

had now been lifted by some of the sympathizing townsfolk; and then with a cry of anger he dashed hotly toward them, followed by his companions.

There was indeed cause for his anger. Several of the brutal soldiers had rushed upon the men carrying the corpse, and with oaths and blows and threats of the Duke's anger, seized the body from them and flung it on the ground.

The girl, courageously placing herself between the soldiers and the frightened townsfolk, had turned upon the former and ordered them away; but the bullies, strong in the protection of their tyrant master and presuming on their license to deal as they would with the people, first jeered at her coarsely and then thrust her roughly aside while one of them ran and kicked the corpse with wanton brutality.

It was the attack on the girl which drove Gerard to interfere. He was by her side in an instant, flung the man who had touched her to the ground, and with eyes flashing and hand on his sword, dared the men to interfere further.

The soldiers were still present in the square in great force, however, and attracted by the tumult many came rallying to the side of their comrades. At the same time, inspirited by Gerard's daring, a great crowd of the townsfolk closed up behind him; and it seemed impossible that a conflict could be avoided.

There was a moment of hesitation, however, while the two opposing bodies glared angrily at one another, and Pascal with ready wit seized it to step between them, and with uplifted crucifix threatened the soldiers with the ban of Holy Church if they attempted further violence to either dead or living.

While he was haranguing them in loud and vehement tones, a number of men in monkish dress appeared almost as if by magic, and pushing through the citizens