

TWO VEILS.

From the nun's wan life a buried passion
Blossomed like a grave-rose in her face;
"Sweet, my child," she said, "in what fair fashion
Do you mean to wear this lovely lace?"

"Thus?"—and, with a feverish hand and shaken,
Round her head the precious veil she wound,
"Faith in man," she said, "I have forsaken;
Faith in God most surely I have found."

"Yet, with music in the dewy distance
And the whole land flowering at my feet,
Through this convent-garment's dark resistance
Backward I can hear my fierce heart beat."

"Tropic eyes too full of light and languor,
Northern soul too grey with northern frost:
Ashes—ashes after fires of anger—
Love and beauty—what a world I lost!"

"Sister," laughed the girl with girlish laughter,
"Sister, do you envy me my veil?"
"You may come to ask for mine hereafter,"
Answered very piteous lips and pale.

"No; for your black cross is heavy bearing;
Tedious counting these stone beads must be.
Oh, but there are jewels worth the wearing
Waiting in the sunny world for me!"

"Sister, have a care—you are forgetting.
Do not broder thorns among my flowers,
Only buds and leaves: your tears are wetting
All my bridal lace." They fell in showers.

After years and years, beside the grating,
(Oh, that saddest sight, young hair grown grey!)
With dry boughs and empty winds awaiting
At the cloister door, came one to pray.

"Sister, see my bride-veil! there were never
Thorns so sharp as those within its lace.
Sister, give me yours to wear for ever;
Give me yours, and let me hide my face."

SALLIE M. B. PIATT.

NINETY-THREE.

BY VICTOR HUGO.

PART THE SECOND.

IN PARIS.

BOOK THE SECOND.

THE PUBLIC-HOUSE OF THE RUE DU PAON.

"During the prosecutions of September you hid yourself, Robespierre."

"And you, Marat, you showed yourself."

"Robespierre, you flung the red cap on the ground."

"Yes, when a traitor hoisted it. That which decorates Dumas sullenly Robespierre."

"Robespierre, you refused to cover Louis XVI's head with a veil while Chateauxvieux's soldiers were passing."

"I did better than veil his head, I cut it off."

Danton interposed, but it was like oil flung upon flames.

"Robespierre, Marat," said he; "calm yourselves."

Marat did not like being named the second. He turned about. "With what does Danton meddle?" he asked.

Danton bounded.

"With what do I meddle? With this! That we must not have fratricide; that there must be no strife between two men who serve the people; that it is enough to have a foreign war; that it is enough to have a civil war; that it would be too much to have a domestic war; that it is I who have made the Revolution, and I will not permit it to be spoiled. Now you know what it is I meddle with!"

Marat replied, without raising his voice, "You had better be getting your accounts ready."

"My accounts!" cried Danton. "Go ask for them in the defiles of Argonne—in Champagne delivered—in Belgium conquered—of the armies where I have already four times offered my breast to the musket-shots. Go demand them at the Place de la Revolution, at the scaffold of January 21st, of the throne flung to the ground, of the guillotine; that widow!"

Marat interrupted him: "The guillotine is a virgin Amazon; she exterminates; she does not give birth."

"Are you sure?" retorted Danton. "I tell you I will make her fruitful."

"We shall see," said Marat. He smiled.

Danton saw this smile.

"Marat," cried he, "you are the man that hides; I am the man of the open air and broad day. I hate the life of a reptile. It would not suit me to be a woodlouse. You inhabit a cave; I live in the street. You hold communication with none; whosoever passes may see and speak with me."

"Pretty fellow! will you mount up to where I live?" snarled Marat.

Then his smile disappeared, and he continued, in a peremptory tone, "Danton, give an account of the thirty-three thousand crowns, ready money, that Montmorin paid you in the King's name under pretext of indemnifying you for your post of solicitor at the Châtelet."

"I made one on the 14th of July," said Danton, haughtily.

"And the Garde-Meuble? and the crown diamonds?"

"I was of the 6th of October."

"And the thefts of your *alter ego*, Lacroix, in Belgium?"

"I was of the 20th of June."

"And the loans to the Montpensier?"

"I urged the people on to the return from Varennes."

"And the opera-house, built with money that you furnished?"

"I armed the sections of Paris."

"And the hundred thousand livres, secret funds of the Minister of Justice?"

"I caused the 10th of August."

"And the two millions for the Assembly's secret expenses, of which you took the fourth?"

"I stopped the enemy on their march, and I barred the passage to the kings in coalition."

"Prostitute!" said Marat.

Danton was terrible as he rose to his full height.

"Yes!" cried he, "I am! I sold myself, but I saved the world!"

Robespierre had gone back to biting his nails. As for him, he could neither laugh nor smile. The laugh—the lightning—of Danton and the smile—the sting—of Marat were both wanting to him.

Danton resumed: "I am like the ocean, I have my ebb and flow; at low water my shoals may be seen: at high tide you may see my waves."

"You foam," said Marat.

"My tempest," said Danton.

Marat had risen at the same moment as Danton. He also exploded. The snake became suddenly a dragon.

"Ah!" cried he. "Ah, Robespierre! Ah, Danton! You will not listen to me! Well, you are lost; I tell you so. Your policy ends in an impossibility to go farther; you have no longer an outlet; and you do things which shut every door against you, except that of the tomb."

"That is our grandeur," said Danton.

He shrugged his shoulders.

Marat hurried on; "Danton, beware. Vergniaud has also a wide mouth, thick lips, and frowning eyebrows; Vergniaud is pitted too, like Mirabeau and like thee; that did not prevent the 31st of May. Ah, you shrug your shoulders! Sometimes a shrug of the shoulders makes the head fall. Danton, I tell thee, that big voice, that loose cravat, those top-boots, those little suppers, those great pockets—all those are things which concern Louisette."

Louisette was Marat's pet name for the guillotine.

He pursued:

"And as for thee, Robespierre, thou art a Moderate, but that will serve nothing. Go on—powder thyself, dress thy hair, brush thy clothes, play the vulgar coxcomb, have clean linen, keep curled and frizzled and bedizened; none the less thou wilt go to the Place de la Grève! Read Brunswick's proclamation! Thou wilt get a treatment no less than that of the regicide Damiens! Fine as thou art, thou wilt be dragged at the tails of four horses."

"Echo of Coblenz!" said Robespierre between his teeth.

"I am the echo of nothing—I am the cry of the whole, Robespierre!"

"Ah, you are young, you! How old art thou, Danton? Four and thirty. How many are your years, Robespierre? Thirty-three. Well, — I have lived always! I am the old human suffering—I have lived six thousand years."

"That is true," retorted Danton. "For six thousand years Cain has been preserved in hatred, like the toad in a rock; the rock breaks, Cain springs out among men, and is called Marat."

"Danton!" cried Marat, and a livid glare illuminated his eyes.

"Well, what?" asked Danton.

Thus these three terrible men conversed.

They were conflicting thunderbolts!

III.—A STIRRING OF THE INMOST NERVES.

There was a pause in the dialogue; these Titans withdrew for a moment each into his own reflections.

Lions dread hydras. Robespierre had grown very pale, and Danton very red. A shiver ran through the frames of both.

The wild-beast glare in Marat's eyes had died out; a calm cold and imperious, settled again on the face of this man, dreaded by his formidable associates.

Danton felt himself conquered, but he would not yield. He resumed:

"Marat talks very loud about the dictatorship and unity, but he has only one ability—that of breaking to pieces."

Robespierre parted his thin lips, and said: "As for me, I am of the opinion of Anacharsis Cloots, I say—Neither Roland nor Marat."

"And I," replied Marat, "I say—Neither Danton nor Robespierre."

He regarded both fixedly, and added; "Let me give you advice, Danton. You are in love, you think of marrying again; do not meddle any more with politics—be wise."

And moving backward a step towards the door as if to go out, he made them a menacing salute, and said, "Adieu, gentlemen."

Danton and Robespierre shuddered. At this instant a voice rose from the bottom of the room, saying, "You are wrong, Marat."

All three turned about. During Marat's explosion, some one had entered unperceived by the door at the end of the room.

"Is it you, Citizen Cimourdain?" asked Marat. "Good day."

It was indeed Cimourdain.

"I say you are wrong, Marat," he repeated.

Marat turned green, which was his way of growing pale.

"You are useful, but Robespierre and Danton are necessary. Why threaten them? Union, union, citizens! The people expect unity."

This entrance acted like a dash of cold water, and had the effect that the arrival of a stranger does on a family quarrel, it calmed the surface if not the depths.

Cimourdain advanced towards the table. Danton and Robespierre knew him. They had often remarked among the public tribunals of the Convention this obscure but powerful man, whom the people saluted. Nevertheless, Robespierre, always a stickler for forms, asked:

"Citizen, how did you enter?"

"He belongs to the Evêché," replied Marat in a voice in which a certain submission was perceptible. Marat braved the Convention, led the Commune, and feared the Evêché. This is a law.

Mirabeau felt Robespierre stirring at some unknown depth below; Robespierre felt Marat stir; Marat felt Hebert stir; Hebert, Babeuf. As long as the underneath layers are still, the politician can advance, but under the most revolutionary there must be some subsoil, and the boldest step in dismay when they feel under their feet the earthquake they have created.

To be able to distinguish the movement which covetousness causes from that brought about by principle; to combat the one and second the other, is the genius and the virtue of great revolutionists.

Danton saw that Marat faltered. "Oh, Citizen Cimourdain

is not one too many," said he. And he held out his hand to the new comer.

Then he said: "Zounds, explain the situation to Citizen Cimourdain. He appears just at the right moment. I represent the Mountain; Robespierre represents the Committee of Public Safety; Marat represents the Commune; Cimourdain represents the Evêché. He is come to give the casting vote."

"So be it," said Cimourdain, simply and gravely. "What is the matter in question?"

"The Vendée," replied Robespierre.

"The Vendée!" repeated Cimourdain.

Then he continued: "There is the great danger. If the Revolution perishes, she will perish by the Vendée. One Vendée is more formidable than ten Germanies. In order that France may live, it is necessary to kill the Vendée."

These few words won him Robespierre. Still he asked this question, "Were you not formerly a priest?"

Cimourdain's priestly air did not escape Robespierre. He recognized in another that which he had within himself.

Cimourdain replied, "Yes, citizen."

"What difference does that make?" cried Danton.

"When priests are good fellows, they are worth more than others. In revolutionary times, the priests melt into citizens, as the bells do into arms and cannon. Danton is a priest! Danton is a priest; Thomas Lindet is the Bishop of Evreux. Robespierre, you sit in the Convention side by side with Massieu, Bishop of Beauvais. The Grand Vicar Vaugeois was a member of the Insurrection Committee of August 10th. Chabot is a Capucin. It was Dom Gerle who divided the tennis-court oath; it was the Abbé Andran who caused the National Assembly to be declared superior to the King; it was the Abbé Goutte who demanded of the Legislature that the dais should be taken away from Louis XVI's armchair; it was the Abbé Grégoire who instigated the abolition of royalty."

"Seconded," sneered Marat, "by the actor Collet d'Herbois. Between them they did the work; the priest overturned the throne, the comedian flung down the king."

"Let us go back to the Vendée," said Robespierre.

"Well, what is it?" demanded Cimourdain. "What is this Vendée doing now?"

Robespierre answered, "This; she has found a chief. She becomes terrible."

"Who is this chief, Citizen Robespierre?"

"A *ci-devant* Marquis de Lantenac, who styles himself a Breton prince."

Cimourdain made a movement.

"I know him," said he; "I was chaplain in his house."

He reflected for a moment, then added: "He was a man of gallantry before being a soldier."

"Like Biron, who was a Lauzun," said Danton.

And Cimourdain continued, thoughtfully: "Yes; an old man of pleasure. He must be terrible."

"Frightful," said Robespierre. "He burns the villages, kills the wounded, massacres the prisoners, shoots the women."

"The women?"

"Yes. Among others he had the mother of three children shot. Nobody knows what became of the little ones. He is really a captain; he understands war."

"Yes, in truth," replied Cimourdain, "he was in the Hanoverian war, and the soldiers said, Richelieu in appearance, Lantenac at the bottom. Lantenac was the real general. Talk about him to your colleague, Dusaulex."

Robespierre remained silent for a moment; then the dialogue began anew between him and Cimourdain.

"Well, Cimourdain, this man is in Vendée"

"Since when?"

"The last three weeks."

"He must be declared an outlaw."

"That is done."

"A price must be set on his head."

"It is done."

"A large reward must be offered to whoever will take him."

"That is done."

"Not in assignats."

"That is done."

"In gold."

"That is done."

"And he must be guillotined."

"That will be done."

"By whom?"

"By you."

"By me?"

"Yes; you will be delegated by the Committee of Public Safety with unlimited powers."

"I accept," said Cimourdain.

Robespierre made his choice of men rapidly—the quality of a true statesman. He took from the portfolio before him a sheet of white paper, on which could be read the printed heading: "The French Republic One and Indivisible. Committee of Public Safety."

Cimourdain continued: "Yes, I accept. The terrible against the terrible. Lantenac is ferocious; I shall be so too. War to the death against this man. I will deliver the Republic from him, please God."

He checked himself, then resumed: "I am a priest; no matter; I believe in God."

"God has gone out of date," said Danton.

"I believe in God," said Cimourdain, unmoved.

Robespierre gave a sinister nod of approval.

Cimourdain asked: "To whom am I delegated?"

"The commandant of the exploring division sent against Lantenac. Only—I warn you—he is a nobleman."

Danton cried out: "That is another thing which matters little. A noble! Well, what then? It is with the nobles as with the priests. When one of either class is good he is excellent. Nobility is a prejudice; but we should not have it in one sense more than the other; no more against than in favour of it. Robespierre, is not Saint-Just a noble? Florelle de Saint-Just, zounds! Anacharsis Cloots is a baron. Our friend Charles Hesse, who never misses a meeting of the Cordeliers, is a prince, and the brother of the reigning Landgrave of Hesse-Rothenburg. Montaut, the intimate of Marat, is the Marquis de Montaut. There is in the Revolutionary Tribunal a juror who is a priest—Vilate; and a juror who is a nobleman—Leroy, Marquis de Montflabert. Both are tried men."

"And you forget," added Robespierre, "the foreman of the revolutionary jury."

"Antonelle?"

"Who is the Marquis Antonelle?" said Robespierre.

Danton replied: "Dampierre was a nobleman, the one who