

not belong to him," returned the porter. "Here, come in and warm thyself, poor brother Gola, and tell us how this chanced, and where are the boy and Festus. Go thou, Peter, and fetch father Philetus and master Cornelius. But tell us of the young master, Gola."

"Alas! would that I could! but Festus was taken from us at Soissons, I fear me with his own good will. The kings made over my poor young lord, my heart's darling, to an untamed savage barbarian named Hunderik. On the outskirts of Treves, this. Abner says he took on him to exchange me for his weapons, and I was carried away by force in the night, or I would never, never have left the darling of my heart."

By this time all the household had come together—Philetus, the tutor; Cornelius, a freedman, the steward of the household; Baldrik, who had come to look grave, prim, and demure, with his tonsured head and little clerical gown; Leo, with bare arms and dough sticking about them; Gilchrist, the Irish monk, still walking lame, together with several more clergy and many more servants, all eager to hear of little Attalus.

The Jew, Abner, looked from one to the other as if he were reckoning what price he could put on even letting Gola speak.

"Thou merchant," demanded Philetus, "how didst thou become possessed of a slave who belongs to the holy and clement Gregory, both senator and bishop?"

"By fair and honest purchase, sir, as he can tell thee himself."

"What right had any man to sell thee the slave who is the property of my lord?" demanded Cornelius.

"It was the free lord Hunderik of Hundingburg, to whom the youth and his following had been granted by King Theudebert," responded the Jew, with low bows and in a submissive voice. "The slaves were made over to him, and he sold this man to me for an inlaid breastplate of brass and silver, curious work of Rome, and a Byzantine blade of excellent metal, worth ten pounds of silver."

"The robber!" was the murmur that went through the spectators.

"Might is right in these days, alas!" said Philetus; and Cornelius added, "It is most unfortunate that his clemency is absent."

"Hunderik is a mere barbarian savage," broke out Baldrik; "I have heard my father say so. It is frightful for Attalus to be in his hands. But for this man, he is Bishop Gregory's. Keep him here. The rogue of a Jew had no right to buy him."

"The noble citizens would not see a poor Jew defrauded," whined Abner; "nor would the great and clement bishop, nor the consul of this place."

For Philetus and Cornelius were consulting

whether it might not be better to refer the matter to the consul, as they called the chief magistrate of the place under the senator; but Cornelius recollected that a Jewish physician, and likewise a Jewish handmaid of his wife, were thought to have much influence over him, and he strongly suspected that the cunning Abner had had some intimation from them of a favorable time for bringing Gola to the house of the bishop. Gregory was, in fact, gone to the court of Hildebert at Paris, carrying the yearly tribute of his district, and hoping to ascertain the fate of his grandson and the chances of his restoration. There was little hope in an appeal to the magistrate, considering who had his ear. It was probable, yet not certain, that Gregory, though on principle he never purchased slaves, would think it right to redeem poor Gola, who looked half starved, half clothed, and with clasped hands implored his rescue. He had evidently been very ill; and had suffered in every respect; and Cornelius would have ventured to advance the amount, sure that the bishop would pardon him for exceeding the rule, but he really had not the money in hand. All that was available had been carried off by Bishop Gregory to satisfy the never-ending demands of king Hildebert, and the household were subsisting on the provisions brought in from the bishop's estates, and on the offerings of the Christian peasantry. There was silver and gold plate belonging to the table, but though Gregory might have parted with it for such a purpose the steward could not venture on doing so.

Gola wept bitterly, and entreated, "Oh, let him not take me away! I shall die in his hands. He will poison me as worthless."

Perhaps this was unjust to the Jew, but it moved the servants very much, and Philetus began to bargain for Gola's being left where he was till the master's return, to satisfy all claims; but of this Abner would not hear, inferring, in a sneering though abject tone, that he knew something of Roman faith.

Little Baldrik was the first to move. He came forward holding out the silver and ivory cup from which he drank, and the buckle of his belt. "These are my own," he said; "take them and set poor Gola free."

The Jew smiled. "The fifth part of him, may be, young priestling."

But already Leo was coming to the front, with a black and grimy canvass bag. Slave as he was, many a guest of his master had flung him a small coin in acknowledgment of the good dinners that he had prepared; and he had sometimes, moreover, been borrowed when one or other of the townsmen was about to make a feast and wanted the services of the best cook in Langres. He had accumulated all with a view to purchasing his own freedom, but he now threw the bag down before Abner, naming