

with their bright red berries sparkling amid the myriad lights. The second mass is finished. A second time the celebrant blesses the kneeling crowd, some among whom shudderingly recall the sad tragedy enacted at this moment just ten years ago.

.....

What means this strange commotion in the peaceful chapel? Why does every one turn and stare at a newcomer, an old man, a tall pilgrim with torn robe and bleeding feet, who slowly walks up the aisle and whose ill-fitting rope-girdled tunic still reveals the wearer, majestic in his savage humility. In his right hand he carries a silver reliquary and in the left a roll of parchment covered with red characters, from which hangs an authentic seal. As he reaches the altar he bends low to receive the priest's blessing. Who is he?... mutely question all as prostrate on the altar steps, he kisses again and again the dark stains made by the life-blood of the martyred priest which ten years have not sufficed to efface.

As the celebrant is about to begin the third mass, the prostrate man rises and with head raised and still haughty eye faces the congregation. An awful cry escapes from the seigniorial pew as the lady of the manor recognizes her guilty husband. The cry is taken up by the slaves who all recognize their cruel master. Quiet being restored, the cause of all this commotion says :

" My Father, and you good, faithful people, listen to the confession of a great culprit, of a penitent who craves your mercy. Yes, I am he : the assassin, the murderer ! Here ten years ago I committed my crime. I confess it, I am heartily sorry for it ! Have I sufficiently expiated it ? Am I worthy to retake my place among you ? You yourselves shall be my judges !

Seized with horror after I had done the awful deed, I fled, branded like another Cain, haunted by the look of the dying priest, cursing and loathing myself. Crossing the glacial Alps, I went to Rome and on the threshold of his Lateran palace threw myself at the feet of the Vicar of Christ, Gregory VI, confessed my crime and offered to surrender my head.