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ladies, mounted on mules! With difficulty they pick their way among the dead and dying! Saw ever you the like, L'Allègre, upon a battlefield?"

"My Seigneur, 'tis most wonderful! A Cardinal, in crimson hat and full canonicals, and with him women in long cloaks of russet brown. Methinks, that 'tis some Papal Nuncio upon a mission, and with him Abbesses? Yet know I not, for never saw I the like in scenes of furious war."

"'Tis this way they come, L'Allègre, mayhap His Eminence would pass the bridge, seeking to gain Savoy? Well, we will aid him with our escort."

"Nay, but they are not Abbesses," answered L'Allègre, irrelevantly. "By Saint Michael! I know the shape of the little one. I would vow I have seen her before, in peace or war. Hark, my Seigneur, the Cardinal cries out! for the unmannerly dogs of Spaniards have recommenced their firing. List to His Eminence's words above the din."

In spite of the desultory arquebus fire of the troops under Pescara, it was easy now to hear the Cardinal loudly crying, while traversing their ranks:

"Safe conduct! Safe conduct! I come from the Holy Father, on a mission of peace!"

"A mission of peace! Give thanks to God, L'Allègre, so that the terms be honourable to France and can be listened to. Yet do the irreligious troops of Charles the Emperor not heed him—the fire grows hotter than ever."

"Ay, a few more such volleys, my Seigneur, and I doubt if ever we cross that bridge, yet can we not leave this spot until that match be ready—but are they full long about it!"

"Behold! now they dismount!" continued L'Allègre, forgetting the balls sputtering around him in his interest in the strange group—"And mark the little lady, 'tis most strange! she seizes the trumpet of him that holds her mule, ay, and raises it to her lips, my Seigne "