

her. The doorway, as she stood faltering, almost fainting, before it, seemed to be full of grotesque dancing faces, some swathed in bandages, others powder-blackened, some hot with excitement, others pallid with fatigue. They were such faces, piled one above the other, as are seen in bad dreams.

On the intruders' side, those who pressed in first saw a girl strangely quiet, who held the door wide for them. "My mother is ill," she said in a voice that strove for composure; if they were the enemy, her only hope, her only safety, lay in courage. "And she is old," she continued. "Do not harm her."

"We come to do harm neither to you nor to her," a voice replied. And the foremost of the troop, a thick, dwarfish man with a huge two-handed sword, stood aside. "Messer Baudichon," he said to one behind him, "this is the daughter."

She knew the fat, sturdy councillor—who in Geneva did not?—and through her stupor she recognised him, although a great bandage swathed half his head, and he was pale. And, beginning to have an inkling that things were well, she began also to tremble. By his side stood Messer Petitot—she knew him, too, he had been Syndic the year before—and a man in hacked and blood-stained armour with his arm in a sling and his face black with powder. These three, and behind them a dozen others—men whom she had seen on high days robed in velvet but who now wore, one and all, the ugly marks of that night's work—looked on her with a strange benevolence. And Baudichon took her hand.

"We do not come to harm you," he said. "On the contrary we come to thank you and yours. In the name of the city of Geneva, and of all those here with me——"

"Ay! Ay!" shouted Jehan Brosse, the tailor. And he rang his sword on the doorstep. "Ay! Ay!"