

above their fellows' shoulders; inch by inch until I judged we had them limed. With a swift touch on the shoulder I warned Marcel, and in a flash we two were upon them. Taken unawares, the fellows never so much as parried the attack, and but for the odds behind, the thrust I gave would have been sheer butchery.

That sobered the rogues. The spilling of blood, even though not their own, was a marvellous cooler. No barber-surgeon's lancet ever so quickly brought down a fever, for no man was in haste to lay his cheek alongside the ghastly white and twisted faces which looked up so blindly from the shadow of the bridge!

"God for Navarre!" cried the King a second time, as we again faced them, unhurt but breathing heavier than was comforting.

During the struggle a silence had fallen upon the reserve on the hillside, though they breathed harder, as if they themselves bore the brunt of the fight. But as the second pair went down a yell broke from behind, a storm of wild threats and wilder curses, above which the harsh voice of Pierre Salces could be heard roaring out from the rear—

"Bow down there in front, and by the saints I will open such a breach as will let us all in! What? You slayers of women! You who killed my poor wench no more than four days back! do ye dare face the Red Rat a second time? 'Tis once too often. Bow down, comrades, lower, lower, and now follow hard on the heels of this."