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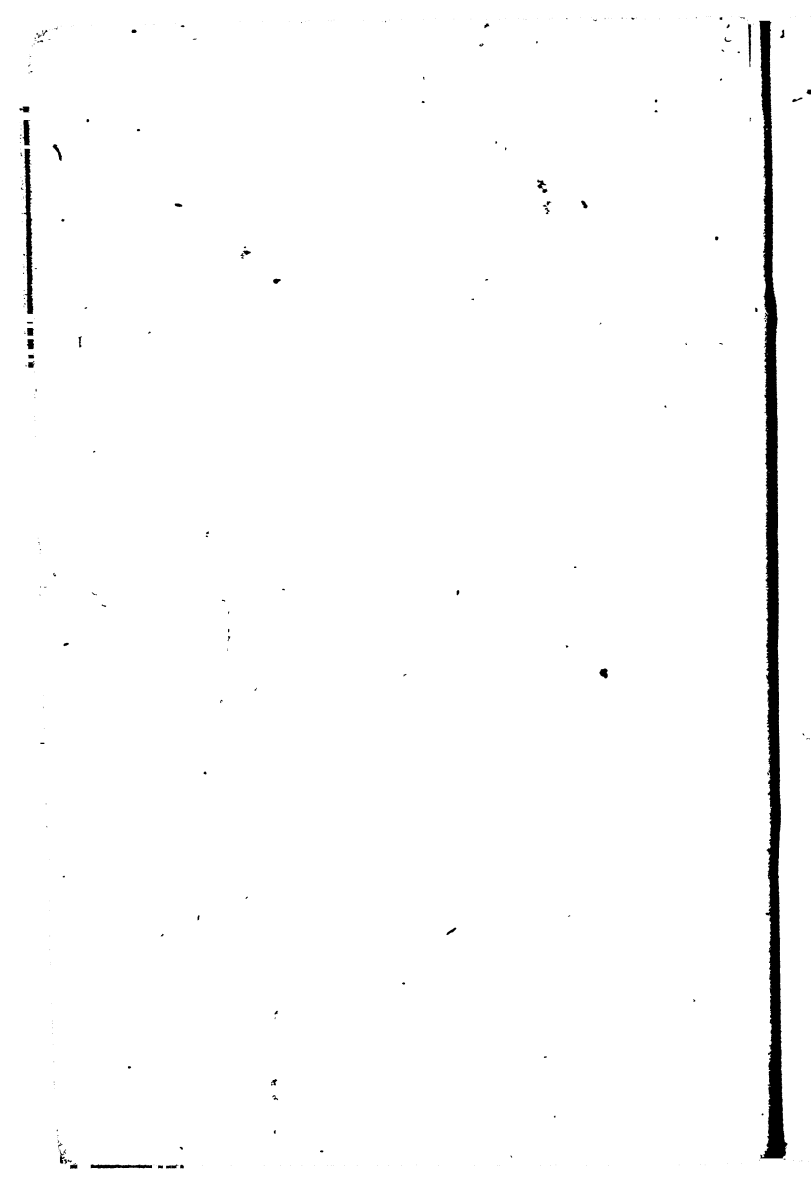


The  
Pope's Niece,

TRANSLATED BY  
MRS. J. SADLIER.

NEW YORK.  
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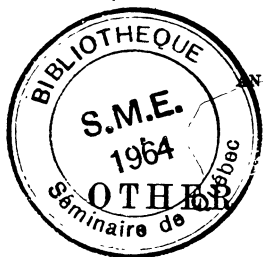
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THE

# POPE'S NIECE,



AND  
OTHER TALES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY

MRS. J. SADLIER.

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NEW YORK:

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# P R E F A C E

TO THE

## YOUTH'S CATHOLIC LIBRARY.

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UNDER this head we intend publishing a series of entertaining and instructive books, which Catholic parents may safely place in the hands of their children. Some object to works of fiction, and say how much better it would be to circulate such books as the *Following of Christ*, *Youth's Director*, and others of that class. So it would, undoubtedly, if the young would only read such books. But, unfortunately, they will *not* read pious books, as the experience even of Christian parents every day testifies. Yet books they will and must have, and in this case, what is to be done? Are we to leave the rising generation to receive their ideas of men and things from the brainless, godless book-makers who are flooding the world with "sensation stories"—men and women who have no higher end in view than making money and pandering to the morbidly-depraved tastes of the multitude? Heaven forbid! It was these reflections, doubtless, that impelled Cardinal

Wiseman to apply his great talents to the composition of a work like *Fabrola*, and who will say that the time he spent in writing it was not well and usefully employed?

The tales in this series are from various French authors—most of them from Balleydier, whose brilliant sketches of life in its different phases are deservedly popular in France at the present day, on account of the sound principles of religion and morality on which his writings are based.

It is hardly necessary to say that no volume will appear in "The Youth's Catholic Library," that is not fully deserving of the name. It is also to be observed that the low price at which the series will be published, makes these little volumes very suitable for premiums for young children. The price is, indeed, so low that it will require a very large circulation to give the publishers even a moderate profit.

# THE POPE'S NIECE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE BAKER'S SHOP.

"HALLO! Master Fournier, what are you about there? The third stroke of matins has already rung, and your bakery is still closed. Hallo, I say?"

And the speaker knocked repeatedly on the door of a house situated in one of the principal streets of the little town of Saverdun, in the earldom of Foix. The man carried on his back a large sack, the weight of which seemed too much for his strength. After some moments he knocked louder and louder, his impatience seeming to increase in proportion to his delay, until the door shook beneath his heavy blows.

"By the king!" cried some one inside; "you must have more patience, and leave me time to put on my jacket."

On hearing this the man was somewhat appeased; the door very soon opened, and the baker appeared on the threshold.

"What do you want, my master?" he was just beginning, but recognizing the other, he quickly added: "Ah! it is you, then, Guerard! what the devil has got into you this morning? Why do you come to make such a fuss at your gossip's door?"

"Hold!" said the man outside, without answering the question, "there's twelve measures of flour that I owe the Benedictines. I'll come back for my loaves about this time to-morrow."

"Hey-day, not so fast, master; for this day, at least, my oven shall remain cold, and your flour unbaked."

"And why so, gossip? Have you lost your senses, or do you forget that to-day is Saturday—a working day! And, now I come to look at you, you're tricked out like a spruce gallant; what's in the wind now?"

"What's in the wind, do you say? Why, just this, friend, that to-day is the seventh day of April in the year of grace 1324, and that I am marrying off my pretty Blanche, my well-beloved daughter. So that's what it is, gossip, and that's just why my oven shall remain cold, and your flour keep as it is."

"May Satan confound yourself, your daughter, and her spark!" growled the man in an under tone; "so I suppose I must e'en take my load to your brother-baker at the other end of the town?"

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“Just as you please!” rejoined the baker, as he coolly assisted Master Guerard to place his sack again on his shoulders—“farewell, gossip!”

“To the devil with you!” returned Guerard, as he left the shop, “and may Lucifer cross your fine wedding for you to-day!”

“Heaven forbid!” cried Master Fournier, as he hastily closed the door.

When left once more to himself, he began to think of finishing his toilet; he had already put on a fine new jacket of brown cloth, and encircled his burly waist with a broad leathern girdle; he had taken from a trunk a mantle of gray cloth, carefully folded, the sleeves of which were narrow and very short—for it belonged only to the gentle folks to wear large hanging sleeves—and was just about to don it when Guillemette, his wife, descended the stairs with a heavy step, and entered the shop. She also was dressed, and her new gear was nothing behind that of her husband; a long robe of green serge covered her whole rotund figure, and her good-humored face, round and rosy, wore that day an air of freshness, with its double adornment of glossy black hair and a blue cloth hood with lappets. Truth to tell, Guillemette was a comely dame notwithstanding her half century, and on that day she looked so joyous that she might well have passed for being ten years younger. On the day of her daughter's marriage a mother is apt to feel her youth renewed, for it brings back a vivid recollection of the day when she also

saw her mother dress up fine to have a share in her happiness.

"Why, holy St. Guillemette! are you not ready yet, Master Claude? What in the world are you thinking of?"

"One must take their time," replied the baker gravely, "and a new suit is not so easy put on as an old one; these fastenings are so tight that I cannot get my sleeves tied. Come and help me, Guillemette."

She laid hold of his arm with a suppressed murmur, and when she had finished, Master Claude set jauntily on his head a new cap of gray felt, and then drew himself up before his worthy helpmate with an air which seemed to say: "How do you like me now?" A smile of approbation was Guillemette's answer, and Claude, interpreting the smile in his own favor, embraced his wife, and set about arranging the furniture in the most becoming manner for the reception of the wedding guests.

"There will be somebody missing to-day, sweetheart," said master Claude, suddenly stopping in the midst of his work, "somebody who would have taken the first place after myself in the ceremony."

"Who may that be?" asked Guillemette.

"A brother of mine—my elder brother, too—the same of whom I have often spoken to you, but whom you never saw."

"And where is he now, think you?"

"God only knows that!—James—that was his

name—left this house at the age of sixteen, to become a monk, leaving me the sole heir of the bakery which has given our family a living for full two hundred years.”

“And did you never hear anything of him since?”

“Not so much as a word. The day he left us, our honored father, God rest his soul! asked him if we should not soon hear from him, and whether he would not send us some message. Well! do you know what he said?”

“Not I, indeed—perhaps *never*?”

“No, not that; but it was nearly the same thing; he said: ‘*Yes, when I am Pope.*’ And from that day to this, we never knew what became of him, but one thing is sure enough—that he has not got to be Pope.”

“May the saints protect him, at any rate! that is what I wish from my heart out. But it is my opinion that we shall never hear anything of him.”

“Well! well! we have only to think of our daughter; is Blanche dressed, sweetheart, as she ought to be on a day like this?”

“Why, surely, you do not think we neglected that between us two? Blanche is all ready, and I left her above saying her prayers; I think she has finished by this time.”

Just then Blanche descended from her chamber. Her face, usually bright and smiling, wore at that moment a subdued and rather pensive look, which, if anything, increased its loveliness. There was a

sort of cloud hanging over her which looked suspiciously like uneasiness, and beneath her present happiness there might be read a vague thought of the future, as though she kept ever saying within herself: "I am happy now, but how long will my happiness continue?"

Having reached the presence of her parents, Blanche knelt piously, and they extended their hands over her head, her father saying with touching solemnity: "May God and the Holy Virgin guide and protect thee through this world, my daughter!"

"And may they bless thee, Blanche, as I bless thee!" said her mother with tearful eyes.

The maiden then arose and embraced her parents; it seemed as though their blessing had banished all her fears, for her fair face assumed a more cheerful expression.

Some one knocked at the door; Master Claude hastened to open it, and in came a gaily dressed youth of some twenty years. It was Germain, the intended bridegroom. After a little, he began to grow impatient, and thought it was time to go to Church.

"By St. Germain, my blessed patron!" said he, "this is the happiest day I have ever seen. But what are we waiting for? Here is my sweet Blanche dressed so prettily, and mother Guillemette looking as though she were her elder sister. Come along!—it is surely time!"



"Fair and easy, boy!" said Claude. "Time moves swiftly on, and the first Mass bell will soon ring."

Blanche, trembling with emotion, leaned on her father's arm, Germain laid hold of Guillemette's hand, and they were all advancing to the door, when a monk appeared, demanding to speak with Master Claude Fournier. The baker, quitting his daughter's arm, introduced the monk and stood ready to listen.

"What does your reverence want of me?" he respectfully asked.

"I come with tidings from your brother, master."

Claude opened his eyes wide: "Tidings of my brother," he slowly repeated. "Say you true, father, or do you only mock me? Tidings of my brother—of James Fournier?"

"Of your brother, James Fournier!" repeated the monk.

"But," stammered the poor baker, almost beside himself, "he has not kept his promise, then! He was to send us no message, unless—unless—he became—Pope!"

"And he has kept his promise!"

"By St. Claude! what is that you say, sir monk? James Fournier—my brother—could he be——"

"He is Pope, under the name of Benedict XII. On the death of John XXII. the assembled Cardinals elected Cardinal Blanco. He who bore that name is no other than your brother."

"Pope!" cried Master Claude, utterly confounded.

"Pope!—Benedict XII. !—Cardinal Blanco !—my

brother James!—either I am mad or Satan is in me!”

“No, master, you are not mad, and if you wish to make sure of the truth of my words, the Papal Palace is at Avignon. I have done my errand; and, now, God be with you!”

So saying, he quitted the house, leaving the four persons who remained behind standing in mute astonishment. Master Claude was the first to recover the use of his tongue.

“And so I am the Pope’s brother!” he exclaimed, suddenly drawing himself up with a comical assumption of dignity, “and my wife is the Pope’s sister-in-law! and my daughter is the Pope’s niece!”

Whereupon he began to jump about, compelling the various articles of furniture to do in like manner; the stools cutting each a merry caper, and then falling flat in the middle of the shop. All that came in Claude’s way was overturned without mercy. Guillemette, as if aroused from her stupor by the noise, began to look around.

“Come, come, Master Claude,” said she, “moderate your joy or you’ll have your fine new jacket torn to pieces.”

“Heaven and earth! but you are ready with your advice!” replied the baker with a look of ineffable disdain. “Don’t you know very well that it was a low day with me when I married one like you?”

“One like me, indeed!” cried Guillemette, much excited. “Marry, come up, you blockhead, it was a good day for you!”

"A tanner's daughter!" continued Master Claude contemptuously.

"And good enough she was for a baker's son!"

"The Pope's brother, if you please, Guillemette—who sets very little store by a vile jacket of brown cloth! The brother of the Pope, whose sister-in-law you now are—thanks to my wise marriage!"

The angry Guillemette was about to make a sharp retort, but Germain interposed, suggesting to her that joy had turned the poor baker's head. The matron, then, took the wiser part of laughing at the whole affair, and even begged of Master Claude to be calm.

"I can conceive what your joy must be," said Germain, in his turn, addressing the baker, "but this must not put a stop to the wedding—the time is passing—and——"

"What is that you say of a wedding, my lad? Do you suppose that the son of a Toulouse baker can marry the Pope's niece?"

"But, Master Claude——"

"Peace, boy; and take yourself off as quickly as you can—there is no wife here for you."

"Dame Guillemette!" said Germain with an imploring look.

"What! my daughter, my Blanche, to wed a craftsman!" responded Guillemette, touched in her turn by the foolish vanity of Master Claude. "For shame! the Pope's niece must marry a lord of high degree."

"Blanche! Blanche! will you, too, reject me?" cried Germain in despair.

But Blanche was silent. Her mother had spoken of her *marrying a lord*, the word had conjured up visions of grandeur, and she all at once began to imagine herself a great lady, with troops of varlets and pages, mounting a fair palfrey, hawking, or chasing the deer, pleasures which she had always coveted. She no more than the others gave any token of sympathy, and suffered the unhappy Germain to go without one word of consolation.

In vain did the young man renew his entreaties; the answer always was: "What are you dreaming of?—marry the Pope's niece, forsooth!"

At last, despairing of success, and overwhelmed with sorrow and disappointment, the poor lad opened the door and rushed into the street, where he was quickly lost amongst the crowd of neighbors and friends who had come to assist at the wedding.

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE PAPAL PALACE.

By the next morning, the whole town of Saverdun was in possession of the news, and Master Claude's house was never empty. The whole day long there was a continual concourse of townspeople and trades-

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men coming to recommend themselves to him. Every one reminded him of their ancient friendship.

"You know yourself, Master Claude," said one, "if I have not been always devoted to you."

"By my beard!" said another, "I could almost have wished that some mishap had befallen you, just to have the pleasure of assisting you!"

Every one, in short, enlarged on his own friendship and devotion. There was not one, to hear themselves speak, who would not, if necessary, have given all he had, and even his life itself, for Master Claude. The very people who had been always unfriendly to the baker, and were ever most active in circulating any report unfavorable to him, were now the loudest in their protestations of friendship and good-will.

Even neighbor Guerard, who had been so ready with his curses a few hours before, was there with the rest excusing himself, and trying to secure the good-will of Master Claude, hoping, through his influence with his brother the Pope, to obtain from his Holiness an exemption from his tribute of ten baked loaves to the monks of St. Benedict. As to the others, what they wanted was favors and privileges, and it was amusing to see the air of condescension and the comical dignity with which Master Claude promised his protection to all his neighbors and friends. He was intoxicated with joy and pride. Ever since he had heard the good news, he had laughed, wept, sang, committed a thousand extravagancies, and was, in fact, still under the influ-

ence of the first paroxysm of joy. It may well be imagined that he still wore his fine new clothes, and, by his orders, his wife and daughter had done so, too, in order to keep up an appearance becoming the splendid destiny which his imagination had in store for them all.

"When I am in my castle," said he, all day long, "I shall have guards and vassals, my table shall be royally served, and I will have an oven built, for my own begins to be bad."

In his fertile brain, the idea of his present position was mixed up with what he hoped from the future, and the good man was still so confused that he could see nothing very distinctly. It was especially for his daughter that he piled up his aerial castles; for we must do honest Claude the justice to say that he loved his daughter beyond everything else. "Dear girl!" he would say, "I shall then see her richly portioned, the wife of some high and mighty lord, clothed and equipped like a princess! By my beard! but she will be a goodly sight to look upon!"

Meanwhile, his first paroxysm of joy being over, Master Claude began to think of testing his good fortune as brother of the Pope. It was agreed between him and Guillemette, with whom he was perfectly reconciled, that they should set out as soon as possible for Avignon, to visit the Pope, and present his niece to him. The journey once fixed on, the question was only to make the needful preparations, and Master Claude set about them with right good

will. He closed his shop, collected a few debts, and procured a mule for himself and his wife, with a pretty nag for his daughter.

Whilst the preparations were in progress Guillemette, entering her daughter's chamber one day, found her sitting by the window in a pensive attitude, apparently lost in thought. "Why, Blanche, what are you thinking of?" she asked.

"Of the past and the future, mother," replied Blanche.

"And, truly, one must appear far more pleasant to you than the other. Eight days ago you were going to marry Germain, and could never be anything but a tradesman's wife; now you may marry a lord, and be called *my lady*."

"Yes, mother—but Germain——"

"Germain, you see, never came back, he saw very well that he could no longer pretend to wed the Pope's niece."

The preparations for departure occupied some days yet, and Blanche did nothing to interrupt them. At length Master Claude having all arranged to his satisfaction, one morning Blanche mounted her pretty nag, the baker bestrode his mule, and Guillemette climbed up, as best she could, behind her husband, on the back of the poor animal who hung down his head as though overpowered by the honor of bearing two such great and bulky personages. The baker cast a parting glance at his house, and they all set out amid the acclamations of the townspeople,

who had one and all come forth to bid adieu to Fournier. The latter returned their salutations by sundry patronizing nods, shook, here and there, the hand of some old friend, and disappeared from the admiring gaze of the crowd.

Some days after, a good-looking young man, neatly and becomingly clad, though evidently belonging to the people, was waiting in one of the lower halls of the papal palace in Avignon. A cardinal introduced him there, and then left him; but he soon returned and made a sign for the young man to follow him. They crossed a lobby filled with cardinals, nobles and monks, and on reaching the end the Cardinal pointed to a tapestry which hung over a door, and said: "There is the place."

"Good heavens! before whom am I about to appear!" stammered the young man.

"Before his Holiness, Pope Benedict XII.," replied the Cardinal.

The youth turned pale, but his guide pushed him gently forward into the apartment which he had pointed out, letting the tapestry fall behind him.

Half an hour after, when the young man came out, he had recovered his color, and, as the tapestry was raised to let him pass out, the Pope was heard to say in quite a paternal tone: "Be of good heart, my son. I promise you every satisfaction."

The young man crossed the lobby and disappeared. The same day, Master Claude, confined in a suit of rich velvet, Guillemette, bedecked and bedizened



like the wife of some great lord, and Blanche, more attractive for her beauty than the rich dress she wore, took their station in the same lobby, awaiting the appearance of the Pope. The Cardinal who, in the morning, had conducted the young man, approached master Claude and soon withdrew, after speaking to him some time in a low voice.

Soon after, a low murmur and a motion among the nobles and monks announced the arrival of the Pope. Benedict XII. passed through the crowd, saluting one, accosting another; and on reaching the place where his brother stood, he asked the Cardinal on whose arm he leaned: "Who is this man?"

"It is the good Lord Claude Fournier, your brother," replied the Cardinal respectfully.

"Why you are surely mistaken, Laurentino," rejoined the Holy Father; "my brother is a baker, and it cannot be him that I see under this costume which belongs only to a gentleman."

He then passed on, leaving Master Claude utterly confounded by this unlooked-for blow. He who had expended so many good crowns to provide a suitable equipment! At length having recovered a little from his confusion, he sadly retraced his way to his lodgings, which was one of the first inns in Avignon.

"See now," said he to Guillemette, as they trudged along, "I hoped everything for poor Blanche, from my brother's favor, and he would not even deign to recognize me."

He had scarcely entered the house when he re-

ceived the following message from the Pope: "If Master Claude Fournier wishes to see his brother James, let him come to-morrow, not dressed as a lord, but as one brother visiting another."

This revived the baker's hopes, and next day he donned once more the brown cloth jacket and gray cloak which we have seen him wear on the day of the proposed marriage. Guillemette and Blanche being suitably dressed, they all three returned to the Papal palace. They had no sooner arrived than they were introduced to the presence of an old man wearing the habit of the Cistercian monks.

"Well! brother," said he, as Claude advanced into the room, "thou dost not give me the fraternal embrace?" Claude was a little embarrassed at first, but his brother holding out his arms, he was not slow to reciprocate the movement. It was quite a family scene; nothing was there to recall the Pope. When James Fournier (I will here give him no other name, since he himself laid aside his greatness) was informed of all that had passed in the house at Saverdun since his departure, had given a tear to his father's memory, and saluted Guillemette as his brother's wife, "And who," said he, "is this pretty girl?"

"Your niece," responded Claude, who was at length quite at his ease; "that is my daughter—my dear Blanche."

"And why have you not yet married her to some worthy man?"

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"Why, I had some thoughts of it," answered Master Claude; "but things are changed since I have found my brother, and that he is——"

"For you, only plain James Fournier."

"Well!—but I thought my brother would likely wish to provide a match worthy of her."

"*Worthy of her!*" repeated James Fournier fixing his eye upon him. "Well, so I will, Claude. I will undertake to find her a husband worthy of her. Now, brother," added James Fournier, "you will spend a week with me in my good city of Avignon, after which you will return to Saverdun; your business must suffer from your absence."

"My business, indeed!" and Master Claude made a contemptuous gesture. "Why——"

"As for Blanche," said James interrupting him, "I will see her this evening. I will send Cardinal Laurentino for her, and you will come back with them, Claude. Farewell, brother, farewell."

Thereupon James Fournier raised the tapestry of the apartment where he left his brother, and Benedict XII. traversed the lobby, escorted by his Cardinals.

Poor Claude, thus sent back to Saverdun to resume his business, knew not how to console himself. Who, then, will repair the inroads that all this expense has made on his little fortune? How can he open his bakery again, when many of his customers have gone to his rival at the other end of the town? It was enough to drive a man mad, and

mad he well nigh was. Nevertheless, he took patience, for, though he would not own as much, he had great hopes from Blanche's promised interview with the Pope.

An hour before curfew, Laurentino conducted Blanche and Claude to the palace. Having ordered the baker to wait till he was summoned, he introduced the maiden to the presence of her uncle.

'God keep you niece!' said the Pope, as she entered.

"Holy Father!" murmured Blanche, in a voice scarcely audible, as she knelt before the throne whereon Benedict XII. was seated.

"Rise, my daughter," said he, "and answer me without fear. You are, it is true, the Pope's niece, and can, if you will, marry a noble and wealthy gentleman, but, before we proceed to choose a husband for you, I would wish to know whether there is not some one whom you would yourself prefer?"

"No, Holy Father," replied Blanche; "provided he be a gentleman," she added, in a lower voice. "I——"

A sudden movement behind made her turn her head. A young man stood there, the same whom we have seen introduced on the previous day by Cardinal Laurentino. The sight of this young man, after what she had just said, had such an effect on Blanche, that she tottered and fell fainting to the ground.

When she recovered she was with her mother.

"It is Germain, I have seen him!" was her first exclamation; but when her father and mother had convinced her of the impossibility of such an apparition in the Pope's apartment, she began to think, as they did, that she must have been mistaken, and she became somewhat more composed.

Eight days after, Claude, his wife and daughter, took leave of the Pope, who promised to send to Saverdun the husband and the portion destined for his niece.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### THE HUSBAND AND THE DOWRY.

It was a sad day for Master Claude when he found himself obliged to return to Saverdun. At first, he had only thought of the pecuniary loss he had sustained; but now that he was to go back amongst his old neighbors, he was suddenly assailed by other fears, which never occurred to him before. He thought of the jeers and mockery which awaited him, and his heart sank within him; nevertheless, feeling that there was no possible way of escaping the danger, he resolved to meet it boldly, and in this mood entered the town.

But how great was his surprise when, as he passed along, he saw every one salute him with respect,

and heard Master Guerard thank him because the monks of St. Benedict discharged him from his rent of ten loaves. The poor man thought, at first, that they were mocking him, but his surprise and joy had no bounds, when, turning into the street where his house was situated, he saw the shop open, and customers going in and out as usual. In a moment he fancied that some other baker had profited by his absence to establish a bakery in place of his, but he was quickly undeceived. There was still over the door the figure of St. Nicholas, and underneath, the name which made him almost weep for joy—the name of *Master Claude Fournier*.

Alighting quickly from his mule, he entered the shop, the keys of which were at once handed to him by the person who had conducted the business in his absence. A moment after, the same monk who had announced the promotion of James to the Holy See came in and asked him how much his journey had cost him.

“Fifty good crowns,” replied Master Claude with a heavy sigh.

“There they are,” said the monk, taking them from a large purse which he kept concealed under his robe; “your brother restores them to you, and hopes you will profit by the lesson he has given you.”

Master Claude was so overjoyed that the tears sprang to his eyes. He could scarcely believe it possible that he, who had thought himself utterly ruined only a few hours before, was now just in the

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same position as when he started for Avignon. Blanche was now his sole trouble, and, indeed, the poor girl began to look so pale and care-worn, that he had sufficient cause to fear for her health and happiness.

“Confound my folly!” said he to himself, sometimes, as he looked at his daughter, “nothing would serve me but I must be a lord, I who am only just good for keeping a bakery: we were so happy before that unlucky day when the marriage was interrupted!”

But these regrets were of little use to Blanche. Ever since that apparition in the Papal palace she had never known a moment's peace. Vainly did she try to persuade herself that it was not Germain she had seen; his reproachful glance was ever before her mind, and she began seriously to repent her unaccountable folly. She no longer dreamed of nobility, pages or varlets, hunting or hawking; she only sighed to recall that fatal word spoken in the presence of her uncle, which precluded the possibility of rejecting the husband whom the Pope was to send. These reflections became at length so painful that her health was grievously impaired. One morning Blanche was unable to leave her bed, and the physicians who were called in declared that there was imminent danger of madness, if her grief could not be dispelled.

One night, Blanche, who was then at the worst, awoke with a start.

"The Holy Virgin has heard my prayer," cried she in a strange manner, and half raising herself in the bed, "I shall never see the bridegroom whom the Pope was to send."

"What do you mean, child?" asked Guillemette in an agony of fear.

"No! No!" repeated Blanche, looking earnestly at her mother; "I shall be dead before he comes."

Then drawing herself up: "Germain has nothing to do here—am I not the bride of a rich and noble knight—hold—there he is—look!—only look—there—in that corner!"

Guillemette looked in the direction pointed out by Blanche, but there was no one there.

"Do you hear? . . . He tells me to follow him," added the poor girl, whose breathing became every moment more oppressed. "I go!—I go!" She made a motion as though she would have sprang from the bed, but her strength failed, and she fell back in a faint.

Next day Master Claude and his wife were weeping beside their daughter's bed.

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Meantime, what was going on in Avignon?

Germain had been introduced a second time to the presence of the Pope; for it was indeed he whom we saw there before, and Blanche was not mistaken. The young man arrived from Saverdun, whither he had gone by order of Benedict.

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"What news from Saverdun?" demanded his Holiness anxiously.

"Nothing good!" cried Germain; "nothing good, Holy Father! Blanche is ill, and the physicians have pronounced her life in danger. I beseech your Holiness put an end to this torment!"

"Yes, you are right, it is time that all this should end. Laurentino!" said he, turning to his favorite Cardinal, "give me that parchment and that purse."

Laurentino obeyed, the Pope traced some words on the parchment, rolled it up, tied some silk around it, and gave it with the purse to Germain.

"Here," said he, "take this, you shall be the husband of my niece. This purse contains her dowry, but remember it is not to be opened till after the marriage. This parchment you will give to a Benedictine monk who will meet you on your return to Saverdun. Go now, and may God preserve you!"

The worthy Germain left the Papal palace, his heart full of hope and joy; and, an hour after, he was journeying gaily on, assured that happiness could not now escape him. Just as he entered Saverdun he was stopped by a monk.

"Have you nothing for me, brother?" inquired the monk.

Germain, wholly engrossed with his happiness, had forgotten the parchment which he now quickly handed to the monk.

"It is well," said the letter, after reading some lines traced on the parchment, "the will of the Holy

Father be done! Come!" and he pointed towards the baker's house.

They had still some distance to go, and Germain walked on silently for some time; but yielding at last to his impatience, he ventured to question his companion—"What has been going on here, father, since I left? What news of Blanche? Is she cured yet?"

To all these questions the monk remained cold and silent, and Germain's anxiety became every moment greater. On reaching the street where Master Claude lived, he perceived that the baker's house was closed, and he trembled from head to foot. When they came to the door, the monk pushed it open, and they entered together.

"Go up to your bride's apartment," said the monk, with a strange smile.

A convulsive trembling ran through Germain's whole frame. He ascended nevertheless, and from the staircase he could perceive the tapers burning in Blanche's room. By the time he reached the top, his heart had ceased to beat. A death-like stillness reigned in that chamber! He went in, followed by the monk, and saw—He saw Blanche kneeling before an image of Our Lady, around which tapers were burning; Claude and Guillemette were kneeling beside her. The poor girl was thanking Heaven for her cure, and that she was soon to be the happy wife of Germain. The monk had brought the good news.

Next day the wedding took place, and all the nobility of the neighborhood, as well as the townspeople, wished to assist at the marriage of the Pope's niece. In the evening, when they all returned from the Church, and had partaken of a family repast, during which more than one glass was drained to the glory of Benedict XII., the monk, who never left the young couple all the day, said to Germain :

“And that purse which I see at your girdle ; have you forgotten that it contains your wife's portion ?”

“Why, sure enough, father, I forgot all about it,” cried Germain. He quickly opened the purse, and found in it an hundred gold crowns, with tablets which Germain handed to the monk. The latter read these words aloud :

“This is a little present from your uncle, James Fournier. As for the Pope, he has no kindred but the poor and the afflicted.”

Every one admired the wisdom of these words, and when the first emotions of joyful surprise had subsided the monk arose. “Now, daughter,” said he to Blanche, “my mission is accomplished and I return to Avignon to your saintly uncle. God keep you, Master Claude !

“But will you not explain to me—?” said Claude, embarrassed.

“Know, then, that I have never left this town,” answered the monk, “since the day that you first saw me, and that I watched over the interests of your family by the express orders of the Holy Fa-

ther." So saying, he disappeared. Next day Master Claude said with a sigh:

"All this is very good, but, by my beard! if I were Pope, my brother should have a fine castle and my niece more than a hundred crowns of a portion!"

"Oh, father, do not complain!" said Blanche, "my uncle has done well for us," and she looked fondly at her husband; "he has made me happy, and taught me the useful lesson that VANITY IS EVER AN EVIL COUNSELLOR."



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# THE TWO CROSSES.

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DECEMBER 2d, 1805.

THE first anniversary of Napoleon's coronation was passed in a small village in Moravia called Aus-terlitz. In place of his palace of the Tuilleries Napoleon had a poor cottage thatched with straw and open to every wind; for illumination he had eighty thousand torches improvised for the occasion by his brave soldiers with the straw of their bivouacs; for congratulations, the acclamations of a whole army.

The Emperor, as he always did on the eve of his great battles, passed along the lines of his army, throwing out on his way some of those heroic words which history has preserved for transmission to future ages.

The Emperor stopped before the first squadron of a regiment of the foot-guards. He recognized one of his bravest officers :

"We were together at Marengo," said he, "Captain de St. Eustache."

"I was there, sire."

"You took a flag from the enemy?"

"Yes, sire."

"It is well. France and I are pleased with you."

"Long live the Emperor!" cried Captain de St. Eustache, putting the back of his right hand to his shako.

"Long live the Emperor!" re-echoed the squadron as with one voice.

"Captain de St. Eustache," added Napoleon, "between the cross which I wear this night on my bosom and your squadron, which requires a chief for to-morrow's battle, choose."

"The cross for me, sire," replied the officer quickly, "the cross of honor for Captain de St. Eustache for the battle of the three Emperors. My grandfather received the cross of St. Louis on the very morning of the battle of Fontenoy. He wore it but a moment. If I am to die like him on the field of victory, once more, long live the Emperor!"

Some hours after a tremendous cannonade opened all along the line, and Captain de St. Eustache darted with his braves after General Napp, on the masses of cavalry thrown by the Grand Duke Constantine on Drouot's squares of infantry. The shock was terrific; the earth trembled under the feet of the horses; a cloud of dust obscured the heavens; it was a duel between French cavalry and

Russian cavalry, each one fighting breast to breast, sword to sword; horrible to see! The snow on the plain of Austerlitz is but a marsh of mud and blood in which thousands of corpses are lying stretched, and still the contest rages with equal fury on both sides. General Napp is wounded—the Russian cavalry retreats, forms again, returns to the charge, falls back again, and again advances; the French cavalry still advances, the enemy intrenches himself behind walls of dead—he disputes the victory foot by foot—at length the battle is gained—the eagles of France are again victorious!

Some hours after, Napoleon, according to custom, was riding over the field of battle, stopping no longer, as on the evening before, in front of living squadrons, battalions flushed with enthusiasm, but heaps of dead rising like sepulchral mounds in that glorious cemetery of Austerlitz.

Some unhappy beings were breathing still amongst that human wreck, and to them he gave his first attention, taking upon himself the task of first giving them comfort. "Oh, but glory is dearly purchased," said he at times with a stifled sigh; "what blood, oh my God! for a laurel-wreath, what tears for a victory; poor mothers! poor wives!" Suddenly the Emperor turned his head—his hand was raised to his forehead as if to recall some recollection or rather to dispel an unwelcome image—a shudder, a groan, a gurgle, caught his ear. An unhappy man lay before him pressing a cross of

honor convulsively to his bosom. Napoleon made a sign, and one of his aid-de-camps instantly alighted to raise the dying man. He was delirious, and took it in head that they were going to rob him of his cross. "Oh, leave it to me!" said he wildly, "leave it to me—it is my Emperor's cross—it is mine—I won it honestly—it is baptized in blood. Oh, leave it to me!" he repeated when they laid him on a litter to convey him to the ambulance. "Leave it to me—I earned it well!"

Passing before the group of generals who surrounded Napoleon, he recognized the Emperor, who had already recognized him. He showed him his cross. "It saved me, sire," said he. "Was I worthy of it?"

"Yes, Major de St. Eustache," answered the Emperor, "you were worthy of it as you are of the squadron which I now give you."

The Emperor galloped away muttering to himself: "Oh! but glory is dear bought!"

The major's wounds were serious—for a moment the doctors believed them mortal, but the constant care bestowed on him was at last successful. His recovery was tedious—a day passed away from his companions in arms seemed to him an age, and he counted the hours with feverish impatience. At every victory that he heard of being gained, he cried: "Blood and thunder! and I wasn't there!" He actually envied the wounds and the success of his comrades. It was a strange, strong, robust nature, that



of Major de St. Eustache: his soul, tempered like steel, seemed destined for the storm of battle. At length, however, he was able to rejoin the army, and take possession of the new post assigned him by the Emperor. Welcomed by the acclamations of his whole regiment, he received that very day from the hands of his colonel the brevet of major, soon to be changed for that of colonel. He was subsequently found one of the first on every battle-field of the Imperial wars.

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DECEMBER 2d, 1837.

ON that day an aged priest, leaning on a knotted stick, was wending his toilsome way through a foot of snow that covered the main street of the town of Luxeuil. A little boy, of seven years old or thereabouts, walked before him carrying a lantern.

"Make haste, father, make haste," repeated the boy every few steps, 'make haste, or we may arrive too late.'

The good priest in his reply strove to soften a voice by nature somewhat of the roughest, and broken, doubtless, by the storms of life.

"Remember, child, we are never too late to do good."

The boy did not very well understand what was meant, still he answered:

"But it won't be doing good if we let him go

without seeing you, and his old housekeeper told me he was just departing. So come on, father, before he goes."

And the poor child, in his anxiety to hurry on, plunged to his neck in a snow-wreath. Then the priest had to go to his assistance, the boy in turn lending the help of his young eyes to the dim sight of his companion. The two extremes of life were thus joined, age and childhood—the grave almost and the cradle.

Five o'clock struck from the town clock as the priest and his youthful guide, half dead with cold, passed the Gothic spire of the old monastery where Ebroin, mayor of the palace, meditated of old on the instability of human things, and where, in after times, a simple monk dreamed of a cardinal's hat which the court of Rome was one day to send him.

After walking a few moments more, the boy stopped before an old house built half of brick, half of stone. An aged woman stood at the door waiting impatiently.

"Come quick, father, come quick," said she, on perceiving the old priest; "come quick—up this way—the staircase is dark and in bad condition. Alas! *he'll* never come down it again, poor dear man!"

"He is very ill, then?"

"Just look," said she, showing the priest into a room, at the far end of which was a bed with full hanging curtains checked red and white.

Old arms, swords, sabres and pistols were grouped in trophies on the four sides of the white wall forming a perfect square. At one angle of the apartment stood a bronzed plaster statue representing the great Emperor, whilst all around hung large colored lithographs of the principal battles of the Empire. High above all was a solitary eagle, looking as if he, too, were pondering on the emptiness of human glory, and near by, on the bed, lay a man with large, strong features, now pale and worn with sickness. An aged man lay there dying.

Seeing the priest, the sufferer made a gesture of impatience, and called his housekeeper.

"Marguerite, what does this man want?"

"He wants to see you."

"If so, he is welcome. Bring a seat, Marguerite. Nearer yet—that will do—thank you."

The priest sat down beside the bed and took the dying man's hand. "You suffer much, sir?" said he.

"Horribly."

"Where?"

"Wherever the mischances of war have left their marks."

"You mean your wounds?"

"Oh yes, sir; they are opened now to close no more. Alas! why didn't I die on a battle-field? why didn't a cannon-ball carry me off on a day of victory! Death! oh death! would you believe it, sir, I saw him close enough and that many a good time—I defied him at Wagram, at Friedland, at

Eylau—I fought him hand to hand at Marengo in the glorious days of the Consulate, and after that, on one of the grandest days that ever shone on the Empire, he left the print of his iron nails in my breast—see here.” And the old soldier uncovered his chest magnificently torn by a sabre wound. “It was at Austerlitz,” he resumed, “but after that, I braved death again at Montereau and at Montmirail—motionless, frigid, bolt upright and covered with the blood of my comrades, I invoked him at Waterloo, but he wouldn’t have me—well, would you believe it, sir, now that I am alone in the world, old and decrepid, and of no use to my country—would you believe it, sir? shall I say it? Well, yes—I fear death—I fear him, sir!”

“Sir,” answered the venerable priest, “I bring you courage and strength to look him in the face again without quailing.”

“Give me your hand, then——”

“Here it is——”

“My hand trembles, does it not?”

“The fever does that, you know.”

“No, not the fever, but fear—ha! ha! ha! I afraid of death!” And the old soldier of the Empire, ashamed even to acknowledge to himself a feeling so new and strange, laughed outright, then suddenly fixing his eyes on the priest, he asked:

“Who are you?”

“A friend.”

“What do you want with me?”

"I have told you already: I want to give you the courage of which you have need, strength that will enable you to meet death like a brave man; I want to help you to pass valiantly from this life to that which is eternal——"

"Who sent you?"

"Providence."

"Don't know Providence—but yes, faith, I remember a sutler of that name."

"The person of whom I speak is the sutler of heaven," said the priest suiting his language to the comprehension of his hearer.

"Heaven!" repeated the old soldier again bursting out laughing, "heaven, indeed! I protest you amuse me with your heaven—heaven, did you say? Open that curtain, Marguerite—now look there, sir! the heavens are calm and blue—not a cloud to be seen—not a sign of mourning—does your heaven know anything of me? does it know my name, or who I am? does it know that there is a man at Luxeuil who is afraid, and that that man was once a soldier?"

"God knows——"

The dying man turned his back on the priest and laughed again.

"You laugh——"

"I do, at your God and your heaven."

"Do you not believe in them?"

"What for would I believe in your old-wives' fables? But I ask you again who are you, sir?"

"I am the representative of God on earth ; I am the minister of that God who from the plains of Tolbiac to those of Wagram has conducted France through ages of Glory, by ways which are called Bouvines, Fontenoy, Marengo and Austerlitz—I am the humble follower of the Great Master of all, I am he who in His name remits the sins of men. Now make the sign of the cross and begin—I am a priest."

"You are a priest! a priest come to my house to hear my confession! Get out of this! thunder and lightning! Go to the d——!"

"I want to send you to God."

"Leave me alone—away with you "

"Hear me, in pity to yourself!"

"Never!—leave me, I tell you!"

"No, my brother, I will not leave you—mercy, mercy on your own soul!" and the priest threw himself on his knees beside the bed of death.

"Do you want to kill me?" cried the old soldier, and with a horrible oath he drove away the poor priest, sorely afflicted that he could not save that poor soul.

After the departure of the venerable pastor, the soldier had a fearful crisis ; foaming with rage, he gnashed his teeth, and rolled and twisted like one possessed, the sweat oozing from every pore of his body. "A priest! a priest in my house!" he repeated ever, and not perceiving his old housekeeper, who was on her knees beside the bed weeping and

praying, he called her in a trembling voice. The unhappy man was delirious.

"Marguerite, do you hear?" said he, "they are coming, are they not? Their lances glitter in the sun—their horses' feet raise clouds of dust—they are coming at full charge—don't you see? How many are there? Count them, Marguerite. . . . Ten to one—as usual—the drum beats to arms—the cannon roars—ho! here is the Emperor. Where is my horse? Give me my sabre, Marguerite, and my pistols. Forward, my braves—long live the Emperor!" and with an eye of fire, and arm raised in the attitude of command, he gave the order: "Charge! charge!" But all at once his voice failed him, his eye fixed glazed and motionless on his old weapons and his war-pictures. Marguerite placed her ear to his lips, and could then hear him muttering the names of Wagram, Friedland, Austerlitz, Waterl——. He could not finish the name of Waterloo.

For more than an hour the poor sufferer remained sunk in a complete lethargy. When he recovered a little from that death-like swoon, he once more called on Marguerite: "I slept long," said he, "and yet I'm sleepy still—my head and heart are broken—don't leave me, Marguerite—you weep, I believe—come, come, child, don't grieve so—when death sounds the reveille for eternity, there is no chance of escaping—to horse! we must go. Each one has his hour—mine is come at last—here, Marguerite,

take the key of that alcove—when I am no more—you will open it—there is a roll of paper inside that will let you know my last will. Before night—this house will be yours.”

Marguerite burst into tears. The dying man continued: “Thunder and lightning! it shall never be said that the old soldier was ungrateful to the old sutler of the Grand Army. At the passage of the Beresina you saved my life, my old comrade! Since then you have cared and comforted my old age here in France, in Luxeuil,—for which reason I will shelter and protect yours—all I own is yours, do you hear? But why do you cry so—you make me feel bad, Marguerite—courage, woman—blood and thunder! why don’t you fall back on old times—sing me a war-chorus, a song of the bivouac—that will be better than the priest’s *De Profundis* and paternosters.”

But poor Marguerite’s heart was too full to sing. Moreover, the sutler had long closed her heart against the recollections of the tumultuous life of camps. She had left her regiment to enrol herself in all the confraternities of women, and since then her lips had breathed no other song than the praises of God and hymns of devotion—she was a living example of sweet and tender piety. So, at that final moment, she prayed with all the fervor of her soul for the salvation of her master’s, and with that intention she passed rapidly through her fingers the well-worn beads of her rosary.



The sick man became somewhat calmer—he was in that state of prostration, or collapse which follows on the agony and precedes death. His eyes were still fixed on the grand figure of the man he had loved so much. Alas! Napoleon rose as majestically before him on his bed of death as he did on the field of Austerlitz. As the blood concentrates in the heart at the last hour of existence, so did the thought of the Emperor absorb his whole soul. Napoleon was all to him—his devotion, his worship, his religion. His veneration for the Emperor was so great that he would willingly have said: “Saint Napoleon, pray for me!”

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At that moment the door of his chamber opened—a soldier entered in full uniform, advanced some steps towards the bed and then stopped with a military salute. At sight of a uniform faded and discolored as though it had seen some hard service, the death-dimmed eye appeared to revive, like a lamp flashing up before it expires. He made a sign for the new-comer to approach: the soldier who came to witness the departure of an old companion in arms, took his hand:

“Well, comrade!” said he, “we are going to take our final leave.”

“Alas, yes, old boy—I have got the route, as you see—the rations won’t be much.”

“Let us see, comrade—look at me close——”

"I can't see much, but it's all the same, I see the bulk and that's enough."

"So you don't know me?"

"I never saw you before to my knowledge."

"There you're wrong, old lad!"

"Who are you, then?"

"A brother in Napoleon."

"A brother—you lie, I have no brother!"

At this the soldier made an angry motion, but, checking himself immediately, he went on: "Wrong again, my friend! I was really and truly an old comrade of yours."

"I have no comrades now, I tell you. War has killed some, time, misfortune and rheumatism carried off the others."

"Hear me——"

"Speak!"

"Do you remember Austerlitz?"

"To be sure I remember! I was there—what a day it was!"

"A cannon-ball struck down your horse."

"Ay! and the spur off my right boot."

"You were badly wounded yourself."

"So I was, old fellow——"

"A cross of honor intercepting the course of the ball saved your life that day——"

"It is true—but how do you know?"

"Because I was there too."

"In what regiment?"

"The dragoons of the guard."

"What number?"

"The first."

"A fine regiment, faith!"

"Better still——"

"It was mine—what squadron?"

"The third."

"I was in the second. Your name?"

"Remy."

"A captain, were you not?"

"You know me now then?"

"I think I do—the best shot in the regiment—give me your hand, brother! Oh! but that was the great day—Austerlitz—December 2d——"

"Just thirty-two years this very day."

"So it is on the *2d of December* that I, an old soldier of the Empire, must die on my bed like a good-for-nothing? I that so often staked my life on a bullet, I that would ask no other grave than a bomb-hole on the field of battle."

"What of that, friend, each has his own lot?"

"But what do you think, brother?—didn't they want me to die like an old friar?"

"Who?"

"Why, a scarecrow of a priest that was here awhile ago! Wouldn't it be a droll thing to see one of the Emperor's soldiers die like a Christian Brother, or a disciple of Loyola?—eh! what would you say to that?"

"I say it wouldn't be the first time for that to happen."

"There now! I see you're joking."

"Not so, my old friend—it is quite natural that at the moment of departure we should pay our respects to the great Chief."

"Get out, you old hen-wife, would you kneel like a nun at the grate of a confessional to whisper your peccadilloes to a priest?"

"Why not? I have done it and will do it again."

"Away with you, then!—you were not at Austerlitz!"

"The Emperor was there, and yet at his last hour he asked for a priest."

"The Emperor did?"

"Yes, the Emperor himself!"

"Where?"

"In St. Helena."

"Silly tale!"

"True and consoling example!"

"Invention of weak, cowardly men!"

"Mercy of the God of armies, that sent a priest to the edge of a foreign grave to sustain our Emperor in his last dread struggle!"

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"Napoleon went to confession!" repeated the dying man after a moment's silence.

"Even so, my brave! and he died a Christian with the name of Jesus on his lips!"

"Oh! as for that, I believe in God, comrade, as firmly as I do in my own burial; but confession! I can't believe in that!"

“ You are wrong.

There was again a moment's silence during which the dying man appeared lost in thought.

“ So you think, brother, that I need not be ashamed to make the sign of the cross ? ”

“ Did not Napoleon's hand make that sacred sign on his brow and on his breast ? Was he ashamed when he knelt uncovered before the altar to give glory to God after each of his victorious battles ? Have you forgotten how our eagles used to bend before the cross at the roll of our drums ? Do you not remember the *Te Deum*, that magnificent canticle going up to heaven through the roar of our cannon ? Do you not remember the glorious swell of our martial music in praise of the God of battles ? Do you not remember the priests who, armed only with a crucifix, made their way through our ranks to give comfort and hope to the dying ? And those brave fellows who fell on the battle-field, were they ashamed to make the sign of the cross and say : ‘ Father, forgive us, for we have sinned ? ’ You know, comrade, when the bravest of the brave, the knight without fear and without reproach, received his death-wound he made his sword-hilt answer for a cross to have before him in his last moments. And the gallant Drouot, was he ashamed to recommend his soul to God as often as he heard the first shot of a cannonade ? Comrade mine, there is no disgrace in acknowledging one's self a Christian, for a great captain has said : ‘ Good Christians make

good soldiers.' Be advised by me, brother—you have lived a valiant soldier, you must die a Christian, like your master.

"Remy! Remy! you have prevailed—I believe in God——"

"Finish——"

"I will die as our Emperor died."

"Very good, brother, very good. I was sure your last hour would be a victory—the greatest of all. You have conquered the devil; rejoice, for you shall never enter his *Moscow*."

"A priest, then! a priest—I want a priest," exclaimed the dying man.

"Present, comrade!"

"I ask you for a priest."

"Well! I have one here——"

"Where is he, then?"

"Right before you——"

"Remy, can you be——"

"Your old companion in arms is the priest whom you sent away this morning. Now commence, my son: 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, I bless you.'"

The penitent struck his breast three times and commenced with tears a confession which he ended in repentance. "You spoke the truth, comrade," said he raising his head boldly under the hand that had just absolved him; "you have given me back strength and courage—I feel just as I used to do."

"You are no longer afraid?"

“Afraid! not I—who cares for death? It may come now—I am ready. *Vive l'Empereur! Vive Jesus Christ!*”

“Well said, comrade. To-day will be the Austerlitz of God, for I have won him a fair soul!”

\* \* \* \* \*

When the sick man, reconciled to God, recovered his speech, which he had lost for a short time, he perceived his former comrade present, and kneeling beside him. “That’s well, Remy,” said he; “be content; I will pray for you in my turn, not on earth, but in heaven, where I hope soon to be, with the grace of God.” Then following a new train of thought, “What hour is it?” he asked.

“Nine o’clock,” answered Remy.

“At that hour,” resumed the patient, “the battle was won;—but it was day—the sun shone—now, it is dark for me! I see nothing now—death has closed my eyes.”

“Courage, friend, our good God will open them; after darkness comes light; for the converted sinner death is the gate of heaven.”

Marguerite was still on her knees beside her master, who guessed she was, though he could no longer see her; she was praying with all the fervor of her heart, and the nearer the fatal moment approached, the more fervent became her supplications, the faster flew her beads through her trembling fingers.

“Marguerite,” said the dying man.

"Sir," answered Marguerite.

"I have a last favor to ask of you—you'll grant it, will you not?"

"Before God I will."

"In the first days of spring you'll set out for Switzerland."

"I will, my good master."

"You will go to Our Lady of Hermits and pray nine days for the repose of the old sinner's soul. My mother had great confidence in that good Lady of Hermits."

The old soldier was drawing near his last moment. He addressed his brother in arms

"Where are you, father?"

"At your side, my son."

"What hour is it?"

"Ten o'clock."

"I have still an hour to live, Marguerite, give the priest that book that you'll find on the table."

"Here it is, father."

"Comrade Remy, read me the chapter that commences on the open page."

"Willingly, brother!" and Remy read, in a faltering voice, the account of the battle of Austerlitz, then closed the book, saying: "You will soon read in the book of God."

"I hope so, friend—what o'clock is it?"

"A quarter to eleven."

"It is the hour for my agony. Bless me, father!



Do you see on my bosom a cross of honor fastened to a ribbon that was once red?"

"I see it."

"It bears the mark of a bullet?"

"Yes, my son."

"It has been there for thirty-two years."

"Since the battle of Austerlitz?"

"Yes, brother—it was my Emperor's cross. Then it saved my life, I now give it to you; in exchange give me yours, that of my God—it will save my soul to-day. . ."

As the clock struck eleven Marguerite gave a cry of pain—Colonel de St. Eustache had just departed.



# MASTER PETER;

OR,

## A HOLY WEEK AT HAVRE.

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WHEN the Reign of Terror covered France with scaffolds and dead bodies, ruin and desolation, almost alone amongst the cities of the desolate land, Havre had remained free from the crimes and atrocities of the time. The executioner had not yet exposed to the eyes of a brutalized mob, athirst for blood, the horrible invention of Guillotin. The doors of the churches were closed, but those of the houses were still open to some intrepid priests, who, though driven from their presbyteries, bravely resisted the storms of the revolution.

These generous remnants of the French clergy exercised freely enough, if not openly, the functions of their sacred office. It was no uncommon thing to see on Sunday morning numerous groups of men and women wending their way in silence towards some dwelling fixed on the day before, and prepared during the night to receive in a becoming manner

the minister of religion who was to celebrate the divine mysteries. Neither was it unusual to hear at evening from the deck of a vessel riding at anchor the *refrain* of some well-known hymn sung in chorus by the crew and wafted to the shore like a memory, or rather like a prayer, of other days.

In the surrounding country were often met old crosses still respected, decked with flowers, standing as sentinels of Christ, and peasants kneeling in prayer before them.

One day, a brig, newly arrived at Havre from the Indies, hoisted her flags and set out for Honfleur. The crew, dressed in their best, were all assembled on the deck, crowding eagerly around a stout, square-built man, with a broad, massive forehead, a man whom they called Master Peter. It was the ex-pastor of St. Francis, the comfort of the afflicted, the providence of the poor, the worthy minister of that religion which is all love and charity. This venerable priest was conducting the crew to the hill of Grace in fulfilment of a vow made during a storm when all on board would most probably have perished were it not for the mysterious intercession of the Virgin Mary, Star of the Sea.

The hill of Grace has taken its name from an ancient chapel reared by the devotion of the Norman mariners in honor of their cherished patroness. Nothing can be gayer, or prettier than this coast, especially in summer, when the trees with which it is covered set it in a frame of verdure. The summit

is reached by a narrow road winding up the side of the hill between two hedges of eglantine bordered with daisies, violets and primroses.

There in that quiet, shady spot stands the venerated shrine covered with *ex-voto* nearly all representing tempests, and vessels in danger of shipwreck. Like a beacon of hope and safety rises the cross of that little Church from the trees which gird it round overhanging the sea-beat shore as if to mark the limits of the ocean waves. Weather-beaten old mariners have told me that there are times when that cross shines and sparkles in a ring of fire. Some misfortune is then sure to come upon the country, the luminous appearance becomes a signal from heaven and is called the Virgin Mary's *warning*.

An hour's sail brought the pilgrims to the port of Honfleur. Some sailors chosen by lot were left to guard the vessel, and all the others followed the ex-pastor of St. Francis towards the heights of Grace.

It was a touching and very beautiful sight to see those hardy sons of ocean walking barefoot two by two up the steep ascent singing hymns to Our Lady. How different were those pious strains from the ribald songs vociferated by the Convention around the scaffolds erected on the public streets.

The sailors have reached the summit of the mountain, but the doors of the chapel are closed, sealed by order of the people's delegate sent on a special commission to Lower Normandy. The mariners

interrupted their pious prayers to curse the jacobins who thus interposed between their gratitude and the fulfilment of a duty. Their wrath, rising like the tide, is at length ready to burst forth; already consulting each other's eyes, they point to the roof of the delegate's house smoking at the foot of the hill, meaning doubtless to wreak vengeance there, when all at once the priest of St. Francis appears at a side window which he had succeeded in reaching and opening: it is by that aerial way that the sailors penetrate to the interior of the chapel.

No more anger then, no more schemes of revenge. As the waves of the sea stop obedient to the finger of God, so the wrath of the sailors is calmed before the altar; they kneel and the Holy Sacrifice begins.

The sky was serene, the sea calm, the wicked of the earth were alone agitated! The jacobins of Honfleur could not behold without a storm of indignation this religious display made at a time when the ceremonies of Catholic worship were abolished, when the exercise of religion was considered a crime of high treason, and the ministers of that holy religion punished with death. Accordingly, whilst the sailors from Havre, piously prostrate before their God, acquit themselves of their debt of gratitude and return thanks to the patroness of the seas, the jacobins beat their drums and sound the tocsin; they gather around them all the vilest and most degraded of the townspeople, then, commanding silence, they cry out: "Citizens! citizens! braves sans-culottes;

we might well say that this chapel would become a den of aristocrats, a nest of fanatics. We said it, but you would not believe us; you would not have it destroyed; well! sans-culottes, learn now that refugees, priests back from England arrived last night at Havre, and are come here this morning with a company of suspicious persons, the known enemies of the nation—citizens, the conspiracy is plain, the country is in danger! To arms, citizens! on to the chapel! See yonder, brave sans-culottes, there are aristocrats to hang and crosses to break down! On! on!"

At the bidding of their chiefs, the jacobins rush towards the hill of Grace. The priest was at the altar—all at once the *Marseillaise* rings around the chapel; the mariners from within answer simultaneously with a hymn to the Virgin. The priest raises his hand over the men of good will who humbly bow their heads to the benediction which he gives them in the name of the living and thrice holy God. At the same moment the report of firearms is heard and a ball is seen to enter the sacerdotal robes of the officiating priest—but that priest has long since made the sacrifice of his life and, nowise disturbed, he blesses himself and commences the Gospel according to St. John. Another shot is heard, a second ball comes whizzing through the air and falls at the feet of the priest. Mass is said.

The ex-pastor of St. Francis has quickly changed the vestments for the full costume of a sailor. A small hat of waxed canvas is drawn over his brow,

and an ample blouse disguises his herculean figure. The priest is again Master Peter.

"The will of God be done, brethren!" said he, "and blessed forever be the name of our gracious patroness, the Virgin Mary!"

"Amen!" answered the sailors. Then the death-cry is heard on every side and the door of the little chapel is shivered to atoms. The mariners thus attacked defend themselves vigorously. If numbers are against them they have courage and skill on their side: they are one to five; no matter! forming in line they rush bravely on the enemy who are astounded to meet fighting men where they expected only martyrs: it is one thing to strike down a head bent for the stroke and another to bring down one that resists.

To the cries of "Vive la Convention!" the seamen respond: "Vive la France!" Master Peter is still at their head, with no other arms than the crucifix. Boldly he descends the steep hill-side and makes his way without any obstacle to the ship which is under full sail. The men left to guard it presented so bold a front that none had dared to attack them. The vessel is under weigh, the priest and the sailors have escaped, in an hour they will reach Havre, and once there they are safe.

The Convention is furious on hearing these events. One of its most fiery orators, the paralytic Couthon, takes his place in the tribune. "Citizens!" cried he with fury, "Christ will not own himself conquered.

There are still priests cross in hand and men at the foot of the cross. Your soldiers have stabled their horses, and stored their forage in the Catholic temples; their sabres have demolished the superstitious images which adorned the front of their churches; you have proscribed priests, yet priests reappear more audacious than ever; the forests, the mountains, nay! all France, become one vast Church, where the word of God resounds mightier than before! Will you allow this recent affair at Honfleur to go unpunished? The culprits are at Havre, there it is that the sword of the law must reach them. I demand that a reward be offered to that man amongst us who will invent a new torture to punish the enemies of the republic, one and indivisible."

This motion was received with acclamation. The Convention resolved, then and there, to send a delegate of the people to Havre. "The city of the *cit-devant* Francis I. needs a purgative," said Couthon to the delegate at his departure. "Purge it, citizen, purge it vigorously. Be as mighty as the God of Moses, serve it with manna on the knife of the guillotine!"

The citizen-delegate set out that very day, and arrived just in time to see the refractory vessel under the lighthouse at la Heve, all her sails spread to the wind. The sea was fair, the wind blew fresh, and the brig was soon lost to sight on the horizon.

"I arrived five hours too late," cried the delegate, stamping his foot. The victims escaped him while



he was enjoying in anticipation the comical farce of hanging the crew from the ship's yards, and the priest from the cross on the chapel of Our Lady of Grace.

"The Vicar may not be gone," thought he, and forthwith, setting a price on his head, he sent all the police of the city out on his trail; but their search, though pursued for several days with incredible zeal, ended in disappointment. It was clear that Master Peter was no longer in Havre.

The day following the delegate's arrival at Havre it was spring-tide, and a large brig was that day to be launched.

From early morning the ladies of the town invited to the festival occupied a platform erected during the night on the Perrey. In front was the citizen-delegate surrounded by his myrmidons. Near him on the left, on a species of throne, sat in queenly state, a sort of female drum-major in short petticoats and painted face. It was the Goddess of Reason, who had been tricked out over night in a neighboring tavern. She was to preside at the festival and give the signal for the launch by throwing her bouquet into the sea.

The musicians of the town, whose services were employed to give greater pomp to the ceremony, played at intervals the airs most esteemed by the republic. Young girls clothed in white, their hands full of flowers, moved through the crowd to the tune of the *Marseillaise* and *Ca ira*. The sea-faring

people were ranged in a semi-circle on the strand. They appeared sad, gloomy and discontented.

The sight of that divinity, decked out in the name of reason and invented by the folly of men, excited their pity and disgust. The looks which they cast on her goddess-ship from time to time were anything but reverential; had not a supreme power controlled their human will, they would have laid irreverent hands on the deity and thrown her to the fishes. The ferocious strains sung around them on every side tended no little to increase their horror and indignation.

Mariners require something more than the songs of men. The *Marseillaise* would perhaps suffice for earthly conflicts, but the songs of heaven can alone agree with the stormy strife of ocean. In their strong, though simple faith, those brave fellows understood that losing sight of God they would lose strength and courage to struggle with the elements; they knew that the cross was the surest compass to guide them to the harbor of salvation: hence it was that they stood there, sad and silent, looking with angry eyes on the revolting scene where impiety and revolutionary folly were the predominating elements.

The goddess has given the signal by casting the bouquet into the sea, but a wave carries it back immediately to the shore as an unclean thing that would have profaned it. All the spectators have their eyes fixed on the vessel, which, notwithstand-

ing the deity's signal, remains motionless on the stocks. In vain have a chorus of young men chanted the launching-song, the brig is not gone. A man at this moment emerges from the crowd and bends his steps towards the strand, where the vessel seems to await something else than the presence of a delegate of the people to venture forth on the Ocean. At sight of this man, who advances boldly without deigning to salute the agent of the Convention, the seamen shout with joy. They have recognized Master Peter, the ex-Vicar of St. Francis, who, by means of the end of a rope, has hoisted himself to the prow of the vessel. The cries of joy rise louder and louder, drowning the revolutionary hymn, when Master Peter, throwing on a surplice and putting his stole around his neck, prepares to bless the brig, before committing her to the ocean-waves. A dead silence fell on the multitude as the priest pronounced the words of benediction, but the stillness was instantly broken by the voice of the people's delegate. "Let that man be arrested," he cries. The priest quietly continues his office. "He is an enemy of the republic," goes on the enraged delegate. "I declare him an outlaw." And darting off the platform he runs towards the ship—the jacobins around him follow his example and hasten after him—the seamen fly to meet them so as to block up the passage—a conflict is about to ensue, but a gesture from the priest restrains the effusion of blood. The delegate alone, endowed with a species of courage,

pursues his course, and seizing the rope by which Master Peter had got up, he bravely commences a perilous ascent. But at the same moment the vessel moves, the blows of a hatchet has cut the last stay that held it fast; it glides rapidly towards the sea, the delegate hanging in a cloud of smoke from its larboard side. The joyous acclamations of the seamen drown the curses of the jacobins; the cord snaps asunder in the hands of the valiant rope-dancer: the people's delegate is in the water!

In vain he struggles against the descending tide; he is borne away by the rapid current; vain his cries of distress, and his piteous appeals to his brothers of the republic; not a jacobin will risk his life to save him. Still the tide carries him on—farther—farther away, and his cries are lost in the roaring of the waves. He was just disappearing, when Master Peter threw himself into the sea from the deck of the vessel. Being a vigorous swimmer he soon came up with the drowning man and brought him in safety to the shore.

One of the ship's boats had put out after him, he threw himself in, and, some moments after, shunning the dubious gratitude of the jacobins, he disappeared under the hill of St. Adresse.

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## GOOD FRIDAY.

MISERERE MEI. . . . .

KNEELING piously before an altar put up secretly during the night in a cellar in d'Estimauville street, a great number of persons were in prayer awaiting the arrival of a priest who was to preach the Passion.

Oh! how fervent were the prayers of those young men! how sweet the voice of those young girls singing in subdued tones the praises of God!

How like the hymns and prayers of those early Christians who buried themselves alive in the Roman catacombs to adore the God made known to them by the Apostles. All at once the prayers and hymns ceased, a man's voice said at the door: "Open in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and God be with you, brethren." The door opens and Master Peter is recognized under the loose jacket and red woollen cap of a sailor.

He bent his knee before the altar, then rising, he remained some moments in pious recollection, his arms crossed on his bosom. He was doubtless asking of God some of those burning words that can melt the frozen heart, some of those mysterious accents which penetrate the soul and open it wide to the light of truth.

Three o'clock rung from the towers of Notre Dame. The priest crossed himself in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

"Hark, brethren!" cried he, "that brazen signal

from time to eternity! It is the hour when the Son of Man dying on the cross uttered His last cry on Calvary, His last sob of redeeming agony. It is the hour when with the great book of the world open before His eyes, He took in at a glance all the iniquities, all the abominations of future ages.

“Ah! how He must have suffered, when His finger resting on the land of France, He saw its altars overthrown, its priests slain at the altars, its cross broken and reddened with the blood of the ministers of religion! Ah! how He must have suffered when He saw the street-prostitute deified, folly proclaimed reason, Marat called holy! Ah! how He must have suffered when He saw the heads of men and of kings, the ruins of society, swept by the torrent of popular fury into the revolutionary abyss which had swallowed up throne, laws and institutions! Oh, yes! brethren, He must have suffered, He must have wept tears of blood over that page of France, that France which He already loved as the eldest daughter of His Church! Truly He must have been the Son of God, to undergo such torture as the Son of Man, and suffer such inconceivable affliction!”

Here the priest stopped; he had tears in his eyes and sobs choked his voice. He resumed:

“God had given us, in His mercy, a just and good prince, a king who sincerely desired the welfare and happiness of the country. May we not fear that He will one day ask us, like Cain of old: ‘France! France! what hast thou done with thy king?’

“Alas! we, too, like the Jews of Jerusalem, replaced the crown of gold on a royal brow by a crown of thorns; we, too, covered our king’s shoulders with the mantle of disgrace; we, too, snatched the sceptre from his hands to give him a bloody reed; we, too, dragged him to the Calvary of execution on that fatal 21st of January!—

“God had given us priests worthy of His Church to guide us through the doubts, the sorrows, the trials and vicissitudes of this life. France! France! what hast thou done with thy priests? Alas! we banished them from the land of their birth, we drove them to the land of the stranger; we shed their blood on the scaffold and on the steps of the altar; we scourged and mutilated them; we raised crosses for them all over France; we nailed them to the gibbet of infamy and threw dice for their priestly inheritance!—my God! my God! forgive us! forgive our enemies as we forgive them; avert from our lips the bitter chalice!—

“It required Thy blood, O gracious Lord! to save the world—may ours, unworthy as it is, save France!”

It was a magnificent spectacle, that of the priest preaching the Passion thus to the faithful believers who heard him in profound silence. It was the holy prophet weeping over the woes of Zion—Jeremiah singing his Lamentations over the ruins of the new Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, a display of a very different kind took

place in the interior of the city. Some revolutionary cut-throats, the usual attendants of the delegate, were parading the streets with the guillotine which the latter, faithful to his system of intimidation, had ordered from Paris. Pushing before them the diabolical machine which, by a nameless refinement of cruelty, they had decked all over with ribbons and flowers, they forced the passers-by to uncover their heads before the horrible instrument of death—sometimes even to join in the words of the *Carmagnole*, which they sung by way of hymn. A crowd of men and women, the lowest dregs of the populace, completed the cortege which arrived at that moment in the Rue d'Estimauville, where the faithful were listening in wrapt attention to the eloquent appeal of Master Peter.

From the street below came up the cries: "Down with the priests! death to the priests! down with aristocrats! death to the rich! *vive la republique!* *vive Marat!* success to the holy guillotine! success to the lanthorn! priests to the lanthorn!"

In the cellar below the voice of the priest replies: 'May the Lord our God be with us, now and for ever!'

"Amen!" answer the Christians forming at that hour but one and the same family.

"Let us pray, my children, for our erring brethren, and forgive us, O Lord! at the hour of our death, as we forgive them this day!"



“Amen!”

“Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ, Our Divine Redeemer! O thou who wilt not the death of the sinner, but rather his conversion, shelter them in your grace, enfold them in your sanctity that they may return from their wanderings.”

“Amen!”

The prayers of the Christians ascend to heaven, whilst the yells and imprecations of the jacobins echo still through the streets. What a contrast, my God! what thoughts for the philosopher. In that under-ground chamber, hung with black, and lit with torches of yellow wax, there are angels and saints! In the street above, the dirty, muddy street, there are cut-throats, murderers, demons in human shape! Here a stone altar, a leaden chalice, a wooden cross; there, in the street, '93 and Terror, Terror *sans-culotte*, Terror with naked arms, scowling brow, blood-shot eyes.

Here prayers——

There blasphemies——

Here forgiveness of injuries——

There hatred and abuse——

Here the victim ready and resigned——

There the executioner also ready and impatient——

Here hymns of peace and mercy——

There songs of death and voices of assassins——

What a dread antithesis, my God! the sublime confronted with the horrible.

The priest finished the office of the day and re-

suming his sailor's costume, he walked right through the crowd of sans-culottes to attend a sick call at Ingouville.

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## HOLY SATURDAY

STABAT MATER. . . .

ON that day the Terrorists of Havre found themselves, by a just retribution, in a state of alarm and consternation; they were seen hurrying in crowds, with terror depicted on their faces, to the door of the delegate sent by the Convention to scourge the city into revolutionary principles.

What had happened, then, between the master and his disciples? Had discord crept into the jacobin camp? Not so, for bad men always agree in doing evil: crime is the bond of union amongst the wicked.

What new Charlotte Corday had stealthily introduced herself into the official dwelling? had she surprised and dispatched the tyrant?

No, this time death had taken the place of the heroine of Caen. Death had struck the delegate in his bath, the vast ocean-bath, into which we have seen him fall but yesterday from a ship's side. Laid on the beach by his deliverer, the Conventional agent remained some hours in an unconscious state; he was bled immediately, but the blood only came from the vein in very small quantity. The physicians

called in were first of opinion that he could not recover from his swoon. Nevertheless, he was restored to consciousness, and his first word was a tremendous oath, his first act of thanksgiving a foul blasphemy, washed down by a full glass of brandy

"Who saved me?" he afterwards inquired?

"A man of great courage, who was fortunate enough to escape himself."

"Who is the man?"

"I pray you, citizen, do not ask."

"I must know."

"Why so, citizen delegate?"

"In order to thank him as he deserves, until such time as he receives a civic reward for his brave conduct."

"The man who saved you, citizen, is——"

"Go on—why do you hesitate?"

"The priest who led those daring pilgrims to Honfleur, and afterwards blessed the vessel that you were trying to launch."

"That priest had the audacity to save me!" cried the delegate clenching his fist—"let him be brought here bound hand and foot, with a rope round his neck, and let them tell the executioner to be ready, for to-morrow at sunrise I'll have that rascally priest hung from the cross of his *Lady of Grace*. Ah! you say I owe him my life? well! he will owe me heaven—one good turn deserves another, so that will square the account. That is the way for a good jacobin to show his gratitude."

"To have us bring you that man bound as you say, citizen, you would have to tell us where we are likely to find him——"

"And by the holy republic! you ought to know that better than I—in prison, is he not?"

"The prison is as empty as that bottle, citizen." And he pointed with his finger to a flask of cogniac, completely absorbed in five minutes.

"How, you devil's limb,!" resumed the delegate; "you don't mean to say that the jail-bird has broken his chains?"

"He never had them to break!"

"And why did you not arrest him, you good-for-nothing scoundrels, when he came to lay me on the shore?"

"He wouldn't let us, the graceless fellow!—the sea was growling between us like a wolf—showing teeth like a shark."

"Enough—you are all cowards, traitors, enemies of the republic—you are nothing else than aristocrats."

"Aristocrats?"

"Yes, aristocrats."

"You lie, citizen: look you here, we are all good sans-culottes."

"Cursed crew that you are, I tell you I must have that man's head! I'll have his or—mark me! you shall answer for it with yours before the Convention."

The citizen-delegate had worked himself up to such a state of excitement that he literally gasped

for breath—a violent spasm again interrupted him, and at last he fainted away. Then the justice of God, surer than the decrees of men, condemned him as he lay. When he opened his eyes, he knew himself that he was lost.

Meanwhile, a man in a red cap, with bare brawny arms, made his way through the crowd that pressed around the door of the delegate's hotel.

"Citizens!" cried he, "let me pass, let me pass for the republic's safety, for our delegate's safety!"

He ran up the stairs, crossed an anti-chamber and found himself suddenly face to face with the dying man.

"Citizen-delegate," said he, "I would speak with you, but without witnesses." And he motioned for all to leave the room.

"Speak, and speak quickly," said the delegate, "we are alone."

"One moment, citizen, let me first close this door." And having taken the key from the lock the mariner came back to the bedside.

"Speak now, then,—what is your business with me?"

By way of answer the sailor took his hand after the manner of doctors.

"The pulse is bad, citizen," said he—"let us see if the sight is better—look close at me, and see if you know me?"

"The d—I take you! how should I know you, when I never saw you before——"

"So the sight is no better than the pulse—a bad sign, citizen!"

"A plague take you, rascal——"

"Keep cool, citizen! anger is not good for sick people——"

"Well! speak out—what's in the wind?"

"You have ordered a search, they tell me, for a fanatic, a——"

"A robber of a priest, who gathers *have-beens* and aristocrats about him every day of his life—they told you true—a scoundrel who dared to bless a vessel in my very presence, with all the forms and mummeries of the *ci-devant* Roman Catholic Church."

"Audacious!"

"But at daylight to-morrow, I hope he will swing from the cross of that chapel on the hill of Grace."

"Do not hope it, citizen!"

"Why?"

"Because the priest is safe."

"Where?"

"In a place where the police cannot reach him."

"You know——"

"I do, citizen."

"Where is it?"

"You are in a hurry—wait——"

"Answer immediately—or I call——"

"You would not be heard—your voice is too weak."

"Scoundrel, you shall die like him——"

"And like you, citizen—death is made for all."

"In the name of the republic, answer—where is this priest hidden?"

"In the name of France, I will tell you, but on one condition——"

"Conditions, rascal!—I receive none, I give them"—saying these words, he endeavored to grasp a sabre which lay within his reach; the sabre, half drawn from the scabbard, fell again on the bed, the mariner took it up, and said, as he examined it attentively:

"You have a fine sword here, citizen, what a pity it is too heavy for your hand——"

"Here, my brave sans-culottes!" cried the delegate, "here! here!—help!"

"I told you they wouldn't hear you," said the mariner; "if you want to know where the priest is, you have but one means to take."

"What is that?"

"To listen to me."

"Speak, then, brigand! you see well that I must listen."


"Judas sold his master for money."

"You shall have it."

"It is not money I ask of you."

"What then?"

"The first favor I shall ask——"

"I grant it before hand." 

"Whatever it be?"

"Whatever it be."

"You promise me?"

"I swear it in the name of the republic."

"I accept it in the name of God."

"God, do you say?—there is no God——"

"Do not interrupt me—time presses."

"Hasten, then!"

"There is a God, my brother!—a God who punishes guilt and forgives the repenting sinner."

"Leave the room!"

"I will not, for there is yet time, see—we are alone, alone with that God who hears us and who will soon judge *you*."

"Will you leave me?"

"No, for it is God that sends me here with words of peace and reconciliation."

"I reject them, for your God is not mine."

"Unhappy man! death is here—death will not go from this room till he leaves a corpse behind him—you are going to die, with blasphemy on your tongue, malediction in your heart!—it is not thus that you ought to appear before God."

"Begone! I tell you, begone!"

"I will not go till you have kept the promise made in the name of the republic—the favor I must and will have, citizen—I accept it in the name of God, in whose name I ask it . . . ."

"Hear me, brother, and I will place on your lips words that bless; in your heart prayers that give everlasting life—will you have them? You answer me not. No need to look around, we are alone, as I told you, alone with God. At this final hour, men



are nothing—time disappears before the coming eternity. Remember your mother, her pious teachings, your first steps in the path of virtue—in the name of your dead mother, return to God, brother, and your faults will be forgiven. You hear me now; oh thanks! thanks! my God!—you weep at the thoughts of your mother, who smiles down on you from heaven. Thanks, thanks, my brother! Oh! now I can fulfil my promise, since you have kept your oath. The priest whom you seek——”

“Where is he?”

“Before you.”

At these words the delegate raised himself by a desperate effort and knelt on his bed, he struck his breast, and the long-effaced impressions of his pious childhood returning vividly to his heart, he exclaimed: “Forgive me, Father! for I have sinned.”

Long after a truly penitent confession, the priest remained alone with the dying man. What passed between them God only knows. What we know is, that the priest was not handed over to the executioners, and the people’s delegate, saved a second time by Master Peter, died praising and blessing God.

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## EASTER SUNDAY.

ALLELUIA! ALLELUIA!

THE subterraneous chapel in Rue d'Estimauville has laid aside its mourning garb to put on its festal ornaments—it is the day of the Resurrection! In every city of France the scaffolds are covered with victims and executioners; in a cellar of that street in Havre, an altar is gay with flowers and brilliant with lights. At the foot of that radiant altar a priest is standing: it is Master Peter again, still the priest of Good Friday.

But it is no longer words of passion and of agony that he addresses to the numerous assemblage of Christians, eager for the Word of God. Sobs no longer choke his utterance; tears stream no longer from his eyes: no, his face is radiant, his voice full and sonorous, his eyes sparkling with joy; the day of triumph has replaced the day of death—Jesus Christ has come forth glorious from the tomb. *Alleluia! Alleluia!*

“Peace to men of good will,” said the priest, “and glory to God in the highest!”

“Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God of hosts,” answered the faithful.

The moment of the elevation approaches. The officiating priest has resumed: “Behold the moment when the King of angels and of men is about to appear. Lord, fill us with Thy spirit. Grant that our hearts, detached from earthly things, may think only

of Thee. Receive, O Holy Father, Eternal and Almighty God! the Spotless Host which I offer Thee, unworthy as I am of that ministry. I offer it to Thee, true and living God, for our sins and transgressions, innumerable as the stars of heaven. I offer it to Thee for our friends and for our enemies: support the one, enlighten the other. I offer it to Thee in behalf of Thy Church and her chief minister on earth—I offer it to Thee for my country, for our beloved France! Lord, my God! save, oh! save France!"

"Amen!" responded the faithful bowing down before the priest who, after these words of pious exhortation, elevated the Spotless Host.

The hour of Communion is arrived. Then with arms folded on their breast, the men surround the holy table to participate in the food of the strong. Clothed in white, the women take their place in turn at the sacred banquet to receive the Bread of Virgins.

After the celebration of the Divine office, the ensigns of worship disappeared as if by magic from the subterraneous chapel which resumed its former appearance, so that the cellar in Rue d'Estimauville might defy the strictest search of the republican police.

It is noon. All those who assisted at the Holy Mass are assembled around a long table set in a spacious room on the first story of the same house. Many of them are proscribed and doomed to death. If matters not, they would celebrate Easter together

as one family. Master Peter stills presides at the banquet. "Let us return thanks to God," said he, "because in great goodness and mercy, He has heard our prayers. To-morrow will be a day of rest for the *sans-culottes* butchers, there will be no more victims for the guillotine. Rejoice, O all you who were condemned to perish, to-morrow you will be saved!"

"And who will save us, father?"

"I; I mean God."

"How?"

"Here are passports that will enable you to leave France in safety."

"Who signed them?"

"The people's delegate who died yesterday penitent and full of confidence in God."

"But how shall we get away from France?"

"There is a Norwegian brig all ready; to-morrow when the tide falls it will await you at the Heve."

"Who will conduct us to the brig?"

"Master Peter; and the brig will convey you to England with the blessing of God—now, my brethren, I drink your health."

"Yours, our father."

"Thanks, children—now, to France!"

"To France! That, ever glorious, she may soon be free again! Poor France! she has changed her masters for tyrants. The liberty which is given her on the knife of the guillotine, liberty saturated

in blood, is not liberty, it is a monstrous anarchy." At this moment a frightful tumult was heard in the streets, under the very windows of the house, where the jacobins were assembled in arms. It was the sans-culottes returning from the Cemetery d'Ingouville. After throwing the body of their delegate into a grave blessed secretly by Master Peter during the night, they set out to return to Havre, when their chief stopped them in front of the red sign of the *Headless Woman*. "Friends," said he, "here is a sign that is just the thing for true republicans like us: let us go in here to the *Headless Woman*, and sing, glass in hand, to the tune of the *Marseillaise*, the funeral service of the citizen who is no more."

"Well said, citizen! Hola! you headless woman, wine here! bring us wine!"

"There it is, citizens," said the landlady, "and famous wine, too; I bottled it six months ago—it's white Bordeaux."

"White Bordeaux! jade, don't you know that aristocratic wine is prohibited? we want red wine, very red wine, blood-red wine. To the d——l with your white wine and your soul, too, if you have one!"

So saying, one of the most furious sans-culottes, who gloried in the name of a child of Paris, seized the first bottle that came to his hand and flung it with all his strength at the landlady, who had barely time to stoop when the bottle was shattered in a thousand pieces on the wall behind her.

For hours after *the friends and brothers* kept up the carousal to the health of the dead, when word was brought them that a company of priests, with a great number of royalists, were plotting treason against the republic in the Rue d'Estimauville. Forthwith all those who were not under the table started up and ran off as fast as their drunken limbs would carry them to the Rue d'Estimauville. They it was who were preparing at that moment to attack the suspected house — but the door opens before them without resistance. To give a legal appearance to their violence, several municipal officers, with a number of soldiers, penetrate immediately to the room where the Christians are assembled.

"In the name of law and liberty," said one of the officers, "we arrest you, citizens! Show us your papers?"

"There they are," said Master Peter throwing the contents of his pocket-book on the table.

"Quite correct," replied the officials turning to their associates. "They are all signed by the worthy delegate whom we have just been burying."

"An out-and-out republican!"

"A full-blooded sans-culotte!"

"A true jacobin!"

"Of course he was," said Master Peter coolly; "we were drinking his health when you came in—I drink now to yours. We also drank to France, her glory, her liberty! Come now, citizens, pledge us

as brothers,—sdeath! once more and always—France!”

“Vive la France!” cried all in one voice—royalists and jacobins. The latter swallowed at a draught the brimming bumpers offered them. The municipal officers, confused and bewildered, swore lustily at what they called a mystification.

Next morning, at four o'clock, a pilot boat, guided by Master Peter, with six stout rowers, moved swiftly down the harbor towards Cape la Heve. The outlaws were saved!

Master Peter, their deliverer, was living but one year ago. He was pastor of a little village in Lower Normandy. He loved his good peasants as children, and they loved him as a father.



## A VERITABLE GHOST STORY

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AFTER a long and hard contest under the walls of Rome in 1849, through the blessing of the God of Hosts, victory declared at last for the French army. The conquering sword of Charlemagne, placed in the hands of General Oudinot, Duke de Reggio, overthrew the European democracy rallied by Mazzini within the walls of the City of the Seven Hills. Right at length prevailed, and the hydra of revolution was crushed in its last intrenchments.

Some months after the triumphant entry of the French army into Rome, the illustrious successor of Gregory XVI. returned to his capital, and prostrate before the chair of Peter, against which it is said the gates of hell shall not prevail, he solemnly returned thanks to the Almighty Ruler who had used the arm of republican France to suppress the most unjust of insurrections.

The days which followed the restoration of the Pope-King were days of joy and festivity, the Eter-



nal City was crowned with a diadem of light, and the joyous shouts of its people rolling along the shores of the Tiber, found an echo in the heart of the Catholic world.

Then a new era succeeded to the revolutionary tempest which, fanned by impious passions, had too long convulsed the capital of the Christian world. The flag of France waved beside the cross on the summit of the Capitol; the noise and tumult of strife gave place to prayer and peace. If the clash of arms was still heard at times, it was that of the French bayonets that kept guard over the safety of Rome, now delivered from the yoke of its oppressors, but still in danger from the occult practices and underground plots of the conspirators.

Garibaldi, the sword of the cause of which Mazzini made himself chief, had taken flight. The revolutionary legions were not slow to follow, and speedily retreated in disorder from the States of the Church to carry elsewhere the scene of murder and rapine.

Meanwhile, some audacious brigands escaped from the sword of justice and of victory; some insurgents hidden in the purlieu of Rome, or scattered through the adjacent country, signalized their presence by individual crimes, by frequent and repeated assassinations. As usually happens in countries where the people are simple and unsophisticated and prone to admit marvels, fear, magnifying objects, gave them an importance which in reality they had not. So it

was that after nightfall every tree on the Roman Campagna took the form of a murderous brigand, and a lonely old castle in the Sabine Mountains was said to have become a fortress where the valiant *condottieri* of Garibaldi's bands had betaken themselves to lead a merry and a wicked life. These highway heroes, taking care to keep up the terror which they inspired by the wildest audacity, pursued the course of their easy exploits, by day levying black-mail on the simplicity of the peasants, by night working on their superstitious credulity by the clanking of chains, fantastic figures and frightful apparitions. Betrayed by fortune in regular warfare, they had been reinforced, they said, by new and powerful auxiliaries from the ranks of the infernal legions. According to them this old castle in the mountains was now nothing more than the dwelling of hobgoblins, smelling awfully of pitch and sulphur. The story went that a poor peasant, by name Pietro Bianchini, the father of eight children, should have been flogged unmercifully, between eleven and twelve at night, for refusing to make over his soul to a huge devil seven feet high, who offered him in exchange a box full of gold.

Another time, two young girls, returning from the fields at nightfall, saw thirteen men in a hollow dancing the saltarella; they were clothed in red, their heads ornamented with horns and great flashing eyes, and they all had long tails turned up in trumpet fashion. The girls would have been forced

to take part in their dance, had not one of them, being in the state of grace, put the demons to flight with the sign of the cross. So every day the neighborhood of the old castle became more lonely. The less timid and those who set up for strong-minded individuals, not caring to give a flat contradiction to all their neighbors, gave it as their opinion that the pretended demons might be neither more nor less than coiners. But however it was, it was quite clear that the strangest and most out-of-the-way things were going on in the country.

One evening four officers of the first regiment of horse dragoons were assembled round a table in the Cafe Nuovo; one of them, who had returned that morning from the little town of Albano, entertained the others with the various reports current in that charming spot; it is probable that he did not spare a little exaggeration in order to excite the curiosity of his comrades.

"Ghosts! capital!" cried they, "we must ask them to serve us up some ghosts!"

"Hola, waiter!"

"Picolo!"\*

"Let us have a hobgoblin, will you?"

"Immediately," replied the waggish youth, and, pretending to go out, he returned almost instantly, saying "I can't possibly serve you to-day with

\* *Picolo* was a very smart, intelligent lad, a favorite waiter in the Cafe Nuovo, which was much frequented by the French officers.

what you have ordered; but if you choose, we'll have one to-morrow from Albano."

"Better for us go and fetch it ourselves—what say you, gentlemen?" put in one of the officers. His comrades, delighted at the thoughts of a wild adventure, unanimously adopted the motion of the honorable speaker, and resolved to pay a visit to the ghosts in the mysterious castle. As they had all to be on duty next day, however, they put off their visit till the day after, which chanced to be Friday.

That day come, they all four set out early in the morning, armed with wretched fowling-pieces which they had procured, notwithstanding, from the best gunsmith in the city. Independently of their pistols and sabres, this borrowed weapon was likely to remove suspicion as to the true object of their expedition, by giving it the appearance of a hunting-party.

At ten o'clock they reached Albano. The sky was magnificent, and the sun seemed to crown with living gold the brow of the Sabine mountains. The day opened most auspiciously for our adventurous soldiers. Alighting at the first inn they came to, they ordered a good breakfast, which they washed down with some capital white wine from Orvieto, nothing sparing the use of it either. At noon they betook them to the mountains where they followed the chase till night; then, by a clever manœuvre they drew near enough to the suspected castle to

discover over the principal entrance in characters of flame this threatening inscription:

WARNING TO THE FRENCH OFFICERS.

*Accursed be they who shall dare to venture within these walls!*

"Bravo! it seems we are expected!" cried the chief of the little band, a captain decorated on the cheek with a splendid sabre-cut received in Africa at the battle of Isly.

"That is a challenge," replied a lieutenant

"More than that, it is a threat."

"Well! threat or challenge, it matters not," resumed the captain aloud; "we shall enter this castle as we entered Rome to drive out Mazzini, Garibaldi, Sterbini, Armellini, Saffi and the rest of the Italian vipers. Hear you that, Signor *Satanas*?"

"*Accursed be they who dare insult the stars of Italian independence!*" cried a deep sepulchral voice as if from the bowels of the earth.

"You are—ahem!—fools!" cried an impatient young ensign: "Your stars are but farthing rush-lights, that went out before the moustaches of the French grenadiers."

"See," he added, "if you have eyes to see, how much we care for your warning." And with one blow of his sword he took down the phosphorescence from over the door.

At that moment a skeleton, holding a naked sword in its bony and fleshless hand, replaced the inscrip-

tion and cried: "*Accursed be they who dare to cross this threshold!*"

"Hunters, right flank and forward—march!" cried the captain of the merry band in his turn, and the officers, keeping close together, advanced in good order into a large vestibule lit up with funeral torches.

An immense catafalque, covered with black drapey all spangled with silver, arose in the midst of the torches, whilst sundry death's heads and cross-bones completed the dismal array.

"It is my opinion, comrades," said one of the officers, "that we are going to witness a sitting of Robert Houdin."

"*Accursed be they who dare to jest before a coffin!*" replied the deep voice again, and forthwith a mournful chorus began slowly to chant the *De Profundis*.

"Bravo, friends!" cried an officer, "we are just in time to assist at the obsequies of the defunct Roman republic."

This time the voice of the choir seemed to come from the top of the edifice.

"Sing, sing, gentlemen ghosts; by-and bye, we'll make you dance!" cried the captain. And giving the signal to move forward, he darted, sword in hand, from the vestibule into a vast saloon also hung with black. In the centre, a large porphyry urn, covered with crape, arose on a pedestal lit by the reddish flames of four cassolettes\* burning at

\* Vases of perfume.

each of the corners. The sepulchral urn was shaded by a tri-color Italian flag. Three portraits, unmistakeably representing the features of Mazzini, Sterbini and Garibaldi, were traced in fire on the black ground seeming to grin defiance at the gallant soldiers who had conquered the originals.

“One for each of you,” said he of the scar, “and for me the flag! One, two, three, fire!”

At this command three pistol shots were heard, and the captain rushed on the red, white and green banner; but at the same moment the flag of the Italian revolution was transformed as if by magic into a French standard, and the three portraits of the Roman chiefs assumed the features of Generals Oudinot, Rostolan and Baraguay d’Hilliers.

The urn, the cassolettes, the whole phantasmagoria had disappeared. “Bravissimo! messieurs hobgoblins!” shouted the officers in quartetto; “you are clever conjurors, but you are not such wicked devils as you would fain have us believe.”

Low whispers and bursts of suppressed laughter followed this apostrophe.

Silence having succeeded on one side the report of the pistols, on the other, the sounds of scoffing merriment, the captain threw himself into a large arm-chair; his friends followed his example and they began to consult what was to be done next. An old clock of the time of Louis XV. struck eleven. At that moment a clear mellifluous voice pronounced these words:

"Watchers, pray for the dead of the Roman republic!"

"Dead, ay! that's the word!" responded the bold captain; "dead and gone the whole fraternity, and we honestly hope there's an end of them forever more!"

"*Forever* is the synonyme of eternity," answered the mysterious voice; "God alone has the right to pronounce it here."

"That is true; but we, who have been the instruments of God, have a right to interpret His will. God will not suffer the enemies of His Church to regain a power which the sword of justice and of right has broken."

"The might of ideas is stronger than the oppression of the sword. The sword rests in its scabbard, but opinion moves on—it invades all minds."

"Yes, when ideas are based on justice and truth; but yours, founded on falsehood and perfidy, will not last, let your patron, the devil, do his best."

At this moment a loud crash like a peal of thunder shook the castle to its foundations. The voice was silent, and the officers gaily resumed the interrupted course of their deliberations.

They unanimously resolved to make a general survey of the inner parts of the mansion. Provided with lights which they found burning on a stand, they traversed two corridors which brought them into an octagonal apartment into which several doors opened. The one which they chose led them



to a long, narrow gallery, in bad repair, constructed in the style of Charles the Fifth's time. It seemed probable that the pretended ghosts might have stationed themselves in this gallery. This supposition appeared the more probable from the fact that the shape and dimensions of the gallery were wonderfully favorable to the effects of sound.

They had hardly got half through, when all at once their lights were extinguished, apparently without the slightest breath of air. They would have found themselves in total darkness were it not that the moon shining in through some high windows gave them light enough to guide their steps through the darkness.

This pale, uncertain light, reflected from gilt frames that hung here and there along the walls, gave the pictured personages a strange and ghastly character, a most unearthly hue. Most of the paintings represented warriors of a by-gone age. Others presented the appearance of old dowagers, and others still, high dignitaries of the Church. One of these portraits, that of a knight of the middle ages, appeared to move; his eyes, starting from their sockets, darted two jets of flame; his long sword rattled, as it were, on his steel armor; his lips parted, and after some unintelligible words, distinctly pronounced the following:

*"Wo to those who come here to disturb the sleep of the dead!"*

"Dead people don't speak, you old humbug!"

cried the junior lieutenant, and with one thrust of his sword he split the canvas in two. The knight's long sword fell at his feet; a great cry, followed instantly by a peal of laughter, echoed round the arched roof of the gallery, and a spectre, wrapped in a white cloak like a shroud, appeared faintly at one end of the corridor. It was of colossal size, and had its arms crossed on its breast. "Hunters!" it cried in a hollow but distinct voice, "you are all armed, full of youth and courage—still I defy you!"

"You should not defy us in vain," replied the captain, "if I had only light enough to take aim." He had hardly finished the words, when a sudden and almost overpowering light enveloped the spectre, who now, sword in hand, repeated a second time: "Hunters, I defy you!"

The captain took aim and fired. The spectre waved his arm with a gesture of disdain, whilst the light gradually faded from his features.

"I took good aim," said the captain; "the fellow must be sheathed in armor from head to foot. Let us after him—forward, march!" The officers continued their search, but making no new discovery, they agreed to take up their quarters in the grand saloon, to await the course of events. They marched on accordingly to the sound of subdued music, which they soon recognized as the old French air: "*Vive Henri quatre!*"

"My opinion is, gentlemen, that that air augurs good for us," said the captain opening the door of the saloon.

"You are not far wrong, I think, captain," added one of his comrades; "see here——"

An excellent fire burned on the spacious hearth. Candelabra of gold placed on the mantel-piece shed their sparkling rays over the rich drapery of the apartment. On a table ornamented with flowers stood a fine marble bust of Pius IX., his brow encircled with the triple crown. On every side the papal arms were gracefully intertwined with those of France. In the far distance, hands unseen were playing *la Dansé Syriaque* on one of Erard's pianos.

"It seems the spirits of darkness have a taste for good music," said an ensign who was somewhat of an amateur himself; "here is one of them playing a trio, with the right hand of the author, the left hand of Emma Staudach, and the system of Lecoupey, one of the most delightful compositions of Josephine Martin—decidedly, you are right, captain, the night begins fair and fine."

"Yes, if the mysterious enchanter of the place had only thought of preparing something good for us to eat, for I give you my word of honor I'm as hungry as an ogre."

"That's a fact, comrades—when do we sup?"

"Some time to-morrow, I dare say, since we were so thoughtless as to neglect taking anything with us."

"To-morrow, say you? why, if Signor *Satanas* don't take it in head to serve us up a dish of his own cooking, we shall most certainly die of hunger."

"What hour is it?"

"Half-past eleven."

"Just the hour for pleasant dreams!"

"And phantoms."

"Not yet for them: midnight is their hour."

"Waiting for which, and the grand display it is pretty certain to bring, I should be agreeably surprised by the apparition of a glass of any sort of bitters, for the tongue is parched in my head with thirst."

"That is not strange, comrade! there's none of us here but would do honor to the same liquor."

"It must be owned that messieurs the devils made a great mistake in omitting that from the programme of their fantastic pranks."

"Doubtless, they never thought of our wishing for it."

"Let us ask for some now, then."

"Very politely, though,—those gentry are very particular."

"Attention to the word of command!—Listen!—Waiter! four glasses of bitters, please!"

"Here it is, gentlemen!" answered the voice of an invisible being. And forthwith a small round table, appearing to emerge from the bowels of the earth, placed itself right in front of the astonished Frenchmen. On the table was a richly-chased silver tray with four glasses, and a bottle of the desired cordial.

"Let us be cautious, gentlemen," said the captain, "this liquor may contain some pernicious drug." But, at length, finding that it did not smell of sul-

hour, but only of the fragrant perfumes of certain aromatic herbs from the Alpine region, our bold adventurers helped themselves freely without thinking that bitters to a hungry stomach is what oil is to fire.

Half an hour after, reclined in their arm-chairs, they were just beginning to experience the truth of the proverb *who sleeps dines*, when the castle-clock striking twelve, all at once there was heard such a clanking of chains, shrieking and howling, accompanied by violent shocks as it were of an earthquake, that the castle-walls appeared shaken from top to bottom.

"To arms!" cried the self-installed leader of the nocturnal expedition, "to arms!" And, with a pistol in one hand and a lamp in the other, the officers started once more to explore the gloomy galleries and passages of the old manor. By degrees the clanking of chains and the dismal cries ceased, unbroken silence succeeded to the infernal uproar, and the officers returned to their head-quarters in the saloon without having met as much as one troubled spirit.

"My soul to God!" cried the captain throwing his eyes on a door in one corner of the saloon which he had not before observed, "the ghosts have brought us a new challenge."

"They'd better have brought us an invitation to supper."

The goblins had profited by the short absence of

the officers to trace in flaming letters, over the un-noticed door, this provoking inscription:

“WO TO HIM WHO SHALL FIRST ENTER THIS DOOR.”

The four officers rushed in pell-mell and shouted with joy on seeing a sumptuous supper prepared for them. Four covers marked with the name of each were surrounded with five glasses of divers form and color, and served as outposts to magnificent joints. Amongst other good things was a splendid turbot, a truffled turkey, a *pate de foie gras* and a fillet of venison, that would have done honor to the table of the hotel de la Minerve, which, be it said in passing, is the first in Rome.

A great variety of those little superfluities indispensable to a well-arranged banquet completed the bill of fare of this splendid supper, flanked by a variety of bottles ranged scientifically in line of battle.

The four friends, overwhelmed with astonishment and not knowing how to interpret the reception given them, nevertheless sat down to table.

“I should like to know,” said one of them, “the name of him who made ours known, together with our projects; for there can be no doubt but we were expected here by our proper names.”

“We have only to ask our mysterious entertainers—let us try.”

“Gentlemen ghosts, would you have the kindness to inform us who it was that apprised you of our intended visit?”

"Most willingly," answered a soft feminine voice.

"Who was it?"

"One who reads all hearts and knows their most secret thoughts."

"His name?"

"Find it out; it is written everywhere, on earth and sky——"

"Well! to your health, angel or devil, gentle fairy or daughter of Beelzebub, I drink this Orvietto!" said a lieutenant raising a brimming bumper to his lips.

His example was quickly followed by the others; then one of the merry party exclaimed: "By Mars! we are so well supplied here that there is little left to wish for—still you must admit that our Amphitryons forgot an indispensable item."

"What is that, pray?"

"The necessary accompaniment of the Chablis."\*

"Oysters?"

"You have said it."

"Well! let us ask them. Hola, waiter! let us have a basket of oysters, the best quality, we'll tell you why——"

"Gentlemen," answered the strange voice, "you shall be served in five minutes."

"Five minutes to open a whole basket—parbleu! that's quick work."

The time specified had hardly passed when a long

\* A white wine so called from the city of that name in Burgundy.

growl was heard at the door, which, opening of it self, admitted a huge white bear.

"So, so," cried the youngest of the officers, "messieurs the devils are coming out in *furs*. Now there is a fellow that would do excellently well in the *Jardin des Plantes*."

During this sally, the bear, carrying between his two fore-paws an enormous tray of oysters, advanced slowly towards the table walking on his hind legs.

"Well! there's an *ill-licked groom*," said the same officer who was given to punning; "faith, boy! I wouldn't care to have you in my service."

Little relishing the compliment, apparently, the bear uttered another growl, and bowing very obsequiously, like a well-trained domestic, he placed the tray on the table.

"I must have a better look at this lad," cried the ensign darting on the *ill-licked groom*; but the bear, making a sudden dive, disappeared, leaving his hairy covering in the hands of the adventurous youth.

"Well played!" cried the other officers laughing immoderately. "The groom has scorched your politeness!"

"No matter—I'll have a footstool made of this skin—it will not be worm-eaten anyhow."

Nothing was wanting to make this enchanted festival complete. The rarest and most exquisite wines, meats of the best and of many kinds, and all seasoned with the joyous French spirit that never



loses its sparkling brightness. It was a regular running fire of *bon-mots* and *repartees*, a merry war of words that might have put an hundred *blue-devils* to flight. The sallies of wit were as bright as the sparkle of the champagne.

"But, now I think of it," said the youngest officer, the Count de——; "since one has nothing to do here but wish and presto! it is done, I have a mind to ask one thing."

"What is that?"

"Twenty-five thousand francs."

"Ask—it costs nothing."

The officer had hardly expressed this desire when a pocket-book, as if from heaven, fell before his plate; he opened it hastily, and found in one of its perfumed folds a note to this effect:

"Good for 25,000 francs, payable to Count de ——, 20th Dec., 1849."

"Thanks, gentlemen devils," cried the Count; "I trust you won't oblige me to send you stamped paper the day it falls due!"

The merry soldiers were at the dessert, and one of them, the fortunate owner of a rich barytone voice, started off in a gay *refrain*, when female voices of exquisite sweetness sang with a fine instrumental accompaniment the following patriotic verses:

Fear not the ghost,  
Valiant soldiers of France,  
Hope dawns on us  
As your banners advance.

Base plotters of evil,  
 Whose deeds shun the light,  
 Would chain the arm upraised to bless  
 And trample on a Father's right.  
 Fear not the ghost!

But trusting in the Lord of hosts  
 The victim sought a foreign clime  
 To save that vile assassin-band  
 The guilt of parricidal crime.  
 Fear not the ghost!

Long he mourn'd in sad exile,  
 Near Naples' hospitable king,  
 Sighing for his own loved home  
 'Neath peace, the halcyon's wing.  
 Fear not the ghost!

Honor to the sons of France,  
 Who came to shield and save,  
 Let Roman hearts for ever join  
 To bless the true and brave.  
 Fear not the ghost!"

The voices ceased, but the barytone, taking up  
 the same air, sang the following impromptu:

"To you, our gracious syrens, thanks!  
 Accept our homage, too,  
 And see we raise our glasses high  
 To you, fair nymphs, to you!  
 All honor to the generous ghost  
 Appearing here to-night  
 To fill our glass with *Laffite* red  
 And sparkling *Medoc* white!"

As we may perceive, there was a regular skirmish of gallantry going on between the goblins and the officers. This skirmish, less perilous than that of bastion 8, led to a new surprise. The singer had hardly finished the last words :

“And sparkling Medoc white”

when each of the four officers found his brows encircled with a laurel crown clasped with a superb cameo representing the august features of Pius IX.

“These crowns must fall from heaven,” said the captain, “that heaven whose worthiest minister, Pius IX. is . . . . . *Vive le Pope!*”

“And *Vive la France* who has restored him to us!” answered the mysterious voices.

Time passes quickly at table, especially when a long fast has whetted the appetite and given a keener relish for the good things so bountifully provided. The castle-clock tolled three, yet the captain alone heard the sonorous sound.

“It seems a hungry stomach has no ears,” said he looking at his watch; and rising from table, he added: “Since our kind entertainers decline to meet us, I move that we beat a retreat and adjourn to the Cafe Nuovo for our half cups.”\*

The other three protested so loudly against this proposal that the captain agreed to withdraw it.

“Still we must have coffee, gentlemen!” said he; “where shall we take it?”

\* Meaning coffee.

"Here, in this very canteen," answered the first lieutenant.

"At this hour, think you?"

"Undoubtedly! In a devil's house they can never be short for boiling water. Wait a moment, and you shall see . . . . Hallo, waiter!—no one answers—can Master Satan's household be all a-bed? Let's try again. Waiter! I say, waiter! let's have four half-cups in due form, with the necessary accompaniments; be quick, and hot—mind, hot!"

On the instant, a small table of white Carara marble, supported by a gilt hind's foot, arose before the astonished officers with everything on it that they could possibly desire. Nothing was wanting: neither the flasks of kirsch, rum, Cogniac and Anisette de Bourdeaux, nor the bundles of cigars, nor even the fine bowl of punch, the approved winding-up of such repasts; moreover, even some invisible hand had even placed on the salver cards and dominos.

"Decidedly," said the captain, "they seem willing to make this castle an out-and-out Capua.

"Luckily, captain, the French are not Carthaginians, though: they will not forget amid the delights of to-night the military duties of to-morrow—I mean to-day."

"We have eight hours still before us."

"And our adventure is in such good train that we must positively await the issue."

"Meanwhile, I propose a game of piquet."

"What shall we play for?"

"I lost my last crown at General Baraguay-d'Hilliers' the other evening."

"We must play for something—that is clear."

"Let us play *drogue*,\* then."

"For shame! a trooper's game!"

"Let us play for the note of 25,000 francs presented to our comrade."

"Not so fast, I pray! that note is mine, and I'll keep it to light my pipe with when it is due, if the drawer does not honor his signature."

"Come, then, gentlemen, time flies, you know!—let us decide on something."

Right in front of the speaker was a magnificent basket of roses: one of the flowers opening immediately with a slight noise, there fell from its calix, on the table, a magnificent topaz adorned with a circle of brilliants; it was the stake provided for the players by their entertainer, and they welcomed its appearance with loud acclamations.

"What will the game be, gentlemen?" demanded the captain.

"A hundred and fifty clear; the first out wins."

"Is that agreed on?"

"Agreed."

It was again the lucky Count de — that won.

"I insist on his being searched," cried one of the

\* A sort of game which is, or was, much in use amongst French soldiers and sailors, in which the loser wears a forked stick on his nose.

lieutenants; "I'll engage he has a piece of a hangman's rope in his pocket."

It was near four o'clock and our brave adventurers were beginning to think seriously of beating a retreat, when the captain begged to remind the others that they would show themselves very ill-bred if they did not at least express a desire to pay their respects in person to the mysterious beings who had treated them so well.

This motion was scarcely adopted—as it was unanimously and without any amendment—when the door of the saloon opening, admitted a person of tall stature, and oddly dressed. His head, ornamented with a periwig a la Louis XIV., was topped by a steeple-crowned hat. Over his athletic shoulders hung a short black velvet cloak all spangled with silver. A Saint Simonian tunic was bound at the waist by a golden cincture. Short knee-breeches of white satin, red stockings and varnished shoes with silver buckles, completed the strange and fantastic costume.

This singular personage stopped at the door; he folded his arms on his chest, looked composedly and sharply at each of the officers, and called in a loud, strong voice, the name of Captain B——.

"Present, my lord Satanas," answered the owner of the name called; "present!" he repeated, making the military salute with his right hand; then on a sign which amounted to a *follow me*, he arose and boldly followed the apparition, who carried a yellow

waken torch, that shed a ghastly light on the walls as he paced along.

"Whither would you lead me?" demanded the captain after traversing three long galleries.

"Where the decrees of God ordain."

"What are those decrees?"

"You shall soon know."

"Whatever they are, I bless them beforehand, as I do all that comes from the hand of God——"

Hereupon, the clanking of chains, the clash of arms and the wildest shrieks were heard again. Through the infernal din the captain thought he could recognize Sterbini's hymn; then apprehending an ambush that might give a tragic end to the affair, he stopped to examine his pistols.

"Are you afraid?" asked the man in the black cloak in a gloomy voice.

"There is no such word in the military dictionary of France," answered the captain quickly; and then he added: "March—I follow!"

A moment after his limbs bent, a trap-door opened under him, his guide disappeared, and he suddenly found himself in a chamber which had escaped their close scrutiny. It was a small boudoir hung with pink satin and radiant with lights and flowers. The foot sank an inch deep in a rich carpet, and the air was heavy with delicious perfumes.

Meanwhile another personage no less singularly attired than the first had summoned the senior officer, and conducted him by the same ways and with

the same ceremonial to a trap which had precipitated him into a charming boudoir tapestried with white satin, and also flooded with light and gay with flowers. The floor was covered with an exquisite carpet, formed of swan's down. On an upright piano of Erard's was a piece of music signed de Ligniere-Parmenier; it was the same which the ghosts had played during the officers' dessert.

During this time, the Count de — and the ensign were likewise transported, the former to a boudoir hung with blue satin, with innumerable Chinese devices of the prettiest and most tasteful; the latter to a little room of pale green, whose elegance and splendor reminded one of the Thousand and One Nights.

Not one of our intrepid young men had exhibited the least sign of weakness; no lip was blanched with fear, no pulse gave a throb more than usual. Calm and composed, they each reclined on a sumptuous couch fringed with gold, awaiting without fear, but certainly not without impatience, the issue of this strange adventure.

Then the same voice which had before said in a sepulchral tone: *Accursed be they who shall dare to cross the portals of this castle*, cried: "*Honor to the brave who feared not even the infernal powers!*"

Two minutes after, the sound of a gong was heard through the sullen growl of the thunder that seemed to shake the castle to its foundations; the walls of the boudoirs disappeared, and the four officers found



themselves together in a vast room carpeted with golden fleur-de-lys and adorned with full length portraits of Charlemagne, Pius IX., and Ferdinand II., King of the Two Sicilies.

Ladies and gentlemen in full dress surrounded the officers. The musicians struck up a waltz-introduction and the ball commenced, to end at seven in the morning.

The reader will probably guess that the castle in the Sabine Mountains was inhabited, not by proscribed Mazzinians, but by the wealthy and intellectual Marchioness de C——, who, hearing of the projected visit of the French officers, had availed herself of the eccentric arrangement of her old manor to prepare the drama just described.

Three months after, on the 20th December, the Count de —— married one of the prettiest heroines of this ghost story. On that day, Teresa, a young and wealthy heiress, paid with her heart, her hand and fortune, a note of 25,000 francs rent, quite willing to spare her husband the expense of a stamped acceptance!



## A WEDDING DAY.

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“OH mother! how happy I am to-day—if you only knew—yes, very, very happy! let me embrace you—again—again—forever!—oh! mother! I love you so much! and I am so happy!—he is so good, my Edouard, so generous, his sentiments are so noble, so elevated! He has promised to make me happy, for he loves me, you know, and Edouard’s lips could not speak a falsehood. His voice is the prayer of truth abiding ever in his soul——”

“But he comes not, and it is past eight o’clock—eight o’clock! oh! my God! do you hear those cries? do you see those men rushing along the street?—they have anger in their faces and arms in their hands—whither are they going? and the drum—do you hear the roll of the drum—they are beating the recal—see again, here is a whole battalion of the Garde Mobile marching as a patrol. Mother! come near me! I am afraid!”

Poor Theonie! she was very sad and the paleness

of the lily suddenly replaced the rosy tint on her young cheek, there were tears in her eyes and she sighed many times, as she watched with feverish impatience the hand of the clock as it moved round the dial and yet no Edouard came. At a quarter to nine the sound of carriage-wheels was heard in the street. "Thanks! thanks! my God!" cried Theonie, "my heart tells me it is he!" The carriages stopped before the door—the loving heart was not mistaken—Edouard soon made his appearance. He was dressed as one of the National Guard.

"Forgive me, Thèonie," said he, "if I have made you wait; in the day of public calamity, the good citizen's first duty is to his country—a great misfortune has come upon us——"

"My God! what do you mean?"

"Civil war is just breaking out and rebellion hoisting its banner. A barricade is being erected at St. Denis' Gate, that outpost of Parisian insurrections. God protect our France——"

"He will save her," cried Theonie's mother with enthusiasm, "He will save her, for is she not the eldest daughter of His Church?"

"It is nine o'clock," resumed Edouard, "the altar is ready—the priest awaits us—let us go!" A moment after, the carriages were rolling rapidly towards the Church of the Magdalen. It was the 23d of June, 1848, and on that day Edouard de St. Sylvain, young and rich and handsome, endowed with the finest qualities, was to unite his fate to that

of a young girl recently come from a boarding-school of the Sacred Heart. At sight of the warlike preparations everywhere going on, Theonie grew pale as the lilies that decked her lovely brow. Edouard himself, notwithstanding the energy of his character, could not help averting his eyes from the bands of insurgents crying out on every side for bread or bullets.

Just as the visitors stopped before the portico of the Church, several pieces of cannon were advancing in all haste along the boulevards.

The interior of the Magdalen presented a sublime spectacle at that moment. The confessionals were literally besieged by a crowd of National Guardsmen fully equipped for battle, and anxious to prepare as Christian men for the death which they were going to brave in defence of law and order. No sooner did the grating of the tribunal of reconciliation close on one than another instantly presented himself, resting his gun against the confessional before he knelt in his place. All were calm and resigned: the fear of danger vanished before the consciousness of a great duty to be fulfilled. A priest in mourning vestments was chanting the last prayers for the dead over a coffin placed in the centre of the grand aisle.

In the baptistery hard by, a new-born infant was receiving the water of regeneration. Thus, by a strange contrast, the cradle and the tomb were brought together: the two extremes of human life

seemed to mingle and to harmonize under the hand of the priest raised to bless both the entrance into life and the departure from it. What a theme for reflection, O my God! to the Christian philosopher!

Edouard and Theonie have knelt to receive the nuptial benediction. The priest has blessed them on the part of the God whom he represents; the golden ring, emblem of love and fidelity, glitters on the bride's finger, and the young husband swears to love her and protect her all his life long. It is over, the sacramental word is spoken: united forever on earth, death alone can separate them, to reunite them again in heaven, if, faithful to the Divine precepts, they render themselves worthy the crown of the elect.

The carriages retrace their way to the dwelling where Theonie left her girlish dreams. The wedding feast is postponed till better days; the guests have departed, for the popular storm becomes every moment louder and more threatening. The streets are deserted, the shops closed, the silence of terror reigns all around.

"Edouard, my love," said Theonie as she entered her new abode, "did you remark how gloomy the altar was, how ghastly the glare of the tapers? Heard you not the mournful chant of death on one side, and on the other the plaintive cries of an infant? Edouard, there was a coffin near us, and beside it was a young woman clad in mourning and weeping bitterly. 'Can this be,' I asked myself, 'a

presentiment, a mysterious warning from Heaven? Why, dearest, do you turn your head away? Edouard, look at me—oh! tell me you will not leave me, for now you are all my own—you are mine, to-day, to-morrow, forever. You will not, must not leave me, I tell you, for if you do, they will surely kill you.” And so saying she wound her arms around her husband as a timid child clings to its mother’s neck.

At this moment a loud noise was heard far off in the direction of Porte St. Denis. Edouard shuddered; he raised his hand to his forehead. “The struggle is commenced,” said he, “our country in danger calls on all her sons to defend her—I must obey the call—farewell, Theonie!—farewell, mother! I confide you to each other—farewell!” But Theonie’s arms were still so locked around his neck that he could only disengage himself by a violent effort.

“Theonie, my heart’s love, hear me!” said he, “let me go—I will return—the drums are beating—my brothers call me, I cannot leave my place vacant in the ranks of my company—Theonie, you would not have them point the finger of scorn at your husband and say ‘there goes a coward!’ You would not that the name I gave you this morning should bring dishonor with it—let me join my companions in arms!”

Theonie threw herself at his feet, bathed in tears. With one bound Edouard cleared this barricade, the only one, alas! that could restrain his courage and

patriotism; then, opening the door hastily, he darted into the street.

At that hour Paris was bristling from one end to the other with barricades, ruins of houses and shops, shattered arms, and bodies of men, and high over all rings the tocsin calling to arms! the tocsin pealed like a voice from hell throughout the French capital. Blood flowed in torrents wherever the struggle had commenced. The insurgents, rallied by able leaders, attacked with an energy and determination worthy a better cause: whilst, on the other side, the Garde Mobile and the Garde Nationale rivalled each other in their courageous exertions.

All this time the new-made wife, drowned in tears, lay prostrate before the crucifix, to which, as a girl, she had so often confided her passing cares and troubles, light as the summer cloud. Theonie prayed fervently for her husband who had not returned. Every cannon-shot appeared to rend her heart asunder, and she suffered the torments of death over and over that wedding-day, which seemed an age to her; the tears streamed incessantly from her eyes, and many a time she called that Edouard, who never answered the fond appeal. The tenderness of a mother was this time powerless in calming the anguish of the youthful bride, who, fancying herself already a widow, darted every moment to the window, crying in a delirium of terror: "Oh! do not, do not kill my Edouard, my husband: he is so good and I love him so much!"

When the shades of night overspread the great city the cannon ceased, but still the tocsin pealed on. The "who goes there?" of the sentinels had replaced the rattle of the musketry: death, tired of destruction, slept in blood by the barricades, to awake more terrible yet at morn.

It was half-past ten and Theonie was praying still. All at once her knees failed her, her hair rose on her head, her brain reeled. "My God! my God!" she cried, "have pity on me!" and rising, she darted to the door—footsteps were heard on the stairs. "He comes!" she cried, "but not alone, I do not recognize his step—my God! my God! if you send him to me dead, take me, too, this night!"

A moment after the door opened, and four men laid down in silence a hand-barrow, on which lay a dead body—Edouard had fallen bravely in the attack on the barricades of the faubourg Poissoniere.

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When Theonie recovered from her long swoon, the bleeding body of her husband was stretched in an adjoining chamber on a bed, from which, alas! it was only to rise to go to its long, last home.

"Where is my Edouard?" she asked throwing a wild look around.

Her mother pointed upwards.

"I did not ask you for his soul: where else would it be but in heaven? what I want to know is where they have laid his mortal remains."

Her mother made no answer but gently placed



herself between her daughter and the door leading to the next room.

“He is there!” cried Theonie, “I will see him.”

Her mother moved still nearer to the door.

“I tell you I will see him—you shall not prevent me, for he is mine!—”

“He now belongs to God alone, my child.”

“And the grave—I know it, mother! but I must see him once more—for the last time—oh! do not fear, I will be strong.” In presence of such a resolution, longer resistance would have been cruelty; and besides Theonie’s mother knew well that violent grief is apt to exhaust itself at sight of the object which excites it. “Well! come, my child!” said she, and opening the fatal door, she led Theonie to the lifeless body of her husband. Edouard looked as though he were asleep. His brow was stamped with the heavenly beatitude that belongs to the elect. Theonie, bursting into tears, knelt at the foot of the bed—her mother, following her example, wept long in silence—she knew too that tears relieve the overburdened heart.

Theonie never left the body of her husband till the moment appointed for the funeral. The obsequies were splendid, for a grateful country, desiring to honor its illustrious dead, defrayed all the expense. The grief of that young girl, widowed on her wedding day, was beyond all description, but happily her resignation to the will of God was equal to her despair. She would be dead, if that pious resignation,

interposing between her and the grave, had not sustained her strength and courage.

For more than a year Theonie, avoiding the pomps and pleasures of that gay world to which she belonged by birth and by social position, shut herself up in the solitude of her dwelling and mourned in the silent depths of her heart. If at times she quitted her retreat it was only to pray under the tall trees that shaded her husband's grave and hang a fresh garland on the cross that sheltered his last sleep.

She was young, rich and lovely. Many suitors presented themselves for her acceptance, but faithful to the memory of her soldier lover, she steadily refused every advantage that was offered. "I promised," said she, "that mortal man should never again call me wife—God alone shall be my spouse." She kept her word. Five years after, on the anniversary of her husband's death, she took the holy habit of the Hospital Nuns

Two years after, she died a victim of charity, attending the cholera patients at the hospital in Constantinople, on the anniversary of her wedding-day. Life is strewn with mysterious dates.



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## THE BATHS OF ST. GERVAISE AND THE BURNING OF MOSCOW.

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SOME years ago I was making a tour through the mountains of Savoy, that elder sister of Switzerland, fairer still, if possible, and yet less known. Nothing is less definite than the beautiful—beauty, all conventional, is often but an affair of taste and fashion. I had chosen for my head-quarters the baths of St. Gervase, situated at the foot of Mont Blanc, that alpine giant whose head crowned with eternal snows seems to touch the skies.

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For the benefit of those of my readers who are deprived of good health or summer villas, and would wish the one to renew their vital energies at unrivalled springs, the other to live a quiet home-life in the prettiest nook to be found in the luxuriant valley of Sallenche, we will beg leave to make a short digression—every road leads to Rome.

Discovered at the beginning of this century, the waters of St. Gervase, under the direction of a good

and learned man, Dr. de May, have done much good. There is now a magnificent hotel, spacious gardens full of flowers and perfumes, shady groves vocal with melody, solitudes mysterious without mystery, gushing fountains, waterfalls, and walks of endless variety, in short every comfort that the sick or the happy can desire in this world.

A long avenue leads to the Springs Hotel, finely situated at the bottom of a romantic gorge down which rolls a torrent of foaming waters. This avenue is separated from the groves by the whitish waters of the Bonnaut. Nothing could be prettier, sweeter, or more graceful than the long alleys, straight or winding, shaded by flowering shrubs; more picturesque than those springing fountains, those rainbow-like cascades, when they sparkled in the sun's rays. Nothing more charming than the little groves where young maidens love to wonder and list to the nightingale's song. And then the green velvet turf where children can sport in safety under the eyes of their smiling mothers.

The baths of St. Gervase are not unlike what we might imagine the terrestrial paradise to have been before our first mother tasted the forbidden fruit.

Here to the left lies the Zigzag hill, towering above the evergreen firs, around its base the arbors of the Retreat, which forms the first station, and that of the Solitude, shaded by the wild-rose and the sweet-brier. Then comes the Green Saloon, carpeted with white daisies. Thither the ladies love

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to take their work and admire the magnificent panorama extending at their feet.

There, it is an invisible alley, so to speak, running between two rows of flowering shrubs, to a blue, limpid lake, with an islet in the middle which the children call Robinson Crusoe's island. Farther on is the Grove of Sighs, then the Nightingale's Labyrinth, then the Grove of Mysteries—all that intersected by limpid streams, peopled with shining little fish, and everywhere around the breath of spring, the perfume of flowers and a never-dying freshness.

The society met at St. Gervase is of the choicest kind: there is no ceremony, no formality, but all is natural, refined, intellectual, such as refreshes the mind and the heart; it is the life of a family-circle with its peaceful joys, and not the tumultuous, troubled existence of the outer world.

Amongst the persons then assembled at the baths of St. Gervase, I had remarked a fine old man of seventy-two, whose frank, decided manner announced a military profession. Mr. Raimond was, in fact, an old soldier who had been through all the wars of the Empire. From the time I first saw him I felt myself attracted towards him by a sympathy which soon became reciprocal; for if I, on my side, loved the trade of arms, he did not disdain the commerce of letters. Between the soldier and the writer there is more than one point of assimilation: both carry arms of equal power; the one, that of action, the other, that of thought; the first, the

sword, the second, the pen. Happy are they if they but know how to use them properly! The road they travel through struggle and privation rarely leads to fortune; for, often, too often, they have to reach the temple of fame through the hospital or utter destitution, like Belisarius and Camoens.

Notwithstanding the great difference of ages, at the end of eight days I found myself on the most intimate terms with the old man. Every day, in our long walks, we were of mutual assistance to each other, he, in guiding my inexperience by his counsels, I supporting his feeble steps along the toilsome paths with a stronger and more vigorous arm. I was really sorry when he one day announced to me his approaching departure; he would bid me farewell in the chapel of the establishment. That morning he had received communion from the hands of the almoner: Mr. Raymond was as pious a Christian as he had been a good soldier.

"Should you extend your excursions towards the Tarentaise," said he, as he stepped into the carriage, "do not forget that your old friend will be happy to offer you a bed and his cellar. I have still some old bottles that we must discuss together."

I promised to visit him before leaving Savoy. Six weeks after, faithful to my promise, I arrived on foot, wallet on back and iron-shod stick in hand, in the little village where, for thirty-five years, he had established his domicile. The first peasant I met

pointed out his dwelling raising his hat respectfully at the mention of his name. He was seated before his door reading attentively; at sight of the habit he wore, I could not help making an exclamation of surprise which he answered holding out his hand: "Yes, my young friend, I have changed my hussar-jacket for the soutane—and I do not regret my former position."

The worthy vicar kept me eight days in his presbytery, and, as he had promised, we emptied together some bottles equally respectable for age and quality. I relished them the better inasmuch as they were seasoned with tales of wars and battles.

In the old man's memory, facts were arrayed like books on the shelves of a library, and like a collector of rare volumes he loved to exhibit his store. Having seen much, he knew much. He had studied, from the height of the Egyptian pyramids, the forty ages evoked by the voice of the young captain who promised France a great man. He had measured the towers of the Kremlin with his eye, he had seen the torch that set fire to the funeral pile of Moscow. I have seldom been more impressed by anything than by his account of that immense cataclysm.

This recital, from an eye-witness whose character is a proof of authenticity, presents some new details, which I am about to render as faithfully as possible.

It was on the 24th of June, 1812, said my venerable host, after pausing awhile to consult his recollec-

tions, "it was on the 24th of June that we passed the Niemen. We traversed Lithuania with all speed to penetrate at once into the heart of Russia. Before the most formidable army, whether as to numbers, valor, or discipline, that ever appeared in ancient or modern history, the Czar could only muster one hundred and fifty thousand men. What did he do in order to avert the torrent which threatened him on every side? He adopted the only system that could save him and serve in after-times as a precedent for the military operations of his successors: it was to avoid general actions at any cost, to retire slowly before the rushing tide of invasion, leaving it a ravaged country, sandy deserts, wild forests, and a hundred and sixty leagues to cross before a first battle could be fought."

Sure of conquering at the first encounter—for the French eagles bore victory on their wings—the Emperor Napoleon hurried straight on. We rapidly passed the Dwina, then the Dnieper. There Smolensk opposed an obstinate resistance and left in our hands but a heap of ruins.

Prudence would have required that the grand army, already six hundred leagues from France, should rest content with these victories, and wait for the Spring to advance farther into a country where the system of destruction adopted by the Russians must necessarily leave behind one vast scene of devastation. Nothing of the kind: the great captain, accustomed to conquer, pursued his



triumphal march. We arrived within thirty leagues of Moscow; then the Russians, surprised by the rapidity of our movements, and forced to make a stand in order to cover their menaced capital, stopped all at once at Borrodino, on the Moskwa. We attacked them with vigor, and once more victory declared for France.

Some days after, on the 14th of September, 1812, at two o'clock in the afternoon, we discovered the holy city from the heights of Mount Salvation. After a long and pedestrian navigation through a sea of steppes we at length perceived the land. At the sight an hundred and twenty thousand shouts of acclamation saluted the city of golden domes. After touching the Indian Ocean with its sword, France was now about to hoist her banner on the polar seas. At the shouts of his army the Emperor runs, he raises himself in his stirrups, and taking off his hat, he adds his voice to that of his brave soldiers, and cries: "Moscow! Moscow!"

That moment was solemn. . . . . The army halted. With his eyes fixed on one of the city gates, the Emperor waits —. "It is thence," said he, "that the deputation charged to bring me the keys of the capital must come to us." But a dark cloud soon succeeds the brightness of hope on his speaking face.

A death-like silence reigns in the city; no smoke rises from the chimneys, no deputation appears. On the other side of Moscow armed masses are seen

moving. No doubt remains: it is the same slippery foe who has ever eluded our grasp when we thought to reach him, who is now disappearing towards the East.

On a sign from Napoleon, whose eagle glance still rested on the unopening gates, Eugene and Poniatowski, making a movement to the right, outflanked the city, whilst the impetuous Murat gained the extremity of the suburbs. Surrounded by his Marshals, who seek to read in his looks what is passing in his troubled mind, Napoleon, caressing his horse's mane, cries with a bitter smile: "You are very impatient, gentlemen! These people are so savage, that they probably don't know how to tender their submission."

Meanwhile Murat has made his way into the city without striking one blow. Napoleon, whose growing impatience outstrips the anxiety of his captains, dispatches Gourgaud after the King of Naples, whom he overtakes just as the aid-de-camp of Milarodowich is threatening to burn Moscow, if the Russians are molested in their retreat. Gourgaud gallops back to announce this resolution to the Emperor, who exclaims:

"What care we for the retreat of the Russians? What I want is the whole of Moscow, from its richest palace to its humblest shed. This victory will be the finest of all, since it costs us not one drop of blood. All France will illuminate when it hears of this new triumph."

Alas! the Emperor never suspected that the Russians, preferring their independence to their riches, were preparing the tremendous conflagration which was to illumine one of the most heroic pages of their history.

"Go," said the Emperor to Gourgaud, "go tell Murat that I grant the Russians the armistice they ask to have time to evacuate the city."

Gourgaud returns with the news to the King of Naples, whom he finds in the midst of the Cossacks, the latter examining with curious eyes the fantastic embroidery of his theatrical uniform.

Meanwhile, the Russian army, protected by this verbal treaty, continues its retreat. Napoleon, on his side, setting spurs to his horse, stops at the entrance of the city. The orderly officers, coming back, announce that the deserted city presents the silent aspect of Pompeii.

"It is very strange," said the Emperor. Then, in order to prevent the egress of those who do not belong to the army, he has Moscow surrounded by Prince Eugene on the one side and Prince Poniatowski on the other. These two corps, spreading immediately their rings of steel, lengthen, cross each other and encircle the holy city, which is entered at the same moment by the young guard under the orders of the Duke of Dantzic. At length, wishing to see with his own eyes how the matter stands, Napoleon decides on crossing the barrier of Dorogomitoff. The secretary-interpreter,

Labogne, who knows Moscow, is on horseback at his side; the Emperor advancing through the deep stillness, where no sound is heard save the tramp of his escort, anxiously inquires about the deserted monuments, those closed palaces, those empty houses. Not a single head, urged by curiosity, appears at a window, not one senator meets the eye seated on his chair of office—silence and solitude are around—Moscow is nothing more than a vast Necropolis.

All at once, as if fearing to venture farther into that modern Thebes, the Emperor stops, alights from his horse and enters an inn, deserted like the rest of the city. Scarcely has he installed himself in it, when, anxious to break the frightful silence which oppresses his heart, he dictates and expedites order after order; the orderlies cross and recross on every side and dart off in all directions. One conveys to the Duke of Treviso the dispatch appointing him governor of the province; the other bears to the Duke of Dantzic the order to take possession of the Kremlin; this one confides to the King of Naples the care of pursuing the enemy, of picking up stragglers and sending them to the Emperor—that one makes known the Emperor's will to all the generals of division, who are made responsible for the security of persons and of property. The Emperor has foreseen all, all except what patriotism could inspire in the heart of an energetic and disinterested people.

The Emperor had just signed a new dispatch, when, without any announcement, a pope,\* six feet high with a white beard in proportion to his size, boldly presented himself before him.

“What do you want?” asked the Emperor.

“To tell you the truth and foretell what is to come!”

“You are then a sorcerer?”

“No. I am the minister of the mighty God who defends the right against the wrong, the oppressed against the oppressor.”

“And who has conducted the French eagles,” said the Emperor warmly, “to the towers of your Kremlin.”

“Those eagles shall never see France again,” replied the pope with perfect composure; “it were better for them if they had only the wings of the raven, for then they might avoid the death of cold and hunger—but I promised you the secrets of the future—would you wish to know them?”

“I listen.”

“Well! the war you have declared against Russia is an unjust one.”

“From a Muscovite point of view, doubtless?”

“From the rights of nations' point of view. But where you hope for triumph, you will find incendiarism, destruction and death.”

“Incendiarism will serve as the torch for my

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\* The priests of the Greek Church are so called in Russia.

victories; as for death, I command braves who fear it not; and, moreover, is it not the inseparable companion of war?"

"For that reason war is an impious thing, since the lives of men belong to God."

"Go on, prophet of evil, your oracles are less sure than those of Calchas."

"The future will prove. . . . The Almighty God who said to the waves of the sea: 'Thus far shall ye go,' tells you now by my voice:—mark me well! The waves of your invading army shall stop at Moscow—the walls of the holy city will oppose an insurmountable barrier to your power, and when the hour of retreat shall sound for you, and that will soon be—the cross alone shall guide your march over a way strewn with corpses. Your soldiers, lost, frozen, dying of hunger on an ocean of snow, will lie in churchyard heaps all along that dreary route. Hear you the north-wind howling in the distance? it is the precursor of coming death. Hear you those cries wild through the tempest? it is the voice of your soldiers as they fall murmuring the names of loved ones whom they shall see no more. See you those men thin, pale, covered with tattered rags, their hair and beard stiff with icicles, dragging themselves heavily along leaning on their broken arms? those are your soldiers conquered without fight. See you that lovely and majestic figure standing before you? her eyes are full of tears, sobs choke her voice—it is France in mourning, de-

manding from you an account of the valiant sons she entrusted to you. See you that?"

"I see," said Napoleon, whose patience was exhausted, "I see nothing but an old fool to whom I promise a place at Charenton. Sir," continued the Emperor, addressing the officer on duty, "conduct this worthy man to the door. Are there no lunatic asylums, then, in Moscow?"

The pope, insensible to this scathing irony, bowed before the Emperor and retired saying: "You will remember the prophet of Moscow."

"I never forget a promise," the Emperor replied; "I will write to-day to the director of Charenton."

By this time night was come, and the Emperor's brow grew dark as it. Some firing had been heard in the direction of the Kolomna gate; it was Prince Murat who had dispersed a band of Cossacks on the Vladimir road. At ten o'clock Napoleon was informed that a numerous deputation desired to be introduced to his presence.

"At last," cried he, making rapidly for the door, "better late than never; let them come in." It was a deputation of the French residents in Moscow, coming with information.

Napoleon received them eagerly and with cordiality, but at the first words they uttered he knitted his brows; they related things so strange, that they seemed almost incredible. According to them, Moscow was irrevocably doomed to the flames. Rostopchin, torch in hand, awaited the appointed

hour; the inhabitants resigned to the sacrifice, had followed the troops in their retreating movement; the hospitals were evacuated, the sacrificers stood ready at the doors waiting only the signal for action—yet a few hours and the French army would find itself in a fiery furnace.

The idea that the capital of the Russian Empire had been condemned to a general *auto-da-fe*, appeared so extraordinary that the Emperor, supposing he had crazy people to deal with, dismissed them with a sort of ironical courtesy that sufficiently denoted his incredulity. A moment after, he threw himself, dressed as he was, on a temporary bed. The cloak he had worn at Austerlitz served him for a covering. At two in the morning he was awoke by cries of distress: the fire had broken out in the Merchant's Exchange, situated in one of the finest parts of the city. Rostopchin's hour had come.

Napoleon, still doubting the dread reality, attributed this opening disaster to the neglect of the chiefs, or the imprudence of the soldiers; he repaired himself to the scene of the conflagration; there he severely reprimanded Marshal Mortier for what he called neglect of duty. In reply the marshal pointed to a closed house which took fire at the moment before his own eyes. Napoleon, with a sigh, slowly ascended the steps leading to the Kremlin, his head bent forward.

On reaching the last step, he proudly raises his



head, for before his eyes stands the ancient dwelling of the czars. The church which serves as their sepulchre rises on his right. On his left is the senatorial palace; lastly he perceives on the second range the steeple of Ivan-Welikoi crowned by the cross of gold which he had promised for the dome of the Invalides.

He enters the palace without remarking its Venetian style of architecture, without giving a look to the sumptuous apartments which he traverses, or the magnificent panorama lying beneath the imperial dwelling; he sees but one thing: the finger of the pope-prophet pointing to the flaming towers of Moscow. Still he does not despair; to the torch of Rostopchin, glory will oppose the star of Napoleon.

At five o'clock word was brought him that the fire was extinguished. Another enemy was conquered: Decidedly Napoleon carried Cæsar's fortune in the folds of his cloak.

Reports follow each other in quick succession, his apprehensions vanish with the last gleams of the conflagration. He is informed that in the arsenal of the Kremlin have been found forty thousand guns, an hundred and twenty pieces of cannon, with a great number of military accoutrements, with trophies of arms and banners taken from the Turks and Persians. The arms will be for his troops, the trophies and the standards for the Hotel des Invalides. At the German barrier four hundred thousand pounds of powder and more than a million of salt-

petre were found concealed in isolated houses. On one side the five hundred palaces abandoned by the nobility are open and ready furnished; they will serve for the superior officers of the army. On the other, the dwellings of the fugitive townspeople will amply shelter the army of occupation. Moscow, abundantly supplied with necessaries of all kinds, will be a Capua for the French troops, but without its inconveniences. There they can await the Spring, and Spring will bring back victory.

So was Napoleon thinking and saying, when the cry of: "Fire!" was again heard.

The wind blew from the north, and it was in the north the fire had broken out. The wind sped on the flames, which, like a river of fire, rolled on towards the Kremlin. Soon after a second fire starts up in the west, and, urged by the wind, it sweeps on like that from the north. At every instant and on every side immense columns of smoke are seen, emitting at intervals long jets of flame. The sky appears all on fire—the ground is but one vast sea. The fire, like the rising tide of the Ocean, comes roaring on; up, up it rises till its incandescent waves beat against the foot of the Kremlin walls.

All the long night the Emperor contemplated with stupefaction that tempest of fire braving the efforts of the powerless workers: more than once during that night, which appeared an age to him, he thought of Rome and Nero.

When the sun, rising over that fiery furnace, disclosed the disasters of the night, Napoleon understood that patriotism driven to despair had triumphed over the might of genius!

According to the reports which every hour brought in, there was no longer room to doubt that Moscow would soon be no more than a heap of ashes; details were multiplied every moment. The fire had commenced with the palace of the Prince Troubetski, by means of a globe of flame which fell like a bomb on that magnificent mansion. The Exchange has taken fire at the same moment. The financiers and the aristocracy had joined hands in the work of general destruction. The dwellings of the citizens had likewise taken fire simultaneously in various quarters. Shells, concealed in the large delf-stoves, had produced a doubly fatal result by bursting under the hands of the French soldiers when making fires to warm themselves.

Like the accursed cities of the Bible, Moscow, the holy city, was doomed to irrevocable destruction, with this difference, however, that, for this work, the fire, instead of falling from heaven, seemed to issue from the bowels of the earth. Seeing all this, Napoleon was forced to give in, and to acknowledge that the burning of Moscow was the act of one and the same will. "It is not thus," he exclaimed, "that civilization ought to make war: the Russians are still the ancient Scythians."

Immediately he orders all the incendiaries who

can be caught to be put to death. A score of them, surprised torch in hand, are shot; but, before they die, they tell that they have nine hundred accomplices dispersed all-over the city. Not a house shall escape the destruction.

All at once a cry is heard; the fire has reached the Kremlin! The palace of the czars is to share the common fate. The Russian soldier caught in the act of setting fire to it is seized and brought before the Emperor, who questions him himself, and then orders him to execution. The incendiary expires to the cry of "Russia for ever!"

Then the Emperor is urged to fly before the rapidly-advancing fire—he hesitates; the rumor spreads that the Kremlin is undermined. The grenadiers of the guard, forgetful of their own safety, and thinking only of Napoleon, demand their Emperor—if he does not come to them, they will go themselves to seek him. Napoleon at length decides on quitting the Kremlin; but every avenue is closed; a wall of flame encircles the building. General Gourgaud and the Prince of Neufchatel ascend to the flat roof of the palace, hoping to discover a passage, whilst several aid-de-camps explore the interior; but all return immediately without having succeeded in their search. The windows of the palace shiver and burst—the Kremlin resembles an old tower seated on the crater of a volcano. The walls, devoured by the flames, fall in with a tremendous crash, burying under their ruins the unfortunates who had not time to escape.

There is not a moment to be lost: at the risk of going head foremost into the furnace, the Emperor and his staff descend the north staircase, mysterious witness of the murder of Strelitz—but, on reaching the court, they find no means of egress: an immense barrier of flame closes every passage.

Death! a frightful death appears inevitable to all! The Emperor himself has made his sacrifice: "Gentlemen," said he, "we shall have a grand funeral!"

At this moment a man runs up panting and breathless, his hair half burned—it is a Catholic priest, who has been twenty years attached to the French chapel in Moscow; he understood the danger to which Napoleon was exposed, and ran to save him or perish with him. Seeing him, the Emperor exclaimed: 'You see, gentlemen, heaven is for us, since it sends us one of its worthy ministers.' The priest rapidly conducts the Emperor to a closed door, which he knows ought to open on the Moskwa; four sappers break it open, with their hatchets. Napoleon follows his liberator between two walls of rocks; but, by a deplorable mistake, the priest finds himself out in his reckoning: the door opens not on the Moskwa, but on a narrow street, like all the others, enveloped in flames. Imprecations, cries of "treason!" and menaces of death, ring in the priest's ears. "You may kill me when I have saved you," was his reply. "Follow me!" And he darted the first under an arcade of fire—all follow, not knowing which to ad-

mire most, the coolness of the Emperor or the devotion of the priest.

For full ten minutes the living glories of imperial France walk amid the roaring and crackling of the flames, the crash of falling roofs and walls; a stream of molten lead runs along the middle of the street—the panting chests inhale a fiery atmosphere—still on they march—the priest has recognized his way—some paces yet, and the Emperor is saved!

Five minutes after, Napoleon, his marshals and all his suite, found themselves in safety amongst the ruins of a suburb which had been burned in the morning. The Catholic priest, satisfied with his work of deliverance, had disappeared when the Emperor sought him to express his gratitude.

The imperial quarters were immediately removed to the Castle of Petroskoi, situated about half a league from the city, amongst the cantonments of Prince Eugene. Thus terminated, in the burning of the holy city, the first act of our campaign of 1812.

\* \* \* \* \*

The day following this recital, which interested me much from its new and fresh details, I took leave of my worthy friend, who I shrewdly suspected was the identical priest that saved the Emperor, though his modesty would not permit him to say so. I never saw him more—he died the following year, as he had lived, a good and virtuous priest.

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