

assassins—the war with the English—the tales of the Holy Land—and the sittings of the council were laid aside as things of the past.

Paris never gossips but of one subject at a time, and the absorbing subject now was queen Ingeburge. That name was now in all mouths—to the facts of the late riot were added a thousand embellishments, and every one was enquiring who was the leader and promoter of the quarrel.

The students of the universities protested that they had nothing to do with it—the grand master of the freemasons swore upon the gospels that his fraternity had taken no part in the sacrilegious proceedings.

Some mischievous tongues had endeavoured to show that the disappearance of Madame Ingeburge was in accordance with the cherished plans of Phillip Augustus. But how could that be, when it was the archers of king Phillip who had laid their heavy hands upon the rioters and dispersed them?

It is true that page Albret and the king's archers had arrived very late, and that the queen had disappeared.

Then the question arose, "Where was she? Had they put her to death? or had they plunged her into some dark prison?"

The people of Paris—the true people this time—that rough and honest crowd, who are so apt to judge correctly, when all sophistry is laid aside, took a decided interest in the fate of that poor unhappy young maiden, whose arrival they had one day witnessed, so full of happiness and so beautiful—to be Queen of France; but who, instead of a palace, had found the cheerless cell of a monastery—then a prison—and then, perhaps, a tomb. And the poor queen had done nothing to deserve such a fate; her only crime was that of adoration for the king, who hated her. They, therefore, began to grumble around the Louvre; and it is certain, that if the gentle queen had been capable of heading a party, she would soon have found an army to support her. But Queen Angel only knew how to pray, and how to love; and besides that, no trace of her could be discovered—though she was sought for by all the ardent hearts of Paris.

There was Eve—adroit as a fairy—old Christian, and Eric, whose wound did not prevent his being constantly on foot; then there was the handsome page Albret, whose wound, given also by the hand of Mahmoud, did not prevent him from commanding the king's forces, and also of disposing of the king's favours.

All these friends of the queen were exhausted by their useless efforts—neither the queen nor Jean Cador, the image-cutter, were any where to be found.

One night in the large corridors of the Louvre, which were lit up by wax-tapers, suspended from the arched ceilings, Albret thought he saw, in the shade, the sharp features of the Syrian. He sprang forward to seize him, but he must have been grasping at a vision, for his hand had only clutched at emptiness. Albret's heart and soul were feverish, and fever produces phantoms. How had Mahmoud been able to clear the wide and deep ditches which surrounded the Louvre? how have scaled the walls of the tower and eluded the vigilance of the watch?

Albret was obliged to confess that his head was all wrong. All those who were seeking the queen, were asking whether the mysterious story spread abroad by the lay brothers of the abbey St. Martin might not be true, and if the dark enemy of the human race had not really carried off the queen on that unfortunate night.

Four days had now passed over since the assault was given to the House of God, and Phillip Augustus was engaged in a low and tender conversation with Agnes de Meranie, in his bedchamber.

"Alas! my well-beloved lord," said Agnes, passing her fingers through the hair of Phillip Augustus caressingly, "may I not know why I never feel quiet and safe? Why my love for you increases a thousand-fold each day? And why that love, lately so full of delights, is now changed into martyrdom?"

She looked at the king, and her beautiful eyes were full of a sorrowful inquietude?

"The heart judges aright," she murmured, "and tells me that if I suffer, it is because my lord loves me no longer."

Those who knew with what passion the king had loved Agnes de Meranie, and those who knew the magic powers which the accents of that enchantress had hitherto exercised over her royal lover, would have concluded from the foregoing scene that Phillip Augustus was still under the charm of Agnes de Meranie, for he still looked upon her with ravished eyes.

And who is ignorant of the rare beauty exhibited by those daughters of the gipsy race in their hours of dalliance. Their bizarre physiognomy—so striking at first sight—is now all illuminated, and a radiance spreads over that low brow—between the audacious eyes and the luxuriant tresses—and the ardent and almost masculine expression of strength, is subdued by the all-conquering passion. Agnes de Meranie was as beautiful that night as could be desired—beautiful with the soft melancholy of regret.

I repeat it, these women have enchantments; and if in open day the radiant and calm beauty of more holy women puts their blandishments to flight, they rise again at night, with the light of conscious triumph sparkling in their eye.

"Foolish woman," murmured Phillip drawing the hand of Agnes to his lips, "knowest thou not thine empire over me?"

Agnes, on feeling the lips of the king touching her hand, experienced something of the sensation of one suffering from some dangerous malady, and whose pulse is being felt by a physician; but she shivered, for the king's lips were cold. Her eyes glanced towards a mirror hanging opposite to her, and though it satisfied her about her admirable beauty, it could not completely reassure her. "Ah! of what account is beauty, when one is no longer loved?"

"I believe you—I believe you," my lord, she said, "for if I believed it not, I should die."

The king kissed her hand again. The magnificent Agnes was acting this comedy superbly; but she had some experience and some knowledge of the king's skill in that line. She knew that Phillip Augustus could give her some points, and still win the game. What rendered her more foolish and bold, was her belief that the king was ignorant of her secret ways; but, ever and anon, her heart would sink within her, when she called to mind that threatening voice that she had heard at the brigand's tavern, repeating those ominous words—

"The king knows all!"

It was something in Agnes' favor that a perfect calm reigned around the place—leaving the king's bed-chamber quite undisturbed—and Agnes wished to profit by it, for she had still another battle to fight there, and something told her that upon the result of that battle depended her whole destiny.

"I thank you, my lord," murmured she,—"you are very kind; and you re-assure me, because I observe that you have some pity for your poor wife. But you must know that anxious love sees everywhere symptoms of abandonment, and I have been neglected so long. Shall we not be happy to-night as formerly, when, with a smile on your face, you would fall asleep to the sound of my voice and my lute?"

Just as Phillip was about to reply, the clock of the Louvre struck eleven.

"My adored lady," said he, rising abruptly, "I have been fighting all day for love of you—not with my sword, but with my tongue—not against men-at-arms, covered with steel, but against churchmen, carrying under their surplices a whole arsenal of texts and arguments, which have quite overwhelmed me. In former times, when I was engaged in fighting with the English, I had more leisure, but now that I am engaged in debating with the council, I am obliged to excuse myself, and cannot listen either to your lute or your songs!"

Here was a *congé*. Agnes rose immediately, and did her best to conceal her chagrin.

"I must thank you again, my lord," said she, trying to assume a tone of gaiety; "if you gain the victory, and the council allows me to be with you, I shall only be too happy. But when

will that tedious council ever deliver its judgment?"

Phillip Augustus gave her his hand, and led her towards the door.

"To-morrow, at this same hour," replied the king, "the council of bishops will hold their last sitting—no longer in a hall of the palace, but in the choir of Notre Dame, the key-stone of which was placed yesterday. When the hour of midnight strikes, the mass *d'action de graces* will be pronounced, and the prelates will then proclaim the name of the queen."

Thus saying, Phillip Augustus, for the third time, kissed the hand of Agnes. These last words were pronounced with such an accent of affectionate gallantry, that any one hearing them might have put the name of Agnes in the place of the queen, without fearing to have it struck out again.

Madame Agnes, who had half opened the door by which she was about to leave, understood the king's words in that sense, and pressed Phillip's hands with gratitude.

Outside the door stood Amaury, armed at all points, and fulfilling the duties of his charge. He bowed low and respectfully to Agnes, who returned his salute.

"Good evening, Amaury," said the king, kindly.

"May God preserve you, my dreaded sire," replied Montreuil, "and give you peaceful slumbers!"

The king said, "thank you," and re-entered his bed-chamber.

Montreuil laid down, all armed as he was, across the closed door.

To be continued.

A FEMALE FIEND.

ELIZABETH—— was wont to dress well, in order to please her husband, and she spent half the day over her toilet. On one occasion, a lady's-maid saw something wrong in her head-dress, and, as a recompense for observing it, received such a severe box on the ears that the blood gushed from her nose, and spirted on her mistress's face. When the blood drops were washed from off her face, her skin appeared much more beautiful—whiter and more transparent on the spots where the blood had been. Elizabeth formed the resolution to bathe her face and her whole body in human blood so as to enhance her beauty. Two old women and a certain Fitzko assisted her in her undertaking. This monster used to kill the luckless victim, and the old women caught the blood, in which Elizabeth was wont to bathe at the hour of four in the morning. After the bath she appeared more beautiful than before. She continued this habit after the death of her husband (1604,) in the hopes of gaining new suitors. The unhappy girls who were allured to the castle, under the plea that they were to be taken into service there, were locked up in a cellar. Here they were beaten till their bodies were swollen. Elizabeth not infrequently tortured the victims herself; often she changed their clothes which dripped with blood, and then renewed her cruelties. The swollen bodies were then cut up with razors. Occasionally she had the girls burned, and then cut up, but the great majority were beaten to death. At last her cruelty became so great, that she would stick needles into those who sat with her in a carriage, especially if they were of her own sex. One of her servant-girls she stripped naked, smeared her with honey, and so drove her out of the house. When she was ill, and could not indulge her cruelty, she bit a person who came near her sick bed, as though she were a wild beast. She caused, in all, the death of 650 girls; some in Tscheita, on the neutral ground, where she had a cellar constructed for the purpose; others in different localities; for murder and bloodshed became with her a necessity. When at last the parents of the lost children could no longer be cajoled, the castle was seized, and the traces of the murders were discovered. Her accomplices were executed, and she was imprisoned for life. *Book of Were-Wolves, by S. Barrington Gould.*