan being now dead—was interested in prosecuting him, he returned to his castle at Ganges, and remained there, pretty well hidden. M. de Baville, indeed, the Lieutenant of Languedoc, learned that the marquis had broken from his exile; but he was told, at the same time, that the marquis, as a zealous Catholic, was forcing his vassals to attend mass, whatever their religion might be: this was the period in which persons of the Reformed Church were being persecuted, and the zeal of the marquis appeared to M. de Baville to compensate and more than compensate for the peccadillo of which he had been accused; consequently, instead of prosecuting him, he entered into secret communication with him, reassuring him about his stay in France, and urging on his religious zeal; and in this manner twelve years passed by.

During this time the marquise's young son, whom we saw at his mother's deathbed, had reached the age of twenty, and being rich in his father's possessions—which his uncle had restored to him—and also by his mother's inheritance, which he had shared with his sister, had married a girl of good family, named Mademoiselle de Moissac, who was both rich and beautiful. Being called to serve in the royal army, the count brought his young wife to the castle of Ganges, and, having fervently commended her to his father, left her in his charge.

The Marquis de Ganges was forty-two years old, and scarcely seemed thirty; he was one of the handsomest men living; he fell in love with his daughter-in-law and hoped to win her love, and in order to promote this design, his first care was to separate from her, under the excuse of religion, a maid who had been with her from childhood and to whom she was greatly attached.

This measure, the cause of which the young marquise did

not know, distressed her extremely. It was much against her will that she had come to live at all in this old castle of Ganges, which had so recently been the scene of the terrible story that we have just told. She inhabited the suite of rooms in which the murder had been committed; her bedchamber was the same which had belonged to the late marquise; her bed was the same; the window by which she had fled was before her eyes; and everything, down to the smallest article of furniture, recalled to her the details of that savage tragedy. But even worse was her case when she found it no longer possible to doubt her father-in-law's intentions; when she saw herself beloved by one whose very name had again and again made her childhood turn pale with terror, and when she was left alone at all hours of the day in the sole company of the man whom public rumour still pursued as a murderer. Perhaps in any other place the poor lonely girl might have found some strength in trusting herself to God; but there, where God had suffered one of the fairest and purest creatures that ever existed to perish by so cruel a death, she dared not appeal to Him, for He seemed to have turned away from this family.

She waited, therefore, in growing terror; spending her days, as much as she could, with the women of rank who lived in the little town of Ganges, and some of whom, eye-witnesses of her mother-in-law's murder, increased her terrors by the accounts which they gave of it, and which she, with the despairing obstinacy of fear, asked to hear again and again. As to her nights, she spent the greater part of them on her knees, and fully dressed, trembling at the smallest sound; only breathing freely as daylight came back, and then venturing to seek her bed for a few hours' rest.

At last the marquis's attempts became so direct and so pressing, that the poor young woman resolved to escape at all costs from his hands. Her first idea was to write to her father, explain to him her position and ask help; but her father had not long been a Catholic, and had suffered much on behalf of the Reformed religion, and on these accounts it was clear that her letter would be opened by the marquis on pretext of

religion, and thus that step, instead of saving, might destroy her. She had thus but one resource: her husband had always been a Catholic; her husband was a captain of dragoons, faithful in the service of the king and faithful in the service of God; there could be no excuse for opening a letter to him; she resolved to address herself to him, explained the position in which she found herself, got the address written by another hand, and sent the letter to Montpellier, where it was posted.

The young marquis was at Metz when he received his wife's missive. At that instant all his childish memories awoke; he beheld himself at his dying mother's bedside, vowing never to forget her and to pray daily for her. The image presented itself of this wife whom he adored, in the same room, exposed to the same violence, destined perhaps to the same fate; all this was enough to lead him to take positive action: he flung himself into a post-chaise, reached Versailles, begged an audience of the king, cast himself, with his wife's letter in his hand, at the feet of Louis XIV, and besought him to compel his father to return into exile, where he swore upon his honour that he would send him everything he could need in order to live properly.

The king was not aware that the Marquis de Ganges had disobeyed the sentence of banishment, and the manner in which he learned it was not such as to make him pardon the contradiction of his laws. In consequence he immediately ordered that if the Marquis de Ganges were found in France he should be proceeded against with the utmost rigour.

Happily for the marquis, the Comte de Ganges, the only one of his brothers who had remained in France, and indeed in favour, learned the king's decision in time. He took post from Versailles, and making the greatest haste, went to warn him of the danger that was threatening; both together immediately left Ganges, and withdrew to Avignon. The district of Venaissin, still belonging at that time to the pope and being governed by a vice-legate, was considered as foreign territory. There he found his daughter, Madame d'Urban, who did all she could to induce him to stay with her; but to do so would

have been to flout Louis XIV's orders too publicly, and the marquis was afraid to remain so much in evidence lest evil should befall him; he accordingly retired to the little village of l'Isle, built in a charming spot near the fountain of Vaucluse; there he was lost sight of; none ever heard him spoken of again, and when I myself travelled in the south of France in 1835, I sought in vain any trace of the obscure and forgotten death which closed so turbulent and stormy an existence.

As, in speaking of the last adventures of the Marquis de Ganges, we have mentioned the name of Madame d'Urban, his daughter, we cannot exempt ourselves from following her amid the strange events of her life, scandalous though they may be; such, indeed, was the fate of this family, that it was to occupy the attention of France through well-nigh a century, either by its crimes or by its freaks.

On the death of the marquise, her daughter, who was barely six years old, had remained in the charge of the dowager Marquise de Ganges, who, when she had attained her twelfth year, presented to her as her husband the Marquis de Perrant, formerly a lover of the grandmother herself. The marquis was seventy years of age, having been born in the reign of Henry IV; he had seen the court of Louis XIII and that of Louis XIV's youth, and he had remained one of its most elegant and favoured nobles; he had the manners of those two periods, the politest that the world has known, so that the young girl, not knowing as yet the meaning of marriage and having seen no other man, yielded without repugnance, and thought herself happy in becoming the Marquise de Perrant.

The marquis, who was very rich, had quarrelled with his younger brother, and regarded him with such hatred that he was marrying only to deprive his brother of the inheritance that would rightfully accrue to him, should the elder die childless. Unfortunately, the marquis soon perceived that the step which he had taken, however efficacious in the case of another man, was likely to be fruitless in his own. He did not, however, despair, and waited two or three years, hoping every day that Heaven would work a miracle in his favour; but as

every day diminished the chances of this miracle, and his hatred for his brother grew with the impossibility of taking revenge upon him, he adopted a strange and altogether antique scheme, and determined, like the ancient Spartans, to obtain by the help of another what Heaven refused to himself.

The marquis did not need to seek long for the man who should give him his revenge: he had in his house a young page, some seventeen or eighteen years old, the son of a friend of his, who, dying without fortune, had on his deathbed particularly commended the lad to the marquis. This young man, a year older than his mistress, could not be continually about her without falling passionately in love with her; and however much he might endeavour to hide his love, the poor youth was as yet too little practised in dissimulation to succeed in concealing it from the eyes of the marquis, who, after having at first observed its growth with uneasiness, began on the contrary to rejoice in it, from the moment when he had decided upon the scheme that we have just mentioned.

The marquis was slow to decide but prompt to execute. Having taken his resolution, he summoned his page, and, after having made him promise inviolable secrecy, and having undertaken, on that condition, to prove his gratitude by buying him a regiment, explained what was expected of him. The poor youth, to whom nothing could have been more unexpected than such a communication, took it at first for a trick by which the marquis meant to make him own his love, and was ready to throw himself at his feet and declare everything; but the marquis seeing his confusion, and easily guessing its cause, reassured him completely by swearing that he authorised him to take any steps in order to attain the end that the marquis had in view. As in his inmost heart the aim of the young man was the same, the bargain was soon struck: the page bound himself by the most terrible oaths to keep the secret; and the marquis, in order to supply whatever assistance was in his power, gave him money to spend, believing that there was no woman, however virtuous, who could resist the combination of youth, beauty, and fortune: unhappily for the marquis, such a

woman, whom he thought impossible, did exist, and was his wife.

The page was so anxious to obey his master, that from that very day his mistress remarked the alteration that arose from the permission given him—his prompt obedience to her orders and his speed in executing them, in order to return a few moments the sooner to her presence. She was grateful to him, and in the simplicity of her heart she thanked him. Two days later the page appeared before her splendidly dressed; she observed and remarked upon his improved appearance, and amused herself in conning over all the parts of his dress, as she might have done with a new doll. All this familiarity doubled the poor young man's passion, but he stood before his mistress, nevertheless, abashed and trembling, like Cherubino before his fair godmother. Every evening the marquis inquired into his progress, and every evening the page confessed that he was no farther advanced than the day before; then the marquis scolded, threatened to take away his fine clothes, to withdraw his own promises, and finally to address himself to some other person. At this last threat the youth would again call up his courage, and promise to be bolder to-morrow; and on the morrow would spend the day in making a thousand compliments to his mistress's eyes, which she, in her innocence, did not understand. At last, one day, Madame de Perrant asked him what made him look at her thus, and he ventured to confess his love; but then Madame de Perrant, changing her whole demeanour, assumed a face of sternness and bade him go out of her room.

The poor lover obeyed, and ran, in despair, to confide his grief to the husband, who appeared sincerely to share it, but consoled him by saying that he had no doubt chosen his moment badly; that all women, even the least severe, had inauspicious hours in which they would not yield to attack, and that he must let a few days pass, which he must employ in making his peace, and then must take advantage of a better opportunity, and not allow himself to be rebuffed by a few refusals; and to these words the marquis added a purse of gold,

in order that the page might, if necessary, win over the marquise's waiting-woman.

Guided thus by the older experience of the husband, the page began to appear very much ashamed and very penitent; but for a day or two the marquise, in spite of his apparent humility, kept him at a distance: at last, reflecting no doubt, with the assistance of her mirror and of her maid, that the crime was not absolutely unpardonable, and after having reprimanded the culprit at some length, while he stood listening with eyes cast down, she gave him her hand, forgave him, and admitted him to her companionship as before.

Things went on in this way for a week. The page no longer raised his eyes and did not venture to open his mouth, and the marquise was beginning to regret the time in which he used to look and to speak, when, one fine day while she was at her toilet, at which she had allowed him to be present, he seized a moment when the maid had left her alone, to cast himself at her feet and tell her that he had vainly tried to stifle his love, and that, even although he were to die under the weight of her anger, he must tell her that this love was immense, eternal, stronger than his life. The marquise upon this wished to send him away, as on the former occasion, but instead of obeying her, the page, better instructed, took her in his arms. The marquise called, screamed, broke her bell-rope; the waiting-maid, who had been bought over, according to the marquis's advice, had kept the other women out of the way, and was careful not to come herself. Then the marquise, resisting force by force, freed herself from the page's arms, rushed to her husband's room, and there, bare-necked, with floating hair, and looking lovelier than ever, flung herself into his arms and begged his protection against the insolent fellow who had just insulted her. But what was the amazement of the marquise, when, instead of the anger which she expected to see break forth, the marquis answered coldly that what she was saying was incredible, that he had always found the young man very well behaved, and that, no doubt, having taken up some frivolous ground of resentment against him, she was employing this means to get

rid of him; but, he added, whatever might be his love for her, and his desire to do everything that was agreeable to her, he begged her not to require this of him, the young man being his friend's son, and consequently his own adopted child. It was now the marquise who, in her turn, retired abashed, not knowing what to make of such a reply, and fully resolving, since her husband's protection failed her, to keep herself well guarded by her own severity.

Indeed, from that moment the marquise behaved to the poor youth with so much prudery, that, loving her as he did, sincerely, he would have died of grief, if he had not had the marquis at hand to encourage and strengthen him. Nevertheless, the latter himself began to despair, and to be more troubled by the virtue of his wife than another man might have been by the levity of his. Finally, he resolved, seeing that matters remained at the same point and that the marquise did not relax in the smallest degree, to take extreme measures. He hid his page in a closet of his wife's bedchamber, and, rising during her first sleep, left empty his own place beside her, went out softly, double-locked the door, and listened attentively to hear what would happen.

He had not been listening thus for ten minutes when he heard a great noise in the room, and the page trying in vain to appease it. The marquis hoped that he might succeed, but the noise increasing, showed him that he was again to be disappointed; soon came cries for help, for the marquise could not ring, the bell-ropes having been lifted out of her reach, and no one answering her cries, he heard her spring from her high bed, run to the door, and finding it locked rush to the window, which she tried to open: the scene had come to its climax.

The marquis decided to go in, lest some tragedy should happen, or lest his wife's screams should reach some belated passer-by, who next day would make him the talk of the town. Scarcely did the marquise behold him when she threw herself into his arms, and pointing to the page, said—

"Well, monsieur, will you still hesitate to free me from this insolent wretch?"

"Yes, madame," replied the marquis; "for this insolent wretch has been acting for the last three months not only with my sanction but even by my orders."

The marquise remained stupefied. Then the marquis, without sending away the page, gave his wife an explanation of all that had passed, and besought her to yield to his desire of obtaining a successor, whom he would regard as his own child, so long as it was hers; but young though she was, the marquise answered with a dignity unusual at her age, that his power over her had the limits that were set to it by law, and not those that it might please him to set in their place, and that however much she might wish to do what might be his pleasure, she would yet never obey him at the expense of her soul and her honour.

So positive an answer, while it filled her husband with despair, proved to him that he must renounce the hope of obtaining an heir; but since the page was not to blame for this, he fulfilled the promise that he had made, bought him a regiment, and resigned himself to having the most virtuous wife in France. His repentance was not, however, of long duration; he died at the end of three months, after having confided to his friend, the Marquis d'Urban, the cause of his sorrows.

The Marquis d'Urban had a son of marriageable age; he thought that he could find nothing more suitable for him than a wife whose virtue had come triumphantly through such a trial: he let her time of mourning pass, and then presented the young Marquis d'Urban, who succeeded in making his attentions acceptable to the beautiful widow, and soon became her husband. More fortunate than his predecessor, the Marquis d'Urban had three heirs to oppose to his collaterals, when, some two years and a half later, the Chevalier de Bouillon arrived at the capital of the county of Venaissin.

The Chevalier de Bouillon was a typical rake of the period, handsome, young, and well-grown; the nephew of a cardinal who was influential at Rome, and proud of belonging to a house which had privileges of suzerainty. The chevalier, in his indiscreet fatuity, spared no woman; and his conduct had given some scandal in the circle of Madame de Maintenon, who

was rising into power. One of his friends, having witnessed the displeasure exhibited towards him by Louis XIV, who was beginning to become devout, thought to do him a service by warning him that the king "*gardait une dent*" against him.[1]

"*Pardieu!*" replied the chevalier, "I am indeed unlucky when the only tooth left to him remains to bite me."

This pun had been repeated, and had reached Louis XIV, so that the chevalier presently heard, directly enough this time, that the king desired him to travel for some years. He knew the danger of neglecting such intimations, and since he thought the country after all preferable to the Bastille, he left Paris, and arrived at Avignon surrounded by the halo of interest that naturally attends a handsome young persecuted nobleman.

The virtue of Madame d'Urban was as much cried up at Avignon as the ill-behaviour of the chevalier had been reprobated in Paris. A reputation equal to his own, but so opposite in kind, could not fail to be very offensive to him, therefore he determined immediately upon arriving to play one against the other.

Nothing was easier than the attempt. M. d'Urban, sure of his wife's virtue, allowed her entire liberty; the chevalier saw her wherever he chose to see her, and every time he saw her found means to express a growing passion. Whether because the hour had come for Madame d'Urban, or whether because she was dazzled by the splendour of the chevalier's belonging to a princely house, her virtue, hitherto so fierce, melted like snow in the May sunshine; and the chevalier, luckier than the poor page, took the husband's place without any attempt on Madame d'Urban's part to cry for help.

As all the chevalier desired was public triumph, he took care to make the whole town acquainted at once with his success; then, as some infidels of the neighbourhood still doubted, the chevalier ordered one of his servants to wait for him at the marquise's door with a lantern and a bell. At one in the morning, the chevalier came out, and the servant walked before

[1] Translator's note.—"*Garder une dent*," that is, to keep up a grudge, means literally "to keep a tooth" against him.

ringing the bell. At this unaccustomed sound, a great number of townspeople, who had been quietly asleep, awoke, and, curious to see what was happening, opened their windows. They beheld the chevalier, walking gravely behind his servant, who continued to light his master's way and to ring, along the course of the street that lay between Madame d'Urban's house and his own. As he had made no mystery to anyone of his love affair, nobody took the trouble even to ask him whence he came. However, as there might possibly be persons still unconvinced, he repeated this same jest, for his own satisfaction, three nights running; so that by the morning of the fourth day nobody had any doubts left.

As generally happens in such cases, M. d'Urban did not know a word of what was going on until the moment when his friends warned him that he was the talk of the town. Then he forbade his wife to see her lover again. The prohibition produced the usual results. On the morrow, as soon as M. d'Urban had gone out, the marquise sent for the chevalier to inform him of the catastrophe in which they were both involved; but she found him far better prepared than herself for such blows, and he tried to prove to her, by reproaches for her imprudent conduct, that all this was her fault; so that at last the poor woman, convinced that it was she who had brought these woes upon them, burst into tears. Meanwhile, M. d'Urban, who, being jealous for the first time, was the more seriously so, having learned that the chevalier was with his wife, shut the doors, and posted himself in the ante-chamber with his servants, in order to seize him as he came out. But the chevalier, who had ceased to trouble himself about Madame d'Urban's tears, heard all the preparations, and, suspecting some ambush, opened the window, and, although it was one o'clock in the afternoon and the place was full of people, jumped out of the window into the street, and did not hurt himself at all, though the height was twenty feet, but walked quietly home at a moderate pace.

The same evening, the chevalier, intending to relate his new adventure in all its details, invited some of his friends to sup

with him at the pastry-cook Lecoq's. This man, who was a brother of the famous Lecoq of the rue Montorgueil, was the cleverest eating-house-keeper in Avignon; his own unusual corpulence commended his cookery, and, when he stood at the door, constituted an advertisement for his restaurant. The good man, knowing with what delicate appetites he had to deal, did his very best that evening, and that nothing might be wanting, waited upon his guests himself. They spent the night drinking, and towards morning the chevalier and his companions, being then drunk, espied their host standing respectfully at the door, his face wreathed in smiles. The chevalier called him nearer, poured him out a glass of wine and made him drink with them; then, as the poor wretch, confused at such an honour, was thanking him with many bows, he said—

"*Pardieu*, you are too fat for a cock,[1] and I must make you a capon."

This strange proposition was received as men would receive it who were drunk and accustomed by their position to impunity. The unfortunate pastry-cook was seized, bound down upon the table, and died under their treatment. The vice-legate being informed of the murder by one of the waiters, who had run in on hearing his master's shrieks, and had found him, covered with blood, in the hands of his butchers, was at first inclined to arrest the chevalier and bring him conspicuously to punishment. But he was restrained by his regard for the Cardinal de Bouillon, the chevalier's uncle, and contented himself with warning the culprit that unless he left the town instantly he would be put into the hands of the authorities. The chevalier, who was beginning to have had enough of Avignon, did not wait to be told twice, ordered the wheels of his chaise to be greased and horses to be brought. In the interval before they were ready the fancy took him to go and see Madame d'Urban again.

As the house of the marquise was the very last at which, after the manner of his leaving it the day before, the chevalier was expected at such an hour, he got in with the greatest ease, and,

[1] Translator's note.—"Lecoq," of course, means "cock."

meeting the lady's-maid, who was in his interests, was taken to the room where the marquise was. She, who had not reckoned upon seeing the chevalier again, received him with all the raptures of which a woman in love is capable, especially when her love is a forbidden one. But the chevalier soon put an end to them by announcing that his visit was a visit of farewell, and by telling her the reason that obliged him to leave her. The marquise was like the woman who pitied the fatigue of the poor horses that tore Damien limb from limb; all her commiseration was for the chevalier, who on account of such a trifle was being forced to leave Avignon. At last the farewell had to be uttered, and as the chevalier, not knowing what to say at the fatal moment, complained that he had no memento of her, the marquise took down the frame that contained a portrait of herself corresponding with one of her husband, and tearing out the canvas, rolled it up and gave it to the chevalier. The latter, so far from being touched by this token of love, laid it down, as he went away, upon a piece of furniture, where the marquise found it half an hour later. She imagined that his mind being so full of the original, he had forgotten the copy, and representing to herself the sorrow which the discovery of this forgetfulness would cause him, she sent for a servant, gave him the picture, and ordered him to take horse and ride after the chevalier's chaise. The man took a post-horse, and, making great speed, perceived the fugitive in the distance just as the latter had finished changing horses. He made violent signs and shouted loudly, in order to stop the postillion. But the postillion having told his fare that he saw a man coming on at full speed, the chevalier supposed himself to be pursued, and bade him go on as fast as possible. This order was so well obeyed that the unfortunate servant only came up with the chaise a league and a half farther on; having stopped the postillion, he got off his horse, and very respectfully presented to the chevalier the picture which he had been bidden to bring him. But the chevalier, having recovered from his first alarm, bade him go about his business, and take back the portrait—which was of no use to him—to the sender. The servant, however, like a

faithful messenger, declared that his orders were positive, and that he should not dare go back to Madame d'Urban without fulfilling them. The chevalier, seeing that he could not conquer the man's determination, sent his postillion to a farrier, whose house lay on the road, for a hammer and four nails, and with his own hands nailed the portrait to the back of his chaise; then he stepped in again, bade the postillion whip up his horses, and drove away, leaving Madame d'Urban's messenger greatly astonished at the manner in which the chevalier had used his mistress's portrait.

At the next stage, the postillion, who was going back, asked for his money, and the chevalier answered that he had none. The postillion persisted; then the chevalier got out of his chaise, unfastened Madame d'Urban's portrait, and told him that he need only put it up for sale in Avignon and declare how it had come into his possession, in order to receive twenty times the price of his stage; the postillion, seeing that nothing else was to be got out of the chevalier, accepted the pledge, and, following his instructions precisely, exhibited it next morning at the door of a dealer in the town, together with an exact statement of the story. The picture was bought back the same day for twenty-five louis.

As may be supposed, the adventure was much talked of throughout the town. Next day, Madame d'Urban disappeared, no one knew whither, at the very time when the relatives of the marquis were met together and had decided to ask the king for a *lettre-de-cachet*. One of the gentlemen present was entrusted with the duty of taking the necessary steps; but whether because he was not active enough, or whether because he was in Madame d'Urban's interests, nothing further was heard in Avignon of any consequences ensuing from such steps. In the meantime, Madame d'Urban, who had gone to the house of an aunt, opened negotiations with her husband that were entirely successful, and a month after this adventure she returned triumphantly to the conjugal roof.

Two hundred pistoles, given by the Cardinal de Bouillon, pacified the family of the unfortunate pastry-cook, who at

first had given notice of the affair to the police, but who soon afterwards withdrew their complaint, and gave out that they had taken action too hastily on the strength of a story told in joke, and that further inquiries showed their relative to have died of an apoplectic stroke.

Thanks to this declaration, which exculpated the Chevalier de Bouillon in the eyes of the king, he was allowed, after travelling for two years in Italy and in Germany, to return undisturbed to France.

Thus ends, not the family of Ganges, but the commotion which that family made in the world. From time to time, indeed, the playwright or the novelist calls up the pale and blood-stained figure of the marquise to appear either on the stage or in a book; but the evocation almost always ceases at her, and many persons who have written about the mother do not even know what became of the children. Our intention has been to fill this gap; that is why we have tried to tell what our predecessors left out, and to offer to our readers what the stage—and often the actual world—offers: comedy after melodrama.

MARY STUART



Bourdet, del. *Lafond, sculp.*

MARY STUART AND THE HANDSOME RIZZIO

MARY STUART

1587

CHAPTER I

SOME royal names are predestined to misfortune: in France, there is the name "Henry." Henry I was poisoned, Henry II was killed in a tournament, Henry III and Henry IV were assassinated. As to Henry V, for whom the past is so fatal already, God alone knows what the future has in store for him.

In Scotland, the unlucky name is "Stuart." Robert I, founder of the race, died at twenty-eight of a lingering illness. Robert II, the most fortunate of the family, was obliged to pass a part of his life, not merely in retirement, but also in the dark, on account of inflammation of the eyes, which made them blood-red. Robert III succumbed to grief, caused by the death of one son and the captivity of the other. James I was stabbed by Graham in the abbey of the Black Monks of Perth. James II was killed at the siege of Roxburgh, by a splinter from a burst cannon. James III was assassinated by an unknown hand in a mill where he had taken refuge during the battle of Sauchie. James IV, wounded by two arrows and a blow from a halberd, fell amidst his nobles on the battlefield of Flodden. James V died of grief at the loss of his two sons, and of remorse for the execution of Hamilton. James VI, destined to unite on his head the two crowns of Scotland and England, son of a father who had been assassinated, led a melancholy and timorous existence, between the scaffold of his mother, Mary Stuart, and that of his son, Charles I. Charles II spent a portion of his life in exile. James II died in it. The Chevalier Saint-George, after having been

appeared one after another; then wave followed upon wave, and the spectators of this horrible tragedy, seeing the sea calm and solitary as if nothing had happened, asked themselves if it was not a vision that had appeared to them and vanished.

"Alas!" cried Mary, falling on a seat and leaning both arms on the vessel's stern, "what a sad omen for such a sad voyage!" Then, once more fixing on the receding harbour, her eyes dried for a moment by terror, and beginning to moisten anew, "Adieu, France!" she murmured, "adieu, France!" and for five hours she remained thus, weeping and murmuring, "Adieu, France! adieu, France!" Darkness fell while she was still lamenting; and then, as the view was blotted out and she was summoned to supper, "It is indeed now, dear France," said she, rising, "that I really lose you, since jealous night heaps mourning upon mourning, casting a black veil before my sight. Adieu then, one last time, dear France; for never shall I see you more."

With these words, she went below, saying that she was the very opposite of Dido, who after the departure of Æneas had done nothing but look at the waves, while she, Mary, could not take her eyes off the land. Then everyone gathered round her to try to divert and console her. But she, growing sadder, and not being able to respond, so overcome was she with tears, could hardly eat; and, having had a bed got ready on the stern deck, she sent for the steersman, and ordered him if he still saw land at daybreak, to come and wake her immediately. On this point Mary was favoured; for the wind having dropped, when daybreak came the vessel was still within sight of France.

It was a great joy when, awaked by the steersman, who had not forgotten the order he had received, Mary raised herself on her couch, and through the window that she had had opened saw once more the beloved shore. But at five o'clock in the morning, the wind having freshened, the vessel rapidly drew farther away, so that soon the land completely disappeared. Then Mary fell back upon her bed, pale as death, murmuring yet once again—

"Adieu, France! I shall see thee no more."

Indeed, the happiest years of her life had just passed away in this France that she so much regretted. Born amid the first religious troubles, near the bedside of her dying father, the cradle mourning was to stretch for her to the grave, and her stay in France had been a ray of sunshine in her night. Slandered from her birth, the report was so generally spread abroad that she was malformed, and that she could not live to grow up, that one day her mother, Mary of Guise, tired of these false rumours, undressed her and showed her naked to the English ambassador, who had come, on the part of Henry VIII, to ask her in marriage for the Prince of Wales, himself only five years old. Crowned at nine months by Cardinal Beaton, archbishop of St. Andrews, she was immediately hidden by her mother, who was afraid of treacherous dealing in the King of England, in Stirling Castle. Two years later, not finding even this fortress safe enough, she removed her to an island in the middle of the Lake of Menteith, where a priory, the only building in the place, provided an asylum for the royal child and for four young girls born in the same year as herself, having like her the sweet name which is an anagram of the word "*aimer*," and who, quitting her neither in her good nor in her evil fortune, were called the "Queen's Marys." They were Mary Livingston, Mary Fleming, Mary Seyton, and Mary Beaton. Mary stayed in this priory till Parliament, having approved her marriage with the French dauphin, son of Henry II, she was taken to Dumbarton Castle, to await the moment of departure. There she was entrusted to M. de Brézé, sent by Henry II to fetch her. Having set out in the French galleys anchored at the mouth of the Clyde, Mary, after having been hotly pursued by the English fleet, entered Brest harbour, 15th August 1548, one year after the death of Francis I. Besides the queen's four Marys, the vessels also brought to France three of her natural brothers, among whom was the Prior of St. Andrews, James Stuart, who was later to abjure the Catholic faith, and with the title of Regent, and under the name of the Earl of Murray to become so fatal to poor Mary From Brest, Mary went

to St. Germain-en-Laye, where Henry II, who had just ascended the throne, overwhelmed her with caresses, and then sent her to a convent where the heiresses of the noblest French houses were brought up. There Mary's happy qualities developed. Born with a woman's heart and a man's head, Mary not only acquired all the accomplishments which constituted the education of a future queen, but also that real knowledge which is the object of the truly learned.

Thus, at fourteen, in the Louvre, before Henry II, Catherine de Médici, and the whole court, she delivered a discourse in Latin of her own composition, in which she maintained that it becomes women to cultivate letters, and that it is unjust and tyrannical to deprive flowers of their perfumes, by banishing young girls from all but domestic cares. One can imagine in what manner a future queen, sustaining such a thesis, was likely to be welcomed in the most lettered and pedantic court in Europe. Between the literature of Rabelais and Marot verging on their decline, and that of Ronsard and Montaigne reaching their zenith, Mary became a queen of poetry, only too happy never to have to wear another crown than that which Ronsard, Dubellay, Maison-Fleur, and Brantôme placed daily on her head. But she was predestined. In the midst of those fêtes which a waning chivalry was trying to revive came the fatal joust of Tournelles: Henry II, struck by a splinter of a lance for want of a visor, slept before his time with his ancestors, and Mary Stuart ascended the throne of France, where, from mourning for Henry, she passed to that for her mother, and from mourning for her mother to that for her husband. Mary felt this last loss both as woman and as poet; her heart burst forth into bitter tears and plaintive harmonies. Here are some lines that she composed at this time:—

"Into my song of woe,
Sung to a low sad air,
My cruel grief I throw,
For loss beyond compare;
In bitter sighs and tears
Go by my fairest years.

Was ever grief like mine
Imposed by destiny?
Did ever lady pine,
In high estate, like me,
Of whom both heart and eye
Within the coffin lie?

Who, in the tender spring
And blossom of my youth,
Taste all the sorrowing
Of life's extremest ruth,
And take delight in nought
Save in regretful thought.

All that was sweet and gay
Is now a pain to see;
The sunniness of day
Is black as night to me;
All that was my delight
Is hidden from my sight.

My heart and eye, indeed,
One face, one image know,
The which this mournful weed
On my sad face doth show,
Dyed with the violet's tone
That is the lover's own.

Tormented by my ill,
I go from place to place,
But wander as I will
My woes can nought efface;
My most of bad and good
I find in solitude.

But wheresoe'er I stay,
In meadow or in copse,
Whether at break of day
Or when the twilight drops,
My heart goes sighing on,
Desiring one that's gone.

If sometimes to the skies
My weary gaze I lift,

His gently shining eyes
Look from the cloudy drift,
Or stooping o'er the wave
I see him in the grave.

Or when my bed I seek,
And sleep begins to steal,
Again I hear him speak,
Again his touch I feel;
In work or leisure, he
Is ever near to me.

No other thing I see,
However fair displayed,
By which my heart will be
A tributary made,
Not [having] the perfection
Of that, my lost affection.

Here make an end, my verse,
Of this thy sad lament,
Whose burden shall rehearse
Pure love of true intent,
Which separation's stress
Will never render less."

"It was then," says Brantôme, "that it was delightful to see her; for the whiteness of her countenance and of her veil contended together; but finally the artificial white yielded, and the snow-like pallor of her face vanquished the other. For it was thus," he adds, "that from the moment she became a widow, I always saw her with her pale hue, as long as I had the honour of seeing her in France, and Scotland, where she had to go in eighteen months' time, to her very great regret, after her widowhood, to pacify her kingdom, greatly divided by religious troubles. Alas! she had neither the wish nor the will for it, and I have often heard her say so, with a fear of this journey like death; for she preferred a hundred times to dwell in France as a dowager queen, and to content herself with Touraine and Poitou for her jointure, than to go and reign over there in her wild country; but her uncles, at least some of

them, not all, advised her, and even urged her to it, and deeply repented their error."

Mary was obedient, as we have seen, and she began her journey under such auspices that when she lost sight of land she was like to die. Then it was that the poetry of her soul found expression in these famous lines :—

"Farewell, delightful land of France,
My motherland,
The best beloved!
Foster-nurse of my young years!
Farewell, France, and farewell my happy days!
The ship that separates our loves
Has borne away but half of me;
One part is left thee and is thine,
And I confide it to thy tenderness,
That thou may'st hold in mind the other part."[1]

This part of herself that Mary left in France was the body of the young king, who had taken with him all poor Mary's happiness into his tomb.

Mary had but one hope remaining, that the sight of the English fleet would compel her little squadron to turn back; but she had to fulfil her destiny. This same day, a fog, a very unusual occurrence in summer-time, extended all over the Channel, and caused her to escape the fleet; for it was such a dense fog that one could not see from stern to mast. It lasted the whole of Sunday, the day after the departure, and did not lift till the following day, Monday, at eight o'clock in the morning. The little flotilla, which all this time had been sailing haphazard, had got among so many reefs that if the fog had lasted some minutes longer the galley would certainly have grounded on some rock, and would have perished like the vessel that had been seen engulfed on leaving port. But, thanks to the fog's clearing, the pilot recognised the Scottish coast, and, steering his four boats with great skill through all the dangers, on the 20th August he put in at Leith, where no

[1] Translator's note.—It has not been found possible to make a rhymed version of these lines without sacrificing the simplicity which is their chief charm.

preparation had been made for the queen's reception. Nevertheless, scarcely had she arrived there than the chief persons of the town met together and came to felicitate her. Meanwhile, they hastily collected some wretched nags, with harness all falling in pieces, to conduct the queen to Edinburgh. At sight of this, Mary could not help weeping again; for she thought of the splendid palfreys and hackneys of her French knights and ladies, and at this first view Scotland appeared to her in all its poverty. Next day it was to appear to her in all its wildness.

After having passed one night at Holyrood Palace, "during which," says Brantôme, "five to six hundred rascals from the town, instead of letting her sleep, came to give her a wild morning greeting on wretched fiddles and little rebecks," she expressed a wish to hear mass. Unfortunately, the people of Edinburgh belonged almost entirely to the Reformed religion; so that, furious at the queen's giving such a proof of papistry at her first appearance, they entered the church by force, armed with knives, sticks and stones, with the intention of putting to death the poor priest, her chaplain. He left the altar, and took refuge near the queen, while Mary's brother, the Prior of St. Andrews, who was more inclined from this time forward to be a soldier than an ecclesiastic, seized a sword, and, placing himself between the people and the queen, declared that he would kill with his own hand the first man who should take another step. This firmness, combined with the queen's imposing and dignified air, checked the zeal of the Reformers.

As we have said, Mary had arrived in the midst of all the heat of the first religious wars. A zealous Catholic, like all her family on the maternal side, she inspired the Huguenots with the gravest fears: besides, a rumour had got about that Mary, instead of landing at Leith, as she had been obliged by the fog, was to land at Aberdeen. There, it was said, she would have found the Earl of Huntly, one of the peers who had remained loyal to the Catholic faith, and who, next to the family of Hamilton, was the nearest and most powerful ally of the royal house. Seconded by him and by twenty thousand

soldiers from the north, she would then have marched upon Edinburgh, and have re-established the Catholic faith throughout Scotland. Events were not slow to prove that this accusation was false.

As we have stated, Mary was much attached to the Prior of St. Andrews, a son of James v and of a noble descendant of the Earls of Mar, who had been very handsome in her youth, and who, in spite of the well-known love for her of James v, and the child who had resulted, had none the less wedded Lord Douglas of Lochleven, by whom she had had two other sons, the elder named William and the younger George, who were thus half-brothers of the regent. Now, scarcely had she reascended the throne than Mary had restored to the Prior of St. Andrews the title of Earl of Mar, that of his maternal ancestors, and as that of the Earl of Murray had lapsed since the death of the famous Thomas Randolph, Mary, in her sisterly friendship for James Stuart, hastened to add this title to those which she had already bestowed upon him.

But here difficulties and complications arose; for the new Earl of Murray, with his character, was not a man to content himself with a barren title, while the estates which were crown property since the extinction of the male branch of the old earls, had been gradually encroached upon by powerful neighbours, among whom was the famous Earl of Huntly whom we have already mentioned: the result was that, as the queen judged that in this quarter her orders would probably encounter opposition, under pretext of visiting her possessions in the north, she placed herself at the head of a small army, commanded by her brother the Earl of Mar and Murray.

The Earl of Huntly was the less duped by the apparent pretext of this expedition, in that his son, John Gordon, for some abuse of his powers, had just been condemned to a temporary imprisonment. He, notwithstanding, made every possible submission to the queen, sending messengers in advance to invite her to rest in his castle, and following up the messengers in person, to renew his invitation *vivâ voce.* Unfortunately, at the very moment when he was about to join

the queen, the governor of Inverness, who was entirely devoted to him, was refusing to allow Mary to enter this castle, which was a royal one. It is true that Murray, aware that it does not do to hesitate in the face of such rebellions, had already had him executed for high treason.

This new act of firmness showed Huntly that the young queen was not disposed to allow the Scottish lords a resumption of the almost sovereign power humbled by her father; so that, in spite of the extremely kind reception she accorded him, as he learned while in camp that his son, having escaped from prison, had just put himself at the head of his vassals, he was afraid that he should be thought, as doubtless he was, a party to the rising, and he set out the same night to assume command of his troops, his mind made up, as Mary only had with her seven to eight thousand men, to risk a battle, giving out, however, as Buccleuch had done in his attempt to snatch James v from the hands of the Douglases, that it was not at the queen he was aiming, but solely at the regent, who kept her under his tutelage and perverted her good intentions.

Murray, who knew that often the entire peace of a reign depends on the firmness one displays at its beginning, immediately summoned all the northern barons whose estates bordered on his, to march against Huntly. All obeyed, for the house of Gordon was already so powerful that each feared it might become still more so; but, however, it was clear that if there was hatred for the subject there was no great affection for the queen, and that the greater number came without fixed intentions and with the idea of being led by circumstances.

The two armies encountered near Aberdeen. Murray at once posted the troops he had brought from Edinburgh, and of which he was sure, on the top of rising ground, and drew up in tiers on the hill slope all his northern allies. Huntly advanced resolutely upon them, and attacked his neighbours the Highlanders, who after a short resistance retired in disorder. His men immediately threw away their lances, and, drawing their swords, crying, "Gordon, Gordon!" pursued the fugitives, and believed they had already gained the battle, when they suddenly

ran right against the main body of Murray's army, which remained motionless as a rampart of iron, and which, with its long lances, had the advantage of its adversaries, who were armed only with their claymores. It was then the turn of the Gordons to draw back, seeing which, the northern clans rallied and returned to the fight, each soldier having a sprig of heather in his cap that his comrades might recognise him. This unexpected movement determined the day: the Highlanders ran down the hillside like a torrent, dragging along with them everyone who could have wished to oppose their passage. Then Murray seeing that the moment had come for changing the defeat into a rout, charged with his entire cavalry: Huntly, who was very stout and very heavily armed, fell and was crushed beneath the horses' feet; John Gordon, taken prisoner in his flight, was executed at Aberdeen three days afterwards; finally, his brother, too young to undergo the same fate at this time, was shut up in a dungeon and executed later, the day he reached the age of sixteen.

Mary had been present at the battle, and the calm and courage she displayed had made a lively impression on her wild defenders, who all along the road had heard her say that she would have liked to be a man, to pass her days on horseback, her nights under a tent, to wear a coat of mail, a helmet, a buckler, and at her side a broadsword.

Mary made her entry into Edinburgh amid general enthusiasm; for this expedition against the Earl of Huntly, who was a Catholic, had been very popular among the inhabitants, who had no very clear idea of the real motives which had caused her to undertake it. They were of the Reformed faith, the earl was a papist, there was an enemy the less; that is all they thought about. Now, therefore, the Scotch, amid their acclamations, whether *vivâ voce* or by written demands, expressed the wish that their queen, who was without issue by Francis II, should re-marry: Mary agreed to this, and, yielding to the prudent advice of those about her, she decided to consult upon this marriage Elizabeth, whose heir she was, in her title of granddaughter of Henry VII, in the event of the Queen of England's

dying without posterity. Unfortunately, she had not always acted with like circumspection; for at the death of Mary Tudor, known as Bloody Mary, she had laid claim to the throne of Henry VIII, and, relying on the illegitimacy of Elizabeth's birth, had with the dauphin assumed the title of King of Scotland, England, and Ireland, and had had coins struck with this new title, and plate engraved with these new armorial bearings.

Elizabeth was nine years older than Mary—that is to say, that at this time she had not yet attained her thirtieth year; she was not merely her rival as queen, then, but as woman. As regards education, she could sustain comparison with advantage; for if she had less charm of mind, she had more solidity of judgment: versed in politics, philosophy, history, rhetoric, poetry and music, besides English, her maternal tongue, she spoke and wrote to perfection Greek, Latin, French, Italian and Spanish; but while Elizabeth excelled Mary on this point, in her turn Mary was more beautiful, and above all more attractive, than her rival. Elizabeth had, it is true, a majestic and agreeable appearance, bright quick eyes, a dazzlingly white complexion; but she had red hair, a large foot,[1] and a powerful hand, while Mary, on the contrary, with her beautiful ashy fair hair,[2] her noble open forehead, eyebrows which could be only blamed for being so regularly arched that they looked as if drawn by a pencil, eyes continually beaming with the witchery of fire, a nose of perfect Grecian outline, a mouth so ruby red and gracious that it seemed that, as a flower opens but to let its perfume escape, so it could not open but to give passage to gentle words, with a neck white and graceful as a swan's, hands of alabaster, with

[1] Elizabeth bestowed a pair of her shoes on the University of Oxford; their size would point to their being those of a man of average stature.

[2] Several historians assert that Mary Stuart had black hair; but Brantôme, who had seen it, since, as we have said, he accompanied her to Scotland, affirms that it was fair:—

"And, so saying, he (the executioner) took off her head-dress, in a contemptuous manner, to display her hair already white, that while alive, however, she feared not to show, nor yet to twist and frizz as in the days when it was so beautiful and so fair."

a form like a goddess's and a foot like a child's,—Mary was a harmony in which the most ardent enthusiast for sculptured form could have found nothing to reproach.

This was indeed Mary's great and real crime: one single imperfection in face or figure, and she would not have died upon the scaffold. Besides, to Elizabeth, who had never seen her, and who consequently could only judge by hearsay, this beauty was a great cause of uneasiness and of jealousy, which she could not even disguise, and which showed itself unceasingly in eager questions. One day when she was chatting with James Melville about his mission to her court, Mary's offer to be guided by Elizabeth in her choice of a husband,—a choice which the Queen of England had seemed at first to wish to see fixed on the Earl of Leicester,—she led the Scotch ambassador into a cabinet, where she showed him several portraits with labels in her own handwriting: the first was one of the Earl of Leicester. As this nobleman was precisely the suitor chosen by Elizabeth, Melville asked the queen to give it him to show to his mistress; but Elizabeth refused, saying that it was the only one she had. Melville then replied, smiling, that being in possession of the original she might well part with the copy; but Elizabeth would on no account consent. This little discussion ended, she showed him the portrait of Mary Stuart, which she kissed very tenderly, expressing to Melville a great wish to see his mistress. "That is very easy, madam," he replied: "keep your room, on the pretext that you are indisposed, and set out incognito for Scotland, as King James v set out for France when he wanted to see Madeleine de Valois, whom he afterwards married."

"Alas!" replied Elizabeth, "I would like to do so, but it is not so easy as you think. Nevertheless, tell your queen that I love her tenderly, and that I wish we could live more in friendship than we have done up to the present." Then passing to a subject which she seemed to have wanted to broach for a long time, "Melville," she continued, "tell me frankly, is my sister as beautiful as they say?"

"She has that reputation," replied Melville; "but I cannot

give your Majesty any idea of her beauty, having no point of comparison."

"I will give you one," the queen said. "Is she more beautiful than I?"

"Madam," replied Melville, "you are the most beautiful woman in England, and Mary Stuart is the most beautiful woman in Scotland."

"Then which of the two is the taller?" asked Elizabeth, who was not entirely satisfied by this answer, clever as it was.

"My mistress, madam," responded Melville; "I am obliged to confess it."

"Then she is too tall," Elizabeth said sharply, "for I am tall enough. And what are her favourite amusements?" she continued.

"Madam," Melville replied, "hunting, riding, performing on the lute and the harpsichord."

"Is she skilled upon the latter?" Elizabeth inquired.

"Oh yes, madam," answered Melville; "skilled enough for a queen."

There the conversation stopped; but as Elizabeth was herself an excellent musician, she commanded Lord Hunsdon to bring Melville to her at a time when she was at her harpsichord, so that he could hear her without her seeming to have the air of playing for him. In fact, the same day, Hunsdon, agreeably to her instructions, led the ambassador into a gallery separated from the queen's apartment merely by tapestry, so that his guide having raised it, Melville at his leisure could hear Elizabeth, who did not turn round until she had finished the piece, which however, she was playing with much skill. When she saw Melville, she pretended to fly into a passion, and even wanted to strike him; but her anger calmed down by little and little at the ambassador's compliments, and ceased altogether when he admitted that Mary Stuart was not her equal. But this was not all: proud of her triumph, Elizabeth desired also that Melville should see her dance. Accordingly, she kept back her despatches for two

days that he might be present at a ball that she was giving. These despatches, as we have said, contained the wish that Mary Stuart should espouse Leicester; but this proposal could not be taken seriously. Leicester, whose personal worth was besides sufficiently mediocre, was of birth too inferior to aspire to the hand of the daughter of so many kings; thus Mary replied that such an alliance would not become her. Meanwhile, something strange and tragic came to pass.

CHAPTER II

AMONG the lords who had followed Mary Stuart to Scotland was, as we have mentioned, a young nobleman named Chatelard, a true type of the nobility of that time, a nephew of Bayard on his mother's side, a poet and a knight, talented and courageous, and attached to Marshal Damville, of whose household he formed one. Thanks to this high position, Chatelard, throughout her stay in France, paid court to Mary Stuart, who in the homage he rendered her in verse saw nothing more than those poetical declarations of gallantry customary in that age, and with which she especially was daily overwhelmed. But it happened that about the time when Chatelard was most in love with the queen she was obliged to leave France, as we have said. Then Marshal Damville, who knew nothing of Chatelard's passion, and who himself, encouraged by Mary's kindness, was among the candidates to succeed Francis II as husband, set out for Scotland with the poor exile, taking Chatelard with him, and not imagining he would find a rival in him, he made a confidant of him, and left him with Mary when he was obliged to leave her, charging the young poet to support with her the interests of his suit. This post as confidant brought Mary and Chatelard more together, and as in her capacity as poet the queen treated him like a brother, he made bold in his passion to risk all to obtain another title. Accordingly, one evening he got into Mary Stuart's room, and hid himself under the bed; but at the moment when the queen was beginning to undress, a little dog she had began to yelp so loudly that her women came running at his barking, and, led by this indication, perceived Chatelard. A woman easily pardons a crime for which too great love is

the excuse: Mary Stuart was woman before being queen—she pardoned.

But this kindness only increased Chatelard's confidence: he put down the reprimand he had received to the presence of the queen's women, and supposed that if she had been alone she would have forgiven him still more completely; so that, three weeks after, this same scene was repeated. But this time, Chatelard, discovered in a cupboard when the queen was already in bed, was placed under arrest.

The moment was badly chosen: such a scandal, just when the queen was about to re-marry, was fatal to Mary, let alone Chatelard. Murray took the affair in hand, and thinking that a public trial could alone save his sister's reputation, he urged the prosecution with such vigour, that Chatelard, convicted of the crime of *lèse-majesté*, was condemned to death. Mary entreated her brother that Chatelard might be sent back to France; but Murray made her see what terrible consequences such a use of her right of pardon might have, so that Mary was obliged to let justice take its course: Chatelard was led to execution. Arrived on the scaffold, which was set up before the queen's palace, Chatelard, who had declined the services of a priest, had Ronsard's Ode on Death read; and when the reading, which he followed with evident pleasure, was ended, he turned towards the queen's windows, and, having cried out for the last time, "Adieu, loveliest and most cruel of princesses!" he stretched out his neck to the executioner, without displaying any repentance or uttering any complaint. This death made all the more impression upon Mary, that she did not dare to show her sympathy openly.

Meanwhile there was a rumour that the Queen of Scotland was consenting to a new marriage, and several suitors came forward, sprung from the principal reigning families of Europe: first the Archduke Charles, third son of the Emperor of Germany; then the Duke of Anjou, who afterwards became Henry III. But to wed a foreign prince was to give up her claims to the English crown. So Mary refused, and, making a merit of this to Elizabeth, she cast her eyes on a relation of

the latter's, Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, son of the Earl of Lennox. Elizabeth, who had nothing plausible to urge against this marriage, since the Queen of Scotland not only chose an Englishman for husband, but was marrying into her own family, allowed the Earl of Lennox and his son to go to the Scotch court, reserving it to herself, if matters appeared to take a serious turn, to recall them both—a command which they would be constrained to obey, since all their property was in England.

Darnley was eighteen years of age: he was handsome, well-made, elegant; he talked in that attractive manner of the young nobles of the French and English courts that Mary no longer heard since her exile in Scotland; she let herself be deceived by these appearances, and did not see that under this brilliant exterior Darnley hid utter insignificance, dubious courage, and a fickle and churlish character. It is true that he came to her under the auspices of a man whose influence was as striking as the risen fortune which gave him the opportunity to exert it. We refer to David Rizzio.

David Rizzio, who played such a great part in the life of Mary Stuart, whose strange favour for him has given her enemies, probably without any cause, such cruel weapons against her, was the son of a Turin musician burdened with a numerous family, who, recognising in him a pronounced musical taste, had him instructed in the first principles of the art. At the age of fifteen he had left his father's house and had gone on foot to Nice, where the Duke of Savoy held his court; there he entered the service of the Duke of Moreto, and this lord having been appointed, some years afterwards, to the Scottish embassy, Rizzio followed him to Scotland. As this young man had a very fine voice, and accompanied on the viol and fiddle songs of which both the airs and the words were of his own composition, the ambassador spoke of him to Mary, who wished to see him. Rizzio, full of confidence in himself, and seeing in the queen's desire a road to success, hastened to obey her command, sang before her, and pleased her. She begged him then of Moreto, making no more of it

than if she had asked of him a thoroughbred dog or a well-trained falcon. Moreto presented him to her, delighted at finding such an opportunity to pay his court; but scarcely was Rizzio in her service than Mary discovered that music was the least of his gifts, that he possessed, besides that, education if not profound at least varied, a supple mind, a lively imagination, gentle ways, and at the same time much boldness and presumption. He reminded her of those Italian artists whom she had seen at the French court, and spoke to her the tongue of Marot and Ronsard, whose most beautiful poems he knew by heart: this was more than enough to please Mary Stuart. In a short time he became her favourite, and meanwhile the place of secretary for the French despatches falling vacant, Rizzio was provided for with it.

Darnley, who wished to succeed at all costs, enlisted Rizzio in his interests, unconscious that he had no need of this support; and as, on her side, Mary, who had fallen in love with him at first sight, fearing some new intrigue of Elizabeth's, hastened on this union so far as the proprieties permitted, the affair moved forward with wonderful rapidity; and in the midst of public rejoicing, with the approbation of the nobility, except for a small minority, with Murray at its head, the marriage was solemnised under the happiest auspices, 29th July 1565. Two days before, Darnley and his father, the Earl of Lennox, had received a command to return to London, and as they had not obeyed it, a week after the celebration of the marriage they learned that the Countess of Lennox, the only one of the family remaining in Elizabeth's power, had been arrested and taken to the Tower. Thus Elizabeth, in spite of her dissimulation, yielding to that first impulse of violence that she always had such trouble to overcome, publicly displayed her resentment.

However, Elizabeth was not the woman to be satisfied with useless vengeance: she soon released the countess, and turned her eyes towards Murray, the most discontented of the nobles in opposition, who by this marriage was losing all his personal influence. It was thus easy for Elizabeth to put arms

in his hand. In fact, when he had failed in his first attempt to seize Darnley, he called to his aid the Duke of Chatellerault, Glencairn, Argyll, and Rothes, and collecting what partisans they could, they openly rebelled against the queen. This was the first ostensible act of that hatred which was afterwards so fatal to Mary.

The queen, on her side, appealed to her nobles, who in response hastened to rally to her, so that in a month's time she found herself at the head of the finest army that ever a king of Scotland had raised. Darnley assumed the command of this magnificent assembly, mounted on a superb horse, arrayed in gilded armour, and accompanied by the queen, who, in a riding habit, with pistols at her saddle-bow, wished to make the campaign with him, that she might not quit his side for a moment. Both were young, both were handsome, and they left Edinburgh amidst the cheers of the people and the army.

Murray and his accomplices did not even try to stand against them, and the campaign consisted of such rapid and complex marches and counter-marches that this rebellion is called the *Run-about Raid*—that is to say, the run in every sense of the word. Murray and the rebels withdrew into England, where Elizabeth, while seeming to condemn their unlucky attempt, afforded them all the assistance they needed.

Mary returned to Edinburgh delighted at the success of her two first campaigns, not suspecting that this new good fortune was the last she would have, and that there her short-lived prosperity would cease. Indeed, she soon saw that in Darnley she had given herself not a devoted and very attentive husband, as she had believed, but an imperious and brutal master, who, no longer having any motive for concealment, showed himself to her just as he was, a man of disgraceful vices, of which drunkenness and debauchery were the least. Accordingly, serious differences were not long in springing up in this royal household.

Darnley in wedding Mary had not become king, but merely the queen's husband. To confer on him authority nearly

equalling a regent's, it was necessary that Mary should grant him what was termed the crown matrimonial — a crown Francis II had worn during his short royalty, and that Mary, after Darnley's conduct to herself, had not the slighest intention of bestowing on him. Thus, to whatever entreaties he made, in whatever form they were wrapped, Mary merely replied with an unvaried and obstinate refusal. Darnley, amazed at this force of will in a young queen who had loved him enough to raise him to her, and not believing that she could find it in herself, sought in her entourage for some secret and influential adviser who might have inspired her with it. His suspicions fell on Rizzio.

In reality, to whatever cause Rizzio owed his power (and to even the most clear-sighted historians this point has always remained obscure), be it that he ruled as lover, be it that he advised as minister, his counsels as long as he lived were always given for the greater glory of the queen. Sprung from so low, he at least wished to show himself worthy of having risen so high, and owing everything to Mary, he tried to repay her with devotion. Thus Darnley was not mistaken, and it was indeed Rizzio who, in despair at having helped to bring about a union which he foresaw must become so unfortunate, gave Mary the advice not to give up any of her power to one who already possessed much more than he deserved, in possessing her person.

Darnley, like all persons of both weak and violent character, disbelieved in the persistence of will in others, unless this will was sustained by an outside influence. He thought that in ridding himself of Rizzio he could not fail to gain the day, since, as he believed, he alone was opposing the grant of this great desire of his, the crown matrimonial. Consequently, as Rizzio was disliked by the nobles in proportion as his merits had raised him above them, it was easy for Darnley to organise a conspiracy, and James Douglas of Morton, chancellor of the kingdom, consented to act as chief.

This is the second time since the beginning of our narrative that we inscribe this name Douglas, so often pronounced in

Scottish history, and which at this time, extinct in the elder branch, known as the Black Douglases, was perpetuated in the younger branch, known as the Red Douglases. It was an ancient, noble, and powerful family, which, when the descent in the male line from Robert Bruce had lapsed, disputed the royal title with the first Stuart, and which since then had constantly kept alongside the throne, sometimes its support, sometimes its enemy, envying every great house, for greatness made it uneasy, but above all envious of the house of Hamilton, which, if not its equal, was at any rate after itself the next most powerful.

During the whole reign of James v, thanks to the hatred which the king bore them, the Douglases had not only lost all their influence, but had also been exiled to England. This hatred was on account of their having seized the guardianship of the young prince and kept him prisoner till he was fifteen. Then, with the help of one of his pages, James v had escaped from Falkland, and had reached Stirling, whose governor was in his interests. Scarcely was he safe in the castle than he made proclamation that any Douglas who should approach within a dozen miles of it would be prosecuted for high treason. This was not all: he obtained a decree from Parliament, declaring them guilty of felony, and condemning them to exile; they remained proscribed, then, during the king's lifetime, and returned to Scotland only upon his death. The result was that, although they had been recalled about the throne, and though, thanks to the past influence of Murray, who, one remembers, was a Douglas on the mother's side, they filled the most important posts there, they had not forgiven to the daughter the enmity borne them by the father.

This is why James Douglas, chancellor as he was, and consequently entrusted with the execution of the laws, put himself at the head of a conspiracy which had for its aim the violation of all laws, human and divine.

Douglas's first idea had been to treat Rizzio as the favourites of James III had been treated at the Bridge of Lauder—that is to say, to make a show of having a trial and to hang him after-

wards. But such a death did not suffice for Darnley's vengeance: as above everything he wished to punish the queen in Rizzio's person, he exacted that the murder should take place in her presence.

Douglas associated with himself Lord Ruthven, an idle and dissolute sybarite, who under the circumstances promised to push his devotion so far as to wear a cuirass; then, sure of this important accomplice, he busied himself with finding other agents.

However, the plot was not woven with such secrecy but that something of it transpired; and Rizzio received several warnings that he despised. Sir James Melville, among others, tried every means to make him understand the perils a stranger ran who enjoyed such absolute confidence in a wild, jealous court like that of Scotland. Rizzio received these hints as if resolved not to apply them to himself; and Sir James Melville, satisfied that he had done enough to ease his conscience, did not insist further. Then a French priest, who had a reputation as a clever astrologer, got himself admitted to Rizzio, and warned him that the stars predicted that he was in deadly peril, and that he should beware of a certain bastard above all. Rizzio replied that from the day when he had been honoured with his sovereign's confidence, he had sacrificed in advance his life to his position; that since that time, however, he had had occasion to notice that in general the Scotch were ready to threaten but slow to act; that, as to the bastard referred to, who was doubtless the Earl of Murray, he would take care that he should never enter Scotland far enough for his sword to reach him, were it as long as from Dumfries to Edinburgh; which in other words was as much as to say that Murray should remain exiled in England for life, since Dumfries was one of the principal frontier towns.

Meanwhile the conspiracy proceeded, and Douglas and Ruthven, having collected their accomplices and taken their measures, came to Darnley to finish the compact. As the price of the bloody service they rendered the king, they exacted from him a promise to obtain the pardon of Murray and the nobles

compromised with him in the affair of the "run in every sense." Darnley granted all they asked of him, and a messenger was sent to Murray to inform him of the expedition in preparation, and to invite him to hold himself in readiness to re-enter Scotland at the first notice he should receive. Then, this point settled, they made Darnley sign a paper in which he acknowledged himself the author and chief of the enterprise. The other assassins were the Earl of Morton, the Earl of Ruthven, George Douglas the bastard of Angus, Lindley, and Andrew Carew. The remainder were soldiers, simple murderers' tools, who did not even know what was afoot. Darnley reserved it for himself to appoint the time.

Two days after these conditions were agreed upon, Darnley having been notified that the queen was alone with Rizzio, wished to make himself sure of the degree of her favour enjoyed by the minister. He accordingly went to her apartment by a little door of which he always kept the key upon him; but though the key turned in the lock, the door did not open. Then Darnley knocked, announcing himself; but such was the contempt into which he had fallen with the queen, that Mary left him outside, although, supposing she had been alone with Rizzio, she would have had time to send him away. Darnley, driven to extremities by this, summoned Morton, Ruthven, Lennox, Lindley, and Douglas's bastard, and fixed the assassination of Rizzio for two days later.

They had just completed all the details, and had distributed the parts that each must play in this bloody tragedy, when suddenly, and at the moment when they least expected it, the door opened, and Mary Stuart appeared on the threshold.

"My lords," said she, "your holding these secret counsels is useless. I am informed of your plots, and with God's help I shall soon apply a remedy."

With these words, and before the conspirators had had time to collect themselves, she shut the door again, and vanished like a passing but threatening vision. All remained thunderstruck. Morton was the first to find his tongue.

"My lords," said he, "this is a game of life and death, and

the winner will be not the cleverest or the strongest, but the readiest. If we do not destroy this man, we are lost. We must strike him down, this very evening, not the day after to-morrow."

Everyone applauded, even Ruthven, who, still pale and feverish from riotous living, promised not to be behindhand. The only point changed, on Morton's suggestion, was that the murder should take place next day; for, in the opinion of all, not less than a day's interval was needed to collect the minor conspirators, who numbered not less than five hundred.

The next day, which was Saturday, March 9th, 1566, Mary Stuart, who had inherited from her father, James v, a dislike of ceremony and the need of liberty, had invited to supper with her six persons, Rizzio among the number. Darnley, informed of this in the morning, immediately gave notice of it to the conspirators, telling them that he himself would let them into the palace between six and seven o'clock in the evening. The conspirators replied that they would be in readiness.

The morning had been dark and stormy, as nearly all the first days of spring are in Scotland, and towards evening the snow and wind redoubled in depth and violence. So Mary had remained shut up with Rizzio, and Darnley, who had gone to the secret door several times, could hear the sound of instruments and the voice of the favourite, who was singing those sweet melodies which have come down to our time, and which Edinburgh people still attribute to him. These songs were for Mary a reminder of her stay in France, where the artists in the train of the Medicis had already brought echoes from Italy; but for Darnley they were an insult, and each time he had withdrawn strengthened in his design.

At the appointed time, the conspirators, who had been given the password during the day, knocked at the palace gate, and were received there so much the more easily that Darnley himself, wrapped in a great cloak, awaited them at the postern by which they were admitted. The five hundred soldiers immediately stole into an inner courtyard, where they placed themselves under some sheds, as much to keep themselves

from the cold as that they might not be seen on the snow-covered ground. A brightly lighted window looked into this courtyard; it was that of the queen's study: at the first signal given them from this window, the soldiers were to break in the door and go to the help of the chief conspirators.

These instructions given, Darnley led Morton, Ruthven, Lennox, Lindley, Andrew Carew, and Douglas's bastard into the room adjoining the study, and only separated from it by a tapestry hanging before the door. From there one could overhear all that was being said, and at a single bound fall upon the guests.

Darnley left them in this room, enjoining silence; then, giving them as a signal to enter the moment when they should hear him cry, "To me, Douglas!" he went round by the secret passage, so that seeing him come in by his usual door the queen's suspicions might not be roused by his unlooked-for visit.

Mary was at supper with six persons, having, say de Thou and Melville, Rizzio seated on her right; while, on the contrary, Campden assures us that he was eating standing at a sideboard. The talk was gay and intimate; for all were giving themselves up to the ease one feels at being safe and warm, at a hospitable board, while the snow is beating against the windows and the wind roaring in the chimneys. Suddenly Mary, surprised that the most profound silence had succeeded to the lively and animated flow of words among her guests since the beginning of supper, and suspecting, from their glances, that the cause of their uneasiness was behind her, turned round and saw Darnley leaning on the back of her chair. The queen shuddered; for although her husband was smiling when looking at Rizzio, this smile had assumed such a strange expression that it was clear that something terrible was about to happen. At the same moment, Mary heard in the next room a heavy, dragging step draw near the cabinet, then the tapestry was raised, and Lord Ruthven, in armour of which he could barely support the weight, pale as a ghost, appeared on the threshold, and, drawing his sword in silence, leaned upon it. The queen thought he was delirious.

"What do you want, my lord?" she said to him; "and why do you come to the palace armed like this?"

"Ask the king, madam," replied Ruthven in an indistinct voice. "It is for him to answer."

"Explain, my lord," Mary demanded, turning again towards Darnley; "what does such a neglect of ordinary propriety mean?"

"It means, madam," returned Darnley, pointing to Rizzio, "that that man must leave here this very minute."

"That man is mine, my lord," Mary said, rising proudly, "and consequently takes orders only from me."

"To me, Douglas!" cried Darnley.

At these words, the conspirators, who for some moments had drawn nearer Ruthven, fearing, so changeable was Darnley's character, lest he had brought them in vain and would not dare to utter the signal—at these words, the conspirators rushed into the room with such haste that they overturned the table. Then David Rizzio, seeing that it was he alone they wanted, threw himself on his knees behind the queen, seizing the hem of her robe and crying in Italian, "Giustizia! giustizia!" Indeed, the queen, true to her character, not allowing herself to be intimidated by this terrible irruption, placed herself in front of Rizzio and sheltered him behind her Majesty. But she counted too much on the respect of a nobility accustomed to struggle hand to hand with its kings for five centuries. Andrew Carew held a dagger to her breast and threatened to kill her if she insisted on defending any longer him whose death was resolved upon. Then Darnley, without consideration for the queen's pregnancy, seized her round the waist and bore her away from Rizzio, who remained on his knees pale and trembling, while Douglas's bastard, confirming the prediction of the astrologer who had warned Rizzio to beware of a certain bastard, drawing the king's own dagger, plunged it into the breast of the minister, who fell wounded, but not dead. Morton immediately took him by the feet and dragged him from the cabinet into the larger room, leaving on the floor that long track of blood which is still shown there; then, arrived there, each rushed

upon him as upon a quarry, and set upon the corpse, which they stabbed in fifty-six places. Meanwhile Darnley held the queen, who, thinking that all was not over, did not cease crying for mercy. But Ruthven came back, paler than at first, and at Darnley's inquiry if Rizzio were dead, he nodded in the affirmative; then, as he could not bear further fatigue in his convalescent state, he sat down, although the queen, whom Darnley had at last released, remained standing on the same spot. At this Mary could not contain herself.

"My lord," cried she, "who has given you permission to sit down in my presence, and whence comes such insolence?"

"Madam," Ruthven answered, "I act thus not from insolence, but from weakness; for, to serve your husband, I have just taken more exercise than my doctors allow." Then turning round to a servant, "Give me a glass of wine," said he, showing Darnley his bloody dagger before putting it back in its sheath, "for here is the proof that I have well earned it." The servant obeyed, and Ruthven drained his glass with as much calmness as if he had just performed the most innocent act.

"My lord," the queen then said, taking a step towards him, "it may be that as I am a woman, in spite of my desire and my will, I never find an opportunity to repay you what you are doing to me; but," she added, energetically striking her womb with her hand, "he whom I bear there, and whose life you should have respected, since you respect my Majesty so little, will one day revenge me for all these insults." Then, with a gesture at once superb and threatening, she withdrew by Darnley's door, which she closed behind her.

At that moment a great noise was heard in the queen's room. Huntly, Athol, and Bothwell, who, we are soon about to see, play such an important part in the sequel of this history, were supping together in another hall of the palace, when suddenly they had heard outcries and the clash of arms, so that they had run with all speed. When Athol, who came first, without knowing whose it was, struck against the dead body of Rizzio, which was stretched at the top of the staircase, they

believed, seeing someone assassinated, that the lives of the king and queen were threatened, and they had drawn their swords to force the door that Morton was guarding. But directly Darnley understood what was going on, he darted from the cabinet, followed by Ruthven, and showing himself to the new-comers—

"My lords," he said, "the persons of the queen and myself are safe, and nothing has occurred here but by our orders. Withdraw, then; you will know more about it in time. As to him," he added, holding up Rizzio's head by the hair, whilst the bastard of Douglas lit up the face with a torch so that it could be recognised, "you see who it is, and whether it is worth your while to get into trouble for him." And in fact, as soon as Huntly, Athol, and Bothwell had recognised the musician-minister, they sheathed their swords, and, having saluted the king, went away.

Mary had gone away with a single thought in her heart, vengeance. But she understood that she could not revenge herself at one and the same time on her husband and his companions: she set to work, then, with all the charms of her wit and beauty to detach the king from his accomplices. It was not a difficult task: when that brutal rage which often carried Darnley beyond all bounds was spent, he was frightened himself at the crime he had committed, and while the assassins, assembled by Murray, were resolving that he should have that greatly desired crown matrimonial, Darnley, as fickle as he was violent, and as cowardly as he was cruel, in Mary's very room, before the scarcely dried blood, made another compact, in which he engaged to deliver up his accomplices. Indeed, three days after the event that we have just related, the murderers learned a strange piece of news—that Darnley and Mary, accompanied by Lord Seyton, had escaped together from Holyrood Palace. Three days later still, a proclamation appeared, signed by Mary and dated from Dunbar, which summoned round the queen, in her own name and the king's, all the Scottish lords and barons, including those who had been compromised in the affair of the "run in every sense," to whom

she not only granted full and complete pardon, but also restored her entire confidence. In this way she separated Murray's cause from that of Morton and the other assassins, who, in their turn, seeing that there was no longer any safety for them in Scotland, fled to England, where all the queen's enemies were always certain to find a warm welcome, in spite of the good relations which reigned in appearance between Mary and Elizabeth. As to Bothwell, who had wanted to oppose the assassination, he was appointed Warden of all the Marches of the Kingdom.

Unfortunately for her honour, Mary, always more the woman than the queen, while, on the contrary, Elizabeth was always more the queen than the woman, had no sooner regained her power than her first royal act was to exhume Rizzio, who had been quietly buried on the threshold of the chapel nearest Holyrood Palace, and to have him removed to the burial-place of the Scottish kings, compromising herself still more by the honours she paid him dead than by the favour she had granted him living.

Such an imprudent demonstration naturally led to fresh quarrels between Mary and Darnley: these quarrels were the more bitter that, as one can well understand, the reconciliation between the husband and wife, at least on the latter's side, had never been anything but a pretence; so that, feeling herself in a stronger position still on account of her pregnancy, she restrained herself no longer, and, leaving Darnley, she went from Dunbar to Edinburgh Castle, where on June 19th, 1566, three months after the assassination of Rizzio, she gave birth to a son who afterwards became James VI.

CHAPTER III

DIRECTLY she was delivered, Mary sent for James Melville, her usual envoy to Elizabeth, and charged him to convey this news to the Queen of England, and to beg her to be godmother to the royal child at the same time. On arriving in London, Melville immediately presented himself at the palace; but as there was a court ball, he could not see the queen, and contented himself with making known the reason for his journey to the minister Cecil, and with begging him to ask his mistress for an audience next day. Elizabeth was dancing in a quadrille at the moment when Cecil, approaching her, said in a low voice, "Queen Mary of Scotland has just given birth to a son." At these words she grew frightfully pale, and, looking about her with a bewildered air, and as if she were about to faint, she leaned against an arm-chair; then, soon, not being able to stand upright, she sat down, threw back her head, and plunged into a mournful reverie. Then one of the ladies of her court, breaking through the circle which had formed round the queen, approached her, ill at ease, and asked her of what she was thinking so sadly. "Ah! madam," Elizabeth replied impatiently, "do you not know that Mary Stuart has given birth to a son, while I am but a barren stock, who will die without offspring?"

Yet Elizabeth was too good a politician, in spite of her liability to be carried away by a first impulse, to compromise herself by a longer display of her grief. The ball was not discontinued on that account, and the interrupted quadrille was resumed and finished.

The next day, Melville had his audience. Elizabeth received him to perfection, assuring him of all the pleasure that the

news he brought had caused her, and which, she said, had cured her of a complaint from which she had suffered for a fortnight. Melville replied that his mistress had hastened to acquaint her with her joy, knowing that she had no better friend; but he added that this joy had nearly cost Mary her life, so grievous had been her confinement. As he was returning to this point for the third time, with the object of still further increasing the Queen of England's dislike to marriage—

"Be easy, Melville," Elizabeth answered him; "you need not insist upon it. I shall never marry; my kingdom takes the place of a husband for me, and my subjects are my children. When I am dead, I wish graven on my tombstone: 'Here lies Elizabeth, who reigned so many years, and who died a virgin.'"

Melville availed himself of this opportunity to remind Elizabeth of the desire she had shown to see Mary, three or four years before; but Elizabeth said, besides her country's affairs, which necessitated her presence in the heart of her possessions, she did not care, after all she had heard said of her rival's beauty, to expose herself to a comparison disadvantageous to her pride. She contented herself, then, with choosing as her proxy the Earl of Bedford, who set out with several other noblemen for Stirling Castle, where the young prince was christened with great pomp, and received the name of Charles James.

It was remarked that Darnley did not appear at this ceremony, and that his absence seemed to scandalise greatly the Queen of England's envoy. On the contrary, James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, had the most important place there.

This was because, since the evening when Bothwell at Mary's cries had run to oppose the murder of Rizzio, he had made great way in the queen's favour; to her party he himself appeared to be really attached, to the exclusion of the two others, the king's and the Earl of Murray's. Bothwell was already thirty-five years old, head of the powerful family of Hepburn, which had great influence in East Lothian and the county of Berwick; for the rest, violent, rough, given to every kind of debauchery, and capable of anything to satisfy an

ambition that he did not even give himself the trouble to hide. In his youth he had been reputed courageous, but for long he had had no serious opportunity to draw the sword.

If the king's authority had been shaken by Rizzio's influence, it was entirely upset by Bothwell's. The great nobles, following the favourite's example, no longer rose in the presence of Darnley, and ceased little by little to treat him as their equal: his retinue was cut down, his silver plate taken from him, and some officers who remained about him made him buy their services with the most bitter vexations. As for the queen, she no longer even took the trouble to conceal her dislike for him, avoiding him without consideration, to such a degree that one day when she had gone with Bothwell to Alway, she left there again immediately, because Darnley came to join her. The king, however, still had patience; but a fresh imprudence of Mary's at last led to the terrible catastrophe that, since the queen's *liaison* with Bothwell, some had already foreseen.

Towards the end of the month of October 1566, while the queen was holding a court of justice at Jedburgh, it was announced to her that Bothwell, in trying to seize a malefactor called John Elliot of Park, had been badly wounded in the hand; the queen, who was about to attend the council, immediately postponed the sitting till next day, and, having ordered a horse to be saddled, she set out for Hermitage Castle, where Bothwell was living, and covered the distance at a stretch, although it was twenty miles, and she had to go across woods, marshes, and rivers; then, having remained some hours *tête-à-tête* with him, she set out again with the same speed for Jedburgh, to which she returned in the night.

Although this proceeding had made a great deal of talk, which was inflamed still more by the queen's enemies, who chiefly belonged to the Reformed religion, Darnley did not hear of it till nearly two months afterwards—that is to say, when Bothwell, completely recovered, returned with the queen to Edinburgh.

Then Darnley thought that he ought not to put up any longer with such humiliations. But as, since his treason to his

accomplices, he had not found in all Scotland a noble who would have drawn the sword for him, he resolved to go and seek the Earl of Lennox, his father, hoping that through his influence he could rally the malcontents, of whom there were a great number since Bothwell had been in favour. Unfortunately, Darnley, indiscreet and imprudent as usual, confided this plan to some of his officers, who warned Bothwell of their master's intention. Bothwell did not seem to oppose the journey in any way; but Darnley was scarcely a mile from Edinburgh when he felt violent pains: none the less, he continued his road, and arrived very ill at Glasgow. He immediately sent for a celebrated doctor, called James Abrenets, who found his body covered with pimples, and declared without any hesitation that he had been poisoned. However, others, among them Walter Scott, state that this illness was nothing else than smallpox.

Whatever it may have been, the queen, in the presence of the danger her husband ran, appeared to forget her resentment, and at the risk of what might prove troublesome to herself, she went to Darnley, after sending her doctor in advance. It is true that if one is to believe in the following letters, dated from Glasgow, which Mary is accused of having written to Bothwell, she knew the illness with which he was attacked too well to fear infection. As these letters are little known, and seem to us very singular, we transcribe them here; later we shall tell how they fell into the power of the Confederate lords, and from their hands passed into Elizabeth's, who, quite delighted, cried on receiving them, "God's death, then I hold her life and honour in my hands!"

First Letter.

"When I set out from the place where I had left my heart, judge in what a condition I was, poor body without a soul: besides, during the whole of dinner I have not spoken to anyone, and no one has dared to approach me, for it was easy to see that there was something amiss. When I arrived within

a league of the town, the Earl of Lennox sent me one of his gentlemen to make me his compliments, and to excuse himself for not having come in person; he has caused me to be informed, moreover, that he did not dare to present himself before me after the reprimand that I gave Cunningham. This gentleman begged me, as if of his own accord, to examine his master's conduct, to ascertain if my suspicions were well founded. I have replied to him that fear was an incurable disease, that the Earl of Lennox would not be so agitated if his conscience reproached him with nothing, and that if some hasty words had escaped me, they were but just reprisals for the letter he had written me.

"None of the inhabitants visited me, which makes me think they are all in his interests; besides, they speak of him very favourably, as well as of his son. The king sent for Joachim yesterday, and asked him why I did not lodge with him, adding that my presence would soon cure him, and asked me also with what object I had come: if it were to be reconciled with him; if you were here; if I had taken Pâris and Gilbert as secretaries, and if I were still resolved to dismiss Joseph? I do not know who has given him such accurate information. There is nothing, down to the marriage of Sebastian, with which he has not made himself acquainted. I have asked him the meaning of one of his letters, in which he complains of the cruelty of certain people. He replied that he was stricken, but that my presence caused him so much joy that he thought he should die of it. He reproached me several times for being dreamy; I left him to go to supper; he begged me to return: I went back. Then he told me the story of his illness, and that he wished to make a will leaving me everything, adding that I was a little the cause of his trouble, and that he attributed it to my coldness. 'You ask me,' added he, 'who are the people of whom I complain: it is of you, cruel one, of you, whom I have never been able to appease by my tears and my repentance. I know that I have offended you, but not on the matter that you reproach me with: I have also offended some of your subjects, but that you have forgiven me. I am young, and you say

that I always relapse into my faults; but cannot a young man like me, destitute of experience, gain it also, break his promises, repent directly, and in time improve? If you will forgive me yet once more, I will promise to offend you never again. All the favour I ask of you is that we should live together like husband and wife, to have but one bed and one board: if you are inflexible, I shall never rise again from here. I entreat you, tell me your decision: God alone knows what I suffer, and that because I occupy myself with you only, because I love and adore only you. If I have offended you sometimes, you must bear the reproach; for when someone offends me, if it were granted me to complain to you, I should not confide my griefs to others; but when we are on bad terms, I am obliged to keep them to myself, and that maddens me.'

"He then urged me strongly to stay with him and lodge in his house; but I excused myself, and replied that he ought to be purged, and that he could not be, conveniently, at Glasgow; then he told me that he knew I had brought a letter for him, but that he would have preferred to make the journey with me. He believed, I think, that I meant to send him to some prison: I replied that I should take him to Craigmiller, that he would find doctors there, that I should remain near him, and that we should be within reach of seeing my son. He has answered that he will go where I wish to take him, provided that I grant him what he has asked. He does not, however, wish to be seen by anyone.

"He has told me more than a hundred pretty things that I cannot repeat to you, and at which you yourself would be surprised: he did not want to let me go; he wanted to make me sit up with him all night. As for me, I pretended to believe everything, and I seemed to interest myself really in him. Besides, I have never seen him so small and humble; and if I had not known how easily his heart overflows, and how mine is impervious to every other arrow than those with which you have wounded it, I believe that I should have allowed myself to soften; but lest that should alarm you, I would die rather than give up what I have promised you. As

for you, be sure to act in the same way towards those traitors who will do all they can to separate you from me. I believe that all those people have been cast in the same mould: this one always has a tear in his eye; he bows down before everyone, from the greatest to the smallest; he wishes to interest them in his favour, and make himself pitied. His father threw up blood to-day through the nose and mouth; think what these symptoms mean. I have not seen him yet, for he keeps to the house. The king wants me to feed him myself; he won't eat unless I do. But, whatever I may do, you will be deceived by it no more than I shall be deceiving myself. We are united, you and I, to two kinds of very detestable people:[1] that hell may sever these knots then, and that heaven may form better ones, that nothing can break, that it may make of us the most tender and faithful couple that ever was; there is the profession of faith in which I would die.

"Excuse my scrawl: you must guess more than the half of it, but I know no help for this. I am obliged to write to you hastily while everyone is asleep here: but be easy, I take infinite pleasure in my watch; for I cannot sleep like the others, not being able to sleep as I would like—that is to say, in your arms.

"I am going to get into bed; I shall finish my letter to-morrow: I have too many things to tell to you, the night is too far advanced: imagine my despair. It is to you I am writing, it is of myself that I converse with you, and I am obliged to make an end. . . .

"I cannot prevent myself, however, from filling up hastily the rest of my paper. Cursed be the crazy creature who torments me so much! Were it not for him, I could talk to you of more agreeable things: he is not greatly changed; *and yet he has taken a great deal of it.* But he has nearly killed me with the fetid smell of his breath; for now his is still worse than your cousin's: you guess that this is a fresh reason for my not

[1] Mary means Miss Huntly, Bothwell's wife, whom he repudiated, at the king's death, to marry the queen.

approaching him; on the contrary, I go away as far as I can, and sit on a chair at the foot of his bed.

"Let us see if I forget anything.

His father's messenger on the road;
The question about Joachim;
The state of my house;
The people of my suite;
Subject of my arrival;
Joseph;
Conversation between him and me;
His desire to please me and his repentance;
The explanation of his letter;
Mr. Livingston.

"Ah! I was forgetting that. Yesterday Livingston during supper told de Rère in a low voice to drink to the health of one I knew well, and to beg me to do him the honour. After supper, as I was leaning on his shoulder near the fire, he said to me, 'Is it not true that there are visits very agreeable for those who pay them and those who receive them? But, however satisfied they seem with your arrival, I challenge their delight to equal the grief of one whom you have left alone to-day, and who will never be content till he sees you again.' I asked him of whom he wished to speak to me. He then answered me by pressing my arm: 'Of one of those who have not followed you; and among those it is easy for you to guess of whom I want to speak.'

"I have worked till two o'clock at the bracelet; I have enclosed a little key which is attached by two strings: it is not as well worked as I should like, but I have not had time to make it better; I will make you a finer one on the first occasion. Take care that it is not seen on you; for I have worked at it before everyone, and it would be recognised to a certainty.

"I always return, in spite of myself, to the frightful attempt that you advise. You compel me to concealments, and above all to treacheries that make me shudder; I would rather die, believe me, than do such things; for it makes my heart bleed. He does not want to follow me unless I promise him to have

the selfsame bed and board with him as before, and not to abandon him so often. If I consent to it, he says he will do all I wish, and will follow me everywhere; but he has begged me to put off my departure for two days. I have pretended to agree to all he wishes; but I have told him not to speak of our reconciliation to anyone, for fear it should make some lords uneasy. At last I shall take him everywhere I wish. . . . Alas! I have never deceived anyone; but what would I not do to please you? Command, and whatever happens, I shall obey. But see yourself if one could not contrive some secret means in the shape of a remedy. He must purge himself at Craigmiller and take baths there; he will be some days without going out. So far as I can see, he is very uneasy; but he has great trust in what I tell him: however, his confidence does not go so far as to allow him to open his mind to me. If you like, I will tell him everything: I can have no pleasure in deceiving someone who is trusting. However, it will be just as you wish: do not esteem me the less for that. It is you advised it; never would vengeance have taken me so far. Sometimes he attacks me in a very sensitive place, and he touches me to the quick when he tells me that his crimes are known, but that every day greater ones are committed that one uselessly attempts to hide, since all crimes, whatsoever they be, great or small, come to men's knowledge and form the common subject of their discourse. He adds sometimes, in speaking to me of Madame de Rère, 'I wish her services may do you honour.' He has assured me that many people thought, and that he thought himself, that I was not my own mistress; this is doubtless because I had rejected the conditions he offered me. Finally, it is certain that he is very uneasy about you know what, and that he even suspects that his life is aimed at. He is in despair whenever the conversation turns on you, Livingston, and my brother. However, he says neither good nor ill of absent people; but, on the contrary, he always avoids speaking of them. His father keeps to the house: I have not seen him yet. A number of the Hamiltons are here, and accompany me everywhere; all the friends of the other one

follow me each time I go to see him. He has begged me to be at his rising to-morrow. My messenger will tell you the rest.

"Burn my letter: there would be danger in keeping it. Besides, it is hardly worth the trouble, being filled only with dark thoughts.

"As for you, do not be offended if I am sad and uneasy to-day, that to please you I rise above honour, remorse, and dangers. Do not take in bad part what I tell you, and do not listen to the malicious explanations of your wife's brother; he is a knave whom you ought not to hear to the prejudice of the most tender and most faithful mistress that ever was. Above all, do not allow yourself to be moved by that woman: her sham tears are nothing in comparison with the real tears that I shed, and with what love and constancy make me suffer at succeeding her; it is for that alone that in spite of myself I betray all those who could cross my love. God have mercy on me, and send you all the prosperity that a humble and tender friend who awaits from you soon another reward wishes you. It is very late; but it is always with regret that I lay down my pen when I write to you; however, I shall not end my letter until I shall have kissed your hands. Forgive me that it is so ill-written: perhaps I do so expressly that you may be obliged to re-read it several times. I have transcribed hastily what I had written down on my tablets, and my paper has given out. Remember a tender friend, and write to her often: love me as tenderly as I love you, and remember

Madame de Rère's words;
The English;
His mother;
The Earl of Argyll;
The Earl of Bothwell;
The Edinburgh dwelling."

Second Letter

"It seems that you have forgotten me during your absence, so much the more that you had promised me, at setting out,

to let me know in detail everything fresh that should happen. The hope of receiving your news was giving me almost as much delight as your return could have brought me: you have put it off longer than you promised me. As for me, although you do not write, I play my part always. I shall take him to Craigmiller on Monday, and he will spend the whole of Wednesday there. On that day I shall go to Edinburgh to be bled there, unless you arrange otherwise at least. He is more cheerful than usual, and he is better than ever. He says everything he can to persuade me that he loves me; he has a thousand attentions for me, and he anticipates me in everything: all that is so pleasant for me, that I never go to him but the pain in my side comes on again, his company weighs on me so much. If Pâris brought me what I asked him, I should be soon cured. If you have not yet returned when I go you know where, write to me, I beg you, and tell me what you wish me to do; for if you do not manage things prudently, I foresee that the whole burden will fall on me: look into everything and weigh the affair maturely. I send you my letter by Beaton, who will set out the day which has been assigned to Balfour. It only remains for me to beg you to inform me of your journey.

"Glasgow, this Saturday morning."

Third Letter

"I stayed you know where longer than I should have done, if it had not been to get from him something that the bearer of these presents will tell you: it was a good opportunity for covering up our designs: I have promised him to bring the person you know to-morrow. Look after the rest, if you think fit. Alas! I have failed in our agreement, for you have forbidden me to write to you, or to despatch a messenger to you. However, I do not intend to offend you: if you knew with what fears I am agitated, you would not have yourself so many doubts and suspicions. But I take them in good part, per-

suaded as I am that they have no other cause than love—love that I esteem more than anything on earth.

"My feelings and my favours are to me sure warrants for that love, and answer to me for your heart; my trust is entire on this head: but explain yourself, I entreat you, and open your soul to me; otherwise, I shall fear lest, by the fatality of my star, and by the too fortunate influence of the stars on women less tender and less faithful than I, I may be supplanted in your heart as Medea was in Jason's; not that I wish to compare you to a lover as unfortunate as Jason, and to parallel myself with a monster like Medea, although you have enough influence over me to force me to resemble her each time our love exacts it, and that it concerns me to keep your heart, which belongs to me, and which belongs to me only. For I name as belonging to me what I have purchased with the tender and constant love with which I have burned for you, a love more alive to-day than ever, and which will end only with my life; a love, in short, which makes me despise both the dangers and the remorse which will be perhaps its sad sequel. As the price of this sacrifice, I ask you but one favour, it is to remember a spot not far from here: I do not exact that you should keep your promise to-morrow; but I want to see you to disperse your suspicions. I ask of God only one thing: it is that He should make you read my heart, which is less mine than yours, and that He should guard you from every ill, at least during my life: this life is dear to me only in so far as it pleases you, and as I please you myself. I am going to bed: adieu; give me your news to-morrow morning; for I shall be uneasy till I have it. Like a bird escaped from its cage, or the turtle-dove which has lost her mate, I shall be alone, weeping your absence, short as it may be. This letter, happier than I, will go this evening where I cannot go, provided that the messenger does not find you asleep, as I fear. I have not dared to write it in the presence of Joseph, of Sebastian, and of Joachim, who had only just left me when I began it."

Thus, as one sees, and always supposing these letters to be

genuine, Mary had conceived for Bothwell one of those mad passions, so much the stronger in the women who are a prey to them, that one the less understands what could have inspired them. Bothwell was no longer young, Bothwell was not handsome, and yet Mary sacrificed for him a young husband, who was considered one of the handsomest men of his century. It was like a kind of enchantment. Darnley, the sole obstacle to the union, had been already condemned for a long time, if not by Mary, at least by Bothwell; then, as his strong constitution had conquered the poison, another kind of death was sought for.

The queen, as she announces in her letter to Bothwell, had refused to bring back Darnley with her, and had returned alone to Edinburgh. Arrived there, she gave orders for the king to be moved, in his turn, in a litter; but instead of taking him to Stirling or Holyrood, she decided to lodge him in the abbey of the Kirk of Field. The king made some objections when he knew of this arrangement; however, as he had no power to oppose it, he contented himself with complaining of the solitude of the dwelling assigned him; but the queen made answer that she could not receive him at that moment, either at Holyrood or at Stirling, for fear, if his illness were infectious, lest he might give it to his son: Darnley was then obliged to make the best of the abode allotted him.

It was an isolated abbey, and little calculated by its position to dissipate the fears that the king entertained; for it was situated between two ruined churches and two cemeteries: the only house, which was distant about a shot from a cross-bow, belonged to the Hamiltons, and as they were Darnley's mortal enemies the neighbourhood was none the more reassuring: further, towards the north, rose some wretched huts, called the "Thieves' cross-roads." In going round his new residence, Darnley noticed that three holes, each large enough for a man to get through, had been made in the walls; he asked that these holes, through which ill-meaning persons could get in, should be stopped up: it was promised that masons should be sent; but nothing was done, and the holes remained open.

The day after his arrival at Kirk of Field, the king saw a light in that house near his which he believed deserted; next day he asked Alexander Durham whence it came, and he heard that the Archbishop of St. Andrews had left his palace in Edinburgh and had housed there since the preceding evening, one didn't know why: this news still further increased the king's uneasiness; the Archbishop of St. Andrews was one of his most declared enemies.

The king, little by little abandoned by all his servants, lived on the first floor of an isolated pavilion, having about him only this same Alexander Durham, whom we have mentioned already, and who was his valet. Darnley, who had a quite special friendship for him, and who besides, as we have said, feared some attack on his life at every moment, had made him move his bed into his own apartment, so that both were sleeping in the same room.

On the night of the 8th February, Darnley awoke Durham: he thought he heard footsteps in the apartment beneath him. Durham rose, took a sword in one hand, a taper in the other, and went down to the ground floor; but although Darnley was quite certain he had not been deceived, Durham came up again a moment after, saying he had seen no one.

The morning of the next day passed without bringing anything fresh. The queen was marrying one of her servants named Sebastian: he was an Auvergnat whom she had brought with her from France, and whom she liked very much. However, as the king sent word that he had not seen her for two days, she left the wedding towards six o'clock in the evening, and came to pay him a visit, accompanied by the Countess of Argyll and the Countess of Huntly. While she was there, Durham, in preparing his bed, set fire to his palliasse, which was burned as well as a part of the mattress; so that, having thrown them out of the window all in flames, for fear lest the fire should reach the rest of the furniture, he found himself without a bed, and asked permission to return to the town to sleep; but Darnley, who remembered his terror the night before, and who was surprised at the promptness that had made

Durham throw all his bedding out of window, begged him not to go away, offering him one of his mattresses, or even to take him into his own bed. However, in spite of this offer, Durham insisted, saying that he felt unwell, and that he should like to see a doctor the same evening. So the queen interceded for Durham, and promised Darnley to send him another valet to spend the night with him: Darnley was then obliged to yield, and, making Mary repeat that she would send him someone, he gave Durham leave for that evening. At that moment Pâris, of whom the queen speaks in her letters, came in: he was a young Frenchman who had been in Scotland for some years, and who, after having served with Bothwell and Seyton, was at present with the queen. Seeing him, she got up, and as Darnley still wished to keep her—

"Indeed, my lord, it is impossible," said she, "to come and see you. I have left this poor Sebastian's wedding, and I must return to it; for I promised to come masked to his ball."

The king dared not insist; he only reminded her of the promise that she had made to send him a servant: Mary renewed it yet once again, and went away with her attendants. As for Durham, he had set out the moment he received permission.

It was nine o'clock in the evening. Darnley, left alone, carefully shut the doors within, and retired to rest, though in readiness to rise to let in the servant who should come to spend the night with him. Scarcely was he in bed than the same noise that he had heard the night before recommenced; this time Darnley listened with all the attention fear gives, and soon he had no longer any doubt but that several men were walking about beneath him. It was useless to call, it was dangerous to go out; to wait was the only course that remained to the king. He made sure again that the doors were well fastened, put his sword under his pillow, extinguished his lamp for fear the light might betray him, and awaited in silence for his servant's arrival; but the hours passed away, and the servant did not come.

At one o'clock in the morning, Bothwell, after having talked some while with the queen, in the presence of the captain of the guard, returned home to change his dress; after some

minutes, he came out wrapped up in the large cloak of a German hussar, went through the guard-house, and had the castle gate opened. Once outside, he took his way with all speed to Kirk of Field, which he entered by the opening in the wall: scarcely had he made a step in the garden than he met James Balfour, governor of the castle.

"Well," he said to him, "how far have we got?"

"Everything is ready," replied Balfour, "and we were waiting for you to set fire to the fuse."

"That is well," Bothwell answered; "but first I want to make sure that he is in his room."

At these words, Bothwell opened the pavilion door with a false key, and, having groped his way up the stairs, he went to listen at Darnley's door. Darnley, hearing no further noise, had ended by going to sleep; but he slept with a jerky breathing which pointed to his agitation. Little mattered it to Bothwell what kind of sleep it was, provided that he was really in his room. He went down again in silence, then, as he had come up, and taking a lantern from one of the conspirators, he went himself into the lower room to see if everything was in order: this room was full of barrels of powder, and a fuse ready prepared wanted but a spark to set the whole on fire. Bothwell withdrew, then, to the end of the garden with Balfour, David, Chambers, and three or four others, leaving one man to ignite the fuse. In a moment this man rejoined them.

There ensued some minutes of anxiety, during which the five men looked at one another in silence and as if afraid of themselves; then, seeing that nothing exploded, Bothwell impatiently turned round to the engineer, reproaching him for having, no doubt through fear, done his work badly. He assured his master that he was certain everything was all right, and as Bothwell, impatient, wanted to return to the house himself, to make sure, he offered to go back and see how things stood. In fact, he went back to the pavilion, and, putting his head through a kind of air-hole, he saw the fuse, which was still burning. Some seconds afterwards, Bothwell saw him come running back, making a sign that all was going well; at the same moment

a frightful report was heard, the pavilion was blown to pieces, the town and the firth were lit up with a clearness exceeding the brightest daylight; then everything fell back into night, and the silence was broken only by the fall of stones and joists, which came down as fast as hail in a hurricane.

Next day the body of the king was found in a garden in the neighbourhood: it had been saved from the action of the fire by the mattresses on which he was lying, and as, doubtless, in his terror he had merely thrown himself on his bed wrapped in his dressing-gown and in his slippers, and as he was found thus, without his slippers, which were flung some paces away, it was believed that he had been first strangled, then carried there; but the most probable version was that the murderers simply relied upon powder—an auxiliary sufficiently powerful in itself for them to have no fear it would fail them.

Was the queen an accomplice or not? No one has ever known save herself, Bothwell, and God; but, yes or no, her conduct, imprudent this time as always, gave the charge her enemies brought against her, if not substance, at least an appearance of truth. Scarcely had she heard the news than she gave orders that the body should be brought to her, and, having had it stretched out upon a bench, she looked at it with more curiosity than sadness; then the corpse, embalmed, was placed the same evening, without pomp, by the side of Rizzio's.

Scottish ceremonial prescribes for the widows of kings retirement for forty days in a room entirely closed to the light of day: on the twelfth day Mary had the windows opened, and on the fifteenth set out with Bothwell for Seaton, a country house situated five miles from the capital, where the French ambassador, Ducroc, went in search of her, and made her remonstrances which decided her to return to Edinburgh; but instead of the cheers which usually greeted her coming, she was received by an icy silence, and a solitary woman in the crowd called out, "God treat her as she deserves!"

The names of the murderers were no secret to the people. Bothwell having brought a splendid coat which was too large for him to a tailor, asking him to remake it to his measure, the

man recognised it as having belonged to the king. "That's right," said he; "it is the custom for the executioner to inherit from the condemned." Meanwhile, the Earl of Lennox, upported by the people's murmurs, loudly demanded justice for his son's death, and came forward as the accuser of his murderers. The queen was then obliged, to appease paternal clamour and public resentment, to command the Earl of Argyll, the Lord Chief Justice of the kingdom, to make investigations; the same day that this order was given, a proclamation was posted up in the streets of Edinburgh, in which the queen promised two thousand pounds sterling to whoever would make known the king's murderers. Next day, wherever this letter had been affixed, another placard was found, worded thus :—

"As it has been proclaimed that those who should make known the king's murderers should have two thousand pounds sterling, I, who have made a strict search, affirm that the authors of the murder are the Earl of Bothwell, James Balfour, the priest of Flisk, David, Chambers, Blackmester, Jean Spens, and the queen herself."

This placard was torn down; but, as usually happens, it had already been read by the entire population.

The Earl of Lennox accused Bothwell, and public opinion, which also accused him, seconded the earl with such violence, that Mary was compelled to bring him to trial: only every precaution was taken to deprive the prosecutor of the power of convicting the accused. On the 28th March, the Earl of Lennox received notice that the 12th April was fixed for the trial: he was granted a fortnight to collect decisive proofs against the most powerful man in all Scotland; but the Earl of Lennox, judging that this trial was a mere mockery, did not appear. Bothwell, on the contrary, presented himself at the court, accompanied by five thousand partisans and two hundred picked fusiliers, who guarded the doors directly he had entered; so that he seemed to be rather a king who is about to violate the law than an accused who comes to submit to it. Of course there happened what was certain to happen—that is to say, the jury acquitted Bothwell of the crime of which everyone, the judges included, knew him to be guilty.

The day of the trial, Bothwell had this written challenge placarded :—

"Although I am sufficiently cleared of the murder of the king, of which I have been falsely accused, yet, the better to prove my innocence, I am ready to engage in combat with whomsoever will dare to maintain that I have killed the king."

The day after, this reply appeared :—

"I accept the challenge, provided that you select neutral ground."

However, judgment had been barely given, when rumours of a marriage between the queen and the Earl of Bothwell were abroad. However strange and however mad this marriage, the relations of the two lovers were so well known that no one doubted but that it was true. But as everyone submitted to Bothwell, either through fear or through ambition, two men only dared to protest beforehand against this union : the one was Lord Herries, and the other James Melville.

Mary was at Stirling when Lord Herries, taking advantage of Bothwell's momentary absence, threw himself at her feet, imploring her not to lose her honour by marrying her husband's murderer, which could not fail to convince those who still doubted it that she was his accomplice. But the queen, instead of thanking Herries for this devotion, seemed very much surprised at his boldness, and scornfully signing to him to rise, she coldly replied that her heart was silent as regarded the Earl of Bothwell, and that, if she should ever re-marry, which was not probable, she would neither forget what she owed to her people nor what she owed to herself.

Melville did not allow himself to be discouraged by this experience, and pretended to have received a letter that one of his friends, Thomas Bishop, had written him from England. He showed this letter to the queen; but at the first lines Mary recognised the style, and above all the friendship of her ambassador, and giving the letter to the Earl of Livingston, who was present, "There is a very singular letter," said she. "Read it. It is quite in Melville's manner."

Livingston glanced through the letter, but had scarcely read the half of it when he took Melville by the hand, and drawing him into the embrasure of a window—

"My dear Melville," said he, "you were certainly mad when you just now imparted this letter to the queen: as soon as the Earl of Bothwell gets wind of it, and that will not be long, he will have you assassinated. You have behaved like an honest man, it is true; but at court it is better to behave as a clever man. Go away, then, as quickly as possible; it is I who recommend it."

Melville did not require to be told twice, and stayed away for a week. Livingston was not mistaken: scarcely had Bothwell returned to the queen than he knew all that had passed. He burst out into curses against Melville, and sought for him everywhere; but he could not find him.

This beginning of opposition, weak as it was, none the less disquieted Bothwell, who, sure of Mary's love, resolved to make short work of things. Accordingly, as the queen was returning from Stirling to Edinburgh some days after the scenes we have just related, Bothwell suddenly appeared at the Bridge of Grammont with a thousand horsemen, and, having disarmed the Earl of Huntly, Livingston, and Melville, who had returned to his mistress, he seized the queen's horse by the bridle, and with apparent violence he forced Mary to turn back and follow him to Dunbar; which the queen did without any resistance—a strange thing for one of Mary's character.

The day following, the Earls of Huntly, Livingston, Melville, and the people in their train were set at liberty; then, ten days afterwards, Bothwell and the queen, perfectly reconciled, returned to Edinburgh together.

Two days after this return, Bothwell gave a great dinner to the nobles his partisans in a tavern. When the meal was ended, on the very same table, amid half-drained glasses and empty bottles, Lindsay, Ruthven, Morton, Maitland, and a dozen or fifteen other noblemen signed a bond which not only set forth that upon their souls and consciences Bothwell was innocent, but which further denoted him as the most suitable husband for

the queen. This bond concluded with this sufficiently strange declaration:—

"After all, the queen cannot do otherwise, since the earl has carried her off and has lain with her."

Yet two circumstances were still opposed to this marriage: the first, that Bothwell had already been married three times, and that his three wives were living; the second, that having carried off the queen, this violence might cause to be regarded as null the alliance which she should contract with him: the first of these objections was attended to, to begin with, as the one most difficult to solve.

Bothwell's two first wives were of obscure birth, consequently he scorned to disquiet himself about them; but it was not so with the third, a daughter of that Earl of Huntly who had been trampled beneath the horses' feet, and a sister of Gordon, who had been decapitated. Fortunately for Bothwell, his past behaviour made his wife long for a divorce with an eagerness as great as his own. There was not much difficulty, then, in persuading her to bring a charge of adultery against her husband. Bothwell confessed that he had had criminal intercourse with a relative of his wife, and the Archbishop of St. Andrews, the same who had taken up his abode in that solitary house at Kirk of Field to be present at Darnley's death, pronounced the marriage null. The case was begun, pushed on, and decided in ten days.

As to the second obstacle, that of the violence used to the queen, Mary undertook to remove it herself; for, being brought before the court, she declared that not only did she pardon Bothwell for his conduct as regarded her, but further that, knowing him to be a good and faithful subject, she intended raising him immediately to new honours. In fact, some days afterwards she created him Duke of Orkney, and on the 15th of the same month—that is to say, scarcely four months after the death of Darnley—with levity that resembled madness, Mary, who had petitioned for a dispensation to wed a Catholic prince, her cousin in the third degree, married Bothwell, a Protestant upstart, who, his divorce not withstanding, was still

bigamous, and who thus found himself in the position of having four wives living, including the queen.

The wedding was dismal, as became a festival under such outrageous auspices. Morton, Maitland, and some base flatterers of Bothwell alone were present at it. The French ambassador, although he was a creature of the House of Guise, to which the queen belonged, refused to attend it.

Mary's delusion was short-lived: scarcely was she in Bothwell's power than she saw what a master she had given herself. Gross, unfeeling, and violent, he seemed chosen by Providence to avenge the faults of which he had been the instigator or the accomplice. Soon his fits of passion reached such a point, that one day, no longer able to endure them, Mary seized a dagger from Erskine, who was present with Melville at one of these scenes, and would have struck herself, saying that she would rather die than continue living unhappily as she did; yet, inexplicable as it seems, in spite of these miseries, renewed without ceasing, Mary, forgetting that she was wife and queen, tender and submissive as a child, was always the first to be reconciled with Bothwell.

Nevertheless, these public scenes gave a pretext to the nobles, who only sought an opportunity for an outbreak. The Earl of Mar, the young prince's tutor, Argyll, Athol, Glencairn, Lindley, Boyd, and even Morton and Maitland themselves, those eternal accomplices of Bothwell, rose, they said, to avenge the death of the king, and to draw the son from hands which had killed the father and which were keeping the mother captive. As to Murray, he had kept completely in the background during all the last events; he was in the county of Fife when the king was assassinated, and three days before the trial of Bothwell he had asked and obtained from his sister permission to take a journey on the Continent.

The insurrection took place in such a prompt and instantaneous manner, that the Confederate lords, whose plan was to surprise and seize both Mary and Bothwell, thought they would succeed at the first attempt.

The king and queen were at table with Lord Borthwick, who was entertaining them, when suddenly it was announced that a large body of armed men was surrounding the castle. Bothwell and Mary suspected that they were aimed at, and as they had no means of resistance, Bothwell dressed himself as a squire, Mary as a page, and both immediately taking horse, escaped by one door just as the Confederates were coming in by the other. The fugitives withdrew to Dunbar.

There they called together all Bothwell's friends, and made them sign a kind of treaty by which they undertook to defend the queen and her husband. In the midst of all this, Murray arrived from France, and Bothwell offered the document to him as to the others; but Murray refused to put his signature to it, saying that it was insulting him to think he need be bound by a written agreement when it was a question of defending his sister and his queen. This refusal having led to an altercation between him and Bothwell, Murray, true to his system of neutrality, withdrew into his earldom, and let affairs follow without him the fatal decline they had taken.

In the meantime the Confederates, after having failed at Borthwick, not feeling strong enough to attack Bothwell at Dunbar, marched upon Edinburgh, where they had an understanding with a man of whom Bothwell thought himself sure. This man was James Balfour, governor of the citadel, the same who had presided over the preparation of the mine which had blown up Darnley, and whom Bothwell had met on entering the garden at Kirk of Field. Not only did Balfour deliver Edinburgh Castle into the hands of the Confederates, but he also gave them a little silver coffer of which the cipher, an "F" crowned, showed that it had belonged to Francis II; and in fact it was a gift from her first husband, which the queen had presented to Bothwell. Balfour stated that this coffer contained precious papers, which in the present circumstances might be of great use to Mary's enemies. The Confederate lords opened it, and found inside the three genuine or spurious letters that we have quoted, the marriage contract of Mary

and Bothwell, and twelve poems in the queen's handwriting. As Balfour had said, therein lay, for her enemies, a rich and precious find, which was worth more than a victory; for a victory would yield them only the queen's life, while Balfour's treachery yielded them her honour.

CHAPTER IV

MEANWHILE Bothwell had levied some troops, and thought himself in a position to hold the country: accordingly, he set out with his army, without even waiting for the Hamiltons, who were assembling their vassals, and June 15th, 1567, the two opposed forces were face to face. Mary, who desired to try to avoid bloodshed, immediately sent the French ambassador to the Confederate lords to exhort them to lay aside their arms; but they replied "that the queen deceived herself in taking them for rebels; that they were marching not against her, but against Bothwell." Then the king's friends did what they could to break off the negotiations and give battle: it was already too late; the soldiers knew that they were defending the cause of one man, and that they were going to fight for a woman's caprice, and not for the good of the country: they cried aloud, then, that "since Bothwell alone was aimed at, it was for Bothwell to defend his cause." And he, vain and blustering as usual, gave out that he was ready to prove his innocence in person against whomsoever would dare to maintain that he was guilty. Immediately everyone with any claim to nobility in the rival camp accepted the challenge; and as the honour was given to the bravest, Kirkcaldy of Grange, Murray of Tullibardine, and Lord Lindsay of Byres defied him successively. But, be it that courage failed him, be it that in the moment of danger he did not himself believe in the justice of his cause, he, to escape the combat, sought such strange pretexts that the queen herself was ashamed, and his most devoted friends murmured.

Then Mary, perceiving the fatal humour of men's minds, decided not to run the risk of a battle. She sent a herald to

Kirkcaldy of Grange, who was commanding an outpost, and as he was advancing without distrust to converse with the queen, Bothwell, enraged at his own cowardice, ordered a soldier to fire upon him; but this time Mary herself interposed, forbidding him under pain of death to offer the least violence. In the meanwhile, as the imprudent order given by Bothwell spread through the army, such murmurs burst forth that he clearly saw that his cause was for ever lost.

That is what the queen thought also; for the result of her conference with Lord Kirkcaldy was that she should abandon Bothwell's cause, and pass over into the camp of the Confederates, on condition that they would lay down their arms before her and bring her as queen to Edinburgh. Kirkcaldy left her to take these conditions to the nobles, and promised to return next day with a satisfactory answer.

But at the moment of leaving Bothwell, Mary was seized again with that fatal love for him that she was never able to surmount, and felt herself overcome with such weakness, that, weeping bitterly, and before everyone, she wanted Kirkcaldy to be told that she broke off all negotiations; however, as Bothwell had understood that he was no longer safe in camp, it was he who insisted that things should remain as they were; and, leaving Mary in tears, he mounted, and setting off at full speed, he did not stop till he reached Dunbar.

Next day, at the time appointed, the arrival of Lord Kirkcaldy of Grange was announced by the trumpeters preceding him. Mary mounted directly and went to meet him; then, as he alighted to greet her, "My lord," said she, "I surrender to you, on the conditions that you have proposed to me on the part of the nobles, and here is my hand as a sign of entire confidence." Kirkcaldy then knelt down, kissed the queen's hand respectfully; and, rising, he took her horse by the bridle and led it towards the Confederates' camp.

Everyone of any rank in the army received her with such marks of respect as entirely to satisfy her; but it was not so at all with the soldiers and common people. Hardly had the queen reached the second line, formed by them, than

great murmurs arose, and several voices cried, "To the stake, the adulteress! To the stake, the parricide!" However, Mary bore these outrages stoically enough: but a more terrible trial yet was in store for her. Suddenly she saw rise before her a banner, on which was depicted on one side the king dead and stretched out in the fatal garden, and on the other the young prince kneeling, his hands joined and his eyes raised to heaven, with this inscription, "O Lord! judge and revenge my cause!" Mary reined in her horse abruptly at this sight, and wanted to turn back; but she had scarcely moved a few paces when the accusing banner again blocked her passage. Wherever she went, she met this dreadful apparition. For two hours she had incessantly under her eyes the king's corpse asking vengeance, and the young prince her son praying God to punish the murderers. At last she could endure it no longer, and, crying out, she threw herself back, having completely lost consciousness, and would have fallen, if someone had not caught hold of her.

In the evening she entered Edinburgh, always preceded by this cruel banner, and she already had rather the air of a prisoner than of a queen; for, not having had a moment during the day to attend to her toilet, her hair was falling in disorder about her shoulders, her face was pale and showed traces of tears; and, finally, her clothes were covered with dust and mud. As she proceeded through the town, the hootings of the people and the curses of the crowd followed her. At last, half dead with fatigue, worn out with grief, bowed down with shame, she reached the house of the Lord Provost; but scarcely had she got there when the entire population of Edinburgh crowded into the square, with cries that from time to time assumed a tone of terrifying menace. Several times, then, Mary wished to go to the window, hoping that the sight of her, of which she had so often proved the influence, would disarm this multitude; but each time she saw this banner unfurling itself like a bloody curtain between herself and the people—a terrible rendering of their feelings.

However, all this hatred was meant still more for Bothwell than for her: they were pursuing Bothwell in Darnley's widow.

The curses were for Bothwell: Bothwell was the adulterer, Bothwell was the murderer, Bothwell was the coward; while Mary was the weak, fascinated woman, who, that same evening, gave a fresh proof of her folly.

In fact, directly the falling night had scattered the crowd and a little quiet was regained, Mary, ceasing to be uneasy on her own account, turned immediately to Bothwell, whom she had been obliged to abandon, and who was now proscribed and fleeing; while she, as she believed, was about to reassume her title and station of queen. With that eternal confidence of the woman in her own love, by which she invariably measures the love of another, she thought that Bothwell's greatest distress was to have lost, not wealth and power, but to have lost herself. So she wrote him a long letter, in which, forgetful of herself, she promised him with the most tender expressions of love never to desert him, and to recall him to her directly the breaking up of the Confederate lords should give her power to do so; then, this letter written, she called a soldier, gave him a purse of gold, and charged him to take this letter to Dunbar, where Bothwell ought to be, and if he were already gone, to follow him until he came up with him.

Then she went to bed and slept more calmly; for, unhappy as she was, she believed she had just sweetened misfortunes still greater than hers.

Next day the queen was awakened by the step of an armed man who entered her room. Both astonished and frightened at this neglect of propriety, which could augur nothing good, Mary sat up in bed, and parting the curtains, saw standing before her Lord Lindsay of Byres: she knew he was one of her oldest friends, so she asked him in a voice which she vainly tried to make confident, what he wanted of her at such a time.

"Do you know this writing, madam?" Lord Lindsay asked in a rough voice, presenting to the queen the letter she had written to Bothwell at night, which the soldier had carried to the Confederate lords, instead of taking to its address.

"Yes, doubtless, my lord," the queen answered; "but am I

already a prisoner, then, that my correspondence is intercepted? or is it no longer allowed to a wife to write to her husband?"

"When the husband is a traitor," replied Lindsay, "no, madam, it is no longer allowed to a wife to write to her husband—at least, however, if this wife have a part in his treason; which seems to me, besides, quite proved by the promise you make to this wretch to recall him to you."

"My lord," cried Mary, interrupting Lindsay, "do you forget that you are speaking to your queen?"

"There was a time, madam," Lindsay replied, "when I should have spoken to you in a more gentle voice, and bending the knee, although it is not in the nature of us old Scotch to model ourselves on your French courtiers; but for some time, thanks to your changing loves, you have kept us so often in the field, in harness, that our voices are hoarse from the cold night air, and our stiff knees can no longer bend in our armour: you must then take me just as I am, madam; since to-day, for the welfare of Scotland, you are no longer at liberty to choose your favourites."

Mary grew frightfully pale at this want of respect, to which she was not yet accustomed; but quickly containing her anger, as far as possible—

"But still, my lord," said she, "however disposed I may be to take you as you are, I must at least know by what right you come here. That letter which you are holding in your hand would lead me to think it is as a spy, if the ease with which you enter my room without being asked did not make me believe it is as a gaoler. Have the goodness, then, to inform me by which of these two names I must call you."

"Neither by one nor the other, madam; for I am simply your fellow-traveller, chief of the escort which is to take you to Lochleven Castle, your future residence. And yet, scarcely have I arrived there than I shall be obliged to leave you to go and assist the Confederate lords choose a regent for the kingdom."

"So," said Mary, "it was as prisoner and not as queen that I surrendered to Lord Kirkcaldy. It seems to me that things

were agreed upon otherwise; but I am glad to see how much time Scotch noblemen need to betray their sworn undertakings."

"Your Grace forgets that these engagements were made on one condition," Lindsay answered.

"On which?" Mary asked.

"That you should separate for ever from your husband's murderer; and there is the proof," he added, showing the letter, "that you had forgotten your promise before we thought of revoking ours."

"And at what o'clock is my departure fixed?" said Mary, whom this discussion was beginning to fatigue.

"At eleven o'clock, madam."

"It is well, my lord; as I have no desire to make your lordship wait, you will have the goodness, in withdrawing, to send me someone to help me dress, unless I am reduced to wait upon myself."

And, in pronouncing these words, Mary made a gesture so imperious, that whatever may have been Lindsay's wish to reply, he bowed and went out. Behind him entered Mary Seyton.

CHAPTER V

AT the time appointed the queen was ready: she had suffered so much at Edinburgh that she left it without any regret. Besides, whether to spare her the humiliations of the day before, or to conceal her departure from any partisans who might remain to her, a litter had been made ready. Mary got into it without any resistance, and after two hours' journey she reached Duddington; there a little vessel was waiting for her, which set sail directly she was on board, and next day at dawn she disembarked on the other side of the Firth of Forth in the county of Fife.

Mary halted at Rosythe Castle only just long enough to breakfast, and immediately recommenced her journey; for Lord Lindsay had declared that he wished to reach his destination that same evening. Indeed, as the sun was setting, Mary perceived gilded with his last rays the high towers of Lochleven Castle, situated on an islet in the midst of the lake of the same name.

No doubt the royal prisoner was already expected at Lochleven Castle, for, on reaching the lake side, Lord Lindsay's equerry unfurled his banner, which till then had remained in its case, and waved it from right to left, while his master blew a little hunting bugle which he wore hanging from his neck. A boat immediately put off from the island and came towards the arrivals, set in motion by four vigorous oarsmen, who had soon propelled it across the space which separated it from the bank. Mary silently got into it, and sat down at the stern, while Lord Lindsay and his equerry stood up before her; and as her guide did not seem any more inclined to

speak than she was herself to respond, she had plenty of time to examine her future dwelling.

The castle, or rather the fortress of Lochleven, already somewhat gloomy in its situation and architecture, borrowed fresh mournfulness still from the hour at which it appeared to the queen's gaze. It was, so far as she could judge amid the mists rising from the lake, one of those massive structures of the twelfth century which seem, so fast shut up are they, the stone armour of a giant. As she drew near, Mary began to make out the contours of two great round towers, which flanked the corners and gave it the severe character of a state prison. A clump of ancient trees enclosed by a high wall, or rather by a rampart, rose at its north front, and seemed vegetation in stone, and completed the general effect of this gloomy abode, while, on the contrary, the eye wandering from it and passing from islands to islands, lost itself in the west, in the north, and in the south, in the vast plain of Kinross, or stopped southwards at the jagged summits of Ben Lomond, whose farthest slopes died down on the shores of the lake.

Three persons awaited Mary at the castle door: Lady Douglas, William Douglas her son, and a child of twelve who was called Little Douglas, and who was neither a son nor a brother of the inhabitants of the castle, but merely a distant relative. As one can imagine, there were few compliments between Mary and her hosts; and the queen, conducted to her apartment, which was on the first floor, and of which the windows overlooked the lake, was soon left with Mary Seyton, the only one of the four Marys who had been allowed to accompany her.

However, rapid as the interview had been, and short and measured the words exchanged between the prisoner and her gaolers, Mary had had time, together with what she knew of them beforehand, to construct for herself a fairly accurate idea of the new personages who had just mingled in her history.

Lady Lochleven, wife of Lord William Douglas, of whom we have already said a few words at the beginning of this

history, was a woman of from fifty-five to sixty years of age, who had been handsome enough in her youth to fix upon herself the glances of King James v, and who had had a son by him, who was this same Murray whom we have already seen figuring so often in Mary's history, and who, although his birth was illegitimate, had always been treated as a brother by the queen.

Lady Lochleven had had a momentary hope, so great was the king's love for her, of becoming his wife, which upon the whole was possible, the family of Mar, from which she was descended, being the equal of the most ancient and the noblest families in Scotland. But, unluckily, perhaps slanderously, certain talk which was circulating among the young noblemen of the time came to James's ears: it was said that together with her royal lover the beautiful favourite had another, whom she had chosen, no doubt from curiosity, from the very lowest class. It was added that this Porterfeld, or Porterfield, was the real father of the child who had already received the name of James Stuart, and whom the king was educating as his son at the monastery of St. Andrews. These rumours, well founded or not, had therefore stopped James v at the moment when, in gratitude to her who had given him a son, he was on the point of raising her to the rank of queen; so that, instead of marrying her himself, he had invited her to choose among the nobles at court; and as she was very handsome, and the king's favour went with the marriage, this choice, which fell on Lord William Douglas of Lochleven, did not meet with any resistance on his part. However, in spite of this direct protection, that James v preserved for her all his life, Lady Douglas could never forget that she had fingered higher fortune; moreover, she had a hatred for the one who, according to herself, had usurped her place, and poor Mary had naturally inherited the profound animosity that Lady Douglas bore to her mother, which had already come to light in the few words that the two women had exchanged. Besides, in ageing, whether from repentance for her errors or from hypocrisy, Lady Douglas had become a prude and a puritan; so that

at this time she united with the natural acrimony of her character all the stiffness of the new religion she had adopted.

William Douglas, who was the eldest son of Lord Lochleven, and on his mother's side half-brother of Murray, was a man of from thirty-five to thirty-six years of age, athletic, with hard and strongly pronounced features, red-haired like all the younger branch, and who had inherited that paternal hatred that for a century the Douglases cherished against the Stuarts, and which was shown by so many plots, rebellions, and assassinations. According as fortune had favoured or deserted Murray, William Douglas had seen the rays of the fraternal star draw near or away from him; he had then felt that he was living in another's life, and was devoted, body and soul, to him who was his cause of greatness or of abasement. Mary's fall, which must necessarily raise Murray, was thus a source of joy for him, and the Confederate lords could not have chosen better than in confiding the safe-keeping of their prisoner to the instinctive spite of Lady Douglas and to the intelligent hatred of her son.

As to Little Douglas, he was, as we have said, a child of twelve, for some months an orphan, whom the Lochlevens had taken charge of, and whom they made buy the bread they gave him by all sorts of harshness. The result was that the child, proud and spiteful as a Douglas, and knowing, although his fortune was inferior, that his birth was equal to his proud relatives', had little by little changed his early gratitude into lasting and profound hatred: for one used to say that among the Douglases there was an age for loving, but that there was none for hating. It results that, feeling his weakness and isolation, the child was self-contained with a strength beyond his years, and, humble and submissive in appearance, only awaited the moment when, a grown-up young man, he could leave Lochleven, and perhaps avenge himself for the proud protection of those who dwelt there. But the feelings that we have just expressed did not extend to all the members of the family: as much as from the bottom of his heart the little Douglas detested William and his mother, so much he loved

George, the second of Lady Lochleven's sons, of whom we have not yet spoken, because, being away from the castle when the queen arrived, we have not yet found an opportunity to present him to our readers.

George, who at this time might have been about twenty-five or twenty-six years old, was the second son of Lord Lochleven; but by a singular chance, that his mother's adventurous youth had caused Sir William to interpret amiss, this second son had none of the characteristic features of the Douglases—full cheeks, high colour, large ears, and red hair. The result was that poor George, who, on the contrary, had been given by nature pale cheeks, dark blue eyes, and black hair, had been since coming into the world an object of indifference to his father and of dislike to his elder brother. As to his mother, whether she were indeed in good faith surprised like Lord Douglas at this difference in race, whether she knew the cause and inwardly reproached herself, George had never been, ostensibly at least, the object of a very lively maternal affection; so the young man, followed from his childhood by a fatality that he could not explain, had sprung up like a wild shrub, full of sap and strength, but uncultivated and solitary. Besides, from the time when he was fifteen, one was accustomed to his motiveless absences, which the indifference that everyone bore him made moreover perfectly explicable; from time to time, however, he was seen to reappear at the castle, like those migratory birds which always return to the same place but only stay a moment, then take their way again without one's knowing towards what spot in the world they are directing their flight.

An instinct of misfortune in common had drawn Little Douglas to George. George, seeing the child ill-treated by everyone, had conceived an affection for him, and Little Douglas, feeling himself loved amid the atmosphere of indifference around him, turned with open arms and heart to George: it resulted from this mutual liking that one day, when the child had committed I do not know what fault, and that William Douglas raised the whip he beat his dogs

with to strike him, that George, who was sitting on a stone, sad and thoughtful, had immediately sprung up, snatched the whip from his brother's hands and had thrown it far from him. At this insult William had drawn his sword, and George his, so that these two brothers, who had hated one another for twenty years like two enemies, were going to cut one another's throats, when Little Douglas, who had picked up the whip, coming back and kneeling before William, offered him the ignominious weapon, saying—

"Strike, cousin; I have deserved it."

This behaviour of the child had caused some minutes' reflection to the two young men, who, terrified at the crime they were about to commit, had returned their swords to their scabbards and had each gone away in silence. Since this incident the friendship of George and Little Douglas had acquired new strength, and on the child's side it had become veneration.

We dwell upon all these details somewhat at length, perhaps, but no doubt our readers will pardon us when they see the use to be made of them.

This is the family, less George, who, as we have said, was absent at the time of her arrival, into the midst of which the queen had fallen, passing in a moment from the summit of power to the position of a prisoner; for from the day following her arrival Mary saw that it was by such a title she was an inmate of Lochleven Castle. In fact, Lady Douglas presented herself before her as soon as it was morning, and with an embarrassment and dislike ill disguised beneath an appearance of respectful indifference, invited Mary to follow her and take stock of the several parts of the fortress which had been chosen beforehand for her private use. She then made her go through three rooms, of which one was to serve her as bedroom, the second as sitting-room, and the third as ante-chamber; afterwards, leading the way down a spiral staircase, which looked into the great hall of the castle, its only outlet, she had crossed this hall, and had taken Mary into the garden whose trees the queen had seen topping the

high walls on her arrival: it was a little square of ground, forming a flower-bed in the midst of which was an artificial fountain. It was entered by a very low door, repeated in the opposite wall; this second door looked on to the lake, and, like all the castle doors, whose keys, however, never left the belt or the pillow of William Douglas, it was guarded night and day by a sentinel. This was now the whole domain of her who had possessed the palaces, the plains, and the mountains of an entire kingdom.

Mary, on returning to her room, found breakfast ready, and William Douglas standing near the table: he was going to fulfil about the queen the duties of carver and taster.

In spite of their hatred for Mary, the Douglases would have considered it an eternal blemish on their honour if any accident should have befallen the queen while she was dwelling in their castle; and it was in order that the queen herself should not entertain any fear in this respect that William Douglas, in his quality of lord of the manor, had not only desired to carve before the queen, but even to taste first in her presence, all the dishes served to her, as well as the water and the several wines to be brought her. This precaution saddened Mary more than it reassured her; for she understood that, while she stayed in the castle, this ceremony would prevent any intimacy at table. However, it proceeded from too noble an intention for her to impute it as a crime to her hosts: she resigned herself, then, to this company, insupportable as it was to her; only, from that day forward, she so cut short her meals that all the time she was at Lochleven her longest dinners barely lasted more than a quarter of an hour.

Two days after her arrival, Mary, on sitting down to table for breakfast, found on her plate a letter addressed to her which had been put there by William Douglas. Mary recognised Murray's handwriting, and her first feeling was one of joy; for if a ray of hope remained to her, it came from her brother, to whom she had always been perfectly kind, whom from Prior of St. Andrews she had made an earl in bestowing

on him the splendid estates which formed part of the old earldom of Murray, and to whom, which was of more importance, she had since pardoned, or pretended to pardon, the part he had taken in Rizzio's assassination.

Her astonishment was great, then, when, having opened the letter, she found in it bitter reproaches for her conduct, an exhortation to do penance, and an assurance several times repeated that she should never leave her prison. He ended his letter in announcing to her that, in spite of his distaste for public affairs, he had been obliged to accept the regency, which he had done less for his country than for his sister, seeing that it was the sole means he had of standing in the way of the ignominious trial to which the nobles wished to bring her, as author, or at least as chief accomplice, of Darnley's death. This imprisonment was then clearly a great good fortune for her, and she ought to thank Heaven for it, as an alleviation of the fate awaiting her if he had not interceded for her.

This letter was a lightning stroke for Mary: only, as she did not wish to give her enemies the delight of seeing her suffer, she contained her grief, and, turning to William Douglas—

"My lord," said she, "this letter contains news that you doubtless know already, for although we are not children by the same mother, he who writes to me is related to us in the same degree, and will not have desired to write to his sister without writing to his brother at the same time; besides, as a good son, he will have desired to acquaint his mother with the unlooked-for greatness that has befallen him."

"Yes, madam," replied William, "we know since yesterday that, for the welfare of Scotland, my brother has been named regent; and as he is a son as respectful to his mother as he is devoted to his country, we hope that he will repair the evil that for five years favourites of every sort and kind have done to both."

"It is like a good son, and at the same time like a courteous host, to go back no farther into the history of Scotland," replied Mary Stuart, "and not to make the daughter blush for

the father's errors; for I have heard say that the evil which your lordship laments was prior to the time to which you assign it, and that King James v also had formerly favourites, both male and female. It is true that they add that the ones as ill rewarded his friendship as the others his love. In this, if you are ignorant of it, my lord, you can be instructed, if he is still living, by a certain Porterfeld or Porterfield, I don't know which, understanding these names of the lower classes too ill to retain and pronounce them, but about which, in my stead, your noble mother could give you information."

With these words, Mary Stuart rose, and, leaving William Douglas crimson with rage, she returned into her bedroom, and bolted the door behind her.

All that day Mary did not come down, remaining at her window, from which she at least enjoyed a splendid view over the plains and village of Kinross; but this vast extent only contracted her heart the more, when, bringing her gaze back from the horizon to the castle, she beheld its walls surrounded on all sides by the deep waters of the lake, on whose wide surface a single boat, where Little Douglas was fishing, was rocking like a speck. For some moments Mary's eyes mechanically rested on this child, whom she had already seen upon her arrival, when suddenly a horn sounded from the Kinross side. At the same moment Little Douglas threw away his line, and began to row towards the shore whence the signal had come with skill and strength beyond his years. Mary, who had let her gaze rest on him absently, continued to follow him with her eyes, and saw him make for a spot on the shore so distant that the boat seemed to her at length but an imperceptible speck; but soon it reappeared, growing larger as it approached, and Mary could then observe that it was bringing back to the castle a new passenger, who, having in his turn taken the oars, made the little skiff fly over the tranquil water of the lake, where it left a furrow gleaming in the last rays of the sun. Very soon, flying on with the swiftness of a bird, it was near enough for Mary to see that the skilful and vigorous oarsman was a young man from twenty-five to twenty-six years of age, with long black hair, clad in a close

coat of green cloth, and wearing a Highlander's cap, adorned with an eagle's feather; then, as with his back turned to the window he drew nearer, Little Douglas, who was leaning on his shoulder, said a few words which made him turn round towards the queen: immediately Mary, with an instinctive movement rather than with the dread of being an object of idle curiosity, drew back, but not so quickly, however, but that she had been able to see the handsome pale face of the unknown, who, when she returned to the window, had disappeared behind one of the corners of the castle.

Everything is a cause of conjecture to a prisoner: it seemed to Mary that this young man's face was not unknown to her, and that he had seen her already; but though great the care with which she questioned her memory, she could not recall any distinct remembrance, so much so that the queen ended in thinking it the play of her imagination, or that some vague and distant resemblance had deceived her.

However, in spite of Mary, this idea had taken an important place in her mind: she incessantly saw this little boat skimming the water, and the young man and the child who were in it drawing near her, as if to bring her help. It followed that, although there had been nothing real in all these captive's dreams, she slept that night a calmer sleep than she had yet done since she had been in Lochleven Castle.

Next day, on rising, Mary ran to her window: the weather was fine, and everything seemed to smile on her, the water, the heavens and the earth. But, without being able to account for the restraining motive, she did not want to go down into the garden before breakfast. When the door opened, she turned quickly round: it was, as on the day before, William Douglas, who came to fulfil his duty as taster.

The breakfast was a short and silent one; then, as soon as Douglas had withdrawn, Mary descended in her turn: in crossing the courtyard she saw two horses ready saddled, which pointed to the near departure of a master and a squire. Was it the young man with the black hair already setting out again? This is what Mary did not dare or did not wish to ask. She con-

sequently went her way, and entered the garden: at the first glance she took it in in its full extent; it was deserted.

Mary walked there a moment; then, soon tiring of the promenade, she went up again to her room: in passing back through the courtyard she had noticed that the horses were no longer there. Directly she returned into her apartment, she went then to the window to see if she could discover anything upon the lake to guide her in her conjectures: a boat was in fact receding, and in this boat were the two horses and the two horsemen; one was William Douglas, the other a simple squire from the house.

Mary continued watching the boat until it had touched the shore. Arrived there, the two horsemen got out, disembarked their horses, and went away at full gallop, taking the same road by which the queen had come; so that, as the horses were prepared for a long journey, Mary thought that William Douglas was going to Edinburgh. As to the boat, scarcely had it landed its two passengers on the opposite shore than it returned towards the castle.

At that moment Mary Seyton announced to the queen that Lady Douglas was asking permission to visit her.

It was the second time, after long hatred on Lady Douglas's part and contemptuous indifference on the queen's, that the two women were to be face to face; therefore the queen, with that instinctive impulse of coquetry which urges women, in whatever situation they find themselves, to desire to be beautiful, above all for women, made a sign to Mary Seyton, and, going to a little mirror fastened to the wall in a heavy Gothic frame, she arranged her curls, and readjusted the lace of her collar; then, having seated herself in the pose most favourable to her, in a great arm-chair, the only one in her sitting-room, she said smilingly to Mary Seyton that she might admit Lady Douglas, who was immediately introduced.

Mary's expectation was not disappointed: Lady Douglas, in spite of her hatred for James v's daughter, and mistress of herself as she thought she was, could not prevent herself from showing by a movement of surprise the impression that this

marvellous beauty was making on her: she thought she should find Mary crushed by her unhappiness, pallid from her fatigues, humbled by captivity, and she saw her calm, lovely, and haughty as usual. Mary perceived the effect that she was producing, and addressing herself with an ironical smile partly to Mary Seyton, who was leaning on the back of her chair, and partly to her who was paying her this unforeseen visit—

"We are fortunate to-day," said she, "for we are going as it seems to enjoy the society of our good hostess, whom we thank besides for having kindly maintained with us the empty ceremony of announcing herself—a ceremony with which, having the keys of our apartment, she could have dispensed."

"If my presence is inconvenient to your grace," replied Lady Lochleven, "I am all the more sorry for it, as circumstances will oblige me to impose it twice daily, at least during the absence of my son, who is summoned to Edinburgh by the regent; this is of what I came to inform your grace, not with the empty ceremonial of the court, but with the consideration which Lady Lochleven owes to everyone who has received hospitality in her castle."

"Our good hostess mistakes our intention," Mary answered, with affected good-nature, "and the regent himself can bear witness to the pleasure we have always had in bringing nearer to us the persons who can recall to us, even indirectly, our well-beloved father, James v. It will be therefore unjustly that Lady Douglas will interpret in a manner disagreeable to herself our surprise at seeing her; and the hospitality that she offers us so obligingly does not promise us, in spite of her goodwill, sufficient distractions that we should deprive ourselves of those that her visits cannot fail to procure us."

"Unfortunately, madam," replied Lady Lochleven, whom Mary was keeping standing before her, "whatever pleasure I myself derive from these visits, I shall be obliged to deprive myself of, except at the times I have mentioned. I am now too old to bear fatigue, and I have always been too proud to endure sarcasms."

"Really, Seyton," cried Mary, seeming to recollect herself,

"we had not dreamed that Lady Lochleven, having won her right to a stool at the court of the king my father, would have need to preserve it in the prison of the queen his daughter. Bring forward a seat, Seyton, that we be not deprived so soon, and by a failure of memory on our part, of our gracious hostess's company; or even," went on Mary, rising and pointing out her own seat to Lady Lochleven, who was making a motion to withdraw, "if a stool does not suit you, my lady, take this easy-chair: you will not be the first member of your family to sit in my place."

At this last allusion, which recalled to her Murray's usurpation, Lady Lochleven was no doubt about to make some exceedingly bitter reply, when the young man with the dark hair appeared on the threshold, without being announced, and advancing towards Lady Lochleven, without saluting Mary—

"Madam," said he, bowing to the former, "the boat which took my brother has just returned, and one of the men in it is charged with a pressing charge that Lord William forgot to make to you yourself."

Then, saluting the old lady with the same respect, he immediately went out of the room, without even glancing at the queen, who, hurt by this impertinence, turned round to Mary Seyton, and with her usual calm—

"What have they told us, Seyton, of injurious rumours which were spread about our worthy hostess *à propos* of a child with a pale face and dark hair? If this child, as I have every reason to believe, has become the young man who just went out of the room, I am ready to affirm to all the incredulous that he is a true Douglas, if not for courage, of which we cannot judge, then for insolence, of which he has just given us proofs. Let us return, darling," continued the queen, leaning on Mary Seyton's arm; "for our good hostess, out of courtesy, might think herself obliged to keep us company longer, while we know that she is impatiently awaited elsewhere."

With these words, Mary went into her bedroom, while the old lady, still quite stunned with the shower of sarcasms that he queen had rained on her, withdrew, murmuring, "Yes,

yes, he is a Douglas, and with God's help he will prove it, I hope."

The queen had had strength as long as she was sustained by her enemy's presence, but scarcely was she alone than she sank into a chair, and no longer having any witness of her weakness than Mary Seyton, burst into tears. Indeed, she had just been cruelly wounded: till then no man had come near her who had not paid homage either to the majesty of her rank or to the beauty of her countenance. But precisely he, on whom she had reckoned, without knowing why, with instinctive hopes, insulted her at one and the same time in her double pride of queen and woman: thus she remained shut up till evening.

At dinner-time, just as Lady Lochleven had informed Mary, she ascended to the queen's apartment, in her dress of honour, and preceding four servants who were carrying the several dishes composing the prisoner's repast, and who, in their turn, were followed by the old castle steward, having, as on days of great ceremony, his gold chain round his neck and his ivory stick in his hand. The servants placed the dishes on the table, and waited in silence for the moment when it should please the queen to come out of her room; but at this moment the door opened, and in place of the queen Mary Seyton appeared.

"Madam," said she on entering, "her grace was indisposed during the day, and will take nothing this evening; it will be useless, then, for you to wait longer."

"Permit me to hope," replied Lady Lochleven, "that she will change her decision; in any case, see me perform my office."

At these words, a servant handed Lady Lochleven bread and salt on a silver salver, while the old steward, who in the absence of William Douglas fulfilled the duties of carver, served to her on a plate of the same metal a morsel from each of the dishes that had been brought; then, this transaction ended—

"So the queen will not appear to-day?" Lady Lochleven inquired.

"It is her Majesty's resolve," replied Mary Seyton.

"Our presence is then needless," said the old lady; "but in any case the table is served, and if her grace should have need of anything else, she would have but to name it."

With these words, Lady Lochleven, with the same stiffness and the same dignity with which she had come, withdrew, followed by her four servants and her steward.

As Lady Lochleven had foreseen, the queen, yielding to the entreaties of Mary Seyton, came out of her room at last, towards eight o'clock in the evening, sat down to table, and, served by the only maid of honour left her, ate a little; then, getting up, she went to the window.

It was one of those magnificent summer evenings on which the whole of nature seems making holiday: the sky was studded with stars, which were reflected in the lake, and in their midst, like a more fiery star, the flame of a chafing-dish shone, burning at the stern of a little boat: the queen, by the gleam of the light it shed, perceived George Douglas and Little Douglas, who were fishing. However great her wish to profit by this fine evening to breathe the pure night air, the sight of this young man who had so grossly insulted her this very day made such a keen impression on her that she shut her window directly, and, retiring into her room, went to bed, and made her companion in captivity read several prayers aloud; then, not being able to sleep, so greatly was she agitated, she rose, and throwing on a mantle went again to the window: the boat had disappeared.

Mary spent part of the night gazing into the immensity of the heavens, or into the depths of the lake; but in spite of the nature of the thoughts agitating her, she none the less found very great physical alleviation in contact with this pure air and in contemplation of this peaceful and silent night: thus she awoke next day calmer and more resigned. Unfortunately, the sight of Lady Lochleven, who presented herself at breakfast-time, to fulfil her duties as taster, brought back her irritability. Perhaps, however, things would have gone smoothly if Lady Lochleven, instead of remaining standing by the sideboard, had withdrawn after having tasted the various dishes of the courses; but this insisting on remaining throughout the

meal, which was at bottom but a mark of respect, seemed to the queen unbearable tyranny.

"Darling," said she, speaking to Mary Seyton, "have you already forgotten that our good hostess complained yesterday of the fatigue she felt in standing? Bring her, then, one of the two stools which compose our royal furniture, and take care that it is not the one with the leg broken."

"If the furniture of Lochleven Castle is in such bad condition, madam," the old lady replied, "it is the fault of the kings of Scotland: the poor Douglases for nearly a century have had such a small part of their sovereigns' favour, that they have not been able to keep up the splendour of their ancestors to the level of that of private individuals, and because there was in Scotland a certain musician, as I am informed, who spent their income for a whole year in one month."

"Those who know how to take so well, my lady," the queen answered, "have no need of being given to: it seems to me the Douglases have lost nothing by waiting, and there is not a younger son of this noble family who might not aspire to the highest alliances; it is truly vexatious that our sister the Queen of England has taken a vow of virginity, as is stated."

"Or rather," interrupted Lady Lochleven, "that the Queen of Scotland is not a widow by her third husband. But," continued the old lady, pretending to recollect herself, "I do not say that to reproach your grace. Catholics look upon marriage as a sacrament, and on this head receive it as often as they can."

"This, then," returned Mary, "is the difference between them and the Huguenots; for they, not having the same respect for it, think it is allowed them to dispense with it in certain circumstances."

At this terrible sarcasm Lady Lochleven took a step towards Mary Stuart, holding in her hand the knife which she had just been using to cut off a piece of the meat brought her to taste; but the queen rose up with so great a calm and with such majesty, that either from involuntary respect or shame of her first impulse, she let fall the weapon she was holding, and not

finding anything sufficiently strong in reply to express her feelings, she signed to the servants to follow her, and went out of the apartment with all the dignity that anger permitted her to summon to her aid.

Scarcely had Lady Lochleven left the room than the queen sat down again, joyful and triumphant at the victory she had just gained, and ate with a better appetite than she had yet done since she was a prisoner, while Mary Seyton deplored in a low tone and with all possible respect this fatal gift of repartee that Mary had received, and which, with her beauty, was one of the causes of all her misfortunes; but the queen did nothing but laugh at all her observations, saying she was curious to see the figure her good hostess would cut at dinner-time.

After breakfast, the queen went down into the garden: her satisfied pride had restored some of her cheerfulness, so much so that, seeing, while crossing the hall, a mandolin lying forgotten on a chair, she told Mary Seyton to take it, to see, she said, if she could recall her old talent. In reality the queen was one of the best musicians of the time, and played admirably, says Brantôme, on the lute and the viol d'amour, an instrument much resembling the mandolin. Mary Seyton obeyed.

Arrived in the garden, the queen sat down in the deepest shade, and there, having tuned her instrument, she at first drew from it lively and light tones, which soon darkened little by little, at the same time that her countenance assumed a hue of deep melancholy. Mary Seyton looked at her with uneasiness, although for a long time she had been used to these sudden changes in her mistress's humour, and she was about to ask the reason of this gloomy veil suddenly spread over her face, when, regulating her harmonies, Mary began to sing in a low voice, and as if for herself alone, the following verses:—

"Caverns, meadows, plains and mounts,
Lands of tree and stone,
Rivers, rivulets and founts,
By which I stray alone,

Bewailing as I go,
With tears that overflow,
Sing will I
The miserable woe
That bids me grieve and sigh.

Ay, but what is here to lend
Ear to my lament?
What is here can comprehend
My dull discontent?
Neither grass nor reed,
Nor the ripples heed,
Flowing by,
While the stream with speed
Hastens from my eye.

Vainly does my wounded heart
Hope, alas, to heal;
Seeking, to allay its smart,
Things that cannot feel.
Better should my pain
Bitterly complain,
Crying shrill,
To thee who dost constrain
My spirit to such ill.

Goddess, who shalt never die,
List to what I say;
Thou who makest me to lie
Weak beneath thy sway,
If my life must know
Ending at thy blow,
Cruellest!
Own it perished so
But at thy behest.

Lo! my face may all men see
Slowly pine and fade,
E'en as ice doth melt and flee
Near a furnace laid.
Yet the burning ray
Wasting me away—
Passion's glow,
Wakens no display
Of pity for my woe.

Yet does every neighbour tree,
Every rocky wall,
This my sorrow know and see;
So, in brief, doth all
Nature know aright
This my sorry plight;
Thou alone
Takest thy delight
To hear me cry and moan.

But if it be thy will,
To see tormented still
Wretched me,
Then let my woful ill
Immortal be."

This last verse died away as if the queen were exhausted, and at the same time the mandolin slipped from her hands, and would have fallen to the ground had not Mary Seyton thrown herself on her knees and prevented it. The young girl remained thus at her mistress's feet for some time, gazing at her silently, and as she saw that she was losing herself more and more in gloomy reverie—

"Have those lines brought back to your Majesty some sad remembrance?" she asked hesitatingly.

"Oh yes," answered the queen; "they reminded me of the unfortunate being who composed them."

"And may I, without indiscretion, inquire of your grace who is their author?"

"Alas! he was a noble, brave, and handsome young man, with a faithful heart and a hot head, who would defend me to-day, if I had defended him then; but his boldness seemed to me rashness, and his fault a crime. What was to be done? I did not love him. Poor Chatelard! I was very cruel to him."

"But you did not prosecute him, it was your brother; you did not condemn him, the judges did."

"Yes, yes; I know that he too was Murray's victim, and that is no doubt the reason that I am calling him to mind just now. But I was able to pardon him, Mary, and I was inflexible; I let ascend the scaffold a man whose only crime was in loving

me too well; and now I am astonished and complain of being abandoned by everyone. Listen, darling, there is one thing that terrifies me: it is, that when I search within myself I find that I have not only deserved my fate, but even that God did not punish me severely enough."

"What strange thoughts for your grace!" cried Mary; "and see where those unlucky lines which returned to your mind have led you, the very day when you were beginning to recover a little of your cheerfulness."

"Alas!" replied the queen, shaking her head and uttering a deep sigh, "for six years very few days have passed that I have not repeated those lines to myself, although it may be for the first time to-day that I repeat them aloud. He was a Frenchman too, Mary: they have exiled from me, taken or killed all who came to me from France. Do you remember that vessel which was swallowed up before our eyes when we came out of Calais harbour? I exclaimed then that it was a sad omen: you all wanted to reassure me. Well, who was right, now, you or I?"

The queen was in one of those fits of sadness for which tears are the sole remedy; so Mary Seyton, perceiving that not only would every consolation be vain, but also unseasonable, far from continuing to react against her mistress's melancholy, fully agreed with her: it followed that the queen, who was suffocating, began to weep, and that her tears brought her comfort; then little by little she regained self-control, and this crisis passed as usual, leaving her firmer and more resolute than ever, so that when she went up to her room again it was impossible to read the slightest alteration in her countenance.

The dinner-hour was approaching, and Mary, who in the morning was looking forward impatiently to the enjoyment of her triumph over Lady Lochleven, now saw her advance with uneasiness: the mere idea of again facing this woman, whose pride one was always obliged to oppose with insolence, was, after the moral fatigues of the day, a fresh weariness. So she decided not to appear for dinner, as on the day before: she

was all the more glad she had taken this resolution, that this time it was not Lady Lochleven who came to fulfil the duties enjoined on a member of the family to make the queen easy, but George Douglas, whom his mother in her displeasure at the morning's scene sent to replace her. Thus, when Mary Seyton told the queen that she saw the young man with dark hair cross the courtyard on his way to her, Mary still further congratulated herself on her decision; for this young man's insolence had wounded her more deeply than all his mother's haughty insults. The queen was not a little astonished, then, when in a few minutes Mary Seyton returned and informed her that George Douglas, having sent away the servants, desired the honour of speaking to her on a matter of importance. At first the queen refused; but Mary Seyton told her that the young man's air and manner this time were so different from what she had seen two days before, that she thought her mistress would be wrong to refuse his request.

The queen rose then, and with the pride and majesty habitual to her, entered the adjoining room, and, having taken three steps, stopped with a disdainful air, waiting for George to address her.

Mary Seyton had spoken truly: George Douglas was now another man. To-day he seemed to be as respectful and timid as the preceding day he had seemed haughty and proud. He, in his turn, made a step towards the queen; but seeing Mary Seyton standing behind her—

"Madam," said he, "I wished to speak with your Majesty alone: shall I not obtain this favour?"

"Mary Seyton is not a stranger to me, sir: she is my sister, my friend; she is more than all that, she is my companion in captivity."

"And by all these claims, madam, I have the utmost veneration for her; but what I have to tell you cannot be heard by other ears than yours. Thus, madam, as the opportunity furnished now may perhaps never present itself again, in the name of what is dearest to you, grant me what I ask."

There was such a tone of respectful prayer in George's voice

that Mary turned to the young girl, and, making her a friendly sign with her hand—

"Go, then, darling," said she; "but be easy, you will lose nothing by not hearing. Go."

Mary Seyton withdrew; the queen smilingly looked after her, till the door was shut; then, turning to George—

"Now, sir," said she, "we are alone, speak."

But George, instead of replying, advanced to the queen, and, kneeling on one knee, drew from his breast a paper which he presented to her. Mary took it with amazement, unfolded it, glancing at Douglas, who remained in the same posture, and read as follows:—

"We, earls, lords, and barons, in consideration that our queen is detained at Lochleven, and that her faithful subjects cannot have access to her person; seeing, on the other hand, that our duty pledges us to provide for her safety, promise and swear to employ all reasonable means which will depend on us to set her at liberty again on conditions compatible with the honour of her Majesty, the welfare of the kingdom, and even with the safety of those who keep her in prison, provided that they consent to give her up; that if they refuse, we declare that we are prepared to make use of ourselves, our children, our friends, our servants, our vassals, our goods, our persons, and our lives, to restore her to liberty, to procure the safety of the prince, and to co-operate in punishing the late king's murderers. If we are assailed for this intent, whether as a body or in private, we promise to defend ourselves, and to aid one another, under pain of infamy and perjury. So may God help us.

"Given with our own hands at Dumbarton,

"St. Andrews, Argyll, Huntly, Arbroath, Galloway, Ross, Fleming, Herries, Stirling, Kilwinning, Hamilton, and Saint-Clair, Knight."

"And Seyton!" cried Mary, "among all these signatures, I do not see that of my faithful Seyton."

Douglas, still kneeling, drew from his breast a second paper, and presented it to the queen with the same marks of respect. It contained only these few words:—

"Trust George Douglas; for your Majesty has no more devoted friend in the entire kingdom. SEYTON."

Mary lowered her eyes to Douglas with an expression which was hers only; then, giving him her hand to raise him—

"Ah!" said she, with a sigh more of joy than of sadness, "now I see that God, in spite of my faults, has not yet abandoned me. But how is it, in this castle, that you, a Douglas . . . oh! it is incredible!"

"Madam," replied George, "seven years have passed since I saw you in France for the first time, and for seven years I have loved you." Mary moved; but Douglas put forth his hand and shook his head with an air of such profound sadness, that she understood that she might hear what the young man had to say. He continued: "Reassure yourself, madam; I should never have made this confession if, while explaining my conduct to you, this confession would not have given you greater confidence in me. Yes, for seven years I have loved you, but as one loves a star that one can never reach, a madonna to whom one can only pray; for seven years I have followed you everywhere without your ever having paid attention to me, without my saying a word or making a gesture to attract your notice. I was on the knight of Mévillon's galley when you crossed to Scotland; I was among the regent's soldiers when you beat Huntly; I was in the escort which accompanied you when you went to see the sick king at Glasgow; I reached Edinburgh an hour after you had left it for Lochleven; and then it seemed to me that my mission was revealed to me for the first time, and that this love for which, till then, I had reproached myself as a crime, was on the contrary a favour from God. I learned that the lords were assembled at Dumbarton: I flew thither. I pledged my name, I pledged my honour, I pledged my life; and I obtained from them, thanks

to the facility I had for coming into this fortress, the happiness of bringing you the paper they have just signed. Now, madam, forget all I have told you, except the assurance of my devotion and respect: forget that I am near you; I am used to not being seen: only, if you have need of my life, make a sign; for seven years my life has been yours."

"Alas!" replied Mary, "I was complaining this morning of no longer being loved, and I ought to complain, on the contrary, that I am still loved; for the love that I inspire is fatal and mortal. Look back, Douglas, and count the tombs that, young as I am, I have already left on my path—Francis II, Chatelard, Rizzio, Darnley. . . . Oh! to attach one's self to my fortunes more than love is needed now; heroism and devotion are requisite so much the more that, as you have said, Douglas, it is love without any possible reward. Do you understand?"

"Oh, madam, madam," answered Douglas, "is it not reward beyond my deserts to see you daily, to cherish the hope that liberty will be restored to you through me, and to have at least, if I do not give it you, the certainty of dying in your sight?"

"Poor young man!" murmured Mary, her eyes raised to heaven, as if she were reading there beforehand the fate awaiting her new defender.

"Happy Douglas, on the contrary," cried George, seizing the queen's hand and kissing it with perhaps still more respect than love, "happy Douglas! for in obtaining a sigh from your Majesty he has already obtained more than he hoped."

"And upon what have you decided with my friends?" said the queen, raising Douglas, who till then had remained on his knees before her.

"Nothing yet," George replied; "for we scarcely had time to see one another. Your escape, impossible without me, is difficult even with me; and your Majesty has seen that I was obliged publicly to fail in respect, to obtain from my mother the confidence which gives me the good fortune of seeing you to-day: if this confidence on my mother's or my brother's part

ever extends to giving up to me the castle keys, then you are saved! Let your Majesty not be surprised at anything, then: in the presence of others, I shall ever be always a Douglas, that is an enemy; and except your life be in danger, madam, I shall not utter a word, I shall not make a gesture which might betray the faith that I have sworn you; but, on your side, let your grace know well, that present or absent, whether I am silent or speak, whether I act or remain inert, all will be in appearance only, save my devotion. Only," continued Douglas, approaching the window and showing to the queen a little house on Kinross hill,—"only, look every evening in that direction, madam, and so long as you see a light shine there, your friends will be keeping watch for you, and you need not lose hope."

"Thanks, Douglas, thanks," said the queen; "it does one good to meet with a heart like yours from time to time—oh! thanks."

"And now, madam," replied the young man, "I must leave your Majesty; to remain longer with you would be to raise suspicions, and a single doubt of me, think of it well, madam, and that light which is your sole beacon is extinguished, and all returns into night."

With these words, Douglas bowed more respectfully than he had yet done, and withdrew, leaving Mary full of hope, and still more full of pride; for this time the homage that she had just received was certainly for the woman and not for the queen.

As the queen had told him, Mary Seyton was informed of everything, even the love of Douglas, and the two women impatiently awaited the evening to see if the promised star would shine on the horizon. Their hope was not in vain: at the appointed time the beacon was lit. The queen trembled with joy, for it was the confirmation of her hopes, and her companion could not tear her from the window, where she remained with her gaze fastened on the little house in Kinross. At last she yielded to Mary Seyton's prayers, and consented to go to bed; but twice in the night she rose noiselessly to go to the window:

the light was always shining, and was not extinguished till dawn, with its sisters the stars.

Next day, at breakfast, George announced to the queen the return of his brother, William Douglas: he arrived the same evening; as to himself, George, he had to leave Lochleven next morning, to confer with the nobles who had signed the declaration, and who had immediately separated to raise troops in their several counties. The queen could not attempt to good purpose any escape but at a time when she would be sure of gathering round her an army strong enough to hold the country; as to him, Douglas, one was so used to his silent disappearances and to his unexpected returns, that there was no reason to fear that his departure would inspire any suspicion.

All passed as George had said: in the evening the sound of a bugle announced the arrival of William Douglas; he had with him Lord Ruthven, the son of him who had assassinated Rizzio, and who, exiled with Morton after the murder, died in England of the sickness with which he was already attacked the day of the terrible catastrophe in which we have seen him take such a large share. He preceded by one day Lord Lindsay of Byres and Sir Robert Melville, brother of Mary's former ambassador to Elizabeth: all three were charged with a mission from the regent to the queen.

On the following day everything fell back into the usual routine, and William Douglas reassumed his duties as carver. Breakfast passed without Mary's having learned anything of George's departure or Ruthven's arrival. On rising from table she went to her window: scarcely was she there than she heard the sound of a horn echoing on the shores of the lake, and saw a little troop of horsemen halt, while waiting for the boat to come and take those who were going to the castle.

The distance was too great for Mary to recognise any of the visitors; but it was clear, from the signs of intelligence exchanged between the little troop and the inhabitants of the fortress, that the new-comers were her enemies. This was a reason why the queen, in her uneasiness, should not lose sight for a moment of the boat which was going to fetch them.

She saw only two men get into it, and immediately it put off again for the castle.

As the boat drew nearer, Mary's presentiments changed to real fears, for in one of the men coming towards her she thought she made out Lord Lindsay of Byres, the same who, a week before, had brought her to her prison. It was indeed he himself, as usual in a steel helmet without a visor, which allowed one to see his coarse face designed to express strong passions, and his long black beard with grey hairs here and there, which covered his chest: his person was protected, as if it was in time of war, with his faithful suit of armour, formerly polished and well gilded, but which, exposed without ceasing to rain and mist, was now eaten up with rust; he had slung on his back, much as one slings a quiver, a broadsword, so heavy that it took two hands to manage it, and so long that while the hilt reached the left shoulder the point reached the right spur: in a word, he was still the same soldier, brave to rashness but brutal to insolence, recognising nothing but right and force, and always ready to use force when he believed himself in the right.

The queen was so much taken up with the sight of Lord Lindsay of Byres, that it was only just as the boat reached the shore that she glanced at his companion and recognised Robert Melville: this was some consolation, for, whatever might happen, she knew that she should find in him if not ostensible at least secret sympathy. Besides, his dress, by which one could have judged him equally with Lord Lindsay, was a perfect contrast to his companion's. It consisted of a black velvet doublet, with a cap and a feather of the same hue fastened to it with a gold clasp; his only weapon, offensive or defensive, was a little sword, which he seemed to wear rather as a sign of his rank than for attack or defence. As to his features and his manners, they were in harmony with this peaceful appearance: his pale countenance expressed both acuteness and intelligence; his quick eye was mild, and his voice insinuating; his figure slight and a little bent by habit rather than by years, since he was but forty-five at this time, indicated an easy and conciliatory character.

However, the presence of this man of peace, who seemed entrusted with watching over the demon of war, could not reassure the queen, and as to get to the landing-place, in front of the great door of the castle, the boat had just disappeared behind the corner of a tower, she told Mary Seyton to go down that she might try to learn what cause brought Lord Lindsay to Lochleven, well knowing that with the force of character with which she was endowed, she need know this cause but a few minutes beforehand, whatever it might be, to give her countenance that calm and that majesty which she had always found to influence her enemies.

Left alone, Mary let her glance stray back to the little house in Kinross, her sole hope; but the distance was too great to distinguish anything; besides, its shutters remained closed all day, and seemed to open only in the evening, like the clouds, which, having covered the sky for a whole morning, scatter at last to reveal to the lost sailor a solitary star. She had remained no less motionless, her gaze always fixed on the same object, when she was drawn from this mute contemplation by the step of Mary Seyton.

"Well, darling?" asked the queen, turning round.

"Your Majesty is not mistaken," replied the messenger: "it really was Sir Robert Melville and Lord Lindsay; but there came yesterday with Sir William Douglas a third ambassador, whose name, I am afraid, will be still more odious to your Majesty than either of the two I have just pronounced."

"You deceive yourself, Mary," the queen answered: "neither the name of Melville nor that of Lindsay are odious to me. Melville's, on the contrary, is, in my present circumstances, one of those which I have most pleasure in hearing; as to Lord Lindsay's, it is doubtless not agreeable to me, but it is none the less an honourable name, always borne by men rough and wild, it is true, but incapable of treachery. Tell me, then, what is this name, Mary; for you see I am calm and prepared."

"Alas! madam," returned Mary, "calm and prepared as you may be, collect all your strength, not merely to hear this name uttered,

but also to receive in a few minutes the man who bears it; for this name is that of Lord Ruthven."

Mary Seyton had spoken truly, and this name had a terrible influence upon the queen; for scarcely had it escaped the young girl's lips than Mary Stuart uttered a cry, and turning pale, as if she were about to faint, caught hold of the window-ledge.

Mary Seyton, frightened at the effect produced by this fatal name, immediately sprang to support the queen; but she, stretching one hand towards her, while she laid the other on her heart—

"It is nothing," said she; "I shall be better in a moment. Yes, Mary, yes, as you said, it is a fatal name and mingled with one of my most bloody memories. What such men are coming to ask of me must be dreadful indeed. But no matter, I shall soon be ready to receive my brother's ambassadors, for doubtless they are sent in his name. You, darling, prevent their entering, for I must have some minutes to myself: you know me; it will not take me long."

With these words the queen withdrew with a firm step to her bedchamber.

Mary Seyton was left alone, admiring that strength of character which made of Mary Stuart, in all other respects so completely woman-like, a man in the hour of danger. She immediately went to the door to close it with the wooden bar that one passed between two iron rings, but the bar had been taken away, so that there was no means of fastening the door from within. In a moment she heard someone coming up the stairs, and guessing from the heavy, echoing step that this must be Lord Lindsay, she looked round her once again to see if she could find something to replace the bar, and finding nothing within reach, she passed her arm through the rings, resolved to let it be broken rather than allow anyone to approach her mistress before it suited her. Indeed, hardly had those who were coming up reached the landing than someone knocked violently, and a harsh voice cried—

"Come, come, open the door; open directly."

"And by what right," said Mary Seyton, "am I ordered thus insolently to open the Queen of Scotland's door?"

"By the right of the ambassador of the regent to enter everywhere in his name. I am Lord Lindsay, and I am come to speak to Lady Mary Stuart."

"To be an ambassador," answered Mary Seyton, "is not to be exempted from having oneself announced in visiting a woman, and much more a queen; and if this ambassador is, as he says, Lord Lindsay, he will await his sovereign's leisure, as every Scottish noble would do in his place."

"By St. Andrew!" cried Lord Lindsay, "open, or I will break in the door."

"Do nothing to it, my lord, I entreat you," said another voice, which Mary recognised as Melville's. "Let us rather wait for Lord Ruthven, who is not yet ready."

"Upon my soul," cried Lindsay, shaking the door, "I shall not wait a second." Then, seeing that it resisted, "Why did you tell me, then, you scamp," Lindsay went on, speaking to the steward, "that the bar had been removed?"

"It is true," replied he.

"Then," returned Lindsay, "with what is this silly wench securing the door?"

"With my arm, my lord, which I have passed through the rings, as a Douglas did for King James I, at a time when Douglases had dark hair instead of red, and were faithful instead of being traitors."

"Since you know your history so well," replied Lindsay, in a rage, "you should remember that that weak barrier did not hinder Graham, that Catherine Douglas's arm was broken like a willow wand, and that James I was killed like a dog."

"But you, my lord," responded the courageous young girl, "ought also to know the ballad that is still sung in our time—

'Now, on Robert Gra'am,
The king's destroyer, shame!
To Robert Graham cling
Shame, who destroyed our king'"

"Mary," cried the queen, who had overheard this altercation from her bedroom,—"Mary, I command you to open the door directly: do you hear?"

Mary obeyed, and Lord Lindsay entered, followed by Melville, who walked behind him, with slow steps and bent head. Arrived in the middle of the second room, Lord Lindsay stopped, and, looking round him—

"Well, where is she, then?" he asked; "and has she not already kept us waiting long enough outside, without making us wait again inside? Or does she imagine that, despite these walls and these bars, she is always queen?"

"Patience, my lord," murmured Sir Robert: "you see that Lord Ruthven has not come yet, and since we can do nothing without him, let us wait."

"Let wait who will," replied Lindsay, inflamed with anger; "but it will not be I, and wherever she may be, I shall go and seek her."

With these words, he made some steps towards Mary Stuart's bedroom; but at the same moment the queen opened the door, without seeming moved either at the visit or at the insolence of the visitors, and so lovely and so full of majesty, that each, even Lindsay himself, was silent at her appearance, and, as if in obedience to a higher power, bowed respectfully before her.

"I fear I have kept you waiting, my lord," said the queen, without replying to the ambassador's salutation otherwise than by a slight inclination of the head; "but a woman does not like to receive even enemies without having spent a few minutes over her toilet. It is true that men are less tenacious of ceremony," added she, throwing a significant glance at Lord Lindsay's rusty armour and soiled and pierced doublet. "Good-day, Melville," she continued, without paying attention to some words of excuse stammered by Lindsay; "be welcome in my prison, as you were in my palace; for I believe you as devoted to the one as to the other." Then, turning to Lindsay, who was looking interrogatively at the door, impatient as he was for Ruthven to come—

"You have there, my lord," said she, pointing to the sword he carried over his shoulder, "a faithful companion, though it is a little heavy: did you expect, in coming here, to find enemies against whom to employ it? In the contrary case, it is a strange ornament for a lady's presence. But no matter, my lord, I am too much of a Stuart to fear the sight of a sword, even if it were naked, I warn you."

"It is not out of place here, madam," replied Lindsay, bringing it forward and leaning his elbow on its cross hilt, "for it is an old acquaintance of your family."

"Your ancestors, my lord, were brave and loyal enough for me not to refuse to believe what you tell me. Besides, such a good blade must have rendered them good service."

"Yes, madam, yes, surely it has done so, but that kind of service that kings do not forgive. He for whom it was made was Archibald Bell-the-Cat, and he girded himself with it the day when, to justify his name, he went to seize in the very tent of King James III, your grandfather, his unworthy favourites, Cochran, Hummel, Leonard, and Torpichen, whom he hanged on Lauder Bridge with the halters of his soldiers' horses. It was also with this sword that he slew at one blow, in the lists, Spens of Kilspindie, who had insulted him in the presence of King James IV, counting on the protection his master accorded him, and which did not guard him against it any more than his shield, which it split in two. At his master's death, which took place two years after the defeat of Flodden, on whose battlefield he left his two sons and two hundred warriors of the name of Douglas, it passed into the hands of the Earl of Angus, who drew it from the scabbard when he drove the Hamiltons out of Edinburgh, and that so quickly and completely that the affair was called the 'sweeping of the streets.' Finally, your father James V saw it glisten in the fight of the bridge over the Tweed, when Buccleuch, stirred up by him, wanted to snatch him from the guardianship of the Douglases, and when eighty warriors of the name of Scott remained on the battlefield."

"But," said the queen, "how is it that this weapon, after such

exploits, has not remained as a trophy in the Douglas family? No doubt the Earl of Angus required a great occasion to decide him to renounce in your favour this modern Excalibur."[1]

"Yes, no doubt, madam, it was upon a great occasion," replied Lindsay, in spite of the imploring signs made by Melville, "and this will have at least the advantage of the others, in being sufficiently recent for you to remember. It was ten days ago, on the battlefield of Carberry Hill, madam, when the infamous Bothwell had the audacity to make a public challenge in which he defied to single combat whomsoever would dare to maintain that he was not innocent of the murder of the king your husband. I made him answer then, I the third, that he was an assassin. And as he refused to fight with the two others under the pretext that they were only barons, I presented myself in my turn, I who am earl and lord. It was on that occasion that the noble Earl of Morton gave me this good sword to fight him to the death. So that, if he had been a little more presumptuous, or a little less cowardly, dogs and vultures would be eating at this moment the pieces that, with the help of this good sword, I should have carved for them from that traitor's carcass."

At these words, Mary Seyton and Robert Melville looked at each other in terror, for the events that they recalled were so recent that they were, so to speak, still living in the queen's heart; but the queen, with incredible impassibility and a smile of contempt on her lips—

"It is easy, my lord," said she, "to vanquish an enemy who does not appear in the lists; however, believe me, if Mary had inherited the Stuarts' sword as she has inherited their sceptre, your sword, long as it is, would yet have seemed to you too short. But as you have only to relate to us now, my lord, what you intended doing, and not what you have done, think it fit that I bring you back to something of more reality; for I do not suppose you have given yourself the trouble to come here purely and simply to add a chapter to the little treatise *Des Rodomontades Espagnolles* by M. de Brantôme."

[1] *History of Scotland*, by Sir Walter Scott. — "The Abbot": historical part.

"You are right, madam," replied Lindsay, reddening with anger, "and you would already know the object of our mission if Lord Ruthven did not so ridiculously keep us waiting. But," added he, "have patience; the matter will not be long now, for here he is."

Indeed, at that moment they heard steps mounting the staircase and approaching the room, and at the sound of these steps, the queen, who had borne with such firmness Lindsay's insults, grew so perceptibly paler, that Melville, who did not take his eyes off her, put out his hand towards the arm-chair as if to push it towards her; but the queen made a sign that she had no need of it, and gazed at the door with apparent calm. Lord Ruthven appeared: it was the first time that she had seen the son since Rizzio had been assassinated by the father.

Lord Ruthven was both a warrior and a statesman, and at this moment his dress savoured of the two professions: it consisted of a close coat of embroidered buff leather, elegant enough to be worn as a court undress, and on which, if need were, one could buckle a cuirass, for battle: like his father, he was pale; like his father, he was to die young, and, even more than his father, his countenance wore that ill-omened melancholy by which fortune-tellers recognise those who are to die a violent death.

Lord Ruthven united in himself the polished dignity of a courtier and the inflexible character of a minister; but quite resolved as he was to obtain from Mary Stuart, even if it were by violence, what he had come to demand in the regent's name, he none the less made her, on entering, a cold but respectful greeting, to which the queen responded with a courtesy; then the steward drew up to the empty arm-chair a heavy table on which had been prepared everything necessary for writing, and at a sign from the two lords he went out, leaving the queen and her companion alone with the three ambassadors. Then the queen, seeing that this table and this arm-chair were put ready for her, sat down; and after a moment, herself breaking this silence more gloomy than any word could have been—

"My lords," said she, "you see that I wait: can it be that this message which you have to communicate to me is so terrible that two soldiers as renowned as Lord Lindsay and Lord Ruthven hesitate at the moment of transmitting it?"

"Madam," answered Ruthven, "I am not of a family, as you know, which ever hesitates to perform a duty, painful as it may be; besides, we hope that your captivity has prepared you to hear what we have to tell you on the part of the Secret Council."

"The Secret Council!" said the queen. "Instituted by me, by what right does it act without me? No matter, I am waiting for this message: I suppose it is a petition to implore my mercy for the men who have dared to reach to a power that I hold only from God."

"Madam," replied Ruthven, who appeared to have undertaken the painful *rôle* of spokesman, while Lindsay, mute and impatient, fidgeted with the hilt of his long sword, "it is distressing to me to have to undeceive you on this point: it is not your mercy that I come to ask; it is, on the contrary, the pardon of the Secret Council that I come to offer you."

"To me, my lord, to me!" cried Mary: "subjects offer pardon to their queen! Oh! it is such a new and wonderful thing, that my amazement outweighs my indignation, and that I beg you to continue, instead of stopping you there, as perhaps I ought to do."

"And I obey you so much the more willingly, madam," went on Ruthven imperturbably, "that this pardon is only granted on certain conditions, stated in these documents, destined to re-establish the tranquillity of the State, so cruelly compromised by the errors that they are going to repair."

"And shall I be permitted, my lord, to read these documents, or must I, allured by my confidence in those who present them to me, sign them with my eyes shut?"

"No, madam," Ruthven returned; "the Secret Council desire, on the contrary, that you acquaint yourself with them, for you must sign them freely."

"Read me these documents, my lord; for such a reading is, I think, included in the strange duties you have accepted."

Lord Ruthven took one of the two papers that he had in his hand, and read with the impassiveness of his usual voice the following:—

"Summoned from my tenderest youth to the government of the kingdom and to the crown of Scotland, I have carefully attended to the administration; but I have experienced so much fatigue and trouble that I no longer find my mind free enough nor my strength great enough to support the burden of affairs of State: accordingly, and as Divine favour has granted us a son whom we desire to see during our lifetime bear the crown which he has acquired by right of birth, we have resolved to abdicate, and we abdicate in his favour, by these presents, freely and voluntarily, all our rights to the crown and to the government of Scotland, desiring that he may immediately ascend the throne, as if he were called to it by our natural death, and not as the effect of our own will: and that our present abdication may have a more complete and solemn effect, and that no one should put forward the claim of ignorance, we give full powers to our trusty and faithful cousins, the lords Lindsay of Byres and William Ruthven, to appear in our name before the nobility, the clergy, and the burgesses of Scotland, of whom they will convoke an assembly at Stirling, and to there renounce, publicly and solemnly, on our part, all our claims to the crown and to the government of Scotland.

"Signed freely and as the testimony of one of our last royal wishes, in our castle of Lochleven, the June 1567." (The date was left blank.)

There was a moment's silence after this reading, then—

"Did you hear, madam?" asked Ruthven.

"Yes," replied Mary Stuart,—"yes, I have heard rebellious words that I have not understood, and I thought that my ears, that one has tried to accustom for some time to a strange language, still deceived me, and that I have thought for your

honour, my lord William Ruthven, and my lord Lindsay of Byres."

"Madam," answered Lindsay, out of patience at having kept silence so long, "our honour has nothing to do with the opinion of a woman who has so ill known how to watch over her own."

"My lord!" said Melville, risking a word.

"Let him speak, Robert," returned the queen. "We have in our conscience armour as well tempered as that with which Lord Lindsay is so prudently covered, although, to the shame of justice, we no longer have a sword. Continue, my lord," the queen went on, turning to Lord Ruthven: "is this all that my subjects require of me? A date and a signature? Ah! doubtless it is too little; and this second paper, which you have kept in order to proceed by degrees, probably contains some demand more difficult to grant than that of yielding to a child scarcely a year old a crown which belongs to me by birthright, and to abandon my sceptre to take a distaff."

"This other paper," replied Ruthven, without letting himself be intimidated by the tone of bitter irony adopted by the queen, "is the deed by which your Grace confirms the decision of the Secret Council which has named your beloved brother, the Earl of Murray, regent of the kingdom."

"Indeed!" said Mary. "The Secret Council thinks it needs my confirmation to an act of such slight importance? And my beloved brother, to bear it without remorse, needs that it should be I who add a fresh title to those of Earl of Mar and of Murray that I have already bestowed on him? But one cannot desire anything more respectful and touching than all this, and I should be very wrong to complain. My lords," continued the queen, rising and changing her tone, "return to those who have sent you, and tell them that to such demands Mary Stuart has no answer to give."

"Take care, madam," responded Ruthven; "for I have told you it is only on these conditions that your pardon can be granted you."

"And if I refuse this generous pardon," asked Mary, "what will happen?"

"I cannot pronounce beforehand, madam; but your Grace has enough knowledge of the laws, and above all of the history of Scotland and England, to know that murder and adultery are crimes for which more than one queen has been punished with death."

"And upon what proofs could such a charge be founded, my lord? Pardon my persistence, which takes up your precious time; but I am sufficiently interested in the matter to be permitted such a question."

"The proof, madam?" returned Ruthven. "There is but one, I know; but that one is unexceptionable: it is the precipitate marriage of the widow of the assassinated with the chief assassin, and the letters which have been handed over to us by James Balfour, which prove that the guilty persons had united their adulterous hearts before it was permitted them to unite their bloody hands."

"My lord," cried the queen, "do you forget a certain repast given in an Edinburgh tavern, by this same Bothwell, to those same noblemen who treat him to-day as an adulterer and a murderer; do you forget that at the end of that meal, and on the same table at which it had been given, a paper was signed to invite that same woman, to whom to-day you make the haste of her new wedding a crime, to leave off a widow's mourning to re-assume a marriage robe? for if you have forgotten it, my lords, which would do no more honour to your sobriety than to your memory, I undertake to show it to you, I who have preserved it; and perhaps if we search well we shall find among the signatures the names of Lindsay of Byres and William Ruthven. O noble Lord Herries," cried Mary, "loyal James Melville, you alone were right then, when you threw yourselves at my feet, entreating me not to conclude this marriage, which, I see it clearly to-day, was only a trap set for an ignorant woman by perfidious advisers or disloyal lords."

"Madam," cried Ruthven, in spite of his cold impassivity beginning to lose command of himself, while Lindsay was giving still more noisy and less equivocal signs of impatience, "madam, all these discussions are beside our aim: I beg you to return

to it, then, and inform us if, your life and honour guaranteed, you consent to abdicate the crown of Scotland."

"And what safeguard should I have that the promises you here make me will be kept?"

"Our word, madam," proudly replied Ruthven.

"Your word, my lord, is a very feeble pledge to offer, when one so quickly forgets one's signature: have you not some trifle to add to it, to make me a little easier than I should be with it alone?"

"Enough, Ruthven, enough!" cried Lindsay. "Do you not see that for an hour this woman answers our proposals only by insults?"

"Yes, let us go," said Ruthven; "and thank yourself only, madam, for the day when the thread breaks which holds the sword suspended over your head."

"My lords," cried Melville, "my lords, in Heaven's name, a little patience, and forgive something to her who, accustomed to command, is to-day forced to obey."

"Very well," said Lindsay, turning round, "stay with her, then, and try to obtain by your smooth words what is refused to our frank and loyal demand. In a quarter of an hour we shall return: let the answer be ready in a quarter of an hour!"

With these words, the two noblemen went out, leaving Melville with the queen; and one could count their footsteps, from the noise that Lindsay's great sword made, in resounding on each step of the staircase.

Scarcely were they alone than Melville threw himself at the queen's feet.

"Madam," said he, "you remarked just now that Lord Herries and my brother had given your Majesty advice that you repented not having followed; well, madam, reflect on that I in my turn give you; for it is more important than the other, for you will regret with still more bitterness not having listened to it. Ah! you do not know what may happen, you are ignorant of what your brother is capable."

"It seems to me, however," returned the queen, "that he has just instructed me on that head: what more will he do than

he has done already? A public trial! Oh! it is all I ask: let me only plead my cause, and we shall see what judges will dare to condemn me."

"But that is what they will take good care not to do, madam; for they would be mad to do it when they keep you here in this isolated castle, in the care of your enemies, having no witness but God, who avenges crime, but who does not prevent it. Recollect, madam, what Machiavelli has said, 'A king's tomb is never far from his prison.' You come of a family in which one dies young, madam, and almost always of a sudden death: two of your ancestors perished by steel, and one by poison."

"Oh, if my death were sudden and easy," cried Mary, "yes, I should accept it as an expiation for my faults; for if I am proud when I compare myself with others, Melville, I am humble when I judge myself. I am unjustly accused of being an accomplice of Darnley's death, but I am justly condemned for having married Bothwell."

"Time presses, madam; time presses," cried Melville, looking at the sand, which, placed on the table, was marking the time. "They are coming back, they will be here in a minute; and this time you must give them an answer. Listen, madam, and at least profit by your situation as much as you can. You are alone here with one woman, without friends, without protection, without power: an abdication signed at such a juncture will never appear to your people to have been freely given, but will always pass as having been torn from you by force; and if need be, madam, if the day comes when such a solemn declaration is worth something, well, then you will have two witnesses of the violence done you: the one will be Mary Seyton, and the other," he added in a low voice and looking uneasily about him, —"the other will be Robert Melville."

Hardly had he finished speaking when the footsteps of the two nobles were again heard on the staircase, returning even before the quarter of an hour had elapsed; a moment afterwards the door opened, and Ruthven appeared, while over his shoulder was seen Lindsay's head.

"Madam," said Ruthven, "we have returned. Has your Grace decided? We come for your answer."

"Yes," said Lindsay, pushing aside Ruthven, who stood in his way, and advancing to the table,—"yes, an answer, clear, precise, positive, and without dissimulation."

"You are exacting, my lord," said the queen: "you would scarcely have the right to expect that from me if I were in full liberty on the other side of the lake and surrounded with a faithful escort; but between these walls, behind these bars, in the depths of this fortress, I shall not tell you that I sign voluntarily, lest you should not believe it. But no matter, you want my signature; well, I am going to give it to you. Melville, pass me the pen."

"But I hope," said Lord Ruthven, "that your Grace is not counting on using your present position one day in argument to protest against what you are going to do?"

The queen had already stooped to write, she had already set her hand to the paper, when Ruthven spoke to her. But scarcely had he done so, than she rose up proudly, and letting fall the pen, "My lord," said she, "what you asked of me just now was but an abdication pure and simple, and I was going to sign it. But if to this abdication is joined this marginal note, that I renounce of my own accord, and as judging myself unworthy, the throne of Scotland, I would not do it for the three united crowns that I have been robbed of in turn."

"Take care, madam," cried Lord Lindsay, seizing the queen's wrist with his steel gauntlet and squeezing it with all his angry strength,—"take care, for our patience is at an end, and we could easily end by breaking what would not bend."

The queen remained standing, and although a violent flush had passed like a flame over her countenance, she did not utter a word, and did not move: her eyes only were fixed with such a great expression of contempt on those of the rough baron, that he, ashamed of passion that had carried him away, let go the hand he had seized and took a step back. Then, raising her sleeve and showing the violet marks made on her arm by Lord Lindsay's steel gauntlet—

"This is what I expected, my lords," said she, "and nothing

prevents me any longer from signing; yes, I freely abdicate the throne and crown of Scotland, and there is the proof that my will has not been forced."

With these words, she took the pen and rapidly signed the two documents, held them out to Lord Ruthven, and bowing with great dignity, withdrew slowly into her room, accompanied by Mary Seyton. Ruthven looked after her, and when she had disappeared, "It doesn't matter," he said; "she has signed, and although the means you employed, Lindsay, may be obsolete enough in diplomacy, it is not the less efficacious, it seems."

"No joking, Ruthven," said Lindsay; "for she is a noble creature, and if I had dared, I should have thrown myself at her feet to ask her forgiveness."

"There is still time," replied Ruthven, "and Mary, in her present situation, will not be severe upon you: perhaps she has resolved to appeal to the judgment of God to prove her innocence, and in that case a champion such as you might well change the face of things."

"Do not joke, Ruthven," Lindsay answered a second time, with more violence than the first; "for if I were as well convinced of her innocence as I am of her crime, I tell you that no one should touch a hair of her head, not even the regent."

"The devil! my lord," said Ruthven. "I did not know you were so sensitive to a gentle voice and a tearful eye; you know the story of Achilles' lance, which healed with its rust the wounds it made with its edge: do likewise my lord, do likewise."

"Enough, Ruthven, enough," replied Lindsay; "you are like a corselet of Milan steel, which is three times as bright as the steel armour of Glasgow, but which is at the same time thrice as hard: we know one another, Ruthven, so an end to railleries or threats; enough, believe me, enough."

And after these words, Lord Lindsay went out first, followed by Ruthven and Melville, the first with his head high and affecting an air of insolent indifference, and the second, sad, his brow bent, and not even trying to disguise the painful impression which this scene had made on him.[1]

[1] *History of Scotland*, by Sir Walter Scott.—"The Abbot": historical part.

CHAPTER VI

THE queen came out of her room only in the evening, to take her place at the window which looked over the lake: at the usual time she saw the light which was henceforth her sole hope shine in the little house in Kinross; for a whole long month she had no other consolation than seeing it, every night, fixed and faithful.

At last, at the end of this time, and as she was beginning to despair of seeing George Douglas again, one morning, on opening the window, she uttered a cry. Mary Seyton ran to her, and the queen, without having strength to speak, showed her in the middle of the lake the tiny boat at anchor, and in the boat Little Douglas and George, who were absorbed in fishing, their favourite amusement. The young man had arrived the day before, and as everyone was accustomed to his unexpected returns, the sentinel had not even blown the horn, and the queen had not known that at last a friend had come.

However, she was three days yet without seeing this friend otherwise than she had just done—that is, on the lake. It is true that from morning till evening he did not leave that spot, from which he could view the queen's windows and the queen herself, when, to gaze at a wider horizon, she leaned her face against the bars. At last, on the morning of the fourth day, the queen was awakened by a great noise of dogs and horns: she immediately ran to the window, for to a prisoner everything is an event, and she saw William Douglas, who was embarking with a pack of hounds and some huntsmen. In fact, making a truce, for a day, with his gaoler's duties, to enjoy a pleasure more in harmony with his rank and birth, he was going to hunt in the woods which cover the last ridge of Ben

on your breast, count your heart-beats: if you reach the number twenty without the light reappearing, nothing is yet settled; if you only reach ten, the moment approaches; if the light does not leave you time to count beyond five, your escape is fixed for the following night; if it reappears no more, it is fixed for the same evening; then the owl's cry, repeated thrice in the courtyard, will be the signal; let down the ladder when you hear it."

"Oh, Douglas," cried the queen, "you alone could foresee and calculate everything thus. Thank you, thank you a hundred times!" And she gave him her hand to kiss.

A vivid red flushed the young man's cheeks; but almost directly mastering his emotion, he kneeled down, and, restraining the expression of that love of which he had once spoken to the queen, while promising her never more to speak of it, he took the hand that Mary extended, and kissed it with such respect that no one could have seen in this action anything but the homage of devotion and fidelity.

Then, having bowed to the queen, he went out, that a longer stay with her should not give rise to any suspicions.

At the dinner-hour Douglas brought, as he had said, a parcel of cord. It was not enough, but when evening came Mary Seyton was to unroll it and let fall the end from the window, and George would fasten the remainder to it: the thing was done as arranged, and without any mishap, an hour after the hunters had returned.

The following day George left the castle.

The queen and Mary Seyton lost no time in setting about the rope ladder, and it was finished on the third day. The same evening, the queen in her impatience, and rather to assure herself of her partisans' vigilance than in the hope that the time of her deliverance was so near, brought her lamp to the window: immediately, and as George Douglas had told her, the light in the little house at Kinross disappeared: the queen then laid her hand on her heart and counted up to twenty-two; then the light reappeared; they were ready for everything, but nothing was yet settled. For a week the queen

thus questioned the light and her heart-beats without their number changing; at last, on the eighth day, she counted only as far as ten; at the eleventh the light reappeared.

The queen believed herself mistaken: she did not dare to hope what this announced. She withdrew the lamp; then, at the end of a quarter of an hour, showed it again: her unknown correspondent understood with his usual intelligence that a fresh trial was required of him, and the light in the little house disappeared in its turn. Mary again questioned the pulsations of her heart, and, fast as it leaped, before the twelfth beat the propitious star was shining on the horizon: there was no longer any doubt; everything was settled.

Mary could not sleep all night: this persistency of her partisans inspired her with gratitude to the point of tears. The day came, and the queen several times questioned her companion to assure herself that it was not all a dream; at every sound it seemed to her that the scheme on which her liberty hung was discovered, and when, at breakfast and at dinner time, William Douglas entered as usual, she hardly dared look at him, for fear of reading on his face the announcement that all was lost.

In the evening the queen again questioned the light: it made the same answer; nothing had altered; the beacon was always one of hope.

For four days it thus continued to indicate that the moment of escape was at hand; on the evening of the fifth, before the queen had counted five beats, the light reappeared: the queen leaned upon Mary Seyton; she was nearly fainting, between dread and delight. Her escape was fixed for the next evening.

The queen tried once more, and obtained the same reply: there was no longer a doubt; everything was ready except the prisoner's courage, for it failed her for a moment, and if Mary Seyton had not drawn up a seat in time, she would have fallen prone; but, the first moment over, she collected herself as usual, and was stronger and more resolute than ever.

Till midnight the queen remained at the window, her eyes fixed on that star of good omen: at last Mary Seyton persuaded

her to go to bed, offering, if she had no wish to sleep, to read her some verses by M. Ronsard, or some chapters from the *Mer des Histoires*; but Mary had no desire now for any profane reading, and had her Hours read, making the responses as she would have done if she had been present at a mass said by a Catholic priest: towards dawn, however, she grew drowsy, and as Mary Seyton, for her part, was dropping with fatigue, she fell asleep directly in the arm-chair at the head of the queen's bed.

Next day she awoke, feeling that someone was tapping her on the shoulder: it was the queen, who had already arisen.

"Come and see, darling," said she,—"come and see the fine day that God is giving us. Oh! how alive is Nature! How happy I shall be to be once more free among those plains and mountains! Decidedly, Heaven is on our side."

"Madam," replied Mary, "I would rather see the weather less fine: it would promise us a darker night; and consider, what we need is darkness, not light."

"Listen," said the queen; "it is by this we are going to see if God is indeed for us; if the weather remains as it is, yes, you are right, He abandons us; but if it clouds over, oh! then, darling, this will be a certain proof of His protection, will it not?"

Mary Seyton smiled, nodding that she adopted her mistress's superstition; then the queen, incapable of remaining idle in her great preoccupation of mind, collected the few jewels that she had preserved, enclosed them in a casket, got ready for the evening a black dress, in order to be still better hidden in the darkness: and, these preparations made, she sat down again at the window, ceaselessly carrying her eyes from the lake to the little house in Kinross, shut up and dumb as usual.

The dinner-hour arrived: the queen was so happy that she received William Douglas with more goodwill than was her wont, and it was with difficulty she remained seated during the time the meal lasted; but she restrained herself, and William Douglas withdrew, without seeming to have noticed her agitation.

Scarcely had he gone than Mary ran to the window; she had need of air, and her gaze devoured in advance those wide horizons which she was about to cross anew; it seemed to her that once at liberty she would never shut herself up in a palace again, but would wander about the countryside continually: then, amid all these tremors of delight, from time to time she felt unexpectedly heavy at heart. She then turned round to Mary Seyton, trying to fortify her strength with hers, and the young girl kept up her hopes, but rather from duty than from conviction.

But slow as they seemed to the queen, the hours yet passed: towards the afternoon some clouds floated across the blue sky; the queen remarked upon them joyfully to her companion; Mary Seyton congratulated her upon them, not on account of the imaginary omen that the queen sought in them, but because of the real importance that the weather should be cloudy, that darkness might aid them in their flight. While the two prisoners were watching the billowy, moving vapours, the hour of dinner arrived; but it was half an hour of constraint and dissimulation, the more painful that, no doubt in return for the sort of goodwill shown him by the queen in the morning, William Douglas thought himself obliged, in his turn, to accompany his duties with fitting compliments, which compelled the queen to take a more active part in the conversation than her preoccupation allowed her; but William Douglas did not seem in any way to observe this absence of mind, and all passed as at breakfast.

Directly he had gone the queen ran to the window: the few clouds which were chasing one another in the sky an hour before had thickened and spread, and all the blue was blotted out, to give place to a hue dull and leaden as pewter. Mary Stuart's presentiments were thus realised: as to the little house in Kinross, which one could still make out in the dusk, it remained shut up, and seemed deserted.

Night fell: the light shone as usual; the queen signalled, it disappeared. Mary Stuart waited in vain; everything remained in darkness: the escape was for the same evening. The queen

heard eight o'clock, nine o'clock, and ten o'clock strike successively. At ten o'clock the sentinels were relieved; Mary Stuart heard the patrols pass beneath her windows, the steps of the watch recede: then all returned to silence. Half an hour passed away thus; suddenly the owl's cry resounded thrice, the queen recognised George Douglas's signal: the supreme moment had come.

In these circumstances the queen found all her strength revive: she signed to Mary Seyton to take away the bar and to fix the rope ladder, while, putting out the lamp, she felt her way into the bedroom to seek the casket which contained her few remaining jewels. When she came back, George Douglas was already in the room.

"All goes well, madam," said he. "Your friends await you on the other side of the lake, Thomas Warden watches at the postern, and God has sent us a dark night."

The queen, without replying, gave him her hand. George bent his knee and carried this hand to his lips; but on touching it, he felt it cold and trembling.

"Madam," said he, "in Heaven's name summon all your courage, and do not let yourself be downcast at such a moment."

"Our Lady-of-Good-Help," murmured Mary Seyton, "come to our aid!"

"Summon to you the spirit of the kings your ancestors," responded George, "for at this moment it is not the resignation of a Christian that you require, but the strength and resolution of a queen."

"Oh, Douglas! Douglas," cried Mary mournfully, "a fortune-teller predicted to me that I should die in prison and by a violent death: has not the hour of the prediction arrived?"

"Perhaps," George said, "but it is better to die as a queen than to live in this ancient castle calumniated and a prisoner."

"You are right, George," the queen answered; "but for a woman the first step is everything: forgive me." Then, after a moment's pause, "Come," said she; "I am ready."

George immediately went to the window, secured the ladder again and more firmly, then getting up on to the sill and holding to the bars with one hand, he stretched out the other to the queen, who, as resolute as she had been timid a moment before, mounted on a stool, and had already set one foot on the window-ledge, when suddenly the cry, "Who goes there?" rang out at the foot of the tower. The queen sprang quickly back, partly instinctively and partly pushed by George, who, on the contrary, leaned out of the window to see whence came this cry, which, twice again renewed, remained twice unanswered, and was immediately followed by a report and the flash of a firearm: at the same moment the sentinel on duty on the tower blew his bugle, another set going the alarm bell, and the cries, "To arms, to arms!" and "Treason, treason!" resounded throughout the castle.

"Yes, yes, treason, treason!" cried George Douglas, leaping down into the room. "Yes, the infamous Warden has betrayed us!" Then, advancing to Mary, cold and motionless as a statue, "Courage, madam," said he, "courage! Whatever happens, a friend yet remains for you in the castle; it is Little Douglas."

Scarcely had he finished speaking when the door of the queen's apartment opened, and William Douglas and Lady Lochleven, preceded by servants carrying torches and armed soldiers, appeared on the threshold: the room was immediately filled with people and light.

"Mother," said William Douglas, pointing to his brother standing before Mary Stuart and protecting her with his body, "do you believe me now? Look!"

The old lady was for a moment speechless; then finding a word at last, and taking a step forward—

"Speak, George Douglas," cried she, "speak, and clear yourself at once of the charge which weighs on your honour; say but these words, 'A Douglas was never faithless to his trust,' and I believe you."

"Yes, mother," answered William, "a Douglas! . . . but he —he is not a Douglas."

"May God grant my old age the strength needful to bear

on the part of one of my sons such a misfortune, and on the part of the other such an injury!" exclaimed Lady Lochleven. "O woman born under a fatal star," she went on, addressing the queen, "when will you cease to be, in the Devil's hands, an instrument of perdition and death to all who approach you? O ancient house of Lochleven, cursed be the hour when this enchantress crossed thy threshold!"

"Do not say that, mother, do not say that," cried George; "blessed be, on the contrary, the moment which proves that, if there are Douglases who no longer remember what they owe to their sovereigns, there are others who have never forgotten it."

"Douglas! Douglas!" murmured Mary Stuart, "did I not tell you?"

"And I, madam," said George, "what did I reply then? That it was an honour and a duty to every faithful subject of your Majesty to die for you."

"Well, die, then!" cried William Douglas, springing on his brother with raised sword, while he, leaping back, drew his, and with a movement quick as thought and eager as hatred defended himself. But at the same moment Mary Stuart darted between the two young people.

"Not another step, Lord Douglas," said she. "Sheathe your sword, George, or if you use it, let it be to go hence, and against everyone but your brother. I still have need of your life; take care of it."

"My life, like my arm and my honour, is at your service, madam, and from the moment you command it I shall preserve it for you."

With these words, rushing to the door with a violence and resolve which prevented anyone's stopping him—

"Back!" cried he to the domestics who were barring the passage; "make way for the young master of Douglas, or woe to you!"

"Stop him!" cried William. "Seize him, dead or alive! Fire upon him! Kill him like a dog!"

Two or three soldiers, not daring to disobey William, pre-

tended to pursue his brother. Then some gunshots were heard, and a voice crying that George Douglas had just thrown himself into the lake.

"And has he then escaped?" cried William.

Mary Stuart breathed again; the old lady raised her hands to Heaven.

"Yes, yes," murmured William,—"yes, thank Heaven for your son's flight; for his flight covers our entire house with shame; counting from this hour, we shall be looked upon as the accomplices of his treason."

"Have pity on me, William!" cried Lady Lochleven, wringing her hands. "Have compassion on your old mother! See you not that I am dying?"

With these words, she fell backwards, pale and tottering; the steward and a servant supported her in their arms.

"I believe, my lord," said Mary Seyton, coming forward, "that your mother has as much need of attention just now as the queen has need of repose: do you not consider it is time for you to withdraw?"

"Yes, yes," said William, "to give you time to spin fresh webs, I suppose, and to seek what fresh flies you can take in them? It is well, go on with your work; but you have just seen that it is not easy to deceive William Douglas. Play your game, I shall play mine." Then turning to the servants, "Go out, all of you," said he; "and you, mother, come."

The servants and the soldiers obeyed; then William Douglas went out last, supporting Lady Lochleven, and the queen heard him shut behind him and double-lock the two doors of her prison.

Scarcely was Mary alone, and certain that she was no longer seen or heard, than all her strength deserted her, and, sinking into an arm-chair, she burst out sobbing.

Indeed, all her courage had been needed to sustain her so far, and the sight of her enemies alone had given her this courage; but hardly had they gone than her situation appeared before her in all its fatal hardship. Dethroned, a prisoner,

without another friend in this impregnable castle than a child to whom she had scarce given attention, and who was the sole and last thread attaching her past hopes to her hopes for the future, what remained to Mary Stuart of her two thrones and her double power? Her name, that was all; her name with which, free, she had doubtless stirred Scotland, but which little by little was about to be effaced in the hearts of her adherents, and which during her lifetime oblivion was to cover perhaps as with a shroud. Such an idea was insupportable to a soul as lofty as Mary Stuart's, and to an organisation which, like that of the flowers, has need, before everything, of air, light, and sun.

Fortunately there remained to her the best beloved of her four Marys, who, always devoted and consoling, hastened to succour and comfort her; but this time it was no easy matter, and the queen let her act and speak without answering her otherwise than with sobs and tears; when suddenly, looking through the window to which she had drawn up her mistress's arm-chair—

"The light!" cried she, "madam, the light!" At the same time she raised the queen, and with arm outstretched from the window, she showed her the beacon, the eternal symbol of hope, relighted in the midst of this dark night on Kinross hill: there was no mistake possible, not a star was shining in the sky.

"Lord God, I give Thee thanks," said the queen, falling on her knees and raising her arms to heaven with a gesture of gratitude: "Douglas has escaped, and my friends still keep watch."

Then, after a fervent prayer, which restored to her a little strength, the queen re-entered her room, and, tired out by her varied successive emotions, she slept an uneasy, agitated sleep, over which the indefatigable Mary Seyton kept watch till daybreak.

As William Douglas had said, from this time forward the queen was a prisoner indeed, and permission to go down into the garden was no longer granted but under the surveillance of

two soldiers; but this annoyance seemed to her so unbearable that she preferred to give up the recreation, which, surrounded with such conditions, became a torture. So she shut herself up in her apartments, finding a certain bitter and haughty pleasure in the very excess of her misfortune.

CHAPTER VII

A WEEK after the events we have related, as nine o'clock in the evening had just sounded from the castle bell, and the queen and Mary Seyton were sitting at a table where they were working at their tapestry, a stone thrown from the courtyard passed through the window bars, broke a pane of glass, and fell into the room. The queen's first idea was to believe it accidental or an insult; but Mary Seyton, turning round, noticed that the stone was wrapped up in a paper: she immediately picked it up. The paper was a letter from George Douglas, conceived in these terms:—

"You have commanded me to live, madam: I have obeyed, and your Majesty has been able to tell, from the Kinross light, that your servants continue to watch over you. However, not to raise suspicion, the soldiers collected for that fatal night dispersed at dawn, and will not gather again till a fresh attempt makes their presence necessary. But, alas! to renew this attempt now, when your Majesty's gaolers are on their guard, would be your ruin. Let them take every precaution, then, madam; let them sleep in security, while we, we, in our devotion, shall go on watching.

"Patience and courage!"

"Brave and loyal heart!" cried Mary, "more constantly devoted to misfortune than others are to prosperity! Yes, I shall have patience and courage, and so long as that light shines I shall still believe in liberty."

This letter restored to the queen all her former courage: she had means of communication with George through Little

Douglas; for no doubt it was he who had thrown that stone. She hastened, in her turn, to write a letter to George, in which she both charged him to express her gratitude to all the lords who had signed the protestation, and begged them, in the name of the fidelity they had sworn to her, not to cool in their devotion, promising them, for her part, to await the result with that patience and courage they asked of her.

The queen was not mistaken: next day, as she was at her window, Little Douglas came to play at the foot of the tower, and, without raising his head, stopped just beneath her to dig a trap to catch birds. The queen looked to see if she were observed, and assured that that part of the courtyard was deserted, she let fall the stone wrapped in her letter: at first she feared to have made a serious error; for Little Douglas did not even turn at the noise, and it was only after a moment, during which the prisoner's heart was torn with frightful anxiety, that indifferently, and as if he were looking for something else, the child laid his hand on the stone, and without hurrying, without raising his head, without indeed giving any sign of intelligence to her who had thrown it, he put the letter in his pocket, finishing the work he had begun with the greatest calm, and showing the queen, by this coolness beyond his years, what reliance she could place in him.

From that moment the queen regained fresh hope; but days, weeks, months passed without bringing any change in her situation: winter came; the prisoner saw snow spread over the plains and mountains, and the lake afforded her, if she had only been able to pass the door, a firm road to gain the other bank; but no letter came during all this time to bring her the consoling news that they were busy about her deliverance; the faithful light alone announced to her every evening that a friend was keeping watch.

Soon Nature awoke from her death-sleep: some forward sunrays broke through the clouds of this sombre sky of Scotland; the snow melted, the lake broke its ice-crust, the first buds opened, the green turf reappeared; everything came out of its prison at the joyous approach of spring, and it was a great

grief to Mary to see that she alone was condemned to an eternal winter.

At last, one evening, she thought she observed in the motions of the light that something fresh was happening: she had so often questioned this poor flickering star, and she had so often let it count her heart-beats more than twenty times, that to spare herself the pain of disappointment, for a long time she had no longer interrogated it; however, she resolved to make one last attempt, and, almost hopeless, she put her light near the window, and immediately took it away; still, faithful to the signal, the other disappeared at the same moment, and reappeared at the eleventh heart-beat of the queen. At the same time, by a strange coincidence, a stone passing through the window fell at Mary Seyton's feet. It was, like the first, wrapped in a letter from George: the queen took it from her companion's hands, opened it, and read:—

"The moment draws near; your adherents are assembled; summon all your courage.

"To-morrow, at eleven o'clock in the evening, drop a cord from your window, and draw up the packet that will be fastened to it."

There remained in the queen's apartments the rope over and above what had served for the ladder taken away by the guards the evening of the frustrated escape: next day, at the appointed hour, the two prisoners shut up the lamp in the bedroom, so that no light should betray them, and Mary Seyton, approaching the window, let down the cord. After a minute, she felt from its movements that something was being attached to it. Mary Seyton pulled, and a rather bulky parcel appeared at the bars, which it could not pass on account of its size. Then the queen came to her companion's aid. The parcel was untied, and its contents, separately, got through easily. The two prisoners carried them into the bedroom, and, barricaded within, commenced an inventory. There were two complete suits of men's clothes in the Douglas livery. The

queen was at a loss, when she saw a letter fastened to the collar of one of the two coats. Eager to know the meaning of this enigma, she immediately opened it, and read as follows:—

"It is only by dint of audacity that her Majesty can recover her liberty: let her Majesty read this letter, then, and punctually follow, if she deign to adopt them, the instructions she will find therein.

"In the daytime the keys of the castle do not leave the belt of the old steward; when curfew is rung and he has made his rounds to make sure that all the doors are fast shut, he gives them up to William Douglas, who, if he stays up, fastens them to his sword-belt, or, if he sleeps, puts them under his pillow. For five months, Little Douglas, whom everyone is accustomed to see working at the armourer's forge of the castle, has been employed in making some like enough to the others, once they are substituted for them, for William to be deceived. Yesterday Little Douglas finished the last.

"On the first favourable opportunity that her Majesty will know to be about to present itself, by carefully questioning the light each day, Little Douglas will exchange the false keys for the true, will enter the queen's room, and will find her dressed, as well as Miss Mary Seyton, in their men's clothing, and he will go before them to lead them, by the way which offers the best chances for their escape; a boat will be prepared and will await them.

"Till then, every evening, as much to accustom themselves to these new costumes as to give them an appearance of having been worn, her Majesty and Miss Mary Seyton will dress themselves in the suits, which they must keep on from nine o'clock till midnight. Besides, it is possible that, without having had time to warn them, their young guide may suddenly come to seek them: it is urgent, then, that he find them ready.

"The garments ought to fit perfectly her Majesty and her companion, the measure having been taken on Miss Mary Fleming and Miss Mary Livingston, who are exactly their size.

"One cannot too strongly recommend her Majesty to summon to her aid on the supreme occasion the coolness and courage of which she has given such frequent proofs at other times."

The two prisoners were astounded at the boldness of this plan: at first they looked at one another in consternation, for success seemed impossible. They none the less made trial of their disguise: as George had said, it fitted each of them as if they had been measured for it.

Every evening the queen questioned the light, as George had urged, and that for a whole long month, during which each evening the queen and Mary Seyton, although the light gave no fresh tidings, arrayed themselves in their men's clothes, as had been arranged, so that they both acquired such practice that they became as familiar to them as those of their own sex.

At last, the 2nd May 1568, the queen was awakened by the blowing of a horn: uneasy as to what it announced, she slipped on a cloak and ran to the window, where Mary Seyton joined her directly. A rather numerous band of horsemen had halted on the other side of the lake, displaying the Douglas pennon, and three boats were rowing together and vying with each other to fetch the new arrivals.

This event caused the queen dismay: in her situation the least change in the castle routine was to be feared, for it might upset all the concerted plans. This apprehension redoubled when, on the boats drawing near, the queen recognised in the elder Lord Douglas the husband of Lady Lochleven and the father of William and George. The venerable knight, who was Keeper of the Marches in the north, was coming to visit his ancient manor, in which he had not set foot for three years.

It was an event for Lochleven; and, some minutes after the arrival of the boats, Mary Stuart heard the old steward's footsteps mounting the stairs; he came to announce his master's arrival to the queen, and, as it must needs be a time of rejoicing to all the castle inhabitants when its master returned, he came to invite the queen to the dinner in celebration of

the event: whether instinctively or from distaste, the queen declined.

All day long the bell and the bugle resounded: Lord Douglas, like a true feudal lord, travelled with the retinue of a prince. One saw nothing but new soldiers and servants passing and repassing beneath the queen's windows: the footmen and horsemen were wearing, moreover, a livery similar to that which the queen and Mary Seyton had received.

Mary awaited the night with impatience. The day before, she had questioned her light, and it had informed her as usual, in reappearing at her eleventh or twelfth heart-beat, that the moment of escape was near; but she greatly feared that Lord Douglas's arrival might have upset everything, and that this evening's signal could only announce a postponement. But hardly had she seen the light shine than she placed her lamp in the window; the other disappeared directly, and Mary Stuart, with terrible anxiety, began to question it. This anxiety increased when she had counted more than fifteen beats. Then she stopped, cast down, her eyes mechanically fixed on the spot where the light had been. But her astonishment was great when, at the end of a few minutes, she did not see it reappear, and when, half an hour having elapsed, everything remained in darkness. The queen then renewed her signal, but obtained no response: the escape was for the same evening.

The queen and Mary Seyton were so little expecting this issue, that, contrary to their custom, they had not put on their men's clothes that evening. They immediately flew to the queen's bedchamber, bolted the door behind them, and began to dress. They had hardly finished their hurried toilette when they heard a key turn in the lock: they immediately blew out the lamp. Light steps approached the door. The two women leaned one against the other; for they both were near falling. Someone tapped gently. The queen asked who was there, and Little Douglas's voice answered in the two first lines of an old ballad—

"Douglas, Douglas,
Tender and true."

Mary opened directly: it was the watchword agreed upon with George Douglas.

The child was without a light. He stretched out his hand and encountered the queen's: in the starlight, Mary Stuart saw him kneel down; then she felt the imprint of his lips on her fingers.

"Is your Majesty ready to follow me?" he asked in a low tone, rising.

"Yes, my child," the queen answered: "it is for this evening, then?"

"With your Majesty's permission, yes, it is for this evening."

"Is everything ready?"

"Everything."

"What are we to do?"

"Follow me everywhere."

"My God! my God!" cried Mary Stuart, "have pity on us!" Then, having breathed a short prayer in a low voice, while Mary Seyton was taking the casket in which were the queen's jewels, "I am ready," said she; "and you, darling?"

"I also," replied Mary Seyton.

"Come, then," said Little Douglas.

The two prisoners followed the child; the queen going first, and Mary Seyton after. Their youthful guide carefully shut again the door behind him, so that if a warder happened to pass he would see nothing; then he began to descend the winding stair. Half-way down, the noise of the feast reached them, a mingling of shouts of laughter, the confusion of voices, and the clinking of glasses. The queen placed her hand on her young guide's shoulder.

"Where are you leading us?" she asked him with terror.

"Out of the castle," replied the child.

"But we shall have to pass through the great hall?"

"Without a doubt; and that is exactly what George foresaw. Among the footmen, whose livery your Majesty is wearing, no one will recognise you."

"My God! my God!" the queen murmured, leaning against the wall.

"Courage, madam," said Mary Seyton in a low voice, "or we are lost."

"You are right," returned the queen; "let us go." And they started again, still led by their guide.

At the foot of the stair he stopped, and giving the queen a stone pitcher full of wine—

"Set this jug on your right shoulder, madam," said he; "it will hide your face from the guests, and your Majesty will give rise to less suspicion if carrying something. You, Miss Mary, give me that casket, and put on your head this basket of bread. Now, that's right: do you feel you have strength?"

"Yes," said the queen.

"Yes," said Mary Seyton.

"Then follow me."

The child went on his way, and after a few steps the fugitives found themselves in a kind of ante-chamber to the great hall, from which proceeded noise and light. Several servants were occupied there with different duties; not one paid attention to them, and that a little reassured the queen. Besides, there was no longer any drawing back: Little Douglas had just entered the great hall.

The guests, seated on both sides of a long table ranged according to the rank of those assembled at it, were beginning dessert, and consequently had reached the gayest moment of the repast. Moreover, the hall was so large that the lamps and candles which lighted it, multiplied as they were, left in the most favourable half-light both sides of the apartment, in which fifteen or twenty servants were coming and going. The queen and Mary Seyton mingled with this crowd, which was too much occupied to notice them, and without stopping, without slackening, without looking back, they crossed the whole length of the hall, reached the other door, and found themselves in the vestibule corresponding to the one they had passed through on coming in. The queen set down her jug there, Mary Seyton her basket, and both, still led by the child, entered a corridor at the end of which they found themselves in the

courtyard. A patrol was passing at the moment, but he took no notice of them.

The child made his way towards the garden, still followed by the two women. There, for no little while, it was necessary to try which of all the keys opened the door; it was a time of inexpressible anxiety. At last the key turned in the lock, the door opened; the queen and Mary Seyton rushed into the garden. The child closed the door behind them.

About two-thirds of the way across, Little Douglas held out his hand as a sign to them to stop; then, putting down the casket and the keys on the ground, he placed his hands together, and blowing into them, thrice imitated the owl's cry so well that it was impossible to believe that a human voice was uttering the sounds; then, picking up the casket and the keys, he kept on his way on tiptoe and with an attentive ear. On getting near the wall, they again stopped, and after a moment's anxious waiting they heard a groan, then something like the sound of a falling body. Some seconds later the owl's cry was answered by a tu-whit-tu-whoo.

"It is over," Little Douglas said calmly; "come."

"What is over?" asked the queen; "and what is that groan we heard?"

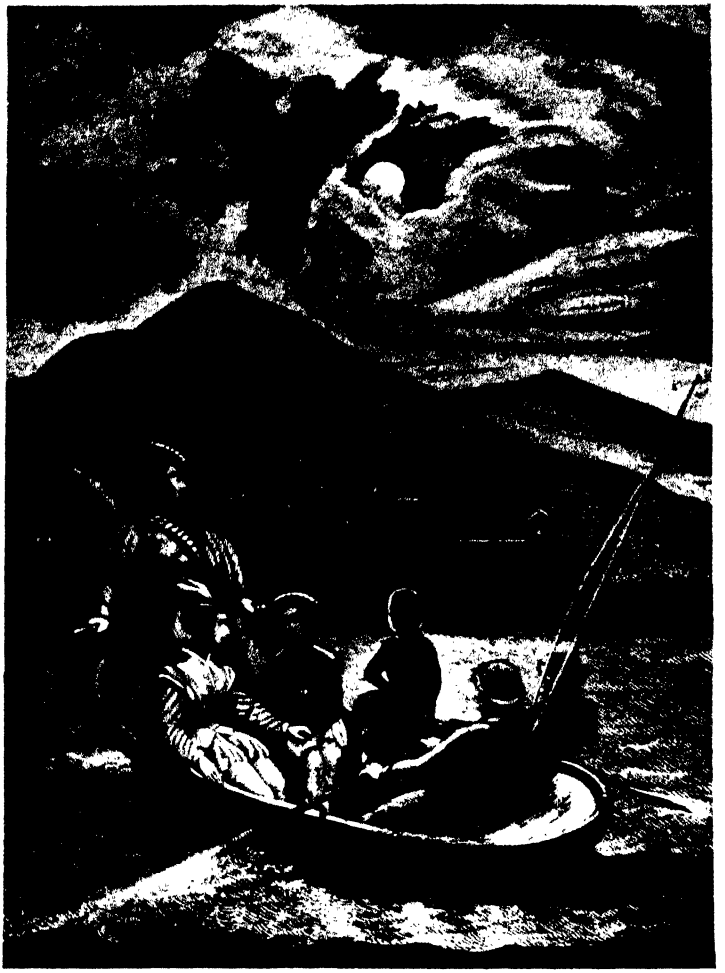
"There was a sentry at the door on to the lake," the child answered, "but he is no longer there."

The queen felt her heart's blood grow cold, at the same time that a chilly sweat broke out to the roots of her hair; for she perfectly understood: an unfortunate being had just lost his life on her account. Tottering, she leaned on Mary Seyton, who herself felt her strength giving way. Meanwhile Little Douglas was trying the keys: the second opened the door.

"And the queen?" said in a low voice a man who was waiting on the other side of the wall.

"She is following me," replied the child.

George Douglas, for it was he, sprang into the garden, and, taking the queen's arm on one side and Mary Seyton's on the other, he hurried them away quickly to the lake-side. When passing through the doorway Mary Stuart could not help



Fourdet, del. *Henri, sculp.*

THE FLIGHT OF MARY STUART FROM LOCHLEVEN CASTLE

throwing an uneasy look about her, and it seemed to her that a shapeless object was lying at the bottom of the wall, and as she was shuddering all over—

"Do not pity him," said George in a low voice, "for it is a judgment from Heaven. That man was the infamous Warden who betrayed us."

"Alas!" said the queen, "guilty as he was, he is none the less dead on my account."

"When it concerned your safety, madam, was one to haggle over drops of that base blood? But silence! This way, William, this way; let us keep along the wall, whose shadow hides us. The boat is within twenty steps, and we are saved."

With these words, George hurried on the two women still more quickly, and all four, without having been detected, reached the banks of the lake. As Douglas had said, a little boat was waiting; and, on seeing the fugitives approach, four rowers, couched along its bottom, rose, and one of them, springing to land, pulled the chain, so that the queen and Mary Seyton could get in. Douglas seated them at the prow, the child placed himself at the rudder, and George, with a kick, pushed off the boat, which began to glide over the lake.

"And now," said he, "we are really saved; for they might as well pursue a sea swallow on Solway Firth as try to reach us. Row, children, row; never mind if they hear us: the main thing is to get into the open."

"Who goes there?" cried a voice above, from the castle terrace.

"Row, row," said Douglas, placing himself in front of the queen.

"The boat! the boat!" cried the same voice; "bring to the boat!" Then, seeing that it continued to recede, "Treason! treason!" cried the sentinel. "To arms!"

At the same moment a flash lit up the lake; the report of a firearm was heard, and a ball passed, whistling. The queen uttered a little cry, although she had run no danger, George, as we have said, having placed himself in front of her, quite protecting her with his body.

The alarm bell now rang, and all the castle lights were seen moving and glancing about, as if distracted, in the rooms.

"Courage, children!" said Douglas. "Row as if your lives depended on each stroke of the oar; for ere five minutes the skiff will be out after us."

"That won't be so easy for them as you think, George," said Little Douglas; "for I shut all the doors behind me, and some time will elapse before the keys that I have left there open them. As to these," added he, showing those he had so skilfully abstracted, "I resign them to the Kelpie, the genie of the lake, and I nominate him porter of Lochleven Castle."

The discharge of a small piece of artillery answered William's joke; but as the night was too dark for one to aim to such a distance as that already between the castle and the boat, the ball ricochetted at twenty paces from the fugitives, while the report died away in echo after echo. Then Douglas drew a pistol from his belt, and, warning the ladies to have no fear, he fired in the air, not to answer by idle bravado the castle cannonade, but to give notice to a troop of faithful friends, who were waiting for them on the other shore of the lake, that the queen had escaped. Immediately, in spite of the danger of being so near Kinross, cries of joy resounded on the bank, and William having turned the rudder, the boat made for land at the spot whence they had been heard. Douglas then gave his hand to the queen, who sprang lightly ashore, and who, falling on her knees, immediately began to give thanks to God for her happy deliverance.

On rising, the queen found herself surrounded by her most faithful servants—Hamilton, Herries, and Seyton, Mary's father. Light-headed with joy, the queen extended her hands to them, thanking them with broken words, which expressed her intoxication and her gratitude better than the choicest phrases could have done, when suddenly, turning round, she perceived George Douglas, alone and melancholy. Then, going to him and taking him by the hand—

"My lords," said she, presenting George to them, and pointing to William, "behold my two deliverers: behold those

to whom, as long as I live, I shall preserve gratitude of which nothing will ever acquit me."

"Madam," said Douglas, "each of us has only done what he ought, and he who has risked most is the happiest. But if your Majesty will believe me, you will not lose a moment in needless words."

"Douglas is right," said Lord Seyton. "To horse! to horse!"

Immediately, and while four couriers set out in four different directions to announce to the queen's friends her happy escape, they brought her a horse saddled for her, which she mounted with her usual skill; then the little troop, which, composed of about twenty persons, was escorting the future destiny of Scotland, keeping away from the village of Kinross, to which the castle firing had doubtless given the alarm, took at a gallop the road to Seyton's castle, where was already a garrison large enough to defend the queen from a sudden attack.

The queen journeyed all night, accompanied on one side by Douglas, on the other by Lord Seyton; then, at daybreak, they stopped at the gate of the castle of West Niddrie, belonging to Lord Seyton, as we have said, and situated in West Lothian. Douglas sprang from his horse to offer his hand to Mary Stuart; but Lord Seyton claimed his privilege as master of the house. The queen consoled Douglas with a glance, and entered the fortress.

"Madam," said Lord Seyton, leading her into a room prepared for her for nine months, "your Majesty must have need of repose, after the fatigue and the emotions you have gone through since yesterday morning; you may sleep here in peace, and disquiet yourself for nothing: any noise you may hear will be made by a reinforcement of friends which we are expecting. As to our enemies, your Majesty has nothing to fear from them so long as you inhabit the castle of a Seyton."

The queen again thanked all her deliverers, gave her hand to Douglas to kiss one last time, kissed Little William on the forehead, and named him her favourite page for the future; then, profitting by the advice given her, entered her room

where Mary Seyton, to the exclusion of every other woman, claimed the privilege of performing about her the duties with which she had been charged during their eleven months' captivity in Lochleven Castle.

On opening her eyes, Mary Stuart thought she had had one of those dreams so painful to prisoners, when waking they see again the bolts on their doors and the bars on their windows. So the queen, unable to believe the evidence of her senses, ran, half dressed, to the window. The courtyard was filled with soldiers, and these soldiers all friends who had hastened at the news of her escape; she recognised the banners of her faithful friends, the Seytons, the Arbroaths, the Herries, and the Hamiltons, and scarcely had she been seen at the window than all these banners bent before her, with the shouts a hundred times repeated of "Long live Mary of Scotland! Long live our queen!" Then, without giving heed to the disarray of her toilet, lovely and chaste with her emotion and her happiness, she greeted them in her turn, her eyes full of tears; but this time they were tears of joy. However, the queen recollected that she was barely covered, and blushing at having allowed herself to be thus carried away in her ecstasy, she abruptly drew back, quite rosy with confusion.

Then she had an instant's womanly fright: she had fled from Lochleven Castle in the Douglas livery, and without either the leisure or the opportunity for taking women's clothes with her. But she could not remain attired as a man; so she explained her uneasiness to Mary Seyton, who responded by opening the closets in the queen's room. They were furnished, not only with robes, the measure for which, like that of the suit, had been taken from Mary Fleming, but also with all the necessaries for a woman's toilet. The queen was astonished: it was like being in a fairy castle.

"*Mignonne*," said she, looking one after another at the robes, all the stuffs of which were chosen with exquisite taste, "I knew your father was a brave and loyal knight, but I did not think him so learned in the matter of the toilet. We shall name him groom of the wardrobe."

"Alas! madam," smilingly replied Mary Seyton, "you are not mistaken: my father has had everything in the castle furbished up to the last corselet, sharpened to the last sword, unfurled to the last banner; but my father, ready as he is to die for your Majesty, would not have dreamed for an instant of offering you anything but his roof to rest under, or his cloak to cover you. It is Douglas again who has foreseen everything, prepared everything—everything even to Rosabelle, your Majesty's favourite steed, which is impatiently awaiting in the stable the moment when, mounted on her, your Majesty will make your triumphal re-entry into Edinburgh."

"And how has he been able to get her back again?" Mary asked. "I thought that in the division of my spoils Rosabelle had fallen to the fair Alice, my brother's favourite sultana?"

"Yes, yes," said Mary Seyton, "it was so; and as her value was known, she was kept under lock and key by an army of grooms; but Douglas is the man of miracles, and, as I have told you, Rosabelle awaits your Majesty."

"Noble Douglas!" murmured the queen, with eyes full of tears; then, as if speaking to herself, "And this is precisely one of those devotions that we can never repay. The others will be happy with honours, places, money; but to Douglas what matter all these things?"

"Come, madam, come," said Mary Seyton: "God takes on Himself the debts of kings; He will reward Douglas. As to your Majesty, reflect that they are waiting dinner for you. I hope," added she, smiling, "that you will not affront my father as you did Lord Douglas yesterday in refusing to partake of his feast on his fortunate home-coming."

"And luck has come to me for it, I hope," replied Mary. "But you are right, darling: no more sad thoughts; we will consider when we have indeed become queen again what we can do for Douglas."

The queen dressed and went down. As Mary Seyton had told her, the chief noblemen of her party, already gathered round her, were waiting for her in the great hall of the castle. Her arrival was greeted with acclamations of the liveliest

enthusiasm, and she sat down to table, with Lord Seyton on her right hand, Douglas on her left, and behind her Little William, who the same day was beginning his duties as page.

Next morning the queen was awakened by the sound of trumpets and bugles: it had been decided the day before that she should set out that day for Hamilton, where reinforcements were looked for. The queen donned an elegant riding-habit, and soon, mounted on Rosabelle, appeared amid her defenders. The shouts of joy redoubled: her beauty, her grace, and her courage were admired by everyone. Mary Stuart became her own self once more, and she felt spring up in her again the power of fascination she had always exercised on those who came near her. Everyone was in good humour, and the happiest of all was perhaps Little William, who for the first time in his life had such a fine dress and such a fine horse.

Two or three thousand men were awaiting the queen at Hamilton, which she reached the same evening; and during the night following her arrival the troops increased to six thousand. The 2nd of May she was a prisoner, without another friend but a child in her prison, without other means of communication with her adherents than the flickering and uncertain light of a lamp, and three days afterwards—that is to say, between the Sunday and the Wednesday—she found herself not only free, but also at the head of a powerful confederacy, which counted at its head nine earls, eight peers, nine bishops, and a number of barons and nobles renowned among the bravest of Scotland.

The advice of the most judicious among those about the queen was to shut herself up in the strong castle of Dumbarton, which, being impregnable, would give all her adherents time to assemble together, distant and scattered as they were: accordingly, the guidance of the troops who were to conduct the queen to that town was entrusted to the Earl of Argyll, and the 11th of May she took the road with an army of nearly ten thousand men.

Murray was at Glasgow when he heard of the queen's escape: the place was strong; he decided to hold it, and summoned to him his bravest and most devoted partisans. Kirkcaldy of Grange, Morton, Lindsay of Byres, Lord Lochleven, and William Douglas hastened to him, and six thousand of the best troops in the kingdom gathered round them, while Lord Ruthven in the counties of Berwick and Angus raised levies with which to join them.

The 13th May, Morton occupied from daybreak the village of Langside, through which the queen must pass to get to Dumbarton. The news of the occupation reached the queen as the two armies were yet seven miles apart. Mary's first instinct was to escape an engagement: she remembered her last battle at Carberry Hill, at the end of which she had been separated from Bothwell and brought to Edinburgh; so she expressed aloud this opinion, which was supported by George Douglas, who, in black armour, without other arms, had continued at the queen's side.

"Avoid an engagement!" cried Lord Seyton, not daring to answer his sovereign, and replying to George as if this opinion had originated with him. "We could do it, perhaps, if we were one to ten; but we shall certainly not do so when we are three to two. You speak a strange tongue, my young master," continued he, with some contempt; "and you forget, it seems to me, that you are a Douglas and that you speak to a Seyton."

"My lord," returned George calmly, "when we only hazard the lives of Douglases and Seytons, you will find me, I hope, as ready to fight as you, be it one to ten, be it three to two; but we are now answerable for an existence dearer to Scotland than that of all the Seytons and all the Douglases. My advice is then to avoid battle."

"Battle! battle!" cried all the chieftains.

"You hear, madam?" said Lord Seyton to Mary Stuart: "I believe that to wish to act against such unanimity would be dangerous. In Scotland, madam, there is an ancient proverb which has it that 'there is most prudence in courage.'"

"But have you not heard that the regent has taken up an advantageous position?" the queen said.

"The greyhound hunts the hare on the hillside as well as in the plain," replied Seyton: "we will drive him out, wherever he is."

"Let it be as you desire, then, my lords. It shall not be said that Mary Stuart returned to the scabbard the sword her defenders had drawn for her."

Then, turning round to Douglas—

"George," she said to him, "choose a guard of twenty men for me, and take command of them: you will not quit me."

George bent low in obedience, chose twenty from among the bravest men, placed the queen in their midst, and put himself at their head; then the troops, which had halted, received the order to continue their road. In two hours' time the advance guard was in sight of the enemy; it halted, and the rest of the army rejoined it.

The queen's troops then found themselves parallel with the city of Glasgow, and the heights which rose in front of them were already occupied by a force above which floated, as above that of Mary, the royal banners of Scotland. On the other side, and on the opposite slope, stretched the village of Langside, encircled with enclosures and gardens. The road which led to it, and which followed all the variations of the ground, narrowed at one place in such a way that two men could hardly pass abreast, then, farther on, lost itself in a ravine, beyond which it reappeared, then branched into two, of which one climbed to the village of Langside, while the other led to Glasgow.

On seeing the lie of the ground, the Earl of Argyll immediately comprehended the importance of occupying this village, and, turning to Lord Seyton, he ordered him to gallop off and try to arrive there before the enemy, who doubtless, having made the same observation as the commander of the royal forces, was setting in motion at that very moment a considerable body of cavalry.

Lord Seyton called up his men directly, but while he was

ranging them round his banner, Lord Arbroath drew his sword, and approaching the Earl of Argyll—

"My lord," said he, "you do me a wrong in charging Lord Seyton to seize that post: as commander of the vanguard, it is to me this honour belongs. Allow me, then, to use my privilege in claiming it."

"It is I who received the order to seize it; I will seize it!" cried Seyton.

"Perhaps," returned Lord Arbroath, "but not before me!"

"Before you and before every Hamilton in the world!" exclaimed Seyton, putting his horse to the gallop and rushing down into the hollow road: "Saint Bennet! and forward!"

"To me, my faithful kinsmen!" cried Lord Arbroath, dashing forward on his side with the same object; "to me, my men-at-arms! For God and the queen!"

The two troops precipitated themselves immediately in disorder and ran against one another in the narrow way, where, as we have said, two men could hardly pass abreast. There was a terrible collision there, and the conflict began among friends who should have been united against the enemy. Finally, the two troops, leaving behind them some corpses stifled in the press, or even killed by their companions, passed through the defile pell-mell and were lost sight of in the ravine. But during this struggle Seyton and Arbroath had lost precious time, and the detachment sent by Murray, which had taken the road by Glasgow, had reached the village beforehand; it was now necessary not to take it, but to retake it.

Argyll saw that the whole day's struggle would be concentrated there, and, understanding more and more the importance of the village, immediately put himself at the head of the body of his army, commanding a rearguard of two thousand men to remain there and await further orders to take part in the fighting. But whether the captain who commanded them had ill understood, or whether he was eager to distinguish himself in the eyes of the queen, scarcely had Argyll vanished into the ravine, at the end of which the struggle had already commenced between Kirkcaldy of Grange

and Morton on the one side, and on the other between Arbroath and Seyton, than, without regarding the cries of Mary Stuart, he set off in his turn at a gallop, leaving the queen without other guard than the little escort of twenty men which Douglas had chosen for her. Douglas sighed.

"Alas!" said the queen, hearing him, "I am not a soldier, but there it seems to me is a battle very badly begun."

"What is to be done?" replied Douglas. "We are every one of us infatuated, from first to last, and all these men are behaving to-day like madmen or children."

"Victory! victory!" said the queen; "the enemy is retreating, fighting. I see the banners of Seyton and Arbroath floating near the first houses in the village. Oh! my brave lords," cried she, clapping her hands. "Victory! victory!"

But she stopped suddenly on perceiving a body of the enemy's army advancing to charge the victors in flank.

"It is nothing, it is nothing," said Douglas; "so long as there is only cavalry we have nothing much to fear, and besides the Earl of Argyll will fall in in time to aid them."

"George," said Little William.

"Well?" asked Douglas.

"Don't you see?" the child went on, stretching out his arms towards the enemy's force, which was coming on at a gallop.

"What?"

"Each horseman carries a footman armed with an arquebuse behind him, so that the troop is twice as numerous as it appears."

"That's true; upon my soul, the child has good sight. Let someone go at once full gallop and take news of this to the Earl of Argyll."

"I! I!" cried Little William. "I saw them first; it is my right to bear the tidings."

"Go, then, my child," said Douglas; "and may God preserve thee!"

The child flew, quick as lightning, not hearing or feigning not to hear the queen, who was recalling him. He was

seen to cross the gorge and plunge into the hollow road at the moment when Argyll was debouching at the end and coming to the aid of Seyton and Arbroath. Meanwhile, the enemy's detachment had dismounted its infantry, which, immediately formed up, was scattering on the sides of the ravine by paths impracticable for horses.

"William will come too late!" cried Douglas, "or even, should he arrive in time, the news is now useless to them. Oh, madmen, madmen that we are! This is how we have always lost all our battles!"

"Is the battle lost, then?" demanded Mary, growing pale.

"No, madam, no," cried Douglas; "Heaven be thanked, not yet; but through too great haste we have begun badly."

"And William?" said Mary Stuart.

"He is now serving his apprenticeship in arms; for, if I am not mistaken, he must be at this moment at the very spot where those marksmen are making such quick firing."

"Poor child!" cried the queen; "if ill should befall him, I shall never console myself."

"Alas! madam," replied Douglas, "I greatly fear that his first battle is his last, and that everything is already over for him; for, unless I mistake, there is his horse returning riderless."

"Oh, my God! my God!" said the queen, weeping, and raising her hands to heaven, "it is then decreed that I should be fatal to all around me!"

George was not deceived: it was William's horse coming back without his young master and covered with blood.

"Madam," said Douglas, "we are ill placed here; let us gain that hillock on which is the Castle of Crookstone: from thence we shall survey the whole battlefield."

"No, not there! not there!" said the queen in terror: "within that castle I came to spend the first days of my marriage with Darnley; it will bring me misfortune."

"Well, beneath that yew-tree, then," said George, pointing to another slight rise near the first; "but it is important for us to lose no detail of this engagement. Everything depends

perhaps for your Majesty on an ill-judged manœuvre or a lost moment."

"Guide me, then," the queen said; "for, as for me, I no longer see it. Each report of that terrible cannonade echoes to the depths of my heart."

However well placed as was this eminence for overlooking from its summit the whole battlefield, the reiterated discharge of cannon and musketry covered it with such a cloud of smoke that it was impossible to make out from it anything but masses lost amid this murderous fog. At last, when an hour had passed in this desperate conflict, through the skirts of this sea of smoke the fugitives were seen to emerge and disperse in all directions, followed by the victors. Only, at that distance, it was impossible to make out who had gained or lost the battle, and the banners, which on both sides displayed the Scottish arms, could in no way clear up this confusion.

At that moment there was seen coming down from the Glasgow hillsides all the remaining reserve of Murray's army: it was coming at full speed to engage in the fighting; but this manœuvre might equally well have for its object the support of defeated friends as to complete the rout of the enemy. However, soon there was no longer any doubt; for this reserve charged the fugitives, amid whom it spread fresh confusion. The queen's army was beaten. At the same time, three or four horsemen appeared on the hither side of the ravine, advancing at a gallop. Douglas recognised them as enemies.

"Fly, madam," cried George, "fly without loss of a second; for those who are coming upon us are followed by others. Gain the road, while I go to check them. And you," added he, addressing the escort, "be killed to the last man rather than let them take your queen."

"George! George!" cried the queen, motionless, and as if riveted to the spot.

But George had already dashed away with all his horse's speed, and as he was splendidly mounted, he flew across the

space with lightning rapidity, and reached the gorge before the enemy. There he stopped, put his lance in rest, and alone against five bravely awaited the encounter.

As to the queen, she had no desire to go; but, on the contrary, as if turned to stone, she remained in the same place, her eyes fastened on this combat which was taking place at scarcely five hundred paces from her. Suddenly, glancing at her enemies, she saw that one of them bore in the middle of his shield a bleeding heart, the Douglas arms. Then she uttered a cry of pain, and drooping her head—

"Douglas against Douglas; brother against brother!" she murmured: "it only wanted this last blow."

"Madam, madam," cried her escort, "there is not an instant to lose: the young master of Douglas cannot hold out long thus alone against five; let us fly! let us fly!" And two of them taking the queen's horse by the bridle, put it to the gallop, at the moment when George, after having beaten down two of his enemies and wounded a third, was thrown down in his turn in the dust, thrust to the heart by a lance-head. The queen groaned on seeing him fall; then, as if he alone had detained her, and as if he being killed she had no interest in anything else, she put Rosabelle to the gallop, and as she and her troop were splendidly mounted, they had soon lost sight of the battlefield.

She fled thus for sixty miles, without taking any rest, and without ceasing to weep or to sigh: at last, having traversed the counties of Renfrew and Ayr, she reached the Abbey of Dundrennan, in Galloway, and certain of being, for the time at least, sheltered from every danger, she gave the order to stop. The prior respectfully received her at the gate of the convent.

"I bring you misfortune and ruin, father," said the queen, alighting from her horse.

"They are welcome," replied the prior, "since they come accompanied by duty."

The queen gave Rosabelle to the care of one of the men-at-arms who had accompanied her, and leaning on Mary Seyton,

who had not left her for a moment, and on Lord Herries, who had rejoined her on the road, she entered the convent.

Lord Herries had not concealed her position from Mary Stuart: the day had been completely lost, and with the day, at least for the present, all hope of reascending the throne of Scotland. There remained but three courses for the queen to take: to withdraw into France, Spain, or England. On the advice of Lord Herries, which accorded with her own feeling, she decided upon the last; and that same night she wrote this double missive in verse and in prose to Elizabeth:—

"My dear Sister,—I have often enough begged you to receive my tempest-tossed vessel into your haven during the storm. If at this pass she finds a safe harbour there, I shall cast anchor there for ever: otherwise the bark is in God's keeping, for she is ready and caulked for defence on her voyage against all storms. I have dealt openly with you, and still do so: do not take it in bad part if I write thus; it is not in defiance of you, as it appears, for in everything I rely on your friendship."

This sonnet accompanied the letter:—

"One thought alone brings danger and delight;
Bitter and sweet change places in my heart,
With doubt, and then with hope, it takes its part,
Till peace and rest alike are put to flight.

Therefore, dear sister, if this card pursue
That keen desire, by which I am oppressed,
To see you, 'tis because I live distressed,
Unless some swift and sweet result ensue.

Beheld I have my ship compelled by fate
To seek the open sea, when close to port,
And calmest days break into storm and gale;
Wherefore full grieved and fearful is my state,
Not for your sake, but since, in evil sort,
Fortune so oft snaps strongest rope and sail."

Elizabeth trembled with joy at receiving this double letter; for the eight years that her enmity had been daily increasing to Mary Stuart, she had followed her with her eyes continually, as a wolf might a gazelle; at last the gazelle sought refuge in the wolf's den. Elizabeth had never hoped as much: she immediately despatched an order to the Sheriff of Cumberland to make known to Mary that she was ready to receive her. One morning a bugle was heard blowing on the sea-shore: it was Queen Elizabeth's envoy come to fetch Queen Mary Stuart.

Then arose great entreaties to the fugitive not to trust herself thus to a rival in power, glory, and beauty; but the poor dispossessed queen was full of confidence in her she called her good sister, and believed herself going, free and rid of care, to take at Elizabeth's court the place due to her rank and her misfortunes: thus she persisted, in spite of all that could be said. In our time, we have seen the same infatuation seize another royal fugitive, who like Mary Stuart confided himself to the generosity of his enemy England: like Mary Stuart, he was cruelly punished for his confidence, and found in the deadly climate of St. Helena the scaffold of Fotheringay.

Mary Stuart set out on her journey, then, with her little following. Arrived at the shore of Solway Firth, she found there the Warden of the English Marches: he was a gentleman named Lowther, who received the queen with the greatest respect, but who gave her to understand that he could not permit more than three of her women to accompany her. Mary Seyton immediately claimed her privilege: the queen held out to her her hand.

"Alas! *mignonne*," said she, "but it might well be another's turn: you have already suffered enough for me and with me."

But Mary, unable to reply, clung to her hand, making a sign with her head that nothing in the world should part her from her mistress. Then all who had accompanied the queen renewed their entreaties that she should not persist in this fatal resolve, and when she was already a third of the way along the plank placed for her to enter the skiff, the Prior of Dundrennan, who had offered Mary Stuart such dangerous and

touching hospitality, entered the water up to his knees, to try to detain her; but all was useless: the queen had made up her mind.

At that moment Lowther approached her. "Madam," said he, "accept anew my regrets that I cannot offer a warm welcome in England to all who would wish to follow you there; but our queen has given us positive orders, and we must carry them out. May I be permitted to remind your Majesty that the tide serves?"

"Positive orders!" cried the prior. "Do you hear, madam? Oh! you are lost if you quit this shore! Back, while there is yet time! Back, madam, in Heaven's name! To me, sir knights, to me!" he cried, turning to Lord Herries and the other lords who had accompanied Mary Stuart; "do not allow your queen to abandon you, were it needful to struggle with her and the English at the same time. Hold her back, my lords, in Heaven's name! withhold her!"

"What means this violence, sir priest?" said the Warden of the Marches. "I came here at your queen's express command; she is free to return to you, and there is no need to have recourse to force for that." Then, addressing the queen—

"Madam," said he, "do you consent to follow me into England in full liberty of choice? Answer, I entreat you; for my honour demands that the whole world should be aware that you have followed me freely."

"Sir," replied Mary Stuart, "I ask your pardon, in the name of this worthy servant of God and his queen, for what he may have said of offence to you. Freely I leave Scotland and place myself in your hands, trusting that I shall be free either to remain in England with my royal sister, or to return to France to my worthy relatives." Then, turning to the priest, "Your blessing, father, and God protect you!"

"Alas! alas!" murmured the abbot, obeying the queen, "it is not we who are in need of God's protection, but rather you, my daughter. May the blessing of a poor priest turn aside from you the misfortunes I foresee! Go, and may it be with you as the Lord has ordained in His wisdom and in His mercy!"

Then the queen gave her hand to the sheriff, who conducted her to the skiff, followed by Mary Seyton and two other women only. The sails were immediately unfurled, and the little vessel began to recede from the shores of Galloway, to make her way towards those of Cumberland. So long as it could be seen, they who had accompanied the queen lingered on the beach, waving her signs of adieu, which, standing on the deck of the shallop which was bearing her away, she returned with her handkerchief. Finally, the boat disappeared, and all burst into lamentations or into sobbing. They were right, for the good Prior of Dundrennan's presentiments were only too true, and they had seen Mary Stuart for the last time.

CHAPTER VIII

ON landing on the shores of England, the Queen of Scotland found messengers from Elizabeth empowered to express to her all the regret their mistress felt in being unable to admit her to her presence, or to give her the affectionate welcome she bore her in her heart. But it was essential, they added, that first of all the queen should clear herself of the death of Darnley, whose family, being subjects of the Queen of England, had a right to her protection and justice.

Mary Stuart was so blinded that she did not see the trap, and immediately offered to prove her innocence to the satisfaction of her sister Elizabeth; but scarcely had she in her hands Mary Stuart's letter, than from arbitress she became judge, and, naming commissioners to hear the parties, summoned Murray to appear and accuse his sister. Murray, who knew Elizabeth's secret intentions with regard to her rival, did not hesitate a moment. He came to England, bringing the casket containing the three letters we have quoted, some verses and some other papers which proved that the queen had not only been Bothwell's mistress during the lifetime of Darnley, but had also been aware of the assassination of her husband. On their side, Lord Herries and the Bishop of Ross, the queen's advocates, maintained that these letters had been forged, that the handwriting was counterfeited, and demanded, in verification, experts whom they could not obtain; so that this great controversy remained pending for future ages, and to this hour nothing is yet affirmatively settled in this matter either by scholars or historians.

After a five months' inquiry, the Queen of England made known to the parties, that not having, in these proceedings,

been able to discover anything to the dishonour of accuser or accused, everything would remain *in statu quo* till one or the other could bring forward fresh proofs.

As a result of this strange decision, Elizabeth should have sent back the regent to Scotland, and have left Mary Stuart free to go where she would. But, instead of that, she had her prisoner removed from Bolton Castle to Carlisle Castle, from whose terrace, to crown her with grief, poor Mary Stuart saw the blue mountains of her own Scotland.

However, among the judges named by Elizabeth to examine into Mary Stuart's conduct was Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk. Be it that he was convinced of Mary's innocence, be it that he was urged by the ambitious project which since served as a ground for his prosecution, and which was nothing else than to wed Mary Stuart, to affiance his daughter to the young king, and to become regent of Scotland, he resolved to extricate her from her prison. Several members of the high nobility of England, among whom were the Earls of Westmoreland and Northumberland, entered into the plot and undertook to support it with all their forces. But their scheme had been communicated to the regent: he denounced it to Elizabeth, who had Norfolk arrested. Warned in time, Westmoreland and Northumberland crossed the frontiers and took refuge in the Scottish borders which were favourable to Queen Mary. The former reached Flanders, where he died in exile; the latter, given up to Murray, was sent to the castle of Lochleven, which guarded him more faithfully than it had done its royal prisoner. As to Norfolk, he was beheaded. As one sees, Mary Stuart's star had lost none of its fatal influence.

Meanwhile the regent had returned to Edinburgh, enriched with presents from Elizabeth, and having gained, in fact, his case with her, since Mary remained a prisoner. He employed himself immediately in dispersing the remainder of her adherents, and had hardly shut the gates of Lochleven Castle upon Westmoreland than, in the name of the young King James VI, he pursued those who had upheld his mother's cause, and among them more particularly the Hamiltons, who

him. Then Bothwellhaugh, seeing that whip and spur were not enough, drew his dagger and used it to goad on his horse. His horse, under this terrible stimulus, acquired fresh vigour, and, leaping a gully eighteen feet deep, put between his master and his pursuers a barrier which they dared not cross.

The murderer sought an asylum in France, where he retired under the protection of the Guises. There, as the bold stroke he had attempted had acquired him a great reputation, some days before the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, they made him overtures to assassinate Admiral Coligny. But Bothwellhaugh indignantly repulsed these proposals, saying that he was the avenger of abuses and not an assassin, and that those who had to complain of the admiral had only to come and ask him how he had done, and to do as he.

As to Murray, he died the night following his wound, leaving the regency to the Earl of Lennox, the father of Darnley: on learning the news of his death, Elizabeth wrote that she had lost her best friend.

While these events were passing in Scotland, Mary Stuart was still a prisoner, in spite of the pressing and successive protests of Charles IX and Henry III. Taking fright at the attempt made in her favour, Elizabeth even had her removed to Sheffield Castle, round which fresh patrols were incessantly in motion.

But days, months, years passed, and poor Mary, who had borne so impatiently her eleven months' captivity in Lochleven Castle, had been already led from prison to prison for fifteen or sixteen years, in spite of her protests and those of the French and Spanish ambassadors, when she was finally taken to Tutbury Castle and placed under the care of Sir Amyas Paulet, her last gaoler: there she found for her sole lodging two low and damp rooms, where little by little what strength remained to her was so exhausted that there were days on which she could not walk, on account of the pain in all her limbs. Then it was that she who had been the queen of two kingdoms, who was born in a gilded cradle and brought up in silk and velvet, was forced to humble herself to ask of her gaoler a softer bed

and warmer coverings. This request, treated as an affair of state, gave rise to negotiations which lasted a month, after which the prisoner was at length granted what she asked. And yet the unhealthiness, cold, and privations of all kinds still did not work actively enough on that healthy and robust organisation. They tried to convey to Paulet what a service he would render the Queen of England in cutting short the existence of her who, already condemned in her rival's mind, yet delayed to die. But Sir Amyas Paulet, coarse and harsh as he was to Mary Stuart, declared that, so long as she was with him she would have nothing to fear from poison or dagger, because he would taste all the dishes served to his prisoner, and that no one should approach her but in his presence. In fact, some assassins, sent by Leicester, the very same who had aspired for a moment to the hand of the lovely Mary Stuart, were driven from the castle directly its stern keeper had learned with what intentions they had entered it. Elizabeth had to be patient, then, in contenting herself with tormenting her whom she could not kill, and still hoping that a fresh opportunity would occur for bringing her to trial. That opportunity, so long delayed, the fatal star of Mary Stuart at length brought.

A young Catholic gentleman, a last scion of that ancient chivalry which was already dying out at that time, excited by the excommunication of Pius v, which pronounced Elizabeth fallen from her kingdom on earth and her salvation in heaven, resolved to restore liberty to Mary, who thenceforth was beginning to be looked upon, no longer as a political prisoner, but as a martyr for her faith. Accordingly, braving the law which Elizabeth had had made in 1585, and which provided that, if any attempt on her person was meditated by, or for, a person *who thought he had claims to the crown of England*, a commission would be appointed composed of twenty-five members, which, to the exclusion of every other tribunal, would be empowered to examine into the offence, and to condemn the guilty persons, whosoever they might be. Babington, not at all discouraged by the example of his predecessors, assembled five of his friends, Catholics as zealous as himself, who engaged their life and

honour in the plot of which he was the head, and which had as its aim to assassinate Elizabeth, and as a result to place Mary Stuart on the English throne. But this scheme, well planned as it was, was revealed to Walsingham, who allowed the conspirators to go as far as he thought he could without danger, and who, the day before that fixed for the assassination, had them arrested.

This imprudent and desperate attempt delighted Elizabeth, for, according to the letter of the law, it finally gave her rival's life into her hands. Orders were immediately given to Sir Amyas Paulet to seize the prisoner's papers and to move her to Fotheringay Castle. The gaoler, then, hypocritically relaxing his usual severity, suggested to Mary Stuart that she should go riding, under the pretext that she had need of an airing. The poor prisoner, who for three years had only seen the country through her prison bars, joyfully accepted, and left Tutbury between two guards, mounted, for greater security, on a horse whose feet were hobbled. These two guards took her to Fotheringay Castle, her new habitation, where she found the apartment she was to lodge in already hung in black. Mary Stuart had entered alive into her tomb. As to Babington and his accomplices, they had been already beheaded.

Meanwhile, her two secretaries, Curle and Nau, were arrested, and all her papers were seized and sent to Elizabeth, who, on her part, ordered the forty commissioners to assemble, and proceed without intermission to the trial of the prisoner. They arrived at Fotheringay the 14th October 1586; and next day, being assembled in the great hall of the castle, they began the examination.

At first Mary refused to appear before them, declaring that she did not recognise the commissioners as judges, they not being her peers, and not acknowledging the English law, which had never afforded her protection, and which had constantly abandoned her to the rule of force. But seeing that they proceeded none the less, and that every calumny was allowed, no one being there to refute it, she resolved to appear before the commissioners. We quote the two interrogatories to which

Mary Stuart submitted as they are set down in the report of M. de Bellièvre to M. de Villeroy. M. de Bellièvre, as we shall see later, had been specially sent by King Henry III to Elizabeth.[1]

The said lady being seated at the end of the table in the said hall, and the said commissoners about her—

The Queen of Scotland began to speak in these terms:—

"I do not admit that any one of you here assembled is my peer or my judge to examine me upon any charge. Thus what I do, and now tell you, is of my own free will, taking God to witness that I am innocent and pure in conscience of the accusations and slanders of which they wish to accuse me. For I am a free princess and born a queen, obedient to no one, save to God, to whom alone I must give an account of my actions. This is why I protest yet again that my appearance before you be not prejudicial either to me, or to the kings, princes and potentates, my allies, nor to my son, and I require that my protest be registered, and I demand the record of it."

Then the chancellor, who was one of the commissioners, replied in his turn, and protested against the protestation; then he ordered that there should be read over to the Queen of Scotland the commission in virtue of which they were proceeding—a commission founded on the statutes and law of the kingdom.

But to this Mary Stuart made answer that she again protested; that the said statutes and laws were without force against her, because these statutes and laws are not made for persons of her condition.

To this the chancellor replied that the commission intended to proceed against her, even if she refused to answer, and declared that the trial should proceed; for she was doubly subject to indictment, the conspirators having not only plotted in her favour, but also with her consent: to which the said Queen of Scotland responded that she had never even thought of it.

[1] Intelligence for M. Villeroy of what was done in England by M. de Bellièvre about the affairs of the Queen of Scotland, in the months of November and December 1586 and January 1587.

Upon this, the letters it was alleged she had written to Babington and his answers were read to her.

Mary Stuart then affirmed that she had never seen Babington, that she had never had any conference with him, had never in her life received a single letter from him, and that she defied anyone in the world to maintain that she had ever done anything to the prejudice of the said Queen of England; that besides, strictly guarded as she was, away from all news, withdrawn from and deprived of those nearest her, surrounded with enemies, deprived finally of all advice, she had been unable to participate in or to consent to the practices of which she was accused; that there are, besides, many persons who wrote to her what she had no knowledge of, and that she had received a number of letters without knowing whence they came to her.

Then Babington's confession was read to her; but she replied that she did not know what was meant; that besides, if Babington and his accomplices had said such things, they were base men, false and liars.

"Besides," added she, "show me my handwriting and my signature, since you say that I wrote to Babington, and not copies counterfeited like these which you have filled at your leisure with the falsehoods it has pleased you to insert."

Then she was shown the letter that Babington, it was said, had written her. She glanced at it; then said, "I have no knowledge of this letter." Upon this, she was shown her reply, and she said again, "I have no more knowledge of this answer. If you will show me my own letter and my own signature containing what you say, I will acquiesce in all; but up to the present, as I have already told you, you have produced nothing worthy of credence, unless it be the copies you have invented and added to with what seemed good to you."

With these words, she rose, and with her eyes full of tears—

"If I have ever," said she, "consented to such intrigues, having for object my sister's death, I pray God that He have neither pity nor mercy on me. I confess that I have written to several persons, that I have implored them to deliver me from my wretched prisons, where I languished, a captive and ill-treated

princess, for nineteen years and seven months; but it never occurred to me, even in thought, to write or even to desire such things against the queen. Yes, I also confess to having exerted myself for the deliverance of some persecuted Catholics, and if I had been able, and could yet, with my own blood, protect them and save them from their pains, I would have done it, and would do it for them with all my power, in order to save them from destruction."

Then, turning to the secretary Walsingham—

"But, my lord," said she, "from the moment I see you here, I know whence comes this blow: you have always been my greatest enemy and my son's, and you have moved everyone against me and to my prejudice."

Thus accused to his face, Walsingham rose.

"Madam," he replied, "I protest before God, who is my witness, that you deceive yourself, and that I have never done anything against you unworthy of a good man, either as an individual or as a public personage."

This is all that was said and done that day in the proceedings, till the next day, when the queen was again obliged to appear before the commissioners.

And being seated at the end of the table of the said hall, and the said commissioners about her, she began to speak in a loud voice.

"You are not unaware, my lords and gentlemen, that I am a sovereign queen, anointed and consecrated in the church of God, and cannot, and ought not, for any reason whatever, be summoned to your courts, or called to your bar, to be judged by the law and statutes that you lay down; for I am a princess and free, and I do not owe to any prince more than he owes to me; and on everything of which I am accused towards my said sister, I cannot reply if you do not permit me to be assisted by counsel. And if you go further, do what you will; but from all your procedure, in reiterating my protestations, I appeal to God, who is the only just and true Judge, and to the kings and princes my allies and confederates."

This protestation was once more registered, as she had required of the commissioners. Then she was told that she had

further written several letters to the princes of Christendom, against the queen and the kingdom of England.

"As to that," replied Mary Stuart, "it is another matter, and I do not deny it; and if it was again to do, I should do as I have done, to gain my liberty; for there is not a man or woman in the world, of less rank than I, who would not do it, and who would not make use of the help and succour of their friends to issue from a captivity as harsh as mine was. You charge me with certain letters from Babington: well, I do not deny that he has written to me and that I have replied to him; but if you find in my answers a single word about the queen my sister, well, yes, there will be good cause to prosecute me. I replied to him who wrote to me that he would set me at liberty, that I accepted his offer, if he could do it without compromising the one or the other of us: that is all.

"As to my secretaries," added the queen, "not they, but torture spoke by their mouths: and as to the confessions of Babington and his accomplices, there is not much to be made of them; for now that they are dead you can say all that seems good to you; and let who will believe you."

With these words, the queen refused to answer further if she were not given counsel, and, renewing her protestation, she withdrew into her apartment; but, as the chancellor had threatened, the trial was continued despite her absence.

However, M. de Châteauneuf, the French ambassador to London, saw matters too near at hand to be deceived as to their course: accordingly, at the first rumour which came to him of bringing Mary Stuart to trial, he wrote to King Henry III, that he might intervene in the prisoner's favour. Henry III immediately despatched to Queen Elizabeth an embassy extraordinary, of which M. de Bellièvre was the chief; and at the same time, having learned that James VI, Mary's son, far from interesting himself in his mother's fate, had replied to the French minister, Courcelles, who spoke to him of her, "I can do nothing; let her drink what she has spilled," he wrote him the following letter, to decide the young prince to second him in the steps he was going to take:—

"*21st November*, 1586.

"COURCELLES,—I have received your letter of the 4th October last, in which I have seen the discourse that the King of Scotland has held with you concerning what you have witnessed to him of the good affection I bear him, discourse in which he has given proof of desiring to reciprocate it entirely; but I wish that that letter had informed me also that he was better disposed towards the queen his mother, and that he had the heart and the desire to arrange everything in a way to assist her in the affliction in which she now is, reflecting that the prison where she has been unjustly detained for eighteen years and more has induced her to lend an ear to many things which have been proposed to her for gaining her liberty, a thing which is naturally greatly desired by all men, and more still by those who are born sovereigns and rulers, who bear being kept prisoners thus with less patience. He should also consider that if the Queen of England, my good sister, allows herself to be persuaded by the counsels of those who wish that she should stain herself with Queen Mary's blood, it will be a matter which will bring him to great dishonour, inasmuch as one will judge that he will have refused his mother the good offices that he should render her with the said Queen of England, and which would have perhaps been sufficient to move her, if he would have employed them, as warmly, and as soon his natural duty commanded him. Moreover, it is to be feared for him, that, his mother dead, his own turn may come, and that one may think of doing as much for him, by some violent means, to make the English succession easier to seize for those who are likely to have it after the said Queen Elizabeth, and not only to defraud the said King of Scotland of the claim he can put forward, but to render doubtful even that which he has to his own crown. I do not know in what condition the affairs of my said sister-in-law will be when you receive this letter; but I will tell you that in every case I wish you to rouse strongly the said King of Scotland, with remonstrances, and everything else which may bear on this subject, to embrace the defence and protec-

tion of his said mother, and to express to him, on my part, that as this will be a matter for which he will be greatly praised by all the other kings and sovereign princes, he must be assured that if he fails in it there will be great censure for him, and perhaps notable injury to himself in particular. Futhermore, as to the state of my own affairs, you know that the queen, madam and mother, is about to see very soon the King of Navarre, and to confer with him on the matter of the pacification of the troubles of this kingdom, to which, if he bear as much good affection as I do for my part, I hope that things may come to a good conclusion, and that my subjects will have some respite from the great evils and calamities that the war occasions them: supplicating the Creator, Courcelles, that He may have you in His holy keeping.

"Written at St. Germain-en-Laye, the 21st day of November 1586.

(*Signed*) "HENRI,
And below, BRULART."

This letter finally decided James VI to make a kind of demonstration in his mother's favour: he sent Gray, Robert Melville, and Keith to Queen Elizabeth. But although London was nearer Edinburgh than was Paris, the French envoys reached it before the Scotch.

It is true that on reaching Calais, the 27th of November, M. de Bellièvre had found a special messenger there to tell him not to lose an instant, from M. de Châteauneuf, who, to provide for every difficulty, had chartered a vessel ready in the harbour. But however great the speed these noble lords wished to make, they were obliged to await the wind's good-will, which did not allow them to put to sea till Friday 28th at midnight; next day also, on reaching Dover at nine o'clock, they were so shaken by sea-sickness that they were forced to stay a whole day in the town to recover, so that it was not till Sunday 30th that M. de Bellièvre was able to set out in the coach that M. Châteauneuf sent him by M. de Brancaleon, and take the road to London, accompanied by the gentlemen

of his suite, who rode on post-horses; but resting only a few hours on the way to make up for lost time, they at last arrived in London, Sunday the 1st of December at midday. M. de Bellièvre immediately sent one of the gentlemen of his suite, named M. de Villiers, to the Queen of England, who was holding her court at Richmond Castle: the decree had been secretly pronounced already six days, and submitted to Parliament, which was to deliberate upon it with closed doors.

The French ambassadors could not have chosen a worse moment to approach Elizabeth; and to gain time she declined to receive M. de Villiers, returning the answer that he would himself know next day the reason for this refusal. And indeed, next day, the rumour spread in London that the French Embassy had contagion, and that two of the lords in it having died of the plague at Calais, the queen, whatever wish she might have to be agreeable to Henry III, could not endanger her precious existence by receiving his envoys. Great was the astonishment of M. de Bellièvre at learning this news: he protested that the queen was led into error by a false report, and insisted on being received. Nevertheless, the delays lasted another six days; but as the ambassadors threatened to depart without waiting longer, and as, upon the whole, Elizabeth, disquieted by Spain, had no desire to embroil herself with France, she had M. de Bellièvre informed on the morning of the 7th of December that she was ready to receive him after dinner at Richmond Castle, together with the noblemen of his suite.

At the appointed time the French ambassadors presented themselves at the castle gates, and, having been brought to the queen, found her seated on her throne and surrounded by the greatest lords in her kingdom. Then MM. de Châteauneuf and de Bellièvre, the one the ambassador in ordinary and the other the envoy extraordinary, having greeted her on the part of the King of France, began to make her the remonstrances with which they were charged. Elizabeth replied, not only in the same French tongue, but also in the most beautiful speech in use at that time, and, carried away by passion, pointed out to the envoys of her brother Henry that

the Queen of Scotland had always proceeded against her, and that this was the third time that she had wished to attempt her life by an infinity of ways; which she had already borne too long and with too much patience, but that never had anything so profoundly cut her to the heart as her last conspiracy; that event, added she with sadness, having caused her to sigh more and to shed more tears than the loss of all her relations, so much the more that the Queen of Scotland was her near relative and closely connected with the King of France; and as, in their remonstrances, MM. de Châteauneuf and de Bellièvre had brought forward several examples drawn from history, she assumed, in reply to them on this occasion, the pedantic style which was usual with her, and told them that she had seen and read a great many books in her life, and a thousand more than others of her sex and her rank were wont to, but that she had never found in them a single example of a deed like that attempted on her—a deed pursued by a relative, whom the king her brother could not and ought not to support in her wickedness, when it was, on the contrary, his duty to hasten the just punishment of it: then she added, addressing herself specially to M. de Bellièvre, and coming down again from the height of her pride to a gracious countenance, that she greatly regretted he was not deputed for a better occasion; that in a few days she would reply to King Henry her brother, concerning whose health she was solicitous, as well as that of the queen mother, who must experience such great fatigue from the trouble she took to restore peace to her son's kingdom; and then, not wishing to hear more, she withdrew into her room.

The envoys returned to London, where they awaited the promised reply; but while they were expecting it unavailingly, they heard quietly the sentence of death given against Queen Mary, which decided them to return to Richmond to make fresh remonstrances to Queen Elizabeth. After two or three fruitless journeys, they were at last, December 15th, admitted for the second time to the royal presence.

The queen did not deny that the sentence had been pro-

nounced, and as it was easy to see that she did not intend in this case to use her right of pardon, M. de Bellièvre, judging that there was nothing to be done, asked for a safe-conduct to return to his king: Elizabeth promised it to him within two or three days.

On the following Tuesday, the 17th of the same month of December, Parliament as well as the chief lords of the realm were convoked at the Palace of Westminster, and there, in full court and before all, sentence of death was proclaimed and pronounced against Mary Stuart: then this same sentence, with great display and great solemnity, was read in the squares and at the cross-roads of London, whence it spread throughout the kingdom; and upon this proclamation the bells rang for twenty-four hours, while the strictest orders were given to each of the inhabitants to light bonfires in front of their houses, as is the custom in France on the Eve of St. John the Baptist.

Then, amid this sound of bells, by the light of these bonfires, M. de Bellièvre, wishing to make a last effort, in order to have nothing with which to reproach himself, wrote the following letter to Queen Elizabeth:—

"MADAM,—We quitted your Majesty yesterday, expecting, as it had pleased you to inform us, to receive in a few days your reply touching the prayer that we made you on behalf of our good master, your brother, for the Queen of Scotland, his sister-in-law and confederate; but as this morning we have been informed that the judgment given against the said queen has been proclaimed in London, although we had promised ourselves another issue from your clemency and the friendship you bear to the said lord king your good brother, nevertheless, to neglect no part of our duty, and believing in so doing to serve the intentions of the king our master, we have not wanted to fail to write to you this present letter, in which we supplicate you once again, very humbly, not to refuse his Majesty the very pressing and very affectionate prayer that he has made you, that you will be pleased to preserve the life of the said

lady Queen of Scotland, which the said lord king will receive as the greatest pleasure your Majesty could do him; while, on the contrary, he could not imagine anything which would cause him more displeasure, and which would wound him more, than if he were used harshly with regard to the said lady queen, being what she is to him: and as, madam, the said king our master, your good brother, when for this object he despatched us to your Majesty, had not conceived that it was possible, in any case, to determine so promptly upon such an execution, we implore you, madam, very humbly, before permitting it to go further, to grant us some time in which we can make known to him the state of the affairs of the said Queen of Scotland, in order that before your Majesty takes a final resolution, you may know what it may please his very Christian Majesty to tell you and point out to you on the greatest affair which, in our memory, has been submitted to men's judgment. Monsieur de Saint-Cyr, who will give these presents to your Majesty, will bring us, if it pleases you, your good reply.

"London, this 16th day of December 1586.

"(*Signed*) DE BELLIÈVRE,

"And DE L'AUBESPINE CHÂTEAUNEUF."

The same day, M. de Saint-Cyr and the other French lords returned to Richmond to take this letter; but the queen would not receive them, alleging indisposition, so that they were obliged to leave the letter with Walsingham, her first Secretary of State, who promised them to send the queen's answer the following day.

In spite of this promise, the French lords waited two days more: at last, on the second day, towards evening, two English gentlemen sought out M. de Bellièvre in London, and, *vivâ voce*, without any letter to confirm what they were charged to say, announced to him, on behalf of their queen, that in reply to the letter that they had written her, and to do justice to the desire they had shown to obtain for the condemned a reprieve during which they would make known the decision to the King of France, her Majesty would grant twelve days. As

this was Elizabeth's last word, and it was useless to lose time in pressing her further, M. de Genlis was immediately despatched to his Majesty the King of France, to whom, besides the long despatch of M. de Châteauneuf and de Bellièvre which he was charged to remit, he was to say *vivâ voce* what he had seen and heard relative to the affairs of Queen Mary during the whole time he had been in England.

Henry III responded immediately with a letter containing fresh instructions for MM. de Châteauneuf and de Bellièvre; but in spite of all the haste M. de Genlis could make, he did not reach London till the fourteenth day—that is to say, forty-eight hours after the expiration of the delay granted; nevertheless, as the sentence had not yet been put into execution, MM. de Bellièvre and de Châteauneuf set out at once for Greenwich Castle, some miles from London, where the queen was keeping Christmas, to beg her to grant them an audience, in which they could transmit to her Majesty their king's reply; but they could obtain nothing for four or five days; however, as they were not disheartened, and returned unceasingly to the charge, January 6th, MM. de Bellièvre and de Châteauneuf were at last sent for by the queen.

As on the first occasion, they were introduced with all the ceremonial in use at that time, and found Elizabeth in an audience-chamber. The ambassadors approached her, greeted her, and M. de Bellièvre began to address to her with respect, but at the same time with firmness, his master's remonstrances. Elizabeth listened to them with an impatient air, fidgeting in her seat; then at last, unable to control herself, she burst out, rising and growing red with anger—

"M. de Bellièvre," said she, "are you really charged by the king my brother to speak to me in such a way?"

"Yes, madam," replied M. de Bellièvre, bowing; "I am expressly commanded to do so."

"And have you this command under his hand?" continued Elizabeth.

"Yes, madam," returned the ambassador with the same calmness; "and the king my master, your good brother, has

expressly charged me, in letters signed by his own hand, to make to your Majesty the remonstrances which I have had the honour to address to you."

"Well," cried Elizabeth, no longer containing herself, "I demand of you a copy of that letter, signed by you; and reflect that you will answer for each word that you take away or add."

"Madam," answered M. de Bellièvre, "it is not the custom of the kings of France, or of their agents, to forge letters or documents; you will have the copies you require to-morrow morning, then, and I pledge their accuracy on my honour."

"Enough, sir, enough!" said the queen, and signing to everyone in the room to go out, she remained nearly an hour with MM. de Châteauneuf and de Bellièvre. No one knows what passed in that interview, except that the queen promised to send an ambassador to the King of France, who, she promised, would be in Paris, if not before, at least at the same time as M. de Bellièvre, and would be the bearer of her final resolve as to the affairs of the Queen of Scotland; Elizabeth then withdrew, giving the French envoys to understand that any fresh attempt they might make to see her would be useless.

On the 13th of January the ambassadors received their passports and at the same time notice that a vessel of the queen's was awaiting them at Dover.

The very day of their departure a strange incident occurred. A gentleman named Stafford, a brother of Elizabeth's ambassador to the King of France, presented himself at M. de Trappes's, one of the officials in the French chancellery, telling him that he was acquainted with a prisoner for debt who had a matter of the utmost importance to communicate to him, and that he might pay the greater attention to it, he told him that this matter was connected with the service of the King of France, and concerned the affairs of Queen Mary of Scotland. M. de Trappes, although mistrusting this overture from the first, did not want, in case his suspicions deceived him, to have to reproach himself for any neglect on such a pressing occasion. He repaired, then, with Mr. Stafford to the prison where he who wished to converse with him was detained,

When he was with him, the prisoner told him that he was locked up for a debt of only twenty crowns, and that his desire to be at liberty was so great that if M. de Châteauneuf would pay that sum for him he would undertake to deliver the Queen of Scotland from her danger, by stabbing Elizabeth: to this proposal, M. de Trappes, who saw the pitfall laid for the French ambassador, was greatly astonished, and said that he was certain that M. de Châteauneuf would consider as very evil every enterprise having as its aim to threaten in any way the life of Queen Elizabeth or the peace of the realm; then, not desiring to hear more, he returned to M. de Châteauneuf and related to him what had just happened. M. de Châteauneuf, who perceived the real cause of this overture, immediately said to Mr. Stafford that he thought it strange that a gentleman like himself should undertake with another gentleman such treachery, and requested him to leave the Embassy at once, and never to set foot there again. Then Stafford withdrew, and appearing to think himself a lost man, he implored M. de Trappes to allow him to cross the Channel with him and the French envoys. M. de Trappes referred him to M. de Châteauneuf, who answered Mr. Stafford directly that he had not only forbidden him his house, but also all relations with any person from the Embassy, that he must thus very well see that his request could not be granted; he added that if he were not restrained by the consideration he desired to keep for his brother the Earl of Stafford, his colleague, he would at once denounce his treason to Elizabeth. The same day Stafford was arrested.

After this conference, M. de Trappes set out to rejoin his travelling companions, who were some hours in advance of him, when on reaching Dover he was arrested in his turn and brought back to prison in London. Interrogated the same day, M. de Trappes frankly related what had passed, appealing to M. de Châteauneuf as to the truth of what he said.

The day following there was a second interrogatory, and great was his amazement when, on requesting that the one of the day before should be shown him, he was merely shown,

according to custom in English law, counterfeit copies, in which were avowals compromising him as well as M. de Châteauneuf: he objected and protested, refused to answer or to sign anything further, and was taken back to the Tower with redoubled precaution, the object of which was the appearance of an important accusation.

Next day, M. de Châteauneuf was summoned before the queen, and there confronted with Stafford, who impudently maintained that he had treated of a plot with M. de Trappes and a certain prisoner for debt—a plot which aimed at nothing less than endangering the queen's life. M. de Châteauneuf defended himself with the warmth of indignation, but Elizabeth had too great an interest in being unconvinced even to attend to the evidence. She then said to M. de Châteauneuf that his character of ambassador alone prevented her having him arrested like his accomplice M. de Trappes; and immediately despatching, as she had promised, an ambassador to King Henry III, she charged him not to excuse her for the sentence which had just been pronounced and the death which must soon follow, but to accuse M. de Châteauneuf of having taken part in a plot of which the discovery alone had been able to decide her to consent to the death of the Queen of Scotland, certain as she was by experience, that so long as her enemy lived her existence would be hourly threatened.

On the same day, Elizabeth made haste to spread, not only in London, but also throughout England, the rumour of the fresh danger from which she had just escaped, so that, when, two days after the departure of the French envoys, the Scottish ambassadors, who, as one sees, had not used much speed, arrived, the queen answered them that their request came unseasonably, at a time when she had just had proof that, so long as Mary Stuart existed, her own (Elizabeth's) life was in danger. Robert Melville wished to reply to this; but Elizabeth flew into a passion, saying that it was he, Melville, who had given the King of Scotland the bad advice to intercede for his mother, and that if she had such an adviser she would have him beheaded. To which Melville answered—

"That at the risk of his life he would never spare his master good advice; and that, on the contrary, he who would counsel a son to let his mother perish, would deserve to be beheaded."

Upon this reply, Elizabeth ordered the Scotch envoys to withdraw, telling them that she would let them have her answer.

Three or four days passed, and as they heard nothing further, they asked again for a parting audience to hear the last resolve of her to whom they were sent: the queen then decided to grant it, and all passed, as with M. de Bellièvre, in recriminations and complaints. Finally, Elizabeth asked them what guarantee they would give for her life in the event of her consenting to pardon the Queen of Scotland. The envoys responded that they were authorised to make pledges in the name of the King of Scotland their master, and all the lords of his realm, that Mary Stuart should renounce in favour of her son all her claims upon the English crown, and that she should give as security for this undertaking the King of France, and all the princes and lords, his relations and friends.

To this answer, the queen, without her usual presence of mind, cried, "What are you saying, Melville? That would be to arm my enemy with two claims, while he has only one."

"Does your Majesty then regard the king my master as your enemy?" replied Melville. "He believed himself happier, madam, and thought he was your ally."

"No, no," Elizabeth said, blushing; "it is a way of speaking: and if you find a means of reconciling everything, gentlemen, to prove to you, on the contrary, that I regard King James VI as my good and faithful ally, I am quite ready to incline to mercy. Seek, then, on your side," added she, "while I seek on mine."

With these words, she went out of the room, and the ambassadors retired, with the light of the hope of which she had just let them catch a glimpse.

The same evening, a gentleman at the court sought out the Master of Gray, the head of the Embassy, as if to pay him a

civil visit, and while conversing said to him, "That it was very difficult to reconcile the safety of Queen Elizabeth with the life of her prisoner; that besides, if the Queen of Scotland were pardoned, and she or her son ever came to the English throne, there would be no security for the lords commissioners who had voted her death; that there was then only one way of arranging everything, that the King of Scotland should himself give up his claims to the kingdom of England; that otherwise, according to him, there was no security for Elizabeth in saving the life of the Scottish queen." The Master of Gray then, looking at him fixedly, asked him if his sovereign had charged him to come to him with this talk. But the gentleman denied it, saying that all this was on his own account and in the way of opinion.

Elizabeth received the envoys from Scotland once more, and then told them—

"That after having well considered, she had found no way of saving the life of the Queen of Scotland while securing her own, that accordingly she could not grant it to them." To this declaration, the Master of Gray replied: "That since it was thus, he was, in this case, ordered by his master to say that they protested in the name of King James that all that had been done against his mother was of no account, seeing that Queen Elizabeth had no authority over a queen, as she was her equal in rank and birth; that accordingly they declared that immediately after their return, and when their master should know the result of their mission, he would assemble his Parliament and send messengers to all the Christian princes, to take counsel with them as to what could be done to avenge her whom they could not save."

Then Elizabeth again flew into a passion, saying that they had certainly not received from their king a mission to speak to her in such a way; but they thereupon offered to give her this protest in writing under their signatures; to which Elizabeth replied that she would send an ambassador to arrange all that with her good friend and ally the King of Scotland. But the envoys then said that their master would not listen to any-

one before their return. Upon which Elizabeth begged them not to go away at once, because she had not yet come to her final decision upon this matter. On the evening following this audience, Lord Hingley having come to see the Master of Gray, and having seemed to notice some handsome pistols which came from Italy, Gray, directly he had gone, asked this nobleman's cousin to take them to him as a gift from him. Delighted with this pleasant commission, the young man wished to perform it the same evening, and went to the queen's palace, where his relative was staying, to give him the present which he had been told to take him. But hardly had he passed through a few rooms than he was arrested, searched, and the arms he was taking were found upon him. Although these were not loaded, he was immediately arrested; only he was not taken to the Tower, but kept a prisoner in his own room.

Next day there was a rumour that the Scotch ambassadors had wanted to assassinate the queen in their turn, and that pistols, given by the Master of Gray himself, had been found on the assassin.

This bad faith could not but open the envoys' eyes. Convinced at last that they could do nothing for poor Mary Stuart, they left her to her fate, and set out next day for Scotland.

Scarcely were they gone than Elizabeth sent her secretary Davison to Sir Amyas Paulet. He was instructed to sound him again with regard to the prisoner; afraid, in spite of herself, of a public execution, the queen had reverted to her former ideas of poisoning or assassination; but Sir Amyas Paulet declared that he would let no one have access to Mary but the executioner, who must in addition be the bearer of a warrant perfectly in order. Davison reported this answer to Elizabeth, who while listening to him stamped her foot several times, and when he had finished, unable to control herself, cried, "God's death! there's a dainty fellow, always talking of his fidelity and not knowing how to prove it!"

Elizabeth was then obliged to make up her mind. She asked Davison for the warrant; he gave it to her, and forgetting that she was the daughter of a queen who had died on the scaffold, she

signed it without any trace of emotion; then, having affixed to it the great seal of England, "Go," said she, laughing, "tell Walsingham that all is ended for Queen Mary; but tell him with precautions, for, as he is ill, I am afraid he will die of grief when he hears it."

The jest was the more atrocious in that Walsingham was known to be the Queen of Scotland's bitterest enemy.

Towards evening of that day, Saturday the 14th, Beale, Walsingham's brother-in-law, was summoned to the palace. The queen gave into his hands the death warrant, and with it an order addressed to the Earls of Shrewsbury, Kent, Rutland, and other noblemen in the neighbourhood of Fotheringay, to be present at the execution. Beale took with him the London executioner, whom Elizabeth had had dressed in black velvet for this great occasion, and set out two hours after he had received his warrant.

CHAPTER IX

QUEEN MARY had known the decree of the commissioners these two months. The very day it had been pronounced she had learned the news through her chaplain, whom they had allowed her to see this once only. Mary Stuart had taken advantage of this visit to give him three letters she had just written—one for Pope Sixtus V, the other to Don Bernard Mendoza, the third to the Duke of Guise.

Here is that last letter:—

"*4th December* 1586

"MY GOOD COUSIN, whom I hold dearest in the world, I bid you farewell, being prepared to be put to death by an unjust judgment, and to a death such as no one of our race, thanks to God, and never a queen, and still less one of my rank, has ever suffered. But, good cousin, praise the Lord; for I was useless to the cause of God and of His Church in this world, prisoner as I was; while, on the contrary, I hope that my death will bear witness to my constancy in the faith and to my willingness to suffer for the maintenance and the restoration of the Catholic Church in this unfortunate island. And though never has executioner dipped his hand in our blood, have no shame of it, my friend; for the judgment of heretics who have no authority over me, a free queen, is profitable in the sight of God to the children of His Church. If I adhered, moreover, to what they propose to me, I should not suffer this stroke. All of our house have been persecuted by this sect, witness your good father, through whose intercession I hope to be received with mercy by the just Judge. I commend to you, then, my poor servants, the discharge of my debts, and the founding of some annual mass for my soul, not at

your expense, but that you may make the arrangements, as you will be required when you learn my wishes through my poor and faithful servants, who are about to witness my last tragedy. God prosper you, your wife, children, brothers and cousins, and above all our chief, my good brother and cousin, and all his. The blessing of God and that which I shall give to my children be on yours, whom I do not commend less to God than my own son, unfortunate and ill-treated as he is. You will receive some rings from me which will remind you to pray God for the soul of your poor cousin, deprived of all help and counsel except that of the Lord who gives me strength and courage alone to resist so many wolves howling after me. To God be the glory.

"Believe particularly what will be told you by a person who will give you a ruby ring from me; for I take it on my conscience that the truth will be told you of what I have charged him to tell, and specially in what concerns my poor servants and the share of any. I commend this person to you for his simple sincerity and honesty, that he may be placed in some good place. I have chosen him as the least partial and as the one who will most simply bring you my commands. Ignore, I beg you, that he told you anything in particular; for envy might injure him. I have suffered a great deal for two years and more, and have not been able to let you know, for an important reason. God be praised for all, and give you grace to persevere in the service of His Church as long as you live, and never may this honour pass from our race, while so many men and women are ready to shed our blood to maintain the fight for the faith, all other worldly considerations set aside. And as to me, I esteem myself born on both father's and mother's sides, that I should offer up my blood for this cause, and I have no intention of degenerating. Jesus, crucified for us, and all the holy martyrs, make us by their intercession worthy of the voluntary offering we make of our bodies to their glory!

"From Fotheringay, this Thursday, 24th November.

"They have, thinking to degrade me, pulled down my canopy of state, and since then my keeper has come to offer to write to

their queen, saying this deed was not done by his order, but by the advice of some of the Council. I have shown them instead of my arms on the said canopy the cross of Our Lord. You will hear all this; they have been more gentle since.—Your affectionate cousin and perfect friend,

"MARY, Queen of Scotland, Dowager of France"

From this day forward, when she learned the sentence delivered by the commissioners, Mary Stuart no longer preserved any hope; for as she knew Elizabeth's pardon was required to save her, she looked upon herself thenceforward as lost, and only concerned herself with preparing to die well. Indeed, as it had happened to her sometimes, from the cold and damp in her prisons, to become crippled for some time in all her limbs, she was afraid of being so when they would come to take her, which would prevent her going resolutely to the scaffold, as she was counting on doing. So, on Saturday the 14th February, she sent for her doctor, Bourgoin, and asked him, moved by a presentiment that her death was at hand, she said, what she must do to prevent the return of the pains which crippled her. He replied that it would be good for her to medicine herself with fresh herbs. "Go, then," said the queen, "and ask Sir Amyas Paulet from me permission to seek them in the fields."

Bourgoin went to Sir Amyas, who, as he himself was troubled with sciatica, should have understood better than anyone the need of the remedies for which the queen asked. But this request, simple as it was, raised great difficulties. Sir Amyas replied that he could do nothing without referring to his companion, Drury; but that paper and ink might be brought, and that he, Master Bourgoin, could then make a list of the needful plants, which they would try to procure. Bourgoin answered that he did not know English well enough, and that the village apothecaries did not know enough Latin, for him to risk the queen's life for some error by himself or others. Finally, after a thousand hesitations, Paulet allowed Bourgoin to go out, which he did, accompanied by the apothecary Gorjon; so that

the following day the queen was able to begin to doctor herself.

Mary Stuart's presentiments had not deceived her: Tuesday, February 17th, at about two o'clock in the afternoon, the Earls of Kent and Shrewsbury, and Beale sent word to the queen that they desired to speak with her. The queen answered that she was ill and in bed, but that if notwithstanding what they had to tell her was a matter of importance, and they would give her a little time, she would get up. They made answer that the communication they had to make admitted of no delay, that they begged her then to make ready; which the queen immediately did, and rising from her bed and cloaking herself, she went and seated herself at a little table, on the same spot where she was wont to be great part of the day.

Then the two earls, accompanied by Beale, Amyas Paulet, and Drue Drury, entered. Behind them, drawn by curiosity, full of terrible anxiety, came her dearest ladies and most cherished servants. These were, of womenkind, the Misses Renée de Really, Gilles Mowbray, Jeanne Kennedy, Elspeth Curle, Mary Paget, and Susan Kercady; and of menkind, Dominique Bourgoin her doctor, Pierrre Gorjon her apothecary, Jacques Gervais her surgeon, Annibal Stewart her footman, Didier Sifflart her butler, Jean Lauder her baker, and Martin Huet her carver.

Then the Earl of Shrewsbury, with head bared like all those present, who remained thus as long as they were in the queen's room, began to say in English, addressing Mary—

"Madam, the Queen of England, my august mistress, has sent me to you, with the Earl of Kent and Sir Robert Beale, here present, to make known to you that after having honourably proceeded in the inquiry into the deed of which you are accused and found guilty, an inquiry which has already been submitted to your Grace by Lord Buckhurst, and having delayed as long as it was in her power the execution of the sentence, she can no longer withstand the importunity of her subjects, who press her to carry it out, so great and loving is their fear for her. For this purpose we have come the bearers

of a commission, and we beg very humbly, madam, that it may please you to hear it read."

"Read, my lord; I am listening," replied Mary Stuart, with the greatest calmness. Then Robert Beale unrolled the said commission, which was on parchment, sealed with the Great Seal in yellow wax, and read as follows:—

"Elizabeth, by the grace of God, Queen of England, France, and Ireland, etc., to our beloved and faithful cousins, George, Earl of Shrewsbury, Grand Marshal of England; Henry, Earl of Kent; Henry, Earl of Derby; George, Earl of Cumberland; Henry, Earl of Pembroke, greeting:[1]

"Considering the sentence by us given, and others of our Council, nobility, and judges, against the former Queen of Scotland, bearing the name of Mary, daughter and heiress of James v, King of Scotland, commonly called Queen of Scotland and Dowager of France, which sentence all the estates of our realm in our last Parliament assembled not only concluded, but, after mature deliberation, ratified as being just and reasonable; considering also the urgent prayer and request of our subjects, begging us and pressing us to proceed to the publication thereof, and to carry it into execution against her person, according as they judge it duly merited, adding in this place that her detention was and would be daily a certain and evident danger, not only to our life, but also to themselves and their posterity, and to the public weal of this realm, as much on account of the Gospel and the true religion of Christ as of the peace and tranquillity of this State, although the said sentence has been frequently delayed, so that even until this time we abstained from issuing the commission to execute it: yet, for the complete satisfaction of the said demands made by the Estates of our Parliament, through which daily we hear that all our friends and subjects, as well as the nobility, the wisest, greatest, and most pious, nay, even those of

[1] The Earls of Cumberland, Derby, and Pembroke did not attend to the queen's orders, and were present neither at the reading of the sentence nor at the execution.

inferior condition, with all humility and affection from the care they have of our life, and consequently from the fear they have of the destruction of the present divine and happy state of the realm if we spare the final execution, consenting and desiring the said execution; though the general and continual demands, prayers, counsels, and advice were in such things contrary to our natural inclination; yet, being convinced of the urgent weight of their continual intercessions tending to the safety of our person, and also to the public and private state of our realm, we have at last consented and suffered that justice have its course, and for its execution, considering the singular confidence we have in your fidelity and loyalty together for the love and affection that you have toward us, particularly to the safeguarding of our person and our country of which you are very noble and chief members; we summon, and, for the discharge of it we enjoin you, that at sight of these presents you go to the castle of Fotheringay, where the former Queen of Scotland is, in the care of our friend and faithful servant and counsellor, Sir Amyas Paulet, and there take into your keeping and do that by your command execution be done on her person, in the presence of yourselves and the said Sir Amyas Paulet, and of all the other officers of justice whom you command to be there: in the meantime we have for this end and this execution given warrant in such a way and manner, and in such a time and place, and by such persons, that you five, four, three, or two, find expedient in your discretion; notwithstanding all laws, statutes, and ordinances whatsoever, contrary to these presents, sealed with our Great Seal of England, which will serve for each of you, and all those who are present, or will make by your order anything pertaining to the execution aforesaid full and sufficient discharge for ever.

"Done and given in our house at Greenwich, the first day of February (10th February New Style), in the twenty-ninth year of our reign."

Mary listened to this reading with great calmness and great dignity; then, when it was ended, making the sign of the cross—

"Welcome," said she, "to all news which comes in the name of God! Thanks, Lord, for that You deign to put an end to all the ills You have seen me suffer for nineteen years and more."

"Madam," said the Earl of Kent, "have no ill-will towards us on account of your death; it was necessary to the peace of the State and the progress of the new religion."

"So," cried Mary with delight, "so I shall have the happiness of dying for the faith of my fathers; thus God deigns to grant me the glory of martyrdom. Thanks, God," added she, joining her hands with less excitement but with more piety, "thanks that You have deigned to destine for me such an end, of which I was not worthy. That, O my God, is indeed a proof of Your love, and an assurance that You will receive me in the number of Your servants; for although this sentence had been notified to me, I was afraid, from the manner in which they have dealt with me for nineteen years, of not yet being so near as I am to such a happy end, thinking that your queen would not dare to lay a hand on me, who, by the grace of God, am a queen as she is, the daughter of a queen as she is, crowned as she is, her near relative, granddaughter of King Henry VII, and who has had the honour of being Queen of France, of which I am still Dowager; and this fear was so much the greater," added she, laying her hand on a New Testament which was near her on the little table, "that, I swear on this holy book, I have never attempted, consented to, or even desired the death of my sister, the Queen of England."

"Madam," replied the Earl of Kent, taking a step towards her and pointing to the New Testament, "this book on which you have sworn is not genuine, since it is the papist version; consequently, your oath cannot be considered as any more genuine than the book on which it has been taken."

"My lord," answered the queen, "what you say may befit you, but not me, who well know that this book is the true and faithful version of the word of the Lord, a version made by a very wise divine, a very good man, and approved by the Church."

"Madam," the Earl of Kent returned, "your Grace stopped

at what you were taught in your youth, without inquiry as to whether it was good or bad: it is not surprising, then, that you have remained in your error, for want of having heard anyone who could make known the truth to you; this is why, as your Grace has but a few hours longer to remain in this world, and consequently has no time to lose, with your permission we shall send for the Dean of Peterborough, the most learned man there is on the subject of religion, who, with his word, will prepare you for your salvation, which you risk to our great grief and that of our august queen, by all the papistical follies, abominations, and childish nonsense which keep Catholics away from the holy word of God and the knowledge of the truth."

"You mistake, my lord," replied the queen gently, "if you have believed that I have grown up careless in the faith of my fathers, and without seriously occupying myself with a matter so important as religion. I have, on the contrary, spent my life with learned and wise men who taught me what one must learn on this subject, and I have sustained myself by reading their works, since the means of hearing them has been taken from me. Besides, never having doubted in my lifetime, doubt is not likely to seize me in my death-hour. And there is the Earl of Shrewsbury, here present, who will tell you that, since my arrival in England, I have, for an entire Lent, of which I repent, heard your wisest doctors, without their arguments having made any impression on my mind. It will be useless, then, my lord," she added, smiling, "to summon to one so hardened as I the Dean of Peterborough, learned as he is. The only thing I ask you in exchange, my lord, and for which I shall be grateful to you beyond all expression, is that you will send me my almoner, whom you keep shut up in this house, to console me and prepare me for death, or, in his stead, another priest, be he who he may, if only a poor priest from a poor village, I being no harder to please than God, and not asking that he have knowledge, provided that he has faith."

"It is with regret, madam," replied the Earl of Kent, "that I find myself obliged to refuse your Grace's request; but it would be contrary to our religion and our conscience, and we

should be culpable in doing it; this is why we again offer you the venerable Dean of Peterborough, certain that your Grace will find more consolation and content in him than in any bishop, priest, or vicar of the Catholic faith."

"Thank you, my lord," said the queen again, "but I have nothing to do with him, and as I have a conscience free of the crime for which I am about to die, with God's help, martyrdom will take the place of confession for me. And now, I will remind you, my lord, of what you told me yourself, that I have but few hours to live; and these few hours, to profit me, should be passed in prayer and meditation, and not in idle disputes."

With these words, she rose, and, bowing to the earls, Sir Robert Beale, Amyas, and Drury, she indicated, by a gesture full of dignity, that she wished to be alone and in peace; then, as they prepared to go out—

"*À propos*, my lords," said she, "for what o'clock should I make ready to die?"

"For eight o'clock to-morrow, madam," answered the Earl of Shrewsbury, stammering.

"It is well," said Mary; "but have you not some reply to make me, from my sister Elizabeth, relative to a letter which I wrote to her about a month ago?"

"And of what did this letter treat, if it please you, madam?" asked the Earl of Kent.

"Of my burial and my funeral ceremony, my lord: I asked to be interred in France, in the cathedral church of Rheims, near the late queen my mother."

"That may not be, madam," replied the Earl of Kent; "but do not trouble yourself as to all these details: the queen, my august mistress, will provide for them as is suitable. Has your Grace anything else to ask us?"

"I would also like to know," said Mary, "if my servants will be allowed to return, each to his own country, with the little that I can give him; which will hardly be enough, in any case, for the long service they have done me, and the long imprisonment they have borne on my account."

"We have no instructions on that head, madam," the Earl of Kent said, "but we think that an order will be given for this as for the other things, in accordance with your wishes. Is this all that your Grace has to say to us?"

"Yes, my lord," replied the queen, bowing a second time, "and now you may withdraw."

"One moment, my lords, in Heaven's name, one moment!" cried the old physician, coming forward and throwing himself on his knees before the two earls.

"What do you want?" asked Lord Shrewsbury.

"To point out to you, my lords," replied the aged Bourgoin, weeping, "that you have granted the queen but a very short time for such an important matter as this of her life. Reflect, my lords, what rank and degree she whom you have condemned has held among the princes of this earth, and consider if it is well and seemly to treat her as an ordinary condemned person of middling estate. And if not for the sake of this noble queen, my lords, do this for the sake of us her poor servants, who, having had the honour of living near her so long, cannot thus part from her so quickly and without preparation. Besides, my lords, think of it, a woman of her state and position ought to have some time in which to set in order her last affairs. And what will become of her, and of us, if before dying, our mistress has not time to regulate her jointure and her accounts and to put in order her papers and her title-deeds? She has services to reward and offices of piety to perform. She should not neglect the one or the other. Besides, we know that she will only concern herself with us, and, through this, my lords, neglect her own salvation. Grant her, then, a few more days, my lords; and as our mistress is too proud to ask of you such a favour, I ask you in all our names, and implore you not to refuse to poor servants a request which your august queen would certainly not refuse them, if they had the good fortune to be able to lay it at her feet."

"Is it then true, madam," Sir Robert Beale asked, "that you have not yet made a will?"

"I have not, sir," the queen answered.

"In that case, my lords," said Sir Robert Beale, turning to the two earls, "perhaps it would be a good thing to put it off for a day or two."

"Impossible, sir," replied the Earl of Shrewsbury: "the time is fixed, and we cannot change anything, even by a minute, now."

"Enough, Bourgoin, enough," said the queen; "rise, I command you."

Bourgoin obeyed, and the Earl of Shrewsbury, turning to Sir Amyas Paulet, who was behind him—

"Sir Amyas," said he, "we entrust this lady to your keeping: you will charge yourself with her, and keep her safe till our return."

With these words he went out, followed by the Earl of Kent, Sir Robert Beale, Amyas Paulet, and Drury, and the queen remained alone with her servants.

Then, turning to her women with as serene a countenance as if the event which had just taken place was of little importance—

"Well, Jeanne," said she, speaking to Kennedy, "have I not always told you, and was I not right, that at the bottom of their hearts they wanted to do this? and did I not see clearly through all their procedure the end they had in view, and know well enough that I was too great an obstacle to their false religion to be allowed to live? Come," continued she, "hasten supper now, that I may put my affairs in order." Then, seeing that instead of obeying her, her servants were weeping and lamenting, "My children," said she, with a sad smile, but without a tear in her eye, "it is no time for weeping, quite the contrary; for if you love me, you ought to rejoice that the Lord, in making me die for His cause, relieves me from the torments I have endured for nineteen years. As for me, I thank Him for allowing me to die for the glory of His faith and His Church. Let each have patience, then, and while the men prepare supper, we women will pray to God."

The men immediately went out, weeping and sobbing, and the queen and her women fell on their knees. When they had recited some prayers, Mary rose, and sending for all the

money she had left, she counted it and divided it into portions, which she put into purses with the name of the destined recipient, in her handwriting, with the money.

At that moment, supper being served, she seated herself at table with her women as usual, the other servants standing or coming and going, her doctor waiting on her at table as he was accustomed since her steward had been taken from her. She ate no more nor less than usual, speaking, throughout supper, of the Earl of Kent, and of the way in which he betrayed himself with respect to religion, by his insisting on wanting to give the queen a pastor instead of a priest. "Happily," she added, laughing, "one more skilful than he was needed to change me." Meanwhile Bourgoin was weeping behind the queen, for he was thinking that he was serving her for the last time, and that she who was eating, talking, and laughing thus, next day at the same hour would be but a cold and insensible corpse.

When the meal was over, the queen sent for all her servants; then, before the table was cleared of anything, she poured out a cup of wine, rose and drank to their health, asking them if they would not drink to her salvation. Then she had a glass given to each one: all kneeled down, and all, says the account from which we borrow these details, drank, mingling their tears with the wine, and asking pardon of the queen for any wrongs they had done her. The qeeen granted it heartily, and asked them to do as much for her, and to forget her impatient ways, which she begged them to put down to her imprisonment. Then, having given them a long discourse, in which she explained to them their duties to God, and exhorted them to persevere in the Catholic faith, she begged them, after her death, to live together in peace and charity, forgetting all the petty quarrels and disputes which they had had among one another in the past.

This speech ended, the queen rose from table, and desired to go into her wardrobe-room, to see the clothes and jewels she wished to dispose of; but Bourgoin observed that it would be better to have all these separate objects brought into her chamber; that there would be a double advantage in this, she

would be less tired for one thing, and the English would not see them for another. This last reason decided her, and while the servants were supping, she had brought into her ante-room, first of all, all her robes, and took the inventory from her wardrobe attendant, and began to write in the margin beside each item the name of the person it was to be given to. Directly, and as fast as she did it, that person to whom it was given took it and put it aside. As for the things which were too personal to her to be thus bestowed, she ordered that they should be sold, and that the purchase-money should be used for her servants' travelling expenses, when they returned to their own countries, well knowing how great the cost would be and that no one would have sufficient means. This memorandum finished, she signed it, and gave it as a discharge to her wardrobe attendant.

Then, that done, she went into her room, where had been brought her rings, her jewels, and her most valuable belongings; inspected them all, one after the other, down to the very least; and distributed them as she had done her robes, so that, present or absent, everyone had something. Then she furthermore gave, to her most faithful people, the jewels she intended for the king and queen of France, for the king her son, for the queen-mother, for Messieurs de Guise and de Lorraine, without forgetting in this distribution any prince or princess among her relatives. She desired, besides, that each should keep the things then in his care, giving her linen to the young lady who looked after it, her silk embroideries to her who took charge of them, her silver plate to her butler, and so on with the rest.

Then, as they were asking her for a discharge, "It is useless," said she; "you owe an account to me only, and to-morrow, therefore, you will no longer owe it to anyone"; but, as they pointed out that the king her son could claim from them, "You are right," said she; and she gave them what they asked.

That done, and having no hope left of being visited by her confessor, she wrote him this letter:—

"I have been tormented all this day on account of my religion, and urged to receive the consolations of a heretic: you will learn, through Bourgoin and the others, that everything they could say on this matter has been useless, that I have faithfully made protestation of the faith in which I wish to die. I requested that you should be allowed to receive my confession and to give me the sacrament, which has been cruelly refused, as well as the removal of my body, and the power to make my will freely; so that I cannot write anything except through their hands, and with the good pleasure of their mistress. For want of seeing you, then, I confess to you my sins in general, as I should have done in particular, begging you, in God's name, to watch and pray this night with me, for the remission of my sins, and to send me your absolution and forgiveness for all the wrongs I have done you. I shall try to see you in their presence, as they permitted it to my steward; and if it is allowed, before all, and on my knees, I shall ask your blessing. Send me the best prayers you know for this night and for to-morrow morning; for the time is short, and I have not the leisure to write; but be calm, I shall recommend you like the rest of my servants, and your benefices above all will be secured to you. Farewell, for I have not much more time. Send to me in writing everything you can find, best for my salvation, in prayers and exhortations. I send you my last little ring."

Directly she had written this letter the queen began to make her will, and at a stroke, with her pen running on and almost without lifting it from the paper, she wrote two large sheets, containing several paragraphs, in which no one was forgotten, present as absent, distributing the little she had with scrupulous fairness, and still more according to need than according to service. The executors she chose were: the Duke of Guise, her first cousin; the Archbishop of Glasgow, her ambassador; the Bishop of Ross, her chaplain in chief; and M. du Ruysseau, her chancellor, all four certainly very worthy of the charge, the first from his authority, the two bishops by piety and conscience, and the last by his know-

ledge of affairs. Her will finished, she wrote this letter to the King of France:—

SIR MY BROTHER-IN-LAW,—Having, by God's permission and for my sins, I believe, thrown myself into the arms of this queen, my cousin, where I have had much to endure for more than twenty years, I am by her and by her Parliament finally condemned to death; and having asked for my papers, taken from me, to make my will, I have not been able to obtain anything to serve me, not even permission to write my last wishes freely, nor leave that after my death my body should be transported, as was my dearest desire, into your kingdom, where I had had the honour of being queen, your sister and your ally. To-day, after dinner, without more respect, my sentence has been declared to me, to be executed to-morrow, like a criminal, at eight o'clock in the morning. I have not the leisure to give you a full account of what has occurred; but if it please you to believe my doctor and these others my distressed servants, you will hear the truth, and that, thanks to God, I despise death, which I protest I receive innocent of every crime, even if I were their subject, which I never was. But my faith in the Catholic religion and my claims to the crown of England are the real causes for my condemnation, and yet they will not allow me to say that it is for religion I die, for my religion kills theirs; and that is so true, that they have taken my chaplain from me, who, although a prisoner in the same castle, may not come either to console me, or to give me the holy sacrament of the eucharist; but, on the contrary, they have made me urgent entreaties to receive the consolations of their minister whom they have brought for this purpose. He who will bring you this letter, and the rest of my servants, who are your subjects for the most part, will bear you witness of the way in which I shall have performed my last act. Now it remains to me to implore you, as a most Christian king, as my brother-in-law, as my ancient ally, and one who has so often done me the honour to protest your friendship for me, to give proof of this friend-

ship, in your virtue and your charity, by helping me in that of which I cannot without you discharge my conscience—that is to say, in rewarding my good distressed servants, by giving them their dues; then, in having prayers made to God for a queen who has been called most Christian, and who dies a Catholic and deprived of all her goods. As to my son, I commend him to you as much as he shall deserve, for I cannot answer for him; but as to my servants, I commend them with clasped hands. I have taken the liberty of sending you two rare stones good for the health, hoping that yours may be perfect during a long life; you will receive them as coming from your very affectionate sister-in-law, at the point of death and giving proof of her good disposition towards you.

"I shall commend my servants to you in a memorandum, and will order you, for the good of my soul, for whose salvation it will be employed, to pay me a portion of what you owe me, if it please you, and I conjure you for the honour of Jesus, to whom I shall pray to-morrow at my death, that you leave me the wherewithal to found a mass and to perform the necessary charities.

"This Wednesday, two hours after midnight.—Your affectionate and good sister, MARY, R. . . ."

Of all these recommendations, the will and the letters, the queen at once had copies made which she signed, so that, if some should be seized by the English, the others might reach their destination. Bourgoin pointed out to her that she was wrong to be in such a hurry to close them, and that perhaps in two or three hours she would remember that she had left something out. But the queen paid no attention, saying she was sure she had not forgotten anything, and that if she had, she had only time now to pray and to look to her conscience. So she shut up all the several articles in the drawers of a piece of furniture and gave the key to Bourgoin; then sending for a foot-bath, in which she stayed for about ten minutes, she lay down in bed, where she was not seen to sleep, but constantly to repeat prayers or to remain in meditation.

Towards four o'clock in the morning, the queen, who was accustomed, after evening prayers, to have the story of some male or female saint read aloud to her, did not wish to depart from this habit, and, after having hesitated among several for this solemn occasion, she chose the greatest sinner of all, the penitent thief, saying humbly—

"If, great sinner as he was, he has yet sinned less than I, I desire to beg him, in remembrance of the passion of Jesus Christ, to have pity on me in the hour of my death, as Our Lord had pity on him."

Then, when the reading was over, she had all her handkerchiefs brought, and chose the finest, which was of delicate cambric all embroidered in gold, to bandage her eyes with.

At daybreak, reflecting that she had only two hours to live, she rose and began dressing, but before she had finished, Bourgoin came into her room, and, afraid lest the absent servants might murmur against the queen, if by chance they were discontented at the will, and might accuse those who had been present of having taken away from their share to add to their own, he begged Mary to send for them all and to read it in their presence; to which Mary agreed, and consented to do so at once.

All the servants were then summoned, and the queen read her testament, saying that it was done of her own free, full and entire will, written and signed with her own hand, and that accordingly she begged those present to give all the help in their power in seeing it carried out without change or omission; then, having read it over, and having received a promise from all, she gave it to Bourgoin, charging him to send it to M. de Guise, her chief executor, and at the same time to forward her letters to the king and her principal papers and memorandums: after this, she had the casket brought in which she had put the purses which we mentioned before; she opened them one after another, and seeing by the ticket within for whom each was intended, she distributed them with her own hand, none of the recipients being aware of their contents. These gifts varied from twenty to three hundred crowns; and

to these sums she added seven hundred livres for the poor, namely, two hundred for the poor of England and five hundred for the poor of France; then she gave to each man in her suite two rose nobles to be distributed in alms for her sake, and finally one hundred and fifty crowns to Bourgoin to be divided among them all when they should separate; and thus twenty-six or twenty-seven people had money legacies.

The queen performed all this with great composure and calmness, with no apparent change of countenance; so that it seemed as if she were only preparing for a journey or change of dwelling; then she again bade her servants farewell, consoling them and exhorting them to live in peace, all this while finishing dressing as well and as elegantly as she could.

Her toilet ended, the queen went from her reception-room to her ante-room, where there was an altar set up and arranged, at which, before he had been taken from her, her chaplain used to say mass; and kneeling on the steps, surrounded by all her servants, she began the communion prayers, and when they were ended, drawing from a golden box a host consecrated by Pius v, which she had always scrupulously preserved for the occasion of her death, she told Bourgoin to take it, and, as he was the senior, to take the priest's place, old age being holy and sacred; and in this manner, in spite of all the precautions taken to deprive her of it, the queen received the holy sacrament of the eucharist.

This pious ceremony ended, Bourgoin told the queen that in her will she had forgotten three people—Mesdemoiselles Beauregard, de Montbrun, and her chaplain. The queen was greatly astonished at this oversight, which was quite involuntary, and, taking back her will, she wrote her wishes with respect to them in the first empty margin; then she kneeled down again in prayer; but after a moment, as she suffered too much in this position, she rose, and Bourgoin having had brought her a little bread and wine, she ate and drank, and when she had finished, gave him her hand and thanked him for having been present to help her at her last

meal, as he was accustomed; and feeling stronger, she kneeled down and began to pray again.

Scarcely had she done so, than there was a knocking at the door: the queen understood what was required of her; but as she had not finished praying, she begged those who were come to fetch her to wait a moment, and in a few minutes she would be ready.

The Earls of Kent and Shrewsbury, remembering the resistance she had made when she had had to go down to the commissioners and appear before the lawyers, mounted some guards in the ante-room where they were waiting themselves, so that they could take her away by force if necessary, should she refuse to come willingly, or should her servants want to defend her; but it is untrue that the two barons entered her room, as some have said. They only set foot there once, on the occasion which we have related, when they came to apprise her of her sentence.

They waited some minutes, nevertheless, as the queen had begged them; then, about eight o'clock, they knocked again, accompanied by the guards; but to their great surprise the door was opened immediately, and they found Mary on her knees in prayer. Upon this, Sir Thomas Andrew, who was at the time sheriff of the county of Nottingham, entered alone, a white wand in his hand, and as everyone stayed on their knees praying, he crossed the room with a slow step and stood behind the queen: he waited a moment there, and as Mary Stuart did not seem to see him—

"Madam," said he, "the earls have sent me to you."

At these words the queen turned round, and at once rising in the middle of her prayer, "Let us go," she replied, and she made ready to follow him; then Bourgoin, taking the cross of black wood with an ivory Christ which was over the altar, said—

"Madam, would you not like to take this little cross?"

"Thank you for having reminded me," Mary answered; "I had intended to, but I forgot." Then, giving it to Annibal Stewart, her footman, that he might present it when she

should ask for it, she began to move to the door, and on account of the great pain in her limbs, leaning on Bourgoin, who, as they drew near, suddenly let her go, saying—

"Madam, your Majesty knows if we love you, and all, such as we are, are ready to obey you, should you command us to die for you; but I, I have not the strength to lead you farther; besides, it is not becoming that we, who should be defending you to the last drop of our blood, should seem to be betraying you in giving you thus into the hands of these infamous English."

"You are right, Bourgoin," said the queen; "moreover, my death would be a sad sight for you, which I ought to spare your age and your friendship. Mr. Sheriff," added she, "call someone to support me, for you see that I cannot walk."

The sheriff bowed, and signed to two guards whom he had kept hidden behind the door to lend him assistance in case the queen should resist, to approach and support her; which they at once did; and Mary Stuart went on her way, preceded and followed by her servants weeping and wringing their hands. But at the second door other guards stopped them, telling them they must go no farther. They all cried out against such a prohibition: they said that for the nineteen years they had been shut up with the queen they had always accompanied her wherever she went; that it was frightful to deprive their mistress of their services at the last moment, and that such an order had doubtless been given because they wanted to practise some shocking cruelty on her, of which they desired no witnesses. Bourgoin, who was at their head, seeing that he could obtain nothing by threats or entreaties, asked to speak with the earls; but this claim was not allowed either, and as the servants wanted to pass by force, the soldiers repulsed them with blows of their arquebuses; then, raising her voice—

"It is wrong of you to prevent my servants following me," said the queen, "and I begin to think, like them, that you have some ill design upon me beyond my death."

The sheriff replied, "Madam, four of your servants are chosen to follow you, and no more; when you have come down, they will be fetched, and will rejoin you."

"What!" said the queen, "the four chosen persons cannot even follow me now?"

"The order is thus given by the earls," answered the sheriff, "and, to my great regret, madam, I can do nothing."

Then the queen turned to them, and taking the cross from Annibal Stewart, and in her other hand her book of Hours and her handkerchief, "My children," said she, "this is one more grief to add to our other griefs; let us bear it like Christians, and offer this fresh sacrifice to God."

At these words sobs and cries burst forth on all sides: the unhappy servants fell on their knees, and while some rolled on the ground, tearing their hair, others kissed her hands, her knees, and the hem of her gown, begging her forgiveness for every possible fault, calling her their mother and bidding her farewell. Finding, no doubt, that this scene was lasting too long, the sheriff made a sign, and the soldiers pushed the men and women back into the room and shut the door on them; still, fast as was the door, the queen none the less heard their cries and lamentations, which seemed, in spite of the guards, as if they would accompany her to the scaffold.

At the stairhead, the queen found Andrew Melville awaiting her: he was the Master of her Household, who had been secluded from her for some time, and who was at last permitted to see her once more to say farewell. The queen, hastening her steps, approached him, and kneeling down to receive his blessing, which he gave her, weeping—

"Melville," said she, without rising, and addressing him as "thou" for the first time, "as thou hast been an honest servant to me, be the same to my son: seek him out directly after my death, and tell him of it in every detail; tell him that I wish him well, and that I beseech God to send him His Holy Spirit."

"Madam," replied Melville, "this is certainly the saddest message with which a man can be charged: no matter, I shall faithfully fulfil it, I swear to you."

"What sayest thou, Melville?" responded the queen, rising; "and what better news canst thou bear, on the contrary, than that I am delivered from all my ills? Tell him that he should rejoice, since the sufferings of Mary Stuart are at an end; tell him that I die a Catholic, constant in my religion, faithful to Scotland and France, and that I forgive those who put me to death. Tell him that I have always desired the union of England and Scotland; tell him, finally, that I have done nothing injurious to his kingdom, to his honour, or to his rights. And thus, good Melville, till we meet again in heaven."

Then, leaning on the old man, whose face was bathed in tears, she descended the staircase, at the foot of which she found the two earls, Sir Henry Talbot, Lord Shrewsbury's son, Amyas Paulet, Drue Drury, Robert Beale, and many gentlemen of the neighbourhood: the queen, advancing towards them without pride, but without humility, complained that her servants had been refused permission to follow her, and asked that it should be granted. The lords conferred together; and a moment after the Earl of Kent inquired which ones she desired to have, saying she might be allowed six. So the queen chose from among the men Bourgoin, Gordon, Gervais, and Didier; and from the women Jeanne Kennedy and Elspeth Curle, the ones she preferred to all, though the latter was sister to the secretary who had betrayed her. But here arose a fresh difficulty, the earls saying that this permission did not extend to women, women not being used to be present at such sights, and when they were, usually upsetting everyone with cries and lamentations, and, as soon as the decapitation was over, rushing to the scaffold to staunch the blood with their handkerchiefs—a most unseemly proceeding.

"My lords," then said the queen, "I answer and promise for my servants that they will not do any of the things your honours fear. Alas! poor people! they would be very glad to bid me farewell; and I hope that your mistress, being a maiden queen, and accordingly sensitive for the honour of women,

has not given you such strict orders that you are unable to grant me the little I ask; so much the more," added she in a profoundly mournful tone, "that my rank should be taken into consideration; for indeed I am your queen's cousin, granddaughter of Henry VII, Queen Dowager of France and crowned Queen of Scotland."

The lords consulted together for another moment, and granted her demands. Accordingly, two guards went up immediately to fetch the chosen individuals.

The queen then moved on to the great hall, leaning on two of Sir Amyas Paulet's gentlemen, accompanied and followed by the earls and lords, the sheriff walking before her, and Andrew Melville bearing her train. Her dress, as carefully chosen as possible, as we have said, consisted of a coif of fine cambric trimmed with lace, with a lace veil thrown back and falling to the ground behind. She wore a cloak of black stamped satin lined with back taffetas and trimmed in front with sable, with a long train and sleeves hanging to the ground; the buttons were of jet in the shape of acorns and surrounded with pearls, her collar in the Italian style; her doublet was of figured black satin, and underneath she wore stays, laced behind, in crimson satin, edged with velvet of the same colour; a gold cross hung by a pomander chain at her neck, and two rosaries at her girdle: it was thus she entered the great hall where the scaffold was erected.

It was a platform twelve feet wide, raised about two feet from the floor, surrounded with barriers and covered with black serge, and on it were a little chair, a cushion to kneel on, and a block also covered in black. Just as, having mounted the steps, she set foot on the fatal boards, the executioner came forward, and, asking forgiveness for the duty he was about to perform, kneeled, hiding behind him his axe. Mary saw it, however, and cried—

"Ah! I would rather have been beheaded in the French way, with a sword! . . ."

"It is not my fault, madam," said the executioner, "if this last wish of your Majesty cannot be fulfilled; but, not having

been instructed to bring a sword, and having found this axe here only, I am obliged to use it. Will that prevent your pardoning me, then?"

"I pardon you, my friend," said Mary, "and in proof of it, here is my hand to kiss."

The executioner put his lips to the queen's hand, rose and approached the chair. Mary sat down, and the Earls of Kent and Shrewsbury standing on her left, the sheriff and his officers before her, Amyas Paulet behind, and outside the barrier the lords, knights, and gentlemen, numbering nearly two hundred and fifty, Robert Beale for the second time read the warrant for execution, and as he was beginning the servants who had been fetched came into the hall and placed themselves behind the scaffold, the men mounted upon a bench put back against the wall, and the women kneeling in front of it; and a little spaniel, of which the queen was very fond, came quietly, as if he feared to be driven away, and lay down near his mistress.

The queen listened to the reading of the warrant without seeming to pay much attention, as if it had concerned someone else, and with a countenance as calm and even as joyous as if it had been a pardon and not a sentence of death; then, when Beale had ended, and having ended, cried in a loud voice, "God save Queen Elizabeth!" to which no one made any response, Mary signed herself with the cross, and referred two without any change of expression, and, on the contrary, who great than ever—

"My lords," said she, "I am a queen-born sovereign princess, and not subject to law, a near relation of the Queen of England, and her rightful heir; for a long time I have been a prisoner in this country, I have suffered here much tribulation and many evils that no one had the right to inflict, and now, to crown all, I am about to lose my life. Well, my lords, bear witness that I die in the Catholic faith, thanking God for letting me die for His holy cause, and protesting, to-day as every day, in public as in private, that I have never plotted, consented to, nor desired the queen's death, nor any other thing against her person; but that, on the contrary, I have always loved her,

and have always offered her good and reasonable conditions to put an end to the troubles of the kingdom and deliver me from my captivity, without my having ever been honoured with a reply from her; and all this, my lords, you well know. Finally, my enemies have attained their end, which was to put me to death: I do not pardon them less for it than I pardon all those who have attempted anything against me. After my death, the authors of it will be known. But I die without accusing anyone, for fear the Lord should hear me and avenge me."

Upon this, whether he was afraid that such a speech by so great a queen should soften the assembly too much, or whether he found that all these words were making too much delay, the Dean of Peterborough placed himself before Mary, and, leaning on the barrier—

"Madam," he said, "my much honoured mistress has commanded me to come to you——" But at these words, Mary, turning and interrupting him—

"Mr. Dean," she answered in a loud voice, "I have nothing to do with you; I do not wish to hear you, and beg you to withdraw."

"Madam," said the dean, persisting in spite of this resolve expressed in such firm and precise terms, "you have but a moment longer: change your opinions, abjure your errors, and put your faith in Jesus Christ alone, that you may be saved through Him."

"Everything you can say is useless," replied the queen, "and you will gain nothing by it; be silent, then, I beg you, and let me die in peace."

And as she saw that he wanted to go on, she sat down on the other side of the chair and turned her back to him; but the dean immediately walked round the scaffold till he faced her again; then, as he was going to speak, the queen turned about once more, and sat as at first. Seeing which the Earl of Shrewsbury said—

"Madam, truly I despair that you are so attached to this folly of papacy: allow us, if it please you, to pray for you."

"My lord," the queen answered, "if you desire to pray for

me, I thank you, for the intention is good; but I cannot join in your prayers, for we are not of the same religion."

The earls then called the dean, and while the queen, seated in her little chair, was praying in a low tone, he, kneeling on the scaffold steps, prayed aloud; and the whole assembly except the queen and her servants prayed after him; then, in the midst of her orison, which she said with her *Agnus Dei* round her neck, a crucifix in one hand, and her book of Hours in the other, she fell from her seat on to her knees, praying aloud in Latin, whilst the others prayed in English, and when the others were silent, she continued in English in her turn, so that they could hear her, praying for the afflicted Church of Christ, for an end to the persecution of Catholics, and for the happiness of her son's reign; then she said, in accents full of faith and fervour, that she hoped to be saved by the merits of Jesus Christ, at the foot of whose cross she was going to shed her blood.

At these words the Earl of Kent could no longer contain himself, and without respect for the sanctity of the moment—

"Oh, madam," said he, "put Jesus Christ in your heart, and reject all this rubbish of popish deceptions."

But she, without listening, went on, praying the saints to intercede with God for her, and kissing the crucifix, she cried—

"Lord! Lord! receive me in Thy arms outstretched on the cross, and forgive me all my sins!"

Thereupon, she being again seated in the chair, the Earl of Kent asked her if she had any confession to make; to which she replied that, not being guilty of anything, to confess would be to give herself the lie.

"It is well," the earl answered; "then, madam, prepare."

The queen rose, and as the executioner approached to assist her disrobe—

"Allow me, my friend," said she; "I know how to do it better than you, and am not accustomed to undress before so many spectators, nor to be served by such valets."

And then, calling her two women, she began to unpin her coiffure, and as Jeanne Kennedy and Elspeth Curle, while

performing this last service for their mistress, could not help weeping bitterly—

"Do not weep," she said to them in French; "for I have promised and answered for you."

With these words, she made the sign of the cross upon the forehead of each, kissed them, and recommended them to pray for her.

Then the queen began to undress, herself assisting, as she was wont to do when preparing for bed, and taking the gold cross from her neck, she wished to give it to Jeanne, saying to the executioner—

"My friend, I know that all I have upon me belongs to you; but this is not in your way: let me bestow it, if you please, on this young lady, and she will give you twice its value in money."

But the executioner, hardly allowing her to finish, snatched it from her hands with—

"It is my right."

The queen was not moved much by this brutality, and went on taking off her garments until she was simply in her petticoat.

Thus rid of all her garb, she again sat down, and Jeanne Kennedy approaching her, took from her pocket the handkerchief of gold-embroidered cambric which she had prepared the night before, and bound her eyes with it; which the earls, lords, and gentlemen looked upon with great surprise, it not being customary in England, and as she thought that she was to be beheaded in the French way—that is to say, seated in the chair—she held herself upright, motionless, and with her neck stiffened to make it easier for the executioner, who, for his part, not knowing how to proceed, was standing, without striking, axe in hand: at last the man laid his hand on the queen's head, and drawing her forward, made her fall on her knees. Mary then understood what was required of her, and feeling for the block with her hands, which were still holding her book of Hours and her crucifix, she laid her neck on it, her hands joined beneath her chin, that she might pray till the last moment: the executioner's assistant drew them away, for fear they should

be cut off with her head; and as the queen was saying, "*In manus tuas, Domine*," the executioner raised his axe, which was simply an axe for chopping wood, and struck the first blow, which hit too high, and piercing the skull, made the crucifix and the book fly from the condemned's hands by its violence, but which did not sever the head. However, stunned with the blow, the queen made no movement, which gave the executioner time to redouble it; but still the head did not fall, and a third stroke was necessary to detach a shred of flesh which held it to the shoulders.

At last, when the head was quite severed, the executioner held it up to show to the assembly, saying—

"God save Queen Elizabeth!"

"So perish all Her Majesty's enemies!" responded the Dean of Peterborough.

"Amen," said the Earl of Kent; but he was the only one: no other voice could respond, for all were choked with sobs.

At that moment the queen's headdress falling, disclosed her hair, cut very short, and as white as if she had been aged seventy: as to her face, it had so changed during her death-agony that no one would have recognised it had he not known it was hers. The spectators cried out aloud at this sight; for, frightful to see, the eyes were open, and the lips went on moving as if they would still pray, and this muscular movement lasted for more than a quarter of an hour after the head had been cut off.

The queen's servants had rushed upon the scaffold, picking up the book of Hours and the crucifix as relics; and Jeanne Kennedy, remembering the little dog who had come to his mistress, looked about for him on all sides, seeking him and calling him, but she sought and called in vain. He had disappeared.

At that moment, as one of the executioners was untying the queen's garters, which were of blue satin embroidered in silver, he saw the poor little animal, which had hidden in her petticoat, and which he was obliged to bring out by force; then, having escaped from his hands, it took refuge between the queen's

shoulders and her head, which the executioner had laid down near the trunk. Jeanne took him then, in spite of his howls, and carried him away, covered with blood; for everyone had just been ordered to leave the hall. Bourgoin and Gervais stayed behind, entreating Sir Amyas Paulet to let them take the queen's heart, that they might carry it to France, as they had promised her; but they were harshly refused and pushed out of the hall, of which all the doors were closed, and where there remained only the executioner and the corpse.

Brantôme relates that something infamous took place there!

CHAPTER X

TWO hours after the execution, the body and the head were taken into the same hall in which Mary Stuart had appeared before the commissioners, set down on a table round which the judges had sat, and covered over with a black serge cloth; and there remained till three o'clock in the afternoon, when Waters the doctor from Stamford and the surgeon from Fotheringay village came to open and embalm them—an operation which they carried out under the eyes of Amyas Paulet and his soldiers, without any respect for the rank and sex of the poor corpse, which was thus exposed to the view of anyone who wanted to see it: it is true that this indignity did not fulfil its proposed aim; for a rumour spread about that the queen had swollen limbs and was dropsical, while, on the contrary, there was not one of the spectators but was obliged to confess that he had never seen the body of a young girl in the bloom of health purer and lovelier than that of Mary Stuart, dead of a violent death after nineteen years of suffering and captivity.

When the body was opened, the spleen was in its normal state, with the veins a little livid only, the lungs yellowish in places, and the brain one-sixth larger than is usual in persons of the same age and sex; thus everything promised a long life to her whose end had just been so cruelly hastened.

A report having been made of the above, the body was embalmed after a fashion, put in a leaden coffin and that in another of wood, which was left on the table till the first day of August—that is, for nearly five months—before anyone was allowed to come near it; and not only that, but the English having noticed that Mary Stuart's unhappy servants, who were

still detained as prisoners, went to look at it through the key-hole, stopped that up in such a way that they could not even gaze at the coffin enclosing the body of her whom they had so greatly loved.

However, one hour after Mary Stuart's death, Henry Talbot, who had been present at it, set out at full speed for London, carrying to Elizabeth the account of her rival's death; but at the very first lines she read, Elizabeth, true to her character, cried out in grief and indignation, saying that her orders had been misunderstood, that there had been too great haste, and that all this was the fault of Davison the Secretary of State, to whom she had given the warrant to keep till she had made up her mind, but not to send to Fotheringay. Accordingly, Davison was sent to the Tower and condemned to pay a fine of ten thousand pounds sterling, for having deceived the queen. Meanwhile, amid all this grief, an embargo was laid on all vessels in all the ports of the realm, so that the news of the death should not reach abroad, especially France, except through skilful emissaries who could place the execution in the least unfavourable light for Elizabeth. At the same time the scandalous popular festivities which had marked the announcement of the sentence again celebrated the tidings of the execution. London was illuminated, bonfires lit, and the enthusiasm was such that the French Embassy was broken into and wood taken to revive the fires when they began to die down.

Crestfallen at this event, M. de Châteauneuf was still shut up at the Embassy, when, a fortnight later, he received an invitation from Elizabeth to visit her at the country house of the Archbishop of Canterbury. M. de Châteauneuf went thither with the firm resolve to say no word to her on what had happened; but as soon as she saw him, Elizabeth, dressed in black, rose, went to him, and, overwhelming him with kind attentions, told him that she was ready to place all the strength of her kingdom at Henry III's disposal to help him put down the League. Châteauneuf received all these offers with a cold and severe expression, without saying, as he had promised himself, a single word about the event which had put both the queen and him-

self into mourning. But, taking him by the hand, she drew him aside, and there, with deep sighs, said—

"Ah! sir, since I saw you the greatest misfortune which could befall me has happened: I mean the death of my good sister, the Queen of Scotland, of which I swear by God Himself, my soul and my salvation, that I am perfectly innocent. I had signed the order, it is true; but my counsellors have played me a trick for which I cannot calm myself; and I swear to God that if it were not for their long service I would have them beheaded. I have a woman's frame, sir, but in this woman's frame beats a man's heart."

Châteauneuf bowed without a response; but his letter to Henry III and Henry's answer prove that neither the one nor the other was the dupe of this female Tiberius.

Meanwhile, as we have said, the unfortunate servants were prisoners, and the poor body was in that great hall waiting for a royal interment. Things remained thus, Elizabeth said, to give her time to order a splendid funeral for her good sister Mary, but in reality because the queen dared not place in juxtaposition the secret and infamous death and the public and royal burial; then, was not time needed for the first reports which it pleased Elizabeth to spread to be credited before the truth should be known by the mouths of the servants? For the queen hoped that once this careless world had made up its mind about the death of the Queen of Scots, it would not take any further trouble to change it. Finally, it was only when the warders were as tired as the prisoners, that Elizabeth, having received a report stating that the ill-embalmed body could no longer be kept, at last ordered the funeral to take place.

Accordingly, after the 1st of August, tailors and dressmakers arrived at Fotheringay Castle, sent by Elizabeth, with cloth and black silk stuffs, to clothe in mourning all Mary's servants. But they refused, not having waited for the Queen of England's bounty, but having made their funeral garments at their own expense, immediately after their mistress's death. The tailors and dressmakers, however, none the less set so actively to work that on the 7th everything was finished.

Next day, at eight o'clock in the evening, a large chariot, drawn by four horses in mourning trappings, and covered with black velvet like the chariot, which was, besides, adorned with little streamers on which were embroidered the arms of Scotland, those of the queen, and the arms of Aragon, those of Darnley, stopped at the gate of Fotheringay Castle. It was followed by the herald king, accompanied by twenty gentlemen on horseback, with their servants and lackeys, all dressed in mourning, who, having alighted, mounted with his whole train into the room where the body lay, and had it brought down and put into the chariot with all possible respect, each of the spectators standing with bared head and in profound silence.

This visit caused a great stir among the prisoners, who debated a while whether they ought not to implore the favour of being allowed to follow their mistress's body, which they could not and should not let go alone thus; but just as they were about to ask permission to speak to the herald king, he entered the room where they were assembled, and told them that he was charged by his mistress, the august Queen of England, to give the Queen of Scotland the most honourable funeral he could; that, not wishing to fail in such a high undertaking, he had already made most of the preparations for the ceremony, which was to take place on the 10th of August,—that is to say, two days later,—but that the leaden shell in which the body was enclosed being very heavy, it was better to move it beforehand, and that night, to where the grave was dug, than to await the day of the interment itself; that thus they might be easy, this burial of the shell being only a preparatory ceremony; but that if some of them would like to accompany the corpse, to see what was done with it, they were at liberty, and that those who stayed behind could follow the funeral pageant, Elizabeth's positive desire being that all, from first to last, should be present in the funeral procession. This assurance calmed the unfortunate prisoners, who deputed Bourgoin, Gervais, and six others to follow their mistress's body: these were Andrew Melville, Stewart, Gorjon, Howard, Lauder, and Nicholas Delamarre.

At ten o'clock at night they set out, walking behind the

chariot, preceded by the herald, accompanied by men on foot, who carried torches to light the way, and followed by twenty gentlemen and their servants. In this manner, at two o'clock in the morning, they reached Peterborough, where there is a splendid cathedral built by an ancient Saxon king, and in which, on the left of the choir, was already interred good Queen Catharine of Aragon, wife of Henry VIII, and where was her tomb, still decked with a canopy bearing her arms.

On arriving, they found the cathedral all hung with black, with a dome erected in the middle of the choir, much in the way in which *chapelles ardentes* are set up in France, except that there were no lighted candles round it. This dome was covered with black velvet, and overlaid with the arms of Scotland and Aragon, with streamers like those on the chariot yet again repeated. The state coffin was already set up under this dome: it was a bier, covered like the rest in black velvet fringed with silver, on which was a pillow of the same supporting a royal crown.

To the right of this dome, and in front of the burial-place of Queen Catharine of Aragon, Mary of Scotland's sepulchre had been dug: it was a grave of brick, arranged to be covered later with a slab or a marble tomb, and in which was to be deposited the coffin, which the Bishop of Peterborough, in his episcopal robes, but without his mitre, cross, or cope, was awaiting at the door, accompanied by his dean and several other clergy. The body was brought into the cathedral, without chant or prayer, and was let down into the tomb amid a profound silence. Directly it was placed there, the masons, who had stayed their hands, set to work again, closing the grave level with the floor, and only leaving an opening of about a foot and a half, through which could be seen what was within, and through which could be thrown on the coffin, as is customary at the obsequies of kings, the broken staves of the officers and the ensigns and banners with their arms. This nocturnal ceremony ended, Melville, Bourgoin, and the other deputies were taken to the bishop's palace, where the persons appointed to take part in the funeral procession were to assemble, in number more than three hundred

and fifty, all chosen, with the exception of the servants, from among the authorities, the nobility, and Protestant clergy.

The day following, Thursday, August the 9th, they began to hang the banqueting halls with rich and sumptuous stuffs, and that in the sight of Melville, Bourgoin, and the others, whom they had brought thither, less to be present at the interment of Queen Mary than to bear witness to the magnificence of Queen Elizabeth. But, as one may suppose, the unhappy prisoners were indifferent to this splendour, great and extraordinary as it was.

On Friday, August 10th, all the chosen persons assembled at the bishop's palace: they ranged themselves in the appointed order, and turned their steps to the cathedral, which was close by. When they arrived there, they took the places assigned them in the choir, and the choristers immediately began to chant a funeral service in English and according to Protestant rites. At the first words of this service, when he saw it was not conducted by Catholic priests, Bourgoin left the cathedral, declaring that he would not be present at such sacrilege, and he was followed by all Mary's servants, men and women, except Melville and Barbe Mowbray, who thought that whatever the tongue in which one prayed, that tongue was heard by the Lord. This exit created great scandal; but the bishop preached none the less.

The sermon ended, the herald king went to seek Bourgoin and his companions, who were walking in the cloisters, and told them that the almsgiving was about to begin, inviting them to take part in this ceremony; but they replied that being Catholics they could not make offerings at an altar of which they disapproved. So the herald king returned, much put out at the harmony of the assembly being disturbed by this dissent; but the alms-offering took place no less than the sermon. Then, as a last attempt, he sent to them again, to tell them that the service was quite over, and that accordingly they might return for the royal ceremonies, which belonged only to the religion of the dead; and this time they consented; but when they arrived, the staves were broken, and the banners thrown

into the grave through the opening that the workmen had already closed.

Then, in the same order in which it had come, the procession returned to the palace, where a splendid funeral repast had been prepared. By a strange contradiction, Elizabeth, who, having punished the living woman as a criminal, had just treated the dead woman as a queen, had also wished that the honours of the funeral banquet should be for the servants, so long forgotten by her. But, as one can imagine, these ill accommodated themselves to that intention, did not seem astonished at this luxury nor rejoiced at this good cheer, but, on the contrary, drowned their bread and wine in tears, without otherwise responding to the questions put to them or the honours granted them. And as soon as the repast was ended, the poor servants left Peterborough and took the road back to Fotheringay, where they heard that they were free at last to withdraw whither they would. They did not need to be told twice; for they lived in perpetual fear, not considering their lives safe so long as they remained in England. They therefore immediately collected all their belongings, each taking his own, and thus went out of Fotheringay Castle on foot, Monday, 13th August, 1587.

Bourgoin went last: having reached the farther side of the drawbridge, he turned, and, Christian as he was, unable to forgive Elizabeth, not for his own sufferings, but for his mistress's, he faced about to those regicide walls, and, with hands outstretched to them, said in a loud and threatening voice, those words of David: "Let vengeance for the blood of Thy servants, which has been shed, O Lord God, be acceptable in Thy sight." The old man's curse was heard, and inflexible history is burdened with Elizabeth's punishment.

We said that the executioner's axe, in striking Mary Stuart's head, had caused the crucifix and the book of Hours which she was holding to fly from her hands. We also said that the two relics had been picked up by people in her following. We are not aware of what became of the crucifix, but the book of

Hours is in the royal library, where those curious about these kinds of historical souvenirs can see it: two certificates inscribed on one of the blank leaves of the volume demonstrate its authenticity. These are they:—

FIRST CERTIFICATE.

"We the undersigned Vicar Superior of the strict observance of the Order of Cluny, certify that this book has been entrusted to us by order of the defunct Dom Michel Nardin, a professed religious priest of our said observance, deceased in our college of Saint-Martial of Avignon, March 28th, 1723, aged about eighty years, of which he has spent about thirty among us, having lived very religiously: he was a German by birth, and had served as an officer in the army a long time.

"He entered Cluny, and made his profession there, much detached from all this world's goods and honours; he only kept, with his superior's permission, this book, which he knew had been in use with Mary Stuart, Queen of England and Scotland, to the end of her life.

"Before dying and being parted from his brethren, he requested that, to be safely remitted to us, it should be sent us by mail, sealed. Just as we have received it, we have begged M. l'abbé Bignon, councillor of state and king's librarian, to accept this precious relic of the piety of a Queen of England, and of a German officer of her religion as well as of ours.

"(*Signed*) BROTHER GÉRARD PONCET,
Vicar-General Superior."

SECOND CERTIFICATE.

"We, Jean-Paul Bignon, king's librarian, are very happy to have an opportunity of exhibiting our zeal, in placing the said manuscript in His Majesty's library.

"(*Signed*) JEAN-PAUL BIGNON."

"*8th July*, 1724."

This manuscript, on which was fixed the last gaze of the

Queen of Scotland, is a duodecimo, written in the Gothic character and containing Latin prayers; it is adorned with miniatures set off with gold, representing devotional subjects, stories from sacred history, or from the lives of saints and martyrs. Every page is encircled with arabesques mingled with garlands of fruit and flowers, amid which spring up grotesque figures of men and animals.

As to the binding, worn now, or perhaps even then, to the woof, it is in black velvet, of which the flat covers are adorned in the centre with an enamelled pansy, in a silver setting surrounded by a wreath to which are diagonally attached from one corner of the cover to the other, two twisted silver-gilt knotted cords, finished by a tuft at the two ends.

VANINKA

VANINKA

ABOUT the end of the reign of the Emperor Paul I—that is to say, towards the middle of the first year of the nineteenth century—just as four o'clock in the afternoon was sounding from the church of St. Peter and St. Paul, whose gilded vane overlooks the ramparts of the fortress, a crowd, composed of all sorts and conditions of people, began to gather in front of a house which belonged to General Count Tchermaytoff, formerly military governor of a fair-sized town in the government of Pultava. The first spectators had been attracted by the preparations which they saw had been made in the middle of the courtyard for admininistering torture with the knout. One of the general's serfs, he who acted as barber, was to be the victim.

Although this kind of punishment was a common enough sight in St. Petersburg, it nevertheless attracted all passers-by when it was publicly administered. This was the occurrence which had caused a crowd, as just mentioned, before General Tchermaytoff's house.

The spectators, even had they been in a hurry, would have had no cause to complain of being kept waiting, for at half-past four a young man of about five-and-twenty, in the handsome uniform of an aide-de-camp, his breast covered with decorations, appeared on the steps at the farther end of the courtyard in front of the house. These steps faced the large gateway, and led to the general's apartments.

Arrived on the steps, the young aide-de-camp stopped a moment and fixed his eyes on a window, the closely drawn curtains of which did not allow him the least chance of

satisfying his curiosity, whatever may have been its cause. Seeing that it was useless and that he was only wasting time in gazing in that direction, he made a sign to a bearded man who was standing near a door which led to the servants' quarters. The door was immediately opened, and the culprit was seen advancing in the middle of a body of serfs and followed by the executioner. The serfs were forced to attend the spectacle, that it might serve as an example to them. The culprit was the general's barber, as we have said, and the executioner was merely the coachman, who, being used to the handling of a whip, was raised or degraded, which you will, to the office of executioner every time punishment with the knout was ordered. This duty did not deprive him of either the esteem or even the friendship of his comrades, for they well knew that it was his arm alone that punished them and that his heart was not in his work. As Ivan's arm as well as the rest of his body was the property of the general, and the latter could do as he pleased with it, no one was astonished that it should be used for this purpose. More than that, correction administered by Ivan was nearly always gentler than that meted out by another; for it often happened that Ivan, who was a good-natured fellow, juggled away one or two strokes of the knout in a dozen, or if he were forced by those assisting at the punishment to keep a strict calculation, he manœuvred so that the tip of the lash struck the deal plank on which the culprit was lying, thus taking much of the sting out of the stroke. Accordingly, when it was Ivan's turn to be stretched upon the fatal plank and to receive the correction he was in the habit of administering, on his own account, those who momentarily played his part as executioner adopted the same expedients, remembering only the strokes spared and not the strokes received. This exchange of mutual benefits, therefore, was productive of an excellent understanding between Ivan and his comrades, which was never so firmly knit as at the moment when a fresh execution was about to take place. It is true that the first hour after the punishment was generally so full of suffering that the knouted was sometimes unjust to

the knouter, but this feeling seldom out-lasted the evening, and it was rare when it held out after the first glass of spirits that the operator drank to the health of his patient.

The serf upon whom Ivan was about to exercise his dexterity was a man of five- or six- and-thirty, red of hair and beard, a little above average height. His Greek origin might be traced in his countenance, which even in its expression of terror had preserved its habitual characteristics of craft and cunning.

When he arrived at the spot where the punishment was to take place, the culprit stopped and looked up at the window which had already claimed the young aide-de-camp's attention; it still remained shut. With a glance round the throng which obstructed the entrance leading to the street, he ended by gazing, with a horror-stricken shudder, upon the plank on which he was to be stretched. The shudder did not escape his friend Ivan, who, approaching to remove the striped shirt that covered his shoulders, took the opportunity to whisper under his breath—

"Come, Gregory, take courage!"

"You remember your promise?" replied the culprit, with an indefinable expression of entreaty.

"Not for the first lashes, Gregory; do not count on that, for during the first strokes the aide-de-camp will be watching; but among the later ones be assured I will find means of cheating him of some of them."

"Beyond everything you will take care of the tip of the lash?"

"I will do my best, Gregory, I will do my best. Do you not know that I will?"

"Alas! yes," replied Gregory.

"Now, then!" said the aide-de-camp.

"We are ready, noble sir," replied Ivan.

"Wait, wait one moment, your high origin," cried poor Gregory, addressing the young captain as though he had been a colonel, "Vache Vousso Korodie," in order to flatter him. "I believe that the lady Vaninka's window is about to open!"

The young captain glanced eagerly towards the spot which

had already several times claimed his attention, but not a fold of the silken curtains, which could be seen through the panes of the window, had moved.

"You are mistaken, you rascal," said the aide-de-camp, unwillingly removing his eyes from the window, as though he also had hoped to see it open,—"you are mistaken; and besides, what has your noble mistress to do with all this?"

"Pardon, your excellency," continued Gregory, gratifying the aide-de-camp with yet higher rank,—"pardon, but it is through her orders I am about to suffer. Perhaps she might have pity upon a wretched servant!"

"Enough, enough; let us proceed," said the captain in an odd voice, as though he regretted as well as the culprit that Vaninka had not shown mercy.

"Immediately, immediately, noble sir," said Ivan; then turning to Gregory, he continued, "Come, comrade; the time has come."

Gregory sighed heavily, threw a last look up at the window, and seeing that everything remained the same there, he mustered up resolution enough to lie down on the fatal plank. At the same time two other serfs, chosen by Ivan for assistants, took him by the arms and attached his wrists to two stakes, one at either side of him, so that it appeared as though he were stretched on a cross. Then they clamped his neck into an iron collar, and seeing that all was in readiness and that no sign favourable to the culprit had been made from the still closely shut window, the young aide-de-camp beckoned with his hand, saying, "Now, then, begin!"

"Patience, my lord, patience," said Ivan, still delaying the whipping, in the hope that some sign might yet be made from the inexorable window. "I have a knot in my knout, and if I leave it Gregory will have good right to complain."

The instrument with which the executioner was busying himself, and which is perhaps unknown to our readers, was a species of whip, with a handle about two feet long. A plaited leather thong, about four feet long and two inches broad, was attached to this handle, this thong terminating in an iron or

copper ring, and to this another band of leather was fastened, two feet long, and at the beginning about one and a half inches thick: this gradually became thinner, till it ended in a point. The thong was steeped in milk and then dried in the sun, and on account of this method of preparation its edge became as keen and cutting as a knife; further, the thong was generally changed at every sixth stroke, because contact with blood softened it.

However unwillingly and clumsily Ivan set about untying the knot, it had to come undone at last. Besides, the by-standers were beginning to grumble, and their muttering disturbed the reverie into which the young aide-de-camp had fallen. He raised his head, which had been sunk on his breast, and cast a last look towards the window; then with a peremptory sign, and in a voice which admitted of no delay, he ordered the execution to proceed.

Nothing could put it off any longer: Ivan was obliged to obey, and he did not attempt to find any new pretext for delay. He drew back two paces, and with a spring he returned to his place, and standing on tiptoe, he whirled the knout above his head, and then letting it suddenly fall, he struck Gregory with such dexterity that the lash wrapped itself thrice round his victim's body, encircling him like a serpent, but the tip of the thong struck the plank upon which Gregory was lying. Nevertheless, in spite of this precaution, Gregory uttered a loud shriek, and Ivan counted "One."

At the shriek, the young aide-de-camp again turned towards the window; but it was still shut, and mechanically his eyes went back to the culprit, and he repeated the word "One."

The knout had traced three blue furrows on Gregory's shoulders. Ivan took another spring, and with the same skill as before he again enveloped the culprit's body with the hissing thong, ever taking care that the tip of it should not touch him. Gregory uttered another shriek, and Ivan counted "Two." The blood now began to colour the skin.

At the third stroke several drops of blood appeared; at the fourth the blood spurted out; at the fifth some drops

spattered the young officer's face; he drew back, and wiped them away with his handkerchief. Ivan profited by his distraction, and counted seven instead of six: the captain took no notice. At the ninth stroke Ivan stopped to change the lash, and in the hope that a second fraud might pass off as luckily as the first, he counted eleven instead of ten.

At that moment a window opposite to Vaninka's opened, and a man about forty-five or fifty in general's uniform appeared. He called out in a careless tone, "Enough, that will do," and closed the window again.

Immediately on this apparition the young aide-de-camp had turned towards his general, saluting, and during the few seconds that the general was present he remained motionless. When the window had been shut again, he repeated the general's words, so that the raised whip fell without touching the culprit.

"Thank his excellency, Gregory," said Ivan, rolling the knout's lash round his hand, "for having spared you two strokes;" and he added, bending down to liberate Gregory's hand, "these two with the two I was able to miss out make a total of eight strokes instead of twelve. Come, now, you others, untie his other hand."

But poor Gregory was in no state to thank anybody; nearly swooning with pain, he could scarcely stand.

Two moujiks took him by the arms and led him towards the serfs' quarters, followed by Ivan. Having reached the door, however, Gregory stopped, turned his head, and seeing the aide-de-camp gazing pitifully at him, "Oh, sir," he cried, "please thank his excellency the general for me. As for the lady Vaninka," he added in a low tone, "I will certainly thank her myself."

"What are you muttering between your teeth?" cried the young officer, with an angry movement; for he thought he had detected a threatening tone in Gregory's voice.

"Nothing, sir, nothing," said Ivan. "The poor fellow is merely thanking you, Mr. Foedor, for the trouble you have taken in being present at his punishment, and he says that he has been much honoured, that is all."

"That is right," said the young man, suspecting that Ivan had somewhat altered the original remarks, but evidently not wishing to be better informed. "If Gregory wishes to spare me this trouble another time, let him drink less vodka; or else, if he must get drunk, let him at least remember to be more respectful."

Ivan bowed low and followed his comrades, Fœdor entered the house again, and the crowd dispersed, much dissatisfied that Ivan's trickery and the general's generosity had deprived them of four strokes of the knout—exactly a third of the punishment.

Now that we have introduced our readers to some of the characters in this history, we must make them better acquainted with those who have made their appearance, and must introduce those who are still behind the curtain.

General Count Tchermayloff, as we have said, after having been governor of one of the most important towns in the environs of Pultava, had been recalled to St. Petersburg by the Emperor Paul, who honoured him with his particular friendship. The general was a widower, with one daughter, who had inherited her mother's fortune, beauty, and pride. Vaninka's mother claimed descent from one of the chieftains of the Tartar race, who had invaded Russia, under the leadership of D'Gengis, in the thirteenth century. Vaninka's naturally haughty disposition had been fostered by the education she had received. His wife being dead, and not having time to look after his daughter's education himself, General Tchermayloff had procured an English governess for her. This lady, instead of suppressing her pupil's scornful propensities, had encouraged them, by filling her head with those aristocratic ideas which have made the English aristocracy the proudest in the world. Amongst the different studies to which Vaninka devoted herself, there was one in which she was specially interested, and that one was, if one may so call it, the science of her own rank. She knew exactly the relative degree of nobility and power of all the Russian noble families—those that were a grade above her own, and those of whom she took precedence. She could give each

person the title which belonged to their respective rank, no easy thing to do in Russia, and she had the greatest contempt for all those who were below the rank of excellency. As for serfs and slaves, for her they did not exist: they were mere bearded animals, far below her horse or her dog in the sentiments which they inspired in her; and she would not for one instant have weighed the life of a serf against either of those interesting animals.

Like all the women of distinction in her nation, Vaninka was a good musician, and spoke French, Italian, German, and English equally well.

Her features had developed in harmony with her character. Vaninka was beautiful, but her beauty was perhaps a little too decided. Her large black eyes, straight nose, and lips curling scornfully at the corners, impressed those who saw her for the first time somewhat unpleasantly. This impression soon wore off with her superiors and equals, to whom she became merely an ordinary charming woman, whilst to subalterns and such like she remained haughty and inaccessible as a goddess. At seventeen Vaninka's education was finished, and her governess, who had suffered in health through the severe climate of St. Petersburg, requested permission to leave. This desire was granted with the ostentatious recognition of which the Russian nobility are the last representatives in Europe. Thus Vaninka was left alone, with nothing but her father's blind adoration to direct her. She was his only daughter, as we have mentioned, and he thought her absolutely perfect.

Things were in this state in the general's house when he received a letter, written on the deathbed of one of the friends of his youth. Count Romayloff had been exiled to his estates, as a result of some quarrel with Potemkin, and his career had been spoilt. Not being able to recover his forfeited position, he had settled down about four hundred leagues from St. Petersburg, broken-hearted, distressed probably less on account of his own exile and misfortune than of the prospects of his only son, Fœdor. The count feeling that he was leaving this son alone and friendless in the world, commended the young

man, in the name of their early friendship, to the general, hoping that, owing to his being a favourite with Paul I, he would be able to procure a lieutenancy in a regiment for him. The general immediately replied to the count that his son should find a second father in himself; but when this comforting message arrived, Romayloff was no more, and Fœdor himself received the letter and carried it back with him to the general, when he went to tell him of his loss and to claim the promised protection. So great was the general's despatch, that Paul I, at his request, granted the young man a sub-lieutenancy in the Semonowski regiment, so that Fœdor entered on his duties the very next day after his arrival in St. Petersburg.

Although the young man had only passed through the general's house on his way to the barracks, which were situated in the Litenoi quarter, he had remained there long enough for him to have seen Vaninka, and she had produced a great impression upon him. Fœdor had arrived with his heart full of primitive and noble feelings; his gratitude to his protector, who had opened a career for him, was profound, and extended to all his family. These feelings caused him perhaps to have an exaggerated idea of the beauty of the young girl who was presented to him as a sister, and who, in spite of this title, received him with the frigidity and hauteur of a queen. Nevertheless, her appearance, in spite of her cool and freezing manner, had left a lasting impression upon the young man's heart, and his arrival in St. Petersburg had been marked by feelings till then never experienced before in his life.

As for Vaninka, she had hardly noticed Fœdor; for what was a young sub-lieutenant, without fortune or prospects, to her? What she dreamed of was some princely alliance, that would make her one of the most powerful ladies in Russia, and unless he could realise some dream of the *Arabian Nights*, Fœdor could not offer her such a future.

Some time after this first interview, Fœdor came to take leave of the general. His regiment was to form part of a contingent that Field-Marshal Souvarow was taking to Italy, and Fœdor

was about to die, or show himself worthy of the noble patron who had helped him to a career.

This time, whether on account of the elegant uniform that heightened Fœdor's natural good looks, or because his imminent departure, glowing with hope and enthusiasm, lent a romantic interest to the young man, Vaninka was astonished at the marvellous change in him, and deigned, at her father's request, to give him her hand when he left. This was more than Fœdor had dared to hope. He dropped upon his knee, as though in the presence of a queen, and took Vaninka's between his own trembling hands, scarcely daring to touch it with his lips. Light though the kiss had been, Vaninka started as though she had been burnt; she felt a thrill run through her, and she blushed violently. She withdrew her hand so quickly, that Fœdor, fearing this adieu, respectful though it was, had offended her, remained on his knees, and clasping his hands, raised his eyes with such an expression of fear in them, that Vaninka, forgetting her hauteur, reassured him with a smile. Fœdor rose, his heart filled with inexplicable joy, and without being able to say what had caused this feeling, he only knew that it had made him absolutely happy, so that, although he was just about to leave Vaninka, he had never felt greater happiness in his life.

The young man left dreaming golden dreams; for his future, be it gloomy or bright, was to be envied. If it ended in a soldier's grave, he believed he had seen in Vaninka's eyes that she would mourn him; if his future was glorious, glory would bring him back to St. Petersburg in triumph, and glory is a queen, who works miracles for her favourites.

The army to which the young officer belonged crossed Germany, descended into Italy by the Tyrolese mountains, and entered Verona on the 14th of April 1799. Souvarow immediately joined forces with General Mélas, and took command of the two armies. General Chasteler next day suggested that they should reconnoitre. Souvarow, gazing at him with astonishment, replied, "I know of no other way of reconnoitring the enemy than by marching upon him and giving him battle."

As a matter of fact Souvarow was accustomed to this expeditious sort of strategy: through it he had defeated the Turks at Folkschany and Ismailoff; and he had defeated the Poles, after a few days' campaign, and had taken Prague in less than four hours. Catherine, out of gratitude, had sent her victorious general a wreath of oak-leaves, intertwined with precious stones, and worth six hundred thousand roubles, a heavy gold field-marshal's baton encrusted with diamonds; and had created him a field-marshal, with the right of choosing a regiment that should bear his name from that time forward. Besides, when he returned to Russia, she gave him leave of absence, that he might take a holiday at a beautiful estate she had given him, together with the eight thousand serfs who lived upon it.

What a splendid example for Fœdor! Souvarow, the son of a humble Russian officer, had been educated at the ordinary cadets' training college, and had left it as a sub-lieutenant like himself. Why should there not be two Souvarows in the same century?

Souvarow arrived in Italy preceded by an immense reputation; religious, strenuous, unwearied, impassible, loving with the simplicity of a Tartar and fighting with the fury of a Cossack, he was just the man required to continue General Mélas's successes over the soldiers of the Republic, discouraged as they had been by the weak vacillations of Scherer.

The Austro-Russian army of one hundred thousand men was opposed by only twenty-nine or thirty thousand French. Souvarow began as usual with a thundering blow. On 20th April he appeared before Brescia, which made a vain attempt at resistance; after a cannonade of about half an hour's duration, the Prescheria gate was forced, and the Korsakow division, of which Fœdor's regiment formed the vanguard, charged into the town, pursuing the garrison, which only consisted of twelve hundred men, and obliged them to take refuge in the citadel. Pressed with an impetuosity the French were not accustomed to find in their enemies, and seeing that the scaling ladders were already in position against the ramparts, the captain

Boucret wished to come to terms; but his position was too precarious for him to obtain any conditions from his savage conquerors, and he and his soldiers were made prisoners of war.

Souvarow was experienced enough to know how best to profit by victory; hardly master of Brescia, the rapid occupation of which had discouraged our army anew, he ordered General Kray to vigorously press on the siege of Preschiera. General Kray therefore established his headquarters at Valeggio, a place situated at an equal distance between Preschiera and Mantua, and he extended from the Po to the lake of Garda, on the banks of the Mencio, thus investing the two cities at the same time.

Meanwhile the commander-in-chief had advanced, accompanied by the larger part of his forces, and had crossed the Oglio in two columns: he launched one column, under General Rosenberg, towards Bergamo, and the other, with General Mélas in charge, towards the Serio, whilst a body of seven or eight thousand men, commanded by General Kaïm and General Hohenzollern, were directed towards Placentia and Cremona, thus occupying the whole of the left bank of the Po, in such a manner that the Austro-Russian army advanced deploying eighty thousand men along a front of forty-five miles.

In view of the forces which were advancing, and which were three times as large as his own, Scherer beat a retreat all along the line. He destroyed the bridges over the Adda, as he did not consider that he was strong enough to hold them, and, having removed his headquarters to Milan, he awaited there the reply to a despatch which he had sent to the Directory, in which, tacitly acknowledging his incapacity, he tendered his resignation. As the arrival of his successor was delayed, and as Souvarow continued to advance, Scherer, more and more terrified by the responsibility which rested upon him, relinquished his command into the hands of his most able lieutenant. The general chosen by him was Moreau, who was again about to fight those Russians in whose ranks he was destined to die at last.

Moreau's unexpected nomination was proclaimed amidst the

acclamation of the soldiers. He had been called the French Fabius, on account of his magnificent campaign on the Rhine. He passed his whole army in review, saluted by the successive acclamations of its different divisions, which cried, "Long live Moreau! Long live the saviour of the army of Italy!" But however great this enthusiasm, it did not blind Moreau to the terrible position in which he found himself. At the risk of being out-flanked, it was necessary for him to present a parallel line to that of the Russian army, so that, in order to face his enemy, he was obliged to extend his line from Lake Lecco to Pizzighitone—that is to say, a distance of fifty miles. It is true that he might have retired towards Piedmont and concentrated his troops at Alexandria, to await there the reinforcements the Directory had promised to send him. But if he had done this, he would have compromised the safety of the army at Naples, and have abandoned it, isolated as it was, to the mercy of the enemy. He therefore resolved to defend the passage of the Adda as long as possible, in order to give the division under Dessolles, which was to be despatched to him by Masséna, time to join forces with him and to defend his left, whilst Gauthier, who had received orders to evacuate Tuscany and to hasten with forced marches to his aid, should have time to arrive and protect his right. Moreau himself took the centre, and personally defended the fortified bridge of Cassano; this bridge was protected by the Ritorto Canal, and he also defended it with a great deal of artillery and an entrenched vanguard. Besides, Moreau, always as prudent as brave, took every precaution to secure a retreat, in case of disaster, towards the Apennines and the coast of Genoa. Hardly were his dispositions completed before the indefatigable Souvarow entered Triveglio. At the same time as the Russian commander-in-chief arrived at this last town, Moreau heard of the surrender of Bergamo and its castle, and on 23rd April he saw the heads of the columns of the allied army.

The same day the Russian general divided his troops into three strong columns, corresponding to the three principal points in the French line, each column numerically more than

double the strength of those to whom they were opposed. The right column, led by General Wukassowich, advanced towards Lake Lecco, where General Serrurier awaited it. The left column, under the command of Mélas, took up its position in front of the Cassano entrenchments; and the Austrian division, under Generals Zopf and Ott, which formed the centre, concentrated at Canonia, ready at a given moment to seize Vaprio. The Russian and Austrian troops bivouacked within cannon-shot of the French outposts.

That evening Fœdor, who with his regiment formed part of Chasteler's division, wrote to General Tchermayloff:—

"We are at last opposite the French, and a great battle must take place to-morrow morning; to-morrow evening I shall be a lieutenant or a corpse."

Next morning, 26th April, cannon resounded at break of day from the extremities of the lines; on our left Prince Bagration's grenadiers attacked us, on our right General Seckendorff, who had been detached from the camp of Triveglio, was marching on Créma.

These two attacks met with very different success. Bagration's grenadiers were repulsed with terrible loss, whilst Seckendorff, on the contrary, drove the French out of Crema, and pushed forward towards the bridge of Lodi. Fœdor's predictions were falsified: his portion of the army did nothing the whole day; his regiment remained motionless, waiting for orders that did not come.

Souvarow's arrangements were not yet quite complete, the night was needed for him to finish them. During the night, Moreau, having heard of Seckendorff's success on his extreme right, sent an order to Serrurier commanding him to leave at Lecco, which was an easy post to defend, the 18th light brigade and a detachment of dragoons only, and to draw back with the rest of his troops towards the centre. Serrurier received this order about two o'clock in the morning, and executed it immediately.

On their side the Russians had lost no time, profiting by the darkness of the night. General Wukassowich had

repaired the bridge at Brevio, which had been destroyed by the French, whilst General Chasteler had built another bridge two miles below the castle of Trezzo. These two bridges had been, the one repaired and the other built, without the French outposts having the slightest suspicion of what was taking place.

Surprised at two o'clock in the morning by two Austrian divisions, which, concealed by the village of San Gervasio, had reached the right bank of the Adda without their being discovered, the soldiers defending the castle of Trezzo abandoned it and beat a retreat. The Austrians pursued them as far as Pozzo, but there the French suddenly halted and faced about, for General Serrurier was at Pozzo, with the troops he had brought from Lecco. He heard the cannonade behind him, immediately halted, and, obeying the first law of warfare, he marched towards the noise and smoke. It was therefore through him that the garrison of Trezzo rallied and resumed the offensive. Serrurier sent an aide-de-camp to Moreau to inform him of the manœuvre he had thought proper to execute.

The battle between the French and Austrian troops raged with incredible fury. Bonaparte's veterans, during their first Italian campaigns, had adopted a custom which they could not renounce: it was to fight His Imperial Majesty's subjects wherever they found them. Nevertheless, so great was the numerical superiority of the allies, that our troops had begun to retreat, when loud shouts from the rearguard announced that reinforcements had arrived. It was General Grenier, sent by Moreau, who arrived with his division at the moment when his presence was most necessary.

One part of the new division reinforced the centre column, doubling its size; another part was extended upon the left to envelope the enemy. The drums beat afresh down the whole line, and our grenadiers began again to reconquer this battle-field already twice lost and won. But at this moment the Austrians were reinforced by the Marquis de Chasteler and his division, so that the numerical superiority was again with

the enemy. Grenier drew back his wing to strengthen the centre, and Serrurier, preparing for retreat in case of disaster, fell back on Pozzo, where he awaited the enemy. It was here that the battle raged most fiercely: thrice the village of Pozzo was taken and re-taken, until at last, attacked for the fourth time by a force double their own in numbers, the French were obliged to evacuate it. In this last attack an Austrian colonel was mortally wounded, but, on the other hand, General Beker, who commanded the French rearguard, refused to retreat with his soldiers, and maintained his ground with a few men, who were slain as they stood, he was at length obliged to give up his sword to a young Russian officer of the Semenofskoi regiment, who, handing over his prisoner to his own soldiers, returned immediately to the combat.

The two French generals had fixed on the village of Vaprio as a rallying-place, but at the moment when our troops were thrown into disorder through the evacuation of Pozzo, the Austrian cavalry charged heavily, and Serrurier, finding himself separated from his colleague, was obliged to retire with two thousand five hundred men to Verderio, whilst Grenier, having reached the appointed place, Vaprio, halted to face the enemy afresh.

During this time a terrible fight was taking place in the centre. Mélas with eighteen to twenty thousand men had attacked the fortified posts at the head of the bridge of Cassano and the Ritorto Canal. About seven o'clock in the morning, when Moreau had weakened himself by despatching Grenier and his division, Mélas, leading three battalions of Austrian grenadiers, had attacked the fortifications, and for two hours there was terrible carnage; thrice repulsed, and leaving more than fifteen hundred men at the base of the fortifications, the Austrians had thrice returned to the attack, each time being reinforced by fresh troops, always led on and encouraged by Mélas, who had to avenge his former defeats. At length, having been attacked for the fourth time, forced from their entrenchments, and contesting the ground inch by inch, the French took shelter behind their second

fortifications, which defended the entrance to the bridge itself: here they were commanded by Moreau in person. There, for two more hours, a hand-to-hand struggle took place, whilst the terrible artillery belched forth death almost muzzle to muzzle. At last the Austrians, rallying for a last time, advanced at the point of the bayonet, and, lacking either ladders or fascines, piled the bodies of their dead comrades against the fortifications, and succeeded in scaling the breastworks. There was not a moment to be lost. Moreau ordered a retreat, and whilst the French were re-crossing the Adda, he protected their passage in person with a single battalion of grenadiers, of whom at the end of half an hour not more than a hundred and twenty men remained; three of his aides-de-camp were killed at his side. This retreat was accomplished without disorder, and then Moreau himself retired, still fighting the enemy, who set foot on the bridge as soon as he reached the other bank. The Austrians immediately rushed forward to capture him, when suddenly a terrible noise was heard rising above the roar of the artillery; the second arch of the bridge was blown into the air, carrying with it all those who were standing on the fatal spot. The armies recoiled, and into the empty space between them fell like rain a débris of stones and human beings. But at this moment, when Moreau had succeeded in putting a momentary obstacle between himself and Mélas, General Grenier's division arrived in disorder, after having been forced to evacuate Vaprio, pursued by the Austro-Russians under Zopf, Ott, and Chasteler. Moreau ordered a change of front, and faced this new enemy, who fell upon him when he least expected them; he succeeded in rallying Grenier's troops and in re-establishing the battle. But whilst his back was turned Mélas repaired the bridge and crossed the river; thus Moreau found himself attacked frontally, in the rear, and on his two flanks, by forces three times larger than his own. It was then that all the officers who surrounded him begged him to retreat, for on the preservation of his person depended the preservation of Italy for France. Moreau refused for some time, for he knew the awful consequences of the battle

he had just lost, and he did not wish to survive it, although it had been impossible for him to win it. At last a chosen band surrounded him, and, forming a square, drew back, whilst the rest of the army sacrificed themselves to cover his retreat; for Moreau's genius was looked upon as the sole hope that remained to them.

The battle lasted nearly three hours longer, during which the rearguard of the army performed prodigies of valour. At length Mélas, seeing that the enemy had escaped him, and believing that his troops, tired by the stubborn fight, needed rest, gave orders that the fighting should cease. He halted on the left bank of the Adda, encamping his army in the villages of Imago, Gorgonzola, and Cassano, and remained master of the battlefield, upon which we had left two thousand five hundred dead, one hundred pieces of cannon, and twenty howitzers.

That night Souvarow invited General Becker to supper with him, and asked him by whom he had been taken prisoner. Becker replied that it was a young officer belonging to the regiment which had first entered Pozzo. Souvarow immediately inquired what regiment this was, and discovered that it was the Semenofskoi; he then ordered that inquiries should be made to ascertain the young officer's name. Shortly afterwards Sub-Lieutenant Fœdor Romayloff was announced. He presented General Becker's sword to Souvarow, who invited him to remain and to have supper with his prisoner.

Next day Fœdor wrote to his protector: "I have kept my word. I am a lieutenant, and Field-Marshal Souvarow has requested his Majesty Paul I to bestow upon me the order of Saint Vladimir."

On 28th of April, Souvarow entered Milan, which Moreau had just abandoned in order to retreat beyond Tesino. The following proclamation was by his order posted on all the walls of the capital; it admirably paints the spirit of the Muscovite:—

"The victorious army of the Apostolical and Roman Emperor is here; it has fought solely for the restoration of the Holy Faith, the clergy, nobility, and ancient government of Italy. People join us for God and the Faith, for

we have arrived with an army at Milan and Placentia to assist you ! "

The dearly bought victories of Trebia and Novi succeeded that of Cassano, and left Souvarow so much weakened that he was unable to profit by them. Besides, just when the Russian general was about to resume his march, a new plan of campaign arrived, sent by the Aulic Council at Vienna. The Allied Powers had decided upon the invasion of France, and had fixed the route each general must follow in order to accomplish this new project. It was decided that Souvarow should invade France by Switzerland, and that the arch-duke should yield him his positions and descend on the Lower Rhine.

The troops with which Souvarow was to operate against Massena from this time were the thirty thousand Russians he had with him, thirty thousand others detached from the reserve army commanded by Count Tolstoy in Galicia, who were to be led to join him in Switzerland by General Korsakoff, about thirty thousand Austrians under General Hotze, and lastly, five or six thousand French emigrants under the Prince de Condé—in all, an army of ninety or ninety-five thousand men. The Austrians were to oppose Moreau and Macdonald.

Fœdor had been wounded when entering Novi, but Souvarow had rewarded him with a second cross, and the rank of captain hastened his convalescence, so that the young officer, more happy than proud of the new rank he had received, was in a condition to follow the army, when on 13th September it moved towards Salvedra and entered the valley of Tesino.

So far all had gone well, and as long as they remained in the rich and beautiful Italian plains, Souvarow had nothing but praise for the courage and devotion of his soldiers. But when to the fertile fields of Lombardy, watered by its beautiful river, succeeded the rough ways of the Levantine, and when the lofty summits of the St. Gothard, covered with the eternal snows, rose before them, their enthusiasm was quenched, their energy disappeared, and melancholy forebodings filled the hearts of these savage children of the North.

Unexpected grumblings ran through the ranks; then suddenly the vanguard stopped, and declared that it would go no farther. In vain Fœdor, who commanded a company, begged and entreated his own men to set an example by continuing the march: they threw down their arms, and lay down beside them. Just as they had given this proof of insubordination, fresh murmurs, sounding like an approaching storm, rose from the rear of the army: they were caused by the sight of Souvarow, who was riding from the rear to the vanguard, and who arrived at the front accompanied by this terrible proof of mutiny and insubordination. When he reached the head of the column, the murmurings had developed into imprecations.

Then Souvarow addressed his soldiers with that savage eloquence to which he owed the miracles he had effected with them, but cries of "Retreat! Retreat!" drowned his voice. Then he chose out the most mutinous, and had them thrashed until they were overcome by this shameful punishment. But the thrashings had no more influence than the exhortation, and the shouts continued. Souvarow saw that all was lost if he did not employ some powerful and unexpected means of regaining the mutineers. He advanced towards Fœdor. "Captain," said he, "leave these fools here, take eight non-commissioned officers and dig a grave." Fœdor, astonished, gazed at his general as though demanding an explanation of this strange order. "Obey orders," said Souvarow.

Fœdor obeyed, and the eight men set to work; and ten minutes later the grave was dug, greatly to the astonishment of the whole army, which had gathered in a semicircle on the rising slope of the two hills which bordered the road, standing as if on the steps of a huge amphitheatre.

Souvarow dismounted from his horse, broke his sword in two and threw it into the grave, detached his epaulets one by one and threw them after his sword, dragged off the decorations which covered his breast and cast these after the sword and epaulets, and then, stripping himself naked, he lay down in the grave himself, crying in a loud voice—

"Cover me with earth! Leave your general here. You are

no longer my children, and I am no longer your father; nothing remains to me but death."

At these strange words, which were uttered in so powerful a voice that they were heard by the whole army, the Russian grenadiers threw themselves weeping into the grave, and, raising their general, asked pardon of him, entreating him to lead them again against the enemy.

"At last," cried Souvarow, "I recognise my children again. To the enemy!"

Not cries but yells of joy greeted his words. Souvarow dressed himself again, and whilst he was dressing the leaders of the mutiny crept in the dust to kiss his feet. Then, when his epaulets were replaced on his shoulders, and when his decorations again shone on his breast, he remounted his horse, followed by the army, the soldiers swearing with one voice that they would all die rather than abandon their father.

The same day Souvarow attacked Aerolo; but his luck had turned: the conqueror of Cassano, Trebia, and Novi had left his good-fortune behind in the plains of Italy. For twelve hours six hundred French opposed three thousand Russian grenadiers beneath the walls of the town, and so successfully that night fell without Souvarow being able to defeat them. Next day he marched the whole of his troops against this handful of brave men, but the sky clouded over and the wind blew a bitter rain into the faces of the Russians; the French profited by this circumstance to beat a retreat, evacuating the valley of Ursern, crossing the Reuss, and taking up their position on the heights of the Furka and Grimsel. One portion of the Russian army's design had been achieved, they were masters of the St. Gothard. It is true that as soon as they marched farther on, the French would retake it and cut off their retreat; but what did this matter to Souvarow? Did he not always march forward?

He marched on, then, without worrying about that which was behind him, reached Andermatt, cleared Trou d'Ury, and found Lecourbe guarding the defile of the Devil's Bridge with fifteen hundred men. There the struggle began again; for three

days fifteen hundred Frenchmen kept thirty thousand Russians at bay. Souvarow raged like a lion trapped in a snare, for he could not understand this change of fortune. At last, on the fourth day, he heard that General Korsakoff, who had preceded him and who was to rejoin him later, had been beaten by Molitor, and that Massena had recaptured Zurich and occupied the canton of Glaris. Souvarow now gave up the attempt to proceed up the valley of the Reuss, and wrote to Korsakoff and Jallachieh, "I hasten to retrieve your losses; stand firm as ramparts: you shall answer to me with your heads for every step in retreat that you take." The aide-de-camp was also charged to communicate to the Russian and Austrian generals a verbal plan of battle. Generals Linsken and Jallachieh were to attack the French troops separately and then to join the forces in the valley of Glaris, into which Souvarow himself was to descend by the Klon-Thal, thus hemming Molitor in between two walls of iron.

Souvarow was so sure that this plan would be successful, that when he arrived on the borders of the lake of Klon-Thal, he sent a bearer with a flag of truce, summoning Molitor to surrender, seeing that he was surrounded on every side.

Molitor replied to the field-marshal that his proposed meeting with his generals had failed, as he had beaten them one after the other, and driven them back into the Grisons, and that moreover, in retaliation, as Massena was advancing by Muotta, it was he, Souvarow, who was between two fires, and therefore he called upon him to lay down his arms instead.

On hearing this strange reply, Souvarow thought that he must be dreaming, but soon recovering himself and realising the danger of his position in the defiles, he threw himself on General Molitor, who received him at the point of the bayonet, and then closing up the pass with twelve hundred men, the French succeeded in holding fifteen to eighteen thousand Russians in check for eight hours. At length night came, and Molitor evacuated the Klon-Thal, and retired towards the Linth, to defend the bridges of Nœfels and Mollis.

The old field-marshal rushed like a torrent over Glaris and

Miltodi; there he learnt that Molitor had told him the truth, and that Jallachieh and Linsken had been beaten and dispersed, that Massena was advancing on Schwitz, and that General Rosenberg, who had been given the defence of the bridge of Muotta, had been forced to retreat, so that he found himself in the position in which he had hoped to place Molitor.

No time was to be lost in retreating. Souvarow hurried through the passes of Engi, Schwauden, and Elm. His flight was so hurried that he was obliged to abandon his wounded and part of his artillery. Immediately the French rushed in pursuit among the precipices and clouds. One saw whole armies passing over places where chamois-hunters took off their shoes and walked barefoot, holding on by their hands to prevent themselves from falling. Three nations had come from three different parts to a meeting-place in the home of the eagles, as if to allow those nearest God to judge the justice of their cause. There were times when the frozen mountains changed into volcanoes, when cascades now filled with blood fell into the valleys, and avalanches of human beings rolled down the deepest precipices. Death reaped such a harvest there where human life had never been before, that the vultures, becoming fastidious through the abundance, picked out only the eyes of the corpses to carry to their young—at least so says the tradition of the peasants of these mountains.

Souvarow was able to rally his troops at length in the neighbourhood of Lindau. He recalled Korsakoff, who still occupied Bregenz; but all his troops together did not number more than thirty thousand men—all that remained of the eighty thousand whom Paul had furnished as his contingent in the coalition. In fifteen days Masséna had defeated three separate armies, each numerically stronger than his own. Souvarow, furious at having been defeated by these same Republicans whom he had sworn to exterminate, blamed the Austrians for his defeat, and declared that he awaited orders from his emperor, to whom he had made known the treachery of the allies, before attempting anything further with the coalition.

Paul's answer was that he should immediately return to Russia with his soldiers, arriving at St. Petersburg as soon as possible, where a triumphal entry awaited them.

The same ukase declared that Souvarow should be quartered in the imperial palace for the rest of his life, and lastly that a monument should be raised to him in one of the public places of St. Petersburg.

Fœdor was thus about to see Vaninka once more. Throughout the campaign, where there was a chance of danger, whether in the plains of Italy, in the defiles of Tesino, or on the glaciers of Mount Pragal, he was the first to throw himself into it, and his name had frequently been mentioned as worthy of distinction. Souvarow was too brave himself to be prodigal of honours where they were not merited. Fœdor was returning, as he had promised, worthy of his noble protector's friendship, and who knows, perhaps worthy of Vaninka's love. Field-Marshal Souvarow had made a friend of him, and none could know to what this friendship might not lead; for Paul honoured Souvarow like one of the ancient heroes.

But no one could rely upon Paul, for his character was made up of extreme impulses. Without having done anything to offend his master, and without knowing the cause of his disgrace, Souvarow, on arriving at Riga, received a private letter which informed him, in the emperor's name, that, having tolerated an infraction of the laws of discipline among his soldiers, the emperor deprived him of all the honours with which he had been invested, and also forbade him to appear before him.

Such tidings fell like a thunderbolt upon the old warrior, already embittered by his reverses: he was heart-broken that such storm-clouds should tarnish the end of his glorious day.

In consequence of this order, he assembled all his officers in the market-place of Riga, and took leave of them sorrowfully, like a father taking leave of his family. Having embraced the generals and colonels, and having shaken hands with the others, he said good-bye to them once more, and left them free to continue their march to their destination.

Souvarow took a sledge, and, travelling night and day, arrived incognito in the capital, which he was to have entered in triumph, and was driven to a distant suburb, to the house of one of his nieces, where he died of a broken heart fifteen days afterwards.

On his own account, Fœdor travelled almost as rapidly as his general, and entered St. Petersburg without having sent any letter to announce his arrival. As he had no parent in the capital, and as his entire existence was concentrated in one person, he drove direct to the general's house, which was situated in the Prospect of Niewski, at an angle of the Catherine Canal.

Having arrived there, he sprang out of his carriage, entered the courtyard, and bounded up the steps. He opened the ante-chamber door, and precipitated himself into the midst of the servants and subordinate household officers. They cried out with surprise upon seeing him: he asked them where the general was; they replied by pointing to the door of the dining-room; he was in there, breakfasting with his daughter.

Then, through a strange reaction, Fœdor felt his knees failing him, and he was obliged to lean against a wall to prevent himself from falling. At this moment, when he was about to see Vaninka again, this soul of his soul, for whom alone he had done so much, he dreaded lest he should not find her the same as when he had left her. Suddenly the dining-room door opened, and Vaninka appeared. Seeing the young man, she uttered a cry, and, turning to the general, said, "Father, it is Fœdor"; and the expression of her voice left no doubt of the sentiment which inspired it.

"Fœdor!" cried the general, springing forward and holding out his arms.

Fœdor did not know whether to throw himself at the feet of Vaninka or into the arms of her father. He felt that his first recognition ought to be devoted to respect and gratitude, and threw himself into the general's arms. Had he acted otherwise, it would have been an avowal of his love, and he

had no right to avow this love till he knew that it was reciprocated.

Fœdor then turned, and as at parting, sank on his knee before Vaninka; but a moment had sufficed for the haughty girl to banish the feeling she had shown. The blush which had suffused her cheek had disappeared, and she had become again cold and haughty like an alabaster statue—a masterpiece of pride begun by nature and finished by education.

Fœdor kissed her hand; it was trembling but cold: he felt his heart sink, and thought he was about to die.

"Why, Vaninka," said the general—"why are you so cool to a friend who has caused us so much anxiety and yet so much pleasure? Come, Fœdor, kiss my daughter."

Fœdor rose entreatingly, but waited motionless, that another permission might confirm that of the general.

"Did you not hear my father?" said Vaninka, smiling, but nevertheless possessing sufficient self-control to prevent the emotion she was feeling from appearing in her voice.

Fœdor stooped to kiss Vaninka, and as he held her hands it seemed to him that she lightly pressed his own with a nervous, involuntary movement. A feeble cry of joy nearly escaped him, when, suddenly looking at Vaninka, he was astonished at her pallor: her lips were as white as death.

The general made Fœdor sit down at the table: Vaninka took her place again, and as by chance she was seated with her back to the light, the general noticed nothing.

Breakfast passed in relating and listening to an account of this strange campaign which began under the burning sun of Italy and ended in the glaciers of Switzerland. As there are no journals in St. Petersburg which publish anything other than that which is permitted by the emperor, Souvarow's successes were spread abroad, but his reverses were ignored. Fœdor described the former with modesty and the latter with frankness.

One can imagine the immense interest the general took in Fœdor's story. His two captain's epaulets and the decorations on his breast proved that the young man had modestly

suppressed his own part in the story he had told. But the general, too courageous to fear that he might share in Souvarow's disgrace, had already visited the dying field-marshal, and had heard from him an account of his young protégé's bravery. Therefore, when Fœdor had finished his story, it was the general's turn to enumerate all the fine things Fœdor had done in a campaign of less than a year. Having finished this enumeration, he added that he intended next day to ask the emperor's permission to take the young captain for his aide-de-camp. Fœdor hearing this wished to throw himself at the general's feet, but he received him again in his arms, and to show Fœdor how certain he was that he would be successful in his request, he fixed the rooms that the young man was to occupy in the house at once.

The next day the general returned from the palace of St. Michel with the pleasant news that his request had been granted.

Fœdor was overwhelmed with joy: from this time he was to form part of the general's family. Living under the same roof as Vaninka, seeing her constantly, meeting her frequently in the rooms, seeing her pass like an apparition at the end of a corridor, finding himself twice a day at the same table with her, all this was more than Fœdor had ever dared hope, and he thought for a time that he had attained complete happiness.

For her part, Vaninka, although she was so proud, at the bottom of her heart took a keen interest in Fœdor. He had left her with the certainty that he loved her, and during his absence her woman's pride had been gratified by the glory he had acquired, in the hope of bridging the distance which separated them. So that, when she saw him return with this distance between them lessened, she felt by the beating of her heart that gratified pride was changing into a more tender sentiment, and that for her part she loved Fœdor as much as it was possible for her to love anyone.

She had nevertheless concealed these feelings under an appearance of haughty indifference, for Vaninka was made so: she intended to let Fœdor know some day that she loved him, but until the time came when it pleased her to reveal it, she

did not wish the young man to discover her love. Things went on in this way for several months, and the circumstances which had at first appeared to Fœdor as the height of happiness soon became awful torture.

To love and to feel his heart ever on the point of avowing its love, to be from morning till night in the company of the beloved one, to meet her hand at the table, to touch her dress in a narrow corridor, to feel her leaning on his arm when they entered a salon or left a ballroom, always to have ceaselessly to control every word, look, or movement which might betray his feelings, no human power could endure such a struggle.

Vaninka saw that Fœdor could not keep his secret much longer, and determined to anticipate the avowal which she saw every moment on the point of escaping his heart.

One day when they were alone, and she saw the hopeless efforts the young man was making to hide his feelings from her, she went straight up to him, and, looking at him fixedly, said—

"You love me!"

"Forgive me, forgive me," cried the young man, clasping his hands.

"Why should you ask me to forgive you, Fœdor? Is not your love genuine?"

"Yes, yes, genuine but hopeless."

"Why hopeless? Does not my father love you as a son?" said Vaninka.

"Oh, what do you mean?" cried Fœdor. "Do you mean that if your father will bestow your hand upon me, that you will then consent——?"

"Are you not both noble in heart and by birth, Fœdor? You are not wealthy, it is true, but then I am rich enough for both."

"Then I am not indifferent to you?"

"I at least prefer you to anyone else I have met."

"Vaninka!" The young girl drew herself away proudly.

"Forgive me!" said Fœdor. "What am I doing? You

have but to order: I have no wish apart from you. I dread lest I shall offend you. Tell me what to do, and I will obey."

"The first thing you must do, Fœdor, is to ask my father's consent."

"So you will allow me to take this step?"

"Yes, but on one condition."

"What is it? Tell me."

"My father, whatever his answer, must never know that I have consented to your making this application to him; no one must know that you are following my instructions; the world must remain ignorant of the confession I have just made to you; and, lastly, you must not ask me, whatever happens, to help you in any other way than with my good wishes."

"Whatever you please. I will do everything you wish me to do. Do you not grant me a thousand times more than I dared hope, and if your father refuses me, do I not know myself that you are sharing my grief?" cried Fœdor.

"Yes; but that will not happen, I hope," said Vaninka, holding out her hand to the young officer, who kissed it passionately.

"Now be hopeful and take courage;" and Vaninka retired, leaving the young man a hundred times more agitated and moved than she was herself, woman though she was.

The same day Fœdor asked for an interview with the general. The general received his aide-de-camp as usual with a genial and smiling countenance, but with the first words Fœdor uttered his face darkened. However, when he heard the young man's description of the love, so true, constant, and passionate, that he felt for Vaninka, and when he heard that this passion had been the motive power of those glorious deeds he had praised so often, he held out his hand to Fœdor, almost as moved as the young soldier.

And then the general told him, that while he had been away, and ignorant of his love for Vaninka, in whom he had observed no trace of its being reciprocated, he had, at the emperor's desire, promised her hand to the son of a privy councillor. The only stipulation that the general had made was, that he

should not be separated from his daughter until she had attained the age of eighteen. Vaninka had only five months more to spend under her father's roof. Nothing more could be said: in Russia the emperor's wish is an order, and from the moment that it is expressed, no subject would oppose it, even in thought. However, the refusal had imprinted such despair on the young man's face, that the general, touched by his silent and resigned sorrow, held out his arms to him. Fœdor flung himself into them with loud sobs.

Then the general questioned him about his daughter, and Fœdor answered, as he had promised, that Vaninka was ignorant of everything, and that the proposal came from him alone, without her knowledge. This assurance calmed the general: he had feared that he was making two people wretched.

At dinner-time Vaninka came downstairs and found her father alone. Fœdor had not enough courage to be present at the meal and to meet her again, just when he had lost all hope: he had taken a sleigh, and driven out to the outskirts of the city.

During the whole time dinner lasted Vaninka and the general hardly exchanged a word, but although this silence was so expressive, Vaninka controlled her face with her usual power, and the general alone appeared sad and dejected.

That evening, just when Vaninka was going downstairs, tea was brought to her room, with the message that the general was fatigued and had retired. Vaninka asked some questions about the nature of his indisposition, and finding that it was not serious, she told the servant who had brought her the message to ask her father to send for her if he wanted anything. The general sent to say that he thanked her, but he only required quiet and rest. Vaninka announced that she would retire also, and the servant withdrew.

Hardly had he left the room when Vaninka ordered Annouschka, her foster-sister, who acted as her maid, to be on the watch for Fœdor's return, and to let her know as soon as he came in.

At eleven o'clock the gate of the mansion opened: Fœdor

got out of his sleigh, and immediately went up to his room. He threw himself upon a sofa, overwhelmed by his thoughts. About midnight he heard someone tapping at the door: much astonished, he got up and opened it. It was Annouschka, who came with a message from her mistress, that Vaninka wished to see him immediately. Although he was astonished at this message, which he was far from expecting, Fœdor obeyed.

He found Vaninka seated, dressed in a white robe, and as she was paler than usual he stopped at the door, for it seemed to him that he was gazing at a marble statue.

"Come in," said Vaninka calmly.

Fœdor approached, drawn by her voice like steel to a magnet. Annouschka shut the door behind him.

"Well, and what did my father say?" said Vaninka.

Fœdor told her all that had happened. The young girl listened to his story with an unmoved countenance, but her lips, the only part of her face which seemed to have any colour, became as white as the dressing-gown she was wearing. Fœdor, on the contrary, was consumed by a fever, and appeared nearly out of his senses.

"Now, what do you intend to do?" said Vaninka in the same cold tone in which she had asked the other questions.

"You ask me what I intend to do, Vaninka? What do you wish me to do? What can I do, but flee from St. Petersburg, and seek death in the first corner of Russia where war may break out, in order not to repay my patron's kindness by some infamous baseness?"

"You are a fool," said Vaninka, with a mixed smile of triumph and contempt; for from that moment she felt her superiority over Fœdor, and saw that she would rule him like a queen for the rest of her life.

"Then order me—am I not your slave?" cried the young soldier.

"You must stay here," said Vaninka.

"Stay here?"

"Yes; only women and children will thus confess themselves beaten at the first blow: a man, if he be worthy of the name, fights."

"Fight!—against whom?—against your father? Never!"

"Who suggested that you should contend against my father? It is against events that you must strive; for the generality of men do not govern events, but are carried away by them. Appear to my father as though you were fighting against your love, and he will think that you have mastered yourself. As I am supposed to be ignorant of your proposal, I shall not be suspected. I will demand two years' more freedom, and I shall obtain them. Who knows what may happen in the course of two years? The emperor may die, my betrothed may die, my father—may God protect him!—my father himself may die——!"

"But if they force you to marry?"

"Force me!" interrupted Vaninka, and a deep flush rose to her cheek and immediately disappeared again. "And who will force me to do anything? Father? He loves me too well. The emperor? He has enough worries in his own family, without introducing them into another's. Besides, there is always a last resource when every other expedient fails: the Neva only flows a few paces from here, and its waters are deep."

Fœdor uttered a cry, for in the young girl's knit brows and tightly compressed lips there was so much resolution that he understood that they might break this child but that they would not bend her. But Fœdor's heart was too much in harmony with the plan Vaninka had proposed; his objections once removed, he did not seek fresh ones. Besides, had he had the courage to do so, Vaninka's promise to make up in secret to him for the dissimulation she was obliged to practise in public would have conquered his last scruples.

Vaninka, whose determined character had been accentuated by her education, had an unbounded influence over all who came in contact with her; even the general, without knowing why, obeyed her. Fœdor submitted like a child to everything

she wished, and the young girl's love was increased by the wishes she opposed and by a feeling of gratified pride.

It was some days after this nocturnal decision that the knouting had taken place at which our readers have assisted. It was for some slight fault, and Gregory had been the victim, Vaninka having complained to her father about him. Fœdor, who as aide-de-camp had been obliged to preside over Gregory's punishment, had paid no more attention to the threats the serf had uttered on retiring.

Ivan, the coachman, who after having been executioner had become surgeon, had applied compresses of salt and water to heal up the scarred shoulders of his victim. Gregory had remained three days in the infirmary, and during this time he had turned over in his mind every possible means of vengeance. Then at the end of three days, being healed, he had returned to his duty, and soon everyone except he had forgotten the punishment. If Gregory had been a real Russian, he would soon have forgotten it all; for this punishment is too familar to the rough Muscovite for him to remember it long and with rancour. Gregory, as we have said, had Greek blood in his veins; he dissembled and remembered. Although Gregory was a serf, his duties had little by little brought him into greater familiarity with the general than any of the other servants. Besides, in every country in the world barbers have great licence with those they shave; this is perhaps due to the fact that a man is instinctively more gracious to another who for ten minutes every day holds his life in his hands. Gregory rejoiced in the immunity of his profession, and it nearly always happened that the barber's daily operation on the general's chin passed in conversation, of which he bore the chief part.

One day the general had to attend a review: he sent for Gregory before daybreak, and as the barber was passing the razor as gently as possible over his master's cheek, the conversation fell, or more likely was led, on Fœdor. The barber praised him highly, and this naturally caused his master to ask him, remembering the correction the young aide-de-camp had superintended, if he could not find some fault in this model

of perfection that might counterbalance so many good qualities. Gregory replied that with the exception of pride he thought Fœdor irreproachable.

"Pride?" asked the astonished general. "That is a failing from which I should have thought him most free."

"Perhaps I should have said ambition," replied Gregory.

"Ambition!" said the general. "It does not seem to me that he has given much proof of ambition in entering my service; for after his achievements in the last campaign he might easily have aspired to the honour of a place in the emperor's household."

"Oh yes, he is ambitious," said Gregory, smiling. "One man's ambition is for high position, another's an illustrious alliance: the former will owe everything to himself, the latter will make a stepping-stone of his wife, then they raise their eyes higher than they should."

"What do you mean to suggest?" said the general, beginning to see what Gregory was aiming at.

"I mean, your excellency," replied Gregory, "there are many men who, owing to the kindness shown them by others, forget their position and aspire to a more exalted one; having already been placed so high, their heads are turned."

"Gregory," cried the general, "believe me, you are getting into a scrape; for you are making an accusation, and if I take any notice of it, you will have to prove your words."

"By St. Basilius, general, it is no scrape when you have truth on your side; for I have said nothing I am not ready to prove."

"Then," said the general, "you persist in declaring that Fœdor loves my daughter?"

"Ah! I have not said that: it is your excellency. I have not named the lady Vaninka," said Gregory, with the duplicity of his nation.

"But you meant it, did you not? Come, contrary to your custom, reply frankly."

"It is true, your excellency; it is what I meant."

"And, according to you, my daughter reciprocates the passion, no doubt?"

"I fear so, your excellency."

"And what makes you think this, say?"

"First, Mr. Fœdor never misses a chance of speaking to the lady Vaninka."

"He is in the same house with her, would you have him avoid her?"

"When the lady Vaninka returns late, and when perchance Mr. Fœdor has not accompanied you, whatever the hour Mr. Fœdor is there, ready to help her out of the carriage."

"Fœdor attends me, it is his duty," said the general, beginning to believe that the serf's suspicions were founded on slight grounds. "He waits for me," he continued, "because when I return, at any hour of the day or night, I may have orders to give him."

"Not a day passes without Mr. Fœdor going into my lady Vaninka's room, although such a favour is not usually granted to a young man in a house like that of your excellency."

"Usually it is I who send him to her," said the general.

"Yes, in the daytime," replied Gregory, "but—at night?"

"At night!" cried the general, rising to his feet, and turning so pale that, after a moment, he was forced to lean for support on a table.

"Yes, at night, your excellency," answered Gregory quietly; "and since, as you say, I have begun to mix myself up in a bad business, I must go on with it; besides, even if there were to result from it another punishment for me, even more terrible than that I have already endured, I should not allow so good a master to be deceived any longer."

"Be very careful about what you are going to say, slave; for I know the men of your nation. Take care, if the accusation you are making by way of revenge is not supported by visible, palpable, and positive proofs, you shall be punished as an infamous slanderer."

"To that I agree," said Gregory.

"Do you affirm that you have seen Fœdor enter my daughter's chamber at night?"

"I do not say that I have seen him enter it, your excellency. I say that I have seen him come out."

"When was that?"

"A quarter of an hour ago, when I was on my way to your excellency."

"You lie!" said the general, raising his fist.

"This is not our agreement, your excellency," said the slave, drawing back. "I am only to be punished if I fail to give proofs."

"But what are your proo

"I have told you."

"And do you expect me to believe your word alone?"

"No; but I expect you to believe your own eyes."

"How?"

"The first time that Mr. Fœdor is in my lady Vaninka's room after midnight, I shall come to find your excellency, and then you can judge for yourself if I lie; but up to the present, your excellency, all the conditions of the service I wish to render you are to my disadvantage."

"In what way?"

"Well, if I fail to give proofs, I am to be treated as an infamous slanderer; but if I give them, what advantage shall I gain?"

"A thousand roubles and your freedom."

"That is a bargain, then, your excellency," replied Gregory quietly, replacing the razors on the general's toilet-table, "and I hope that before a week has passed you will be more just to me than you are now."

With these words the slave left the room, leaving the general convinced by his confidence that some dreadful misfortune threatened him.

From this time onward, as might be expected, the general weighed every word and noticed every gesture which passed between Vaninka and Fœdor in his presence; but he saw nothing to confirm his suspicions on the part of the aide-de-camp or of his daughter: on the contrary, Vaninka seemed colder and more reserved than ever.

A week passed in this way. About two o'clock in the morning of the ninth day, someone knocked at the general's door. It was Gregory.

"If your excellency will go into your daughter's room," said Gregory, "you will find Mr. Fœdor there."

The general turned pale, dressed himself without uttering a word, and followed the slave to the door of Vaninka's room. Having arrived there, with a motion of his hand he dismissed the informer, who, instead of retiring in obedience to this mute command, hid himself in the corner of the corridor.

When the general believed himself to be alone, he knocked once; but all was silent. This silence, however, proved nothing; for Vaninka might be asleep. He knocked a second time, and the young girl, in a perfectly calm voice, asked, "Who is there?"

"It is I," said the general, in a voice trembling with emotion.

"Annouschka!" said the girl to her foster-sister, who slept in the adjoining room, "open the door to my father. Forgive me, father," she continued; "but Annouschka is dressing, and will be with you in a moment."

The general waited patiently, for he could discover no trace of emotion in his daughter's voice, and he hoped that Gregory had been mistaken.

In a few moments the door opened, and the general went in, and cast a long look around him; there was no one in this first apartment.

Vaninka was in bed, paler perhaps than usual, but quite calm, with the loving smile on her lips with which she always welcomed her father.

"To what fortunate circumstance," asked the young girl in her softest tones, "do I owe the pleasure of seeing you at so late an hour?"

"I wished to speak to you about a very important matter," said the general, "and however late it was, I thought you would forgive me for disturbing you."

"My father will always be welcome in his daughter's room, at whatever hour of the day or night he presents himself there."

The general cast another searching look round, and was convinced that it was impossible for a man to be concealed in the first room—but the second still remained.

"I am listening," said Vaninka, after a moment of silence.

"Yes, but we are not alone," replied the general, "and it is important that no other ears should hear what I have to say to you."

"Annouschka, as you know, is my foster-sister," said Vaninka.

"That makes no differe[illegible] said the general, going candle in hand into the next room, [illegible]h was somewhat smaller than his daughter's. "Annouschka," said he, "watch in the corridor and see that no one overhears us."

As he spoke these words, the general threw the same scrutinising glance all round the room, but with the exception of the young girl there was no one there.

Annouschka obeyed, and the general followed her out, and, looking eagerly round for the last time, re-entered his daughter's room, and seated himself on the foot of her bed. Annouschka, at a sign from her mistress, left her alone with her father. The general held out his hand to Vaninka, and she took it without hesitation.

"My child," said the general, "I have to speak to you about a very important matter."

"What is it, father?" said Vaninka.

"You will soon be eighteen," continued the general, "and that is the age at which the daughters of the Russian nobility usually marry." The general paused for a moment to watch the effect of these words upon Vaninka, but her hand rested motionless in his. "For the last year your hand has been engaged by me," continued the general.

"May I know to whom?" asked Vaninka coldly.

"To the son of the Councillor-in-Ordinary," replied the general. "What is your opinion of him?"

"He is a worthy and noble young man, I am told, but I can have formed no opinion except from hearsay. Has he not been in garrison at Moscow for the last three months?"

"Yes," said the general, "but in three months' time he should return."

Vaninka remained silent.

"Have you nothing to say in reply?" asked the general.

"Nothing, father; but I have a favour to ask of you."

"What is it?"

"I do not wish to marry until I am twenty years old."

"Why not?"

"I have taken a vow to that effect."

"But if circumstances demanded the breaking of this vow, and made the celebration of this marriage imperatively necessary?"

"What circumstances?" asked Vaninka.

"Fœdor loves you," said the general, looking steadily at Vaninka.

"I know that," said Vaninka, with as little emotion as if the question did not concern her.

"You know that!" cried the general.

"Yes; he has told me so."

"When?"

"Yesterday."

"And you replied——?"

"That he must leave here at once."

"And he consented?"

"Yes, father."

"When does he go?"

"He has gone."

"How can that be?" said the general: "he only left me at ten o'clock."

"And he left me at midnight," said Vaninka.

"Ah!" said the general, drawing a deep breath of relief, "you are a noble girl, Vaninka, and I grant you what you ask—two years more. But remember it is the emperor who has decided upon this marriage."

"My father will do me the justice to believe that I am too submissive a daughter to be a rebellious subject."

"Excellent, Vaninka, excellent," said the general. "So, then, poor Fœdor has told you all?"

"Yes," said Vaninka.

"You knew that he addressed himself to me first?"

"I knew it."

"Then it was from him that you heard that your hand was engaged?"

"It was from him."

"And he consented to leave you? He is a good and noble young man, who shall always be under my protection wherever he goes. Oh, if my word had not been given, I love him so much that, supposing you did not dislike him, I should have given him your hand."

"And you cannot recall your promise?" asked Vaninka.

"Impossible," said the general.

"Well, then, I submit to my father's will," said Vaninka.

"That is spoken like my daughter," said the general, embracing her. "Farewell, Vaninka; I do not ask if you love him. You have both done your duty, and I have nothing more to exact."

With these words, he rose and left the room. Annouschka was in the corridor; the general signed to her that she might go in again, and went on his way. At the door of his room he found Gregory waiting for him.

"Well, your excellency?" he asked.

"Well," said the general, "you are both right and wrong. Fœdor loves my daughter, but my daughter does not love him. He went into my daughter's room at eleven o'clock, but at midnight he left her for ever. No matter, come to me to-morrow, and you shall have your thousand roubles and your liberty."

Gregory went off, dumb with astonishment.

Meanwhile, Annouschka had re-entered her mistress's room, as she had been ordered, and closed the door carefully behind her.

Vaninka immediately sprang out of bed and went to the door, listening to the retreating footsteps of the general. When they had ceased to be heard, she rushed into Annouschka's room, and both began to pull aside a bundle of linen, thrown



VANINKA AND FEDOR

down, as if by accident, into the embrasure of a window. Under the linen was a large chest with a spring lock. Annouschka pressed a button, Vaninka raised the lid. The two women uttered a loud cry: the chest was now a coffin; the young officer, stifled for want of air, lay dead within.

For a long time the two women hoped it was only a swoon. Annouschka sprinkled his face with water; Vaninka put salts to his nose. All was in vain. During the long conversation which the general had had with his daughter, and which had lasted more than half an hour, Fœdor, unable to get out of the chest, as the lid was closed by a spring, had died for want of air. The position of the two girls shut up with a corpse was frightful. Annouschka saw Siberia close at hand; Vaninka, to do her justice, thought of nothing but Fœdor. Both were in despair. However, as the despair of the maid was more selfish than that of her mistress, it was Annouschka who first thought of a plan of escaping from the situation in which they were placed.

"My lady," she cried suddenly, "we are saved."

Vaninka raised her head and looked at her attendant with her eyes bathed in tears.

"Saved?" said she, "saved? We are, perhaps, but Fœdor!"

"Listen now," said Annouschka: "your position is terrible, I grant that, and your grief is great; but your grief could be greater and your position more terrible still. If the general knew this——"

"What difference would it make to me?" said Vaninka. "I shall weep for him before the whole world."

"Yes, but you will be dishonoured before the whole world! To-morrow your slaves, and the day after all St. Petersburg, will know that a man died of suffocation while concealed in your chamber. Reflect, my lady: your honour is the honour of your father, the honour of your family."

"You are right," said Vaninka, shaking her head, as if to disperse the gloomy thoughts that burdened her brain,—"you are right, but what must we do?"

"Does my lady know my brother Ivan?"

"Yes."

"We must tell him all."

"Of what are you thinking?" cried Vaninka. "To confide in a man? A man, do I say? A serf! a slave!"

"The lower the position of the serf and slave, the safer will our secret be, since he will have everything to gain by keeping faith with us."

"Your brother is a drunkard," said Vaninka, with mingled fear and disgust.

"That is true," said Annouschka; "but where will you find a slave who is not? My brother gets drunk less than most, and is therefore more to be trusted than the others. Besides, in the position in which we are we must risk something."

"You are right," said Vaninka, recovering her usual resolution, which always grew in the presence of danger. "Go and seek your brother."

"We can do nothing this morning," said Annouschka, drawing back the window curtains. "Look, the dawn is breaking."

"But what can we do with the body of this unhappy man?" cried Vaninka.

"It must remain hidden where it is all day, and this evening, while you are at the Court entertainment, my brother shall remove it."

"True," murmured Vaninka in a strange tone, "I must go to Court this evening; to stay away would arouse suspicion. Oh, my God! my God!"

"Help me, my lady," said Annouschka; "I am not strong enough alone."

Vaninka turned deadly pale, but, spurrred on by the danger, she went resolutely up to the body of her lover; then, lifting it by the shoulders, while her maid raised it by the legs, she laid it once more in the chest. Then Annouschka shut down the lid, locked the chest, and put the key into her breast. Then both threw back the linen which had hidden it from the eyes of the general. Day dawned, as might be expected, ere sleep visited the eyes of Vaninka.

She went down, however, at the breakfast hour; for she did not wish to arouse the slightest suspicion in her father's mind.

Only it might have been thought from her pallor that she had risen from the grave, but the general attributed this to the nocturnal disturbance of which he had been the cause.

Luck had served Vaninka wonderfully in prompting her to say that Fœdor had already gone; for not only did the general feel no surprise when he did not appear, but his very absence was a proof of his daughter's innocence. The general gave a pretext for his aide-de-camp's absence by saying that he had sent him on a mission. As for Vaninka, she remained out of her room till it was time to dress. A week before, she had been at the Court entertainment with Fœdor.

Vaninka might have excused herself from accompanying her father by feigning some slight indisposition, but two considerations made her fear to act thus: the first was the fear of making the general anxious, and perhaps of making him remain at home himself, which would make the removal of the corpse more difficult; the second was the fear of meeting Ivan and having to blush before a slave. She preferred, therefore, to make a superhuman effort to control herself; and, going up again into her room, accompanied by her faithful Annouschka, she began to dress with as much care as if her heart were full of joy. When this cruel business was finished, she ordered Annouschka to shut the door; for she wished to see Fœdor once more, and to bid a last farewell to him who had been her lover. Annouschka obeyed; and Vaninka, with flowers in her hair and her breast covered with jewels, glided like a phantom into her servant's room.

Annouschka again opened the chest, and Vaninka, without shedding a tear, without breathing a sigh, with the profound and death-like calm of despair, leant down towards Fœdor and took off a plain ring which the young man had on his finger, placed it on her own, between two magnificent rings, then kissing him on the brow, she said, "Good-bye, my betrothed."

At this moment she heard steps approaching. It was a groom of the chambers coming from the general to ask if she

was ready. Annouschka let the lid of the chest fall, and Vaninka going herself to open the door, followed the messenger, who walked before her, lighting the way.

Such was her trust in her foster-sister that she left her to accomplish the dark and terrible task with which she had burdened herself.

A minute later, Annouschka saw the carriage containing the general and his daughter leave by the main gate of the hôtel.

She let half an hour go by, and then went down to look for Ivan. She found him drinking with Gregory, with whom the general had kept his word, and who had received the same day one thousand roubles and his liberty. Fortunately, the revellers were only beginning their rejoicings, and Ivan in consequence was sober enough for his sister to entrust her secret to him without hesitation.

Ivan followed Annouschka into the chamber of her mistress. There she reminded him of all that Vaninka, haughty but generous, had allowed his sister to do for him. The few glasses of brandy Ivan had already swallowed had predisposed him to gratitude (the drunkenness of the Russian is essentially tender). Ivan protested his devotion so warmly that Annouschka hesitated no longer, and, raising the lid of the chest, showed him the corpse of Fœdor. At this terrible sight Ivan remained an instant motionless, but he soon began to calculate how much money and how many benefits the possession of such a secret would bring him. He swore by the most solemn oaths never to betray his mistress, and offered, as Annouschka had hoped, to dispose of the body of the unfortunate aide-de-camp.

The thing was easily done. Instead of returning to drink with Gregory and his comrades, Ivan went to prepare a sledge, filled it with straw, and hid at the bottom an iron crowbar. He brought this to the outside gate, and assuring himself he was not being spied upon, he raised the body of the dead man in his arms, hid it under the straw, and sat down above it. He had the gate of the hôtel opened, followed Niewski Street as far as the Zunamenie Church, passed through the shops in the

Rejestwenskoi district, drove the sledge out on to the frozen Neva, and halted in the middle of the river, in front of the deserted church of Ste. Madeleine. There, protected by the solitude and darkness, hidden behind the black mass of his sledge, he began to break the ice, which was fifteen inches thick, with his pick. When he had made a large enough hole, he searched the body of Fœdor, took all the money he had about him, and slipped the body head foremost through the opening he had made. He then made his way back to the hôtel, while the imprisoned current of the Neva bore away the corpse towards the Gulf of Finland. An hour after, a new crust of ice had formed, and not even a trace of the opening made by Ivan remained.

At midnight Vaninka returned with her father. A hidden fever had been consuming her all the evening: never had she looked so lovely, and she had been overwhelmed by the homage of the most distinguished nobles and courtiers. When she returned, she found Annouschka in the vestibule waiting to take her cloak. As she gave it to her, Vaninka sent her one of those questioning glances that seem to express so much. "It is done," said the girl in a low voice. Vaninka breathed a sigh of relief, as if a mountain had been removed from her breast. Great as was her self-control, she could no longer bear her father's presence, and excused herself from remaining to supper with him, on the plea of the fatigues of the evening. Vaninka was no sooner in her room, with the door once closed, than she tore the flowers from her hair, the necklace from her throat, cut with scissors the corsets which suffocated her, and then, throwing herself on her bed, she gave way to her grief. Annouschka thanked God for this outburst; her mistress's calmness had frightened her more than her despair. The first crisis over, Vaninka was able to pray. She spent an hour on her knees, then, yielding to the entreaties of her faithful attendant, went to bed. Annouschka sat down at the foot of the bed. Neither slept, but when day came the tears which Vaninka had shed had calmed her.

Annouschka was instructed to reward her brother. Too

large a sum given to a slave at once might have aroused suspicion, therefore Annouschka contented herself with telling Ivan that when he had need of money he had only to ask her for it.

Gregory, profiting by his liberty and wishing to make use of his thousand roubles, bought a little tavern on the outskirts of the town, where, thanks to his address and to the acquaintances he had among the servants in the great households of St. Petersburg, he began to develop an excellent business, so that in a short time the Red House (which was the name and colour of Gregory's establishment) had a great reputation. Another man took over his duties about the person of the general, and but for Fœdor's absence everything returned to its usual routine in the house of Count Tchermayloff.

Two months went by in this way, without anybody having the least suspicion of what had happened, when one morning before the usual breakfast-hour the general begged his daughter to come down to his room. Vaninka trembled with fear, for since that fatal night everything terrified her. She obeyed her father, however, and collecting all her strength, made her way to his chamber. The count was alone, but at the first glance Vaninka saw she had nothing to fear from this interview: the general was waiting for her with that paternal smile which was the usual expression of his countenance when in his daughter's presence.

She approached, therefore, with her usual calmness, and, stooping down towards the general, gave him her forehead to kiss.

He motioned to her to sit down, and gave her an open letter. Vaninka looked at him for a moment in surprise, then turned her eyes to the letter.

It contained the news of the death of the man to whom her hand had been promised: he had been killed in a duel.

The general watched the effect of the letter on his daughter's face, and great as was Vaninka's self-control, so many different thoughts, such bitter regret, such poignant remorse assailed her when she learnt that she was now free again, that she could not

entirely conceal her emotion. The general noticed it, and attributed it to the love which he had for a long time suspected his daughter felt for the young aide-de-camp.

"Well," he said, smiling, "I see it is all for the best."

"How is that, father?" asked Vaninka.

"Doubtless," said the general. "Did not Fœdor leave because he loved you?"

"Yes," murmured the young girl.

"Well, now he may return," said the general.

Vaninka remained silent, her eyes fixed, her lips trembling.

"Return!" she said, after a moment's silence.

"Yes, certainly return. We shall be most unfortunate," continued the general, smiling, "if we cannot find someone in the house who knows where he is. Come, Vaninka, tell me the place of his exile, and I will undertake the rest."

"Nobody knows where Fœdor is," murmured Vaninka in a hollow voice; "nobody but God, nobody!"

"What!" said the general, "he has sent you no news since the day he left?"

Vaninka shook her head in denial. She was so heart-broken that she could not speak.

The general in his turn became gloomy. "Do you fear some misfortune, then?" said he.

"I fear that I shall never be happy again on earth," cried Vaninka, giving way under the pressure of her grief; then she continued at once, "Let me retire, father; I am ashamed of what I have said."

The general, who saw nothing in this exclamation beyond regret for having allowed the confession of her love to escape her, kissed his daughter on the brow and allowed her to retire. He hoped that, in spite of the mournful way in which Vaninka had spoken of Fœdor, that it would be possible to find him. The same day he went to the emperor and told him of the love of Fœdor for his daughter, and requested, since death had freed her from her first engagement, that he might dispose of her hand. The emperor consented, and the general then solicited a further favour. Paul was in one of his kindly moods, and showed him-

self disposed to grant it. The general told him that Fœdor had disappeared for two months; that everyone, even his daughter, was ignorant of his whereabouts, and begged him to have inquiries made. The emperor immediately sent for the chief of the police, and gave him the necessary orders.

Six weeks went by without any result. Vaninka, since the day when the letter came, was sadder and more melancholy than ever. Vainly from time to time the general tried to make her more hopeful. Vaninka only shook her head and withdrew. The general ceased to speak of Fœdor.

But it was not the same among the household. The young aide-de-camp had been popular with the servants, and, with the exception of Gregory, there was not a soul who wished him harm, so that, when it became known that he had not been sent on a mission by the general, but had disappeared, the matter became the constant subject of conversation in the ante-chamber, the kitchen, and the stables. There was another place where people busied themselves about it a great deal—this was the Red House.

From the day when he heard of Fœdor's mysterious departure Gregory had his suspicions. He was sure that he had seen Fœdor enter Vaninka's room, and unless he had gone out while he was going to seek the general, he did not understand why the latter had not found him in his daughter's room. Another thing occupied his mind, which it seemed to him might perhaps have some connection with this event—the amount of money Ivan had been spending since that time, a very extraordinary amount for a slave. This slave, however, was the brother of Vaninka's cherished foster-sister, so that, without being sure, Gregory already suspected the source from whence this money came. Another thing confirmed him in his suspicions, which was that Ivan, who had not only remained his most faithful friend, but had become one of his best customers, never spoke of Fœdor, held his tongue if he were mentioned in his presence, and to all questions, however pressing they were, made but one answer: "Let us speak of something else."

In the meantime the Feast of Kings arrived. This is a great day in St. Petersburg, for it is also the day for blessing the waters.

As Vaninka had been present at the ceremony, and was fatigued after standing for two hours on the Neva, the general did not go out that evening, and gave Ivan leave to do so. Ivan profited by the permission to go to the Red House.

There was a numerous company there, and Ivan was welcomed; for it was known that he generally came with full pockets. This time he did not belie his reputation, and had scarcely arrived before he made the sorok-kopecks ring, to the great envy of his companions.

At this warning sound Gregory hastened up with all possible deference, a bottle of brandy in each hand; for he knew that when Ivan summoned him he gained in two ways, as innkeeper and as boon companion. Ivan did not disappoint these hopes, and Gregory was invited to share in the entertainment. The conversation turned on slavery, and some of the unhappy men, who had only four days in the year of respite from their eternal labour, talked loudly of the happiness Gregory had enjoyed since he had obtained his freedom.

"Bah!" said Ivan, on whom the brandy had begun to take effect, "there are some slaves who are freer than their masters."

"What do you mean?" said Gregory, pouring him out another glass of brandy.

"I meant to say happier," said Ivan quickly.

"It is difficult to prove that," said Gregory doubtingly.

"Why difficult? Our masters, the moment they are born, are put into the hands of two or three pedants, one French, another German, and a third English, and whether they like them or not, they must be content with their society till they are seventeen, and whether they wish to or not, must learn three barbarous languages, at the expense of our noble Russian tongue, which they have sometimes completely forgotten by the time the others are acquired. Again, if one of them wishes for some career, he must become a soldier: if he is a sub-lieutenant, he is the slave of the lieutenant; if he is a lieutenant,

he is the slave of the captain, and the captain of the major, and so on up to the emperor, who is nobody's slave, but who one fine day is surprised at the table, while walking, or in his bed, and is poisoned, stabbed, or strangled. If he chooses a civil career, it is much the same. He marries a wife, and does not love her; children come to him he knows not how, whom he has to provide for; he must struggle incessantly to provide for his family if he is poor, and if he is rich to prevent himself being robbed by his steward and cheated by his tenants. Is this life? While we, gentlemen, we are born, and that is the only pain we cost our mothers—all the rest is the master's concern. He provides for us, he chooses our calling, always easy enough to learn if we are not quite idiots. Are we ill? His doctor attends us gratis; it is a loss to him if we die. Are we well? We have our four certain meals a day, and a good stove to sleep near at night. Do we fall in love? There is never any hindrance to our marriage, if the woman loves us; the master himself asks us to hasten our marriage, for he wishes us to have as many children as possible. And when the children are born, he does for them in their turn all he has done for us. Can you find me many great lords as happy as their slaves?"

"All this is true," said Gregory, pouring him out another glass of brandy; "but, after all, you are not free."

"Free to do what?" asked Ivan.

"Free to go where you will and when you will."

"I am as free as the air," replied Ivan.

"Nonsense!" said Gregory.

"Free as air, I tell you; for I have good masters, and above all a good mistress," continued Ivan, with a significant smile, "and I have only to ask and it is done."

"What! if after having got drunk here to-day, you asked to come back to-morrow to get drunk again?" said Gregory, who in his challenge to Ivan did not forget his own interests,—"if you asked that?"

"I should come back again," said Ivan.

"To-morrow?" said Gregory.

"To-morrow, the day after, every day if I liked."

"The fact is, Ivan is our young lady's favourite," said another of the count's slaves who was present, profiting by his comrade Ivan's liberality.

"It is all the same," said Gregory; "for supposing such permission were given you, money would soon run short."

"Never!" said Ivan, swallowing another glass of brandy, "never will Ivan want for money as long as there is a kopeck in my lady's purse."

"I did not find her so liberal," said Gregory bitterly.

"Oh, you forget, my friend; you know well she does not reckon with her friends: remember the strokes of the knout."

"I have no wish to speak about that," said Gregory. "I know that she is generous with blows, but her money is another thing. I have never seen the colour of that."

"Well, would you like to see the colour of mine?" said Ivan, getting more and more drunk. "See here, here are kopecks, sorok-kopecks, blue notes worth five roubles, red notes worth twenty-five roubles, and to-morrow, if you like, I will show you white notes worth fifty roubles. A health to my lady Vaninka!" And Ivan held out his glass again, and Gregory filled it to the brim.

"But does money," said Gregory, pressing Ivan more and more,—"does money make up for scorn?"

"Scorn!" said Ivan,—"scorn! Who scorns me? Do you, because you are free? Fine freedom! I would rather be a well-fed slave than a free man dying of hunger."

"I mean the scorn of our masters," replied Gregory.

"The scorn of our masters! Ask Alexis, ask Daniel there, if my lady scorns me."

"The fact is," said the two slaves in reply, who both belonged to the general's household, "Ivan must certainly have a charm; for everyone talks to him as if to a master."

"Because he is Annouschka's brother," said Gregory, "and Annouschka is my lady's foster-sister."

"That may be so," said the two slaves.

"For that reason or for some other," said Ivan; "but, in short, that is the case."

"Yes; but if your sister should die?" said Gregory. "Ah!"

"If my sister should die, that would be a pity, for she is a good girl. I drink to her health! But if she should die, that would make no difference. I am respected for myself; they respect me because they fear me."

"Fear my lord Ivan!" said Gregory, with a loud laugh. "It follows, then, that if my lord Ivan were tired of receiving orders, and gave them in his turn, my lord Ivan would be obeyed."

"Perhaps," said Ivan.

"He said 'perhaps,' repeated Gregory, laughing louder than ever,—"he said 'perhaps.' Did you hear him?"

"Yes," said the slaves, who had drunk so much that they could only answer in monosyllables.

"Well, I no longer say 'perhaps,' I now say 'for certain.'"

"Oh, I should like to see that," said Gregory; "I would give something to see that."

"Well, send away these fellows, who are getting drunk like pigs, and for nothing, you will find.'

"For nothing?" said Gregory. "You are jesting. Do you think I should give them drink for nothing?"

"Well, we shall see. How much would be their score, for your atrocious brandy, if they drank from now till midnight, when you are obliged to shut up your tavern?"

"Not less than twenty roubles."

"Here are thirty; turn them out, and let us remain by ourselves."

"Friends," said Gregory, taking out his watch as if to look at the time, "it is just upon midnight; you know the governor's orders, so you must go."

The men, habituated like all Russians to passive obedience, went without a murmur, and Gregory found himself alone with Ivan and the two other slaves of the general.

"Well, here we are alone," said Gregory. "What do you mean to do?"

"Well, what would you say," replied Ivan, "if in spite of the late hour and the cold, and in spite of the fact that we are only slaves, my lady were to leave her father's house and come to drink our healths?"

"I would say that you ought to take advantage of it," said Gregory, shrugging his shoulders, "and tell her to bring at the same time a bottle of brandy. There is probably better brandy in the general's cellar than in mine."

"There is better," said Ivan, as if he was perfectly sure of it, "and my lady shall bring you a bottle of it."

"You are mad!" said Gregory.

"He is mad!" repeated the other two slaves mechanically.

"Oh, I am mad?" said Ivan. "Well, will you take a wager?"

"What will you wager?"

"Two hundred roubles against a year of free drinking in your inn."

"Done!" said Gregory.

"Are your comrades included?" said the two moujiks.

"They are included," said Ivan, "and in consideration of them we will reduce the time to six months. Is that agreed?"

"It is agreed," said Gregory.

The two who were making the wager shook hands, and the agreement was perfected. Then, with an air of confidence, assumed to confound the witnesses of this strange scene, Ivan wrapped himself in the fur coat which, like a cautious man, he had spread on the stove, and went out.

At the end of half an hour he reappeared.

"Well!" cried Gregory and the two slaves together.

"She is following," said Ivan.

The three tipplers looked at one another in amazement, but Ivan quietly returned to his place in the middle of them, poured out a new bumper, and raising his glass, cried—

"To my lady's health! It is the least we can do when

she is kind enough to come and join us on so cold a night, when the snow is falling fast."

"Annouschka," said a voice outside, "knock at this door and ask Gregory if he has not some of our servants with him."

Gregory and the two other slaves looked at one another, stupefied: they had recognised Vaninka's voice. As for Ivan, he flung himself back in his chair, balancing himself with marvellous impertinence.

Annouschka opened the door, and they could see, as Ivan had said, that the snow was falling heavily.

"Yes, madam," said the girl; "my brother is there, with Daniel and Alexis."

Vaninka entered.

"My friends," said she, with a strange smile, "I am told that you were drinking my health, and I have come to bring you something to drink it again. Here is a bottle of old French brandy which I have chosen for you from my father's cellar. Hold out your glasses."

Gregory and the slaves obeyed with the slowness and hesitation of astonishment, while Ivan held out his glass with the utmost effrontery.

Vaninka filled them to the brim herself, and then, as they hesitated to drink, "Come, drink to my health, friends," said she.

"Hurrah!" cried the drinkers, reassured by the kind and familiar tone of their noble visitor, as they emptied their glasses at a draught.

Vaninka at once poured them out another glass; then putting the bottle on the table, "Empty the bottle, my friends," said she, "and do not trouble about me. Annouschka and I, with the permission of the master of the house, will sit near the stove till the storm is over."

Gregory tried to rise and place stools near the stove, but whether he was quite drunk or whether some narcotic had been mixed with the brandy, he fell back on his seat, trying to stammer out an excuse.

"It is all right," said Vaninka: "do not disturb yourselves; drink, my friends, drink."

The revellers profited by this permission, and each emptied the glass before him. Scarcely had Gregory emptied his before he fell forward on the table.

"Good!" said Vaninka to her maid in a low voice: "the opium is taking effect."

"What do you mean to do?" said Annouschka.

"You will soon see," was the answer.

The two moujiks followed the example of the master of the house, and fell down side by side on the ground. Ivan was left struggling against sleep, and trying to sing a drinking song; but soon his tongue refused to obey him, his eyes closed in spite of him, and seeking the tune that escaped him, and muttering words he was unable to pronounce, he fell fast asleep near his companions.

Immediately Vaninka rose, fixed them with flashing eyes, and called them by name one after another. There was no response.

Then she clapped her hands and cried joyfully, "The moment has come!" Going to the back of the room, she brought thence an armful of straw, placed it in a corner of the room, and did the same in the other corners. She then took a flaming brand from the stove and set fire in succession to the four corners of the room.

"What are you doing?" said Annouschka, wild with terror, trying to stop her.

"I am going to bury our secret in the ashes of this house," answered Vaninka.

"But my brother, my poor brother!" said the girl.

"Your brother is a wretch who has betrayed me, and we are lost if we do not destroy him."

"Oh, my brother, my poor brother!"

"You can die with him if you like," said Vaninka, accompanying the proposal with a smile which showed she would not have been sorry if Annouschka had carried sisterly affection to that length.

"But look at the fire, madam—the fire!"

"Let us go, then," said Vaninka; and, dragging out the heart-broken girl, she locked the door behind her and threw the key far away into the snow.

"In the name of Heaven," said Annouschka, "let us go home quickly: I cannot gaze upon this awful sight!"

"No, let us stay here!" said Vaninka, holding her back with a grasp of almost masculine strength. "Let us stay until the house falls in on them, so that we may be certain that not one of them escapes."

"Oh, my God!" cried Annouschka, falling on her knees, "have mercy upon my poor brother, for death will hurry him unprepared into Thy presence."

"Yes, yes, pray; that is right," said Vaninka. "I wish to destroy their bodies, not their souls."

Vaninka stood motionless, her arms crossed, brilliantly lit up by the flames, while her attendant prayed. The fire did not last long: the house was wooden, with the crevices filled with oakum, like all those of Russian peasants, so that the flames, creeping out at the four corners, soon made great headway, and, fanned by the wind, spread rapidly to all parts of the building. Vaninka followed the progress of the fire with blazing eyes, fearing to see some half-burnt spectral shape rush out of the flames. At last the roof fell in, and Vaninka, relieved of all fear, then at last made her way to the general's house, into which the two women entered without being seen, thanks to the permission Annouschka had to go out at any hour of the day or night.

The next morning the sole topic of conversation in St. Petersburg was the fire at the Red House. Four half-consumed corpses were dug out from beneath the ruins, and as three of the general's slaves were missing, he had no doubt that the unrecognisable bodies were those of Ivan, Daniel, and Alexis: as for the fourth, it was certainly that of Gregory.

The cause of the fire remained a secret from everyone: the house was solitary, and the snowstorm so violent that nobody had met the two women on the deserted road. Vaninka was sure of her maid. Her secret then had perished with Ivan.

But now remorse took the place of fear: the young girl who was so pitiless and inflexible in the execution of the deed quailed at its remembrance. It seemed to her that by revealing the secret of her crime to a priest, she would be relieved of her terrible burden. She therefore sought a confessor renowned for his lofty charity, and, under the seal of confession, told him all. The priest was horrified by the story. Divine mercy is boundless, but human forgiveness has its limits. He refused Vaninka the absolution she asked. This refusal was terrible: it would banish Vaninka from the Holy Table; this banishment would be noticed, and could not fail to be attributed to some unheard-of and secret crime. Vaninka fell at the feet of the priest, and in the name of her father, who would be disgraced by her shame, begged him to mitigate the rigour of this sentence.

The confessor reflected deeply, then thought he had found a way to obviate such consequences. It was that Vaninka should approach the Holy Table with the other young girls: the priest would stop before her as before all the others, but only to say to her, "Pray and weep"; the congregation, deceived by this, would think that she had received the Sacrament like her companions. This was all that Vaninka could obtain.

This confession took place about seven o'clock in the evening, and the solitude of the church, added to the darkness of night, had given it a still more awful character. The confessor returned home, pale and trembling. His wife Elizabeth was waiting for him alone. She had just put her little daughter Arina, who was eight years old, to bed in an adjoining room. When she saw her husband, she uttered a cry of terror, so changed and haggard was his appearance. The confessor tried to reassure her, but his trembling voice only increased her alarm. She asked the cause of his agitation; the confessor refused to tell her. Elizabeth had heard the evening before that her mother was ill; she thought that her husband had received some bad news. The day was Monday, which is considered an unlucky day among the Russians, and,

going out that day, Elizabeth had met a man in mourning; these omens were too numerous and too strong not to portend misfortune.

Elizabeth burst into tears, and cried out, "My mother is dead!"

The priest in vain tried to reassure her by telling her that his agitation was not due to that. The poor woman, dominated by one idea, made no response to his protestations but this everlasting cry, "My mother is dead!"

Then, to bring her to reason, the confessor told her that his emotion was due to the avowal of a crime which he had just heard in the confessional. But Elizabeth shook her head: it was a trick, she said, to hide from her the sorrow which had fallen upon her. Her agony, instead of calming, became more violent; her tears ceased to flow, and were followed by hysterics. The priest then made her swear to keep the secret, and the sanctity of the confession was betrayed.

Little Arina had awakened at Elizabeth's cries, and being disturbed and at the same time curious as to what her parents were doing, she got up, went to listen at the door, and heard all.

The day for the Communion came; the church of St. Siméon was crowded. Vaninka came to kneel at the railing of the choir. Behind her was her father and his aides-de-camp, and behind them their servants.

Arina was also in the church with her mother. The inquisitive child wished to see Vaninka, whose name she had heard pronounced that terrible night, when her father had failed in the first and most sacred of the duties imposed on a priest. While her mother was praying, she left her chair and glided among the worshippers, nearly as far as the railing.

But when she had arrived there, she was stopped by the group of the general's servants. But Arina had not come so far to be stopped so easily: she tried to push between them, but they opposed her; she persisted, and one of them pushed her roughly back. The child fell, struck her head against a seat, and got up bleeding and crying, "You are very proud

for a slave. Is it because you belong to the great lady who burnt the Red House?"

These words, uttered in a loud voice, in the midst of the silence which preceded the sacred ceremony, were heard by everyone. They were answered by a shriek. Vaninka had fainted. The next day the general, at the feet of Paul, recounted to him, as his sovereign and judge, the whole terrible story, which Vaninka, crushed by her long struggle, had at last revealed to him, at night, after the scene in the church.

The emperor remained for a moment in thought at the end of this strange confession; then, getting up from the chair where he had been sitting while the miserable father told his story, he went to a bureau, and wrote on a sheet of paper the following sentence:—

"The priest having violated what should have been inviolable, the secrets of the confessional, is exiled to Siberia and deprived of his priestly office. His wife will follow him: she is to be blamed for not having respected his character as a minister of the altar. The little girl will not leave her parents.

"Annouschka, the attendant, will also go to Siberia for not having made known to her master his daughter's conduct.

"I preserve all my esteem for the general, and I mourn with him for the deadly blow which has struck him.

"As for Vaninka, I know of no punishment which can be inflicted upon her. I only see in her the daughter of a brave soldier, whose whole life has been devoted to the service of his country. Besides, the extraordinary way in which the crime was discovered, seems to place the culprit beyond the limits of my severity. I leave her punishment in her own hands. If I understand her character, if any feeling of dignity remains to her, her heart and her remorse will show her the path she ought to follow."

Paul handed the paper open to the general, ordering him to take it to Count Pahlen, the governor of St. Petersburg.

On the following day the emperor's orders were carried out.

Vaninka went into a convent, where towards the end of the same year she died of shame and grief.

The general found the death he sought on the field of Austerlitz.

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
General Literature,	2-20
Ancient Cities,	20
Antiquary's Books,	20
Arden Shakespeare,	20
Beginner's Books,	21
Business Books,	21
Byzantine Texts,	21
Churchman's Bible,	22
Churchman's Library,	22
Classical Translations,	22
Classics of Art,	23
Commercial Series,	23
Connoisseur's Library,	23
Library of Devotion,	23
Illustrated Pocket Library of Plain and Coloured Books,	24
Junior Examination Series,	25
Junior School-Books,	26
Leaders of Religion,	26
Little Books on Art,	26
Little Galleries,	27
Little Guides,	27
Little Library,	27
Little Quarto Shakespeare,	29
Miniature Library,	29
Oxford Biographies,	29
School Examination Series,	29
School Histories,	30
Textbooks of Science,	30
Simplified French Texts,	30
Standard Library,	30
Textbooks of Technology,	31
Handbooks of Theology,	31
Westminster Commentaries,	32
Fiction,	32-37
The Shilling Novels,	37
Books for Boys and Girls,	39
Novels of Alexandre Dumas,	39
Methuen's Sixpenny Books,	39

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