

Your being a... I was wrong in not instantly according to you an attention worthy of your desert.

"All, marquis, you flatter me!" "Not at all—I do you no more than ample justice. I shall be surprised, captain, if we do not in the end become excellent friends?"

"The honor would be all on my side. But let us return, I beg, to the subject of your ransom?" "With pleasure. You see that I am disposed to make the greatest sacrifices."

"I am happy to hear you say so, marquis. I, on my part, am animated by a spirit of extreme isolation. Pray make your proposal."

The marquis de la Tremblais, after a moment's reflection, was about to reply, when the Dame d'Erlanges approached him with a majestic bearing, and in a grave tone said: "Monsieur le Marquis, it is time to put an end to this useless discussion. What is the good of your pretending to believe what Monsieur de Maurevert has been saying to you, when you know that in my presence you are safe from any attempt at violence?"

"You are my guest, Captain de Maurevert," replied the Dame d'Erlanges, coldly, "and that quality assures you on my part considerable consideration; do not, I entreat of you, compel me to remind you that I alone am mistress here. Marquis, I repeat, I will not detain you any longer!"

"The fact is, my poor captain," said the marquis, sily, "there is no denying what Madame d'Erlanges says. I am truly distressed at your misadventure. But do not be downhearted; perhaps something may turn up to compensate you for this little disappointment. If it would not be too greatly taxing your complaisance might I ask you to accompany me to the gates of the chateau?"

"I am at your orders, monsieur," replied the captain, furiously biting his moustache. The marquis, who from the time of his arrival had not removed his cap, moved towards the door without offering any salutation to the Dame d'Erlanges.

"As to you," he said, in passing Raoul, "we shall meet again."

"Heaven send it may be speedily, and on neutral ground," replied the chevalier.

At the instant of passing from the room, the marquis appeared suddenly to remember something, and returning upon his steps, crossed to where Diane stood motionless and pale in the darkest corner of the room.

After looking at her for a moment in silence, he said, in a tone of voice at once snoring and passionate, "To induce me to forget this morning, and obtain pardon for your mother, you will have to bend your opposition to my wishes."

Indignation flashed from the eyes of the charming girl. The marquis bowed; then taking De Maurevert's arm, left the room.

Once in the courtyard of the chateau, he stopped, and after assuring himself that no one was within earshot, thus addressed the captain: "Let us lose no time in useless talk," he said. "Do not attempt to deceive me. Though I see you to-day for the first time, I know you as well as if we had lived together for ten years. Immediately. Your conscience is of the most accommodating kind. You have no scruples, you do not believe in remorse, and you love money."

"Marquis!" "Did I not tell you it is of no use attempting to deceive me? You have too much good sense for me to go round about with you; therefore, I come to the point directly and at once—you love money."

"I do. What then?" "Will you enter into my quarrel, and help me to avenge it? There are five hundred sun crowns\* to be gained."

"The sum is not enormous," replied De Maurevert; "but before we discuss the amount, first inform me against whom your vengeance is to be carried out. Is it against these Dames d'Erlanges? In that case I accept. I know nothing of them personally."

"Very good. But my vengeance does not stop at this vile old Huguenot sorceress! It includes that miserable adventurer who has put upon me the most bloody of all affronts, who has dared to give me the lie! This Chevalier Sforzi! I desire my vengeance to equal the outrage, that it should terrify the whole of Aivergnie! If five hundred crowns do not appear to you enough, I will double the sum."

"By doing so you would merely double the horror with which I regard your atrocious offer," cried De Maurevert, in a tone that startled and astonished his interlocutor. "Marquis de la Tremblais, you have formed a very accurate estimate of me. My conscience is one of the most accommodating. I do laugh at all scruples, I love money, and I do not believe in remorse; in a word, if I were not a gentleman, I might be fairly be treated as a scoundrel. That is frank, I think. Bah! we are alone, and it con-

\*In 1581, the *écu au soleil*, the gold coin, was worth from sixty to sixty-five sols—eighteen to twenty francs of the present day.

corns you more than it does me; why should I pretend to be a saint? Only, among all this heap of vices, I possess, marquis, one small virtue: I respect my word. For all the treasures in the world I wouldn't break my oath."

"Now, you must know, marquis," he continued, "that Raoul and myself contracted no later than yesterday a league of friendship—a defensive alliance. If I had only had the good fortune to have met you forty-eight hours earlier—but now the evil is done, and we must resign ourselves to the consequences. But if you will allow me I will not say give you a word of advice, but make a suggestion; do not think of attacking this little chevalier—his a tiger! Our acquaintance commenced yesterday, sword in hand. I flatter myself that I play very prettily with sword and dagger, and should not fear to stand face to face with Hercules himself; well! will you believe it?—this Raoul, even to this moment I cannot understand how he did it—in less time than it takes me to tell you, had me on the ground, his knee on my chest and his dagger at my throat. To that you reply that you do not intend to meo, the chevalier yourself, but leave him to be dealt with by your servants. Very well. Do you know what will be the result?—that his sword will serve your handsome set of apostles in the same fashion—which would be a pity. Trust to my experience, marquis, and let the affair drop."

"I am most obliged to you for your information, my dear captain," replied the marquis coldly, "and will endeavor to profit by your advice. We are arrived at the postern: I will not trouble you further, Monsieur de Maurevert. I hope we shall meet again."

As soon as he was out of the chateau, the Marquis de la Tremblais repaid himself by a volley of oaths for the partial restraint he had been obliged to put upon himself.

"Benoit!" he cried to the chief of the apostles, "the Chateau de Tanve contains a wretch named Sforzi, before a wreck has passed this man must be in my power. A hundred gold crowns for you if you succeed—the galleys if you fail! I accept beforehand responsibility for all the means you may employ in the execution of my orders. How will you get to recognize him?"

"I have already seen him, monseigneur."

"When was that?" "Yesterday, monseigneur. He was in company with the giant who struck me."

"Nothing could be better!" cried the marquis. "This giant, Captain de Maurevert, is the only support possessed by Sforzi. You understand? I put no restriction on you."

"Be under no apprehension, monseigneur," replied the chief of the apostles, in a hoarse voice, while a sinister smile played about his hideous features. "Your wish shall be accomplished."

"One last word, Benoit—the chevalier must be delivered into my hands living!—living! for a simple stab of a poignard would not satisfy my vengeance."

"You shall have him, living, monseigneur. As to Captain de Maurevert—"

"About him I care not—I leave him to you."

"I humbly thank you, monseigneur," replied Benoit, with a devilish sparkle in his deep-set eyes.

there were several other places of resort. The persons believed to have been initiated at their assemblies were looked upon with dread, for they were supposed to be capable of injuring people in various ways; both in their persons and their possessions, and their malice was especially directed against little children.

One of the earliest trials for witchcraft, unconnected with other offences, on the Continent, is that of a woman in the bishopric of Novara, on the northern borders of Italy, about the middle of the fourteenth century; and it illustrates the general belief which also prevailed in Germany at that period. It appears, from the slight account which remains of this trial, that the belief then held by the Church was that women of this class could by their touch or look fascinate men, or children, or beasts, so as to produce sickness and death; and they believed farther that they had devoted their own souls to the demon, to whom also they had done personal homage, after having trampled under foot the figure of the cross. For these offences they were judged by the most learned theologians to be worthy of being burnt at the stake.

Quite a large number of persons were assembled a few days since at the De Groot House, New York, Fourth Avenue, to witness the feeding of a boa-constrictor belonging to Mr. Parks. The animal had had nothing to eat for over two weeks, and was consequently in a condition of hunger which served to make the exhibition more interesting. It is kept in a box with a glass top, placed directly in front of a register, whereby it receives a degree of heat reminding it to some extent of its native African climate. When this box was drawn out into the centre of the room and the cover raised, the lengthy snake—more than seven feet—slowly crawled around the interior, his neck hardly thicker than a man's wrist, and the rest of the body comparatively attenuated. In one corner of the apartment was a basket containing four snow-white rabbits, nibbling and munching their food, totally unconscious of their approaching fate; the largest of these was first given to the snake. Still crawling, the thin neck kept constantly moving around the box, while the rabbit covered as if dreaming he knew not what. Soon the snake saw him. Gathering back nearly a foot he waited for a chance to strike. Just then the rabbit turned his head and approached, as he'd done several times before, to touch the snake's head. The small eyes gleamed, the narrow forked tongue shot in and out like a whip-thong, and in an instant, quicker than the watching eye could follow the motion, the reptile caught him by the nose. At the same moment, the long, slim body was wrapped around the rabbit in three folds. Lightning quickly, the skin of the snake became rough and corrugated; it glistened with a strange, shiny lustre not hitherto observable, and was wrinkled in numberless little circling rings. "Bunny" uttered no squeak, gave no sign of vitality, with the exception of a simple convulsive kick. He was evidently suffocated soon after the catching; he felt no pain, but died easily. For some minutes the snake stayed thus, the folds contracting, the skin becoming rougher, and the lustre deepening. Then the small, leathery head drew back from the circumsolved rabbit, and the keen eye regarded it curiously. The folds contracted more and more, until poor "Bunny" seemed to be no longer by half than nature had fashioned him. So prepared for swallowing, the snake commenced that operation. Contrary to the popular opinion, he did not cover the animal with saliva, but began absorbing him without further ceremony. The jaw dropped, extending to quite its natural size, and the rabbit's head was gently sucked in. Next, the skin, seemingly loose, wrinkled into irregular crosses near the neck, as if the snake were shrugging its shoulders. As these wrinkles straightened out the rabbit disappeared down the gaping jaws—suppingly, it gilded away until there was left of it but the tail and hind legs. A final gulp, and these, too, were gone. The wrinkles still crawled and crept over the snake's skin, while his food could be plainly seen passing down his body. A rest was now given him, though shortly his movements and the swift darting of his tongue, showed him to be ready for further food. Again a rabbit was placed in the box, but although once struck it showed such skill in dodging the snake that by unanimous desire of the spectators he was taken out and restored to his former state of unthinking happiness. The next one was ineffectually seized. Escaping the stroke, the rabbit fled to a corner, but in an instant was assailed by the hind leg and enveloped in thick coils. The operation did not occupy more time than would a flash of lightning. With a few faint squeaks the rabbit was dead, and was lazily swallowed like his predecessor. Although four were provided, two only were eaten, and having accomplished the deglutition of these the snake cared for no more. As an incident in observation of natural history the sight was entertaining, and all the more so that the rabbits were killed so suddenly that their suffering was almost nothing.

AN ANACONDA TAKING ITS DINNER.

At an early period it was commonly believed that the witches rode through the air to the place of rendezvous on reeds and sticks, or on beams, which latter were the articles resorted to at hand to women of this classic society. The chief place of meeting at the great annual witch-festivals in Germany appears to have been, from an earlier period, the Brocken Mountain, the highest part of the wild Harz chain, but

(To be continued.)

WITCHCRAFT

It was in Germany that the belief in witchcraft seems to have first taken that dark, systematic form which held so fearful a sway over men's minds in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There the wild superstitions of the ancient Teutonic creed have been preserved in greater force than in any other part of Europe. The pious legends of Cassarius of Heisterbach, who flourished in the earlier part of the thirteenth century, are little better than a mass of stories of magic and sorcery. The imaginative feelings of the people, and the wild character of many parts of the country, were peculiarly calculated to foster superstitions of this character.

In fact, we may trace back distinctly most of the circumstances of the earlier belief relating to witchcraft to the mythology of the ante-Christian period. The grand night of meeting of the German witches was the night of St. Walpurga, which answered to one of the religious festivals of the Teutonic tribes before their conversion. In after-times two other nights of annual assembly were added—those of the feasts of St. John and St. Bartholomew. It is probable that, as Christianity gained ground and became established as the religion of the state, the old religious festivals, to which the lower and more ignorant part of the people, and particularly the weaker sex (more susceptible of superstitious feelings), were still attached, were celebrated in solitary places and in private, and those who frequented them were branded as witches and sorcerers, who met together to hold communion with demons, for as such the earlier Christians looked upon all the heathen gods. This gives us an easy explanation of the manner in which the heathen worship, became transformed into the witchcraft in the Middle Ages.

A new and wonderful beauty has dawned upon Rome—an Austrian Princess, Fürstess Fürstburg, a large, dark woman, with man-like hair, huge collar, great black eyes, rich skin, heroic features, and a Venus of Milo form. Her laugh and words can be heard three houses distant.