

about in your wisdom to pronounce, henceforth that sentence will be of no avail. Your meeting has been purposeless; and I give you your *conge* by my royal authority."

"Phillip of France," exclaimed the bishop of Orvieto, pale with anger, "it was not thee who called this council together, and it is not thee who can dissolve it."

Phillip Augustus pointed towards heaven with the finger of his gauntleted hand—

"The will of God will be accomplished in spite of us, my venerable fathers," said he, with a calmness which set at naught the anger of the legate; "your respectable council has no longer any object, since the king of France has now but one wife."

A prolonged murmur ran through the row of bishops. For these words rang in their ears as the avowal of some terrible deed of violence, and so the people understood it, for they murmured also.

"The king had two wives," said some voices, who, however, were careful not to pronounce their accusation too loudly. "One that he loved and one that he detested, that is dead."

"Here comes the one that he loves," replied other voices near the entrance.

Madame Agnes had, in short, arrived—the crown upon her head and clothed in the royal mantle—through the great doors she could be seen descending from her litter, and giving her hand to sire Amaury, lord of Anet.

The king saw it as well as the spectators, but he remained immovable and spoke not a word. The prelates were consulting in a low voice. As madame Agnes arrived at the threshold of the cathedral, two halberdiers of the guard crossed their weapons before her.

"Halt there!" called out the rough voice of Antoine Cadoc.

Messire Amaury, on the contrary, was rudely pushed forward into the church. His head had just passed under the atelier of Jean Cadoc. For the first time for two hours the two black statues that were standing before the veiled image were seen to move. The statue of the virgin tottered on its base, and fell, crushing in its fall the body of Amaury Montruel.

The blood spouted on the people, who recoiled with fear.

"To the Chateau d'Etamps!" was heard at that moment outside, from captain Antoine Cadoc, who had just placed madame Agnes on a pack horse.

An escort of twelve brigands, who had accompanied the honest clerk Samson, left at the same time, and entered the same ferry-boat which had so lately brought back the empty litter of that other Agnes—Agnes the Fretty.

Agnes de Meranie could not yet believe the full extent of her misfortune.

"Does not the Chateau d'Etamps belong to messire Amaury?" she asked.

"Messire Amaury is dead," they replied to her, "and the Chateau d'Etamps belongs to captain Antoine."

Midnight sounded, and it was the hour when the mass of thanksgiving was about to commence. During the tumult caused by such an accumulation of unlooked-for events, many

things escaped the general attention. But without either bishops or people being able to say from whence she had come, they suddenly beheld standing, in the middle of the nave, a veiled woman, wearing, like madame Agnes, the crown and royal mantle. She was accompanied by a man dressed in a magnificent Saracen costume. Page Albret from one side, and Eric and Eve from the other, flew towards her with extended arms.

"King," said the Saracen, bending before Phillip Augustus, "the hour of midnight has struck. Out of the nine assassins of the king, there remains but me. Perform thy promise, as I have performed mine."

The king took the trembling hand of the veiled woman, who was presented to him by the Saracen; and, raising her veil, a great shout arose from the assembled multitude, for everybody recognized the sweet and holy beauty of queen Angel.

Eve and Albret, with hands joined, fell upon their knees.

The king kissed the brow of Ingeburge, who was ready to sink, and leading her up to the steps of the altar, they both knelt down together.

"Before thee, O Lord God! I declare this woman to be my wife," said he. Then, turning towards the people, he added—

"Behold thy queen!"

It was absolutely necessary that the Bishop of Orvieto should discover some object on which to expend his wrath; he therefore sprang towards Mahmoud.

"Infidel," exclaimed he, "whose presence defiles this place—what wouldst thou here?"

"I have come here to be baptized," replied Mahmoud el Reis.

The council of bishops declared that the anathema that had been fulminated against the king, and the interdict which had been proclaimed throughout the whole kingdom, were annulled.

The king departed that same night to enter upon his glorious campaign against the English.

Ingeburge was now queen. History, alas! does not tell us whether she was happy; but history tells—and we know that history never lies—that Agnes de Meranie died of love—I do not know where.

But while every one knows that love never kills, every one does know that passion will destroy.

On the same day that queen Ingeburge had given her blessing to the union of the handsome page Albret with our pretty Eve, she found Mahmoud-el-Reis waiting for her at the entrance of her palace.

His two black slaves were already in the saddle, and a third horse stood all ready to receive the Syrian.

The queen extended her hand to Mahmoud, who kissed it, and pressed it for a moment against his heart.

"Adieu, queen," said he. "I have come to take my leave; for I must now go and see Dilah, and then die. God will listen to thy prayers, as to the prayers of his highest angels. O queen! pray for poor Mahmoud, and for Dilah, the sister of thy soul!"