MARTYRDOM OF ST. JOHN

NEPOMUCONE. FROM THE FRENCH OF RAOUL DE

NAVERY. CHAPTER IV.

CHARITY. The missals were closed, the hymni were ended, taper and torch bad ceased to burn, the worshippers arose from their knees, and pressed through the doors of the charch in crowded groups. In a carved oaken chair, over the can-opy of which was fixed a royal crown, sat a young woman, her thoughts dwel-ling on the Holy One within the taber nacle on the alter

acle on the altar.

It was the Queen of Bohemia. A few aces behind her kneit a young als arms crossed upon his breast. Near him were two young women, slightly veiled, seemingly weary of the devotion of their royal mistress, and impatiently awaiting the time she might think fit to eave the church.

Near the baptismal font, before a pleture of our Blessed Lady, knelt the young priest, father John Nepomucene, whose holy eloquence was daily bringing crowds to the shrine of our Lada of Carlo

queen at length arose from her knees, gave her prayer book to one of her maids, and walked slowly down the church. As she approached the door, hastily withdrew, and then came forward again. It was the little girl charged with playing a part in the comedy arranged by Hatto and Mauper.
As soon as the queen had passed the door of the church, the little girl, her face burning with confusion and wet with tears, caught the queen's robe,

pressed it to her lips, and threw her-self on her knees before her. The queen put her hand into her purse, but the child cried out sobbing : 'Tis not money I want, but justice

and pity."
"Pity!" said the queen. "As a woman, I feel for the sorrowful; but as woman, I feel for the sorrowful; but as woman, I feel for the sorrowful; but as woman, I feel for the sorrowful; all my up a queen, I owe justice to all my sub jects. For whom do you ask pity, my

Jane raised up the little girl, and attoped down kindly to her Seeing the queen had stopped, the officers of her suite approached where she stood and very soon a crowd gathered near the porch of our Lady's Church. The little girl parrated all that had taken place the evening before—the death of Julie's father and mother, the suspisions and fears, and the terrible cruelty the mob had shown the orphan girl.

"Then," demanded the queen, "is the poor child still shut up in the

"Yes, your Majesty, and the dead body of the woman who died of the plague is there too."
"It is too terrible," murmured the

queen. Then, turning to the officers. she said: "Go, pull down every stone of that house, if need be; I wish to

save the child's life."

The courtiers bowed lowly, but not one moved to do the queen's bidding.

"What!" exclaimed the queen, with flashing eyes, "are men afraid?"

"Please, your Majesty, twenty times have me fored dotth on the fleid of

have we faced death on the field of battle, but we confess we fear the pest."

" But it is to save a life ! The officers looked at one another, and then bowed their heads in shame

We have enough of this," said

Jane. "I no longer ask; I command it to be done: who will dare disobey?" "The king our master has com manded us not to interiere in such ough," said the queen. "Now,

I know the real measure of your zeal and your courage. When men quail, women must act. Perhaps you are right, and to you are to be yielded the battle field and the siege: to us more homely dangers, less glorious valor. Come, child," said she, "lead me to Julie's house."

queen from an act of needless heroism. but her bold, commanding look forced them to fall back, and leave the way

en before her.
The child hastened on to the house of the imprisoned girl ; the queen followed. Hearing a footstep benind her, she turned round, and saw Offried coming after her. She did not speak; she smiled, and in her smile were She did not speak ; blended joy and confiderce. From the arose the noise of gathering tumult, as the crowd pressed onwards, eager to witness the behavior of the

The young priest whom we saw kneeling in the Church of our Lady missed nothing of the dramatic scene which took place outside the door of the church. Instead of following the queen and the crowd, he took a much shorter way, which led him more quickly to the place whither all were hurrying.

It was a touching sight to see the young queen advancing to a peril from which the bravest fled. From time to time the little girl looked round to make sure that the queen was near her.
At last, having entered the street to which they were going, the child raised her arm and pointed out the house.

The window was closed. Julie hav ing given herself up for lost, would end her agony as soon as possible by clos ing out the pure air, and leaving her-self wholly a prey to the noxious edors of her heated, gloomy apartment. She sat down at the end of the bed, and re ted her burning head on the feet of the corpse.

All at once she heard a loud noise in the street. The clamor became louder. What could it mean? Julie, fearing the people were gathering to marder trembled with new terror. rushed to the window and looked down at the crowd below. " Ah," she said, "they are going to pull down the house. I shall die," she said, "but they shall not touch me." Raising the coverlet, she lay down beside the corpse, and awaited the entrance of ose who, she thought, were coming destroy her. "I dely them now," to said: "they will now surely think

THE QUEEN'S CONFESSION. that my mother died of the plague." A horrible thought crossed her mind, that the house was abandoned, that it was set on fire, and she became uncon-

when the child, Julie's little friend pointed out the house, Offried drew his dagger, pushed it in between two of the stones built up in the doorway, and made room for his hands. It was very difficult to remove the stones the needful tools were not at hand Time was becoming more precious; the death-like stillness within the house made him fear the girl was already dead. His hands were covered with blood, his dagger was broken; he stopped a moment; the queen caught the large stones in her delicate hands; the large stones in ner delicate hands; Offried's courage and hope were re-newed; with one mighty effort he loosened the stones, pulled them from their place, and made a large breach in the wall. Jane was the first to enter the wall. Jane was the first to enter the breach. Offried said to her respectfully: "My sovereign will al-low me to enter alone; I shall be suffi-cient to save the imprisoned child." "Thanks, Offried; I refuse your re-

quest only because I am bound to give ny people an example of courage. The queen quickly advanced over the rubbish torn from the door; but her foot having slipped, to save herself from falling she cried out: "Offried, your hand;" and both disappeared in

little girl who was so anxious to save Julie At the time Offried presented his hand to the queen, two men appeared in the entrance to the street. walked rapidly in deep rage, the other followed with a cruel joy, which he could hardly hide.

the dark passage, followed by the brave

could hardly hide.

"It is not so! it cannot be!" cried
the one whose anger blazed in his face.
While he spoke, he saw the queen and
Otfried disappear through the breach made in the rubbish with which the door had been filled. He staggered for moment; then seizing his dagger, he rushed like a tiger towards the house His companion followed him. It was Wences aus and Hatto.

After having set the snare in which he hoped to ruin the queen, Hatto hastened to the king. Wenceslaus was in great good humor that night. showed some of his former friendship for Hatto. He told him he had an important commission, which he wished to entrust to a man worthy of the charge. "Whom does your majesty deign to nonor?" asked Hatto.

" Otried has always given me proof of his zeal and devotedness."
"Doubtless; yet I should say it is

because of her majesty the queen."

The king was offended at the tone in which these words were spoken.

What do you mean by these words count ?' "Only what they speak. I have al-

ways told your majesty of Otfried's re-spectful affection for the queen." Wenceslaus was silent for a moment. Then he rejoined: "Offried has bee with the queen since he was a child. "I understand that the noble lady of the house of Bavaria took him under her special protection, Notberg having saved the life of the count in an adventure of the chase. But your Majesty surely knows the history of this adventure, for one of the tusks of the boar high destroyed Notberg is to be seen

in the oratory of the queen ' The tusk of the boar ?" "Your Majesty may wish to hear the past?"

egend? Surely."

"None can be more touching. Not-berg had just died his terrible death, when the Lady of Hainault, whose promises had calaed the fears of the lying man, laid her hand on the brow of Ouried, saving at the same time to her little daughter, I mean her Majesty: 'Here is your brother.' This event ended the day; the hunters returned to the castle. Next day Offried deto the castle. Next day Offried de-manded the tusks of the wild boar, and presented one to her Majesty. I am ure the queen sets a higher price on that sad token than on all the jewels in the crown of Bohemia

And I approve it with all my heart," said Wenceslaus. said Wenceslaus. "I knew that the father of Otiried had saved the life of Count Albert

It is that which explains the grati-

tude of the whole family."
"Up to the present there have been "In the beginning, yes; but it has not been in the power of Count Albert. Events in their unforeseen march have

led to the fortune of Osfried. But the young man has no ambition: he takes no pride in the favor with which the queen honors him. This time Hatto's voice took a tone

of raillery. "It is a barren favor; I will see he

s better rewarded. Be cautious, your Majesty; pardon

the zeal which may carry me beyond the limits of your Majesty's favor. Vny give Offried more than he covets? In the possession of power lies his danger. Her Majesty has too much goodness not to yearn for oppor-tunities to repair the injustice which fortune has done to a betrothed,"

"A brother!"
"Without doubt a brother, and alvays a brother; but once Offried had

Albert promised them ?'' Albert promised; but it seems to your Majesty should have been made acquainted with these important details in the queen's former lif

" I have known them," said Wences laus, hastily. "And yet this eveningwill-Speak, speak, or on my soul Wenceslaus ceased; his voice shook in anger; rage burned in his eyes; jeal-ousy was already snawing his heart. Hear, then, all that I know. The Count of Bavaria promised to Offried

the hand of his daughter, in order to be free himself to make a new alliance, and to make happy two young persons who loved one another. "Who loved!" cried Wenceslaus. "They were brought up together," continued Hatto; "habit begets sympathy, tenderness follows; the day of

their union seemed to them the harvest day of their hopes; the young bride hat was to be had tried on her wedding robes and-

hand for the King of the Romans."

cried Wenceslaus "The heiress of Bavaria and Hain who had accepted the hand o Offried, understood political expediency. Nothing betrayed her into an expression of regret. Your Majesty w her come into Prague with a smil to dazzle every eye ; she shone "She brought O fried with her," nurmured the king.
"Her brother," rejoined Hatto.

Her former betroth On, it does not matter, sire ; may

not noble souls triumph over passion? "Tnen it was a passion!"
"Everything in our life is passion, continued Hatto. "Remember that the queen oves to Notberg the life of her father. None can discharge such a debt too well. What matters it if the child of Count Albert was allowed t think for a few days that she was to be the spouse of Ostried? She had seen was like a cloister. She had seen no one except the old chaplain, the old nurse Bridget, and Offried. Albert had thought of marrying again, and the step-mother would not have suffered that a large slice should be cut from the domains of Albert to furnish a marriage portion for her step-daughter. What surprise! what ecstasy! Boles

las comes to offer them a crown!"
"Yes, what ecstasy indeed! She accepted it-What could she have done? Her "She had not known me," murmured

Wenceslaus.
"Your Majesty knows that prin-

Without waiting to listen, Wences laus arose, went over to a large mirror, looked at himself for a moment, and hen stamped his foot with rage, saying : I am not handsome.

"Could your Majesty have made a better choice? The queen is, as is well known, very much attached to you. Her time is passed in the duties of her high state, or in prayer and retire-

Wenceslaus did not reply. He looked at Hatto with a threstening air. The latter, embarrassed by his master's look, stammered out a few words, and was

"After that?" demanded the king.
"What does your Majesty deign to mean ?'

" That is not all." " I don't know."

"You know something more. Speak; what do you fear ?"

" I fear-" Fear only falsehood, Hatto." "Sire," said the villa n, bowing pro-foundly, "I have experienced your Majesty's goodness: her Majesty has deprived me of its enjoyment. gret the privation; but I have not deemed myself released from my allegi-ance, from the faithfulness which I owe, and I continue to watch over my sov-ereign's honor as I would guard his

"You have said my honor; take care, vassal, you are referring to the queen!"
"I think not of any risk I may run when there is need to prove my devo-tion to your Majesty."

"You confess, then, that all these clever windings through which you

have brought this conference, have only one end—to enlighten me as to the

"And that you may be on your guard even now. Wenceslaus started as if he had been

bitten by a viper.
"I do not," said Hatto, "cast the shadow of a doubt on the queen's virtues But. tue. I believe it to be stainless. But. perhaps her notions of what is good are somewhat exaggerated: perhaps she does not confine her acts within the bounds of discretion. She spends hours every day in the church; her maids are with her, it is true, and two of the officers of the household; Otfried accompanies her. The house of God is a place too sacred for suspicion to enter; perhaps the dwellings of the

poor are not so safe.' "Does the queen enter them?"

"Very often.

"With Offried her brother." This must not be.

They both soothe the unhappy."

"But these visits may seem leans-"I have said the queen exaggerates the claims of charity.

"To mask vice, perhaps." Hatto now became the listener. "Do you know what day, what hour, the queen devotes to these pious "Nearly every day she gives to then

two hours."
... Which hours?"

"Those immediately after the divine

office."
"Then on to-morrow she will go 'I should think so."

"If you have lied, you shall die by

the hand of the hangman," cried ceslaus. "One cannot pay too dearly for the happiness of having proved his fidelity to his king," said Hatto, as he left the

Next day the king was in an angry mood. When he was alone he thought over all his former favorite had told him. It was clear to him that Hatto secretly disliked the queen. Wences-laus, however, sought out motives for this dislike. The queen had removed her spouse from Hatto's evil influence. Wenceslaus remembered her noble qualities, and his cruel, savage nature was softened. For a moment he thought of going at once to the queen to ask her for a frank explanation. But, thought he, she is too clever for me. He went to his room, but he slept little that night. He arose when the bells of Our Lady of Tein tolled the hour for the divine office. Hatto was waiting in the ante chamber. When the base plotter had calculated the hour Mass was ended, he hastened to the king. cesians went out with Hatto, who conducted him to the house from which Offried and the queen were freeing the retched girl who had been shut in. with the corpse of her mother. The moment Wence slaus entered the street, Then I' exclaimed the king.
Then Charles IV. demanded her he saw the queen and Offried disappear

through the breach made in the door that was closed up the evening before Wenceslaus would have rushed in after the queen, but Hatto said to him

'Wait one moment more.' Julie lay in the chamber of the dead. She heard the door opening. She closed her eyes that she might not see those who she believed were coming to mur-der her. Hearing a mild voice calling her, she opened them again, and read-ing her deliverance in the pity which shone in the eyes of the queen, Julie arose and knelt before her in tears. Otfried spoke a few consoling words to her, and the queen was recommending the poor girl to leave the place at once, when a hurried footstep was heard coming from the door of the street. "They are coming," cried the terrified girl. In another moment a priest entered the room. It was Father John Nepomucene whom we saw kneeling in the church of Our Lady. "It is God, who has sent you," cried Julie; "my mother will not be buried without Christian rites." The priest knelt down. Offried also knelt, and the queen and the orphan girl were reciting the psalms for the dead along with the priest, when Wendead along with the priest, when Wen cessaus rushed in, with his dagger in his hand, and the foam of his mad rage whitening his lips. The priest walked up to him, and demanded: "Why do you come thus, sire, into the presence of the dead ?'

Wenceslaus was lost in astonishmen at what he saw. The cold, stiffened corpse, the tearful orphan, and the priest praying the prayers for the dead. It was very unlike what he had been led to expect and remembering the led to expect, and remembering the anguish of the miserable night he had passed his rage was turned agains

The plotter was taken by surprise and he was likely to pay the penalty of his wickedness, had not the queen arisen from her knees, and gone to meet the king. "Oh, my noble spouse, we must strive to make this poor girl forget all her sufferings.

"And let her pray for us," said Wen ceslaus, as he threw his dagger into the garden.
"Ab, Sire," said the priest, "

'Ar, Sire, said the priess, now long have angels been suspected?''
'Ever since there was a demon. If it be true,'' said the king," "that you read into the secrets of the soul, change mine."

A few moments afterwards the king,

the queen, Julie, and the young priest quitted the sad scene of Julie's great sufferings. That evening the corpse was buried

in the presence of a vast concourse of the people; their fear had been re moved by the heroic charity of the queen. The king was grateful to the priest The presence of the priest in the chamber of the dead was associated with the innocence of the queen in the mind of the king. That evening the young priest was requested by his sovereign to preach the Advent ser-

mons at the court. It had been well for Wenceslaus had be laid up in his heart the lessons taught him by the virtues of his noble spouse. It would have shielded her from the poisonous breath of his dark , it would have kept him from

CHAPTER V.

THE PRIEST AND THE QUEEN. Nepomucene, was born in a little town of Bohemia. In 1330, John, commonly called John

His mother had long besought heave to bless her marriage with a child Heaven heard her prayer, but it was in a manner that forboded deep affliction. The child was weak and sickly. Many times his parents had given up every hope of his life, and often did they be-seech God to prolong the being He had given. Unwearied were their prayers and their care. By turns they watched by the cradle of the child, by turns hey prayed before the altar in the church. At length, through the pray ers of the Blessed Virgin, God renewed the strength of their child, and bade them hope that his life should be long

their chi'd to the service of God. gave promise that he would one day be great man, and better still, a good man. He surpassed his schoolfellows in learning, in cheerfulness, and piety. He rose early, and heard several Masse in the church of the Cistercian monas tery; the rest of the day he spent at

Charles IV. had lately founded the university of Prague. Thither John Nepomucene was sent, and he won high honors in philosophy, divinity, and canon law. The priesthood was the great aim of his life. He received the Most Holy Sacrament frequently and worthily; this he deemed the surest and most becoming preparation for the priesthood. He had the deepest awe this holy state. "Could it be other vise? What man would not tremb e at the thought of becoming one brist's representatives, of taking upon himself the obligation of offering up with unspotted ands ?

John Nepomucene was ordained The Archbishop, aware of his plendid talents, commanded him to em ploy them in preaching. The whole city flocked to hear him. There were then not fewer than forty thousand students in Prague. John was their model in eloquence, their teacher in religion. His success was like that of Demosthenes; his hearers did not admire him, they obeyed him. They hated the vices he condemned, for he ad made them love the virgues which he told them to practice. This should be the aim of the preacher, for this, and his only, is success. The inhabitants listened to John Nepomu ene, with closest attention, with deep st respect. They knew he practiced what he preached; he could say to them with St. Paul: "Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ." Whenever men Whenever men poke of his name, they spoke also of is learning and piety. He was spoken in the cottage of the peasant, in the alace of the king. He was the model the priest, the solace of the penitent, the fearless champion of virtue; he up braided the guilty, he defended the innocent. His life made him known to

It was on the day Julie was rescued from the deadly rage of the mob that John Nepomucere first ha the honor of speaking to the Queen of Bohemia. His resence in the chamber of the dead vas providential indeed. The demon of jealousy found easy entrance into the heart of Wenceslaus. Thenceforth he would make it his home, and revel in it. Though yet unable to make out what wicked spirit urged the king to rush with a dagger in his hand into the preswith a dagger in his hand the discrete pre-ence of the dead, the queen clearly saw that the king was made the dupe of deep wickedness. He was the prey of furious jealousy. The reaction soon deep wickedness. He was the prey of furious jealousy. The reaction soon followed: all his love for the queen returned with tenfold force; again and again he declared his belief in her high spotless honor. Without telling the queen the reason of his deadly hate for Hatto, he swore he should die by the hands of the common hangman. "Spare him," said the queen, "he will amend."

will amend It you but knew, Jane, of what he

has been guilty."
"Of many things, I should think; but kings should be the representatives of God in His mercy as well as in His justice."

"He has deeply offended me."
"There is, then, all the more reason
to pardon him." He has offended me in what is dear-

est to me."
"Then," said the queen, smiling,
"it is I who forgive."
"Jane! Jane! cried the king, "you ere worthy of a better husband.

"Have I ever found fault with the one heaven has given to me?" "No, Jane, you have never found fault with me, though I have many faults which must distress you; but I will try to amend.'

"Thanks. You know I have suffered so much in my childhood, and after-wards, that I feel deeply for the suffer-

wards, that I feel deeply for the sufferings of others."
"Yes, Jane."
"Then allow me to do what good I am able, when and how I will. Do not e frightened to see me brave the pest, it will pass by me without hurting me. The duty of sovereigns is to make their people believe in Providence. We have been placed at an early age on the throne; we have, therefore, many years before us to lighten the burthens and the sorrows of our people. Your treas ures have been always placed generous ly within my reach. Promise me you will not exact a strict account from charity; alos lay up the richest treas

"Jane, no one shall thwart your holy zeal."

'And if I ask so much for those that want clothes and food. I am none the less anxious to fill the nation's treasury." "Are you going to speak on affairs of state? Perhaps so."

"Very well; I am pleased."
"You are listening?"

"Attentively."

"And when you will have heard me—"

"I will profit by your advice."

"Wenceslaus, the richest kingdoms are those in which there are fewest poor. Bohemia is filled with rich lords and familiary hims heart. and famishing beggars. Heaven forbid that I should speak ill of the memory of Charles IV., but in his haste to make the empire flourish, and to gather to himself the partisans of Louis, he raised heavy incomes, first, to reward the services of the nobles, and afterwards those incomes were to be sold to fill the royal treasury. Is not this an abuse? Every place bought by a wealthy lord, careless of his duties, would have been conscientiously filled by a poorer but more honest man. By following your father's rule of conduct, venality and

aving none but corrupt and ambitious men around you. "It is not well governed people who coment revolution, but a people governed by persons reckless of what happens in beneath them. elf a steady eye to the welfare of the people if you would have your throne settled on a broad, firm foundation. Do not sell to the highest bidder what

imony shall go hand in hand, and you lay yourself open to the danger

Then the king and the queen reviewed the names of the great men of the court, and they resolved that some of then should be taught a severe esson, that some should places, and that those who had it in their power to make promises should that the merits of cardidates should weigh more in the balance than

of your protégés for whom you do not ask any favor. "My brother Otfried," said the queen, smiling; "sire, he is not ambitions."

"Bat," said the king, "there is one

'as he never been ambitious,' Jana ?' In spite of himself, Wenceslaus felt a ouch of bitterness in asking this ques

'Never," replied the queen. "When fortune seemed favorable to him, he welcomed it; when fortune abandoned him, e knew how to be resigned. His is a noble heart, wholly devoted to your interests : you can put it to the test.' "It I should entrust him with a mis

"It shall be a difficult and distant one."
"Inaction is not good for men of his age: employ Otiried as you may deem fitting.

"He will do his best in fulfilling it '

The queen spoke these words with so much trank simplicity, that the king felt psined at having placed a snare before his young wife.
"Be it so, then; to-morrow he shall

go to France, Hatto would have entrusted with the message, but Hatto is unworthy of any favor. Wenceslaus then began to speak of John Nepomucene. The queen had meny opportunities of hearing of the told the king all she had heard of his zeal in the service of God.

and she beggeo Wenceslaus to request him to preach the Advent at the court. Then you will not have the honor of converting me."
That evening, while John Nepomu cene was praying in his cell, he re-ceived a request from the king, asking

his countrymen, his death to the world. him to come to the court to preach during the Advent. The queen chose the preacher as her confessor, and the priest lent himself to the guiding her, not only in the way of virtue, but to highest Christian per-

ection.

Hatto discreetly hid himself. Withont being disheartened, he was screly vexed. Great disgrace threatened him; he was too cunning not to endeavor to escape it. He accordingly shunned the court till the anger of the wickedness and his tact whispered for him that he would yet succeed in the evil work he had undertaken. Ottried, who had gratefully accepted the mission entrusted to him by the king, had not yet returned from France. Lohn not yet returned from France. John Nepomucene had won a wholesome infuence over the king. Everything had promised a happy future to the king-dom and to the royal bousehold, when Mauper, Hatto's evil genius, pushed the latter to a description. the latter to a desperate resolve, which would cost him his liberty and his life, or ruin the queen forever

CHAPTER VI.

THE POISONED CUP.

The feast of the Three Kings was celebrated with great pomp and re-joicing. Wenceslaus invited to his joicing. Wenceslaus invited to his table all the great men of the kingdom. The ministers of the king, the ambassa-dors, Hatto, whose pardon had been obtained by the queen, and all who high places in the court, sat round the

table of the king.
Otfried, who was come from France, after a year's absence, had this eve ing the honor of waiting on the queen. He had fulfilled his mission: the king was theroughly pleased with him. The king would have given him a very honorable post, but for some time past the orable post, but for some time past the young man's thoughts had been turning to the cloister, and the more he advanced in life, the stronger became his yearning to break the ties that bound him to the world. His modesty and unselfishness won the admiration of Wenceslaus. He consulted him on many important questions. As tonished at his prudence and wisdom, he began to cherish a high esteem for the son of

Notberg.

The wine cups were pledged and were honored by the joyous guests. The empty wine cups were refilled. Offried had just taken one from a sideboard, when a valet roughly took it from his hands, and gave him one filled with Tokay in its stead. A group of valets, in passing near him, jostled against him. In the confusion of the moment, a cunning hand dropped a small packet into his pocket. The king was in the act of raising to his lips the cup presented to him by Otfried, when his arm was suddenly and roughly grasped. Wenceslaus hercely turned round to see who could have been guilty of such daring insolence. Hatto was behind him, and Hatto's piercing eyes stared into his.

"Wretch!" cried Wenceslaus.
"The king shall not drink," said

You shall be chastised this instant," answered the monarch.

'Your Majesty will cause a criminal condemned to death to drink this

To drink this wine !" "I swear the cup is poisoned."
The countenance of Wenceslaus fell. "Poisoned! by whom?"
I only wish to state the fact."

"I only wish to state the fact."
"Bring hither a physician, thequeen's almoner, and one of the prisoners condemned to death," exclaimed the king. "Here we have a feast, joyously begun, about to end in a tragedy. I cannot believe that a treason so dastardiy could be at-tempted; and yet our mind must be set at rest."

A cry of indignation, followed by dismal silence burst from the guests. The queen, whose first impulse was to rise and hasten towards the king, suddealy fell back into her seat as she encountered Hatto's hateful gaze. defiance, and is was only when Father John Nepomucene entered the banquet The priest, calm, grave and pale, advanced to where the king was seated.

"What do you require of me, sire ?" " This man, " said the king, as he pointed to flatte, "maintains this cup is poisoned. The jailer is about to bring hither a prisoner condemned to die for murder; instead of giving him up to the hands of the hangman, we will order hin to drink this wine; if he dies not, he shall be free, he dies, our justice shall without rest, and swite without pity the person who poured the poison

nto this cup."

In a few moments the unhappy wretch on whom the experiment was to be made was dragged from his cell into the presence of the king. The priest had been preparing him during the eight days which had passed for the death to which he had been doomed. The priest, however, advised the king to try some other means of proving the crime of which Hatto had warned him, but Wenceslaus angrily replied that the man whose execution vas to take place on the morrow could n no way complain, since he was offered a chance of life, and that his own peace of mind and the punishment of the guilty could not brook delay.

The poor wretch who had been con-demned to die hoped for life and pardon. Having received the priest's last blessing, he took the cup into his hand, and swallowed its contents. effect was immediate; hardly had the last drop moistened his lips, when he was a corpse. All the guests rose at once to their feet. The king, trembling violently, supported himself on the arm of the priest. The queen knelt on the floor in speechless terror. The king, recovering himself, said in a loud voice: "Half of Bohemia to him who points out the prisoner!"
The guests looked at one another in blank astonishment. Hatto moved forward. "I know

him," sa.

" I saw him pour in the poison." " You have seen-

" Furthermore, I say the guilty per-