

affable, I had taken no care to commend myself on the credit of the good chevalier. On gaining the door, however, I remembered his last words, and said by chance—

'Monseigneur, I was sent to you by the chevalier Dieudonné.'

The good bishop at first said like thee, father Christian—he replied by reseating himself before his handsome manuscript, saying—

'I know no chevalier of that name.'

'Still, monseigneur,' he gave it me to give to you as from your comper, I replied.

'Dieudonné?' repeated the bishop, with indifference, 'mon comper,'

He gave me my congé with a gesture; but suddenly remembered, without doubt, for at the moment when I had reached the other side of the door, I heard his voice crying out—

'Ho! man, man!'

I hastened to re-enter, and found the good bishop laughing to himself over his manuscript.

'And where hast thou known that chevalier Dieudonné, my son,' demanded he.

I told him as well as I could what the chevalier had done for me and my little brother, Adam.

'That's a great sinner!' murmured the bishop, 'but has a fine soul.... allons, allons! thou art fortunate, my son. Thou hast had a happy rencontre on thy arrival. The chevalier is right and I am wrong; he has done me much honour in calling me his comper. On his recommendation, I receive thee as a mason on the works of Notre Dame; if there is no room we must make some. Go and seek lodgings in the purlieu, and hold thyself ready to-morrow morning at the first sound of the bell.'

Just as Eric had uttered the last words of his tale, the bell suspended from a tall post in the middle of the premises began to call the masons to their labour.

Eric seized his hammer and trowel. Eve put on her apprentice costume—her plentiful blonde hair was hidden away under a faded cap, and her charming figure disappeared under a large surcoat all covered with plaster.

'That's a beautiful tale,' my children, said Christian, and proves that the chevalier Dieudonné exists—but that is all.'

'It proves besides,' said Eve, 'that the chevalier Dieudonné has credit.'

'Before the lord bishop, true,' said the old man; 'but all-powerful as he is, the lord bishop himself could not introduce you to the queen.'

They descended the staircase of Thomas, the lodging keeper, and found themselves already on the encumbered premises.

'Ah well! the king can do it,' replied Eve, 'and I will even go to the king!'

CHAPTER IV.

The shops were opened, and the kitchens smoking, preparing breakfast for the masters. There was upon the purlieu a compact and moving crowd—composed of all kinds of pedlars, and colporteurs of common objects, and objects that had been blessed. There were women who cried hard eggs and warm bread, in that peculiar and frightful voice, which seems to be the special heritage of Parisian vendors.

There were beggars, who wept and displayed their gangrened wounds. There were men carrying fountains on their backs, charged with the wine of hypocras, like our modern cocoa merchants, with their less heady drink, and the silver tinkle of their little bells could be heard above the confused noises of the crowd. It was a veritable Babel—an incessant murmur which, from time to time, would all at once rise into a fracas, as they knocked against each other and disputed; the masons who were late, fearing to be fined, knocked down women and children in their passage—for women and children in that age, as in ours, formed a large element in the Parisian crowd.

The handsome page, Albret, was in the middle of that Babel, where his costume of a gentleman excited a certain surprise. What did he there so early—at the hour when such people, like him, had still three or four hours to sleep? His dark cloak and bent hat would have led to the belief that he had passed the whole night in running after some good adventure, if he had crossed the

place quickly, like a man in haste to reach his lodgings. But he remained there, always in the same place, with his gaze fixed upon the house of Thomas, the lodging house keeper. The proprietor of the shop, against which he was leaning, came out like others to spread his stall—and was obliged to say to the page, 'Mon maître, I pray you to stand on one side, that I may take down my shutters.'

Albret moved docilely, but without taking his eyes off the house he was so interested in. People began to question—Who there could be in that house to attract the attention of such a gallant seigneur?

Every one knows how little it takes among us Parisians to excite curiosity—they gathered together and criticised his conduct—half a hundred strange suppositions, absurd and ridiculous slanders which the fertile soil of Paris produces, were let fly in an instant. At the end of ten minutes the general and profoundly rooted opinion was that queen Ingeburge had escaped from the hands of her pious jailors, and was to be found in the house of master Thomas. The principal fact once established, and the how and the why commenced. Never was Paris so embarrassed to find a ridiculous reply to an impossible question.

The small pedlars, the hypocras vendors, the old women and the beggars, invented the most ingenious and improbable details. We should be remiss were we not to tell that among these beggars were to be found, in the first rank, our unfortunate friends, Ezekiel and Tréfoilloux, the nocturnal bandits of the rue St. Honoré.

Like their successors of the present day, Ezekiel and Tréfoilloux robbed by night and begged by day. Their begging business was not much more profitable than their brigandage, for here again they found a detestable amount of competition. There was in Paris twice as many beggars as charitable souls, and the surplus spoilt that peaceable profession which might otherwise have had so many charms.

No one can be ignorant of the baneful effects of competition—killing all industry and exaggerating its efforts till it makes its agony a torture. We have seen rival carrying companies, giving free passages, either by land or by water, and even offering travellers refreshment on the road—and all to accomplish their mutual destruction; down that incline they are not long in reaching madness. Thus, in a normal state, a beggar only wants a broken leg, a paralyzed arm, or an incurable ulcer. A beggar, without any legs, passes in every country for a sturdy beggar; and a beggar purely blind has been known to excite the charity of passers-by. But it was not so within the purlieu of Notre Dame—necessity, that offspring of competition, had then heated the imaginations and inventive faculties of the beggar artists. The cul-de-jatte, or men drawing their legs after them on little trucks, and even paralytics, had but moderate success; something more striking, and less classic than these had become necessary to attract any attention.

Ezekiel, who, as a beggar, was one of the elite, had trussed up both legs behind his thighs, like a capon prepared for the table; he had his two arms reversed and a ghastly wound scored in red ochre across his brow.

Tréfoilloux was another veritable artist; he had painted upon his left breast a complicated ulcer—his breast was bared to the light, and Tréfoilloux constantly announced that for a liard any body would be permitted to look through that fearful skylight, and might see the working of his heart and lungs. The veritable English gobemouche had not yet been invented, or the unhappy Tréfoilloux would have been taken at his word; in our day he would very soon have found some curious gentleman who would have paid his money and thrust his lorgnette into the man's stomach—but in Tréfoilloux's day, after all the trouble he had been at, and the pain he had endured, the exhibition did not clear its expenses.

A gigantic woman—extended on some straw before him, and who lead four arms, on one of which was the foot of a goat—carried everything before her.

Ezekiel, in a psalm-singing tone, cried—See,

Christians, a man who lost both legs in the crusade against the Pagans, whose arms have been tortured, and whose skull has been split with the stroke of a cimeter, who has been left for dead, without any succour, on the sands of the desert. Have pity, Christians, and secure your salvation!

See, Christians, resumed Tréfoilloux, the great ulcer of the unhappy man who has only one day more to live—condemned by the faculty, and already pierced through and through by the gnawing worms which are devouring his liver and lungs.

But it was all of no use; there are some persons who never have any luck. Worms, Pagans, trussed limbs, ulcers and sabre-strokes completely failed; and there was only something for the woman with four arms—one of which had the foot of a goat.

CHAPTER V.

The curiosity of the good people who were watching the house of Thomas, the lodging keeper, still augmented. At the moment when the newsmongers abandoned the story about Queen Ingeburge, to fabricate another, where Agnes de Meranie played a rôle sufficiently scandalous, a new person arrived to complicate the scene.

This was our camarade, Tristan the scholar, with his cap saucily posed, and the elbows of his surcoat worn bare by leaning so much on tavern tables, and with his unmeasurable old pointed buskins. Tristan de Pamiers had finished with clerk Samson; his pockets were well filled, and he came now to ramble a little round that dwelling which, to his taste, enclosed the most beautiful girl in Paris; and Tristan was not without acquaintance with such matters. Just as he had raised up his head and put on a bold look, the door of maître Thomas's house was opened, and Christian the Dane, Eric and little Adam came forth.

The noisy crowd knew nothing of the last two; as to old Christian, he had for many months kept shop within the liberties of Notre Dame, where he sold trowels, squares, hammers, compasses, and other instruments in use among the workmen on the church.

The page, Albret, leaped behind the shop, as though afraid of being seen.

'Stay, stay,' growled the disappointed crowd, 'that is neither queen Ingeburge nor Madame Agnes de Meranie.'

'It is him—it is him!' said the handsome page, Albret, 'and it is her also—I am sure of it.'

These two opposite personal pronouns related both to Adam and Eve.

'Pshaw!' growled Tristan, who had posted himself insolently in the passage of our friends, 'what means this masquerade?'

Eric, his sister, and old Christian, the Dane, continued their walk to Notre Dame, and were talking with great vivacity, and appeared to pay no attention to the man who was watching them. Eve still continued her efforts to convince Christian, who remained obstinately incredulous.

'The king can do anything!' said Eve; 'I defy you to deny that.'

'The king can do as he likes!' replied the old man, shaking his white head.

'When the king knows who I am—' began Eve, again with petulance.

'Speak lower,' said the old man, perceiving that they were observed. He saw Albret, with his nose in his cloak, following them through the crowd.

'If it is nothing about queen Ingeburge or queen Agnes, at any rate they are talking about the king.'

'The king would like it,' exclaimed Eve at that moment.

Tristain, without any ceremony, laid hold of her by the chin.

'Ah!' said he, twisting his moustache with his other hand, 'I should like to know why you thus hide the most delicious figure that there is in the world under the ignoble livery of an apprentice mortar-mixer.'

Eric tried to place himself between his sister