

then, what must *I* be? Worse, truly, than those thieves hanging there."

Cabrera was waiting for him in his room, to summon him again to the Council, and there was such unwonted satisfaction beaming in Cabrera's disagreeable countenance, that Cuthbert was sure it betokened coming ill to some unfortunate; and his surmise was true. De Vargas was in one of his most jocular moods, and having discussed some preliminary business, he cried out:—

"Now, Hessels! Wake up, you drowsy Dutchman! We are going to relieve the tedium of the council-room by trying a heretic ourselves. It is not much sport signing a heap of paper, and sending troublesome wretches to the gallows that one has never set eyes on; we will honour a criminal, to-day, by a personal examination. Wake up, man! Father Cabrera says she is wondrous pretty."

"A woman is it?" said Hessels, rubbing his eyes. "What business has our reverend celibate to know whether she is pretty or ugly?"

"None at all, Master Hessels, after the manner you would imply," said the priest, in a silky voice.

"Father Cabrera is not blind; and all reverend confessors do not cover their eyes with such a veil of piety as his brother Cuthbert here does."

Poor guilty Cuthbert felt as if de Vargas had read his secret. Well, whatever ill befell him, he was thankful to think that Anka was far away out of the reach of these monsters.

"Bring in the culprit," said de Vargas.

"Shall we summon the sister who informed against her?" asked an attendant.

"No, these heretics always accuse themselves."

There was a movement at the end of the table. Cuthbert lifted his eyes to see this fresh victim, and there stood his own beloved Anka! She glanced round the table, where the judges sat, with a composed air. She did not dream of mercy—she could not. She had never heard of a pardon being granted by these Inquisitors; they never forfeited their right to the title of "Councillors of Blood." But there was one amongst them whom she did not think to see; her horror and grief were as great as his, and for a moment her eyes rested upon him incredulously; but the constant presence of danger had taught her great self-command, and before her emotion was observed, she had regained her outward quietude. Cuthbert withdrew his gaze, and did not look at her again.

The examination went on in the usual manner; and of course she was found guilty on every point, though the chief offence was the singing of Marot's forbidden hymns. De Vargas' coarse remarks and jests were far more painful to the prisoner than his final, cruel sentence, which he pronounced after one hour's trial—a very reasonable time, then, for considering a question of life or death. The president's verdict was always put to the vote, and the members seldom differed in opinion. Hessels was again snoring on the table, and when they shook him, he growled out, "To the gallows with her!" though he had hardly listened to a word that had been spoken. But this was his customary advice, and having given it, he went to sleep again.

Then came Cuthbert's turn; he did not seem to have been quite conscious of what was passing.