

"You shall have all my pleasures," said the demon, adding: "Take off your cross."

"I do not quarrel with thy feet or horns," replied the knight; "let each have his device and his mark."

"Yours embarrasses me," said the Devil, gruffly.

"Then break the bargain."

"No; so many are thus marked and yet are mine. Let us go."

The walls opened; they passed out, and the evil spirit, taking Bos's hand, which he burnt to the very marrow, placed him on a cloud. Those who on sea or land saw the black vapour floating towards the west, crossed themselves, and pointed to it as the precursor of a horrible tempest, or some fearful calamity. Sire Bos, with a tranquil heart, floated on without uneasiness.

"I never desire a better steed," said Sire Bos.

"You are not so easily put out, I see," replied the demon.

As they passed over the Island of Rhodes, he observed:

"Many of the knights of that sect will become mine, bartering their poverty and vow of chastity for my works and pomp."

"They will leave the Saracens whom they have killed, in payment," answered Bos.

They saw Nismes, that famed city of the Romans, sacked by Normans and Saracens, in ruins, and almost depopulated.

"Oh! the stupidity of mankind!" exclaimed the Devil, "who, having so few years to live, shorten those few by war."

"Hold thy tongue, varlet of hell," replied the knight, disdainfully; "thou knowest not the value of fame, nor the smile of beauty, nor the praise of minstrels—things far above life."

"Oh," said the demon, "excuse me; war is one of our inspirations—it is we who implant that passion in your hearts."

"Poor devil, I pity thee! thou hast no good sword, which thou lovest as a mistress, with which thou canst practise for hours how to wound or slay thine enemies in front or rear."

When skirting Roussillon, they observed its warm and voluptuous manners; its dances, where the female, shot up from the ground, falls back gently on the firm encircling arm of her skillful partner. Both knight and demon smiled at the sight of this pastime.

"Hurrah for the crusades," said the latter; "while you are discomforted out there, your wives and daughters dance in the flowery meadows."

"The faithless ones!" murmured the knight.

"Every woman has three things light belonging to her," said the demon, "her heart, her tongue, and her feet. If you had remained in Palestine a little longer, your Mathe would have loved the Baron des Angles. She would have confessed it to him; and, if he had become tired of her, she would have run after him."

"Thou liest in thy throat."

"You are captious, Sir Knight."

"Retract thy words!"

"Men alone retract them."

The demon desiring a little diversion caused the vapour to become so light, that Messire Bos found nothing whereon to rest his material body; but nothing daunted, he shouted—

"I will pursue thee even to thy caldrons—I will reach thee either by valour, miracle, or magic."

"Shift for yourself as you can," said the demon, quietly.

"Avant thou Evil One! Thou leavest me in the hands of God."

"A truce," said the Devil, whose whole being was troubled at that word—"a truce, and keep your lips from uttering that word."

"I will keep it in my heart," thought the knight.

They were now above Toulouse—which had been called the Rome of the Garonne—then proud of its basilicas raised on its ancient temples. The bells of its four-and-twenty towers sounded the knell for the dead.

"It is for Raymond of St. Gilles, the bold crusader," said the Devil, "who died in Palestine, in his Castle of Pilgrimage, and whose son has been driven hence by Guillaume de Poitiers."

The knight, still incensed against the demon, answered not, but bent in honour of the illustrious Comte de Toulouse. Rubbing his hands, the devil continued:

"In two or three centuries the Pope will make a crusade against this fine country of Languedoc. For our benefit he will exterminate whole armies of heretics, without, however, obtaining for that deed a quittance for the condemned crusaders."

"Wicked juggler! of what boastest thou? Have heretics a soul? Is not every crusader absolved from his sins?"

In a short time they floated over the rich lands of Bigorre—over its rounded mountains, looking, in the distance, like a camp assemblage of giants' tents. They saw the impetuous Etchez rolling its foaming waves along, and the three lofty towers of Bénéac standing proudly on the hill which rises above the village, and commands the three valleys. Sire Bos devoutly saluted his native soil and the heritage of his fathers.

"This little spot in the universe, to which your poor heart clings so fondly, will not long be the property of those of your name."

"I hope, however, to have offspring."

"From the Mentauts it will pass to the Rohan-Rocheforts, until a great tempest shall uproot the seigneurs, to replace them by the sons of serfs. The descendant of one of those whom you see bending under his labour, shall become the possessor of your castle, and will amuse himself with destroying it bit by bit. The winds and birds of heaven will do the rest."

"Ere one of these serfs shall pull down the great towers of Bénéac, thou, oh, vassal of Satan! must reign on the earth."

"Every one in his turn, Baron—you first, then your serf."

The knight whistled a hunting air, then said:

"If all that thou hast said should come to pass in a thousand years or so, what would be said of me?"

"Two good women, spinning, shall recount your history, as an old wife's tale, in the midst of the ruins."

"Thus thou seest," said the knight, drawing himself up, "that so much as the name of that serf, if he ever exist, will not be known; but a knight is as immortal as thou art."

The cloud sank down gently on a hill in front of Bénéac, on the other side of the Etchez. The de-