

"Three days," added one of the bystanders, who had drawn near. And he said it with a certain pride, as of one well pleased to belong to a virtuous community.

But the priest was not listening. He had already turned aside in his quick, jerky way; for he was a comparatively young man. He was looking through the olives towards the south.

"It is the women," he said, and his face suddenly hardened. He was impulsive, it appeared—quick to feel for others, fiery in his anger, hasty in his judgment.

From the direction in which he and the bystanders looked, came the hum of many voices, and the high, incessant shrieks of one who seemed demented. Presently a confused procession appeared from the direction of the south, hurrying through the narrow street now called the Rue Carnot. It was headed by a woman, who led a little child, running and stumbling as he ran. At her heels a number of women hurried, confusedly shouting, moaning, and wailing. The men stood waiting for them in dead silence—a characteristic scene. The leading woman seemed to be superior to her neighbours, for she wore a black silk handkerchief on her head instead of a white or coloured cotton. It is almost a mantilla, and marks as clear a social distinction in Corsica as does that head-dress in Spain. She dragged