

"Free, lady! Alas! let me still be thy slave!"

"What! refuse freedom?" exclaimed the lady.

"Pardon, sweet lady, but my bonds are precious to me. Let me still wear them for the love of JESUS CHRIST. It is all I can do for Him, who has bought me with a price that I might inherit eternal life."

"They give life, they give themselves to be scourged, they refuse liberty, the sweetest of all, for Christ," mused the lady. "But it matters little to me, Panthea. I wished to do thee a kindness; but, if thou dost prefer bonds to freedom, thou art still a slave."

"Thanks, lady," said Panthea bowing her head with a smile.

"I hoped to have pleased Panthea with my gift; but the news which I have for thee, Mona, will, I know, fill thee with joy," said the lady, fixing her full black eyes on Mona's face. "My lord has returned, a Christian; and the bard Abaris, and a young noble from Gaul, are at Innistore, our guests, and both Christians. All of my household, except Aileen, are Christians also. I stand alone!"

"Salvation is nearer to thee than thou dost dream, O lady," said Mona, with sudden inspiration.

"When I see one die for Christ,—when I see Nerf Naom fall from the height of yonder temple when no storm rages the air or convulsion shakes the earth,—then, Mona, perhaps I may receive this new faith," she said, with a smile of scorn. "But it was not for this that I came. Dost thou know a Christian priest named Finian?"

"I do, lady," replied Mona, after a moment's hesitation.

"Nay! have no fears for him. My lord wishes a letter from Patricius conveyed to him. Dost thou know of a trusty messenger?"

"I know of one who would place it in his hands to-morrow at dawn," she replied.

"Who?"

"Myself," she answered, humbly.

"I will not permit it. The peril is too great. Some one else must be found to do it," said the Lady Bernice.

"I have to see the holy Finian on the morrow." Just then Aileen, who had lingered at the door, crept through the apartment, unseen by any except Panthea, on whom she threw a look of hatred and revenge. She had heard all she wished to hear.

"Dost thou go alone?" asked the lady.

"No, lady. Deigo, the son of Lena, who is under-gardener at Innistore, and is a Christian, will guide and protect me. He will not be home until night, as he has gone some miles up the shore to gather sea-weed for the soil. Hence the necessity that I should be the bearer of the letter from Patricius," said Mona, in her gentle way.

"And for what dost thou venture on so perilous a journey, Mona?"

"Dear lady," said Mona, in her sweet, humble tones, "the Christian priests offer to the great God an unbloody sacrifice, the fruits whereof are the real Presence—the body and blood, the divinity and humanity—of JESUS CHRIST. Under the forms of bread and wine, He, the Divine One, is as truly present as He was on the cross,—as He is in heaven at the right hand of the Father; and under these veils we unworthy mortals receive Him, our food and our guest."

"Receive a God!" exclaimed the lady, with a look of awe,—a God! I will not believe it. It is profanity!"

"Not profanity, dear lady; for He Himself tells us, in the great Psalter of His word, that unless we eat of His body and drink of His blood we shall not enter eternal life. It is His own free gift to His children, whose sweet privilege it is to receive it," replied Mona.

"This is wonderful! But, Mona, these are delusions. Thou art deceived, poor maiden. But listen. One day a vestal of Nerf Naom was wandering through the sacred grove, when a wild and ferocious wolf sprang on her, and would have torn her piecemeal, but that a young, noble, and handsome knight came to the rescue, and dashed his spear through the skull of the savage beast. The knight saw the vestal, for the wind had blown back her veil; he saw her as she lay senseless on his breast, where he had lifted her, and he loved her. Dost thou understand me, Mona?"

"I do, lady," she replied, raising her clear large eyes calmly to the lady's face.

"It is well. This knight is now a Christian. He is here; and when he heard that thou didst not perish in the sea, but wert living, and also a Christian, he unfolded his buried love, and declared that he would wed thee! What sayest thou now, Mona? Thou wouldst be my equal,—a countess, a powerful and rich lady, and the beloved bride of a noble and generous knight."

"May the great and holy God reward him overmore for saving me from the fangs of the wolf! I remember the day well."

"But he loves thee, Mona! He—this Count of Bretagne—would wed thee!"

"Noble lady," she said, very gently, "I have naught to do with human love: I know it not. I would not wed the greatest monarch the earth knows, even if such a one deigned to seek my hand. I am pledged and plighted in a holy faith to a divine Spouse." And a smile, one of those rare and radiant smiles that sometimes flashed like light from heaven over her face, now lit her countenance.

"Thou art mad!" exclaimed the Lady Bernice, angrily.

"Not mad, most noble lady. I only mean that, instead of being a vestal of Nerf, who is a false Deity, I wish to be a vestal of JESUS CHRIST, who is the true and living God."

"Per Etelis! They count all things as nothing for this same God,—life, love, riches, rank, power, and liberty!" said the Lady Bernice, in a low voice. "It seems noble,—it is heroic, to say the least of it. But, Mona, it is my will for thee to appear this evening before my lord; he wishes to question thee. There-

fore wash the dye from thy flesh, unfold those rich tresses, and at sunset come to my chamber, where I will see thee properly attired for the interview."

"Lady, might I be spared this?" said Mona, distressed and agitated.

"Spared! No! I will it!—I command it!" she said, as she rose, with an imperious air, to leave the room.

"Thou shalt be obeyed," said Mona, meekly; "and may He who has promised to be my help in times of temptation, aid me with strength!"

That evening the Lady Bernice stood waiting alone in her splendid chamber. It was hung round with amber-colored silk and Phœnician mirrors. Luxurious couches, tables made of ivory and silver, filled with vases of crystal and small golden vases containing cosmetics and perfumes, caskets of jewels, and other fine articles of adornment, stood against the walls. Large vases of flowers, an embroidered eury-frame, a song-bird warbling in a gold-wired cage near the window, would have told, in plain language, that this was the favorite retreat of some high-born dame, even had she not been there in her haughty beauty, engaged in the truly feminine task of examining a number of splendid dresses which were strewn over the couch before her. They were of the richest fabric and most costly finish. The last rich tints of sunset streamed through the western window, and fell with a deep glow around her, and brought out the glitter of many a gem in the robes and draperies she handled. Looking first at one, then at another, she laid them down with a dissatisfied air. At last, under a heap which she had not touched, she espied one made of white and silver. With a smile of satisfaction she hastily drew it out, and, selecting a veil to match it, she threw them over her arm, and went toward a mirror which overhung one of the costly tables we have described. The robe was fashioned of white silk, embroidered with foliage of silver and pearls; the veil was of transparent tissue, dotted with silver and bordered with a fringe of seed-pearls. "This will do," she said, well pleased. "This will just suit her strange and wondrous beauty. Ah! here she is now. Come in, Mona. See what I have selected for thy adornment. Does not this suit a vestal?" she said, laying her hand on the rich robe.

"Noble lady!" she said, shrinking back.

"Mona," was the imperious reply, while those large gleaming eyes were bent full on her, "I am one used to command,—and to obedience in those whom I command. Come hither, then, and let me deck thy matchless beauty as it deserves."

Without another word or gesture of repugnance, she approached, and yielded herself submissively to the lady's humor. It was a new form of suffering; and, breathing the name she loved so well, she stood silent and patient,—silent and patient, like a lamb which is gauded with roses and spangled gauzes and gay ribbons, to become a victim in the shambles. So Mona stood while the proud dame of Innistore arrayed her in robes of purity and splendor. With her own hands she braided back the dark, flowing tresses, over which she threw the veil and clasped over it a band of pearls, fastened the jeweled clasps that secured the dress, then stood off to view the effect. Never had she seen anything half so fair; and, lifting her hands, she whispered, "Oh, Etelis! how more than beautiful!" With downcast eyes, Mona stood like a white-robed spirit watching over the dead, so pale, so motionless, so holy was her aspect,—her wondrous beauty half veiled, half disclosed, her hands folded like two lilies on her bosom, and her eyes looking down, darkening her white cheeks with the shadow of their black fringes.

(To be Continued.)

THE FRENCH SIEGE OF PARIS.

(From Times Special Correspondent.)

PARIS, May 14.

Every morning we go through the form of inquiring whether the "Grand Attack" was made last night; but it is merely a matter of form. Whenever it does come it ought to take everybody by surprise, for it is not in human nature to go on expecting the same event for ever with a lively, unflinching faith; and yet it becomes more and more difficult to make out why the attack is not made. It is not easy, perhaps, even by freely discounting, to make much out of the accounts of the French journals. They are, naturally, for the most part violent partisans, and would have their readers believe, either that there is not a weak point in the Versailles harness, or, on the other hand, that constant disputes between the military and civil authorities—to say nothing of party divisions in the National Assembly—make the Government scarcely less weak than the Commune; but the accounts of less prejudiced observers leave little room to doubt that Versailles has for some time been steadily, if slowly, getting stronger; and, as for Paris, nobody can fail to see that its defence has rapidly been getting weaker. If the Versailles authorities only know a tittle of what is going on here they know enough to justify a vigorous, decisive attack. I have just, however, been talking to a gentleman who is constantly passing to and fro between Paris and Versailles, and he expresses the most unmingled astonishment at the ignorance which in one place prevails of what is going on in the other. He found, for instance, a member of the Versailles Government quite taken aback at the notion that there could be any truth in the audacious assertion of the Communist journals, that shells had been thrown as far as the Palais de l'Industrie. One might be tempted to think the surprise feigned, if one could see what the Minister gained by professing ignorance of a fact which it was his business to know. His disbelief in the statements of the Communist journals was doubtless pardonable enough, but the Versailles have other sources of information in abundance at their disposal. They need not even have recourse to the sys-

tem of paid spies, though it was by this system that the Prussians, at any rate, contrived to keep themselves admirably informed of what was going on inside Paris. Paris is not now, as it was then, invested. Communications between it and Versailles are easy and constant. The Government ought to know in two or three hours every important fact that occurs here, and yet they have missed more than one admirable opportunity for striking a well-timed blow. In any case, they cannot be ignorant of the condition, moral and material, of the Communist army, and of its inferiority to their own troops. Unless we are strangely misinformed here, the Versailles soldiers are not only more eager to engage the Communists than they ever were to engage a foreign foe, but they have as a body recovered much of the old temper and discipline which once gave them a deserved reputation as amongst the first soldiers in the world. Foreigners writing from Versailles—to all appearance unbiassed observers—declare that much of the army there is in far better condition than it was when the war with Prussia commenced. This might not, perhaps, be saying very much for its chances of success, if it had again to contend with a Prussian or any other regular army properly organized and well led. But its opponents here are not only citizen-soldiers—new to their work, but many of them with no heart or stomach for it, dragged to the fight by sheer force, and remaining in the ranks only until they can get a safe chance of running away, either back into Paris, or, which they much prefer, to their so-called "enemies" at Versailles. The press-gang system, which is now being carried out in Paris every day with increasing rigour, ought to ruin the steadiest regiment that ever went under fire—far more, therefore, battalions of National Guards, who, whenever they get into the open field, can with great difficulty be kept from throwing themselves on the ground or bolting to cover when they hear the first shell burst anywhere near them.

When Rossel, the ablest officer on the Communist side, wanted and was promised 12,000 men, he could only get 7,000. The press-gang system is accordingly being worked by the Commune with all the energy of despair. Its agents draw a *cardou* round this or that Arrondissement, as if they were hunting wild beasts, carefully scrutinizing the papers of anybody who wants to pass, and then search carefully every house, and drag off every Frenchman they find in it of the fighting age, i.e., between 19 and 40. One cannot go many hundred yards without coming upon some unlucky victim being carried off in this fashion. Unless he has an uncommonly good plea to urge, or a friend at court, he is immediately incorporated, and probably sent off to a Fort as a place from which he will find it hardest to make his escape back to Paris, the city gates being carefully closed whenever a panic begins. Yet a vast number contrive somehow to escape altogether this compulsory service. In the huge hotel of which I am, I believe, the last remaining occupant not on the staff, there were the other day only two men servants, both bound to fight, but neither fighting. Several visits were made in search of one of them by companies of the National Guard, but he used to hide about so cleverly in the rooms of the deserted hotel, knowing every inch of the ground, that there was no taking him. His was certainly a hard case, for, in addition to his distaste for fighting, he had in the Versailles army a brother, whom he had no sort of motive for shooting, and by whom he had no wish to be shot. I was very glad, therefore, to hear that, finding the place at last too hot, he had made his escape from Paris, by what means it would, perhaps, be as well not to say. The other fugitive's hiding-place here is not even suspected, as his battalion belongs to quite another part of the town. He keeps pretty carefully upstairs, however, and by way of discouraging superfluous visits makes a point of shouting out to everybody who comes to call on me that I am not at home, unless my visitor happens to be in uniform, when he is left to shift for himself and find me if he can. My experience is, I fancy, pretty much that of all my neighbours. There is probably not in Paris a big hotel in which two or three runaway warriors are not hidden. Some of them—resembling thus, in more points than one, the swift-footed Achilles—even take to female attire in order to escape discovery. A friend of mine the other day travelled in the train to St. Denis with, as he thought, a very quiet young lady, of most becomingly modest and retiring manners, until, on approaching St. Denis, she horrified him by showing a cigar-case. The horror was exchanged for amusement when the young person stated that he was a man, who had adopted this disguise to get away from his battalion in Paris. Escapes of this kind continue to be of daily occurrence, though, of course, they get more and more difficult, as the desperation of the Communists increases their vigilance. But one is inclined to wonder why in the world so much pains are taken to catch recruits who, when they are caught, are worse than useless for any really practical purpose; who will not only do no fighting themselves, but will do what they can to prevent others from fighting. One would have thought that, especially for the sort of street fighting which the Commune professes to anticipate, 5,000 picked troops, really in earnest, and bent on doing their best, would be worth 50,000 faint-hearted and disgusted Conscripts. I have heard on pretty good authority that 5,000 is about the number on whom the Commune can really count, and their latest idea is to make Montmartre "the last ditch to die in," as soon as they have bombarded it as much as possible of reactionary Paris. It is, at least, considerable of M. Thiers to have given them the time to fortify it so strongly.

PARIS, May 15.—The Versailles army is at length really beneath our walls, and the "grand coup," which we have been so long expecting,

may fall upon us at any moment. The enemy has steadily encroached, and occupies the ground from Auteuil to Issy within rifle-shot of the ramparts, while the batteries, whose mission it is to protect the advancing works, increase in number almost hourly. On the south-west line there is nothing left to the Federals as a bulwark but the ramparts, behind which a series of impromptu barricades are being built, which will become more and more formidable as day after day passes over us in seemingly unnecessary inaction. The Fort of Vanvres though reported to have fallen into the hands of the Versailles party, still mounts a Federal flag, but it is quite surrounded, and therefore powerless, for neither food nor ammunition can be conveyed within its walls. Last night the regular troops attacked the Federals at midnight between Vanvres and Issy, and, taking them by surprise, produced a panic, which ended in precipitate flight. Vainly the officers attempted to rally their men, who, in spite of threats and promises, rushed like scared sheep into the town by the Versailles gate—some without hats, others without guns or knapsacks, spreading terror and dismay by shouting that the "Prussians of Versailles" were at their heels. From the high ground of the Chemin de Fer de Ceinture the red trousers and white shirt-sleeves of the Lincens can be clearly distinguished with the naked eye as they hurry hither and thither in rows like ants, carrying material for earthworks or digging trenches. The bombardment of the north-west portion of the city has entered into a new phase. While the batteries of Courbevoie continue to pour their daily allowance of iron upon the Portes de Maillet and des Ternes, the guns of Mont Valerien have turned their attention a little further westward, and literally deluge the Porte Dauphine with shells and round shot. The Porte Dauphine is situated at the end of the Avenue de l'Imperatrice, and is the gate through which brilliant crowds of equipages used to defile to the races of Longchamps. It is unprotected by redoubt or barricade, nor has it yet been supplied with a battery to enable it to answer the enemy's fire, and, consequently, will fall an easy prey to the fortress that frowns above. By the changed direction of the fire the hitherto secure Avenues of Eylau and Roi de Rome will share the fate of those which have been already shattered, and will unite in a common wreck that which has been called the American Quarter. As though a sufficient number of dwellings had not been destroyed by shells, the Commune are busily engaged in dismantling and tearing to pieces Monsieur Thiers' hotel in the Place St. Georges. They have carted away its possessions to some unknown hiding-place, preparatory, it is said, to a secret sale, and have already succeeded in taking off the roof and pulling down a portion of the walls of the hotel. A considerable crowd stand watching the performance, and giving vent to different opinions on the subject. "Ah, well," I heard one woman say, "it is a pity not to have left the house standing and to have transformed it into an hospital." Some shake their fists at it, as though it were responsible for the acts of the Assembly; but the greater number shake their heads in mute disapproval. I fancy that the possession of the fine collection of works of art which has lately been removed will serve as an apple of discord among the members of the Commune. Citizen Courbet, Chief Commissioner for Art Collections, wishes to transport everything to the Louvre *en masse*, while other gentlemen of the governing body are anxious to thrust an additional dagger into the heart of M. Thiers, by dispersing his treasures over Europe, knowing, as they do, that he sets more store upon them than upon a dozen houses, which are easily rebuilt. The Thiers Collection is very little known, as no facilities were placed by its owner in the way of visitors; it is, however, of great value, and contains, among other things, a peculiarly rich set of portraits, engraved by Drevet, Edelinek, and others, as well as a celebrated series of bronze statuettes. In 1864 M. Thiers sold a great portion of his library, as well as many of the works of Callot and La Belle, in order to turn his attention to Rembrandt and Vandyke, of whose *van-fortes* he possesses a handsome collection. All these things were carted away in a few hours, like so much lumber, in heavy waggons, from under the flapping curtains of which one could distinguish books and pictures mixed pell-mell with costly japan, china, and boxes and cabinets of jade. I was told that several strangers, who were known to be wealthy, had been offered a chance of picking up sundry costly items, and so I made my way accordingly to the depot in the Rue St. Florentin, where such private possessions as were thought worth keeping together have for the most part been stored. I could obtain no positive information, however, from the sturdy National Guard who has charge of the place. He admitted that the house contained precious things of every kind, and remarked grimly that should "les assassins" come in, they would have the satisfaction of bombarding their own property when they make an attempt to storm the great barricade which occupies the corner of the Rues de Rivoli and St. Florentin. That barricade is the most elaborate work of the kind which has yet been erected in the streets of Paris, having been strengthened with masonry and mortar, and presenting an appearance from behind of a flight of plastered steps. Additional defences are in course of construction behind the balustrade of the Tuileries gardens that skirts the Place de la Concorde. From below there is nothing visible which would lead an enemy to suspect lurking danger, but the public who promenade under the shadow of the horse-chestnuts are enabled to remark the daily advance of a series of important earthworks, excavated below the level of the walk, so as to bring the heads and shoulders of the soldiers who will man these new trenches up to the coping of the low balustrade. Whether the National Guards will fight or not when we come to a street scuffle is a subject of general

surmise. A feeling of discouragement and lassitude is beginning to weigh them down, and many people consider that they only continue to hang together from a dislike to the idea of abandoning their daily pay. A man was haranguing a group of Nationals this morning, and upbraiding them for their drunken habits. "The Republic of '93," he said, "was the revolution of blood, for the patriots of that day had to prove that the blue blood of the nobles did not entitle them to tread beneath their feet their fellow-men. The Republic of 1871 is the revolution of wine, for you held in your hands the white banner of liberty, and you have soaked it in grape-juice till it is red."

The 144th Battalion of the Sedentary National Guards, which had been ordered to proceed yesterday to Ivry, refused to march out of Paris.

Pascal Grousset, in his circular to the great cities of France, says:—"Paris will fight to the last behind her barricades and from house to house."

The Versailles fire has prevented any effective fortification of the Dauphine Gate. The whole of the west and south-west of Paris uninhabitable, a constant shower of bombs and shells falling over that part of the city.

Great damage and great loss of life among the civil population have been occasioned in all directions.

The tricolor is not yet hoisted on Fort Vanvres. The fall of Montrouge is imminent.

M. Titon and Tridon are dangerously ill. PARIS, May 16.—The Committee of Public Safety has appointed a military commission to replace the existing commission; it is composed of Arnold, Avrial, Johannard, Tridon, and Vartin.

Henri has been appointed Chief of the Staff of the War Ministry, and Mathieu commander of the troops posted between Point du Jour and the Wagram gate.

All mechanics over 40 years of age have been called out to work at the city defences. They will receive 3fr. 75c. as daily pay.

The *Vagueur* announces that an understanding has been arrived at between Delescluze and the Central Committee.

Important resolutions are expected to be taken at the sitting of the Commune to-day, and the serious division will be terminated by the dissolution of the Central Committee, or by the absorption of the Committee of Public Safety by the Central Committee.

The Vendome Column is announced to fall at 2 p.m. to day.

VERSAILLES, May 16.—The German troops are concentrating in the direction of Paris.

The head-quarters of the Crown Prince of Saxony have been advanced from Compiegne to Mergency, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Guard has removed from Senlis to Montourenoy.

IRISH INTELLIGENCE.

THE EDUCATION QUESTION.—LETTER FROM THE ARCHBISHOP OF TUAM.

To the Right Hon. William Gladstone.

St. Jarlath's, Tuam, May 10, 1871.

Sir—It cannot excite surprise that I should address you on the subject of Catholic education, one of the most important that can engage the attention of a Catholic prelate, and on which it has been my lot to address yourself as well as several of your distinguished predecessors, on frequent occasions within the last half century. Although much remains yet to be done to bring the subject to a just and successful issue, it has greatly progressed from the commencement of that period, thanks to the experience which has dissipated the confidence that was placed in the dangerous experiment of mixed education, and the unanimity brought about by that experience among the Catholics of Ireland, in demanding earnestly, perseveringly, and unqualifiedly, the long-withheld right of Catholic education, of which they have been so unjustly and so injuriously deprived.

No further toleration can be allowed to those delusive and insulting experiments by which it has been sought to win the confidence of the Irish people, and to persuade them to acquiesce in alien and anti-national projects of instruction instead of nobly striving for the goal which the historical renown of the Catholic schools of Ireland points out to the present as it does to the past generations. Having in their comparative weakness conquered the various temptations by which their fidelity to their religion has been so terribly tried, they will not now, in the enjoyment of their triumph, stoop to embrace any proselytising scheme which hitherto they so indignantly repudiated. And finding the system of the miscalled National Education false to its professions of fairness and impartiality on the score of religious belief, the Catholics of Ireland cannot be content as long as they are denied the most sacred of all national rights—that of the education of their children in their own creed. It is not to any particular age of the pupil, this right is to be confined; it is to embrace all the gradations of teaching, but more especially the primary schools attended by the youngest, since the more feeble the more need there is of the fostering care of the Catholic Church and of those sacred fences of discipline by which she labors to protect the innocence of her children. It would then be an anomaly to abandon the young and tender to all the dangers of mixed and promiscuous teaching, and to reserve all the safeguards of the Catholic Church for the University alone or the intermediate schools when the faith of the scholars shall have been tainted in the unguarded school-room of a mixed education.—The Church solicitous for the safety of her children at every age, makes no such distinctions, extending her care to all from infancy through every state of life.

It would be greatly conducive to the public interest, if English Statesmen, instead of wasting their talents and the resources of the