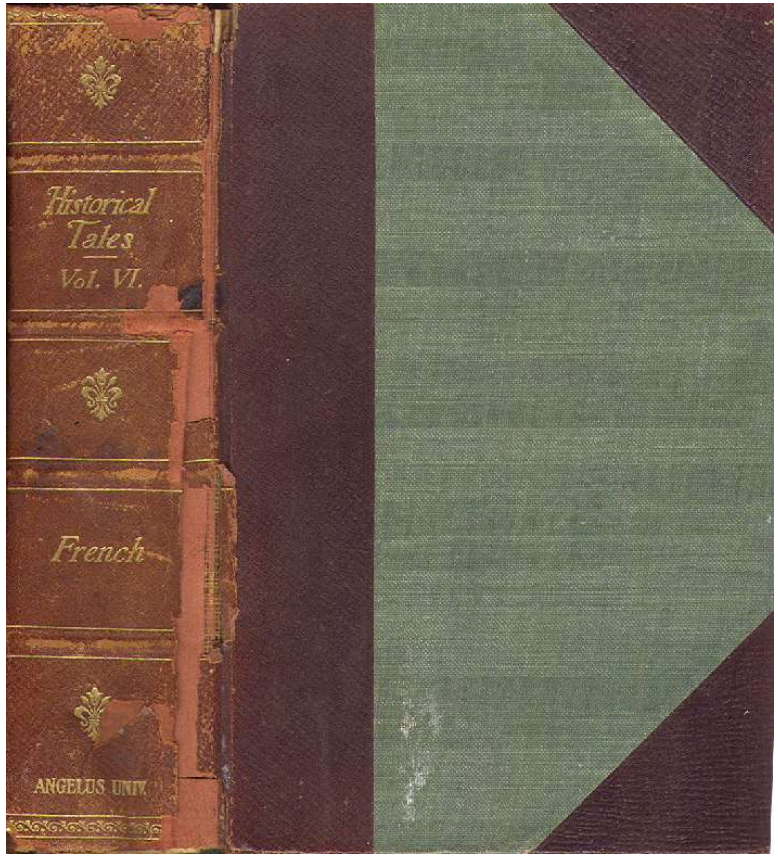

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IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST NATIONS

Historical Tales

The Romance of Reality

By

PROF. CHARLES MORRIS

Author of "Half-Hours with the Best American Authors," "Tales from the Dramatists," etc.

Volume VI

French

THE ANGELUS UNIVERSITY

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CHAPTER I

THE HUNS AT ORLEANS

On the edge of a grand plain, almost in the centre of France, rises a rich and beautiful city, time-honored and famous, for it stood there before France had begun and while Rome still spread its wide wings over this whole region, and it has been the scene of some of the most notable events in French history. The Gauls, one of whose cities it was, named it Genabum. The Romans renamed it Aurelian, probably from their Emperor Aurelian. Time and the evolution of the French language wore this name down to Orleans, by which the city has for many centuries been known.

The broad Loire, the longest river of France, sweeps the foot of the sloping plain on which the city stands, and bears its commerce to the sea. Near by grows a magnificent forest, one of the largest in France, covering no less than ninety-four thousand acres. Within the city appears the lofty spires of a magnificent cathedral, while numerous towers rise from a maze of buildings, giving the place, from a distance, a highly attractive aspect. It is still surrounded by its mediæval walls, outside of which extend prosperous suburbs, while far and wide beyond stretches the fertile plain.

Such is the Orleans of to-day. In the past it was the scene of two striking and romantic events, one of them associated with the name of Joan of Arc, the most interesting figure in French history; the other, which we have now to tell, concerned with the terrible Attila and his horde of devastating Huns, who had swept over Europe and threatened to annihilate civilization. Orleans was the turning-point in the career of victory of this all-conquering barbarian. From its walls he was driven backward to defeat.

Out from the endless wilds of Scythia had poured a vast swarm of nomad horsemen, ill-favored, fierce, ruthless, the scions of the desert and seemingly sworn to make a desert of Europe. They were led by Attila, the "Scourge of God," as he called himself, in the tracks of whose horse's hoofs the grass could never grow again, as he proudly boasted.

Writers of the time picture to us this savage chieftain as a deformed monster, short, ill-formed, with a large head, swarthy complexion, small, deep-seated eyes, flat nose, a few hairs in place of a beard, and with a habit of fiercely rolling his eyes, as if to inspire terror. He had broad shoulders, a square, strong form, and was as powerful in body as he was ready and alert in mind. The man had been born for a conqueror, and Europe was his prey.

The Scythians adored the god of war, whom they worshipped under the shape of an iron cimeter. It was through the aid of this superstition that Attila raised himself to dominion over their savage and tameless hordes. One of their shepherds, finding that a heifer was wounded in the foot, followed the track of blood which the animal had made, and discovered amid the long grass the point of an ancient sword. This he dug from the earth in which it was buried and presented to Attila. The artful chief claimed that it was a celestial gift, sent to him by the god of war, and giving him a divine claim to the dominion of the earth. Doubtless his sacred gift was consecrated with the Scythian rites,—a lofty heap of fagots, three hundred yards in length and breadth, being raised on a spacious plain, the sword of Mars placed erect on its summit, and the rude altar consecrated by the blood of sheep, horses, and probably of human captives. But Attila soon proved a better claim to a divine commission by leading the hordes of the Huns to victory after victory, until he threatened to subjugate, if not to depopulate, all Europe. It was in pursuance of this conquering career that he was brought, in the year 451, to the banks of the Rhine and the borders of the future realm of France, then still known as Gaul, and held by the feeble hand of the expiring empire of Rome.

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The broad Rhine proved but a feeble obstacle to the innumerable cavalry of the Huns. A bridge of boats was quickly built, and across the stream they poured into the fair provinces of Gaul. Universal consternation prevailed. Long peace had made the country rich, and had robbed its people of their ancient valor. As the story goes, the degenerate Gauls trusted for their defence to the prayers of the saints. St. Lupus saved Troyes. The prayers of St. Genevieve turned the march of Attila aside from Paris. Unluckily, most of the cities of the land held neither saints nor soldiers, and the Huns made these their helpless prey. City after city was taken and ruined. The fate of Metz will serve as an example of the policy of the Huns. In this city, as we are told, priests and infants alike were slain, and the flourishing city was so utterly destroyed that only a chapel of St. Stephen was left to mark its site. Its able-bodied inhabitants were probably reserved to be sold as slaves.

And now, in the prosecution of his ruinous march, Attila fixed his camp before the walls of Orleans, a city which he designed to make the central post of the dominion which he hoped to establish in Gaul. It was to be his fortified centre of conquest. Upon it rested the fate of the whole great province.

Orleans lay behind its walls trembling with dread, as the neigh of the Hunnish horses sounded in its ears, as the standards of the Hunnish host floated in the air. Yet it was not quite defenceless. Its walls had been recently strengthened. Behind them lay a force of soldiers, or of armed citizens, who repelled the first assaults of the foe. An army was known to be marching to its relief. All was not lost.

Forty years earlier Rome had fallen before Alaric, the Goth. The empire was now in the last stages of decreptitude. Yet by fortunate chance it had an able soldier at the head of its armies, Ætius, the noblest son of declining Rome. "The graceful figure of Ætius," says a contemporary historian, "was not above the middle stature; but his manly limbs were admirably formed for strength, beauty, and agility; and he excelled in the martial exercises of managing a horse, drawing the bow, and darting the javelin. He could patiently endure the want of food or of sleep; and his mind and body were alike capable of the most laborious efforts. He possessed the genuine courage that can despise not only dangers but injuries; and it was impossible either to corrupt, or deceive, or intimidate the firm integrity of his soul."

When the Huns invaded Gaul, this skilled and valiant commander flew to its relief. To his Roman army he added an army of the Visigoths of Southern Gaul, under their King Theoderic, and marched to the rescue of the land. But the gathering of this army took precious time, during which the foe wrought ruin upon the land. The siege of Orleans had begun by the time Ætius was fairly ready to begin his march.

In that seemingly doomed city all was terror and dismay. A speedy capture, a frightful massacre, or a no less frightful enslavement to the savage Huns, was the dread of the trembling inhabitants. They had no saint to rescue them by his prayers. All their hope lay in the arms of their feeble garrison and the encouraging words of their bishop, in whose heart alone courage seemed to keep alive.

Anianus was the name of this valiant and wise churchman, whose counsels of hope alone sustained the despairing citizens, whose diligence and earnestness animated the garrison in its defence. The siege was fierce, the defence obstinate, the army of relief was known to be on its way, if they could but hold out till it came. Anianus, counting the days and hours with intense anxiety, kept a sentinel on the lookout for the first signs of the advancing host of Romans and Goths. Yet hours and days went by, and no sign of flashing steel or floating banner could be seen, until the stout heart of the bishop himself was almost ready to give way to the despair which possessed so many of the citizens.

The Huns advanced point by point. They were already in the suburbs. The walls were shaking beneath the blows of their battering-rams. The city could not much longer be held. At length came a day which threatened to end with Orleans in the

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hands of the ruthless foe. And still the prayed-for relief came not. Hope seemed at an end.

While such of the people as could not bear arms lay prostrate in prayer, Anianus, hopeful to the last, sent his messenger to the ramparts to look for the banners of the Roman army. Far and wide, from his lofty outlook, the keen-eyed sentinel surveyed the surrounding country. In vain he looked. No moving object was visible, only the line of the forest and the far-off bordering horizon. He returned with this discouraging tidings.

"Go again," said the bishop. "They should have been here before now. Any minute may bring them. Go again."

The sentinel returned, and again swept the horizon with his eyes, noting every visible object, seeing nothing to give him hope. With heavy tread he returned to the bishop, and reported his failure.

"They must be near!" cried Anianus, with nervous impatience. "Go; look once more. Let nothing escape your eyes."

Back went the messenger, again mounted the rampart, again swept the plain with his eyes. Nothing,—ah! what was that, on the horizon, at the very extremity of the landscape, that small, faint cloud, which he had not seen before? He watched it; it seemed to grow larger and nearer. In haste he returned to the bishop with the hopeful news.

"I have seen a distant mist, like a far-off cloud of dust," he said. "It is moving. It comes nearer."

"It is the aid of God!" burst from the lips of the bishop, his heart suddenly elate with joy. And from the expectant multitude, through whose ranks ran like wildfire the inspiring tidings, burst the same glad cry, "It is the aid of God!"

Crowds ran in all haste to the ramparts; hundreds of eyes were fixed on the far-off, mist-like object; every moment it grew larger and more distinct; flashes, as of steel, color, as of standards, were gradually perceived; at last a favorable wind blew aside the dust, and to their joyful eyes, under this gray canopy, appeared the waving folds of banners, and under them, in serried array, the squadrons of the Roman and Gothic troops, pressing forward in all haste to the relief of the beleaguered city.

Well might the citizens cry, "It is the aid of God!" The army of Ætius had come not a day, not an hour, too soon. The walls had given way before the thundering blows of the battering-rams. A breach had been made through which the Huns were swarming. Only for the desire of Attila to save the city, it might have been already in flames. As it was, the savage foes were breaking into the houses in search of plunder, and dividing such citizens as they had seized into groups to be led into captivity, when this cry of glad relief broke loudly upon the air.

The news that had aroused the citizens quickly reached the ears of Attila. A strong army of enemies was at hand. There was no time to occupy and attempt to defend the city. If his men were assailed by citizens and soldiers in those narrow streets they might be slaughtered without mercy. Prudence dictated a retreat.

Attila was as prudent as he was daring. The sound of trumpets recalled his obedient hordes. Out they swarmed through the openings which had permitted their entrance. Soon the army of the Huns was in full retreat, while the advancing host of Romans and Goths marched proudly into the open gates of the delivered city, with banners proudly floating and trumpets loudly blaring, while every heart within those walls was in a thrill of joy. Orleans had been saved, almost by magic as it seemed, for never had been peril more extreme, need more pressing. An hour more of delay, and Orleans, perhaps the whole province of Gaul, had been lost.

We may briefly conclude the story of this invasion of the Huns. Attila, convinced of the strength and spirit of his enemy, retreated in haste, foreseeing ruin if he should be defeated in the heart of Gaul. He crossed the Seine, and halted not until he had

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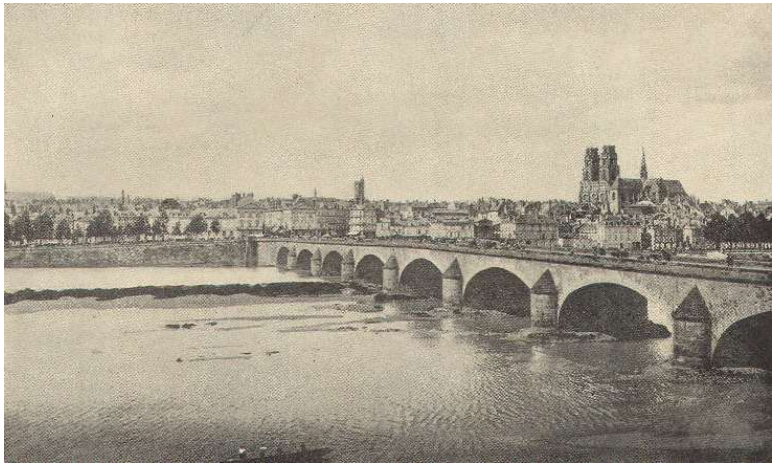
reached the plains of Châlons, whose level surface was well adapted to the evolutions of the skilled horsemen who formed the strength of his hordes.



CITY OF ORLEANS

As he retreated, the Romans and Goths followed, pressing him sharply, making havoc in his rear-guard, reaching Châlons so closely upon his march that the Goths, under Torismond, the young and valiant son of their king, were able to seize a commanding height in the midst of the field, driving back the Huns who were ascending from the opposite side.

The battle that followed was one of the decisive battles of history. Had the Huns won the victory, all western Europe might have become their prey. The victory of Ætius was the first check received by this mighty horde in their career of ruin and devastation. The conflict, as described by the historians of the time, was "fierce, various, obstinate, and bloody, such as could not be paralleled, either in the present or in past ages." The number of the slain is variously estimated at from three hundred thousand to about half that number. Exaggerated as these estimates undoubtedly are, they will serve to indicate the ferocity and bloody nature of the struggle. For a time it seemed as if the Huns would win. Led by their king, they broke through the centre of the allies, separated their wings, turned their whole strength against the Goths, and slew Theodoric, their king, at the head of his men.

But the victory which seemed theirs was snatched from them by the valiant Torismond, who descended from the height he had seized, assailed the Huns with intrepid courage, and so changed the fortune of the field that Attila was obliged to retreat,—vanquished for the first time in his long career. The approach of night alone saved the Huns from a total defeat. They retired within the circle of their wagons, and remained there as in a fort, while the triumphant allies encamped upon the field.

That night was one of anxiety for Attila. He feared an attack, and knew that the Huns, dismounted and fighting behind a barricade, were in imminent danger of defeat. Their strength lay in their horses. On foot they were but feeble warriors. Dreading utter ruin, Attila prepared a funeral pile of the saddles and rich equipments of the cavalry, resolved, if his camp should be forced, to rush into the flames, and deprive his enemies of the glory of slaying or capturing the great barbarian king.

The attack did not come. The army of Ætius was in no condition for an assault. Nor did it seem safe to them to attempt to storm the camp of their formidable antagonist, who lay behind his wagons, as the historians of the time say, like a lion in his den, encompassed by the hunters, and daring them to the attack. His trumpets sounded defiance. Such troops as advanced to the assault were checked or destroyed by showers of arrows. It was at length determined, in a council of war, to besiege the Huns in their camp, and by dread of starvation to force them into battle on unequal terms, or to a treaty disgraceful to their king.

For this Attila did not wait. Breaking camp he retreated, and by crossing the Rhine acknowledged his defeat. The Roman empire had won its last victory in the west, and saved Gaul for the Franks, whose day of conquest was soon to come.

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CHAPTER II

THE WOOING OF CLOTILDE

A beautiful, wise, and well-learned maiden was Clotilde, princess of Burgundy, the noblest and most charming of the daughters of the Franks. Such was the story that the voice of fame whispered into the ear of Clovis, the first of the long line of Frankish kings. Beautiful she was, but unfortunate. Grief had marked her for its own. Her father had been murdered. Her two brothers had shared his fate. Her mother had been thrown into the Rhone, with a stone around her neck, and drowned. Her sister Chrona had taken religious vows. She remained alone, the last of her family, not knowing at what moment she might share their fate, dwelling almost in exile at Geneva, where her days were spent in works of charity and piety.

It was to her uncle, Gondebaud, king of the Burgundians, that she owed these misfortunes. Ambition was their cause. The fierce barbarian, in whom desire for a throne outweighed all brotherly feeling, had murdered his brother and seized the throne, leaving of the line of Chilperic only these two helpless girls, one a nun, the other seemingly a devotee.

To the ears of Clovis, the king of the Franks, came, as we have said, the story of the beauty and misfortunes of this Burgundian maiden, a scion like himself of the royal line of Germany, but an heir to sorrow and exposed to peril. Clovis was young, unmarried, and ardent of heart. He craved the love of this famed maiden, if she should be as beautiful as report said, but wisely wished to satisfy himself in this regard before making a formal demand for her hand. He could not himself see her. Royal etiquette forbade that. Nor did he care to rouse Gondebaud's suspicions by sending an envoy. He therefore adopted more secret measures, and sent a Roman, named Aurelian, bidding him to seek Geneva in the guise of a beggar, and to use all his wit to gain sight of and speech with the fair Clotilde.

Clothed in rags, and bearing his wallet on his back, like a wandering mendicant, Aurelian set out on his mission, travelling on foot to Geneva. Clovis had entrusted him with his ring, as proof of his mission, in case he should deem the maiden worthy to be the bride of his king. Geneva was duly reached, and the seeming pilgrim, learning where the princess dwelt, and her habits of Christian charity towards strangers, sought her dwelling and begged for alms and shelter. Clotilde received him with all kindness, bade him welcome, and, in pursuance of the custom of the times, washed his feet.

Aurelian, who had quickly made up his mind as to the beauty, grace, and wit of the royal maiden, and her fitness to become a king's bride, bent towards her as she was thus humbly employed, and in a low voice said,—

"Lady, I have great matters to announce to thee, if thou wilt deign to grant me secret speech."

Clotilde looked up quickly, and saw deep meaning in his face. "Surely," she thought, "this is no common beggar."

"Say on," she remarked, in the same cautious tone.

"Clovis, king of the Franks, has sent me to thee," said Aurelian. "If it be the will of God, he would fain raise thee to his high rank by marriage, and that thou mayst be satisfied that I am a true messenger, he sendeth thee this, his ring."

Clotilde joyfully took the ring, her heart beating high with hope and desire for revenge. Dismissing her attendants, she warmly thanked the messenger for his caution, and declared that nothing could give her greater joy than to be bride to Clovis, the great and valorous king who was bringing all the land of Gaul under his rule.

"Take in payment for thy pains these hundred sous in gold and this ring of mine," she said. "Return promptly to thy lord. If he would have my hand in marriage, let him send

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messengers without delay to demand me of my uncle Gondebaud; and bid him direct his messengers, as soon as they obtain permission, to take me away in haste. If they delay, I fear all will fail. Aridius, my uncle's counsellor, is on his way back from Constantinople. If he should arrive, and gain my uncle's ear, before I am gone, all will come to naught. Haste, then, and advise Clovis that there be no delay."

Aurelian was willing enough to comply with her request, but he met with obstacles on the way. Starting back in the same disguise in which he had come, he made all haste towards Orleans, where he dwelt, and where he hoped to learn the location of the camp of the warlike Clovis. On nearing this city, he took for travelling companion a poor mendicant, whom fortune threw in his way, and with whom he journeyed for miles in the intimacy of the highway. Growing weary as night approached, and having confidence in his companion, Aurelian fell asleep by the wayside, leaving the beggar to watch.

Several hours passed before he awoke. When he did so it was to find, to his intense alarm, that his companion had vanished and his wallet had gone, and with it the gold which it contained and Clotilde's precious ring. In dismay Aurelian hurried to the city, reached his home, and sent his servants in all directions in search of the thievish mendicant, whom he felt sure had sought some lurking-place within the city walls.

His surmise was correct. The fellow was found and brought to him, the wallet and its valuable contents being recovered intact. What was to be done with the thief? Those were not days of courts and prisons. Men were apt to interpret law and administer punishment for themselves. Culprits were hung, thrashed, or set at liberty. Aurelian weighed the offence and decided on the just measures of retribution. The culprit, so says the chronicle, was soundly thrashed for three days, and then set free.

Having thus settled this knotty question of law, Aurelian continued his journey until Clovis was reached, told him what he had seen and what heard, and gave him Clotilde's ring and message. Clovis was alike pleased with the favorable report of his messenger and with the judicious advice of the maiden. He sent a deputation at once to Gondebaud, bidding the envoys to make no delay either in going or returning, and to demand of Gondebaud the hand of his niece in marriage.

They found Gondebaud, and found him willing. The request of the powerful Clovis was not one to be safely refused, and the Burgundian king was pleased with the idea of gaining his friendship, by giving him his niece in marriage. His consent gained, the deputation offered him a denier and a sou, according to the marriage customs of the Franks, and espoused Clotilde in the name of Clovis. Word was at once sent to Clovis of their success, and without delay the king's council was assembled at Châlons, and preparations made for the marriage.

Meanwhile, news startling to Clotilde had reached Geneva. Aridius was on his way back. He had arrived at Marseilles, and was travelling with all speed towards Burgundy. The alarmed woman, in a fever of impatience, hastened the departure of the Franks, seemingly burning with desire to reach the court of the king, really cold with fear at the near approach of the shrewd Aridius, whose counsel she greatly dreaded. Her nervous haste expedited matters. Gondebaud formally transferred her to the Franks, with valuable gifts which he sent as a marriage portion, and the cortege set out, Clotilde in a covered carriage, her attendants and escort on horseback. And thus slowly moved away this old-time marriage-train.

But not far had they left the city behind them when Clotilde's impatience with their slow movement displayed itself. She had kept herself advised. Aridius was near at hand. He might reach Geneva that very day. Calling to her carriage the leaders of her escort, she said,—

"Good sirs, if you hope to take me into the presence of your lord, you must find me better means of speed than this slow carriage. Let me descend, mount on horseback, and then away as

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fast as we may. Much I fear that, in this carriage, I shall never see Clovis, your king."

Learning the reason of her haste, they did as requested, and mounted on one of their swiftest steeds, Clotilde swept onward to love and vengeance, leaving the lumbering carriage to follow with her female attendants at its slow will.

She was none too soon. Not long had she left her uncle's court before Aridius reached it. Gondebaud, who had unbounded respect for and confidence in him, received him joyfully, and said, after their first greetings,—

"I have just completed a good stroke of policy. I have made friends with the Franks, and given my niece Clotilde to Clovis in marriage."

"You have?" exclaimed Aridius, in surprise and alarm. "And you deem this a bond of friendship? To my poor wit, Gondebaud, it is a pledge of perpetual strife. Have you forgotten, my lord, that you killed Clotilde's father and drowned her mother, and that you cut off the heads of her brothers and threw their bodies into a well? What think you this woman is made of? If she become powerful, will not revenge be her first and only thought? She is not far gone; if you are wise you will send at once a troop in swift pursuit, and bring her back. She is but one, the Franks are many. You will find it easier to bear the wrath of one person than for you and yours to be perpetually at war with all the Franks."

Gondebaud saw the wisdom of these words, and lost no time in taking his councillor's advice. A troop was sent, with orders to ride at all speed, and bring back Clotilde with the carriage and the treasure.

The carriage and the treasure they did bring back; but not Clotilde. She, with her escort, was already far away, riding in haste for the frontier of Burgundy. Clovis had advanced to meet her, and was awaiting at Villers, in the territory of Troyes, at no great distance from the border of Burgundy. But before reaching this frontier, Clotilde gave vent to revengeful passion, crying to her escort,—

"Ride right and left! Plunder and burn! Do what damage you may to this hated country from which Heaven has delivered me!"

THE VOW OF CLOVIS.

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Then, as they rode away on their mission of ruin, to which they had obtained permission from Clovis, she cried aloud,—

"I thank thee, God omnipotent, for that I see in this the beginning of the vengeance which I owe to my slaughtered parents and brethren!"

In no long time afterwards she joined Clovis, who received her with a lover's joy, and in due season the marriage was celebrated, with all the pomp and ceremony of which those rude times were capable.

Thus ends the romantic story told us by the chronicler Frédégaire, somewhat too romantic to be accepted for veracious history, we fear. Yet it is interesting as a picture of the times, and has doubtless in it an element of fact—though it may have been colored by imagination. Aurelian and Aridius are historical personages, and what we know of them is in keeping with what is here told of them. So the reader may, if he will, accept the story as an interesting compound of reality and romance.

But there is more to tell. Clotilde had an important historical part to play, which is picturesquely described by the chronicler, Gregory of Tours. She was a Christian, Clovis a pagan; it was natural that she should desire to convert her husband, and through him turn the nation of the Franks into worshippers of Christ. She had a son, whom she wished to have baptized. She begged her husband to yield to her wishes.

"The gods you worship," she said, "are of wood, stone, or metal. They are nought, and can do nought for you or themselves."

"It is by command of our gods that all things are created," answered Clovis. "It is plain that your God has no power. There is no proof that he is even of the race of gods."

Yet he yielded to her wishes and let the child be baptized. Soon afterwards the infant died, and Clovis reproached her bitterly.

"Had he been dedicated to my gods he would still be alive," he said. "He was baptized in the name of your God, and you see the end; he could not live."

A second son was born, and was also baptized. He, too, fell sick.

"It will be with him as with his brother," said Clovis. "You have had your will in baptizing him, and he is going to die. Is this the power of your Christ?"

But the child lived, and Clovis grew less incredulous of the God of his wife. In the year 496 war broke out between him and a German tribe. The Germans were successful, the Franks wavering, Clovis was anxious. Before hurrying to the front he had promised his wife—so says Frédégaire—to become a Christian if the victory were his. Others say that he made this promise at the suggestion of Aurelian, at a moment when the battle seemed lost. However that be, the tide of battle turned, the victory remained with the Franks, the Germans were defeated and their king slain.

Clotilde, fearing that he would forget his promise, sent secretly to St. Remy, bishop of Rheims, to come and use his influence with the king. He did so, and fervently besought Clovis to accept the Christian faith.

"I would willingly listen to you, holy father," said Clovis, "but I fear that the people who follow me will not give up their gods. I am about to assemble them, and will repeat to them your words."

He found them more ready than he deemed. The story of his promise and the victory that followed it had, doubtless, strongly influenced them. Before he could speak, most of those present cried out,—

"We abjure the mortal gods; we are ready to follow the immortal God whom Remy preaches."

About three thousand of the Franks, however, refused to give up their old faith, and deserted Clovis, joining the Frankish

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King of Cambrai—who was before long to pay dearly for this addition to his ranks.

Christmas-day, 496, was fixed by Remy for the ceremony of baptism of the king and his followers, and on that day, with impressive ceremonies, Clovis the king and about three thousand of his warriors were made Christians, and the maker of the French nation was received into the fold of the Church. From that time forward Clovis won victory after victory over his surrounding enemies. He had been born leader of a tribe. He died king of a nation.

As regards Gundebaud, the result proved as Aridius predicted, whether or not through the personal influence of Clotilde upon her husband. Clovis broke his truce with Gondebaud, and entered Burgundy with an army. Gondebaud was met and defeated at Dijon, partly through the treachery of his brother, whom Clovis had won over. He fled to Avignon and shut himself up in that stronghold. Clovis pursued and besieged him. Gondebaud, filled with alarm, asked counsel of Aridius, who told him that he had brought this upon himself.

"I will save you, though," he said. "I will feign to fly and go over to Clovis. Trust me to act so that he shall ruin neither you nor your land. But you must do what I ask."

"I will do whatever you bid," said Gondebaud.

Aridius thereupon sought Clovis, in the guise of a deserter from Gondebaud. But such was his intelligence, the charm of his conversation, the wisdom and good judgment of his counsel, that Clovis was greatly taken with him, and yielded to his advice.

"You gain nothing by ravaging the fields, cutting down the vines, and destroying the harvests of your adversary," he said, "while he defies you in his stronghold. Rather send him deputies, and lay on him a tribute to be paid you every year. Thus the land will be preserved, and you be lord forever over him who owes you tribute. If he refuse, then do what pleases you."

Clovis deemed the advice good, did as requested, and found Gondebaud more than willing to become his tributary vassal. And thus ended the contest between them, Burgundy becoming a tributary province of France.

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CHAPTER III

THE RIVAL QUEENS

From the days of Clovis to the days of Charles Martel and Charlemagne the history of the Frankish realm, so far as its kingship is concerned, is almost a blank. It was an era of several centuries of incompetent and sluggish monarchs, of whom we can say little more than that they were born and died; they can scarcely be said to have reigned. But from the midst of this dull interregnum of Merovingian sluggards comes to us the story of two queens, women of force and power, whose biography is full of the elements of romance. As a picture of the manners and customs of the Merovingian epoch we cannot do better than to tell the stories of these queens, Fredegonde and Brunehild by name, whose rivalry and enmity, with their consequences, throw a striking light on the history of those obscure times.

What is now France was at that time divided into three kingdoms, Austrasia, Neustria, and Burgundy, King Chilperic reigning over Austrasia; King Sigebert over Neustria. But the power behind the throne lay in the wives of these kings, with whom alone we have to do. Contrasted characters they were,—Fredegonde wicked, faithless, self-seeking; Brunehild patriotic and devoted to the good of her country; yet in the end wickedness triumphed, and honesty died a violent and frightful death. With this preliminary we may proceed with our tale.

Fredegonde was the daughter of poor peasants, who dwelt in the vicinity of Montdidier in Picardy. But so striking and notable was her beauty that at an early age she was made, under circumstances of which we are not informed, one of the ladies in waiting on Queen Andovere, the first wife of King Chilperic. The poor queen was destined to suffer from the artfulness of her maid. The beauty of Fredegonde quickly attracted the attention of the king, and her skilful and unscrupulous arts soon made her a power in the court. The queen was in her way; but no long time passed before, on the pretext of a spiritual relationship with her husband which rendered the marriage illegal, the hapless Andovere was repudiated and banished to a convent.

But Chilperic was not yet ready to marry a peasant. He chose for his second wife Galsuinthe, daughter of the king of the Visigoths. This marriage lasted a still shorter time than the other. Galsuinthe was found strangled in her bed; and now, no longer able to restrain his passion for the beautiful and artful maid of honor, Chilperic married Fredegonde, and raised the peasant maiden to the throne for which she had so deeply and darkly wrought.

The marriage of Galsuinthe had been preceded by that of her younger sister, Brunehild, who became the wife of Sigebert, brother of Chilperic and king of Austrasia. The murder of Galsuinthe was ascribed by Brunehild to Fredegonde, with excellent reason if we may judge from her subsequent career, and from that day on an undying hatred existed between the two queens. To this the stirring incidents of their after lives were due. War broke out between the two kings, probably inspired by Brunehild's thirst for revenge for her sister's death on the one hand, and the ambition and hatred of Fredegonde on the other. Sigebert was successful in the field, but treachery soon robbed him of the fruits of victory. He was murdered in his tent (in the year 575) by two assassins in the pay of Queen Fredegonde.

This murder gave Chilperic the ascendancy. Sigebert's army disbanded, and Brunehild, as the only means of preserving her life, sought an asylum in the cathedral of Paris. And now the scene becomes one of rapid changes, in which the unscrupulous Fredegonde plays the leading part. Chilperic, not daring to offend the church by slaying the fugitive queen under its protection, sent her to Rouen. Here the widowed lady, her beauty rendered more attractive by her misfortunes, was seen and loved by Merovée, the son of Chilperic by his first wife, then in that town on a mission from his father. Fired with passion for the

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hapless queen, he married her privately, the Bishop of Rouen sealing their union.

This imprudent action soon became known at the court of Chilperic, and the ambitious Fredegonde hastened to turn it to her advantage. Merovée was heir to the throne of Chilperic. He was in her way, and had now given her a pretext for his removal. Chilperic, who seems to have been the weak slave of her designs, would have seized both Merovée and his bride but for the Austrasians, who demanded that their queen Brunehild should be restored to them, and enforced their demands with threats. She was surrendered; but Merovée, under the influence of his step-mother, was imprisoned, then shorn and shut up in a monastery, and afterwards became a fugitive, and was urged to head a rebellion against his father. Such was the terror, however, which the unhappy youth entertained for his cruel step-mother, that he put an end to his existence by suicide, inducing a faithful servant to strike him dead.

Fredegonde's success in getting rid of one of the heirs to the throne, only partly satisfied her ambitious views. There was another son, Clovis, brother of Merovée. To rid herself of him the wily queen took another course. Three of her own children had recently died, and she ascribed their death to Clovis, whom she accused of sorcery. He was seized under this charge, thrown into prison, and there ended his career, a poniard-thrust closing his brief tale of life. The tale of murders in this direction was completed by that of the repudiated Queen Andovere, who was soon found strangled in the convent to which she had been consigned.

Fredegonde had thus rid herself of all claimants to the throne outside of herself and her descendants, Galsuinthe having left no children. Though death had recently robbed her of three children, one survived, a son named Clotaire, then a few months old. Her next act of treachery was to make away with her weak and confiding husband, perhaps that she might reign alone, perhaps through fear that Chilperic might discover her guilty relations with Landry, an officer of the court, and subsequently mayor of the palace. Whatever the reason, soon after these events, King Chilperic, while in the act of dismounting on his return from the chase, was struck two mortal blows by a man who took to rapid flight, while all around the cry was raised, "Treason! it is the hand of the Austrasian Childebert against our lord the king!"

The readiness with which this cry was raised seemed evidence of its falsity. Men ascribed it and the murder to emissaries of Fredegonde. But, heedless of their opinions, she installed herself as sovereign guardian of her infant son, and virtual reigning queen of Neustria. It was now the year 584. Fredegonde had by her beauty, ambition, boldness, and unscrupulousness raised herself from the lowly rank of a peasant's daughter to the high position of sovereign over a great dominion, a queenship which she was to hold during the remainder of her life, her strong will, effrontery, artifice, skill in deception, and readiness to strengthen her position by crime, enabling her to overcome all resistance and maintain her ascendancy over the restless and barbarous elements of the kingdom she ruled. She was a true product of the times, one born to become dominant over a barbarous people.

Gregory of Tours tells a story of Chilperic and Fredegonde, which will bear repetition here. In addition to the sons of Chilperic, of whom the queen disposed as we have seen, he had a daughter, Rigouthe by name, whom he promised in marriage to Prince Recared, son of the king of the Visigoths of Spain.

"A grand deputation of Goths came to Paris to fetch the Frankish princess. King Chilperic ordered several families in the fiscal domains to be seized and placed in cars. As a great number of them wept and were not willing to go, he had them kept in prison that he might more easily force them to go away with his daughter. It is said that several, in their despair, hung themselves, fearing to be taken from their parents. Sons were separated from fathers, daughters from mothers, and all departed with deep groans and maledictions, and in Paris there reigned a

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desolation like that of Egypt. Not a few, of superior birth, being forced to go away, even made wills whereby they left their possessions to the churches, and demanded that, so soon as the young girl should have entered Spain, their wills should be opened just as if they were already in their graves.

"When King Chilperic gave up his daughter to the ambassadors of the Goths, he presented them with vast treasures. Queen Fredegonde added thereto so great a quantity of gold and silver and valuable vestments that, at the sight thereof, the king thought he must have nought remaining. The queen, perceiving his emotion, turned to the Franks, and said to them,—

"'Think not, warriors, that there is here aught of the treasures of former kings. All that ye see is taken from my own possessions, for my most glorious king has made me many gifts. Thereto have I added of the fruits of my own toil, and a great part proceeds from the revenues I have drawn, either in kind or in money, from the houses that have been ceded unto me. Ye yourselves have given me riches, and ye see here a portion thereof; but there is here nought of the public treasure.'

"And the king was deceived into believing her words. Such was the multitude of golden and silver articles and other precious things that it took fifty wagons to hold them. The Franks, on their part, made many offerings; some gave gold, others silver, sundry gave horses, but most of them vestments.

"At last the young girl, with many tears and kisses, said farewell. As she was passing through the gate an axle of her carriage broke, and all cried out 'Alack!' which was interpreted by some as a presage. She departed from Paris, and at eight miles' distance from the city she had her tents pitched. During the night fifty men arose and, having taken a hundred of the best horses, and as many golden bits and bridles, and two large silver dishes, fled away, and took refuge with King Childebert. During the whole journey whoever could escape fled away with all that he could lay hands on. It was required also of all the towns that were traversed on the way that they should make great preparations to defray expenses, for the king forbade any contribution from the treasury. All the charges were met by extraordinary taxes levied upon the poor."

In this story there is probably much exaggeration, but it has its significance as a picture of life in the dark ages, from one to the manner born. So far as Fredegonde was concerned, the marriage of Rigouthe removed from her path one possible future rival for the throne.

Twice in the foregoing pages Childebert of Austrasia has been mentioned. Who was this Childebert, it may be asked? He was the son of Brunehild, whom the Austrasians had preserved after the murder of their king, and as a guardian for whom they had insisted on the return, by Chilperic, of the captive queen. Brunehild from that time reigned in Austrasia during the minority of her son, and in a manner in striking contrast with the reign of her wicked rival.

Unlike the latter, she was a princess by birth, and of that race of Gothic kings who had preserved some traces of the Roman civilization. Fredegonde was a barbarian, Brunehild a scion of a semi-civilization and far superior to her rival in culture and intellectual power. As a queen she did so much for her country that her name as a public benefactor was long afterwards remembered in the land. The highways, the bridges, all the public works of the state received her careful attention, so much so that the Roman roads in Austrasia received, and long retained, the name of "Brunehild's Causeways." Her name was associated with many other things in the land. In a forest near Bourges men long pointed out "Brunehild's castle," at Etampes was shown "Brunehild's tower," and near Cahors "Brunehild's fort." A more interesting evidence of her activity for the good of her people for ages existed in the by-word of "Brunehild's alms," which long retained the evidence of her abundant charities. She protected men of letters,—a rare production in that day,—and in return we find one of them, Fortunatus, bishop of Poitiers, dedicating poems to her.

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But the life of Queen Brunehild was far from being a quiet one. In addition to her conflicts with her mortal foe, Queen Fredegonde, she had her own nobles to fight against. They seem to have detested her from the fact that her palace was filled with royal officers and favorites, whose presence excited the jealousy of the great landholders and warriors. But Brunehild protected them, with unyielding courage, against their foes, and proved herself every inch a queen. It was a semblance of the Roman imperial monarchy which she wished to establish in Austrasia, and to her efforts in this direction were due her struggles with the turbulent lords of the land, whose opposition gave her more and more trouble as time went on.

A story of this conflict is told by Gregory of Tours. One of the palace officers of the queen, Lupus, a Roman by birth, but made by her duke of Champagne, "was being constantly insulted and plundered by his enemies, especially by Ursion Bertfried. At last, having agreed to slay him, they marched against him with an army. At the sight, Brunehild, compassionating the evil case of one of her lieges unjustly presented, assumed a manly courage, and threw herself among the hostile battalions, crying, 'Stay, warriors; refrain from this wicked deed; persecute not the innocent; engage not, for a single man's sake, in a battle which will desolate the country!' 'Back, woman!' said Ursion to her; 'let it suffice thee to have ruled under thy husband's sway. Now it is thy son that reigns, and his kingdom is under our protection, not thine. Back! if thou wouldst not that the hoofs of our horses trample thee under as the dust of the ground!' After the dispute had lasted some time in this strain, the queen, by her address, at last prevented the battle from taking place."

The words of Ursion were prophetic. To be trampled under horses' hoofs into the dust was the final fate of the queen, though for many years yet she was to retain her power and to keep up her strife with the foes who surrounded her. Far nobler of soul than Fredegonde, she was as strong in all those qualities which go to make a vigorous queen.

But we must hasten on to the end of these royal rivals. Fredegonde died quietly in Paris, in 597, powerful to her death, and leaving on the throne her son Clotaire II., whom she had infected with all her hatred against the queen of Austrasia. Brunehild lived till 614, thirty-nine years after the death of her husband Sigebert, and through the reigns of her son and two of her grandsons, who were but puppets in her hands. Her later years were marked by lack of womanly virtue, and by an unscrupulousness in ridding herself of her enemies significant of barbarous times. At length, when she had reached the advanced age of eighty years, she was deserted by her army and her people whom the crimes imputed to her had incensed, and fell into the hands of her mortal foe, Clotaire II., in whom all the venom of his cruel mother seemed retained.

After having subjected the aged queen to base and gross insults and severe tortures, the crowned wretch had her paraded on a camel in front of his whole army, and then tied by one arm, one foot, and hair of her head to the tail of an unbroken horse, which dashed and kicked her to pieces as he rushed away in affright, before the eyes of the ferocious Clotaire and his army.

By the death of Brunehild and her sons, whom Clotaire also put to death, this king became master of Austrasia, and thus lord of all the Frankish realm, the successor in power of the two queens whose story stands out so prominently in that dark and barbarous age.

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CHAPTER IV

ROLAND AT RONCESVALLES

From the long, straight ridge of the Pyrenees, stretching from the Bay of Biscay to the Mediterranean, and dividing the land of France from that of Spain, there extend numerous side-hills, like buttresses to the main mountain mass, running far into the plains on either side. Between these rugged buttresses lie narrow valleys, now spreading into broad amphitheatres, now contracting into straightened ravines, winding upward to the passes across the mountain chain. Dense forests often border these valleys, covering the mountain-sides and summits, and hiding with their deep-green foliage the rugged rocks from which they spring. Such is the scene of the celebrated story which we have next to tell.

All these mountain valleys are filled with legends, centring around a great event and a mighty hero of the remote past, whose hand and sword made famous the little vale of Roncesvalles, which lies between the defiles of Sizer and Val Carlos, in the land of the Basques. This hero was Roland, the nephew of the great emperor Charlemagne, who has been given by romantic fiction the first place among the legendary Paladins of France, and made memorable in epic poetry as the hero of the celebrated "Orlando Furioso" of Ariosto, and the less notable "Orlando Innamorato" of Boiardo.

All these stories are based upon a very slender fabric of history, which would have been long since forgotten had not legend clung to it with so loving a hand, and credited its hero with such a multitude of marvellous deeds. The history of the event is preserved for us by Eginhard, the secretary and annalist of Charlemagne. He takes few words to tell what has given rise to innumerable strophes.

In the year 778, Charlemagne invaded Spain, then almost wholly in the hands of the Saracens. His march was a victorious one until Saragossa was reached. Here he found himself before a well-supplied, strongly-fortified, and fully-garrisoned city, while his own army was none too well provided with food. In the end he found it expedient to retreat, leaving Saragossa still in Saracen hands.

The retreat was conducted without loss until the Pyrenees were reached. These were crossed by the main body of the army without hostile disturbance, leaving to follow the baggage-train and a rear-guard under the king's nephew Roland, prefect of the Marches of Brittany, with whom were Eginhard, master of the household, and Anselm, count of the palace; while legend adds the names of Oliver, Roland's bosom friend, the warlike Archbishop Turpin, and other warriors of renown.

Their route lay through the pass of Roncesvalles so narrow at points that only two, or at most three men could move abreast, while the rugged bordering hills were covered with dense forest, affording a secure retreat for an ambushing foe. It was when the main body of the army was miles in advance, and the rear-guard struggling up this narrow defile, that disaster came. Suddenly the surrounding woods and mountains bristled with life. A host of light-armed Basque mountaineers emerged from the forest, and poured darts and arrows upon the crowded columns of heavily-armed Franks below. Rocks were rolled down the steep declivities, crushing living men beneath their weight. The surprised troops withdrew in haste to the bottom of the valley, death pursuing them at every step. The battle that followed was doubtless a severe and hotly-contested one; the prominent place it has gained in tradition indicates that the Franks must have defended themselves valiantly; but they fought at a terrible disadvantage, and in the end they were killed to a man. Then the assailants, rich with the plunder which they had obtained from the baggage-wagons and the slain bodies, vanished into the forests whence they came, leaving to Charlemagne, when he returned in search of Roland and his

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men, only the silence of death and the livid heaps of the slain in that terrible valley of slaughter.

Such is the sober fact. Fancy has adorned it with a thousand loving fictions. In the valleys are told a multitude of tales connected with Roland's name. A part of his armor has given its name to a flower of the hills, the *casque de Roland*, a species of hellebore. The *breiche de Roland*, a deep fissure in the mountain crest, is ascribed to a stroke of his mighty blade. The sound of his magic horn still seems to echo around those rugged crests and pulse through those winding valleys, as it did on the day when, as legend says, it was borne to the ears of Charlemagne miles away, and warned him of the deadly peril of his favorite chieftain.

This horn is reputed to have had magical powers. Its sound was so intense as to split all other horns. The story goes that Roland, himself sadly wounded, his fellows falling thickly around him, blew upon it so mighty a blast that the veins and nerves of his neck burst under the effort. The sound reached the ears of Charlemagne, then encamped eight miles away, in the Val Carlos pass. "It is Roland's horn," he cried. "He never blows it except the extremity be great. We must hasten to his aid."

"I have known him to sound it on light occasions," answered Ganalon, Roland's secret foe. "He is, perhaps, pursuing some wild beast, and the sound echoes through the wood. It would be fruitless to lead back your weary host to seek him."

Charlemagne yielded to his specious argument, and Roland and all his followers died. Charles afterwards discovered the body with the arms extended in the form of a cross, and wept over it his bitterest tears. "There did Charlemagne," says the legend, "mourn for Orlando to the very last day of his life. On the spot where he died he encamped and caused the body to be embalmed with balsam, myrrh, and aloes. The whole camp watched it that night, honoring his corpse with hymns and songs, and innumerable torches and fires kindled in the adjacent mountains."

At the battle of Hastings the minstrel Taillefer, as we have elsewhere told, rode before the advancing Norman host, singing the "Song of Roland," till a British hand stilled his song and laid him low in death. This ancient song is attributed, though doubtfully, to Turold, that abbot of Peterborough who was so detested by Hereward the Wake. From it came many of the stories which afterwards were embodied in the epic legends of mediæval days. To quote a few passages from it may not be amiss. The poet tells us that Roland refused to blow his magic horn in the beginning of the battle. In the end, when ruin and death were gathering fast around, and blood was flowing freely from his own veins, he set his lips to the mighty instrument, and filled vales and mountains with its sound.

"With pain and dolor, groan and pant,
Count Roland sounds his Olifant:
The crimson stream shoots from his lips;
The blood from bursten temple drips;
But far, oh, far, the echoes ring,
And in the defiles reach the king,
Reach Naymes and the French array;
"Tis Roland's horn,' the king doth say;
'He only sounds when brought to bay,'
How huge the rocks! how dark and steep
The streams are swift; the valleys deep!
Out blare the trumpets, one and all,
As Charles responds to Roland's call.
Round wheels the king, with choler mad
The Frenchmen follow, grim and sad;
No one but prays for Roland's life,
Till they have joined him in the strife.
But, ah! what prayer can alter fate?
The time is past; too late! too late!"

The fight goes on. More of the warriors fall. Oliver dies. Roland and Turpin continue the fight. Once more a blast is sent from the magic horn.

"Then Roland takes his horn once more;
His blast is feebler than before,
But still it reaches the emperor;

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He hears it, and he halts to shout,
'Let clarions, one and all, ring out!'
Then sixty thousand clarions ring,
And rocks and dales set echoing.
And they, too, hear,—the pagan pack;
They force the rising laughter back:
'Charles, Charles,' they cry, 'is on our track!'
They fly; and Roland stands alone,—
Alone, afoot; his steed is gone."

Turpin dies. Roland remains the sole survivor of the host, and he hurt unto death. He falls on the field in a swoon. A wounded Saracen rises, and, seeing him, says,—

"Vanquished, he is vanquished, the nephew of Charles! There is his sword, which I will carry off to Arabia." He knew not the power of the dying hero.

"And as he makes to draw the steel,
A something does Sir Roland feel;
He opes his eyes, says nought but this,>
'Thou art not one of us, I wis,
Raises the horn he could not quit,
And cracks the pagan's skull with it. . . .
And then the touch of death that steals
Down, down from head to heart he feels;
Under yon pine he hastes away
On the green turf his head to lay;
Placing beneath him horn and sword,
He turns towards the Paynim horde,
And there, beneath the pine, he sees
A vision of old memories;
A thought of realms he helped to win,
Of his sweet France, of kith and kin,
And Charles, his lord, who nurtured him."

And here let us take our leave of Roland the brave, whose brief story of fact has been rounded into so vast a story of fiction that the actual histories of few men equal in extent that of this hero of romance.

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CHAPTER V

CHARLEMAGNE AND THE AVARS

Striking is the story which the early centuries of modern Europe have to tell us. After the era of the busy building of empire in which the sturdy old Romans were the active agents, there came an era of the overthrow of empire, during which the vast results of centuries of active civilization seemed about to sink and be lost in the seething whirlpool of barbarism. The wild hordes of the north of Europe overflowed the rich cities and smiling plains of the south, and left ruin where they found wealth and splendor. Later, the half-savage nomades of eastern Europe and northern Asia—the devastating Huns—poured out upon the budding kingdoms which had succeeded the mighty empire of Rome, and threatened to trample under foot all that was left of the work of long preceding ages. Civilization had swung downward into barbarism; was barbarism to swing downward into savagery, and man return to his primitive state?

Against such a conceivable fate of Europe Charlemagne served as a mighty bulwark, and built by his genius an impermeable wall against the torrent of savage invasion, saying to its inflowing waves, "Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther." Attila, the "Scourge of God," in the track of whose horses' hoofs "no grass could grow," met his only great defeat at Châlons-sur-Marne, on the soil of Gaul. He died in Hungary; his hordes were scattered; Europe again began to breathe. But not long had the Huns of Attila ceased their devastations when another tribe of Hunnish origin appeared, and began a like career of ravage and ruin. These called themselves Avars. Small in numbers at first, they grew by vanquishing and amalgamating other tribes of Huns until they became the terror and threatened to become the masters of Europe. Hungary, the centre of Attila's great circle of power, was made their place of abode. Here was the palace and stronghold of their monarchs, the Chagans, and

here they continued a threat to all the surrounding nations, while enjoying the vast spoils which they had wrung from ruined peoples.

Time passed on; civilization showed feeble signs of recovery; France and Italy became its abiding-places; but barbarian invasion still threatened these lands, and no security could be felt while the hordes of the north and east remained free to move at will. This was the task that Charlemagne was born to perform. Before his day the Huns of the east, the Saxons of the north, the Moors of the south kept the growing civilization of France in constant alarm. After his day aggression by land was at an end; only by sea could the north invade the south.

The record of the deeds of Charlemagne is a long one. The Saxons were conquered and incorporated into the kingdom of the Franks. Then collision with the Avars took place. The story of how Charlemagne dealt with these savage hordes is one of the most interesting episodes in the extended tale of his wars, and we therefore select it for our present theme. The Avars had long been quiet, but now again began to stir, making two invasions, one of Lombardy, the other of Bavaria. Both were repelled. Stung by defeat, they raised a greater army than before, and in 788 crossed the Danube, determined in their savage souls to teach these proud Franks a lesson, and write on their land in blood the old story of the prowess and invincibility of the Huns. To their alarm and astonishment they found themselves not only checked, but utterly routed, thousands of them being left dead upon the field, and other thousands swallowed up by the Danube, in their wild effort to swim that swollen stream.

This brings us to the record of the dealings of Charlemagne with the Huns, who had thus dared to invade his far-extending kingdom. Vast had been the work of this mighty monarch in subduing the unquiet realms around him. Italy had been made a part of his dominions, Spain invaded and quieted, and the Saxons, the fiercest people of the north, forced to submit to the power of the Franks. Now the Avars of Hungary, the most dangerous of the remaining neighbors of Charlemagne's great empire, were to be dealt with.

During the two years succeeding their defeat, overtures for peace passed between the Avars and Charlemagne, overtures which, perhaps, had their chief purpose in the desire to gain time to prepare for war.

These nomadic hordes were celebrated alike for their cunning and their arrogance,—cunning when they had an object to gain, arrogance when they had gained it. In their dealings with Charlemagne they displayed the same mixture of artfulness and insolence which they had employed in their dealings with the empire of the East. But they had now to do with a different man from the weak emperors of Constantinople. Charlemagne continued his negotiations, but prepared for hostilities, and in the spring of 791 put himself at the head of a powerful army, prepared to repay the barbarian hordes with some of the havoc which they had dealt out to the other nations of Europe.

It was no light task he had undertaken, and the great general made ready for it with the utmost care and deliberation. He was about to invade a country of great resources, of remarkable natural and artificial defences, and inhabited by a people celebrated for their fierceness and impetuosity, and who had hitherto known little besides victory. And he was to leave behind him in his march a kingdom full of unquiet elements, which needed the presence of his strong arm and quick mind to keep it in subjection. He knew not but that the Saxons might rise upon his march and spread ruin upon his path. There was one way to avoid this, and that he took. Years before, he had incorporated the Lombards with his army, and found them to fight as valiantly for him as against him. He now did the same with the Saxons, drafting a large body of them into his ranks, with the double purpose of weakening the fighting power of the nation, and employing their fierce courage in his own service. All winter the world of the Franks was in commotion, preparing for war. The chroniclers of the times speak of "innumerable

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multitudes" which the great conqueror set in motion in the early spring.

The army marched in three grand divisions. One entered Bavaria, joined to itself recruits raised in that country, and descended the Danube in boats, which carried also an abundance of provisions and military stores. A second division, under Charlemagne himself, marched along the southern side of the river; and a third, under his generals Theoderic and Meginfried, along its northern banks. The emperor had besides sent orders to his son Pepin, king of Italy, bidding him to lead an army of Lombards and other Italians to the frontier of Hungary, and co-operate with the other troops.

Before telling the story of the expedition, it behooves us to give some account of the country which the king of the Franks was about to invade, and particularly to describe the extraordinary defences and interior conditions with which it is credited by the gossipy old Monk of St. Gall, the most entertaining, though hardly the most credible, writer of that period. All authors admit that the country of the Avars was defended by an ingenious and singular system of fortifications. The account we propose to give, the Monk of St. Gall declares that he wrote down from the words of an eye-witness, Adelbart by name, who took part in the expedition. But one cannot help thinking that either this eye-witness mingled a strong infusion of imagination with his vision, or that the monk added fiction to his facts, with the laudable purpose of making an attractive story. Such as it is, we give it, without further comment.

Nine concentric circles of palisaded walls, says the garrulous old monk, surrounded the country of the Avars, the outer one enclosing the entire realm of Hungary, the inner ones growing successively smaller, the innermost being the central fortification within which dwelt the Chagan, with his palace and his treasures. These walls were made of double rows of palisades of oak, beech, and pine logs, twenty feet high and twenty feet asunder, the interval between them being filled with stone and lime. Thus was formed a great wall, which at a distance must have presented a singular appearance, since the top was covered with soil and planted with bushes and trees.

The outermost wall surrounded the whole country. Within it, at a distance of twenty Teutonic, or forty Italian, miles, was a second, of smaller diameter, but constructed in the same manner. At an equal distance inward was a third, and thus they continued inward, fortress after fortress, to the number of nine, the outer one rivalling the Chinese wall in extent, the inner one—the *ring*, as it was called—being of small diameter, and enclosing a central space within which the Avars guarded the accumulated wealth of centuries of conquest and plunder.

The only places of exit from these great palisaded fortifications were very narrow gates, or sally-ports, opening at proper intervals, and well guarded by armed sentinels. The space between the successive ramparts was a well-wooded and thickly-settled country, filled with villages and homesteads, so close together that the sound of a trumpet could be heard from one to the other, and thus an alarm from the exterior be conveyed with remarkable rapidity throughout the whole land.

This and more the veracious Monk of St. Gall tells us. As to believing him, that is quite another matter. Sufficient is told by other writers to convince us that the country was guarded by strong and singular defences, but the nine concentric circles of breastworks, surpassing the Chinese wall in length and size, the reader is quite privileged to doubt.

Certainly the defences failed to check the advance of the army of Charlemagne. Though he had begun his march in the spring, so extensive were his preparations that it was September before he reached the banks of the river Enns, the border line between Bavaria and Hungary. Here the army encamped for three days, engaged in prayers for victory, and here encouraging news came to Charlemagne. His son Pepin, with the Duke of Friuli, had already invaded Hungary, met an army of the Avars, and defeated it with great slaughter. The news of this success must have invigorated the army under Charlemagne. Breaking

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camp, they invaded the country of the Avars, advancing with the usual impetuosity of their great leader. One after another the Hungarian lines of defence were taken, until three had fallen, while the country between them was laid waste. No army appeared in the path of the invaders; sword in hand, Charlemagne assailed and broke through the strong walls of his foes; soon he reached the river Raab, which he followed to its junction with the Danube.

Until now all had promised complete success. Those frightful Huns, who had so long kept Europe in terror, seemed about to be subdued and made subjects of the great monarch of the Franks. But, through that fatality which so often ruins the best-laid plans of men, Charlemagne suddenly found himself in a perilous and critical situation. His army was composed almost wholly of cavalry. As he lay encamped by the Danube, a deadly pestilence attacked the horses, and swept them off with such rapidity that a hasty retreat became necessary. Nine-tenths of the horses had perished before the retiring army reached Bavaria. Good fortune, however, attended the retreat. Had the Avars recovered from the panic into which their successive defeats had thrown them, they might have taken a disastrous revenge upon the invaders. But as it was, Charlemagne succeeded in retiring without being attacked, and was able to take with him the valuable booty and the host of prisoners which were the trophies of his victorious progress.

He fully intended to return and complete the conquest of Hungary in the spring, and, to facilitate his advance, had a bridge of boats constructed, during the winter, across the Danube. He never returned, as it happened. Circumstances hindered. But in 794 his subject, the margrave Eric, Duke of Friuli, again invaded Hungary, which had in the interval been exhausted by civil wars. All the defences of the Avars went down before him, and his victorious troops penetrated to that inner fortress, called the Ring, which so long had been the boasted stronghold of the Chagans, and within whose confines were gathered the vast treasures which the conquering hordes had accumulated during centuries of victory and plunder, together with the great wealth in gold and silver coin which they had wrung by way of tribute from the weak rulers of the Eastern Empire. A conception of the extent of this spoil may be gathered from the fact that the Greek emperor during the seventh century paid the Avars annually as tribute eighty thousand gold solidi, and that on a single occasion the Emperor Heraclius was forced to pay them an equal sum.

In a nation that had made any progress towards civilization this wealth would have been distributed and perhaps dissipated. But the only use which the half-savage Avars seem to have found for it was to store it up as spoil. For centuries it had been accumulating within the treasure-house of the Ring, in convenient form to be seized and borne away by the conquering army which now broke into this long-defiant stronghold. The great bulk of this wealth, consisting of gold and silver coin, vessels of the precious metals, garments of great value, rich weapons and ornaments, jewels of priceless worth, and innumerable other articles, was taken to Aix-la-Chapelle, and laid at the feet of Charlemagne, to be disposed of as he saw fit. So extensive was it, that, as we are told, fifteen wagons, each drawn by four oxen, were needed to convey it to the capital of the mighty emperor.

Charlemagne dealt with it in a very different manner from that pursued by the monarchs of the Avars. He distributed it with a liberal hand, the church receiving valuable donations, including some of the most splendid objects, a large share being set aside for the pope, and most of the balance being given to the poor and to the royal officers, nobles, and soldiers. The amount thus divided was so great that, as we are told, the nation of the Franks "became rich, whereas they had been poor before." That treasure which the barbarian invaders had been centuries in collecting from the nations of Europe was in a few months again scattered far and wide.

Eric's invasion was followed by one from Pepin, king of Italy, who in his turn entered the Ring, took the wealth which

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Eric's raiders had left, demolished the palace of the Chagan, and completely destroyed the central stronghold of the Avars. They were not, however, fully subdued. Risings afterwards took place, invading armies were destroyed, and not until 803 was a permanent conquest made. The Avars in the end accepted baptism and held themselves as vassals or subjects of the great Frankish monarch, who permitted them to retain some of their old laws and governmental forms. At a subsequent date they were nearly exterminated by the Moravians, and after the year 827 this once powerful people disappear from history. Part of their realm was incorporated with Moravia, and remained so until the incursion of the Magyars in 884.

As regards the location of the *Ring*, or central stronghold of the Avars, it is believed to have been in the wide plain between the Danube and the Theiss, the probable site being the Pusste-Sarto-Sar, on the right of the Tatar. Traces of the wonderful circular wall, or of the palisaded and earth-filled fortifications of the Avars, are said still to exist in this locality. They are known as Avarian Rings, and in a measure sustain the old stories told of them, though hardly that of the legend-loving Monk of St. Gall and his romancing informant.

CHAPTER VI

THE CROWNING OF CHARLEMAGNE

Charlemagne, the great king, had built himself an empire only surpassed by that of ancient Rome. All France was his; all Italy was his; all Saxony and Hungary were his; all western Europe indeed, from the borders of Slavonia to the Atlantic, with the exception of Spain, was his. He was the bulwark of civilization against the barbarism of the north and east, the right hand of the church in its conflict with paganism, the greatest and noblest warrior the world had seen since the days of the great Cæsar, and it seemed fitting that he should be given the honor which was his due, and that in him and his kingdom the great empire of Rome should be restored.

Augustulus, the last emperor of the west, had ceased to reign in 476. The Eastern Empire was still alive, or rather half-alive, for it was a life without spirit or energy. The empire of the west had vanished under the flood of barbarism, and for more than three centuries there had been no claimant of the imperial crown. But here was a strong man, a noble man, the lord and master of a mighty realm which included the old imperial city; it seemed fitting that he should take the title of emperor and rule over the western world as the successor of the famous line of the Cæsars.

So thought the pope, Leo III., and so thought his cardinals. He had already sent to Charlemagne the keys of the prison of St. Peter and the banner of the city of Rome. In 799 he had a private interview with the king, whose purpose no one knew. In August of the year 800, having settled the affairs of his wide-spread kingdom, Charlemagne suddenly announced in the general assembly of the Franks that he was about to make a journey to Rome. Why he went he did not say. The secret was not yet ready to be revealed.

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On the 23rd of November the king of the Franks arrived at the gates of Rome, a city which he was to leave with the time-honored title of Emperor of the West. "The pope received him as he was dismounting; then, on the next day, standing on the steps of the basilica of St. Peter and amidst general hallelujahs, he introduced the king into the sanctuary of the blessed apostle, glorifying and thanking the Lord for this happy event."

In the days that followed, Charlemagne examined the grievances of the Church and took measures to protect the pope against his enemies. And while he was there two monks came from Jerusalem, bearing with them the keys of the Holy Sepulchre and Calvary, and the sacred standard of the holy city, which the patriarch had intrusted to their care to present to the great king of the Franks. Charlemagne was thus virtually commissioned as the defender of the Church of Christ and the true successor of the Christian emperors of Rome.

Meanwhile, Leo had called a synod of the Church to consider whether the title of emperor should not be conferred on Charles the Great. At present, he said, the Roman world had no sovereign. The throne of Constantinople was occupied by a woman, the Empress Irene, who had usurped the title and made it her own by murder. It was intolerable that Charles should be looked on as a mere patrician, an implied subordinate to this unworthy sovereign of the Eastern Empire. He was the master of Italy, Gaul, and Germany, said Leo. Who was there besides him to act as Defender of the Faith? On whom besides could the Church rest, in its great conflict with paganism and unbelief?

The synod agreed with him. It was fitting that the great king should be crowned emperor, and restore in his person the ancient glory of the realm. A petition was sent to Charles. He answered that, however unworthy the honor, he could not resist the desire of that august body. And thus was formally completed what probably had been the secret understanding of the pope and the king months before. Charles, king of the Franks, was to be given the title and dignity of Charles, Emperor of the West.

The season of the Feast of the Nativity, Christmas-day of the year 800, duly came. It was destined to be a great day in the annals of the Roman city. The chimes of bells which announced the dawning of that holy day fell on the ears of great multitudes assembled in the streets of Rome, all full of the grand event that day to be consummated, and rumors of which had spread far and wide. The great basilica of St. Peter was to be the scene of the imposing ceremony, and at the hour fixed its aisles were crowded with the greatest and the most devoted and enthusiastic assemblage it had ever held, all eager to behold and to lend their support to the glorious act of coronation, as they deemed it, fixed for that day, an act which, as they hoped, would restore Rome to the imperial position which that great city had so many centuries held.

It was a noble pile, that great cathedral of the early church. It had been recently enriched by costly gifts set aside by Charles from the spoils of the Avars, and converted into the most beautiful of ornaments consecrated to the worship of Christ. Before the altar stood the golden censers, containing seventeen pounds weight of solid gold. Above gleamed three grand coronas of solid silver, of three hundred and seven pounds in weight, ablaze with a glory of wax-lights, whose beams softly illuminated the whole great edifice. The shrine of St. Peter dazzled the eyes by its glittering "rufas," made of forty-nine pounds of the purest gold, and enriched by brilliant jewels till they sparkled like single great gems. There also hung superb curtains of white silk, embroidered with roses, and with rich and intricate borders, while in the centre was a splendid cross worked in gold and purple. Suspended from the keystone of the dome hung the most attractive of the many fine pictures which adorned the church, a peerless painting of the Saviour, whose beauty drew all eyes and aroused in all souls fervent aspirations of devoted faith. Never had Christian church presented a grander spectacle; never had one held so immense and enthusiastic an audience; for one of the greatest ceremonies the Christian world had known was that day to be performed.

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THE CORONATION OF CHARLEMAGNE.

Through the wide doors of the great church filed a procession of bronzed veterans of the Frankish army; the nobility and the leading people of Rome; the nobles, generals, and courtiers who had followed Charlemagne thither; warriors from all parts of the empire, with their corslets and winged helmets of steel and their uniforms of divers colors; civic functionaries in their gorgeous robes of office; dignitaries of the church in their rich vestments; a long array of priests in their white dalmatics, until all Christendom seemed present in its noblest and most showy representatives. Heathendom may have been represented also, for it may be that messengers from the great caliph of Bagdad, the renowned Haroun al Raschid, the hero of the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments," were present in the church. Many members of the royal family of Charlemagne were present to lend dignity to the scene, and towering above them all was the great Charles himself, probably clad in Roman costume, his garb as a patrician of the imperial city, which dignity had been conferred upon him. Loud plaudits welcomed him as he rose into view. There were many present who had seen him at the head of his army, driving before him hosts of flying Saracens, Saxons, Lombards, and Avars, and to them he was the embodiment of earthly power, the mighty patron of the church, and the scourge of pagans and infidels; and as they gazed on his noble form and dignified face it seemed to some of them as if they looked with human eyes on the face and form of a representative of the Deity.

A solemn mass was sung, with all the impressive ceremony suitable to the occasion. As the king rose to his feet, or while he still kneeled before the altar and the "confession,"—the tomb of St. Peter,—the pope, as if moved by a sudden impulse, took up a splendid crown which lay upon the altar, and placed it on his brow, saying, in a loud voice,—

"Long life and victory to Charles, the most pious Augustus, crowned by God the great and pacific Emperor of the Romans!"

At once, as if this were a signal for the breaking of the constrained silence, a mighty shout rose from the whole vast assembly. Again and again it was repeated, and then broke out the solemn chant of the litany, sung by hundreds of voices, while Charlemagne stood in dignified and patient silence. Whether or not this act of the pope was a surprise to him we have no assurance. Eginhard tells us that he declared that he would not

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have entered the church that day if he had foreseen the pope's intentions; yet it is not easy to believe that he was ignorant of or non-consenting to the coming event. At the close of the chant Leo prostrated himself at the feet of Charlemagne, and paid him adoration, as had been the custom in the days of the old emperors. He then anointed him with holy oil. And from that day forward Charles, "giving up the title of patrician, bore that of emperor and Augustus."

The ceremonies ended in the presentation from the emperor to the church of a great silver table, and, in conjunction with his son Charles and his daughters, of golden vessels belonging to the table of five hundred pounds' weight. This great gift was followed, on the Feast of the Circumcision, with a superb golden corona to be suspended over the altar. It was ornamented with gems, and contained fifty pounds of gold. On the Feast of the Epiphany he added three golden chalices, weighing forty-two pounds, and a golden paten of twenty-two pounds' weight. To the other churches also, and to the pope, he made magnificent gifts, and added three thousand pounds of silver to be distributed among the poor.

Thus, after more than three centuries, the title of Augustus was restored to the western world. It was destined to be held many centuries thereafter by the descendants of Charlemagne. After the division of his empire into France and Germany, the imperial title was preserved in the latter realm, the fiction—for it was little more—that an emperor of the west existed being maintained down to the present century.

As to the influence exerted by the power and dominion of Charlemagne on the minds of his contemporaries and successors, many interesting stories might be told. Fable surrounded him, legend attached to his deeds, and at a later date he shared the honor given to the legendary King Arthur of England, of being made a hero of romance, a leading character in many of those interminable romances of chivalry which formed the favorite reading of the mediæval age.

But we need not go beyond his own century to find him a hero of romance. The monk of the abbey of St. Gall, in Switzerland, whose story of the defences of the land of the Avars we have already quoted, has left us a chronicle full of surprising tales of the life and doings of Charles the Great. One of these may be of interest, as an example of the kind of history with which our ancestors of a thousand years ago were satisfied.

Charlemagne was approaching with his army Pavia, the capital of the Lombards. Didier, the king, was greatly disquieted at his approach. With him was Ogier the Dane (Ogger the monk calls him), one of the most famous captains of Charlemagne, and a prominent hero of romance. He had quarrelled with the king and had taken refuge with the king of the Lombards. Thus goes on the chronicler of St. Gall:

"When Didier and Ogger heard that the dread monarch was coming, they ascended a tower of vast height, where they could watch his arrival from afar off and from every quarter. They saw, first of all, engines of war such as must have been necessary for the armies of Darius or Julius Cæsar.

"'Is not Charles,' asked Didier of Ogger, 'with this great army?'

"But the other answered, 'No.' The Lombard, seeing afterwards an immense body of soldiery gathered from all quarters of the vast empire, said to Ogger, 'Certainly, Charles advances in triumph in the midst of this throng.'

"'No, not yet; he will not appear so soon,' was the answer.

"'What should we do, then,' rejoined Didier, who began to be perturbed, 'should he come accompanied by a larger band of warriors?'

"'You will see what he is when he comes,' replied Ogger; 'but as to what will become of us I know nothing.'

"As they were thus parleying, appeared the body of guards that knew no repose; and at this sight the Lombard, overcome with dread, cried, 'This time it is surely Charles.'

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"'No," answered Ogger, 'not yet.'

"In their wake came the bishops, the abbots, the ordinaries of the chapels royal, and the counts; and then Didier, no longer able to bear the light of day or to face death, cried out with groans, 'Let us descend and hide ourselves in the bowels of the earth, far from the face and the fury of so terrible a foe.'

"Trembling the while, Ogger, who knew by experience what were the power and might of Charles, and who had learned the lesson by long consuetude in better days, then said, 'When you shall behold the crops shaking for fear in the fields, and the gloomy Po and the Ticino overflowing the walls of the city with their waves blackened with steel, then may you think that Charles is coming.'

"He had not ended these words when there began to be seen in the west, as it were a black cloud raised by the north-west wind or by Boreas, which turned the brightest day into awful shadows. But as the emperor drew nearer and nearer, the gleam of arms caused to shine on the people shut up within the city a day more gloomy than any kind of night. And then appeared Charles himself, that man of steel, with his head encased in a helmet of steel, his hands garnished with gauntlets of steel, his heart of steel and his shoulders of marble protected by a cuirass of steel, and his left hand armed with a lance of steel which he held aloft in the air, for as to his right hand, he kept that continually on the hilt of his invincible sword. The outside of his thighs, which the rest, for their greater ease in mounting on horseback, were wont to leave unshackled even by straps, he wore encircled by plates of steel. What shall I say concerning his boots? All the army were wont to have them invariably of steel; on his buckler there was naught to be seen but steel; his horse was of the color and the strength of steel.

"All those who went before the monarch, all those who marched by his side, all those who followed after, even the whole mass of the army, had armor of the like sort, so far as the means of each permitted. The fields and the highways were covered with steel; the points of steel reflected the rays of the sun; and this steel, so hard, was borne by people with hearts still harder. The flash of steel spread terror throughout the streets of the city. 'What steel! alack, what steel!' Such were the bewildered cries the citizens raised. The firmness of manhood and of youth gave way at sight of the steel; and the steel paralyzed the wisdom of graybeards. That which I, poor tale-teller, mumbling and toothless, have attempted to depict in a long description, Ogger perceived at one rapid glance, and said to Didier, 'Here is what you so anxiously sought,' and whilst uttering these words he fell down almost lifeless."

If our sober chronicler of the ninth century could thus let his imagination wander in speaking of the great king, what wonder that the romancers of a later age took Charlemagne and his Paladins as fruitful subjects for their wildly fanciful themes!

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CHAPTER VII

PETER THE HERMIT

In the last decade of the eleventh century there might have been seen, wandering through every part of France and Germany, a man of singular appearance. Small of stature, almost dwarfish in size, emaciated by rigid austerities, angular and ungainly in form, clad in a woollen tunic over which he wore a serge cloak that came down to his heels, his head and feet bare, and mounted on an ass that seemed to have practised the same austerities as its master, this singular person rode up and down the land, rousing everywhere as he went the wildest enthusiasm. Miserable as he seemed in body, he was a man of active and earnest mind, of quick intellect, keen and penetrating eye, and an ease, fluency, and force of speech that gave him the power to sway multitudes and stir up the soul of Europe as no man before him had ever done.

This man was Peter the Hermit, the father of the Crusades. He had been a soldier in his youth; afterwards a married man and father of a family; later a monk and recluse; then a pilgrim to Jerusalem, now he was an envoy from Simeon, patriarch of Jerusalem, to arouse the nations of Europe with the story of the cruelties to which Christian pilgrims were subjected by the barbarous Turks.

The pope, Urban II., had blessed his enterprise; and then, dressed and mounted as described, and bearing in his arms a huge cross, the inspired envoy rode throughout the Teutonic lands, everywhere recounting with vehement speech and with the force of fiery indignation the sufferings of the Christians and the barbarities of the Turks, and calling on all pious souls to take arms in defence of the Holy Sepulchre and for the emancipation of the Holy Land from infidel control.

"We saw him at that time," says Guibert de Nogent; his contemporary, "scouring city and town, and preaching everywhere. The people crowded around him, heaped presents upon him, and celebrated his sanctity by such great praises that I remember not that like honor was ever rendered to any other person. In all that he did or said he seemed to have in him something divine, insomuch that people went so far as to pluck hairs from his mule to keep as relics."

Never had mankind been more excited. All Europe was aroused, indignant, fiery. The Holy Sepulchre must be rescued, Palestine must be in the hands of the Christians, the infidel Turks must be driven from that sacred soil and punished for the indignities they had heaped upon pilgrims, Europe must march to Asia, and win salvation by driving the unbelieving barbarian from the land sanctified by the feet of Christ.

Everywhere men rose, seized their arms and prepared for the march, of whose length and dangers few of them dreamed. "The most distant islands and savage countries," says William of Malmesbury, "were inspired by this ardent passion. The Welshman left his hunting, the Scotchman his fellowship with vermin, the Dane his drinking-party, the Norwegian his raw fish." So far extended the story of the mission of Peter the Hermit; while in France, Germany, and the other lands in which he made his indignant and fiery appeals, the whole population seemed ready to rise and march *en masse* to the Holy Land.

In 1095, taking advantage of this enthusiasm, Urban II., the pope, called a council at Clermont, in Auvergne, where numbers of clergymen and multitudes of people assembled. Here, after the council, the pope mounted a platform which rose in the midst of a great open space, and around which extended a vast throng of knights, nobles, and common people. Peter the Hermit stood by the pope's side, and told the story of the miseries and humiliations of the Christians in Jerusalem in that fiery and fluent oratory which had stirred the soul of all Europe. Pope Urban followed in an impassioned address, recounting the

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sufferings of the Christian pilgrims, and calling upon the people of France to rise for their deliverance.

"Men of France," he said, "men from beyond the mountains, nations chosen and beloved of God, right valiant knights, recall the virtues of your ancestors, the virtue and greatness of King Charlemagne and your other kings; it is from you above all that Jerusalem awaits the help she invokes, for to you, above all nations, God has vouchsafed signal glory in arms. Christians, put an end to your own misdeeds and let concord reign among you while in those distant lands. If necessary, your bodies will redeem your souls. . . . These things I publish and command, and for their execution I appoint the end of the coming spring."

His eloquent words roused the mass to madness. From the throng rose one general cry, "God wills it! God wills it!" Again and again it was repeated as if it would never end, while swords waving in the air, banners floating on high, and every indication of applause and approval, attested the excitement and enthusiasm of the crowd.

"If the Lord God were not in your soul, you would not all have uttered the same words," cried the pope, when he could make himself heard. "In the battle, then, be those your war-cry, those words that came from God. In the army of our Lord let nought be heard but that one shout, 'God wills it! God wills it!' Whosoever hath a wish to enter upon this pilgrimage, let him wear upon his breast or his brow the cross of the Lord, and let him who, in accomplishment of his desire, shall be willing to march away, place the cross behind him, between his shoulders; for thus he will fulfil the precept of the Lord, who said, 'He that doth not take up his cross and follow me, is not worthy of me.'"

These words aroused a new enthusiasm. The desire to assume the cross spread like a contagion through the crowd. Adhemar, bishop of Puy, was the first to receive it from the pope's hands. This emblem was of red cloth, sewed on the right shoulder of the coat, or fastened on the front of the helmet. In haste the crowd sought materials to make it. The passion for wearing the cross spread like wild fire through Europe. Peter the Hermit, seconded by the pope, had given birth to the Crusades.

The first outburst of enthusiasm was, as always, the strongest. It has been said that in the spring of 1096 six million souls took the road to Palestine. This is, doubtless, a vast exaggeration, but great numbers set out, and an immense multitude of ignorant and enthusiastic people pushed tumultuously towards the Holy Land, in advance of the organized armies of the First Crusade.

As early as the 8th of March, 1096, great mobs—they cannot fairly be called armies—began their journey towards Palestine. They were not only composed of armed men; women and children made up part of them; whole families abandoned their villages; and without organization or provisions, or a knowledge of what lay before them, the ignorant and enthusiastic mass pushed onward with unquestioning faith.

The first body of these enthusiasts, led by a poor knight called Walter the Penniless, was cut to pieces by the natives of Bulgaria, a few only reaching Constantinople. A second multitude, forty thousand strong, was headed by Peter the Hermit. It was similar in character to the preceding. Whenever a town came in sight on their way, the children eagerly asked if that were Jerusalem. The elders were little better informed. Onward they went, through Hungary, through Bulgaria, through the provinces of the Greek empire, everywhere committing excesses, everywhere treated as enemies by the incensed people, until the line of march was strewn with their dead bodies. Peter the Hermit sought to check their excesses, but in vain; and when, at length, a miserable remnant of them reached Constantinople, the Emperor Alexius hastened to convey them across the Bosphorus, to save the suburbs of his city from their ravages.

In Asia Minor they were assailed by the Turks, and numbers of them slain; and when, in the spring of the next year, Godfrey de Bouillon and the other Crusader chiefs, with a real

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army of knights and men-at-arms, reached that locality, and marched to besiege Nicæa, the first important Turkish stronghold on their line of march, they saw coming to meet them a miserable band, with every indication of woeful destitution, at whose head appeared Peter the Hermit. It was the handful of destitute wanderers that remained from the hundreds of thousands who had set out with such high hopes a year before.

Thus began that great movement from Europe towards Asia, which was to continue for several centuries, and end at length in disaster and defeat. But we are concerned here only with Peter the Hermit, and the conclusion of his career. He had set the flood in motion; how far was he to be borne on its waves?

The chiefs of the army welcomed him with respect and consideration, and heard with interest and feeling his account of the misfortunes of those under his leadership, and how they were due to their own ignorance, violence, and insubordination. With the few who survived from the multitude he joined the crusading army, and regained the ardent hopes which had almost vanished from his heart.

The army that reached Nicæa is said to have been six hundred thousand strong, though they were probably not nearly so many. On they went with many adventures, meeting the Turks in battle, suffering from hunger and thirst, enduring calamities, losing many by death, until at length the great city of Antioch was reached and besieged.

Here at first food was plenty and life easy. But the Turks held out, winter came, provisions grew scarce, life ceased to be agreeable. Such was the discouragement that succeeded that several men of note deserted the army of the cross, among them Robert, duke of Normandy, William, viscount of Melun, called the *Carpenter*, from his mighty battle-axe, and Peter the Hermit himself. Their flight caused the greatest indignation. Tancred, one of the leaders, hurried after and overtook them, and brought them back to the camp, where they, overcome by shame, swore on the Gospel never again to abandon the cause of the cross.

In time Antioch was taken, and the Turks therein massacred. But, unknown to the Crusaders, an immense army of Turks was being organized in Syria for its relief; and four days after its capture the Crusaders found themselves in their turn besieged, the place being completely enclosed.

Day by day the blockade became more strict. Suffering from want of food began. Starvation threatened the citizens and the army alike. It seemed as if the crusade might end there and then, in the death or captivity of all concerned in it; when an incident, esteemed miraculous, roused the spirits of the soldiers and achieved their deliverance.

A priest of Marseilles, Peter Bartholomew by name, presented himself before the chief and said that he had had a marvellous dream. St. Andrew had thrice appeared to him, saying, "Go into the church of my brother Peter at Antioch, and hard by the high altar thou wilt find, on digging up the ground, the head of the spear which pierced our Redeemer's side. That, carried in front of the army, will bring about the deliverance of the Christians."

The search was made, a spear-head was found, hope, confidence, enthusiasm were restored, and with loud shouts the half-starved multitude demanded that they should be led against the enemy. But before doing so, the chiefs decided to apprise the leader of the Turks of their intention, and for this purpose chose Peter the Hermit as their boldest and ablest speaker.

Peter, therefore, under a flag of truce, sought the Turkish camp, presented himself without any mark of respect before Corboghâ, the leader of the Turks, and his captains, and boldly told them the decision of the crusading chiefs.

"They offer thee," he said, "the choice between divers determinations: either that thou appear alone in person to fight with one of our princes, in order that, if victorious, thou mayst obtain all thou canst demand, or, if vanquished, thou mayst remain quiet; or again, pick out divers of thine who shall fight, on the same terms, with the same number of ours; or, lastly,

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agree that the two armies shall prove, one against the other, the fortune of battle."

Corboghâ received this challenge as an amusing jest, saying that the chiefs must be in a desperate state to send him such a proposition. "Go, and tell these fools," he said, "that all whom I shall find in full possession of all the powers of the manly age shall have their lives, and shall be reserved by me for my master's service, and that all others shall fall beneath my sword, as useless trees, so that there shall remain of them not even a faint remembrance. Had I not deemed it more convenient to destroy them by famine than to smite them with the sword, I should already have gotten forcible mastery of the city, and they would have reaped the fruits of their voyage hither by undergoing the law of vengeance."

Corboghâ spoke much too hastily. Before night of the next day he was a helpless fugitive, his army destroyed or dispersed. Peter the Hermit returned with his message, but, by the advice of Godfrey de Bouillon, he simply announced that the Turks desired battle, and that instant preparation for it must be made. On the next day the whole Christian army, armed and enthusiastic, issued from the city, a part of the clergy marching at their head, the miraculous spear-head borne before them, and attacked the Turks in their camp. The battle was long, fierce, and stubborn, but in the end the Turks gave way before the fury of Christian enthusiasm, and fled for their lives, vast multitudes of them being slain on the field, while the vain-glorious Corboghâ rode in all haste, with a weak escort, towards far-off Bagdad.

The camp of the Turks was taken and pillaged. It yielded fifteen thousand camels and an unnamed multitude of horses. The tent of Corboghâ proved a rich prize. It was laid out in streets, flanked by towers, in imitation of a fortified town, was everywhere enriched with gold and precious stones, and was so spacious that it would have contained more than two thousand persons. It was sent to Italy, where it was long preserved. So great was the spoil that, says Albert of Aix, "every Crusader found himself richer than he had been at starting from Europe."

In June, 1099, the Crusaders arrived before Jerusalem, and saw with eyes of wonder and delight the vision of the Holy City which they had come so far to gaze upon. After a month of siege the chiefs fixed a day for the grand assault, and on the day preceding that chosen the whole army marched, fasting, and preceded by their priests, in slow procession round the walls, halting at every hallowed spot, listening to the hymns and exhortations of their priests, and looking upward with wrathful eyes at the insults heaped by the Islamites upon the cross and other symbols of the Christian faith.

"Ye see," cried Peter the Hermit, "the blasphemies of God's enemies. Now, this I swear to you by your faith; this I swear to you by the arms you carry; to-day these infidels are still full of pride and insolence, but to-morrow they shall be frozen with fear; those mosques, which tower over Christian ruins, shall serve for temples to the true God, and Jerusalem shall hear no longer aught but the praises of the Lord."

His words were received with shouts of applause by the whole army. His had been the first voice to call Europe to the deliverance of the Holy City; now, with a strong army to back him, he gazed on the walls of Jerusalem, still in the hands of the infidels, likely soon to be in the hands of the Christians. Well might he feel joy and self-gratification, in thinking that all this was his work, and that he had been the apostle of the greatest event in modern history.

On the next day, July 14, 1099, the assault began at daybreak. On Friday, the 15th, Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Crusaders, and the mission of Peter the Hermit was accomplished, the Holy City was won.

With that great day ended the active part played by Peter the Hermit in history. He was received with the greatest respect by the Christian dwellers in Jerusalem, who exerted themselves to render him the highest honors, and attributed to him alone, after God, their deliverance from the sufferings which they had so long endured. On his return to Europe he founded a

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monastery near Hue, in the diocese of Liége, where he spent the remainder of his life in retirement, respected and honored by all, and died there on the 11th of July, 1115.

CHAPTER VIII

THE COMMUNE OF LAON

The history of the kingdoms of Europe has a double aspect, that of the arrogant rule of kings and nobles, and that of the enforced submission and occasional insurrection of the common people, whom the governing class despised while subsisting on the products of their labor, as a tree draws its nutriment from the base soil above which it proudly rises. Insurrections of the peasantry took place at times, we have said, though, as a rule, nothing was gained by them but blows and bloodshed. We have described such outbreaks in England. France had its share of them, all of which were speedily and cruelly suppressed. It was not by armed insurrection that the peasantry gained the measure of liberty they now possess. Their gradual emancipation was gained through unceasing protest and steady pressure, and in no sense by revolt and bloodshed.

A different story must be told of the towns. In these the common people were concentrated and well organized, and possessed skilled leaders and strong walls. They understood the political situation, struck for a definite purpose, and usually gained it. The history of nearly every town in France tells of some such demand for chartered privileges, ordinarily ending in the freeing of the town from the tyranny of the nobles. Each town had its municipal government, the *Commune*. It was this body which spoke for the burghers, which led in the struggle for liberty, and which succeeded in gaining for most of the towns a charter of rights and privileges. Many stirring incidents might be told of this fight for freedom. We shall confine ourselves to the story of the revolt of the Commune of Laon, of which a sprightly contemporary description exists.

A MARRIAGE FEAST IN BRITTANY.

At the end of the eleventh century Laon was a bustling and important city. It was the seat of a cathedral and under the government of a bishop; was wealthy and prosperous, stirring and turbulent; was the gathering-place of the surrounding people, the centre of frequent disturbances. Thierry draws a vivid picture of the state of affairs existing within its walls. "The nobles and their servitors," he says, "sword in hand, committed robbery upon the burghers; the streets of the town were not safe by night nor even by day, and none could go out without running a risk of being stopped and robbed or killed. The burghers in their turn committed violence upon the peasants, who came to buy or sell at the market of the town."

Truly, town life and country life alike were neither safe nor agreeable in those charming mediæval days when chivalry was the profession of all and the possession of none, when the nobility were courteous in word and violent in deed, and when might everywhere lorded it over right, and conscience was but

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another word for desire. As for the treatment of the peasantry by the townsmen, we may quote from Guibert, an abbot of Nogent-sous-Coucy, to whose lively pen we owe all we have to tell about Laon.

"Let me give as example," he says, "a single fact, which had it taken place among the Barbarians or the Scythians would assuredly have been considered the height of wickedness, in the judgment even of those who know no law. On Saturday the inhabitants of the country places used to leave their fields and come from all sides to Laon to get provisions at the market. The townsfolk used then to go round the place carrying in baskets or bowls or otherwise samples of vegetables or grain or any other article, as if they wished to sell. They would offer them to the first peasant who was in search of such things to buy; he would promise to pay the price agreed upon; and then the seller would say to the buyer, 'Come with me to my house to see and examine the whole of the articles I am selling you.' The other would go; and then, when they came to the bin containing the goods, the honest seller would take off and hold up the lid, saying to the buyer, 'Step hither and put your head or arms into the bin to make quite sure that it is all exactly the same goods as I showed you outside.' And then when the other, jumping on to the edge of the bin, remained leaning on his belly, with his head and shoulders hanging down, the worthy seller, who kept in the rear, would hoist up the thoughtless rustic by the feet, push him suddenly into the bin, and, clapping on the lid as he fell, keep him shut up in this safe prison until he had bought himself out."

This has more the aspect of a practical joke than an act of barbarism. But withal, between the cheating of the peasantry by the burghers, the robbery of the burghers by the nobles, and the general turmoil and terror, there might have been found more delightful places of residence than the good city of Laon in the eleventh century. The story of this city is a long one. We are here concerned with but one episode in the tale.

In the year 1106 the bishopric of Laon, which had been for two years vacant, was bought by Gaudri, a Norman by birth, and a man of no very savory reputation. He was a clergyman with the habits of a soldier, hasty and arrogant in disposition, hurrying through the service of the mass, and dallying with delight over narratives of fighting and hunting, one of the churchmen of wickedly worldly tastes of which those days presented so many examples.

Laon soon learned something of the character of its new bishop. Not long was he in office before outrages began. He seized one man whom he suspected of aiding his enemies, and put out his eyes. Another was murdered in the church itself, with his connivance. In his deeds of violence or vengeance he employed a black slave, imitating in this some of the Crusaders, who brought with them such servants from the east. No lawless noble could have shown more disregard of law or justice than this dignitary of the church, and the burghers of Laon viewed with growing indignation his lawless and merciless course.

Taking advantage of the absence of Bishop Gaudri in England, the burghers bribed the clergy and knights who governed in his stead, and obtained from them the privilege of choosing their own rulers. "The clergy and knights," we are told, "came to an agreement with the common folk in hopes of enriching themselves in a speedy and easy fashion." A commune was set up, and given the necessary powers and immunities.

Gaudri returned, and heard with fierce wrath of what had been done in his absence. For several days he stayed outside the walls, clouding and thundering. Then the burghers applied the same plaster to his wrath as they had done to the virtue of his representatives. They offered him money, "enough to appease the tempest of his words." He accepted the bribe and swore to respect the commune. This done, he entered the city in state.

The burghers knew him somewhat too well to trust him. There were higher powers in France than Bishop Gaudri, which were known to be susceptible to the same mercenary argument. A deputation was therefore sent to King Louis the Fat at Paris, laden with rich presents, and praying for a royal confirmation of

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the commune. The king loved the glitter of cash; he accepted the presents, swore that the commune should be respected, and gave Laon a charter sealed with the great seal of the crown. All that the citizens were to do in return, beyond meeting the customary crown claims, was to give the king three lodgings a year, if he came to the town, or in lieu thereof, if he failed to come, twenty livres for each lodging.

For three years all went well in Laon. The burghers were happy in their security and proud of their liberty, while clergy and knights were occupied in spending the money they had received. The year 1112 came. The bishop and his subordinates had got rid of their money, and craved again the power they had sold. They began to consider how the citizens might once more be made serfs. They would not have hesitated long but for that inconvenient grant of Louis the Fat. But King Louis might be managed. He was normally avaricious. The bishop invited him to Laon to take part in the keeping of Holy Week, trusting to get his aid to overthrow the commune.

The king came. The burghers were not long in suspecting the cause of his coming. They offered him some four hundred livres to confirm them in their liberties. The bishop and his party offered him seven hundred livres to restore their power. The higher offer prevailed. The charter was annulled, and the magistrates of the commune were ordered to cease from their functions, to give up the seal and the banner of the town, and no more to ring the belfry-chimes which indicated the beginning and the ending of their sessions.

Wrath and uproar succeeded this decree. The burghers had tasted the sweets of liberty, and were not ready to lose their dearly-bought independence. So violent were they that the king himself was frightened, and hastily left his hotel for the stronger walls of the episcopal palace. At dawn of the next day, partly in fear and perhaps partly in shame, he departed from Laon with all his train, leaving the Easter festival to take place without him.

It was destined to be a serious festival for Bishop Gaudri and his crew of base-souled followers. The king had left a harvest of indignation behind him. On the day after his going all shops and taverns were kept closed and nothing was sold; every one remained at home, nursing his wrath. The next day the anger of the citizens grew more demonstrative. A rumor spread that the bishop and grandees were busy calculating the fortunes of the citizens, that they might force from them the sum promised the king. The burghers assembled in burning indignation, and forty of them bound themselves by oath to kill the bishop and all those who had aided him to destroy the commune.

Some rumor of this got afloat. Anselm, the arch-deacon, warned the bishop that his life was in danger, and urged him not to leave his house, and, in particular, not to accompany the procession on Easter-day. Thus Cæsar had been warned, and had contemned the warning. Gaudri emulated him, and answered, with a sneer of contempt,—

"Pooh! *I* die by the hands of such fellows!"

Easter-day came. The bishop did not appear at matins, or at the later church service. But, lest he should be called coward, he joined the procession, followed by his clergy and domestics, and by a number of knights with arms and armor concealed under their clothes. Slowly through the streets moved the procession, the people looking on in lowering silence. As it passed a dark arch one of the forty rushed suddenly out, crying, "Commune! commune!" No one joined him; the crowd seemed intimidated; their feelings subsided in a murmur; the procession continued on its way undisturbed.

The next day another procession took place. This day the bishop had filled the town with peasants, who were charged to protect his church, his palace, and himself. The people kept quiet. All went well. Bishop Gaudri, satisfied that the talk of danger was all a myth, now dismissed the peasants, feeling quite secure.

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"On the fourth day after Easter," says Guibert of Nogent, "my corn having been pillaged in consequence of the disorder that reigned in the town, I repaired to the bishop, and prayed him to put a stop to this state of violence.

"'What do you suppose,' said he to me, 'these fellows can do with all their outbreaks? Why, if my blackamoor, John, were to pull the nose of the most formidable amongst them, the poor devil durst not even grumble. Have I not forced them to give up what they called their commune, for the whole duration of my life?'

"I held my tongue," adds Guibert; "many folks besides me warned him of his danger, but he would not deign to believe anybody."

For three days all kept quiet. The bishop and his myrmidons busied themselves in calculating how much cash they could squeeze from the people. The people lowered like a gathering storm. All at once the storm broke. A sudden tumult arose; crowds filled the streets. "Commune! commune!" was the general cry; as if by magic, swords, lances, axes, bows, and clubs appeared in the hands of the people; with wild shouts of vengeance they rushed through the streets and burst into the bishop's palace. The knights who had promised to protect him hastened thither and faced the infuriated populace. The first three who appeared were hotly attacked and fell before the axes of the burghers. The others held back. In a few minutes more flames appeared in the palace, and in no long time it was a mass of seething fire. The day of vengeance had come.

The bishop had fled to the church. Here, having no means of defence, he hastily put on the dress of one of his servants and repaired to the church cellar, where were a number of empty casks. One of these he got into, a faithful follower then heading him in, and even stopping up the bung-hole. Meanwhile, the crowd were in eager quest for the object of their wrath. The palace had been searched before being set on fire; the church and all accompanying buildings now swarmed with revengeful burghers. Among these was a bandit named Teutgaud, a fellow notorious for his robberies and murders of travellers, but now hand and glove with the commune. The bishop had named him *Isengrin*, the by-word then for wolf.

This worthy made his way into the cellar, followed by an armed crowd. Through this they went, tapping the casks as they proceeded. Teutgaud halted in front of that in which the bishop was concealed—on what suspicion does not appear.

"Knock in the head of this," he ordered.

He was quickly obeyed.

"Is there any one here?" he asked.

"Only a poor prisoner," came a quavering voice from the depths of the cask.

"Ha! ha!" laughed Teutgaud; "so it is you, Master Isengrin, who are hiding here!"

Seizing the trembling bishop by the hair, he dragged him without ceremony from the cask. The frightened culprit fell on his knees and begged piteously for his life. He would do anything; he would give up the bishopric, yield them all the money he had, and leave the country.

Insults and blows were the only replies. In a minute more the unfortunate man was dead. Teutgaud, true to his profession, cut off his ringer to obtain the episcopal ring that glittered on it. Stripped of its clothing, the body was hurled into a corner, and the furious throng flung stones and mud at it, as the only vent remaining to their revengeful passions.

All that day and the night that followed the armed and maddened townsmen searched the streets and houses of Laon for the supporters of the murdered bishop, and numbers of them shared his fate. Not the guilty alone, but many of the innocent, perished before the blind wrath of the multitude. "The progress of the fire," says Guibert, "kindled on two sides at once, was so rapid, and the winds drove the flames so furiously in the

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direction of the convent of St. Vincent, that the monks were afraid of seeing all they possessed become the fire's prey, and all the persons who had taken refuge in this monastery trembled as if they had seen swords hanging over their heads."

It was a day and night of frightful excess, one of those dread occasions which arise when men are roused to violence by injustice, and for the time break all the bonds of mercy and moderation which ordinarily control them. Regret at their insensate rage is sure to succeed all such outbreaks. Retribution is likely to follow. Consternation came to the burghers of Laon when calm thought returned to them. They had defied the king. What would he do? To protect themselves they added to the burden of their offences, summoning to their aid Thomas de Marle, the son of Lord Enguerraud de Coucy, a man who was little better than a brigand, and with a detestable reputation for cruelty and ferocity.

De Marle was not quite ready to undertake this task. He consulted his people, who declared that it would be folly for their small force to seek to defend such a city against the king. He thereupon induced the burghers to meet him in a field, about a mile from the city, where he would make answer to their request. When they had come, he said,—

"Laon is the head of the kingdom; it is impossible for me to keep the king from making himself master of it. If you fear his arms, follow me to my own land, and you will find in me a protector and a friend."

Their consternation was extreme at this advice. For the time being they were in a panic, through fear of the king's vengeance, and the conference ended in many of them taking the advice of the Lord of Marle, and flying with him to his stronghold. Teutgaud was among the number that accepted his protection.

The news of their flight quickly spread to the country places around Laon. The story went that the town was quite deserted. The peasants, filled with hopes of plunder, hastened to the town, took possession of what empty houses they found, and carried off what money and other valuables they could discover. "Before long," says Guibert, "there arose between the first and last comers disputes about the partition of their plunder; all that the small folks had taken soon passed into the hands of the powerful; if two men met a third quite alone they stripped him; the state of the town was truly pitiable. The burghers who had quitted it with Thomas de Marle had beforehand destroyed and burnt the houses of the clergy and grandees whom they hated; and now the grandees, escaped from the massacre, carried off in their turn from the houses of the fugitives all means of subsistence and all movables to the very hinges and bolts."

What succeeded must be briefly told. The story of the events here described spread through the kingdom. Thomas de Marle was put under ban by the king and excommunicated by the church. Louis raised an army and marched against him. De Marle was helpless with illness, but truculent in temper. He defied the king, and would not listen to his summons. Louis attacked his castles, took two of them, Crecy and Nogent, and in the end forced him to buy pardon by a heavy ransom and an indemnity to the church. As for the burghers who had taken refuge with him, the king showed them no mercy. They had had a hand in the murder of Bishop Gaudri, and all of them were hung.

The remaining story of Laon is too long for our space. The burghers continued to demand their liberties, and in 1128 a new charter was granted them. This they retained, except during some intervals, until that later period when the mediæval system of municipal government came to an end, and all the cities and towns fell under the direct control of the deputies of the king.

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CHAPTER IX

HOW BIG FERRÉ FOUGHT FOR FRANCE

It was in the heart of the Hundred Years' War. Everywhere France lay desolate under the feet of the English invaders. Never had land been more torn and rent, and never with less right and justice. Like a flock of vultures the English descended upon the fair realm of France, ravaging as they went, leaving ruin behind their footsteps, marching hither and thither at will, now victorious, now beaten, yet ever plundering, ever desolating. Wherever they came the rich were ruined, the poor were starved, want and misery stared each other in the face, happy homes became gaping ruins, fertile fields became sterile wastes. It was a pandemonium of war, a frightful orgy of military license, a scene to make the angels weep and demons rejoice over the cruelty of man.

In the history of this dreadful business we find little to show what part the peasantry took in the affair, beyond that of mere suffering. The man-at-arms lorded it in France; the peasant endured.

Yet occasionally this down-trodden sufferer took arms against his oppressors, and contemporary chronicles give us some interesting insight into brave deeds done by the tiller of the soil. One of these we propose to tell,—a stirring and romantic one. It is half legendary, perhaps, yet there is reason to believe that it is in the main true, and it paints a vivid picture of those days of blood and violence which is well worthy of reproduction.

In 1358 the king of Navarre, who had aided the English in their raids, suddenly made peace with France. This displeased his English allies, who none the less, however, continued their destructive raids, small parties marching hither and thither, now victorious, now vanquished, an interminable series of minor encounters taking the place of large operations. Both armies were reduced to guerilla bands, who fought as they met, and lived meanwhile on the land and its inhabitants. The battle of Poitiers had been recently fought, the king of France was a prisoner, there was no organization, no central power, in the realm, and wherever possible the population took arms and fought in their own defence, seeking some little relief from the evils of anarchy.

The scene of the story we propose to tell is a small stronghold called Longueil, not far from Compiègne and near the banks of the Oise. It was pretty well fortified, and likely to prove a point of danger to the district if the enemy should seize it and make it a centre of their plundering raids. There were no soldiers to guard it, and the peasants of the vicinity, Jacques Bonhomme (Jack Goodfellow) as they were called, undertook its defence. This was no unauthorized action. The lord-regent of France and the abbot of the monastery of St. Corneille-de-Compiègne, near by, gave them permission, glad, doubtless, to have even their poor aid, in the absence of trained soldiery.

In consequence, a number of the neighboring tillers of the soil garrisoned the place, providing themselves with arms and provisions, and promising the regent to defend the town until death. Hither came many of the villagers for security, continuing the labors which yielded them a poor livelihood, but making Longueil their stronghold of defence. In all there were some two hundred of them, their chosen captain being a tall, finely-formed man, named William a-Larks *(aux Alouettes)*. For servant, this captain had a gigantic peasant, a fellow of great stature, marvellous strength, and undaunted boldness, and withal of extreme modesty. He bore the name of Big Ferré.

This action of the peasants called the attention of the English to the place, and roused in them a desire to possess it. *Jacques Bonhomme* was held by them in utter contempt, and the peasant garrison simply brought to their notice the advantage of the place as a well-fortified centre of operations. That these poor

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dirt delvers could hold their own against trained warriors seemed a matter not worth a second thought.

"Let us drive the base-born rogues from the town and take possession of it," said they. "It will be a trifle to do it, and the place will serve us well."

Such seemed the case. The peasants, unused to war and lacking all military training, streamed in and out at pleasure, leaving the gates wide open, and taking no precautions against the enemy. Suddenly, to their surprise and alarm, they saw a strong body of armed men entering the open gates and marching boldly into the court-yard of the stronghold, the heedless garrison gazing with gaping eyes at them from the windows and the inner courts. It was a body of English men-at-arms, two hundred strong, who had taken the unguarded fortress by surprise.

Down came the captain, William a-Larks, to whose negligence this surprise was due, and made a bold and fierce assault on the invaders, supported by a body of his men. But the English forced their way inward, pushed back the defenders, surrounded the captain, and quickly struck him to the earth with a mortal wound. Defence seemed hopeless. The assailants had gained the gates and the outer court, dispersed the first party of defenders, killed their captain, and were pushing their way with shouts of triumph into the stronghold within. The main body of the peasants were in the inner court, Big Ferré at their head, but it was beyond reason to suppose that they could stand against this compact and well-armed body of invaders.

Yet they had promised the regent to hold the place until death, and they meant it.

"It is death fighting or death yielding," they said. "These men will slay us without mercy; let us sell them our lives at a dear price."

"Gathering themselves discreetly together," says the chronicler, "they went down by different gates, and struck out with mighty blows at the English, as if they had been beating out their corn on the threshing-floor; their arms went up and down again, and every blow dealt out a mighty wound."

Big Ferré led a party of the defenders against the main body of the English, pushing his way into the outer court where the captain had fallen. When he saw his master stretched bleeding and dying on the ground, the faithful fellow gave vent to a bitter cry, and rushed with the rage of a lion upon the foe, wielding a great axe like a feather in his hands.

The English looked with surprise and alarm on this huge fellow, who topped them all in height by a head and shoulders, and who came forward like a maddened bull, uttering short, hoarse cries of rage, while the heavy axe quivered in his vigorous grasp. In a moment he was upon them, striking such quick and deadly blows that the place before him was soon void of living men. Of one man the head was crushed; of another the arm was lopped off; a third was hurled back with a gaping wound. His comrades, seeing the havoc he was making, were filled with ardor, and seconded him well, pressing on the dismayed English and forcing them bodily back. In an hour, says the chronicler, the vigorous fellow had slain with his own hand eighteen of the foe, without counting the wounded.

This was more than flesh and blood could bear. The English turned to fly; some leaped in terror into the ditches, others sought to regain the gates; after them rushed Big Ferré, still full of the rage of battle. Reaching the point where the English had planted their flag, he killed the bearer, seized the standard, and bade one of his followers to go and fling it into the ditch, at a point where the wall was not yet finished.

"I cannot," said the man; "there are still too many English there."

"Follow me with the flag," said Big Ferré.

Like a woodman making a lane through a thicket, the burly champion cleared an avenue through the ranks of the foe,

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and enabled his follower to hurl the flag into the ditch. Then, turning back, he made such havoc among the English who still remained within the wall, that all who were able fled in terror from his deadly axe. In a short time the place was cleared and the gates closed, the English—such of them as were left—making their way with all haste from that fatal place. Of those who had come, the greater part never went back. It is said that the axe of Big Ferré alone laid more than forty of them low in death. In this number the chronicler may have exaggerated, but the story as a whole is probably true.

The sequel to this exploit of the giant champion is no less interesting. The huge fellow whom steel could not kill was slain by water,—not by drowning, however, but by drinking. And this is how it came to pass.

COLUMN OF JULY, PLACE DE LA BASTILLE.

The story of the doings at Longueil filled the English with shame and anger. When the bleeding and exhausted fugitives came back and reported the fate of their fellows, indignation and desire for revenge animated all the English in the vicinity. On the following day they gathered from all the camps in the neighborhood and marched in force on Longueil, bent on making the peasants pay dearly for the slaughter of their comrades.

This time they found entrance not so easy. The gates were closed, the walls well manned. Big Ferré was now the captain of Longueil, and so little did he or his followers fear the assaults of their foes, that they sallied out boldly upon them, their captain in the lead with his mighty axe.

Fierce was the fray that followed. The peasants fought like tigers, their leader like a lion. The English were broken, slaughtered, driven like sheep before the burly champion and his bold followers. Many were slain or sorely wounded. Numbers were taken, among them some of the English nobles. The remainder fled in a panic, not able to stand against that vigorous arm and deadly axe, and the fierce courage which the exploits of their leader gave to the peasants. The field was cleared and Longueil again saved.

Big Ferré, overcome with heat and fatigue, sought his home at the end of the fight, and there drank such immoderate draughts of cold water that he was seized with a fever. He was put to bed, but would not part with his axe, "which was so heavy that a man of the usual strength could scarcely lift it from the ground with both hands." In this statement one would say that the worthy chronicler must have romanced a little.

The news that their gigantic enemy was sick came to the ears of the English, and filled them with joy and hope. He was outside the walls of Longueil, and might be assailed in his bed. Twelve men-at-arms were chosen, their purpose being to creep up secretly upon the place, surround it, and kill the burly champion before aid could come to him.

The plan was well laid, but it failed through the watchfulness of the sick man's wife. She saw the group of armed men before they could complete their dispositions, and hurried with the alarming news to the bedside of her husband.

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"The English are coming!" she cried. "I fear it is for you they are looking. What will you do?"

Big Ferré answered by springing from bed, arming himself in all haste despite his sickness, seizing his axe, and leaving the house. Entering his little yard, he saw the foe closing covertly in on his small mansion, and shouted, angrily,—

"Ah, you scoundrels! you are coming to take me in my bed. You shall not get me there; come, take me here if you will."

Setting his back against a wall, he defended himself with his usual strength and courage. The English attacked him in a body, but found it impossible to get inside the swing of that deadly axe. In a little while five of them lay wounded upon the ground, and the other seven had taken to flight.

Big Ferré returned triumphantly to his bed; but, heated by his exertions, he drank again too freely of cold water. In consequence his fever returned, more violently than before. A few days afterwards the brave fellow, sinking under his sickness, went out of the world, conquered by water where steel had been of no avail. "All his comrades and his country wept for him bitterly, for, so long as he lived, the English would not have come nigh this place."

And so ended the short but brilliant career of the notable Big Ferré, one of those peasant heroes who have risen from time to time in all countries, yet rarely have lived long enough to make their fame enduring. His fate teaches one useful warning, that imprudence is often more dangerous than armed men.

We are told nothing concerning the fate of Longueil after his death. Probably the English found it an easy prey when deprived of the peasant champion, who had held it so bravely and well; though it may be that the wraith of the burly hero hung about the place and still inspired his late companions to successful resistance to their foes. Its fate is one of those many half-told tales on which history shuts its door, after revealing all that it holds to be of interest to mankind.

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CHAPTER X

BERTRAND DU GUESCLIN

In the castle of Motte-Broon, near Rennes, France, there was born about the year 1314 "the ugliest child from Rennes to Dinan," as an uncomplimentary chronicle says. He was a flat-nosed, swarthy, big-headed, broad-shouldered fellow, a regular wretch, in his own mother's words, violent in temper, using his fist as freely as his tongue, driving his tutor away before he could teach him to read, but having no need to be taught to fight, since this art came to him by nature. At sixteen he fled from home to Rennes, where he entered into adventures, quarrels, and challenges, and distinguished himself by strength, courage, and a strong sense of honor.

He quickly took part in the wars of the time, showed his prowess in every encounter, and in the war against Navarre, won the highest honors. At a later date he engaged in the civil wars of Spain, where he headed an army of thirty thousand men. In the end the adventurers who followed him, Burgundian, Picard, Champagnese, Norman, and others, satisfied with their spoils, left him and returned to France. Bertrand had but some fifteen hundred men-at-arms remaining under his command when a great peril confronted him. He was a supporter of Henry of Transtamare, who was favorable to France, and who had made him Constable of Castile. This was not pleasing to Edward III. of England. Don Pedro the Cruel, a king equally despised and detested, had been driven from Castile by the French allies of his brother Henry. Edward III. determined to replace him on the throne, and with this intent sent his son, the Black Prince, with John Chandos, the ablest of the English leaders, and an army of twenty-seven thousand men, into the distracted kingdom.

A fierce battle followed on April 3, 1367. The ill-disciplined soldiers of Henry were beaten and put to rout. Du

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Guesclin and his men-at-arms alone maintained the fight, with a courage that knew no yielding. In the end they were partly driven back, partly slain. Du Guesclin set his back against a wall, and fought with heroic courage. There were few with him. Up came the Prince of Wales, saw what was doing, and cried,—

"Gentle marshals of France, and you too, Bertrand, yield yourselves to me."

"Yonder men are my foes," exclaimed Don Pedro, who accompanied the prince; "it is they who took from me my kingdom, and on them I mean to take vengeance."

He came near to have ended his career of vengeance then and there. Du Guesclin, incensed at his words, sprang forward and dealt him so furious a blow with his sword as to hurl him fainting to the ground. Then, turning to the prince, the valiant warrior said, "Nathless, I give up my sword to the most valiant prince on earth."

The prince took the sword, and turning to the Captal of Buch, the Navarrese commander, whom Bertrand had years before defeated and captured, bade him keep the prisoner.

"Aha, Sir Bertrand," said the Captal, "you took me at the battle of Cocherel, and to-day I've got you."

"Yes," retorted Bertrand; "but at Cocherel I took you myself, and here you are only my keeper."

Pedro was restored to the throne of Castile,—which he was not long to hold,—and the Prince of Wales returned to Bordeaux, bringing him his prisoner. He treated him courteously enough, but held him in strict captivity, and to Sir Hugh Calverley, who begged that he would release him at a ransom suited to his small estate, he answered,—

"I have no wish for ransom from him. I will have his life prolonged in spite of himself. If he were released he would be in battle again, and always making war."

And so Bertrand remained in captivity, until an event occurred of which the chroniclers give us an entertaining story. It is this event which it is our purpose to relate.

A day came in which the Prince of Wales and his noble companions, having risen from dinner, were amusing themselves with narratives of daring deeds of arms, striking love-passages, and others of the tales with which the barons of that day were wont to solace their leisure. The talk came round to the story of how St. Louis, when captive in Tunis, had been ransomed with fine gold, paid down by weight. At this point the prince spoke, somewhat unthinkingly.

"When a good knight is made prisoner in fair feat of arms," he said, "and sworn to abide prisoner, he should on no account depart without his master's leave. But one should not demand such portion of his substance in ransom as to leave him unable to equip himself again."

The Sire de Lebret, who was friendly to Du Guesclin, answered,—

"Noble sire, be not angry if I relate what I have heard said of you in your absence."

"By my faith," said the prince, "right little should I love follower of mine, sitting at my table, if he heard a word said against my honor and apprised me not of it."

"Sire," answered he of Lebret, "men say that you hold in prison a knight whose name I well know, whom you dare not deliver."

"That is true," broke in Oliver de Clisson; "I have heard the same said."

The prince heard them with a countenance that reddened with anger.

"I know no knight in the world," he declared, "who, if he were my prisoner, I would not put to a fair ransom, according to his ability."

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"How, then, do you forget Bertrand du Guesclin?" said Lebret.

The prince doubly changed color on hearing this. He felt himself fairly caught, and, after a minute's indecision, he gave orders that Bertrand should be brought before him.

The knights who went in search found Bertrand talking with his chamberlain, as a relief to his weariness.

"You are come in good time," he said to his visitors, and bade the chamberlain bring wine.

"It is fitting that we should have good and strong wine," said one of the knights, "for we bring you good and pleasant tidings, with the best of good-will."

"The prince has sent us for you," said another. "We think you will be ransomed by the help of the many friends you have in court."

"What say you?" answered Bertrand. "I have not a half-penny to my purse, and owe more than ten thousand livres in this city, which have been lent me since I have been held prisoner here. I cannot well ask more from my friends."

"How have you got rid of so much?" asked one of his visitors.

"I can easily answer for that," said Bertrand, with a laugh. "I have eaten, drunk, given, and played at dice. A little money is soon spent. But that matters not; if once free I shall soon pay it. He who, for my help, lends me the keys of his money, has it in the best of keeping."

"Sir, you are stout-hearted," answered an officer. "It seems to you that everything which you would have must happen."

"By my faith, you are right," said Bertrand, heartily. "In my view a dispirited man is a beaten and discomfited one."

"Surely there is enchantment in your blood," rejoined the officer, "for you seem proof against every shock."

Leaving Bertrand's chamber, they sought that in which was the prince and his companions. The prisoner was dressed in a rough gray coat, and bore himself with manly ease and assurance. The prince laughed pleasantly on seeing him.

"Well, Bertrand, how are you?" he asked.

"Sir, when it shall please you, I may fare better," answered Bertrand, bowing slightly. "Many a day have I heard the rats and mice, but it is long since I have heard the song of birds. I shall hear them when it is your pleasure."

"That shall be when you will, Bertrand," said the prince. "I require you only to swear never to bear arms against me nor these with me, nor to assist Henry of Spain. If you consent to this, we shall set you free, pay your debts, and give ten thousand florins to equip you anew. If you refuse, you shall not go."

"Then, sir," answered Bertrand, proudly, "my deliverance will not come to pass, for before I do this, may I lie chained by the leg in prison while I live. With God's will, I shall never be a reproach to my friends, but shall serve with my whole heart the good king of France, and the noble dukes of Anjou, Berry, Burgundy, and Bourbon, whose subject I have been. But, so please you, worthy prince, suffer me to go. You have held me too long in prison, wrongfully and without cause. Had I been free I had intended to go from France, to work out my salvation by fighting the Saracens."

"Why, then, went you not straight, without stopping?" asked the prince.

"I will tell you," exclaimed Bertrand, in a loud and fierce tone. "We found Peter,—the curse of God confound him!—who had long since thrice falsely murdered his noble queen, who was of the royal blood of France and your own cousin. I stopped to take revenge for her, and to help Henry, whom I believe to be the rightful king of Spain. But you, through pride and

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covetousness of gold and silver, came to Spain, thinking to have the throne after the death of Peter. In this you injured your own blood and troubled me and my people, ruined your friends and famished your army, and for what? After all this, Peter has deceived you by cheating and trickery, for he has not kept faith nor covenant with you. But for this, by my soul and faith, I thank him heartily."

These bold words were listened to by the prince with a changeful face. Seldom had he heard the truth spoken so bluntly, or with such firm composure in the speaker. When he had ceased, the prince rose, and with a somewhat bitter laugh declared that, on his soul, Bertrand had spoken but the truth. The barons around repeated the same among themselves, and, fixing their eyes on Bertrand, said,—"A brave fellow, the Breton."

"Whether this be truth or no, Bertrand," continued the prince, "you have rejected my offer, and shall not escape without a good ransom. It vexes me to let you go at all, for your king has none like you; but as men say that I keep you prisoner because I fear you, you shall go free on payment of sufficient ransom. Men shall learn that I neither fear nor care for you."

"Sir, I thank you," said Bertrand. "But I am a poor knight of little name and small means. What estate I have is deeply mortgaged for the purchase of war-horses, and I owe besides in this town full ten thousand florins. I pray you, therefore, to be moderate, and deliver me."

"Where will you go, fair sir?" asked the prince.

"Where I may regain my loss," answered Bertrand. "More than that, I say not."

"Consider, then," said the prince, "what ransom you will give me. What sum you name shall be enough for me."

"I trust you will not stoop to retract your meaning," rejoined Bertrand. "And since you are content to refer it to my pleasure, I ought not to value myself too low. So I will give and engage for my freedom one hundred thousand double golden florins."

These words roused the greatest surprise and excitement in the room. Many of those present started, and the prince changed color, as he looked around at his knights.

"Does he mean to make game of me, that he offers such a sum?" asked the prince. "I would gladly free him for the quarter."

Then, turning again to Bertrand, who stood with impassive countenance, he said,—

"Bertrand, neither can you pay, nor do I wish such a sum. So consider again."

"Sir," answered Bertrand, with grave composure, "since you wish not so much, I place myself at sixty thousand double florins; you shall not have less, if you but discharge me."

"Be it so," said the prince. "I agree to it."

Then Bertrand looked round him with glad eyes, and drew up his form with proud assurance.

"Sir," he said, "Prince Henry may truly vaunt that he will die king of Spain, cost him what it may, if he but lend me half my ransom, and the king of France the other. If I can neither go nor send to these two, I will get all the spinstresses in France to spin it, rather than that I should remain longer in your hands."

"What sort of man is this?" said the prince, aside to his lords. "He is startled by nothing, either in act or thought; no more than if he had all the gold in the world. He has set himself at sixty thousand double florins, when I would have willingly accepted ten thousand."

The barons talked among one another, lost in astonishment. Bertrand stood aside, his eyes fixed quietly upon the prince.

"Am I then at liberty?" he asked.

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"Whence shall the money come?" queried Chandos.

"Trust me to find it," said Bertrand. "I have good friends."

"By my faith," answered Chandos, heartily, "you have one of them here. If you need my help, thus much I say: I will lend you ten thousand."

"You have my thanks," answered Bertrand. "But before accepting your offer, I will try the people of my own country."

The confidence of the gallant soldier was not misplaced. Part of the sum was raised among his Breton friends, and King Charles V. of France lent him thirty thousand Spanish doubloons. In the beginning of 1368 the Prince of Wales set him at liberty.

The remaining story of the life of Du Guesclin is a stirring and interesting one. War was the only trade he knew, and he plunged boldly into it. First he joined the Duke of Anjou, who was warring in Provence against Queen Joan of Naples. Then he put his sword again at the service of Henry of Transtamare, who was at war once more with Pedro the Cruel, and whom he was soon to dethrone and slay with his own hand. But shortly afterwards war broke out again between France and England, and Charles V. summoned Du Guesclin to Paris.

The king's purpose was to do the greatest honor to the poor but proud soldier. He offered him the high office of Constable of France,—commander-in-chief of the army and the first dignitary under the crown. Du Guesclin prayed earnestly to be excused, but the king insisted, and he in the end felt obliged to yield. The poor Breton had now indeed risen to high estate. The king set him beside himself at table, showed him the deepest affection, and showered on him gifts and estates. His new wealth the free-handed soldier dispensed lavishly, giving numerous and sumptuous dinners, where, says his poet chronicler,—

"At Bertrand's plate gazed every eye,
So massive, chased so gloriously."

This plate proved a slippery possession. More than once he pledged it, and in the end sold great part of it, to pay "without fail the knights and honorable fighting-men of whom he was the leader."

The war roused a strong spirit of nationality through France. Towns, strongholds, and castles were everywhere occupied and fortified. The English marched through the country, but found no army in the field, no stronghold that was to be had without a hard siege. Du Guesclin adopted the waiting policy, and kept to it firmly against all opposition of lord or prince. It was his purpose to let the English scatter and waste themselves in a host of small operations and petty skirmishes. For eight years the war continued, with much suffering to France, with no gain to England. In 1373 an English army landed at Calais, which overran nearly the whole of France without meeting a French army or mastering a French fortress, while incessantly harassed by detached parties of soldiers. On returning, of the thirty thousand horses with which they had landed, "they could not muster more than six thousand at Bordeaux, and had lost full a third of their men and more. There were seen noble knights who had great possessions in their own country, toiling along afoot, without armor, and begging their bread from door to door without getting any." Such were the happy results for France of the Fabian policy of the Constable Du Guesclin.

A truce was at length signed, that both parties might have time to breathe. Soon afterwards, on June 8, 1376, the Black Prince died, and in June of the following year his father, Edward III., followed him to the tomb, and France was freed from its greatest foes. During his service as constable, Bertrand had recovered from English hands the provinces of Poitou, Guienne, and Auvergne, and thus done much towards the establishment of a united France.

Du Guesclin was not long to survive his great English enemies. The king treated him unjustly, and he threw up his office of constable, declaring that he would seek Spain and enter

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the service of Henry of Castile. This threat brought the king to his senses. He sent the Dukes of Anjou and Bourbon to beg Du Guesclin to retain his office. The indignant soldier yielded to their persuasions, accepted again the title of Constable of France, and died four days afterwards, on July 13, 1380. He had been sent into Languedoc to suppress disturbances and brigandage, provoked by the harsh government of the Duke of Anjou, and in this service fell sick while besieging Châteauneuf-Randon, in the Gévandan, a fortress then held by the English. He died at sixty-six years of age, with his last words exhorting the captains around him "never to forget that, in whatsoever country they might be making war, churchmen, women, children, and the poor people were not their enemies."

He won victory even after his death, so say the chronicles of that day. It is related that an agreement had been made for the surrender of the besieged fortress, and that the date fixed was July 14, the day after Du Guesclin died. The new commander of the army summoned the governor to surrender, but he declared that he had given his word to Du Guesclin, and would yield the place to no other. He was told that the constable was dead.

"Very well;" he replied, "I will carry the keys of the town to his tomb."

And so he did. He marched out of the place at the head of his garrison, passed through the lines of the besieging army, knelt before Du Guesclin's corpse, and laid the keys of Châteauneuf-Randon on his bier.

And thus passed away one of the greatest and noblest warriors France had ever known, honored in life and triumphant in death.

CHAPTER XI

JOAN OF ARC, THE MAID OF ORLEANS

At the hour of noon, on a sunny summer's day in the year of our Lord 1425, a young girl of the little village of Domremy, France, stood with bent head and thoughtful eyes in the small garden attached to her father's humble home. There was nothing in her appearance to attract a second glance. Her parents were peasants, her occupation was one of constant toil, her attire was of the humblest, her life had been hitherto spent in aiding her mother at home or in driving her father's few sheep afield. None who saw her on that day could have dreamed that this simple peasant maiden was destined to become one of the most famous women whose name history records, and that this day, was that of the beginning of her career.

She had been born at a critical period in history. Her country was in extremity. For the greater part of a century the dreadful "Hundred Years' War" had been waged, desolating France, destroying its people by the thousands, bringing it more and more under the dominion of a foreign foe. The realm of France had now reached its lowest depth of disaster, its king uncrowned, its fairest regions overrun,—here by the English, there by the Burgundians,—the whole kingdom in peril of being taken and reduced to vassalage. Never before nor since had the need of a deliverer been so vitally felt. The deliverer chosen of heaven was the young peasant girl who walked that summer noon in her father's humble garden at Domremy.

Young as she was, she had seen the horrors of war. Four years before the village had been plundered and burnt, its defenders slain or wounded, the surrounding country devastated. The story of the suffering and peril of France was in all French ears. Doubtless little Joan's soul burned with sympathy for her beloved land as she moved thoughtfully up and down the garden

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paths, asking herself if God could longer permit such wrongs and disasters to continue.

Suddenly, to her right, in the direction of the small village church, Joan heard a voice calling her, and, looking thither, she was surprised and frightened at seeing a great light. The voice, continued; her courage returned; "it was a worthy voice," she tells us, one that could come only from angels. "I saw them with my bodily eyes," she afterwards said. "When they departed from me I wept and would fain have had them take me with them." Again and again came to her the voices and the forms; they haunted her; and still the burden of their exhortation was the same, that she should "go to France to deliver the kingdom." The girl grew dreamy. She became lost in meditation, full of deep thoughts and budding purposes, wrought by the celestial voices into high hopes and noble aspirations, possessed with the belief that she had been chosen by heaven to deliver France from its woes and to disconcert its enemies.

The times were fitting for such a conception. Two forces ruled mens' minds,—ambition and trust in the supernatural. The powerful depended upon their own arms for aid; the weak and miserable turned to Christ and the Virgin for support; there were those who looked to see God in bodily person; His angels and ministers were thought to deal directly with man; it was an age in which force and fraud alike were dominant, in which men were governed in their bodies by the sword, in their souls by their belief in and dread of the supernatural, and in which enthusiasm had higher sway than thought. It was enthusiastic belief in her divine mission that moved Joan of Arc. It was trust in her as God's agent of deliverance that filled the soul of France with new spirit, and unnerved her foes with enfeebling fears. Joan's mission and her age were well associated. In the nineteenth century she would have been covered with ridicule; in the fifteenth she led France to victory.

Three years passed away. Joan's faith in her mission had grown with the years. Some ridiculed, many believed her. The story of her angelic voices was spreading. At length came the event that moved her to action. The English laid siege to Orleans, the most important city in the kingdom after Paris and Rouen. If this were lost, all might be lost. Some of the bravest warriors of France fought in its defence; but the garrison was weak, the English were strong, their works surrounded the walls; daily the city was more closely pressed; unless relieved it must fall.

"I must go to raise the siege of Orleans," said Joan to Robert de Baudricourt, commander of Vaucouleurs, with whom she had gained speech. "I will go, should I have to wear off my legs to the knee."

"I must be with the king before the middle of Lent," she said later to John of Metz, a knight serving with Baudricourt; "for none in the world, nor kings, nor dukes, nor daughter of the Scottish king can recover the kingdom of France; there is no help but in me. Assuredly I would far rather be spinning beside my poor mother, for this other is not my condition; but I must go and do my work because my Lord wills that I should do it."

"Who is your Lord?" asked John of Metz.

"The Lord God."

"By my faith," cried the knight, as he seized her hands. "I will take you to the king, God helping. When will you set out?"

"Rather now than to-morrow; rather to-morrow than later," said Joan.

On the 6th of March, 1429, the devoted girl arrived at Chinon, in Touraine, where the king then was. She had journeyed nearly a hundred and fifty leagues, through a country that was everywhere a theatre of war, without harm or insult. She was dressed in a coat of mail, bore lance and sword, and had a king's messenger and an archer as her train. This had been deemed necessary to her safety in those distracted times.

Interest and curiosity went before her. Baudricourt's letters to the king had prepared him for something remarkable. Certain incidents which happened during Joan's journey, and

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which were magnified by report into miracles, added to the feeling in her favor. The king and his council doubted if it were wise to give her an audience. That a peasant girl could succor a kingdom in extremity seemed the height of absurdity. But something must be done. Orleans was in imminent danger. If it were taken, the king might have to fly to Spain or Scotland. He had no money. His treasury, it is said, held only four crowns. He had no troops to send to the besieged city. Drowning men catch at straws. The people of Orleans had heard of Joan and clamored for her; with her, they felt sure, would come superhuman aid. The king consented to receive her.

It was the 9th of March, 1429. The hour was evening. Candles dimly lighted the great hall of the king's palace at Chinon, in which nearly three hundred knights were gathered. Charles VII., the king, was among them, distinguished by no mark or sign, more plainly dressed than most of those around him, standing retired in the throng.

Joan was introduced. The story—in which we cannot put too much faith—says that she walked straight to the king through the crowd of showily-dressed lords and knights, though she had never seen him before, and said, in quiet and humble tones,—

"Gentle dauphin" (she did not think it right to call him king until he had been crowned), "my name is Joan the maid; the King of Heaven sendeth you word by me that you shall be anointed and crowned in the city of Rheims, and shall be lieutenant of the King of Heaven, who is king of France. It is God's pleasure that our enemies, the English, should depart to their own country; if they depart not, evil will come to them, and the kingdom is sure to continue yours."

What followed is shrouded in doubt. Some say that Joan told Charles things that none but himself had known. However this be, the king determined to go to Poitiers and have this seeming messenger from Heaven questioned strictly as to her mission, by learned theologians of the University of Paris there present.

"In the name of God," said Joan, "I know that I shall have rough work there, but my Lord will help me. Let us go, then, for God's sake."

They went. It was an august and learned assembly into which the unlettered girl was introduced, yet for two hours she answered all their questions with simple earnestness and shrewd wit.

"In what language do the voices speak to you?" asked Father Seguin, the Dominican, "a very sour man," says the chronicle.

"Better than yours," answered Joan. The doctor spoke a provincial dialect.

"Do you believe in God?" he asked, sharply.

"More than you do," answered Joan, with equal sharpness.

"Well," he answered, "God forbids belief in you without some sign tending thereto; I shall not give the king advice to trust men-at-arms to you and put them in peril on your simple word."

"In the name of God," replied Joan, "I am not come to Poitiers to show signs. Take me to Orleans and I will give you signs of what I am sent for. Let me have ever so few men-at-arms given me and I will go to Orleans."

For a fortnight the questioning was continued. In the end the doctors pronounced in Joan's favor. Two of them were convinced of her divine mission. They declared that she was the virgin foretold in ancient prophecies, notably in those of Merlin. All united in saying that "there had been discovered in her naught but goodness, humility, devotion, honesty, and simplicity."

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Charles decided. The Maid should go to Orleans. A suit of armor was made to fit her. She was given the following of a war-chief. She had a white banner made, which was studded with lilies, and bore on it a figure of God seated on clouds and bearing a globe, while below were two kneeling angels, above were the words "Jesu Maria." Her sword she required the king to provide. One would be found, she said, marked with five crosses, behind the altar in the chapel of St. Catharine de Fierbois, where she had stopped on her arrival in Chinon. Search was made, and the sword was found.

And now five weeks were passed in weary preliminaries, despite the fact that Orleans pleaded earnestly for succor. Joan had friends at court, but she had powerful enemies, whose designs her coming had thwarted, and it was they who secretly opposed her plans. At length, on the 27th of April, the march to Orleans began.

On the 29th the army of relief arrived before the city. There were ten or twelve thousand men in the train, guarding a heavy convoy of food. The English covered the approach to the walls, the only unguarded passage being beyond the Loire, which ran by the town. To the surprise and vexation of Joan her escort determined to cross the stream.

"Was it you," she asked Dunois, who had left the town to meet her, "who gave counsel for making me come hither by this side of the river, and not the direct way, over there where Talbot and the English are?"

"Yes; such was the opinion of the wisest captains," he replied.

"In the name of God, the counsel of my Lord is wiser than yours. You thought to deceive me, and you have deceived yourselves, for I am bringing you the best succor that ever had knight, or town, or city, and that is, the good-will of God and succor from the King of Heaven; not, assuredly, for love of me; it is from God only that it proceeds."

She wished to remain with the troops until they could enter the city, but Dunois urged her to cross the stream at once, with such portion of the convoy as the boats might convey immediately.

"Orleans would count it for naught," he said, "if they received the victuals without the Maid."

She decided to go, and crossed the stream with two hundred men-at-arms and part of the supplies. At eight o'clock that evening she entered the city, on horseback, in full armor, her banner preceding her, beside her Dunois, behind her the captains of the garrison and several of the most distinguished citizens. The population hailed her coming with shouts of joy, crowding on the procession, torch in hand, so closely that her banner was set on fire. Joan made her horse leap forward with the skill of a practised horseman, and herself extinguished the flame.

It was a remarkable change in her life. Three years before, a simple peasant child, she had been listening to the "voices" in her father's garden at Domremy. Now, the associate of princes and nobles, and the last hope of the kingdom, she was entering a beleaguered city at the head of an army, amid the plaudits of the population, and followed by the prayers of France. She was but seventeen years old, still a mere girl, yet her coming had filled her countrymen with hope and depressed their foes with dread. Such was the power of religious belief in that good mediæval age.

The arrival of the Maid was announced to the besiegers by a herald, who bore a summons from her to the English, bidding them to leave the land and give up the keys of the cities which they had wrongfully taken, under peril of being visited by God's judgment. They detained and threatened to burn the herald, as a warning to Joan, the sorceress, as they deemed her. Yet such was their terror that they allowed the armed force still outside the city to enter unmolested, through their intrenchments.

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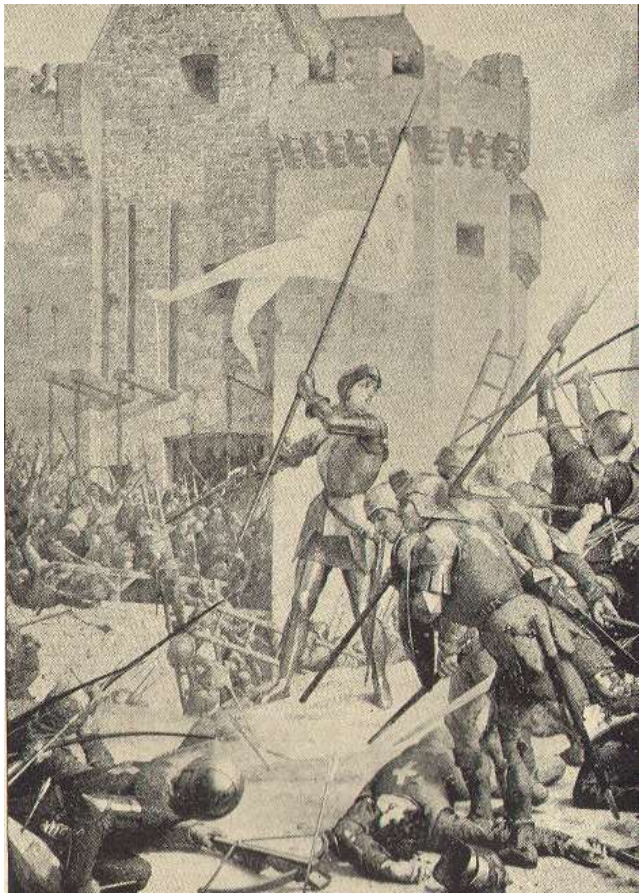
The warning Joan had sent them by herald she now repeated in person, mounting a bastion and bidding the English, in a loud voice, to begone, else woe and shame would come upon them.



JOAN OF ARC AT ORLEANS.

The commandant of the bastille opposite, Sir William Gladesdale, answered with insults, bidding her to go back and mind her cows, and saying that the French were miscreants.

"You speak falsely!" cried Joan; "and in spite of yourselves shall soon depart hence; many of your people shall be slain; but as for you, you shall not see it."

Nor did he; he was drowned a few days afterwards, a shot from Orleans destroying a drawbridge on which he stood, with many companions.

What succeeded we may tell briefly. Inspired by the intrepid Maid, the besieged boldly attacked the British forts, and took them one after another. The first captured was that of St. Loup, which was carried by Joan and her troops, despite the brave defence of the English. The next day, the 6th of May, other forts were assailed and taken, the men of Orleans, led by Joan, proving irresistible. The English would not face her in the open field, and under her leadership the French intrepidly stormed their ramparts.

A memorable incident occurred during the assault on the works south of the city. Here Joan seized a scaling ladder, and was mounting it herself when an arrow struck and wounded her. She was taken aside, her armor removed, and she herself pulled out the arrow, though with some tears and signs of faintness. Her wound being dressed, she retired into a vineyard to rest and pray. Discouraged by her absence, the French began to give way. The captains ordered the retreat to be sounded.

"My God, we shall soon be inside," cried Joan to Dunois. "Give your people a little rest; eat and drink."

In a short time she resumed her arms, mounted her horse, ordered her banner to be displayed, and put herself at the head of the storming party. New courage inspired the French; the English, who had seen her fall, and were much encouraged thereby, beheld her again in arms with superstitious dread. Joan pressed on; the English retreated; the fort was taken without another blow. Back to Orleans marched the triumphant Maid, the people wild with joy. All through the night the bells rang out glad peals, and the Te Deum was chanted. Much reason had they for joy: Orleans was saved.

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It was on a Saturday that these events had taken place. At daybreak of the next day, Sunday, May 8, the English advanced to the moats of the city as if to offer battle. Some of the French leaders wished to accept their challenge, but Joan ran to the city gates, and bade them desist "for the love and honor of holy Sunday."

"It is God's good-will and pleasure," she said, "that they be allowed to get them gone if they be minded to go away; if they attack you, defend yourselves boldly; you will be the masters."

An altar was raised at her suggestion; mass was celebrated, and hymns of thanksgiving chanted. While this was being done, the English turned and marched away, with banners flying. Their advance had been an act of bravado.

"See," cried Joan, "are the English turning to you their faces, or verily their backs? Let them go; my Lord willeth not that there be any fighting this day; you shall have them another time."

Her words were true; the English were in full retreat; the siege of Orleans was raised. So hastily had they gone that they had left their sick and many of their prisoners behind, while the abandoned works were found to be filled with provisions and military supplies. The Maid had fulfilled her mission. France was saved.

History contains no instance to match this. A year before, Joan of Arc, a low-born peasant girl, had occupied herself in tending sheep and spinning flax; her hours of leisure being given to dreams and visions. Now, clad in armor and at the head of an army, she was gazing in triumph on the flight of a hostile army, driven from its seemingly assured prey by her courage, intrepidity, and enthusiasm, while veteran soldiers obeyed her commands, experienced leaders yielded to her judgment. Never had the world seen its like. The Maid of Orleans had made her name immortal.

Three days afterward Joan was with the king, at Tours. She advanced to meet him with her banner in her hand, her head uncovered, and making a deep obeisance over her horse's head. Charles met her with the deepest joy, taking off his cap and extending his hand, while his face beamed with warm gratitude.

She urged him to march at once against his flying enemies, and to start without delay for Rheims, there to be crowned, that her mission might be fulfilled.

"I shall hardly last more than a year," she said, with prophetic insight; "we must think of working right well this year, for there is much to do."

Charles hesitated; hesitation was natural to him. He had many advisers who opposed Joan's counsel. There were no men, no money, for so great a journey, they said. Councils were held, but nothing was decided on. Joan grew impatient and impetuous. Many supported her. Great lords from all parts of France promised their aid. One of these, Guy de Laval, thus pictures the Maid:

"It seems a thing divine to look on her and listen to her. I saw her mount on horseback, armed all in white armor, save her head, and with a little axe in her hand, on a great black charger, which, at the door of her quarters, was very restive and would not let out her mount. Then said she, 'Lead him to the cross,' which was in front of the neighboring church, on the road. There she mounted him without his moving, and as if he were tied up; and turning towards the door of the church, which was very nigh at hand, she said, in quite a womanly voice, 'You priests and churchmen, make procession and prayers to God!' Then she resumed her road, saying, 'Push forward, push forward!'"

Push forward it was. The army was infected with her enthusiasm, irresistible with belief in her. On the 10th of June she led them to the siege of the fortified places which lay around Orleans. One by one they fell. On Sunday, June 12, Jargeau was taken. Beaugency next fell. Nothing could withstand the impetuosity of the Maid and her followers, Patay was assailed.

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"Have you good spurs?" she asked her captains.

"Ha! must we fly, then!" they demanded.

"No, surely; but there will be need to ride boldly; we shall give a good account of the English, and our spurs will serve us famously in pursuing them."

The French attacked, by order of Joan.

"In the name of God, we must fight," she said. "Though the English were suspended from the clouds, we should have them, for God has sent us to punish them. The gentle king shall have to-day the greatest victory he has ever had; my counsel has told me that they are ours."

Her voices counselled well. The battle was short, the victory decisive. The English were put to flight; Lord Talbot, their leader, was taken.

"Lord Talbot, this is not what you expected this morning," said the Duke d'Alençon.

"It is the fortune of war," answered Talbot, coolly.

Joan returned to the king and demanded that they should march instantly for Rheims. He hesitated still. His counsellors advised delay. The impatient Maid left the court and sought the army. She was mistress of the situation. The king and his court were obliged to follow her. On June 29 the army, about twelve thousand strong, began the march to Rheims.

There were obstacles on the road, but all gave way before her. The strong town of Troyes, garrisoned by English and Burgundians, made a show of resistance; but when her banner was displayed, and the assault began, she being at the head of the troops, the garrison lost heart and surrendered. On went the army, all opposition vanishing. On the 16th of July, King Charles entered Rheims. The coronation was fixed for the following day. "Make good use of my time," Joan repeated to the king, "for I shall hardly last longer than a year."

In less than three months she had driven the English from before Orleans, captured from them city after city, raised the sinking cause of France into a hopeful state, and now had brought the prince to be crowned in that august cathedral which had witnessed the coronation of so many kings. On the 17th the ceremony took place with much grandeur and solemnity. Joan rode between Dunois and the Archbishop of Rheims, while the air rang with the acclamations of the immense throng.

"I have accomplished that which my Lord commanded me to do," said Joan, "to raise the siege of Orleans and have the gentle king crowned. I should like it well if it should please Him to send me back to my father and mother, to keep their sheep and their cattle and do that which was my wont."

It would have been well for her if she had done so, for her future career was one of failure and misfortune. She kept in arms at the king's desire. In September she attacked Paris, and was defeated, she herself being pierced through the thigh with an arrow. It was her first repulse. During the winter we hear little of her. Her family was ennobled by royal decree, and the district of Domremy made free from all tax or tribute. In the spring the enemy attacked Compiègne. Joan threw herself into the town to save it. She had not been there many hours when, in a sortie, the French were repulsed. Joan and some of her followers remained outside fighting, while the drawbridge was raised and the portcullis dropped by the frightened commandant. The Burgundians crowded around her. Twenty of them surrounded her horse. One, a Picard archer, "a tough fellow and mighty sour," seized her and flung her to the ground. She was a prisoner in their hands.

The remaining history of Joan of Arc presents a striking picture of the character of the age. It is beyond our purpose to give it. It will suffice to say that she was tried by the English as a sorceress, dealt with unfairly in every particular, and in the end, on May 30, 1431, was burned at the stake. Even as the flames rose she affirmed that the voices which she had obeyed came

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from God. Her voice was raised in prayer as death approached, the last word heard from her lips being "Jesus!"

"Would that my soul were where I believe the soul of that woman is!" cried two of her judges, on seeing her die.

And Tressart, secretary to Henry VI. of England, said, on his return from the place of execution, "We are all lost; we have burned a saint!"

A saint she was, an inspired one. She died, but France was saved.

CHAPTER XII

THE CAREER OF A KNIGHT-ERRANT

Mediæval history would be of greatly reduced interest but for its sprightly stories of knights and their doings. In those days when men, "clad in complete steel," did their fighting with spear, sword, and battle-axe, and were so enamoured of hard blows and blood-letting that in the intervals of war they spent their time seeking combat and adventure, much more of the startling and romantic naturally came to pass than can be looked for in these days of the tyranny of commerce and the dominion of "villanous saltpetre." This was the more so from the fact that enchanters, magicians, demons, dragons, and all that uncanny brood, the creation of ignorance and fancy, made knighthood often no sinecure, and men's haunting belief in the supernatural were frequently more troublesome to them than their armed enemies. But with this misbegotten crew we have nothing to do. They belong to legend and fiction, not to history, and it is with the latter alone that we are here concerned. But as more than one example has been given of how knights bore themselves in battle, it behooves us to tell something of the doings of a knight-errant, one of those worthy fellows who went abroad to prove their prowess in single combat, and win glory in the tournament at spear's point.

Such a knight was Jacques de Lelaing, "the good knight without fear and without doubt," as his chroniclers entitle him, a Burgundian by birth, born in the château of Lelaing early in the fifteenth century. Jacques was well brought up for a knight. Literature was cultivated in Burgundy in those days, and the boy was taught the arts of reading and writing, the accomplishments of French and Latin, and in his later life he employed the pen as well as the sword, and did literary work of which specimens still survive.

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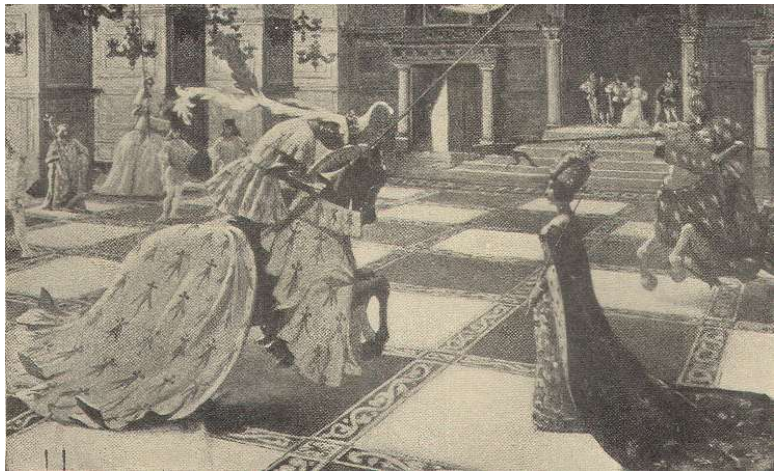
In warlike sports he excelled. He was still but a youth when the nephew of Philip the Good of Burgundy (Philip the Bad would have hit the mark more nearly) carried him off to his uncle's court to graduate in knighthood. The young adventurer sought the court of Philip well equipped for his new duties, his father, William de Lelaing, having furnished him with four fine horses, a skilful groom, and a no less skilful valet; and also with some good advice, to the effect that, "Inasmuch as you are more noble than others by birth, so should you be more noble than they by virtues," adding that, "few great men have gained renown for prowess and virtue who did not entertain love for some dame or damoiselle."



A DUEL OF KNIGHTS.

The latter part of the advice the youthful squire seemed well inclined to accept. He was handsome, gallant, bold, and eloquent, and quickly became a favorite with the fair sex. Nor was he long in gaining an opportunity to try his hand in battle, a squabble having arisen between Philip and a neighboring prince. This at an end, our hero, stirred by his "errant disposition," left Philip's court, eager, doubtless, to win his spurs by dint of battle-axe and blows of blade.

In 1445 he appeared at Nancy, then occupied by the French court, which had escorted thither Margaret of Anjou, who was to be taken to England as bride to Henry VI. The occasion was celebrated by festivals, of which a tournament was the principal feature, and here the Burgundian squire, piqued at some disparaging remarks of the French knights, rode into the lists and declared his purpose to hold them against all comers, challenging the best knight there to unhorse him if he could.

The boastful squire was richly adorned for the occasion, having already made friends among the ladies of the court, and wearing favors and jewels received at the hands of some of the fairest there. Nor was his boast an empty one. Not a man who faced him was able to hurl him from the saddle, while many of them left the lists with bruised bodies or broken bones.

"What manner of man will this be," said the onlookers, "who as a boy is so firm of seat and strong of hand?"

At the banquet which followed Jacques was as fresh and gay as if newly risen from sleep, and his conquests among the ladies were as many as he had won among the knights. That night he went to his couch the owner of a valuable diamond given him by the Duchess of Orleans, and of a ring set with a precious ruby, the gift of the Duchess of Calabria. Verily, the squire of Burgundy had made his mark.

The end of the year found our bold squire in Antwerp. Here, in the cathedral of Notre Dame, he met an arrogant Sicilian knight named Bonifazio, whose insolent bearing annoyed him. The Sicilian wore on his left leg a golden fetter-ring fastened by a chain of gold to a circlet above his knee, while his shield bore the defiant motto, "Who has fair lady, let him look to her well."

Jacques looked at the swaggering fellow, liked his bearing but little, and touched his shield by way of challenge, saying, "Thine is an impertinent device."

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"And thou art but a sorry squire, though with assurance enough for a tried knight," answered the Sicilian.

"That is to prove," said Jacques, defiantly. "If my master, Duke Philip, will give me leave to fight, thou durst not deny me, being, as we are, on his Grace's territory."

Bonifazio accepted the challenge, and as the duke gave consent, a battle between squire and knight was arranged, Ghent being the chosen place of combat.

Two days it lasted, the first day's fight being a sort of horseback prelude to the main combat. In this the squire bore himself so well against his experienced antagonist, that Duke Philip judged he had fairly won his spurs, and on the next day he was formally made a knight, with the accolade and its attendant ceremonies.

This day the work displayed worthily followed the promising preface. After a preliminary bout with spears, the combatants seized their battle-axes, and hewed at each other with the vigor of two woodmen felling a mighty oak. The edges of the axes being spoiled, the knights drew their well-tempered swords and renewed the combat with the lustihood of the heroes of the Round Table, fighting so fiercely that it was not easy to follow the gleam of the swift-flashing blades. In the end the Burgundian proved himself more than a match for the Sicilian, driving him back, hewing rents in his armor, and threatening him with speedy death. At this stage of the affray Duke Philip, at the request of the Duke of Orleans, flung his truncheon into the lists and ended the fight, in time to save the Sicilian knight.

His signal victory won Sir Jacques much fame. His antagonist was a man of mark, and the Burgundian knight gained from his prowess the appellation of "The Good Knight," which he maintained throughout his career. He now determined to take up the profession of knight-errant, travelling from court to court, and winning smiles and fame wherever lists were set up or men of prowess could be found. But first he sought his home and the approval of his parents.

"Go on thy way, with God's blessing," said his stout sire, who had cracked skulls in his day and was proud of his doughty son.

"Yes, go on thy way, Jacques," said his mother in milder tone, and with moist eyes. "I have put a healing ointment in thy valise, that will cure bruises. If thou shouldst break a bone, Heaven send thee a skilful surgeon."

Into France rode Sir Jacques, well mounted, and with squire and page in his train, in search of adventures and opponents, eager for fame and profit. From his left arm, fastened by a chain of gold, hung a splendid helmet, which he offered as a prize to any knight who could overcome him in single combat. To this he added a diamond, which he agreed to present to any lady whom his victor should name. Whoever should first drop his axe in the combat was to bestow a bracelet on his opponent. To this Jacques added a singular stipulation, significant of queer doings in those days, that neither knight should be fastened to his saddle. For all else, he put his trust in God and his own right arm, and in the aid that came to him from the love of "the fair lady who had more power over him than aught besides throughout the entire world."

Thus prepared and thus defying, Sir Jacques rode through Paris and the other cities of France without meeting a knight ready to accept his challenge. This was due to the king, however, rather than to his knights; Charles VII. had forbidden any of his chevaliers to fight the bold Burgundian, the fame of whose strength and prowess was already wide-spread. Through southern France, then in the hands of the English, rode our hero, with the same fortune. Many were ready to meet him at the board, none in the field. Into Spain he passed on, still without an adversary, and sore in temper despite his pride in his reputation.

At last, in the realm of the Dons, he found a knight ready to break lances with him in the field, out of pure duty to his "much loved lady," as he affirmed. This was Don Diego de Guzman, grand master of Calatrava, whom he met on the

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borders of Castile, and who at once accepted his challenge. Yet single combat in those days was not quite the easy affair we might imagine it, if we judged from fiction and legend. Before a knight could indulge in mortal affray he was obliged to obtain the consent of his sovereign, provided that peace ruled between his country and that of his antagonist, as was the case between Spain and Burgundy. The king of Spain was absent. An answer could not be had immediately. While awaiting it, Sir Jacques rode into Portugal, followed by a splendid retinue, and offered an open challenge to the knights of that kingdom to take the field against him.

His ride was almost a royal procession. The story of his one combat seemed to have gained Jacques world-wide fame. From the frontier to Lisbon he was met with a continuous ovation, and in the capital, where a ball was given in his honor, he was invited to open the dance with the queen for partner. And so it went,—an abundance of merry-making, unlimited feasting and dancing, but no fighting. Sir Jacques grew melancholy. He pleaded with King Alphonso.

"I have had a turn in the dance with your queen," he said; "now let me have a tourney with your knights."

"Burgundy is my good friend," answered the king, "and Heaven forbid that a knight from that court should be roughly treated by any knights of mine."

"By all the saints, I defy the best of them!" cried the irate knight.

"And so let it rest," said Alphonso, placably. "Ride back to Castile, and do thy worst upon Guzman's hard head and strong ribs."

There being nothing better to do, Jacques complied, and made his way to Valladolid, having learned that the king of Spain had graciously consented to the combat. The 3rd of February, 1447, was the day which had been fixed for the battle between the two knights, "for the grace of God and the love of their ladies," and on the advent of that day the city named was so crowded with sport-loving Spaniards that its streets were barely passable. A great day in the history of knight-errantry was promised, and gentles and simples, lords and ladies alike, were anxious to see the spectacle.

When the morning of the eventful day dawned all was bustle and excitement in Valladolid, and multitudes gathered at the lists. The Burgundian was on the ground and ready by ten o'clock, but it was three before Don Guzman appeared, and then he came armed with an axe so portentously long in the handle that the Spanish umpires themselves, anxious as they were for his success, forbade its use. Yet the truculent Don gave them no small trouble before he would consent to choose another. This done, the knights were conducted to their tents, which they were not to leave till the clarions had thrice sounded the signal of battle.

Don Guzman, however, proved inconveniently brave and eager. At the first trumpet blast out he sprang, and muttered fiercely when ordered back. The second blast brought him out again, and this time the king himself sent him back "with an ugly word." The third blast sounded. Out now flew both combatants. Battle-axe in hand, they made at each other, and soon the ring of axe on helmet delighted the ardent souls of the thousands of lookers-on. At length, Diego's axe was hurled from his hand. Jacques, with knightly courtesy, threw down his, and an interval of wrestling for the mastery followed. Then they drew their swords, and assailed each other with undiminished fierceness. What might have been the result it is not easy to say; Sir Jacques had no carpet knight to deal with in Don Diego; but the king ended the business by throwing his truncheon into the lists, and refusing permission to the combatants to finish their fight on horseback, as they wished. They thereupon shook hands, while the air rang with the shouts of the spectators.

In the end Don Guzman behaved well. He praised the skill and courage of his antagonist, and presented him with an Andalusian horse, covered with rich trappings. In this Jacques

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was not to be outdone. He sent the Don a charger of great beauty and value, whose coverings were of blue velvet embroidered in gold, and the saddle of violet velvet. Banquets and balls followed the combat; the combatants were feasted to their hearts' content; and Sir Jacques at length left the court of Spain loaded with presents and covered with honor.

And now the "good knight" turned his steps homeward, challenging all champions as he went, but without finding an opponent. Feasting he found in abundance; but no fighting. Stopping at Montpelier, he became the guest of Jacques Cœur, silversmith and banker to Charles VII. His worthy host offered him money freely, and engaged to redeem any valuables which the wandering knight might have found it necessary to pawn. Sir Jacques thanked him, but said,—

"My good master, the Duke of Burgundy, provides all that is necessary for me, and allows me to want for nothing."

Soon after, our errant knight reached Philip's court, where he was received with the highest honors. Then to his paternal castle he wended his way, to be welcomed by his proud parents as gladly as if he had won the Holy Grail. Dancing and rejoicing followed, in which all the neighboring noble families participated, and many a fair damsel shed her smiles—in vain it seems—on the famous and heart-whole knight.

We next hear of Jacques de Lelaing in 1449. In that year the herald Charolais made his advent at the Scottish court, bearing a challenge from the Burgundian knight to the whole clan of the Douglases. James Douglas accepted the challenge, and Sir Jacques appeared in due time at Stirling, where a battle took place in which the Burgundian again came off victor. From Scotland Jacques sought England but failed to find in that kingdom any knight willing to accept his challenge. Yet he had but fairly got home again when an English knight, Sir Thomas Karr by name, appeared at the court of Philip the Good, and challenged Jacques de Lelaing to combat for the honor of old England.

As may well be imagined, this challenge was speedily accepted, the lists being set in a field near Bruges. The English knight was the heavier, but Jacques was the favorite, for once again he was fighting on his native soil. Fierce was the combat. It ended in the Burgundian's favor. Karr struck him a blow on the arm with his battle-axe which rendered that arm useless, it being paralyzed or broken. But the valiant Jacques dropped his axe, closed with his foe, and with the aid of his one arm flung him to the ground, falling upon him. This ended the combat, the Burgundian being pronounced victor. But as he had been the first to drop his battle-axe, he presented Sir Thomas with a rich diamond, as he had agreed in his challenge.

Jacques had been sorely hurt. His wound took a long time to heal. When his arm had grown strong again he repaired to Châlons, where he opened a tournament of his own, in which he held the lists against all comers. This was in fulfilment of a vow which he had made that he would appear in the closed lists thirty times before the completion of his thirtieth year. Much fighting was done, much blood spilt, and much honor gained by Sir Jacques. We cannot tell all that took place, but the noble tournament at Châlons was long afterwards the talk of the country-side.

As for Sir Jacques, he was now at the height of fame, and Philip the Good, to do him the highest honor in his power, created him a knight of the illustrious order of the Golden Fleece. Of his single combats afterwards we shall but speak of one fought at Brussels, in honor of the son of the Duke of Burgundy, then eighteen years old. Jacques de Lelaing was selected to tilt with the young count,—doubtless with the idea that he could be trusted not to harm him. In the first course that was run the count shattered his spear against the shield of Jacques, who raised his own weapon and passed without touching his adversary. This complaisance displeased the duke, who sent word to the knight that if he proposed to play with his adversary he had better withdraw at once. They ran again. This

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time both splintered their spears, and both kept their seats, much to the delight of Duke Philip.

On the next day the grand tourney came off. To behold it there were present no less than two hundred and twenty-five princes, barons, knights, and squires. That day the youthful Count de Charolais acquitted himself nobly, breaking eighteen spears,—and possibly some bones of his antagonists. He carried off the prize, which was bestowed upon him by the ladies of his father's court, and Duke Philip gloried in the prowess of his son.

With that tournament ended the record of the single combats of Jacques de Lelaing. War followed, the duke and his robber barons fighting against the rich cities of Belgium, and spoiling many of them. In those wars Sir Jacques took part. At length, in June, 1453, siege was being made against the Château de Pouckes, a stronghold against whose walls the Burgundians plied a great piece of artillery, an arm which was then only fairly coming into use. Behind this stood Sir Jacques, with a number of other nobles, to watch the effect of the shot. Just then came whizzing through the air a stone bullet, shot from a culverin on the walls of the castle, the artillerist being a young man of Ghent, son of Henry the Blindman. This stone struck Sir Jacques on the forehead and carried away the upper half of his head, stretching him dead on the field. He was yet a young man when death thus came to him. Only eight years before he had made his first appearance in the lists, at Nancy.

Philip the Good was infuriated when he heard of the loss of his favorite knight. He vowed that when the Château was taken every soul in it should be hung from the walls. He kept his word, too, with a few exceptions, these being some priests, a leprous soldier, and a couple of boys. One of these lads made his way in all haste to Ghent, and not until well out of reach of the *good* Philip did he reveal the truth, that it was his hand which had fired the fatal shot.

And so ended the life of our worthy knight-errant, the prize-fighter of an earlier day than ours, the main difference between past and present being that his combats were fought with battle-axe and sword instead of fists, and that his backers were princes, his admirers high-born ladies, instead of the low-lived class of bruisers who now support such knightly exhibitions. Four centuries and more have passed since the days of Sir Jacques. It is to be hoped that long before another century has passed, there will be an end of all single combats in civilized lands.

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CHAPTER XIII

LOUIS THE POLITIC AND CHARLES THE BOLD

In the latter half of the fifteenth century Europe had two notable sovereigns, Louis XI. of France and Charles the Bold, or Charles the Rash, of Burgundy; the one famous in history for his intricate policy, the other for his lack of anything that could fairly be called policy. The relations between these two men ranged from open hostility to a peace of the most fragile character. The policy of Louis was of the kind that was as likely to get him into trouble as out of it. The rashness and headstrong temper of Charles were equally likely to bring trouble in their train. In all things the two formed a strongly contrasted pair, and their adjoining realms could hardly hope for lasting peace while these men lived.

The hand of Charles was ever on his sword. With him the blow quickly followed the word or the thought. The hand of Louis—"the universal spider," as his contemporaries named him—was ever on the web of intrigue which he had woven around him, feeling its filaments, and keeping himself in touch with every movement of his foes. He did not like war. That was too direct a means of gaining his ends. It was his delight to defeat his enemies by combinations of state policy, to play off one against another, and by incessant intrigue to gain those ends which other men gained by hard blows.

Yet it is possible for a schemer to overdo himself, for one who trusts to his plots and his policy to defeat himself by the very neatness and intricacy of his combinations, and so it proved on one occasion in the dealings between these two men. The incident which we propose to relate forms the subject of "Quentin Durward," one of the best-known novels by Sir Walter Scott, and is worth telling for itself without the allurements of romance.

"Louis had a great idea of the influence he gained over people by his wits and his language," says one of his biographers. "He was always convinced that people never said what ought to be said, and that they did not set to work the right way." He liked to owe success to himself alone, and had an inordinate opinion of his power both of convincing and of deceiving people. In consequence, during one of his periods of strained relations with Charles of Burgundy, which his agents found it impossible to settle, this royal schemer determined to visit Charles in person, and try the effect on his opponent of the powers of persuasion of which he was so proud.

LOUIS XI.

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It was as rash a project as Charles himself could have been guilty of. The fox was about to trust himself in the den of the angry lion. But Louis persisted, despite the persuasions of his councillors, sent to Charles for a letter of safe-conduct, and under its assurance sought the Duke of Burgundy in his fortified town of Péronne, having with him as escort only fourscore of his Scotch guard and sixty men-at-arms.

It was a mad movement, and led to consequences of which Louis had not dreamed. Charles received him civily enough. Between rash duke and politic king there was every show of amity. But the negotiations went on no more rapidly now than they had done before. And soon came news which proved that Louis the schemer had, for once at least, played the fool, and put himself in a position of the utmost danger.

The policy of the royal spider had been stretched too far. His webs of plot had unluckily crossed. In truth, shortly before coming to Péronne, he had sent two secret agents to the town of Liége, to stir the unruly citizens up to rebellion against the duke. Quite forgetting this trifle of treachery, the too-hasty plotter had sought the duke's stronghold with the hope of placating him with well-concocted lies and a smooth tongue. Unluckily for him, his agents did not forget their orders.

The Liégoise broke out into rebellion, under the insidious advice of the French king's agents, advanced and took the town of Tongres, killed some few people, and made prisoner there the bishop of Liége and the lord of Humbercourt. The fugitives who brought this news to Péronne made the matter even worse than this, reporting that the bishop and lord had probably been killed. Charles believed them, and broke into a fury that augured badly for his guest.

"So the king came here only to deceive me!" he burst out. "It is he who by his ambassadors excited these bad folks of Liége! By St. George, they shall be severely punished for it, and he himself shall have cause to repent."

The measures taken by the incensed duke were certainly threatening. The gates of the town and castle were closed and guarded by archers. Louis was to all intents and purposes a prisoner, though the duke, a little ashamed, perhaps, of his action, affirmed that his purpose was to recover a box of gold and jewels that had been stolen from him.

The den of the lion had closed on the fox. Now was the time for the fox to show his boasted wit, for his position was one of danger. That rash-headed Duke of Burgundy was never the man to be played with, and in his rage was as perilous as dynamite. It was, in truth, an occasion fitted to draw out all the quickness and shrewdness of mind of Louis, those faculties on which he prided himself! To gain friends in the castle he bribed the household of the duke. As for himself he remained quiet and apparently easy and unsuspicious, while alertly watchful to avail himself of any opportunity to escape from the trap into which he had brought himself. During the two days that succeeded, the rage of Charles cooled somewhat. Louis had offered to swear a peace, to aid Charles in punishing the Liégoise for their rebellion, and to leave hostages for his good faith. This the angry duke at first would not listen to. He talked of keeping Louis a prisoner, and sending for Prince Charles, his brother, to take on himself the government of France. The messenger was ready for this errand; his horse in the court-yard; the letters written. But the duke's councillors begged him to reflect. Louis had come under his safe-conduct. His honor was involved. Such an act would be an eternal reproach to Burgundy. Charles did reflect, and slowly began to relent. He had heard again from Liége. The affair was not so bad as he had been told. The bishop and lord had been set free. The violent storm in the duke's mind began to subside.

Early in the next day the irate duke entered the chamber of the castle in which he held his royal guest a prisoner. The storm had fallen, but the waves still ran high. There was courtesy in his looks, but his voice trembled with anger. The words that

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came from his lips were brief and bitter; there was threat in his manner; Louis looked at him with more confidence than he felt.

"Brother," he said, "I am safe, am I not, in your house and your country?"

"Yes," answered the duke, with an effort at self-repression; "so safe that if I saw an arrow from a bow coming towards you I would throw myself in the way to protect you. But will you not be pleased to swear to the treaty just as it is written?"

"Yes, and I thank you for your good-will," said Louis, heartily.

"And will you not be pleased to come with me to Liége to help me punish the treason committed against me by these Liégoise, all through you and your journey hither? The bishop is your near relative of the house of Bourbon."

"Yes, Pâques-Dieu!" replied Louis; "and I am much astounded by their wickedness. But let us begin by swearing this treaty; and then I will start with as many or as few of my people as you please."

"My brother, the fox, is over-willing," may have been the thought that passed through the duke's mind. "He is ready to lose his foot to get his body out of the trap."

But whatever his thoughts, in action he took prompt measures to bind the slippery king to his promise. From Louis's boxes was produced the cross of St. Laud, claimed to be made of the wood of the true cross, and so named because it was usually kept in the church of St. Laud, at Angers. It was said to have belonged to Charlemagne, and Louis regarded it as the most sacred of relics. On this the king swore to observe the treaty, though it contained clauses to which he would not have assented under other circumstances. The document was immediately signed. Louis, for the first moment since learning of his almost fatal blunder, breathed at ease. As for the second part of his promise, that of helping Charles to punish the townsmen whom he had himself stirred to rebellion, it little troubled his conscience—if he possessed any sentiment that could properly be denominated by this name.

On the day after the signing of the treaty the two princes set out together. Charles was followed by his army, Louis by his modest body-guard, which had been augmented by three hundred men-at-arms, just arrived from France. On the 27th of October [1468) ?> they arrived at the rebellious city. There seemed no trouble to get into it. No wall or ditch surrounded it. The duke had previously deprived it of these obstacles to his armies. But an obstacle remained in the people, who could not easily be brought to believe that the king of France and the Duke of Burgundy, those fire-and water-like potentates, were true allies. The thing seemed impossible. Louis was their friend, and would certainly strike for them. They made a sortie from the city, shouting, "Hurrah for the king! Hurrah for France!"

To their consternation, they saw Louis and Duke Charles together at the head of the advancing army, the king wearing in his hat the cross of St. Andrew of Burgundy, his false voice shouting "Hurrah for Burgundy!"

The surprise of the Liégoise was shared by many of the French, whose sense of national honor was shocked to see so utter a lack of pride and so open a display of treachery in their monarch. They had not deemed his boasted policy capable of such baseness. Louis afterwards excused himself with the remark, "When pride rides before, shame and hurt follow close after," a saying very pretty as a politic apothegm, but not likely to soothe the wounded pride of France.

The treachery of Louis roused a different feeling in the hearts of the Liégoise,—that of indignation. They determined to defend their city, despite its lack of ramparts, and met the advancing army with such spirit that it was obliged to convert its assault into a siege. Night after night the Burgundian army was troubled by the bold sorties of the citizens. In one of these the duke and king both were in danger of capture. At ten o'clock,

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one night, about six hundred well-armed men made a sudden assault upon the duke's quarters. They were ill-defended. Charles was in bed. Only twelve archers were on guard, and these were playing at dice. The assault came with startling suddenness. The archers seized their arms, but had great difficulty in defending the door-way. Charles hastened to put on breast-plate and helmet and to join them. But only the opportune arrival of aid saved him from being seized in the midst of his army.

Louis ran a similar danger. His quarters had simultaneously been attacked. Luckily for him, his Scotch guardsmen were more ready than those of Burgundy. They repulsed the attack, with little heed whether their arrows killed hostile Liégoise or friendly Burgundians. As for the assailants, they found it easier to get into the French camp than out of it. They were killed almost to a man.

On the next day the duke and his councillors determined on an assault. The king was not present, and when he heard of it he did not favor the plan.

"You have seen the courage of these people," he remarked. "You know how murderous and uncertain is street-fighting. You will lose many brave men to no purpose. Wait two or three days, and the Liégoise will certainly come to terms."

Most of the Burgundian captains were of the same opinion. The duke, whose rash spirit could ill brook opposition, grew angry.

"He wishes to spare the Liégoise," he angrily exclaimed. "What danger is there in this assault? There are no walls; they cannot put a single gun in position; I certainly will not give up the assault. If the king is afraid, let him get him gone to Namur."

This insult to the king, which shocked the Burgundians themselves, was repeated to him, and received in silence. He had made up his mind to drain the cup of humiliation to the dregs. The next day, October 30, the assault was made, Charles at the head of his troops. Louis came up to join him.

"Bide your time," said Charles. "Put not yourself uselessly in danger. I will send you word when it is time."

"Lead on, brother," answered Louis. "You are the most fortunate prince alive; I will follow you."

On they marched—into, as it proved, an undefended city. The Liégoise had been discouraged by the fall of many of their bravest men. It was Sunday; no attack was looked for; "the cloth was laid in every house, and all were preparing for dinner"; the Burgundians moved through empty streets, Louis following with his own escort, and shouting, "Hurrah for Burgundy!"

By mid-day the vengeance of Charles was complete; the town had been pillaged; there was nothing left to take in house or church; many a floor was stained with blood; Liége for the time was ruined.

As for the arch-deceiver to whom all this was due, he completed his work of baseness by loading the duke with praises, his tone and manner so courteous and amiable that Charles lost the last shreds of his recent anger.

"Brother," said the king the next day, "if you still need my help, do not spare me. But if you have nothing more for me to do, it would be well for me to go back to Paris, to make public in my court of parliament the arrangement we have come to together; otherwise it would risk becoming of no avail. You know that such is the custom of France. Next summer we must meet again. You will come into your duchy of Burgundy, and I will go and pay you a visit, and we will pass a week joyously together in making good cheer."

It may be that this smooth speech was accompanied by a mental commentary,—"Let me once get from under your claws, my playful tiger, and I will not be fool enough to put myself back there again,"—but if so nothing of the kind appeared on his face.

Charles made no answer. He sent for the treaty, and left it to the king to confirm or renounce it, as he would. Louis

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expressed himself as fully satisfied with its terms, and on the next day, November 2, set out on his return to France. Charles kept him company for some distance. On parting, the king said,—

"If my brother Charles, who is in Brittany, should not be content with the assignment which I, for love of you, have made him, what would you have me do?"

"If he do not please to take it, but would have you otherwise satisfy him, I leave that to the two of you to settle," said Charles.

With these words he turned back, leaving Louis to pursue his way free once more, "after having passed the most trying three weeks of his life."

That the fox kept faith with the lion, or the lion with the fox, is not to be looked for. New disputes broke out, new battles were fought,—not now in alliance,—and the happiest day in the life of Louis XI. was that in which he heard that Charles of Burgundy, the constant thorn in his chaplet, had fallen on the fatal field of Nancy, and that France was freed from the threatening presence of the bold and passionate duke.

CHAPTER XIV

CHARLES THE BOLD AND THE SWISS

On the 6th of February, 1476, Duke Charles of Burgundy marched from Besançon to take the field against the Swiss, between whom and Burgundy hostilities had broken out. There were three parties to this war, Louis XI. being the third. That politic monarch had covertly stirred up the Swiss to their hostile attitude, promised them aid in money, if not in men, and now had his secret agents in both camps, and kept himself in readiness to take advantage of every circumstance that might be turned to his own benefit. Leaving Tours, he went to Lyons, that he might be within easy distance of the seat of war. And not long had he been there before news of the most gratifying character came to his ears, Duke Charles had met the foe, and—but we anticipate.

The army of Burgundy was a powerful one, having not less than thirty or forty thousand men and a strong train of artillery. It was followed, as was Charles's fashion in making war, with an immense baggage-train. Personally his habits were simple and careless, but he loved to display his riches and magnificance, and made his marches and encampments as much scenes of festival as of war. What this showy duke wanted from their poor cities and barren country the Swiss could not very well see. "The spurs and the horses' bits in his army are worth more money than the whole of us could pay in ransom if we were all taken," they said.

Without regard to this, Charles marched on, and on February 19 reached Granson, a little town in the district of Vaud. Here fighting had taken place, and hither soon came the Swiss battalions. Powerful fellows they were, bold and sturdy, and animated with the highest spirit of freedom. On they marched, timing their long strides to the lowings of the "bull of

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Uri" and the "cow of Unterwalden," two great trumpets of buffalo horn which, as was claimed, Charlemagne had given to their ancestors.

Against these compact battalions, armed with spears eighteen feet long, the squadrons of Burgundy rode in vain. Their lines were impregnable. Their enemies fell in numbers. In the end the whole Burgundian army, seized with panic, broke and fled, "like smoke before the northern blast."

So sudden and complete was the defeat that Charles himself had to take to flight with only five horsemen for escort, and with such haste that everything was left in the hands of the foe,—camp, artillery, treasure, the duke's personal jewels, even his very cap with its garniture of precious stones and his collar of the Golden Fleece.

The Swiss were as ignorant of the value of their booty as they were astonished at the completeness of their victory. Jewels, gold, silver, rich hangings, precious tapestry, had little value in their eyes. They sold the silver plate for a few pence, taking it for pewter. The silks and velvets found in the baggage-wagons of the duke, the rich cloth of gold and damask, the precious Flanders lace and Arras carpets, were cut in pieces and distributed among the peasant soldiers as if they had been so much common canvas. Most notable of all was the fate of the great diamond of the duke, which had once glittered in the crown of the Great Mogul, and was of inestimable value. This prize was found on the road, inside a little box set with fine pearls. The man who picked it up thought the box pretty and worth keeping, but saw no use for that bit of shining glass inside. He threw this contemptuously away. Afterwards he thought it might be worth something, to be so carefully kept, and went back to look for it. He found it under a wagon, and sold it to a clergyman in the neighborhood for a crown. This precious stone, one of the few great diamonds in the world, is now in the possession of the Emperor of Austria, its value enhanced to him, it may be, by its strange history.

There was only one thing in this event that did not please Louis XI.,—that Charles had left the field alive. He sent him advice, indeed, to let those poor folks but hard fighters of the Alps alone, well convinced that the fiery duke would not take his counsel. In truth, Charles, mad with rage, ordered that all the soldiers who had fled from the field should be put to death, and that the new recruits to be raised should be dealt with in the same manner if they did not march to his camp with all haste. It cannot be said that this insane command was obeyed, but so intense was his energy, and so fierce his rage against the Swiss, that in no great time he had a fresh army, of from twenty-five to thirty thousand men, composed of Burgundians, Flemings, Italians, and English.

Late in May he was again on the march,—with much less parade and display than before,—and on the 10th of June pitched his camp before the little town of Morat, six leagues from Berne.

Everywhere as he went he left word that it was war to the death on which he was bent. His pride had been bitterly wounded. He vowed to heal it in the blood of his foes.

The Swiss were preparing with all haste, and advancing to Berne. The governor of Morat sent them word to be at ease concerning him. "I will defend Morat," he said, and to garrison and people he swore that he would hang the first who spoke of surrender. For ten days he had held out against Charles's whole army, while his countrymen were gathering.

The men of Zurich were the last to reach Berne. On the 21st of June, in the evening, the Swiss encamped near their foes.

"Have those hounds lost heart, pray?" the duke had just said; "I was told that we were about to get at them."

His wish was to be gratified in a way he had not meant; they were about to get at him. The next day, June 22, opened with a pelting rain. Later, the sun burst through the clouds. With its first beams the Swiss were in motion, marching on the camp of their foes.

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A man-at-arms hurried to the duke's tent, and told him that the Swiss were coming, and that they had attacked the lines. He declared the story was a lie, and drove the messenger with an insulting reproof from his tent. What, these base peasants? To attack his army? The thing was incredible! For all that, he left the tent and hurried to the point indicated. It was true, they had attacked, and were already driving back his men.

Charles rallied them as he best could. The battle was desperate. All the remainder of the day it continued. But before nightfall the Swiss were everywhere victorious, the Burgundians everywhere beaten. Charles had still three thousand horsemen, but they, too, broke before the fierce charges of the Swiss, and in the end he escaped with difficulty, having but a dozen men at his back, and leaving eight or ten thousand of his soldiers dead on the field, the greater part of them killed after the fight by the relentlessly furious Swiss.

Charles, obstinate, furious, wild with rage, sought to collect another army, but failed. No men could be found willing to bear arms against those terrible Swiss. He shut himself up for weeks in one of his castles, dismayed, inconsolable, heated with passion, ready to crush the world if his hand could have grasped it, a sorry spectacle of disappointed ambition and overthrown pride.

Other enemies rose against him. René II., duke of Lorraine, whom he had robbed of his dominions and driven from Nancy, now saw an opportunity to recover his heritage. He had been wandering like a fugitive from court to court. Before Morat he had joined the Swiss, and helped them to their victory. Now, gathering a force, he re-entered his duchy, besieged Nancy, then feebly garrisoned, and pressed it hard. The governor sent messengers to Duke Charles, asking for aid. He received none. The duke did not even reply to him. He seemed utterly dispirited. In this emergency the governor surrendered, and René had his own again.

Yet at that very moment, Charles the Bold, throwing off his apathy, was marching upon Lorraine, with a small army which he had hastily collected. On the 22nd of October, 1476, he reached Nancy, which was once more besieged. At his approach, Duke René left the town, but left it well garrisoned. He went in search of reinforcements. These he found in Switzerland, the agents of Louis XI. promising them good pay, while their hatred of Charles made them fully ready for the service.

On January 4, 1477, René, having led his new army to Lorraine, found himself face to face with the army of Charles the Bold, who was still besieging Nancy. Charles held council with his captains.

"Well," he said, "since these drunken scoundrels are upon us, and are coming here to look for meat and drink, what ought we to do?"

"Fall back," was the general opinion. "They outnumber us. We should recruit our army. Duke René is poor. He will not long be able to bear the expense of the war, and his allies will leave him as soon as his money is gone. Wait but a little, and success is certain."

The duke burst into one of his usual fits of passion.

"My father and I," he cried, "knew how to thrash these Lorrainers, and we will make them remember it. By St. George, I will not fly before a boy, before René of Vaudemont, who is coming at the head of this scum! He has not so many men with him as people think; the Germans have no idea of leaving their stoves in winter. This evening we will deliver the assault against the town, and to-morrow we will give battle."

He did give battle on the morrow,—his last, as it proved. The fray did not last long, nor was the loss of life in the field great. But the Burgundians broke and fled, and the pursuit was terrible, the Lorrainers and their Swiss and German allies pursuing hotly, and killing all they found. René entered Nancy in triumph, and relieved the citizens from the famine from which

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they had long suffered. To show him what they had endured in his cause, there were piled up before his door "the heads of the horses, dogs, mules, cats, and other unclean animals which had for several weeks past been the only food of the besieged."

The battle over, the question arose, what had become of the Duke of Burgundy? None could answer. Some said a servant had carried him wounded from the field; others, that a German lord held him prisoner. But a page soon appeared who said he had seen him fall and could lead to the spot. He did so, conducting a party to a pond near the town, where, half buried in the mud, lay several dead bodies lately stripped. Among the searchers was a poor washerwoman, who, seeing the glitter of a ring on the finger of one of the corpses, turned it over, and cried, "Ah! my prince!"

All rushed to the spot. The body was examined with care. There was no doubt, it was that of Charles of Burgundy. His rash and violent disposition had at length borne the fruit that might have been anticipated, and brought him to an end which gave the highest satisfaction to many of his foes, and to none more than to Louis XI. of France. He was buried with great pomp, by the order of Duke René. In 1550 the emperor Charles V., his great grandson, had his body taken to Bruges, and placed on the tomb the following inscription:

"Here lieth the most high, mighty, and magnanimous prince, Charles, Duke of Burgundy, ... the which, being mightily endowed with strength, firmness, and magnanimity, prospered awhile in high enterprises, battles, and victories, as well at Montlhéry, in Normandy, in Artois, and in Liége, as elsewhere, until fortune, turning her back on him, thus crushed him before Nancy."

To-day it might be written on his tomb, "His was a fitting end to a violent, lawless, and blood-thirsty career."

CHAPTER XV

BAYARD, THE GOOD KNIGHT

Good knights were abundant in the romance of the age of chivalry; they seem to have been greatly lacking in its history. Of knights without fear there were many; of knights "without fear and without reproach" we are specially told of but one, Pierre du Terrail, Chevalier de Bayard, *"Le chevalier sans peur et sans reproche."* Many are the stories of the courage, the justice, the honor, the mercy, the intrepidity in war, the humanity and kindliness of spirit in peace, which make this admirable character an anomaly in that age of courteous appearance and brutal reality yclept the "age of chivalry." One such story we have to tell.

The town of Brescia had been taken by the French army under Gaston de Foix, and given up to pillage by his troops, with all the horrors which this meant in that day of license and inhumanity. Bayard took part in the assault on the town, and was wounded therein, so severely that he said to his fellow-captain, the lord of Molart,—

"Comrade, march your men forward; the town is ours. As for me, I cannot pull on farther, for I am a dead man."

Not quite dead, as it proved. He had many years of noble deeds before him still. When the town was taken, two of his archers bore him to a house whose size and show of importance attracted them as a fair harbor for their lord. It was the residence of a rich citizen, who had fled for safety to a monastery, leaving his wife to God's care in the house, and two fair daughters to such security as they could gain from the hay in a granary, under which they were hidden.

At the loud summons of the archers the lady tremblingly opened the door, and was surprised and relieved when she saw

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that it was a wounded knight who craved admittance. Sadly hurt as Bayard was, his instinct of kindness remained active. He bade the archers to close the door and remain there on guard.

"Take heed, for your lives," he said, "that none enter here unless they be some of my own people. I am sure that, when this is known to be my quarters, none will try to force a way in. If, by your aiding me, you miss a chance of gain in the sack of the town, let not that trouble you; you shall lose nothing by your service."

The archers obeyed, and the wounded knight was borne to a rich chamber, the lady herself showing the way. When he had been laid in bed, she threw herself on her knees before him, and pleadingly said,—

"Noble sir, I present you this house and all that is therein, all of which, in truth, I well know to be yours by right of war. But I earnestly pray that it be your pleasure to spare me and my two young daughters our lives and honor."

"Madam," answered the knight, with grave courtesy, "I know not if I can escape from my wound; but, so long as I live, trust me that no harm shall come to you and your daughters, any more than to myself. Only keep them in their chambers; let them not be seen; and I assure you that no man in the house will take upon himself to enter any place against your will."

These words the lady heard with joy, and on Bayard's request that he should have a good surgeon without delay, she and one of the archers set out in quest of the best that could be found. Fortunately, it proved that the knight's wound, though deep, was not mortal. At the second dressing Master Claude, the surgeon of Gaston de Foix, took him in hand, and afterwards attended him assiduously until his wound was healed, a process which took about a month. After the first dressing of the wound, Bayard asked his hostess, in kindly tones, where her husband was.

"I know not, my lord, if he be dead or alive," she answered, bursting into tears. "If he be living, I am sure he has taken refuge in a monastery where he is well known."

"Let him return home," answered Bayard. "I shall send those after him who will see that he has no harm."

The lady, elate with hope, sent to inquire, and found that her husband was really where she had supposed. Bayard's steward and the two archers were sent for him, and conducted him safely through the turmoil of the streets, where war's ravage, in its worst form, was still afoot. On his arrival, the knight received him with a courteous welcome, and bade him not to be alarmed, as only friends were quartered upon him, and he should suffer no loss in person or estate.

For a month the wounded knight lay on his couch, where, though he was made as comfortable as possible by the assiduous ministrations of his grateful host and hostess, he suffered much from his hurt. At the end of that time he was able to rise and walk across the chamber, though still very weak. But news came that a great battle between the French and the Spaniards was likely soon to be fought, and the brave Bayard burned with warlike desire to take part in the conflict.

"My dear friend," he said to the surgeon, "tell me if there is any danger in setting me on the march. It seems to me that I am well, or nearly so; and, in my judgment, to stay here longer will do me more harm than good, for I fret sorely to be thus tied."

"Your wound is not yet closed," said the surgeon, "though it is quite healed inside. After another dressing you may be able to ride, provided that your barber attends to dressing it with ointment and a little lint every day. The worst of the wound is now on the surface, and, as it will not touch your saddle, you will run no risk in riding."

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Bayard heard these words with gladness, and at once gave orders to his people to prepare for the road, as he would set out for the army in two days.

Meanwhile, his host and hostess and their children were far from well at ease. Until now their guest had protected and spared them, but they knew too well the habits of soldiers to imagine that he intended to do this without being abundantly paid for the service. They held themselves as his prisoners, and feared that he might yet force them to ransom themselves with the utmost sum their estate would afford, perhaps ten or twelve thousand crowns. Yet he had been so gentle and kindly that the good lady entertained hopes that he might prove generous, if softened by a suitable present. Therefore, on the morning of the day which he had fixed for his departure, she appeared in his chamber, followed by a servant who carried a small steel box.

Bayard had been walking up and down the room to try his leg, and had now thrown himself into a chair to rest. The lady fell upon her knees before him; but before he would permit her to speak he insisted that she should rise and be seated.

"My lord," she began, "I can never be thankful enough for the grace which God did me, at the taking of this town, in directing you to this our house. We owe to you our lives and all that we hold dear. Moreover, from the time that you arrived here, neither I nor the least of my people have endured a single insult, but all has been good-will and courtesy, nor have your folks taken a farthing's worth of our goods without paying for them. I am aware that my husband, myself, my children, and all my household are your prisoners, to be dealt with according to your good pleasure, in person and goods; but, knowing the nobleness of your heart, I am come to entreat you humbly to have pity on us, and extend to us your wonted generosity. Here is a little present we make you; and we pray that you may be pleased to take it in good part."

She opened the box which the servant held, and Bayard saw that it was filled with golden coins. The free-hearted knight, who had never in his life troubled himself about money, burst out laughing, and said,—

"Madam, how many ducats are there in this box?"

His action, so different from what she expected, frightened the poor woman. Thinking it to indicate that the sum was below his expectations, she said hurriedly,—

"My lord, there are but two thousand five hundred ducats; but, if you are not content, we will find a larger sum."

"By my faith, madam," he warmly replied, "though you should give a hundred thousand crowns, you would not do as well towards me as you have done by the good cheer I have had here and the kind attendance you have given me. In whatsoever place I may happen to be, you will have, so long as God shall grant me life, a gentleman at your bidding. As for your ducats, I will have none of them, and yet I thank you; take them back; all my life I have always loved people much more than crowns. And take my word for it that I go away as well pleased with you as if this town were at your disposal and you had given it to me."

The good lady listened to him with deep astonishment. Never had she dreamed of such a marvel as this, a soldier who did not crave money. She was really distressed by his decision.

"My lord," she said, "I shall feel myself the most wretched creature in the world if you will not take this small present, which is nothing in comparison with your past courtesy and present kindness."

Seeing how firm she was in her purpose, he said, with a gentle smile,—

"Well, then, I will take it for love of you; but go and fetch me your two daughters, for I would fain bid them farewell."

Much pleased with his acceptance, the lady left the room in search of her daughters, whom the knight knew well, for they had solaced many of the weary hours of his illness with pleasant

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chat, and music from their voices and from the lute and spinet, on which they played agreeably. While awaiting them he bade the servant to empty the box and count the ducats into three lots, two of a thousand each and one of five hundred.

When the young ladies entered, they would have fallen on their knees as their mother had done before them, but Bayard would not consent that they should remain in this humble attitude.

"My lord," said the elder, "these two poor girls, who owe so much to your kindness, are come to take leave of you, and humbly to thank your lordship for your goodness, for which they can make no return other than to pray that God may hold you in His good care."

"Dear damsels," answered Bayard, much affected, "you have done what I ought to do; that is, to thank you for your good company, for which I am much beholden. You know that fighting men are not likely to be laden with pretty things to present to ladies. I am sorry not to be better provided. But here are some ducats brought me by your lady-mother. Of these I give to each of you a thousand towards your marriage; and for my recompense you shall, if it please you, pray God for me, as you have offered."

He swept the ducats from the table into their aprons, forcing them to accept them whether they would or not. Then, turning to his hostess, he said,—

"Madam, I will take these five hundred ducats that remain for my own profit, to distribute among the poor sisterhoods of this town which have been plundered; and to you I commit the charge of them, since you, better than any other, will understand where they are most needed. And with this mission I take my leave of you."

Then he bade them adieu by touching their hands, after the Italian fashion, "and they fell upon their knees, weeping so bitterly that it seemed as if they were to be led out to their deaths."

The dinner hour came and passed. When it was over the knight quickly left the table and called for his horses, being eager to be gone for fear the two armies might come to battle in his absence. As he left his chamber to seek his horse, the two fair daughters of the house came down to bid him a final farewell and to make him presents which they had worked for him during his illness.

One gave him a pair of pretty and delicate bracelets, made of gold and silver thread, worked with marvellous neatness. The other presented him a handsome purse of crimson satin very cleverly ornamented with the needle. The knight received these graceful gifts with warm thanks, saying that presents which came from hands so fair were more to him than a hundred-fold their value in gold. To do them the more honor, he put the bracelets on his wrists and the purse in his sleeve, and assured them that, as long as they lasted, he would wear them for love of the givers.

Then, mounting, the good knight rode away, leaving more tears of joy and heartfelt gratitude behind him than can be said of few soldiers since the world began. It was not for fame he had wrought, or of fame he had thought, but he won high fame by his generous behavior, for his treatment of his Brescian hosts is still quoted as the rarest deed in his chaplet of good actions.

The two archers who had stayed with Bayard failed not to receive the promised reward. Gaston de Foix, the Duke of Nemours, sent the knight a number of presents, among them five hundred crowns, and these he divided between the archers whom he had debarred from their share of the spoil.

It will suffice to say, in conclusion, that he reached the army in time to take part in the battle that followed, and to add therein to his fame as a "good knight without fear."

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CHAPTER XVI

EPISODES IN THE LIFE OF A TRAITOR

At the early hour of one o'clock in the morning of September 8, 1523, a train of men-at-arms and servants, headed by a tall, stern-faced, soldierly-looking man, rode from the gates of the strong castle of Chantelle, and headed southward in the direction of Spain. The leader was dressed in armor, and carried sword by side and battle-axe at his saddle-bow. Of his followers, some fifteen of them were attired in a peculiar manner, wearing thick jackets of woollen cloth that seemed as stiff as iron mail, and jingled metallically as they rode. Mail they were, capable of turning arrow or spear thrust, but mail of gold, not of iron, for in those jackets were sewed up thirty thousand crowns of gold, and their wearers served as the ambulatory treasury of the proud soldier at their head.

This man was no less a personage than Charles, Duke of Bourbon, Constable of France, the highest personage in the kingdom next to the monarch himself, but now in flight from that monarch, and from the soldiers who were marching to environ Chantelle and carry him as a prisoner to the king. There had been bad blood between Bourbon and Francis I., pride and haughtiness on the one side, injustice and indecision on the other; wrong to the subject, defiance to the king; and now the "short-tempered" noble and great soldier had made a moonlight flitting, bent on cutting loose from his allegiance to France, and on lending the aid of his sword and military skill to her hereditary foes.

For a month Bourbon and his followers wandered around the provinces of southern France. Incessantly he changed his road, his costume, his companions, his resting-place, occasionally falling in with soldiers of the king who were on their way to take part in the wars in Italy, seeking in vain for adherents to his cause, and feeling his way by correspondence to an understanding with the enemies of France. In early October he entered the domains of the emperor, Charles V., and definitely cut loose from his allegiance to the king.

The news of this defection filled Francis with alarm. He had, by his injustice, driven his greatest soldier from the realm, and now sought to undo the perilous work he had done. He put off his journey to join the army marching to Italy, and sent a messenger to the redoubtable fugitive, offering restitution of his property, satisfaction in full of his claims, and security for good treatment and punctual payment. Bourbon curtly refused.

"It is too late," he said.

"Then," said the envoy, "I am bidden by the king to ask you to deliver up the sword of constable and the collar of the order of St. Michael."

"You may tell the king," answered Bourbon, shortly, "that he took from me the sword of constable on the day that he took from me the command of the advanced guard to give it to M. d'Alençon. As for the collar of his order, you will find it at Chantelle under the pillow of my bed."

Francis made further efforts to win back the powerful noble whom he had so deeply offended, but equally in vain. Bourbon had definitely cut loose from his native land and was bent on joining hands with its mortal foes. Francis had offended him too deeply to be so readily forgiven as he hoped.

It is not the story of the life of this notable traitor that we propose to tell, but simply to depict some picturesque scenes in his career. Charles V. gladly welcomed him, and made him his lieutenant-general in Italy, so that he became leader against the French in their invasion of that land. We next find him during the siege of Milan by the army of Francis I., one of whose leaders was Chevalier Bayard, "the good knight," who was the subject of our last story. The siege was destined to prove a fatal affair for this noble warrior. The French found themselves so

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hard pressed by the imperial army under the Constable de Bourbon that they fell back to await reinforcements. Near Romagnano, on the banks of the Sesia, they were thrown into disorder while seeking to pass the stream, and Bonnivet, their leader, was severely wounded. The Count de St. Pol and Chevalier Bayard took command. Bayard, always first in advance and last in retreat, charged the enemy at the head of a body of men-at-arms. It proved for him a fatal charge. A shot from an arquebuse gave him a mortal wound.

"Jesus, my God," he cried, "I am dead!"

He took his sword by the handle, kissed its cross-hilt as an act of devotion, and repeated the *Miserere*,—"Have pity on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy!"

In a moment more he grew deathly pale and grasped the pommel of the saddle to keep him from falling, remaining thus until one of his followers helped him to dismount, and placed him at the foot of a tree.

The French were repulsed, leaving the wounded knight within the lines of the enemy. Word of Bayard's plight was quickly brought to Bourbon, who came up with a face filled with sympathetic feeling.

"Bayard, my good friend, I am sore distressed at your mishap," he said. "There is nothing for it but patience. Give not way to melancholy. I will send in quest of the best surgeons in this country, and, by God's help, you will soon be healed."

Bayard looked up at him with dying eyes, full of pity and reproach.

"My lord, I thank you," he said, "but pity is not for me, who die like a true man, serving my king; pity is for you, who bear arms against your prince, your country, and your oath."

Bourbon made no answer. He turned and withdrew, doubtless stung to the soul by the reproachful words of the noblest and honestest man of that age. His own conscience must have added a double sting to Bayard's words. Such is the bitterest reward of treason; it dares not look integrity in the face.

Bayard lived for two or three hours afterwards, surrounded by his friends, who would not leave him, though he bade them do so to escape falling into the enemy's hands. They had nothing to fear. Both armies mourned the loss of the good knight, with equal grief. Five days after his death, on May 5, 1524, Beaurain wrote to Charles V.,—

"Sir, albeit Sir Bayard was your enemy's servant, yet was it pity of his death, for he was a gentle knight, well beloved of every one, and one that lived as good a life as ever any man of his condition. And, in truth, he fully showed it by his end, for it was the most beautiful that I ever heard tell of."

So passed away a man who lived fully up to the principles of chivalry, and whose honesty, modesty, sympathy, and valor have given him undying fame. His name survives as an example of what chivalry might have been had man been as Christian in nature as in name, but of what it rarely was, except in theory.

The next picture we shall draw belongs to the date of February 24, 1525. Francis I. had for months been besieging Pavia. Bourbon came to its relief. A battle followed, which at first seemed to favor the French, but which Bourbon's skill soon turned in favor of the Imperialists. Seeing his ranks breaking on all sides, Francis, inspired by fury and despair, desperately charged the enemy with such knights and men-at-arms as he could get to follow him. The conflict was fierce and fatal. Around the king fell his ablest warriors,—Marshal de Foix, Francis of Lorraine, Bussy d'Amboise, La Trémoille, and many others. At sight of this terrible slaughter, Admiral Bonnivet, under the king the leader of the French host, exclaimed, in accents of despair, "I can never survive this fearful havoc." Raising the visor of his helmet, he rushed desperately forward where a tempest of balls was sweeping the field, and in a moment fell beside his slain comrades.

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Francis fought on amid the heaps of dead and dying, his soul filled with the battle rage, his heart burning with fury and desperation. He was wounded in face, arms, and legs, yet still his heavy sword swept right and left, still men fell before his vigorous blows. His horse, mortally wounded, sank under him, dragging him down. In an instant he was up again, laying about him shrewdly. Two Spaniards who pressed him closely fell before the sweep of that great blade. Alone among his foes he fought on, a crowd of hostile soldiers around him. Who he was they knew not, but his size, strength, and courage, the golden lilies which studded his coat of mail, the plume of costly feathers which waved from his helmet, told them that this must be one of the greatest men in the French array.

Despite the strength and intrepid valor of the king, his danger was increasing minute by minute, when the Lord of Pompérant, one of Bourbon's intimate friends, pressed up through the mass and recognized the warrior who stood like a wounded lion at bay amid a pack of wolves.

"Back! back!" he cried, springing forward, and beating off the soldiers with his sword. "Leave this man to me."

Pressing to the king's side, he still beat back his foes, saying to him,—

"Yield, my liege! You stand alone. If you fight longer, I cannot answer for your life. Look! there is no hope for you. The Duke of Bourbon is not far off. Let me send for him to receive your sword."

The visor of the king hid the look with which he must have received these words. But from the helmet's iron depths came in hollow tones the reply of Francis of France to this appeal.

"No," he cried, sternly, "rather would I die the death than pledge my faith to Bourbon the traitor! Where is the Viceroy of Naples?"

Lannoy, the viceroy, was in a distant part of the field. Some time was lost in finding and bringing him to the spot. At length he arrived, and fell upon one knee before Francis, who presented him his sword. Lannoy took it with a show of the profoundest respect, and immediately gave him another in its place. The battle was over, and the king of France was a prisoner in the hands of his rebellious subject, the Duke of Bourbon. The wheel of fate had strangely turned.

The captive king had shown himself a poor general, but an heroic soldier. His victors viewed him with admiration for his prowess. When he sat at table, after having his wounds, which were slight, dressed, Bourbon approached him respectfully and handed him a dinner napkin. Francis took it, but with the most distant and curt politeness. The next day an interview took place between Bourbon and the king, in reference to the position of the latter as captive. In this Francis displayed the same frigidity of manner as before, while he was all cordiality with Pescara, Bourbon's fellow in command. The two leaders claimed Francis as their own captive, but Lannoy, to whom he had surrendered, had him embarked for Naples, and instead of taking him there, sent him directly to Spain, where he was delivered up to Charles V. Thus ended this episode in the life of the Constable de Bourbon.

We have still another, and the closing, scene to present in the life of this great soldier and traitor. It is of no less interest than those that have gone before. Historically it is of far deeper interest, for it was attended with a destruction of inestimable material that has rarely been excelled. The world is the poorer that Bourbon lived.

In Spain he had been treated with consideration by the emperor, but with disdain by many of the lords, who despised him as a traitor. Charles V. asked the Marquis de Villena to give quarters in his palace to the duke.

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"I can refuse the emperor nothing," he replied; "but as soon as the *traitor* is out of my house I shall set it on fire with my own hand. No man of honor could live in it again."

Despite this feeling, the military record of Bourbon could not be set aside. He was the greatest general of his time, and, recognizing this, Charles again placed him in command of his armies in Italy. On going there, Bourbon found that there was nothing that could be called an army. Everything was in disorder and the imperial cause almost at an end. In this state of affairs, Bourbon became filled with hopes of great conquests and high fame for himself. Filled with the spirit of adventure, and finding the Spanish army devoted to him, he added to it some fifteen thousand of German lanzknechts, most of them Lutherans.

Addressing this greedy horde of soldiers of fortune, he told them that he was now but a poor gentleman, like themselves, and promised that if they would follow him he would make them rich or die in the attempt. Finishing his remarks, which were greeted with enthusiastic cheers, he distributed among them all his money and jewels, keeping little more than his clothes and armor for himself.

"We will follow you everywhere, to the devil himself!" shouted the wild horde of adventurers. "No more of Julius Cæsar, Hannibal, and Scipio! Hurrah for the fame of Bourbon!"

Putting himself at the head of this tumultuous array, the duke led them southward through Italy, halting before Bologna, Florence, and other towns, with a half-formed purpose to besiege them, but in the end pushing on without an assault until, on the 5th of May, 1527, his horde of land pirates came in sight of Rome itself.

The imperial city, after being sacked by the Goths, Vandals, and other barbarians, had remained without serious damage for a thousand years, but now another army was encamped under its walls, and one equally bent on havoc and ruin with those of the past.

"Now is the time to show courage, manliness, and the strength of your bodies," said Bourbon to his followers. "If in this bout you are victorious, you will be rich lords and well off for the rest of your lives. Yonder is the city whereof, in times past, a wise astrologer prophesied concerning me, telling me that I should die there; but I swear to you that I care but little for dying there if, when I die, my corpse be left with endless glory and renown throughout the world."

He then bade them to retire for the night, ordering them to be ready betimes in the morning for the assault, which would take place at an early hour on that day. Hardly, indeed, had the stars faded before the sunrise of May 6, when the soldiers were afoot and making ready for the assault. Bourbon placed himself at their head, clad all in white that he might be better seen and known. To the walls they advanced, bearing scaling ladders, which they hastened to place. On the first raised of these Bourbon set foot, with the soldier's desire to be the earliest in the assault. But hardly had he taken two steps up the ladder than his grasp loosened and he fell backward, with blood gushing from his side. He had been hit with an arquebuse-shot in the left side and mortally wounded.

He had but voice enough left to bid those near him to cover his body with a cloak and take it away, that his followers might not know of his death. Those were the last words recorded of the Duke of Bourbon. He died as he had lived, a valiant soldier and a born adventurer, hurling havoc with his last words on the great city of the Church; for his followers, not knowing of his death, attacked so furiously that the walls were soon carried and the town theirs. Then, as news came to them that their leader had fallen, they burst into the fury of slaughter, shouting, "Slay, slay! blood, blood! Bourbon! Bourbon!" and cutting down remorselessly all whom they met.

The celebrated artist, Benvenuto Cellini, tells us in his autobiography that it was he who shot Bourbon, aiming his arquebuse from the wall of the Campo Santo at one of the

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besiegers who was mounted higher than the rest, and who, as he afterwards learned, was the leader of the assailing army.

Whoever it was that fired the fatal shot, the slain man was frightfully avenged, Rome being plundered, ravaged, and devastated by his brutal followers to a degree not surpassed by the work of the Vandals of old. For several months the famous city remained in the hands of this licentious soldiery, and its inhabitants were subjected to every outrage and barbarity which brutal desire and ungoverned license could incite, while in none of its former periods of ravage were so many of the precious relics of antiquity destroyed as in this period of occupation by men who called themselves the soldiers of civilized and Christian lands.

CHAPTER XVII

ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY

"Kill! kill! kill!" was the cry in Paris. "Blood! blood! death to the Huguenots!" came from the lips of thousands of maddened murderers. Blood flowed everywhere; men dabbled in blood, almost bathed in blood. A crimson tide flowed in the streets of Paris deep enough to damn the infamous Catherine de' Medici and her confederates. To the crime of assassination on that direful day of St. Bartholomew must be added that of treachery of the darkest hue. Peace had been made between the warring parties. The Protestant chiefs had been invited to Paris to witness the marriage of the young King Henry of Navarre with Marguerite de Valois, sister of the king of France, which was fixed for the 18th of August, 1572. They had been received with every show of amity and good-will. The great Huguenot leader, Admiral de Coligny, had come, confiding in the honor of his late foes, and had been received by the king, Charles IX., with demonstrations of sincere friendship, though the weak monarch warned him to beware of the Guises, his bitter enemies and the remorseless haters of all opponents of the Catholic party.

On the 22nd of August the work of treachery began. On that day a murderous shot was fired at Coligny as he stood by the window of his room engaged in reading a letter. It smashed two fingers of his right hand, and lodged a ball in his left arm. The would-be murderer escaped.

"Here is a fine proof of the fidelity to his agreement of the Duke of Guise," said Coligny, reproachfully, to the king.

"My dear father," returned the king, "the hurt is yours, the grief and the outrage mine; but I will take such vengeance that it shall never be forgotten."

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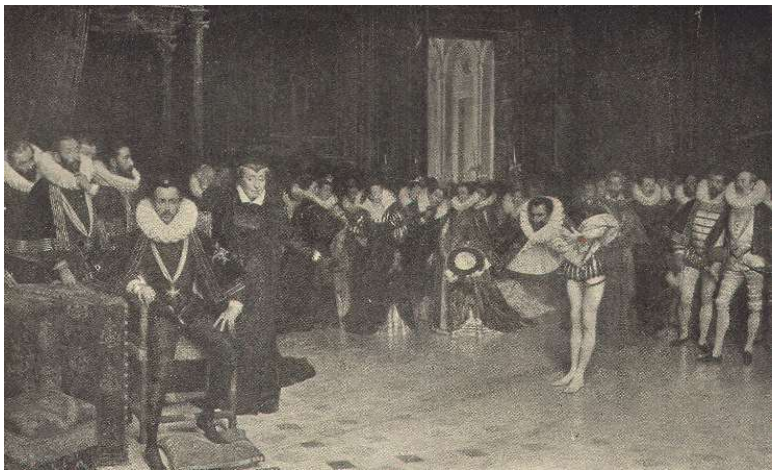
He meant it for the moment; but his mind was feeble, his will weak, himself a mere puppet in the hands of his imperious mother and the implacable Guises. Between them they had determined to rid themselves of the opposing party in the state on the death of the admiral and the other Protestant leaders. Sure of their power over the king, the orders for the massacre were already given when, near midnight of August 24, St. Bartholomew's day, the queen, with some of her leading councillors, sought the king's room and made a determined assault upon the feeble defences of his intellect.



THE DUKE OF GUISE AT THE FRENCH COURT.

"The slaughter of many thousands of men may be prevented by a single sword-thrust," they argued. "Only kill the admiral, the head and front of the civil wars, and the strength of his party will die with him. The sacrifice of two or three men will satisfy the loyal party, who will remain forever your faithful and obedient subjects. War is inevitable. The Guises on one side, and the Huguenots on the other, cannot be controlled. Better to win a battle in Paris, where we hold all the chiefs in our clutches, than to put it to hazard in the field. In this case pity would be cruelty, and cruelty would be pity."

For an hour and a half the struggle with the weak will of the king continued. He was violently agitated, but could not bring himself to order the murder of the guest to whom he had promised his royal faith and protection. The queen mother grew alarmed. Delay might ruin all, by the discovery of her plans. At length, with a show of indignation, she said,—

"Then, if you will not do this, permit me and your brother to retire to some other part of the kingdom."

This threat to leave him alone to grapple with the difficulties that surrounded him frightened the feeble king. He rose hastily from his seat.

"By God's death!" he cried, passionately, "since you think proper to kill the admiral, I consent." With these words he left the room.

The beginning of the work of bloodshed had been fixed for an hour before daybreak. But the king had spoken in a moment of passion and agitation. An hour's reflection might change his mind. There was no time to be lost. The queen gave the signal at once, and out on the air of that dreadful night rang the terrible tocsin peal from the tower of the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, the alarm call for which the white-crossed murderers waited.

Quickly the silence of the night was broken by loud cries, shouts of vengeance, the tramp of many feet, the sharp reports of musketry. The work was begun. Every man not marked by a cross was to be slaughtered. The voice of murder broke fearfully upon the peacefulness of the recently quiet midnight hour.

The noise roused Coligny. He rose hastily and threw on his dressing-gown. The cries and shots told him what was going on. He had trusted the faithless Guises and the soulless De' Medici, and this was what came of it.

"M. Merlin," he said to a clergyman who was with him, "say me a prayer; I commit my soul to my Saviour."

Some of his gentlemen entered the room.

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"What is the meaning of this riot?" asked Ambrose Paré.

"My lord, it is God calling us," said Cornaton.

"I have long been ready to die," said the admiral; "but you, my friends, save yourselves, if it is still possible."

They left him, and escaped, the most of them by the roof. Only one man stayed with him, Nicholas Muss, a German servant, "as little concerned," says Cornaton, "as if there was nothing going on around him."

The flight had been made barely in time. Hasty footsteps were heard below. The assassins were in the house. In a moment more the chamber door was flung open and two servants of the Duke of Guise entered.

"Art not thou the admiral?" asked one of them, Behme by name.

"Young man," answered Coligny, "thou comest against a wounded and aged man. Thou'lt not shorten my life by much."

Behme's answer was to plunge a heavy boar-spear which he held into the body of the defenceless veteran. Withdrawing it, he struck him on the head with it. Coligny fell, saying,—

"If it were but a man! But it is a horse-boy."

Others rushed into the room and thrust their weapons into the dying man.

"Behme," cried the duke of Guise from the court-yard, "hast thou done?"

"It is all over, my lord," answered the assassin.

The murderers flung the body from the window. It fell with a crash at the feet of Guise and his companions. They turned it over, wiped the blood from the face, and said,—

"Faith, it is he, sure enough!"

Some say that Guise kicked the bleeding corpse in the face.

Meanwhile, murder was everywhere. The savage lower orders of Paris, all, high and low, of the party of the Guises, were infected with the thirst for blood, and the streets of the city became a horrible whirlpool of slaughter, all who did not wear the saving cross being shot down without mercy or discrimination.

The anecdotes of that fatal night and the succeeding day are numerous, some of them pathetic, most of them ferocious, all tending to show how brutal man may become under the inspiration of religious prejudice and the example of slaughter,—the blood fury, as it has been fitly termed.

Téligny, the son-in-law of Coligny, took refuge on a roof. The guards of the Duke of Anjou fired at him as at a target. La Rochefoucauld, with whom the king had been in merry chat until eleven o'clock of the preceding evening, was aroused by a loud knocking upon his door. He opened it; six masked men rushed in, and instantly buried their poniards in his body. The new queen of Navarre had just gone to bed, under peremptory orders from her mother, Catherine de' Medici. She was wakened from her first slumber by a man knocking and kicking at her door, with wild shouts of "Navarre! Navarre!" Her nurse ran to open the door, thinking that it was the king, her lady's husband. A wounded and bleeding gentleman rushed in, blood flowing from both arms, four archers pursuing him into the queen's bedchamber.

The fugitive flung himself on the queen's couch, seizing her in his alarm. She leaped out of bed towards the wall, he following her, and still clasping her round the body. What it meant she knew not, but screamed in fright, her assailant screaming as loudly. Their cries had the effect of bringing into the room M. de Nançay, captain of the guards, who could not help laughing on seeing the plight of the queen. But in an instant more he turned in a rage upon the archers, cursed them for their daring, and harshly bade them begone. As for the fugitive, M. de Leran by name, he granted him his life at the queen's prayer. She

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put him to bed, in her closet, and attended him until he was well of his wounds.

Such are a few of the anecdotes told of that night of terror. They might be extended indefinitely, but anecdotes of murder are not of the most attractive character, and may profitably be passed over. The king saved some, including his nurse and Ambrose Paré his surgeon, both Huguenots. Two others, destined in the future to play the highest parts in the kingdom, were saved by his orders. These were the two Huguenot princes, Henry of Navarre, and Henry de Condé. The king sent for them during the height of the massacre, and bade them recant or die.

"I mean, for the future," he said, "to have but one religion in my kingdom; the mass or death; make your choice."

The king of Navarre asked for time to consider the subject, reminding Charles of his promised protection. Condé was defiant.

"I will remain firm in what I believe to be the true religion," he said, "though I have to give up my life for it."

"Seditious madman, rebel, and son of a rebel," cried the king, furiously, "if within three days you do not change your language, I will have you strangled."

In three days Charles himself changed his language. Remorse succeeded his insensate rage.

"Ambrose," he said to his surgeon, "I do not know what has come over me for the last two or three days, but I feel my mind and body greatly excited; in fact, just as if I had a fever. It seems to me every moment, whether I wake or sleep, that these murdered corpses appear to me with hideous and blood-covered faces. I wish the helpless and innocent had not been included."

On the next day he issued orders, prohibiting, on pain of death, any slaying or plundering. But he had raised a fury not easily to be allayed. The tocsin of death still rang; to it the great bell of the palace added at intervals its clanging peal; shouts, yells, the sharp reports of pistols and arquebuses, the shrieks of victims, filled the air; sixty thousand murderers thronged the streets, slaying all who wore not the white cross, breaking into and plundering houses, and slaughtering all within them. All through that dreadful Sunday the crimson carnival went on, death everywhere, wagons loaded with bleeding bodies traversing the streets, to cast their gory burdens into the Seine, a scene of frightful massacre prevailing such as city streets have seldom witnessed. The king judged feebly if he deemed that with a word he could quell the storm his voice had raised. Many of the nobles of the court, satisfied with the death of the Huguenot leaders, attempted to stay the work of death, but a report that a party of Huguenots had attempted to kill the king added to the popular fury, and the sanguinary work went on.

It is not known how many were slain during that outbreak of slaughter. It was not confined to Paris, but spread through France. Thousands are said to have been killed in the city. In the kingdom the number slain has been variously estimated at from ten to one hundred thousand. Such was the frightful result of a lamentable event in which religious animosity was taken advantage of to intensify the political enmity of the warring parties of the realm.

It proved a useless infamy. Charles IX. died two years afterwards, after having suffered agonies of remorse. Despite the massacre, the Huguenots were not all slain. Nor had the murder of Coligny robbed them of a leader. Henry of Navarre, who had narrowly escaped death on that fearful night, was in the coming years to lead the Protestants to many a victory, and in the end to become king of France, as Henry IV. By his coronation, Coligny was revenged; the Huguenots, instead of being exterminated by the hand of massacre, had defeated their foes and raised their leader to the throne, and the Edict of Nantes, which was soon afterwards announced, gave liberty of conscience to France for many years thereafter.

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CHAPTER XVIII

KING HENRY OF NAVARRE

For the first time in its history France had a Protestant king. Henry III. had died by the knife of an assassin. Henry of Navarre was named by him as his successor. But the Catholic chiefs of France, in particular the leaders of the League which had been banded against Henry III., were bitterly opposed to the reign of a Huguenot in a realm that had always been governed by Catholic kings, and it was evident that only by the sword could the throne be secured.

The League held Paris and much of France. Henry's army was too weak to face them. He fell back on Dieppe, that he might be near the coast, and in position to receive reinforcements and supplies promised him by Queen Elizabeth. The Duke of Mayenne pursued him with an army of some thirty-five thousand men. Such was the situation at the date of the opening of our story.

Henry III. had been killed on the 1st of August, 1589. Henry IV. was proclaimed king on the 2nd of August. On the 26th of the same month he reached Dieppe, where he was met by the governor, Aymar de Chastes, and the leading citizens, who brought him the keys of the place.

"I come to salute my lord and hand over to him the government of this city," said Aymar, who was a Catholic noble.

"Ventre-saint-gris!" cried Henry, with his favorite exclamation; "I know none more worthy of it than you are."

The citizens crowded round the king, profuse in their expressions of loyalty.

"No fuss, my lads," said Henry, who was the embodiment of plain common sense; "all I want is your affection, good bread, good wine, and good hospitable faces."

Within the town he was received with loud cheers, and the population seemed enthusiastic in his favor. But the shrewd soldier had no idea of shutting himself up in a walled town, to be besieged there by Mayenne. So, after carefully inspecting its fortifications, he left five hundred men within the town, assisted by a garrison of burgesses, and established his camp on a neighboring hill, crowned by the old castle of Arques, where he put all his men and all the peasants that could be found busily to work digging like beavers, working night and day to fortify the camp. He set the example himself in the use of the spade.

EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF HENRY IV.

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"It is a wonder I am alive with such work as I have," he wrote at the time. "God have pity upon me and show me mercy, blessing my labors, as He does in spite of many folks. I am well, and my affairs are going well. I have taken Eu. The enemy, who are double me just now, thought to catch me there; but I drew off towards Dieppe, and I await them in a camp that I am fortifying. To-morrow will be the day when I shall see them, and I hope, with God's help, that if they attack me they will find they have made a bad bargain."

The enemy came, as Henry had said, saw his preparations, and by a skilful manœuvre sought to render them useless. Mayenne had no fancy for attacking those strong works in front. He managed, by an unlooked-for movement, to push himself between the camp and the town, "hoping to cut off the king's communications with the sea, divide his forces, deprive him of his reinforcements from England, and, finally, surround him and capture him, as he had promised the Leaguers of Paris, who were already talking of the iron cage in which the Bearnese would be sent to them."

But Henry IV. was not the man to be caught easily in a trap. Much as had been his labor at digging, he at once changed his plans, and decided that it would not pay him to await the foe in his intrenchments. If they would not come to him, he must go to them, preserving his communications at any cost. Chance, rather than design, brought the two armies into contact. A body of light-horse approached the king's intrenchments. A sharp skirmish followed.

"My son," said Marshal de Biron to the young Count of Auvergne, "charge; now is the time."

The young soldier—a prince by birth—obeyed, and so effectively that he put the Leaguers to rout, killed three hundred of them, and returned to camp unobstructed. On the succeeding two days similar encounters took place, with like good fortune for Henry's army. Mayenne was annoyed. His prestige was in danger of being lost. He determined to recover it by attacking the intrenchments of the king with his whole army.

The night of the 20th of September came. It was a very dark one. Henry, having reason to expect an attack, kept awake the whole night. In company with a group of his officers, he gazed over the dark valley within which lay Mayenne's army. The silence was profound. Afar off could be seen a long line of lights, so flickering and inconstant that the observers were puzzled to decide if they were men or glow-worms.

At five in the morning, Henry gave orders that every man should be at his post. He had his breakfast brought to him on the field, and ate it with a hearty appetite, seated in a fosse with his officers around him. While there a prisoner was brought in who had been taken during a reconnoissance.

"Good-morning, Belin," said the king, who knew him. "Embrace me for your welcome appearance."

Belin did so, taking the situation philosophically.

"To give you appetite for dinner," he said, "you are about to have work to do with thirty thousand foot and ten thousand horse. Where are your forces?" he continued, looking around curiously.

"You don't see them all, M. de Belin," answered Henry. "You don't reckon the good God and the good right, but they are ever with me."

Belin had told the truth. About ten o'clock Mayenne made his attack. It was a day ill-suited for battle, for there lay upon the field so thick a fog that the advancing lines could not see each other at ten paces apart. Despite this, the battle proceeded briskly, and for nearly three hours the two armies struggled, now one, now the other, in the ascendant.

Henry fought as vigorously as any of his men, all being so confusedly mingled in the fog that there was little distinction between officers and soldiers. At one time he found himself so

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entangled in a medley of disorganized troopers that he loudly shouted,—

"Courage, gentlemen; pray, courage! Are there not among you fifty gentlemen willing to die with their king?"

The confusion was somewhat alleviated by the arrival, at this juncture, of five hundred men from Dieppe, whose opportune coming the king gladly greeted. Springing from his horse, he placed himself beside Chatillon, their leader, to fight in the trenches. The battle, which had been hot at this point, now grew furious, and for some fifteen minutes there was a hand-to-hand struggle in the fog, like that of two armies fighting in the dead of night.

Then came a welcome change. For what followed we may quote Sully. "When things were in this desperate state," he says, "the fog, which had been very thick all the morning, dropped down suddenly, and the cannon of the castle of Arques, getting sight of the enemy's army, a volley of four pieces was fired, which made four beautiful lanes in their squadrons and battalions. That pulled them up quite short; and three or four volleys in succession, which produced marvellous effects, made them waver, and, little by little, retire all of them behind the turn of the valley, out of cannon-shot, and finally to their quarters."

Mayenne was defeated. The king held the field. He pursued the enemy for some distance, and then returned to Arques to return thanks to God for the victory. Immediately afterwards, Mayenne struck camp and marched away, leaving Henry master of the situation. The king of Navarre had scored a master-point in the contest for the throne of France.

During the ensuing year the cause of the king rapidly advanced. More and more of France acknowledged him as the legitimate heir to the throne. A year after the affair at Dieppe he marched suddenly and rapidly on Paris, and would have taken it had not Mayenne succeeded in throwing his army into the city when it was half captured. In March, 1590, the two armies met again on the plain of Ivry, a village half-way between Mantes and Dreux, and here was fought one of the famous battles of history, a conflict whose final result was to make Henry IV. king of all France.

On this notable field the king was greatly outnumbered. Mayenne had under his command about four thousand horse and twenty thousand foot, while Henry's force consisted of three thousand horse and eight thousand foot. But the king's men were much better disciplined, and much more largely moved by patriotism, Mayenne's army being in considerable part made up of German and Swiss auxiliaries. The king's men, Catholics and Protestants alike, were stirred by a strong religious enthusiasm. In a grave and earnest speech to his men, Henry placed the issue of the day in the hands of the Almighty. The Catholics of his army crowded to the neighboring churches to hear mass. The Huguenots, much fewer in number, "also made their prayers after their sort."

The day of battle dawned,—March 14, 1590. Henry's army was drawn up with the infantry to right and left,—partly made up of German and Swiss auxiliaries,—the cavalry, under his own command, in the centre. In this arm, in those days of transition between ancient and modern war, the strength of armies lay, and those five lines of horsemen were that day to decide the fate of the field.

In the early morning Henry displayed a winning instance of that generous good feeling for which he was noted. Count Schomberg, colonel of the German auxiliaries, had, some days before, asked for the pay of his troops, saying that they would not fight if not paid. Henry, indignant at this implied threat, had harshly replied,—

"People do not ask for money on the eve of a battle."

He now, just as the battle was about to begin, approached Schomberg with a look of contrition on his face.

"Colonel," he said, "I have hurt your feelings. This may be the last day of my life. I cannot bear to take away the honor

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of a brave and honest gentleman like you. Pray forgive me and embrace me."

"Sir," answered Schomberg, with deep feeling, "the other day your Majesty wounded me; to-day you kill me."

He gave up the command of the German reiters that he might fight in the king's own squadron, and was killed in the battle.

As the two armies stood face to face, waiting for the signal of onset, Henry rode along the front of his squadron, and halted opposite their centre.

"Fellow-soldiers," he said, "you are Frenchmen; behold the enemy! If to-day you run my risks, I also run yours. I will conquer or die with you. Keep your ranks well, I pray you. If the heat of battle disperse you for a while, rally as soon as you can under those pear-trees you see up yonder to my right; and if you lose sight of your standards, do not lose sight of my white plume. Make that your rallying point, for you will always find it in the path of honor, and, I hope, of victory also."

And Henry pointed significantly to the snow-white plume that ornamented his helmet, while a shout of enthusiastic applause broke from all those who had heard his stirring appeal. Those words have become famous. The white plume of Henry of Navarre is still one of the rallying points of history. It has also a notable place in poetry, in Macaulay's stirring ode of "Ivry," from which we quote:

"'And if my standard-bearer fall,

As fall full well he may;

For never saw I promise yet

Of such a bloody fray;

Press where ye see my white plume shine

Amidst the ranks of war,

And be your oriflamme to-day

The helmet of Navarre.'"

The words we have quoted spoken, Henry galloped along the whole line of his army; then halted again, threw his bridle over his arm, and said, with clasped hands and deep feeling,—

"O God, Thou knowest my thoughts, and dost see to the very bottom of my heart; if it be for my people's good that I keep the crown, favor Thou my cause and uphold my arms. But if Thy holy will have otherwise ordained, at least let me die, O God, in the midst of these brave soldiers who give their lives for me!"

The infantry began the battle. Egmont, in command of Mayenne's right wing, attacked sharply, but after a brief success was killed and his men repulsed. On the king's right, Aumont, Biron, and Montpensier drove their opponents before them. At this stage of the affray Mayenne, in command of the powerful body of cavalry in the centre, fell upon the king's horse with a furious charge, which for the time threatened to carry all before it. The lines wavered and broke; knights and nobles fell back; confusion began and was increasing; the odds appeared too great; for a brief and perilous period the battle seemed lost.

At this critical moment Henry came to the rescue. Victory or death had been his word to his men. His promise was now to be kept in deeds. Pointing with his sword to the enemy, and calling in a loud voice upon all who heard him to follow, he spurred fiercely forward, and in a moment his white plume was seen waving in the thickest ranks of the foe.

His cry had touched the right place in the hearts of his followers. Forgetting every thought but that of victory and the rescue of their beloved leader, they pushed after him in a gallant and irresistible charge, which resembled in its impetuosity that of the Black Prince at Poitiers. Mayenne's thronging horsemen wavered and broke before this impetuous rush. Into the heart of the opposing army rode Henry and his ardent followers, cutting, slashing, shouting in victorious enthusiasm. In a few minutes the forward movement of Mayenne's cavalry was checked. His troops halted, wavered, broke, and fled, hotly pursued by their

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foes. The battle was won. That rush of the white plume had carried all before it, and swept the serried ranks of the Leaguers to the winds. Let us quote the poetic rendition of this scene from Macaulay's ode.

"Hurrah! the foes are moving!
Hark to the mingled din
Of fife, and steed, and trump, and drum
And roaring culverin!
The fiery duke is pricking fast
Across St André's plain,
With all the hireling cavalry
Of Gueldres and Almayne.
'Now by the lips of those ye love,
Fair gentlemen of France,
Charge for the golden lilies,
Upon them with the lance!'
A thousand spurs are striking deep,
A thousand spears in rest,
A thousand knights are pressing close
Behind a snow-white crest,
And in they burst, and on they rushed,
While, like a gliding star,
Amidst the thickest carnage blazed
The helmet of Navarre."

The enemy's cavalry being in flight and hotly pursued, Henry with a handful of horsemen (he had but thirty at his back when he came out of the mêlée) charged upon the Walloons and Swiss, who instantly broke and fled, with such impetuous haste that they left their standards behind them.

"Slay the strangers, but spare the French," was the king's order, as a hot pursuit of the flying infantry began, in which the German auxiliaries in particular were cut down mercilessly.

"And then we thought on vengeance,
And all along our van,
'Remember St. Bartholomew!'
Was passed from man to man.
But out spake gentle Henry,
'No Frenchman is my foe;
Down, down with every foreigner,
But let your brethren go.'"

The Swiss, however, ancient friends and allies of France, begged the king's compassion and were admitted to mercy, being drafted into his service. The flying Germans and French were severely punished, great numbers of them falling, many more being taken, the list of prisoners including a large number of lords and leaders of the foe. The battle had been remarkably short. It was won by the cavalry, the infantry having scarcely come into action. As to its effect, we may quote again from the poem.

"Now glory to the Lord of Hosts,
From whom all glories are,
And glory to our sovereign liege,
King Henry of Navarre.
Now let there be the merry sound
Of music and of dance,
Through thy corn-fields green and sunny vines,
Oh, pleasant land of France.
Hurrah! Hurrah! a single field
Hath turned the chance of war!
Hurrah! Hurrah! for Ivry,
And Henry of Navarre!"

It "turned the chance of war" in truth, in a great measure. Paris was in consternation. Everywhere was a great change in public opinion. Men ceased to look on Henry as an adventurous soldier, and came to regard him as a great prince, fighting for his own. Beyond this, however, the effect was not immediate. Paris remained in the hands of the League. A Spanish League was formed. The difficulties seemed to grow deeper. The only easy solution to them was an abjuration of the Protestant faith, and to this view Henry in the end came. He professed conversion to Catholicism, and all opposition ceased. Henry IV. became the fully acknowledged king of France, and for the time being all persecution of the Huguenots was at an end.

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CHAPTER XIX

THE MURDER OF A KING

History is full of stories of presentiments, of "visions of sudden death," made notable by their realization, of strange disasters predicted in advance. Doubtless there have been very many presentiments that failed to come true, enough, possibly, to make those that have been realized mere coincidences. However that be, these agreements of prediction and event are, to say the least, curious. The case of Cæsar is well known. We have now to relate that of Henry IV.

Sully has told the story. Henry had married, as a second wife, Mary de' Medici, daughter of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and a woman whose headstrong temper and cantankerous disposition were by no means calculated to make his life with her an agreeable one. In the end she strongly insisted on being crowned queen, a desire on her part which was very unpleasant to her royal husband, who seemed to feel that some disaster impended over the event.

"Hey! my friend," he said to Sully, his intimate, "I know not what is the meaning of it, but my heart tells me that some misfortune will happen to me."

He was seated on a low chair, his face disturbed by uneasy thought, his fingers drumming on his spectacle-case. Of a sudden he sprang up, and struck his hand sharply on his thigh.

"By God!" he said; "I shall die in this city, and shall never go out of it. They will kill me. I see quite well that they have no other remedy in their dangers but my death. Ah! accursed coronation; thou wilt be the cause of my death!"

"What fancy is this of yours?" asked Sully. "If it continue, I am of opinion that you should break off this anointment and coronation. If you please to give me orders, it shall be done."

"Yes, break off the coronation," said the king. "Let me hear no more about it. I shall have my mind at rest from divers fancies which certain warnings have put into it. To hide nothing from you, I have been told that I was to be killed at the first grand ceremony I should undertake, and that I should die in a carriage."

"You never told me that, sir," answered Sully. "I have often been astounded to hear you cry out when in a carriage, as if you had dreaded this petty peril, after having so many times seen you amidst cannon-balls, musketry, lance-thrusts, pike-thrusts, and sword-thrusts, without being a bit afraid. Since your mind is so exercised thereby, if I were you, I would go away to-morrow, let the coronation take place without you, or put it off to another time, and not enter Paris for a long time, or in a carriage. If you please, I will send word to Notre Dame and St. Denys to stop everything and to withdraw the workmen."

"I am very much inclined," said the king; "but what will my wife say? She has gotten this coronation marvellously into her head."

"She may say what she likes," rejoined Sully. "But I cannot think that, when she knows your opinion about it, she will persist any longer."

He did not know Mary de' Medici. She did persist strongly and offensively. For three days the matter was disputed, with high words on both sides. In the end, Henry, weary of the contention, and finding it impossible to convince or silence his obstinate wife, gave way, and the laborers were again set to work to prepare for the coronation.

Despite his presentiments Henry remained in Paris, and gave orders for the immediate performance of the ceremony, as if he were anxious to have done with it, and to pass the crisis in his life which he feared. The coronation was proclaimed on the

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12th of May, 1610. It took place on the 13th, at St. Denys. The tragical event which he had dreaded did not take place. He breathed easier.

On the next day, the 14th, he took it in mind to go to the arsenal to see Sully, who was ill. Yet the same indecision and fear seemed to possess him. He stirred about in an unquiet and irresolute mood, saying several times to the queen, "My dear, shall I go or not?"

He went so far as to leave the room two or three times, but each time returned, in the same doubt.

"My dear, shall I really go?" he said to the queen; and then, making up his mind, he kissed her several times and bade her adieu.

CHAMBER OF MARY DE' MEDICI.

"I shall only go there and back," he said; "I shall be here again almost directly."

On reaching his carriage, M. de Praslin, the captain of his guard, proposed to attend him, but he would not permit it, saying,—

"Get you gone; I want nobody; go about your business."

Yet that morning, in a conversation with Guise and Bassompierre, he had spoken as if he dreaded quickly coming death.

"You will live, please God, long years yet," said Bassompierre. "You are only in the flower of your age, in perfect bodily health and strength, full of honor more than any mortal man, in the most flourishing kingdom in the world, loved and adored by your subjects, with fine houses, fine women, fine children who are growing up."

Henry sighed, as if still oppressed by his presentiments, and sadly answered,—

"My friend, all that must be left."

Those were his last words of which any record remains, save the few he spoke in the carriage. A few hours afterwards all the earthly blessings of which Bassompierre spoke were naught to him. The king was dead.

To return to our subject; in the carriage with the king were several gentlemen of the court. Henry occupied the rear seat at the left, with M. d'Epernon seated at his right, and M. de Montbazon between him and the door, while several other gentlemen occupied the remaining seats. When the carriage reached the Croix du Tiroir, the coachman asked whither he should drive, and was bidden to go towards St. Innocent. On the way thither, while in the Rue de la Ferronnerie, a cart obstructed the way, so that the carriage had to turn towards the sidewalk and to proceed more slowly. Here were some ironmongers' shops, beside one of which lurked a man, his eyes keenly fixed on the approaching carriage, his hand nervously clutching some object in his pocket.

As the carriage moved slowly by, this man sprang from his covert and rushed towards it, a knife in his hand. In an instant he had dealt the king two blows, in rapid succession, in the left side. The first struck him below the armpit and went upward, merely grazing the flesh. The other proved more dangerous. It

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entered his side between the fifth and sixth ribs, and, taking a downward direction, cut a large blood-vessel. The king, by chance, had his left hand on the shoulder of M. de Montbazon, and was leaning towards M. d'Epernon, to whom he was speaking. He thus laid himself more fully open to the assassin's knife.

All had passed so quickly that no movement of defence was possible. Henry gave a low cry and made a few movements.

"What is the matter, sir?" asked M. de Montbazon, who had not seen the affair.

"It is nothing," answered the king. "It is nothing," he repeated, his voice now so low that they could barely hear him. Those were the last words he spoke.

The assassin had been seized. He was a fanatic, named François Ravaillac, who had been roused to his mad act by rumors that Henry intended to make war upon the pope, and other baseless fancies of the king's opponents. With him we are not further concerned, other than to say that he was made to suffer the most barbarous tortures for his deed.

The carriage was turned and driven back to the Louvre. On reaching the entrance steps some wine was given to the wounded monarch. An officer of the guard raised his head, his only sign of intelligence being some movements of the eyes. In a moment more they were closed, never to be opened again.

He was carried up-stairs and laid on the couch in his closet, and from there taken to the bed in his chamber. As he lay there some one gave him holy water, and M. de Vic, a councillor of state, put to his mouth the cross of his order, and directed his thoughts to God. All this was lost on the king. He lay motionless and insensible. All around him were in tears. The grief of the queen was unconsolable. All Paris was weeping. The monarch against whom the Parisians had so bitterly fought they now mourned as they would have done for their dearest friend.

The surgeons wanted to dress the king's wounds. Milon, the chief physician, who sat weeping at the bedside, waved them aside. A faint sigh died away on the king's lips. "It is all over," said Milon, sadly. "He is gone."

What followed may be told in a few words. The old adage, "The king is dead; long live the king!" was the thought of practical men of affairs. Sully, whom the news of the assassination had raised in haste from his sick-bed, put himself quickly at the head of some forty horse and rode towards the palace. Guise and Bassompierre had come to the door, to see what was passing outside, as he rode up.

"Gentlemen," he said to them, with tearful eyes, "if the service you vowed to the king be impressed upon your souls as deeply as it ought to be with all good Frenchmen, swear this moment to keep towards the king's son and heir the same allegiance that you showed him, and to spend your lives and your blood in avenging his death."

"Sir," answered Bassompierre, "it is for us to cause this oath to be taken by others; we have no need to be exhorted thereto."

Leaving them, Sully rode to the Bastille, which he took possession of, and sent out soldiers to seize and carry off all the bread that could be found in the market and at the shops of the bakers. He despatched a messenger also, in the greatest haste, to his son-in-law, M. de Rohan, then in command of a force of six thousand Swiss, bidding him to march with all speed upon Paris.

Henry IV. was dead. His son was his legitimate successor. But the murder of Henry III. had been followed by a contest for the throne. That of Henry IV. might be. Sully felt it necessary to take precautions, although the king was hardly cold in death. The king dies; the kingship survives; prudent men, on whom the peace of a people depend, prepare without delay; the Duke de Sully was such a man. His precautions, however, were not needed. No one thought of opposing the heirship of the king's son.

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CHAPTER XX

RICHELIEU AND THE CONSPIRATORS

In a richly-furnished state apartment of the royal palace of the Luxembourg, on a day in November, 1630, stood Louis XIII., king of France, tapping nervously with his fingers on the window-pane, and with a disturbed and irresolute look upon his face. Beside him was his favorite, St. Simon, a showily-dressed and handsome gentleman of the court.

"What do you think of all this?" asked the king, his fingers keeping up their idle drumming on the glass.

"Sir, I seem to be in another world," was the politic reply. "But at any rate you are master."

"I am," said the king, proudly, "and I will make it felt, too."

The royal prisoner was stirring uneasily in the bonds which hard necessity had cast round his will. It was against Cardinal Richelieu that his testy remark was made, yet in the very speaking he could not but feel that to lose Richelieu was to lose the bulwark of his throne; that this imperious master, against whose rule he chafed, was the glory and the support of his reign.

Just now, however, the relations between king and cardinal were sadly strained. Mary de' Medici, the king's mother, once Richelieu's ardent friend, was now his active foe. The queen, Anne of Austria, was equally hostile. Their influence had been used to its utmost to poison the mind of the monarch against his minister, and seemingly with success. To all appearance it looked as if the great cardinal was near his fall.

Rumor of what was afloat had invaded the court. Everywhere were secret whisperings, knowing looks, expectant movements. The courtiers were flocking to the Luxembourg, in hopes of some advantage to themselves. Marillac, the keeper of the seals, was at his country house at Glatigny, very near Versailles, where the king was expected. He remained there in hopes that Louis would send for him and put the power of the disgraced cardinal into his hands. The colossus seemed about to fall. All waited expectantly.

The conspiracy of the queen-mother had gone farther than to use her personal influence with her son against the cardinal. There were others in league with her, particularly Marillac, the keeper of the seals, and Marshal Marillac, his brother, then in command of a large force in Piedmont. All had been carefully prepared against the fall of the minister. The astute conspirators had fully laid their plans as to what was to follow.

Unfortunately for them, they did not reckon with the two principal parties concerned, Louis XIII. and Cardinal Richelieu. With all his weaknesses of temper and mind, the king had intellect enough to know what were the great interests of his kingdom and power, and on whose shoulders they rested. Above all the littleness of a court cabal he could not but discern the great questions which impended, and with which he felt quite incompetent to deal. And he could perceive but one man in his kingdom able to handle these great problems of state.

As for Richelieu, he was by no means blind to what was going on around him. He was the last man in the world to be a dupe. Delaying until the time seemed ripe to move, he requested and obtained an interview with the king. They were a long time closeted, while all the courtier-world of Paris waited in expectation and suspense.

What passed in that private cabinet of the palace no one knew, but when the interview was over it quickly became evident that the queen-mother and her associates had lost, the cardinal had won. Michael de Marillac had hopeful dreams that night, as he slept in his house at Glatigny; but when he awoke in

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the morning it was to receive the disturbing news that the king and the cardinal were at Versailles together, the minister being lodged in a room under that of the monarch. Quickly came still more disturbing news. The king demanded a return of the seals. Before this tidings could be well digested, the frightened plotter learned that his own arrest had been ordered, and that the exons were already at his door to secure his person.

While the courtier conspirator was being thus attended to, the soldier, his brother, was not forgotten. A courier had been despatched to the headquarters of the army in Piedmont, bearing a letter to Marshal Schomberg, who, with Marshals La Force and Marillac, had formed there a junction of the forces under their control. Marillac was in command on the day of the courier's arrival, and was impatiently awaiting the news, for which he had been prepared by his brother, of the cardinal's disgrace.

Schomberg opened his despatches. The first words he saw, in the king's own handwriting, were these:

"My dear cousin, you will not fail to arrest Marshal Marillac; it is for the good of my service and for your own exculpation."

Schomberg looked at the document with startled eyes. What could this mean? And was it safe to attempt an arrest? A large section of the troops were devoted to Marillac. He consulted with La Force, who advised him to obey orders, whatever the consequences. Schomberg thereupon showed Marillac the despatch. He beheld it with surprise and alarm, but without thought of resistance.

"I can protest that I have done nothing contrary to the king's service," he said. "The truth is, that my brother, the keeper of the seals, and I have always been the servants of the queen-mother. She must have had the worst of it, and Cardinal Richelieu has won the day against her and her servants."

So it proved, indeed, and he was to suffer for it. He was tried,—not on any political charge, however, the crimes alleged against him were peculation and extortion, common practices with many of his fellow-generals.

"It is a very strange thing," said he, bitterly, "to prosecute me as they do; my trial is a mere question of hay, straw, wood, stones, and lime; there is not case enough for whipping a lackey."

He was mistaken; there was case enough for beheading a marshal. It was not a question of peculation, but of offending the great cardinal, for which he was really put on trial, and the case ended in his being found guilty of malfeasance in office and executed. His brother died in prison three months afterwards,—of decline, so the records say.

"Dupes' Day," as the day we have described came to be called, was over. The queen-mother had lost. Her dupes had suffered. Richelieu was more powerful than ever. She had but strengthened his ascendancy over the king. But Mary de' Medici was not the woman to acknowledge defeat easily. No sooner had her first effort failed than her enmity against the too-powerful minister showed itself in a new direction, the principal agent of her purposes being now her son, the Duke of Orleans, brother to the king. The duke, after an angry interview with the cardinal, left Paris in haste for Orleans, his mother declaring to the king that the occasion of his sudden departure was that he could no longer tolerate by his presence Richelieu's violent proceedings against herself. She professed to have been taken by surprise by his departure, which Louis doubting, "she took occasion to belch forth fire and flames against the cardinal, and made a fresh attempt to ruin him in the king's estimation, though she had previously bound herself by oath to take no more steps against him."

Her malignity defeated itself. Richelieu was too skilful an adept in the game of politics to be so easily beaten. He brought the affair before the council, seemingly utterly indifferent what might be done; the trouble might be ended, he

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suggested, by his own retirement or that of the queen-mother, whichever in their wisdom they might deem best.

The implied threat settled the matter. The king, alarmed at the idea of having the government of France left on his weak hands, at once gave the offending lady to understand that she had better retire for a time to one of his provincial palaces, recommending Moulins. Mary de' Medici heard this order with fiery indignation. She shut herself up in the castle of Compiègne, where she then was, and declared that she would not leave unless dragged out by main force. In the end, however, she changed her mind, fled by night from the castle, and made her way to Brussels, where she took refuge from her powerful foe. Richelieu's game was won. Mary de' Medici had lost all influence with her son. She was never to see him again.

A number of years passed before a new plot was hatched against the cardinal. Then a conspiracy was organized which threatened not only his power but his life. It was in 1636. The king's headquarters were then at the castle of Demuin. The Duke of Orleans, who had been recently in armed rebellion against the king, and had been pardoned for his treason, determined, in common with the Count of Soissons, that their enemy, the cardinal, should die. There were others in this plot of assassination, two of the duke's gentlemen, Montrésor and Saint Ibal, being chosen to deal the fatal blow. They were to station themselves at the foot of the grand stairway, meet Richelieu at his exit from the council, and strike him dead. The duke was to give the signal for the murderous assault.

The door of the council chamber opened. The king and the cardinal came out together and descended the stairs in company, Richelieu attending Louis until he had reached the foot of the stairway, and gone into an adjoining room. The cardinal turned to ascend again, without a moment's suspicion that the two gentlemen at the stair-foot clutched hidden daggers in their hands, ready, at a signal from the duke, who stood near by, to plunge them in his breast.

The signal did not come. At the last moment the courage of Gaston of Orleans failed him. Whether from something in Richelieu's earnest and dignified aspect, or some sudden fear of serious consequences to himself, the chief conspirator turned hastily away, without speaking the fatal word agreed upon. What the duke feared to do, the count dared not do. The two chosen assassins stood expectant, greeting the cardinal as he passed, and waiting in nervous impatience for the promised signal. It failed to come. Their daggers remained undrawn. Richelieu calmly ascended the stairs to his rooms, without a dream of the deadly peril he had run.

The conspiracy against the cardinal which has attained the greatest historical notoriety is that associated with the name of Cinq-Mars, the famous favorite of Louis XIII. Brilliant and witty, a true type of the courtiers of the time, this handsome youth so amused and interested the king that, when he was only nineteen years of age, Louis made him master of the wardrobe and grand equerry of France. M. Le Grand he was called, and grand enough he seemed, in his independent and capricious dealings with the king. Louis went so far as to complain to Richelieu of the humors of his youthful favorite.

"I am very sorry," he wrote, under date of January 4, 1641, "to trouble you about the ill-tempers of M. Le Grand. I upbraided him with his heedlessness; he answered that for that matter he could not change, and that he should do no better than he had done. I said that, considering his obligations to me, he ought not to address me in that manner. He answered in his usual way; that he didn't want my kindness, that he could do very well without it, and that he would be quite as well content to be Cinq-Mars as M. Le Grand, but as for changing his ways and his life, he couldn't do it. And so, he continually nagging at me and I at him, we came as far as the court-yard, where I said to him that, being in the temper he was in, he would do me the pleasure of not coming to see me. I have not seen him since."

This letter yields a curious revelation of the secret history of a royal court. There have been few kings with whom such

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impudent independence would have served. Louis XIII. was one of them. Cinq-Mars seems to have known his man. The quarrel was not of long continuance. Richelieu, who had first placed the youth near the king, easily reconciled them, a service which the foolish boy soon repaid by lending an ear to the enemies of the cardinal. For this Richelieu was in a way responsible. He had begun to find the constant attendance of the favorite upon the king troublesome to himself, and gave him plainly to understand so. "One day he sent word to him not to be for the future so continually at his heels, and treated him even to his face with as much tartness and imperiousnesss as if he had been the lowest of his valets." Such treatment was not likely to be well received by one of the independent disposition of Cinq-Mars. He joined in a plot against the cardinal.

The king was ill; the cardinal more so. Gaston, Duke of Orleans, was again in Paris, and full of his old intriguing spirit. The Duke of Bouillon was there also, having been sent for by the king to take command of the army of Italy. He, too, was drawn into the plot which was being woven against Richelieu. The queen, Anne of Austria, was another of the conspirators. The plot thus organized was the deepest and most far-reaching which had yet been laid against the all-powerful minister.

Bouillon was prince-sovereign of the town of Sedan. This place was to serve the conspirators as an asylum in case of reverse. But a town was not enough; an army was needed; whence should it come? Spain might furnish it.

The affair was growing to the dimensions of a conspiracy against the crown as well as the minister. Viscount de Fontrailles, a man who detested the cardinal, and would not have hesitated to murder him as a simpler way of disposing of the difficulty, was named by Cinq-Mars as a proper person to deal with the Spaniards. He set out for Madrid, and soon succeeded in negotiating a secret treaty, in the name of the Duke of Orleans, by whose terms Spain was to furnish the conspirators with twelve thousand foot, five thousand horse, and the necessary funds for the enterprise. The town of Sedan, and the names of Cinq-Mars and Bouillon, were not mentioned in this treaty, but were given in a separate document.

While this dangerous work was going on the cardinal was dangerously ill, a prey to violent fever, and with an abscess on his arm which prevented him from writing. The king was with the army, which was besieging Perpignan. With him was Cinq-Mars, who was doing his best to insinuate suspicions of the minister into the mind of the king. All seemed promising for the conspirators, the illness of the cardinal, in their opinion, being likely to carry him off in no long period, and meanwhile preventing him from discovering the plot and setting himself right with the king.

Evidently these hopeful people did not know the resources of Cardinal Richelieu. In all his severe illness his eyes had not been blind, his intellect not at rest. Keen as they thought themselves, they had a man with double their resources to deal with. Though Richelieu was by no means surrounded by the intricate web of spies and intrigues with which fiction and the drama have credited him, he was not without his secret agents, and his means of tracing the most hidden movements of his enemies. Cinq-Mars lacked the caution necessary for a conspirator. His purposes became evident to the king, who had no thought of exchanging his great minister for a frivolous boy who was only fitted to amuse his hours of relaxation. The outcome of the affair appears in a piece of news published in the *Gazette de France* on June 21, 1642.

"The cardinal-duke," it said, "after remaining two days at Arles, embarked on the 11th of this month for Tarascon, his health becoming better and better. The king has ordered under arrest Marquis de Cinq-Mars, grand equerry of France."

Had a thunderbolt fallen in their midst, the enemies of Richelieu could not have been in greater consternation than at this simple item of news.

How came it about? The fox was not asleep. Nor had his illness robbed his hand and his brain of their cunning. The king,

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overladen with affairs of state from which his minister when well had usually relieved him, sent a message of confidence to Richelieu, indicating that his enemies would seek in vain to separate them. In reply the cardinal sent the king a document which filled the monarch with an astonishment that was only equalled by his wrath. It was a copy of the secret treaty of Orleans with Spain!

The king could hardly believe his eyes. So this was what lay behind the insinuations of Cinq-Mars? An insurrection was projected against the state! The cardinal, mayhap the king himself, was to be overthrown by force of arms! Only the sleepless vigilance of Richelieu could have discovered and exposed this perilous plot. It remained for the king to second the work of his minister by decisive action. An order was at once issued for the arrest of Cinq-Mars and his intimate friend, M. de Thou; while a messenger was sent off in all haste to the army of Italy, bearing orders for the arrest of the Duke of Bouillon at the head of his troops.

Fontrailles, just arrived from his mission to Spain, returned to that kingdom with all haste, having first said to Cinq-Mars, "Sir, you are a fine figure; if you were shorter by the whole head you would not cease to be very tall. As for me, who am already very short, nothing could be taken off me without inconveniencing me and making me cut the poorest figure in the world. You will be good enough, if you please, to let me get out of the way of edge tools."

The minor parties to the conspiracy, with the exception of the prudent Fontrailles, were in custody. The most guilty of all, the king's brother, was at large. What part was he to play in the drama of retribution? Flight, or treachery to his accomplices, alone remained to him. He chose the latter, sending an agent to the king, who had just joined the cardinal at Tarascon, with directions to confess everything and implore for him the pardon of his royal brother. The cardinal questioned this agent, the Abbé de la Rivière, with unrelenting severity, made him write and sign everything, and was inclined to make the prince-duke appear as a witness at the trial, and yield up his accomplices in the face of the world. This final disgrace, however, was omitted at the wish of Louis, and an order of exile was sent from the king to his brother, which bore this note in the cardinal's hand,—

"Monsieur will have in his place of exile twelve thousand crowns a month, the same sum that the king of Spain had promised to give him."

The dying cardinal had triumphed over all his foes. He had, from his bed at Tarascon, dictated to the king the course to be pursued, entailing dishonor to the Duke of Orleans and death to the grand equerry of France. The king then took his way back to Fontainebleau in the litter of the cardinal, which the latter had lent him. Richelieu did not remain long behind him. He was conveyed to his house in Lyons in a litter shaped like a square chamber, covered with red damask, and borne on the shoulders of eighteen guards. Within, beside his couch, was a table covered with papers, at which he worked with his ordinary diligence, chatting pleasantly at intervals with such of his servants as accompanied him. In the same equipage he left Lyons for the Loire, on his return to Paris. On the way it was necessary to pull down walls and bridge ditches that this great litter, in which the greatest man in France lay in mortal illness, might pass.

What followed needs few words. The Duke of Bouillon confessed everything, and was pardoned on condition of his delivering up Sedan to the king. He was kept in prison, however, till after the death of his accomplices, Cinq-Mars and De Thou, who were tried and sentenced to execution.

Bouillon had not long to wait. The execution took place on the very day on which sentence had been pronounced. The two culprits met death firmly. Cinq-Mars was but twenty-two years of age. He had rapidly run his course. "Now that I make not a single step which does not lead me to death, I am more capable than anybody else of estimating the value of the things

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of the world," he wrote. "Enough of this world; away to Paradise!" said De Thou, as he walked to the scaffold.

There were no more conspiracies against Richelieu. There was no time for them, for in less than three months afterwards he was dead. The greatest, or at least the most dramatic, minister known to the pages of history had departed from this world. His royal master did not long survive him. In five months afterwards, Louis XIII. had followed his minister to the grave.

CHAPTER XXI

THE PARLIAMENT OF PARIS

In the streets of Paris all was tumult and fiery indignation. Never had there been a more sudden or violent outbreak. The whole city seemed to have turned into the streets. Not until the era of the Revolution, a century and a half later, was the capital of France again to see such an uprising of the people against the court. Broussel had been arrested, Councillor Broussel, a favorite of the populace, who sustained him in his opposition to the court party, and at once the city was ablaze; for the first time in the history of France had the people risen in support of their representatives.

It was by no means the first time that royalty had ended its disputes with the Parliament in this summary manner. Four years previously, Anne of Austria, the queen-regent, had done the same thing, and scarce a voice had been raised in protest. But in the ensuing four years public opinion had changed. The king, Louis XIV., was but ten years old; his mother, aided by her favorite minister, Cardinal Mazarin, ruled the kingdom,—misruled it, as the people thought; the country was crushed under its weight of taxes; the finances were in utter disorder; France was successful abroad, but her successes had been dearly bought, and the people groaned under the burden of their victories. Parliament made itself the mouth-piece of the public discontent. It no longer felt upon it the iron hand of Richelieu. Mazarin was able, but he was not a master, and the Parliament began once more to claim that authority in affairs of state from which it had been deposed by the great cardinal. A conflict arose between the members and the court which soon led to acts of open hostility.

An edict laying a tax upon all provisions which entered Paris irritated the citizens, and the Parliament refused to register

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it. Other steps towards independence were taken by the members. Gradually they resumed their old rights, and the court party was forced to yield. But courage returned to the queen-regent with the news that the army of France had gained a great victory. No sooner had the tidings reached Paris than the city was electrified by hearing that President Brancmesnil and Councillor Broussel had been arrested.

It was the arrest of Broussel that stirred the popular heart. Mazarin and the queen had made the dangerous mistake of not taking into account the state of the public mind. "There was a blaze at once, a sensation, a rush, an outcry, and a shutting up of shops." The excitement of the people was intense. Moment by moment the tumult grew greater. "Broussel! Broussel!" they shouted. That perilous populace had arisen which was afterwards to show what frightful deeds it could do under the impulse of oppression and misgovernment.

Paul de Gondi, afterwards known as Cardinal De Retz, then coadjutor of the Archbishop of Paris, and the leading spirit with the populace, hurried to the palace, accompanied by Marshal de la Meilleraie.

"The city is in a frightful state," they told the queen. "The people are furious and may soon grow unmanageable. The air is full of revolt."

Anne of Austria listened to them with set lips and angry eyes.

"There is revolt in imagining there can be revolt," she sternly replied. "These are the ridiculous stories of those who favor trouble; the king's authority will soon restore order."

M. de Guitant, an old courtier, who entered as she was speaking, declared that the coadjutor had barely represented the facts, and said that he did not see how anybody could sleep with things in such a state.

"Well, M. de Guitant, and what is your advice?" asked De Retz.

"My advice is to give up that old rascal of a Broussel, dead or alive."

"To give him up dead," said the coadjutor, "would not accord with either the piety or the prudence of the queen; to yield him alive might quiet the people."

The queen turned to him a face hot with anger, and exclaimed,—

"I understand you, Mr. Coadjutor; you would have me set Broussel at liberty. I would strangle him with these hands first!" As she finished these words she put her hands close to the coadjutor's face, and added, in a threatening tone, "And those who—" Her voice ceased; he was left to infer the rest.

Yet, despite this infatuation of the queen, it was evident that something must be done, if Paris was to be saved. The people grew more tumultuous. Fresh tidings continued to come in, each more threatening than the last. The queen at length yielded so far as to promise that Broussel should be set free if the people would first disperse and cease their tumultuous behavior.

The coadjutor was bidden to proclaim this in the streets. He asked for an order to sustain him, but the queen refused to give it, and withdrew "to her little gray room," angry at herself for yielding so far as she had.

De Retz did not find the situation a very pleasant one for himself. Mazarin pushed him gently towards the door, saying, "Restore the peace of the realm." Marshal Meilleraie drew him onward. He went into the street, wearing his robe of office, and bestowing benedictions right and left, though while doing so his mind was busy in considering how he was going to get out of the difficulty which lay before him.

It grew worse instead of better. Marshal Meilleraie, losing his head through excitement, advanced waving his sword in the air, and shouting at the top of his voice,—

"Hurrah for the king! Liberation for Broussel!"

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This did very well for those within hearing; but his sword provoked far more than his voice quieted; those at a distance looked on his action as a menace, and their fury was augmented. On all sides there was a rush for arms. Stones were flung by the rioters, one of which struck De Retz and felled him to the earth. As he picked himself up an excited youth rushed at him and put a musket to his head. Only the wit and readiness of the coadjutor saved him from imminent peril.

"Though I did not know him a bit," says De Retz, in his "Memoirs," "I thought it would not be well to let him suppose so at such a moment; on the contrary, I said to him, 'Ah, wretch, if thy father saw thee!' He thought I was the best friend of his father, on whom, however, I had never set eyes."

The fellow withdrew, ashamed of his violence, and before any further attack could be made upon De Retz he was recognized by the people and dragged to the market-place, constantly crying out as he went, "The queen has promised to restore Broussel."

The good news by this time had spread through the multitude, whose cries of anger were giving place to shouts of joy. Their arms were hastily disposed of, and a great throng, thirty or forty thousand in number, followed the coadjutor to the Palais-Royal. When he entered, Marshal Meilleraie turned to the queen and said,—

"Madame, here is he to whom I owe my life, and your Majesty the safety of the Palais-Royal."

The queen's answer was an incredulous smile. On seeing it, the hasty temper of the marshal broke out in an oath.

"Madame," he said, hotly, "no proper man can venture to flatter you in the state in which things are; and if you do not this very day set Broussel at liberty, to-morrow there will not be left one stone upon another in Paris."

Anne of Austria, carried away by her pride and superciliousness, could not be brought to believe that the populace would dare attempt an actual revolt against the king. De Retz would have spoken in support of the marshal's words, but she cut him short, saying in a tone of mockery,—

"Go and rest yourself, sir; you have worked very hard."

He left the palace in a rage. It was increased when word was brought to him that he had been ridiculed at the supper-table of the queen. She had gone so far as to blame him for increasing the tumult, and threatened to make an example of him and to interdict the Parliament. In short, the exercise of power had made the woman mad. De Retz reflected. If the queen designed to punish him, she should have something to punish him for. He was not the man to be made a cat's-paw of.

"We are not in such bad case as you suppose, gentlemen," he said to his friends. "There is an intention of crushing the public; it is for me to defend it from oppression; to-morrow before mid-day I shall be master of Paris."

Anne of Austria had made an enemy of one who had been her strong friend, a bold and restless man, capable of great deeds. He had long taken pains to make himself popular in Paris. During that night he and his emissaries worked in secret upon the people. Early the next day the mob was out again, arms in hand, and ripe for mischief. The chancellor, on his way to the Palace of Justice, suddenly found his carriage surrounded by these rioters. He hastily sought refuge in the Hôtel de Luynes. The mob followed him, pillaging as they went, destroying the furniture, seeking the fugitive. He had taken refuge in a small chamber, where, thinking that his last hour had come, he knelt in confession before his brother, the Bishop of Meaux. Fortunately for him the rioters failed to discover him, and were led away by another fancy.

"It was like a sudden and violent conflagration lighted up from the Pont Neuf over the whole city," says De Retz. "Everybody without exception took up arms. Children of five and six years of age were seen dagger in hand, and the mothers themselves carried them. In less than two hours there were in

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Paris more than two hundred barricades, bordered with flags and all the arms that the League had left entire. Everybody cried 'Hurrah, for the king!' but echo answered, 'None of your Mazarin!'"

It was an incipient revolution, but it was the minister and the regent, not the king, against whom the people had risen, its object being the support of the Parliament of Paris, not the States General of the kingdom. France was not yet ready for the radical work reserved for a later day. The turbulent Parisians were in the street, arms in hand, but they had not yet lost the sentiment of loyalty to the king. A century and a half more of misrule were needed to complete this transformation in the national idea.

While all this was going on, the coadjutor, the soul of the outbreak, kept at home, vowing that he was powerless to control the people. At an early hour the Parliament assembled at the Palace of Justice, but its deliberations were interrupted by shouts of "Broussel! Broussel!" from the immense multitude which filled every adjoining avenue. Only the release of the arrested members could appease the mob. The Parliament determined to go in a body and demand this of the queen.

Their journey was an eventful one. Paris was in insurrection. Everywhere they found the people in arms, while barricades were thrown up at every hundred paces. Through the shouting and howling mob they made their way to the queen's palace, the ushers in front, with their square caps, the members following in their robes, at their head M. Molé, their premier president.

The conference with the queen was a passionate one. M. Molé spoke for the Parliament, representing to the queen the extreme danger Paris was in, the peril to all France, unless the prisoners were released and the sedition allayed. He spoke to a woman "who feared nothing because she knew but little," and who was just then controlled by pride and passion instead of reason.

"I am quite aware that there is a disturbance in the city," she answered, furiously; "but you shall answer to me for it, gentlemen of the Parliament, you, your wives, and your children."

With further threats that the king would remember the cause of these evils, when he reached his majority, the incensed woman flouted from the chamber of audience, slamming the door violently behind her. To deal with her, in her present mood, was evidently impracticable. The members left the palace to return. They quickly found themselves surrounded by an angry mob, furious at their non-success, disposed to hold them responsible for the failure. On their arrival at the Rue St. Honoré, just as they were about to turn on to the Pont Neuf, a band of about two hundred men advanced threateningly upon them, headed by a cook-shop lad, armed with a halberd, which he thrust against M. Molé's body, crying,—

"Turn, traitor, and if thou wouldst not thyself be slain, give up to us Broussel, or Mazarin and the chancellor as hostages."

Molé quietly put the weapon aside.

"You forget yourself," he said, with calm dignity, "and are oblivious of the respect you owe to my office."

The mob, however, was past the point of paying respect to dignitaries. They hustled the members, threatened the president with swords and pistols, and several times tried to drag him into a private house. But he resisted, and was aided by members and friends who surrounded him. Slowly the parliamentary body made its way back to the Palais-Royal, whither they had resolved to return, M. Molé preserving his dignity of mien and movement, despite the "running fire of insults, threats, execrations, and blasphemies," that arose from every side. They reached the palace, at length, in diminished numbers, many of the members having dropped out of the procession.

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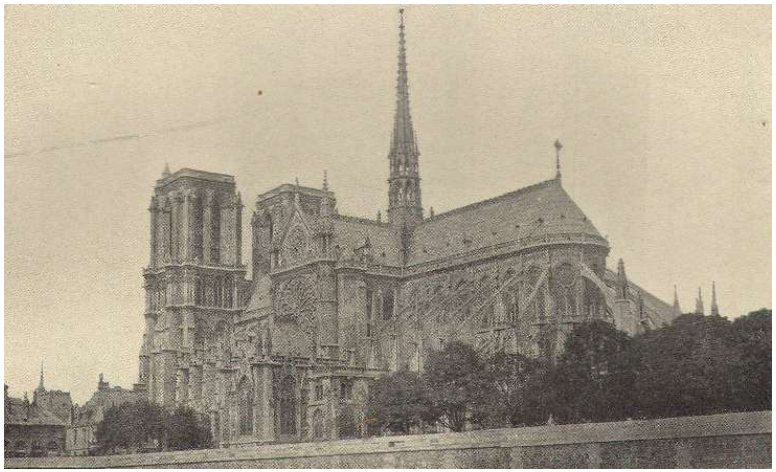
The whole court was assembled in the gallery. Molé spoke first. He was a man of great natural eloquence, who was at his best as an orator when surrounded by peril, and he depicted the situation so graphically that all present, except the queen, were in terror. "Monsieur made as if he would throw himself upon his knees before the queen, who remained inflexible," says De Retz; "four or five princesses, who were trembling with fear, did throw themselves at her feet; the queen of England, who had come that day from St. Germain, represented that the troubles had never been so serious at their commencement in England, nor the feelings so heated or united."



CATHEDRAL OF NOTRE DAME. PARIS.

Paris, in short, was on the eve of a revolution, and the queen could not be made to see it. Cardinal Mazarin, who was present, and who had been severely dealt with in the speeches, some of the orators telling him, in mockery, that if he would only go as far as the Pont Neuf he would learn for himself how things were, now joined the others in entreating Anne of Austria to give way. She did so at length, consenting to the release of Broussel, though "not without a deep sigh, which showed what violence she did her feelings in the struggle."

It is an interesting spectacle to see this woman, moved by sheer pride and obstinacy, conjoined with ignorance of the actual situation, seeking to set her single will against that of a city in revolt, and endangering the very existence of the monarchy by her sheer lack of reason. Her consent, for the time being, settled the difficulty, though the passions which had been aroused were not easily to be set at rest. Broussel was released and took his seat again in the Parliament, and the people returned to their homes, satisfied, for the time, with their victory over the queen and the cardinal.

In truth, a contest had arisen which was yet to yield important consequences. The Prince of Condé had arrived in Paris during these events. He had the prestige of a successful general; he did not like the cardinal, and he looked on the Parliament as imprudent and insolent.

"If I should join hands with them," he said to De Retz, "it might be best for my interests, but my name is Louis de Bourbon, and I do not wish to shake the throne. These devils of square-caps, are they mad about bringing me either to commence a civil war, or to put a rope round their own necks? I will let them see that they are not the potentates they think themselves, and that they may easily be brought to reason."

"The cardinal may possibly be mistaken in his measures," answered De Retz. "He will find Paris a hard nut to crack."

"It will not be taken, like Dunkerque, by mining and assaults," retorted the prince, angrily; "but if the bread of Gonesse were to fail them for a week—" He left the coadjutor to imagine the consequences.

The contest continued. In January, 1649, the queen, the boy king, and the whole court set out by night for the castle of St. Germain. It was unfurnished, with scarcely a bundle of straw to lie upon, but the queen could not have been more gay "had she won a battle, taken Paris, and had all who had displeased her hanged, and nevertheless she was very far from all that."

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Far enough, indeed. Paris was in the hands of her enemies, who were as gay as the queen. On the 8th of January the Parliament of Paris decreed Cardinal Mazarin an enemy to the king and the state, and bade all subjects of the king to hunt him down. War was declared against the queen regent and her favorite, the cardinal. Had it been the States-General in place of the Parliament, the French Revolution might have then and there begun.

Many of the greatest lords joined the side of the people. Troops were levied in the city, their command being offered to the Prince of Conti. The Parliaments of Aix and Rouen voted to support that of Paris. It was decreed that all the royal funds, in the exchequers of the kingdom, should be seized and used for the defence of the people. All was festivity in the city. The versatile people seemed to imagine that to declare war was to decree victory. There was dancing everywhere within the walls. There was the rumble of war without. The Prince of Condé, at the head of the king's troops, had taken the post of Charentin from the Frondeurs, as the malcontents called themselves, and had carried out his threat of checking the flow of bread to the city. The gay Parisians were beginning to feel the inconvenience of hunger.

What followed is too long a story to be told here, except in bare epitome. A truce was patched up between the contending parties. Bread flowed again into Paris. The seared and hungry people grew courageous and violent again when their appetites were satisfied. When M. Molé and his fellows returned to Paris with a treaty of peace which they had signed, the populace gathered round them in fury.

"None of your peace! None of your Mazarin!" they angrily shouted. "We must go to St. Germain to seek our good king! We must fling into the river all the Mazarins."

One of them laid his hand threateningly on President Molé's arm. The latter looked him in the face calmly.

"When you have killed me," he said, quietly, "I shall only need six feet of earth."

"You can get back to your house secretly by way of the record offices," whispered one of his companions.

"The court never hides itself," he composedly replied. "If I were certain to perish, I would not commit this poltroonery, which, moreover, would but give courage to the rioters. They would seek me in my house if they thought I shrank from them here."

M. Molé was a man of courage. To face a mob is at times more dangerous than to face an army.

Paris was in disorder. The agitation was spreading all over France. But the army was faithful to the king, and without it the Fronde was powerless. The outbreak had ended in a treaty of peace and amnesty in which the Parliament had in a measure won, as it had preserved all its rights and privileges.

It was to be a short peace. Condé, elated by having beaten the Fronde, claimed a lion's share in the government. His brother, the Prince of Conti, and his sister, the Duchess of Longueville, joined him in these pretensions. The affair ended in a bold step on the part of Mazarin and the queen. The two princes and M. de Longueville were arrested and conveyed to the castle of Vincennes, while the princesses were ordered to retire to their estates, and the Duchess of Longueville, fearing arrest, fled in haste to Normandy.

For the present the star of the cardinal was in the ascendant. But his master-stroke set war on foot again. The Parliament of Paris supported the princes. Their partisans rallied. Bordeaux broke into insurrection. Elsewhere hot blood declared itself. The Duke of Orleans joined the party of the prisoners. The Parliament enjoined all the officers of the crown to obey none but the duke, the lieutenant-general of the kingdom. On the night of February 6, 1651, Mazarin set out again for St. Germain. Paris had become far too hot to hold him.

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The tidings of his flight brought the people into the streets again. The Duke of Orleans informed Cardinal de Retz that the queen proposed to follow her flying minister, with the boy king.

"What is to be done?" he asked, somewhat helplessly. "It is a bad business; but how are we to stop it?"

"How?" cried the more practical De Retz; "why, by shutting the gates of Paris, to begin with. The king must not go."

Within an hour the emissaries of the ready coadjutor were rousing up the people right and left with the tidings of the projected flight of the queen with her son. Soon the city swarmed again with armed and angry men, the gates were seized, mounted guards patrolled the streets, the crowd surged towards the Palais-Royal.

Within the palace all was alarm and confusion. Anne of Austria had indeed been on the point of flight. Her son was in his travelling-dress. But the people were at the door, clamoring to see the king, threatening dire consequences if the doors were not opened to them. They could not long be kept out; some immediate action must be taken. The boy's travelling-attire was quickly replaced by his night dress, and he was laid in bed, his mother cautioning him to lie quiet and feign sleep.

"The king! we must see the king!" came the vociferous cry from the street. "Open! the people demand to see their king."

The doors were forced; the mob was in the palace; clamor and tumult reigned below the royal chambers. The queen sent word to the people that the king was asleep in his bed. They might enter and see him if they would promise to tread softly and keep strict silence. This message at once stopped the tumult; the noise subsided; the people began to file into the room, stepping as noiselessly as though shod with down, gazing with awed eyes on the seemingly sleeping face of the boy king.

The queen stood at the pillow of her son, a graceful and beautiful woman, her outstretched arm holding back the heavy folds of the drapery, her face schooled to quiet repose. Louis lay with closed eyes and regular breathing, playing his part well. For hours a stream of the men and women of Paris flowed through the chamber, moving in reverential silence, gazing on the boy's face as on a sacred treasure of their own. Till three o'clock in the morning the movement continued, the queen standing all this time like a beautiful statue, her son still feigning slumber. It was a scene of remarkable and picturesque character.

That night of strain and excitement passed. The king was with them still, of that the people were assured; he must remain with them, there must be an end of midnight flights. The patrol was kept up, the gates watched, the king was a prisoner in the hands of the Parisians.

"The king, our master, is a captive," said M. Molé, voicing to the Parliament the queen's complaint.

"He was a captive, in the hands of Mazarin," replied the Duke of Orleans; "but, thank God, he is so no longer."

The people had won. Mazarin was beaten. He hastened to La Havre, where the princes were then confined, and set them at liberty himself. His power in France, for the time, was at an end. He made his way to the frontier, which he crossed on the 12th of March. He was just in time: the Parliament of Paris had issued orders for his arrest, wherever found in France.

We must end here, with this closing of the contest between Mazarin and the Fronde. History goes on to tell that the contest was reopened, Mazarin returned, there was battle in Paris, the Fronde failed, and Mazarin died in office.

The popular outbreak here briefly chronicled is of interest from the fact that it immediately followed the success of the insurrection in England and the execution of Charles I. The provocation was the same in the two nations; the result highly different. In both cases it was a revolt against the tyranny of the court and the attempt to establish absolutism. But the difference in results lay in the fact that England had a single parliament,

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composed of politicians, while France had ten parliaments, composed of magistrates, and unaccustomed to handle great questions of public policy. Richelieu had taken from the civic parliaments of France what little power they possessed, and they were but shadowy prototypes of the English representative assembly. "Without any unity of action or aim, and by turns excited and dismayed by the examples that came to them from England, the Frondeurs had to guide them no Hampden or Cromwell; they had at their backs neither people nor army; the English had been able to accomplish a revolution; the Fronde failed before the dexterous prudence of Mazarin and the queen's fidelity to her minister."

There lay before France a century and a half of autocratic rule and popular suffering; then was to come the convening of the States-General, the rise of the people, and the final downfall of absolute royalty and feudal privileges in the red tide of the Revolution.

CHAPTER XXII

A MARTYR TO HIS PROFESSION

The grounds of the Château de Chantilly, that charming retreat of the Prince de Condé, shone with all the splendor which artistic adornments, gleaming lanterns of varied form and color, splendidly-costumed dames and richly-attired cavaliers could give them, the whole scene having a fairy-like beauty and richness wonderfully pleasing to the eye. For more than a mile from the entrance to the grounds men holding lighted torches bordered the road, while in all the villages leading thither the peasants were out in their gala attire, and triumphal arches of verdure were erected in honor of the king, Louis XIV., who was on his way thither to visit Monsieur le Prince.

He was coming, the great Louis, the Grand Monarque of France, and noble and peasant alike were out to bid him welcome, while the artistic skill of the day had exhausted itself in efforts to provide him a splendid reception. And now there could be heard on the road the trampling of horses, the clanking of swords, the voices of approaching men, and a gallant cavalcade wheeled at length into the grounds, announcing that the king was close at hand. A few minutes of anxious expectation passed, and then the king, attended by a large group of courtiers, came sweeping grandly forward, while at the same moment a gleaming display of fireworks, at the end of the avenue, blazed off in fiery greeting. As the coruscating lights faded out Condé met the king in his coach, which he invited him to enter, and off they drove to the château, followed by a shining swarm of grand dames and great lords who had gathered to this fête from all parts of France.

Within the château as much had been done as without to render honor to the occasion. Hundreds of retainers lined chamber and hall in splendid attire, their only duty being to add

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life and richness to the scene. The rooms were luxuriously furnished, the banqueting hall was a scene for a painter, and the banquet a triumph of the art of the cuisine, for was it not prepared by the genius of Vatel, the great Vatel, the most famous of cooks ministering to the most showy of monarchs!

All went well; the king feasted on delicacies which were a triumph of art; Louis was satisfied; Vatel triumphed; so far the fête was a success. In the evening the king played at piquet, the cavaliers and ladies promenaded through the splendidly-furnished and richly-lighted saloons, some cracked jokes on sofas, some made love in alcoves, still all went well.

For the next day the programme included a grand promenade *à la mode de Versailles*, a collation in the park, under great trees laden with the freshest verdure of spring, a stag-hunt by moonlight, a brilliant display of fireworks, then a supper in the banqueting hall of the château. And still all went well. At least all thought so but Vatel; but as for that prince of cooks, he was in despair. A frightful disaster had occurred. After the days and nights of anxiety and care in preparing for this grand occasion, for a failure now to take place, it was to him unpardonable, unsupportable.

Tidings of his distress were brought to Condé. The generous prince sought his room to console him.

"Vatel," said he, "what is this I hear? The king's supper was superb."

"Monseigneur," said Vatel, tears in his eyes. "The rôti was wanting at two tables."

"Not at all," replied the prince. "You surpassed yourself; nothing could have been better; everything was perfect."

Vatel, somewhat relieved by this praise, sought his couch, and a morsel of sleep visited his eyelids. But the shadow of doom still hung over his career. By break of day he was up again. Others might lie late abed, but there could be no such indulgence for him; for was not he the power behind the throne? What would this grand fête be should his genius fail, his powers prove unequal to the strain? King and prince, lord and lady might slumber, but Vatel must be up and alert.

Fresh fish formed an essential part of the menu which he had laid out for the dining-tables of the third day. He had ordered them from every part of the coast. Would they come? Could the fates fail him now, at this critical moment of his life? The anxious chief went abroad to view the situation. His eyes lighted. A fisher-boy had just arrived with two loads of fish, fresh brought from the coast. Vatel looked at them, and then gazed around with newly disturbed eyes.

"Is that all?" he asked, his voice faltering.

"That is all, sir," answered the boy, who knew nothing about the numerous orders.

Vatel turned pale. All? These few fish all he had to offer his multitude of guests? Only a miracle could divide these so as to give a portion to each. He waited, despair slowly descending upon his heart. In vain his anxious wait; no more fish appeared. Vatel's anxiety was fast becoming despair. The disaster of the night before, to be followed by this terrible stroke—it was more than his artistic soul could bear; disgrace had come upon him in its direst form; his reputation was at stake.

He met Gourville, a wit and factotum of the court, and told him of his misfortune.

"It is disgrace, ruin," he cried; "I cannot survive it."

Gourville heard him with merry laughter. To his light mind the affair seemed only a good joke. It was not so to Vatel. He sought his room and locked himself in.

He was too soon, alas, too soon; for now fish are coming; here, there, everywhere; the orders have been strictly obeyed, there is abundance for all purposes. The cooks receive them, and look for Vatel to give orders for their disposal. He is not to be seen. "He went to his room," says Gourville. They repair thither,

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knock persistently, but in vain, and finding that no answer can be obtained, they break open the door and enter.

A frightful spectacle meets their eyes. On the floor before them lies poor Vatel, in a pool of his own blood, pierced through the heart. In his ecstasy of despair at the non-arrival of the fish, he had fastened his sword in the door, and thrown himself upon its deadly point. Thrice he had done so, twice wounding himself slightly, the third time piercing himself through the heart. Poor fellow! he was dead, and the fish had arrived. It was a useless sacrifice of his life to his art.

The tidings of the tragedy filled the château with alarm and dismay. The prince was in despair, the more so as the king blamed him for the fatal occurrence. He had long avoided Chantilly, he said, knowing that his coming would occasion inconvenience, since his host would insist on providing for the whole of his suite. There should have been but two tables, and there were more than twenty-five; the strain on poor Vatel was the cause of his death and the loss of one of the ornaments of the reign. He would never allow such extravagance again. Men like Vatel were not to be so lightly sacrificed.

While the king thus petulantly scolded his great subject in the time-honored "I told you so" fashion, the whole château buzzed with opinions about the tragic event. "Vatel has played the hero," said some; "He has played the idiot," said others. Some praised his courage and devotion to his art; others blamed his haste and folly. But praise prevailed over blame, for, as all conceded, "he had died for the honor of his profession," and no soldier or martyr could do more.

But Vatel was gone, and dinner was not served. The dead was dead, but appetite remained. What was to be done? Gourville sprang into the breach and undertook to replace Vatel. The fish were cooked, the company dined, then they promenaded, then they played piquet, losing and winning largely, then they supped, then they enjoyed a moonlight chase of the deer in the park of Chantilly. Mirth and gayety prevailed, and before bedtime came poor Vatel was forgotten. The cook who had died for his art was as far from their thoughts as the martyrs of centuries before.

Early the next day the king and his train departed, leaving Condé to count the cost of the entertainment, which had been so great as to make him agree with Louis, that hereafter two tables would be better than twenty-five. Doubtless among his chief losses he counted Vatel. Money could be found again, waste repaired, but a genius of the kitchen the equal of Vatel was not to be had to order. Men like him are the growth of centuries. He died that his name might live.

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CHAPTER XXIII

THE MAN WITH THE IRON MASK

In the year 1662, the first year of the absolute reign of Louis XIV., there occurred an event without parallel in history, and which still remains shrouded in the mystery in which it was from the first involved. There was sent with the utmost secrecy to the Château of Pignerol an unknown prisoner, whose identity was kept secret with the most extreme care. All that can be said of him is that he was young, well-formed and attractive in appearance, and above the usual stature. As for his face, whether it were handsome or ill-favored, noble or base, no man could say, for it was concealed by an impenetrable mask, the lower portion of which was made movable by steel springs, so that he could eat with it on, while the upper portion was immovably fixed.

This mysterious state prisoner remained for a number of years at Pignerol, under charge of its governor, M. de Saint Mars, an officer of the greatest discretion and trustworthiness. He was afterwards removed to the castle of the Isle of Sainte Marguerite, on the coast of Provence, where he remained for years in the same mysterious seclusion, an object of the greatest curiosity on the part of all the people of the prison, and of no less interest to the people of the kingdom, to whose love of the marvellous the secrecy surrounding him appealed. The mask was never removed, day or night, so far as any one could learn, while conjecture sought in vain to discover who this mysterious personage could be.

This much was certain, no person of leading importance had disappeared from Europe in the year 1662. On the other hand, the masked prisoner was treated with a consideration which could be looked for only by persons of the highest birth. The Marquis of Louvois, minister of war under the "Grand Monarque," was said to have visited him at Sainte Marguerite, and to have treated him with the respect due to one of royal birth. He spoke to him standing, as to one far his superior in station, and showed him throughout the interview the greatest deference.

In 1698, M. de Saint Mars was made governor of the Bastille. He brought with him this mysterious masked prisoner, whose secret it was apparently not deemed advisable to intrust to a new governor of Sainte Marguerite. As to what took place on the journey, we have some interesting details in a letter from M. de Formanoir, grand nephew of Saint Mars.

"In 1698, M. de Saint Mars exchanged the governorship of the islands [Sainte Marguerite and Sainte Honnat) ?> for that of the Bastille. When he set out to enter on his new office he stayed with his prisoner for a short time at Palteau, his estate. The mask arrived in a litter which preceded that of M. de Saint Mars; they were accompanied by several men on horseback. The peasants went out to meet their seigneur. M. de Saint Mars took his meals with his prisoner, who sat with his back towards the windows of the room, which looked into the court-yard. The peasants of whom I made inquiry could not see if he had his mask on when eating; but they observed that M. de Saint Mars, who sat opposite to him at table, had a pair of pistols beside his plate. They were attended by a single valet only, Antoine Ru, who took away the dishes set down to him in an antechamber, having first carefully shut the door of the dining-room. When the prisoner crossed the court-yard a black mask was always on his face."

The extreme caution here indicated was continued until the prisoner reached the Bastille. With regard to his life in this fortress we are better informed, since it must be acknowledged that the record of his previous prison life is somewhat obscure. All that seems well established is that he was one of the "two prisoners of the Lower Tower" at Pignerol, in 1681; that he was spoken of to Saint Mars as "your ancient prisoner," and "your prisoner of twenty years' standing;" that in 1687 he was removed

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from Exiles to Sainte Marguerite with the same care and secrecy observed in the journey to the Bastille, his jailer accompanying him to the new prison, and that throughout he was under the care of the relentless Saint Mars.

Of the life of this remarkable state prisoner in the Bastille we have more detailed accounts. Dujunca, the chief turnkey of that prison, has left a journal, which contains the following entry: "On Thursday, the 18th September, 1698, at three o'clock in the afternoon, M. de Saint Mars, the governor, arrived at the Bastille for the first time from the islands of Sainte Marguerite and Sainte Honnat. He brought with him in his own litter an ancient prisoner formerly under his care at Pignerol, and whose name remains untold. This prisoner was always kept masked, and was at first lodged in the Basinière tower. . . . I conducted him afterwards to the Bertaudière tower, and put him in a room, which, by order of M. de Saint Mars, I had furnished before his arrival."

Throughout the life of this mysterious personage in the Bastille, the secrecy which had so far environed him was rigidly observed. So far as is known, no one ever saw him without his mask. Aside from this, and his detention, everything that could be was done to make his life enjoyable. He was given the best accommodation the Bastille afforded. Nothing that he desired was refused him. He had a strong taste for lace and linen of extreme fineness, and his wishes in this particular were complied with. His table was always served in the most elegant manner, while the governor, who frequently attended him, seldom sat in his presence.

During his intervals of ailment he was attended by the old doctor of the Bastille, who, while often examining his tongue and parts of his body, never saw his face. He represents him as very finely shaped, and of somewhat brownish complexion, with an agreeable and engaging voice. He never complained, nor gave any hint as to who he was, and throughout his whole prison life no one gained the least clue to his identity. The only instance in which he attempted to make himself known is described by Voltaire, who tells us that while at Sainte Marguerite he threw out from the grated window of his cell a piece of fine linen, and a silver plate on which he had traced some strange characters. This, however, is an unauthenticated story.

The detention of this mysterious prisoner in the Bastille was not an extended one. He died in 1703. Dujunca's journal tells the story of his death. "On Monday, the 19th of November, 1703, the unknown prisoner, who had continually worn a black velvet mask, and whom M. de Saint Mars had brought with him from the island of Sainte Marguerite, died to-day at about ten o'clock in the evening, having been yesterday taken slightly ill. He had been a long time in M. de Saint Mars' hands, and his illness was exceedingly trifling."

There is one particular of interest in this record. The "iron mask" appears to have been really a mask of black velvet, the only iron about it being the springs, which permitted the lower part to be lifted.

The question now arises, Who was the "man with the iron mask"? It is a question which has been long debated, without definite conclusion. Chamillard was the last minister of Louis XIV. who knew this secret. When he was dying, his son-in-law, Marshal de Feuillade, begged him on his knees to reveal the mystery. He begged in vain. Chamillard answered that it was a secret of state, which he had sworn never to reveal, and he died with it untold.

Voltaire, in his "Age of Louis XIV.," was the first to call special attention to this mystery, and since then numerous conjectures have been made as to who the Iron Mask really was. One writer has suggested that he was an illegitimate son of Anne of Austria, the queen-mother. Another identifies him with a supposed twin brother of Louis XIV., whose birth Richelieu had concealed. Others make him the Count of Vermandois, an illegitimate son of Louis XIV.; the Duke of Beaufort, a hero of the Fronde; the Duke of Monmouth, the English pretender of 1685; Fouquet, Louis's disgraced minister of finance; a son of

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Cromwell, the English protector; and various other wild and unfounded guesses. After all has been said, the identity of the prisoner remains unknown. Mattioli, a diplomatic agent of the Duke of Mantua, who was long imprisoned at Pignerol and at Sainte Marguerite, was for a long time generally thought to be the Iron Mask, but there is good reason to believe that he died in 1694.

Conjecture has exhausted itself, and yet the identity of this strange captive remains a mystery, and is likely always to continue so. The fact that all the exalted personages of the day can be traced renders it probable that the veiled prisoner was really an obscure individual, whom the caprice of Louis XIV. surrounded with conditions intended to excite the curiosity of the public. There are on record other instances of imprisonment under similar conditions of inviolate secrecy, and it is not impossible that the king may have endeavored, for no purpose higher than whim, to surround the story of this one with unbroken mystery. If such were his purpose it has succeeded, for there is no more mysterious person in history than the Man with the Iron Mask.

CHAPTER XXIV

VOLTAIRE'S LAST VISIT TO PARIS

Never had excitable Paris been more excited. Only one man was talked of, only one subject thought of; there was no longer interest in rumors of war, in political quarrels, in the doings at the king's court; all admiration and all sympathy were turned towards one feeble old man, who had returned to Paris to die. For twenty-seven years he had been absent, that brilliant writer and unsurpassed genius, the versatile Voltaire. His facile pen had given its greatest glory to the reign of Louis XV., yet for more than a quarter of a century he had been exiled from the land he loved, because he dared to exercise the privilege of free speech in that land of oppression, and to deal with kings and nobles as man with man, not as reverent worshipper with divinity. Now, in his eighty-fourth year of age, he had ventured to come back to the city he loved above all others, with scarcely enough life left for the journey, and far from sure that power would not still seek to suppress genius as it had done in the past.

If he had such fears, there was no warrant for them. Paris was ready to worship him. The king himself would not have dared to interfere with the popular idol in that interval of enthusiastic ebullition. All Paris was prepared to cast itself at his feet; all France was eager to do him honor; all calumny, jealousy, hatred were forgotten; a nation had risen to welcome and honor its greatest genius, and the splendors of the court paled before the glory which seemed to emanate from that feeble, tottering veteran of the empire of thought, who had come back to occupy, for a brief period, the throne of his old dominion.

The admiration, the enthusiasm, the glory were too much for him. He was dying in the excitement of joy and triumph. Yet, with his wonderful elasticity of frame and mind, he rose again

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for a fuller enjoyment of that popular ovation which was to him the wine of life. The story of his final triumph has been so graphically told by an eye-witness that we cannot do better than to quote his words.

"M. de Voltaire has appeared for the first time at the Academy and at the play; he found all the doors, all the approaches, to the Academy besieged by a multitude which only opened slowly to let him pass, and then rushed in immediately upon his footsteps with repeated plaudits and acclamations. The Academy came out into the first room to meet him, an honor it had never yet paid to any of its members, not even to the foreign princes who had deigned to be present at its meetings.

"The homage he received at the Academy was merely the prelude to that which awaited him at the National theatre. As soon as his carriage was seen at a distance, there arose a universal shout of joy. All the curb-stones, all the barriers, all the windows, were crammed with spectators, and scarcely was the carriage stopped when people were already on the imperial and even on the wheels to get a nearer view of the divinity. Scarcely had he entered the house when Sieur Brizard came up with a crown of laurels, which Madame de Villette placed upon the great man's head, but which he immediately took off, though the public urged him to keep it on by clapping of hands and by cheers which resounded from all parts of the house with such a din as never was heard.

"All the women stood up. I saw at one time that part of the pit which was under the boxes go down on their knees, in despair of getting a sight any other way. The whole house was darkened with the dust raised by the ebb and flow of the excited multitude. It was not without difficulty that the players managed at last to begin the piece. It was 'Irene,' which was given for the sixth time. Never had this tragedy been better played, never less listened to, never more applauded. The illustrious old man rose to thank the public, and, a moment afterwards, there appeared on a pedestal in the middle of the stage a bust of this great man, and the actresses, garlands and crowns in hand, covered it with laurels.

VOLTAIRE'S LAST VISIT TO PARIS.

"M. de Voltaire seemed to be sinking beneath the burden of age and of the homage with which he had just been overwhelmed. He appeared deeply affected, his eyes still sparkled amidst the pallor of his face, but it seemed as if he

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breathed no longer save with the consciousness of his glory. The people shouted, 'Lights! lights! that everybody may see him!' The coachman was entreated to go at a walk, and thus he was accompanied by cheering and the crowd as far as Pont Royal."

This was a very different greeting from that which Voltaire had received fifty years before, when a nobleman with whom he had quarrelled had him beaten with sticks in the public street, and, when Voltaire showed an intention of making him answer at the sword's point for this outrage, had him seized and thrown into the Bastille by the authorities. This was but one of the several times he had been immured in this gloomy prison for daring to say what he thought about powers and potentates. But time brings its revenges. The Chevalier de Rohan, who had had the poet castigated, was forgotten except as the man who had dishonored himself in seeking to dishonor Voltaire, and the poet had become the idol of the people of Paris, high and low alike.

Voltaire was not the only great man in Paris at this period. There was another as great as he, but great in a very different fashion,—Benjamin Franklin, the American philosopher and statesman, as famous for common sense and public spirit as Voltaire was for poetical power and satirical keenness. These two great men met, and their meeting is worthy of description. The American envoys had asked permission to call on the veteran of literature, a request that was willingly granted when Voltaire learned that Franklin was one of the number. What passed between them may be briefly related.

They found the aged poet reclining on a couch, thin of body, wrinkled of face, evidently sick and feeble; yet his eyes, "glittering like two carbuncles," showed what spirit lay within his withered frame. As they entered, he raised himself with difficulty, and repeated the following lines from Thomson's "Ode to Liberty," a poem which he had been familiar with in England fifty years before.

"Lo! swarming southward on rejoicing suns,
Gay colonies extend, the calm retreat
Of undisturbed Distress, the better home
Of those whom bigots chase from foreign lands;
Not built on rapine, servitude, and woe,
And in their turn some petty tyrant's prey;
But bound by social Freedom, firm they rise."

He then began to converse with Franklin in English; but, on being asked by his niece to speak in French, that she and others present might understand what was said, he remarked,—

"I beg your pardon. I have, for the moment, yielded to the vanity of showing that I can speak in the language of a Franklin."

Shortly afterwards, Dr. Franklin presented him his grandson, whereupon the old man lifted his hands over the head of the youth, and said, "My child, God and liberty! Recollect those two words."

This was not the only scene between Franklin and Voltaire. Another took place at the Academy of Sciences at one of the meetings of that body. The two distinguished guests sat side by side on the platform, in full view of the audience.

During the proceedings an interruption occurred. A confused cry arose, the names of the two great visitors alone being distinguishable. It was taken to mean that they should be introduced. This was done. They rose and acknowledged the courtesy by bowing and a few words. But such a formal proceeding was far from enough to satisfy the audience. The noise continued. Franklin and Voltaire shook hands. This gave rise to plaudits, but the confused cries were not stilled; the audience wanted some more decided demonstration.

"Il faut s'embrasser, à la Françoise" ["You must embrace, in French fashion"], they cried.

John Adams, who witnessed the spectacle, thus describes what followed: "The two aged actors upon this great theatre of philosophy and frivolity, embraced each other by hugging one another in their arms, and kissing each other's cheeks, and then the tumult subsided. And the cry immediately spread through the

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whole kingdom, and, I suppose over all Europe, 'How charming it was to see Solon and Sophocles embrace.'"

A month later Voltaire lay dead, his brilliant eyes closed, his active brain at rest. The excitement of his visit to Paris and the constant ovation which he had received had been too much for the old man. He had died in the midst of his triumph, vanished from the stage of life just when his genius had compelled the highest display of appreciation which it was possible for his countrymen to give. As for the church, which his keen pen had dealt with as severely as with the temporal powers, it could not well forget his incessant and bitter attacks. That he might obtain Christian burial, he confessed and received absolution from the Abbé Gaultier; but, with his views, this was simply a sacrifice to the proprieties; he remained a heathen poet to the end, a born satirist and scoffer at all tradition and all conventionality.

Voltaire was deistic in belief, in no sense atheistic. Among his latest words were, "I die worshipping God, loving my friends, not hating my enemies, but detesting superstition." Despite the admiration of the people, the powers of the state could not forget that the man so enthusiastically received was the great apostle of mockery and irreverence. The government gave its last kick to the dead lion by ordering the papers not to comment on his death. The church laid an interdict on his burial in consecrated ground,—an hour or two too late, as it proved. His body, minus the heart, was transferred in 1791 to the Pantheon, and when, in 1864, the sarcophagus was opened with the purpose of restoring the heart to the other remains, it was found to be empty. In the stirring days of France the body had by some one, in some way, been removed.

CHAPTER XXV

THE DIAMOND NECKLACE

Paris, that city of sensations, was shaken to its centre by tidings of a new and startling event. The Cardinal de Rohan, grand almoner of France, at mass-time, and when dressed in his pontifical robes, had been suddenly arrested in the palace of Versailles and taken to the Bastille. Why? No one knew; though many had their opinions and beliefs. Rumors of some mysterious and disgraceful secret beneath this arrest, a mystery in which the honor of Marie Antoinette, the queen of France, was involved, had got afloat, and were whispered from end to end of the city, in which "the Austrian," as the queen was contemptuously designated, was by no means a favorite.

The truth gradually came out,—the story of a disgraceful and extraordinary intrigue, of which the prince cardinal was a victim rather than an accessory, and of which the queen was utterly ignorant, though the odium of the transaction clung to her until her death. When, eight years afterwards, she was borne through a raging mob to the guillotine, insulting references to this affair of the diamond necklace were among the terms of opprobrium heaped upon her by the dregs of the Parisian populace.

What was this disgraceful business? It is partly revealed in the graphic account of an interview with the king which preceded the arrest of the prince cardinal. On the 15th of August, 1785, Louis XVI. sent for M. de Rohan to his cabinet. He entered smilingly, not dreaming of the thunderbolt that was about to burst upon his head. He found there the king and queen, the former with indignant countenance, the latter grave and severe in expression.

"Cardinal," broke out the king, in an abrupt tone, "you bought some diamonds of Boehmer?"

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"Yes, sir," rejoined the cardinal, disturbed by the stern severity of the king's looks and tone.

"What have you done with them?"

"I thought they had been sent to the queen."

"Who gave you the commission to buy them?"

"A lady, the Countess de La Motte Valois," answered the cardinal, growing more uneasy. "She gave me a letter from the queen; I thought I was obliging her Majesty."

The queen sharply interrupted him. She was no friend of the cardinal; he had maligned her years before, when her husband was but dauphin of France. Now was the opportunity to repay him for those malevolent letters.

"How, sir," she broke out severely; "how could you think—you to whom I have never spoken for eight years—that I should choose you for conducting such a negotiation, and by the medium of such a woman?"

"I was mistaken, I perceive," said the cardinal, humbly. "The desire I felt to please your Majesty misled me. Here is the letter which I was told was from you."

He drew a letter from his pocket and handed it to the king. Louis took it, and cast his eyes over the signature. He looked up indignantly.

"How could a prince of your house and my grand almoner suppose that the queen would sign, 'Marie Antoinette of France?'" he sternly demanded. "Queens do not sign their names at such length. It is not even the queen's writing. And what is the meaning of all these doings with jewellers, and these notes shown to bankers?"

By this time the cardinal was so agitated that he was obliged to rest himself against the table for support.

"Sir," he said, in a broken voice, "I am too much overcome to be able to reply. What you say overwhelms me with surprise."

"Walk into the room, cardinal," said the king, with more kindness of tone. "You may write your explanation of these occurrences."

The cardinal attempted to do so, but his written statement failed to make clear the mystery. In the end an officer of the king's body-guard was called in, and an order given him to convey Cardinal de Rohan to the Bastille. He had barely time to give secret directions to his grand vicar to burn all his papers, before he was carried off to that frightful fortress, the scene of so much injustice, haunted by so many woes.

The papers of De Rohan probably needed purging by fire, for the order to burn them indicates that they contained evidence derogatory to his position as a dignitary of the church. The prince cardinal was a vain and profligate man, full of vicious inclinations, and credulous to a degree that had made him the victim of the unscrupulous schemer, Madame de La Motte Valois, a woman as adroit and unscrupulous as she was daring. Of low birth, brought up by charity, married to a ruined nobleman, she had ended her career by duping and ruining Cardinal de Rohan, a man whose character exposed him to the machinations of an adventuress so skilful, bold, and alluring as La Motte Valois.

So much for preliminary. Let us take up the story at its beginning. The diamond necklace was an exceedingly handsome and highly valuable piece of jewelry, containing about five hundred diamonds, and held at a price equal to about four hundred thousand dollars of modern money. It had been made by Boehmer, a jeweller of Paris, about the year 1774, and was intended for Madame Dubarry, the favorite of Louis XV. But before the necklace was finished Louis had died, and a new king had come to the throne. With Louis XVI. virtue entered that profligate court, and Madame Dubarry was excluded from its

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precincts. As for the necklace, it remained without a purchaser. It was too costly for a subject, and was not craved by the queen. The jeweller had not failed to offer it to Marie Antoinette, but found her disinclined to buy. The American Revolution was going on, France was involved in the war, and money was needed for other purposes than diamond necklaces.

MARIE ANTOINETTE AND HER CHILDREN.

"That is the price of two frigates," said the king, on hearing of the estimated value of the famous trinket.

"We want ships, and not diamonds," said the queen, and ended the audience with the jeweller.

A few months afterwards, M. Boehmer openly declared that he had found a purchaser for the necklace. It had gone to Constantinople, he said, for the adornment of the favorite sultana.

"This was a real pleasure to the queen," says Madame Campan. "She, however, expressed some astonishment that a necklace made for the adornment of French women should be worn in the seraglio, and, thereupon, she talked to me a long time about the total change which took place in the tastes and desires of women in the period between twenty and thirty years of age. She told me that when she was ten years younger she loved diamonds madly, but that she had no longer any taste for anything but private society, the country, the work and the attentions required by the education of her children. From that moment until the fatal crisis there was nothing more said about the necklace."

The necklace had not been sold. It remained in the jeweller's hands until nearly ten years had passed. Then the vicious De La Motte laid an adroit plan for getting it into her possession, through the aid of the Cardinal de Rohan, who had come to admire her. She was a hanger-on of the court, and began her work by persuading the cardinal that the queen regarded him with favor. The credulous dupe was completely infatuated with the idea. One night, in August, 1784, he was given a brief interview in the groves around Versailles with a woman whom he supposed to be the queen, but who was really a girl resembling her, and taught by La Motte to play this part.

Filled with the idea that the queen loved him, the duped cardinal was ready for any folly. De La Motte played her next card by persuading him that the queen had a secret desire to possess this wonderful necklace, but had not the necessary

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money at that time. She would, however, sign an agreement to purchase it if the cardinal would become her security. De Rohan eagerly assented. This secret understanding seemed but another proof of the queen's predilection for him. An agreement was produced, signed with the queen's name, to which the cardinal added his own, and on February 1, 1785, the jeweller surrendered the necklace to De Rohan, receiving this agreement as his security. The cardinal carried the costly prize to Versailles, where he was told the queen would send for it. It was given by him to La Motte, who was commissioned to deliver it to her royal patroness. In a few days afterwards this lady's husband disappeared from Paris, and the diamond necklace with him.

The whole affair had been a trick. All the messages from the queen had been false ones, the written documents being prepared by a seeming valet, who was skilful in the imitation of handwriting. Throughout the whole business the cardinal had been readily deceived, infatuation closing his eyes to truth.

Such was the first act in the drama. The second opened when the jeweller began to press for payment. M. de La Motte sold some of the diamonds in England, and transmitted the money to his wife, who is said to have quieted the jeweller for a time by paying him some instalments on the price. But he quickly grew impatient and suspicious that all was not right, and went to court, where he earnestly inquired if the necklace had been delivered to the queen. For a time she could not understand what he meant. The diamond necklace? What diamond necklace? What did this mean? The Cardinal de Rohan her security for payment!—it was all false, all base, some dark intrigue behind it all.

Burning with indignation, she sent for Abbé de Vermond and Baron de Breteuil, the minister of the king's household, and told them of the affair. It was a shameful business, they said. They hated the cardinal, and did not spare him. The queen, growing momentarily more angry, at length decided to reveal the whole transaction to the king, and roused in his mind an indignation equal to her own. The result we have already seen. De Rohan and La Motte were consigned to the Bastille. M. de La Motte was in England, and thus out of reach of justice. Another celebrated individual who was concerned in the affair, and had aided in duping the cardinal, the famous, or infamous, Count Cagliostro, was also consigned to the Bastille for his share in the dark and deep intrigue.

The trial came on, as the closing act in this mysterious drama, in which all Paris had now become intensely interested. The cardinal had renounced all the privileges of his rank and condition, and accepted the jurisdiction of Parliament,—perhaps counting on the open enmity between that body and the court.

The trial revealed a disgraceful business, in which a high dignitary of the church had permitted himself to be completely gulled by a shameless woman and the equally shameless Cagliostro, and into which not only the name but even the virtue of the queen had been dragged. Public opinion became intense. The hostility to the queen which had long smouldered now openly declared itself. "It was for her and by her orders that the necklace was bought," said the respectable Parisians. Those who were not respectable said much worse things. The queen was being made a victim of these shameless and criminal adventurers.

The trial went on, political feeling being openly displayed in it. The great houses of Condé and Rohan took sides with the cardinal. Their representatives might be seen, dressed in mourning, interviewing the magistrates on their way to the tribunal, pleading with them on behalf of their relative. The magistrates needed little persuasion. The Parliament of Paris had long been at sword's point with the crown; now was its time for revenge; political prejudice blinded the members to the pure questions of law and justice; the cardinal was acquitted.

Cagliostro was similarly acquitted. He had conducted his own case, and with a skill that deceived the magistrates and the public alike. Madame de La Motte alone was convicted. She was

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sentenced to be whipped, branded on each shoulder with the letter V (for voleuse, "thief"), and to be imprisoned for life. Her husband, who was in England, was sentenced in his absence to the galleys for life. A minor participant in this business, the girl who had personated the queen, escaped unpunished.

So ended this disgraceful affair. The queen was greatly cast down by the result. "Condole with me," she said, in a broken voice, to Madame Campan; "the intriguer who wanted to ruin me, or procure money by using my name and forging my signature, has just been fully acquitted." But it was due, she declared, to bribery on the part of some and to political passion on that of others, with an audacity towards authority which such people loved to display. The king entered as she was speaking.

"You find the queen in great affliction," he said to Madame Campan; "she has much reason to be. But what then? They would not see in this business anything save a prince of the Church and the Prince of Rohan, whereas it is only the case of a man in want of money, and a mere trick for raising cash, wherein the cardinal has been swindled in his turn. Nothing is easier to understand, and it needs no Alexander to cut this Gordian knot."

Cardinal Rohan was exiled to his abbey of Chaise-Dieu, guilty in the king's opinion, a dupe in the judgment of history, evidently a credulous profligate who had mistaken his vocation. The queen was the true victim of the whole affair. It doubled the hostility of the people to her, and had its share in that final sentence which brought her head to the block.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE FALL OF THE BASTILLE

"To the Bastille! to the Bastille!" was the cry. Paris surged with an ungovernable mob. Month by month, week by week, day by day, since the meeting of the States-General,—called into being chiefly to provide money for the king and kept in being to provide government for the people,—the revolutionary feeling had grown, alike among the delegates and among the citizens. Now the population of Paris was aroused, the unruly element of the city was in the streets, their wrath directed against the prison-fortress, the bulwark of feudalism, the stronghold of oppression, the infamous keeper of the dark secrets of the kings of France. The people had always feared, always hated it, and now against its sullen walls was directed the torrent of their wrath.

The surging throng besieged the Hôtel de Ville, demanding arms. Gaining no satisfaction there, they rushed to the Invalides, where they knew that arms were stored. The governor wished to parley. "He asks for time to make us lose ours!" cried a voice in the crowd. A rush was made, the iron gates gave way, the cellar-doors were forced open, and in a short time thirty thousand guns were distributed among the people.

Minute by minute the tumult increased. Messengers came with threatening tidings. "The troops are marching to attack the Faubourgs; Paris is about to be put to fire and sword; the cannon of the Bastille are about to open fire upon us," were the startling cries. The people grew wild with rage.

This scene was the first of those frightful outbreaks of mob violence of which Paris was in the coming years to see so many. It was the 14th of July, 1789. As yet no man dreamed of the horrors which the near future was to bring forth. The Third Estate was at war with the king, and fancied itself the power in

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France. But beneath it, unseen by it, almost undreamed of by it, was rousing from sleep the wild beast of popular fury and revenge. Centuries of oppression were about to be repaid by years of a wild carnival of slaughter.

The Bastille was the visible emblem of that oppression. It was an armed fortress threatening Paris. The cannon on its walls frowned defiance to the people. Momentarily the wrath of the multitude grew stronger. The electors of the Third Estate sent a message to Delaunay, governor of the Bastille, asking him to withdraw the cannons, the sight of which infuriated the people, and promising, if he would do this, to restrain the mob.

The advice was wise; the governor was not. The messengers were long absent; the electors grew uneasy; the tumult in the street increased. At length the deputation returned, bringing word that the governor pledged himself not to fire on the people, unless forced to do so in self-defence. This message the electors communicated to the crowd around the Hôtel de Ville, hoping that it would satisfy them. Their words were interrupted by a startling sound, the roar of a cannon,—even while they were reporting the governor's evasive message the cannon of the Bastille were roaring defiance to the people of Paris! An attack had been made by the people on the fortress and this was the governor's response.

That shot was fatal to Delaunay. The citizens heard it with rage. "Treason!" was the cry. "To the Bastille! to the Bastille!" again rose the shout. Surging onward in an irresistible mass, the furious crowd poured through the streets, and soon surrounded the towering walls of the detested prison-fortress. A few bold men had already cut the chains of the first drawbridge, and let it fall. Across it rushed the multitude to attack the second bridge.

The fortress was feebly garrisoned, having but thirty Swiss soldiers and eighty invalids for its defence. But its walls were massive; it was well provided; it had resisted many attacks in the past; this disorderly and badly-armed mass seemed likely to beat in vain against those century-old bulwarks and towers. Yet there come times in which indignation grows strong, even with bare hands, oppression waxes weak behind its walls of might, and this was one of those times.

A chance shot was fired from the crowd; the soldiers answered with a volley; several men were wounded; other shots came from the people; the governor gave orders to fire the cannon; the struggle had begun.

FRIEDLAND.

It proved a short one. Companies of the National Guard were brought up to restrain the mob,—the soldiers broke from their ranks and joined it. Two of their sub-officers, Elie and Hullin by name, put themselves at the head of the furious crowd and led the people to the assault on the fortress. The fire of the garrison swept through their dense ranks; many of them fell; one hundred and fifty were killed or wounded; but now several pieces of cannon were dragged up by hand and their threatening muzzles turned against the gates.

The assault was progressing; Delaunay waited for succor which did not arrive; the small garrison could not withstand that mighty mob; in the excitement of the moment the governor

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attempted to blow up the powder magazine, and would have done so had not one of his attendants held his arms by force.

And now deputations arrived from the electors, two of them in succession, demanding that the fortress should be given up to the citizen guard. Delaunay proposed to capitulate, saying that he would yield if he and his men were allowed to march out with arms and honor. The proposition was received with shouts of sarcastic laughter.

"Life and safety are all we can promise you," answered Elie. "This I engage on the word of an officer."

Delaunay at this ordered the second drawbridge to be lowered and the gates to be opened. In poured the mass, precipitating themselves in fury upon that hated fortress, rushing madly through all its halls and passages, breaking its cell-doors with hammer blows, releasing captives some of whom had been held there in hopeless misery for half a lifetime, unearthing secrets which added to their revengeful rage.

Elie and Hullin had promised the governor his life. They miscalculated their power over their savage followers. Before they had gone far they were fighting hand to hand with the multitude for the safety of their prisoner. At the Place de Grève, Hullin seized the governor in his strong arms and covered his bare head with a hat, with the hope of concealing his features from the people. In a moment more he was hurled down and trodden under foot, and on struggling to his feet saw the head of Delaunay carried on a pike. The major and lieutenant were similarly massacred. Flesselles, the mayor of Paris, shared their fate. The other prisoners were saved by the soldiers, who surrounded and protected them from the fury of the mob.

The fall of the Bastille was celebrated by two processions that moved through the streets; one blood-stained and horrible, carrying the heads of the victims on pikes; the other triumphant and pathetic, bearing on their shoulders the prisoners released from its cells. Of these, two had been incarcerated so long that they were imbecile, and no one could tell whence they came. On the pathway of this procession flowers and ribbons were scattered. The spectators looked on with silent horror at the other.

Meanwhile, the king was at Versailles, in ignorance of what was taking place at Paris. The courts were full of soldiers, drinking and singing; wine had been distributed among them; there were courtiers and court intrigues still; the lowering cloud of ruin had yet scarcely cast a shadow on the palace. Louis XVI. went to bed and to sleep, in blissful ignorance of what had taken place. The Duke of Lioncourt entered and had him awakened, and informed him of the momentous event.

"But that is a revolt!" exclaimed the king, with startled face, sitting up on his couch.

"No, sire," replied the duke; "it is a revolution!"

That was the true word. It was a revolution. With the taking of the Bastille the Revolution of France was fairly inaugurated. As for that detested fortress, its demolition began on the next day, amid the thunder of cannon and the singing of the *Te Deum*. It had dominated Paris, and served as a state-prison for four hundred years. Its site was henceforward to be kept as a monument to liberty.

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CHAPTER XXVII

THE STORY OF THE SAINTE AMPOULE

Sad years were they for kings and potentates in France—now a century ago—when the cup of civilization was turned upside-down and the dregs rose to the top. For once in the history of mankind the anarchist was lord—and a frightful use he made of his privileges. Not only living kings were at a discount, but the very bones of kings were scattered to the winds, and the sacred oil, the "Sainte Ampoule," which for many centuries had been used at the coronation of the kings of France, became an object of detestation, and was treated with the same lack of ceremony and consideration as the royal family itself.

Thereby hangs a tale. But before telling what desecration came to the Sainte Ampoule through the impious hands of the new lords of France, it may be well to trace briefly the earlier history of this precious oil. Christianity came to France when Clovis, its first king, was baptized. And although we cannot say much for the Christian virtues of the worthy king Clovis, we are given to understand that Heaven smiled on his conversion, for the story goes that a dove came down from the realm of the blessed, bearing a small vial of holy oil, which was placed in the hands of St. Remy to be used in anointing the king at his coronation. Afterwards the saint placed this vial in his own tomb, where it was after many years discovered by miracle. It is true, St. Remy tells us none of this. Our authority for it is Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, who flourished four centuries after Clovis and his converter had been gathered to their fathers. But as Hincmar defied those who doubted the story of the dove and the vial to prove the contrary, and produced a vial of oil from the saint's tomb in further proof of his statement, no reasonable person—at that day—could longer deny it, though the first mention of it is by a chronicler who lived a century and a half after the saint.

From the days of Hincmar forward the monarchs of France, at their coronation, were anointed with this holy oil. And as the dove was said to have descended at Rheims, and St. Remy was buried there, this became the city of the coronation. An order of knighthood was founded to take part in the coronation,—the "Knights of the Sainte Ampoule,"—but the worthy incumbents held their office for a day only,—that of the crowning of the king. They were created for that purpose, received the precious vial from the archbishop, and after the ceremony returned it to that high dignitary of the church and saw it restored to its abiding-place. This done, they ceased to exist as knights of the holy oil, the order dying while the king lived.

But these short-lived chevaliers made the most of their opportunity, and crowded all the splendor and dignity into their one day that it would well bear. The sacred vial was kept in the abbey of St. Remy, and from that place to the cathedral they moved in a stately procession that almost threw the cortege of the king into the shade. The Grand Prior of St. Remy bore the vial, in its case or shrine, which hung from his neck by a golden chain. He rode always on a white horse, being covered by a magnificent canopy, upheld by the knights of the Sainte Ampoule. The cathedral reached, the prior placed the vial in the hands of the archbishop, who pledged himself by a solemn oath to restore it at the end of the ceremony. And to make this doubly sure a number of barons were given to the knights as hostages, the restoration of the vial to be their ransom. The ceremony over, back to the abbey they went, through streets adorned with rich tapestries, and surrounded by throngs of admiring lookers-on, to whom the vial was of as much interest as the king's crown.

For many centuries this honor came at intervals to the city of Rheims, and the St. Remy vial figured as an indispensable element of every kingly coronation. It figured thus in the mission of Joan of Arc, whose purpose was to drive the English from Orleans and open the way to Rheims, that the new king might be crowned with the old ceremony. The holy oil continued to play a leading part in the coronation of the kings

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until the reign of Louis XVI. Then came the Revolution, that mighty overturner of all things sacred and time-honored, and a new chapter was written in the story of the Sainte Ampoule. It is this chapter which we have now to give.

The Revolution had gone on, desecrating things sacred and beheading things royal, through years of terror, and now had arrived the 6th of October, 1793, a day fatal in the history of the holy oil. On that day Citizen Rhul, one of the new sovereigns of France, entered the room of Philippe Hourelle, chief *marguillier* of the Cathedral of Rheims, and demanded of him the vial of coronation oil of which he had charge. Horror seized Monsieur Philippe; but Master Rhul was imperative, and the guillotine stood in the near perspective. There was nothing to do but to obey.

"It is not in my care," declared the trembling Philippe. "It is in the keeping of the curé, Monsieur Seraine. I will instantly apply to him for it."

"And make haste," said Citizen Rhul. "Bring pomatum and all," thus irreverently designating the age-thickened oil.

"May I ask what you will do with it?" ventured Philippe.

"Grease the knife of the guillotine, mayhap, that it may the easier slip through your neck, if you waste any time in your errand."

As may be imagined, Philippe Hourelle lost no time in seeking the curé, and giving him his startling message. M. Seraine heard him with horror. Had the desecration of sans-culottisme proceeded so far as this? But an idea sprang to the quick wit of the curé.

"We can save some of it," he exclaimed.

A minute sufficed to extract a portion of the unguent-like substance. Then, with a sigh of regret, the curé handed the vial to Philippe, who, with another sigh of regret, delivered it to Citizen Rhul, who, without a sigh of regret, carried it to the front of the cathedral, and at the foot of the statue of Louis XV. hammered the vial to powder, and trod what remained of the precious ointment under foot until it was completely mingled with the mud of the street.

"So we put an end to princes and pomatum," said this irascible republican, with a laugh of triumph, as he ground the remnants of the vial under his irreverent heel.

Not quite an end to either, as it proved. The portion of the sacred oil which M. Seraine had saved was divided into two portions, one kept by himself, the other placed in the care of Philippe Hourelle, to be kept until the reign of anarchy should come to an end and a king reign again in France. And had Citizen Rhul dreamed of all that lay in the future every hair on his democratic head would have stood erect in horror and dismay.

In truth, not many years had passed before the age of princes came again to France, and a demand for St. Remy's vial arose, Napoleon was to be crowned emperor at Notre Dame. Little did this usurper of royalty care for the holy oil, but there were those around him with more reverence for the past, men who would have greatly liked to act as knights of the Sainte Ampoule. But the unguent was not forthcoming, and the emperor was crowned without its aid.

Then came the end of the imperial dynasty, and the return of the Bourbons. To them the precious ointment was an important essential of legitimate kingship. Could St. Remy's vial be found, or had it and its contents vanished in the whirlpool of the Revolution? That was to be learned. A worthy magistrate of Rheims, Monsieur de Chevrières, took in hand the task of discovery. He searched diligently but unsuccessfully, until one day, in the early months of 1819, when three gentlemen, sons of Philippe Hourelle, called upon him, and told the story which we have just transcribed. A portion of the holy oil of coronation, they declared, had been in their father's care, preserved and transmitted through M. Seraine's wit and promptitude. Their father was dead, but he had left it to his widow, who long kept it

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as a priceless treasure. They were interrupted at this point in their story by M. de Chevrières.

"This is fortunate," he exclaimed. "She must pass it over to me. Her name will become historic for her loyal spirit."

"I wish she could," said one of the visitors. "But, alas! it is lost. Our house was plundered during the invasion, and among other things taken was this precious relic. It is irretrievably gone."

That seemed to end the matter; but not so, there was more of the consecration oil in existence than could have been imagined. The visit of the Hourelles was followed after an interval by a call from a Judge Lecomte, who brought what he affirmed was a portion of the holy ointment which had been given him by the widow Hourelle. Unluckily, it was of microscopic dimensions, far from enough to impart the full flavor of kingship to his majesty Louis XVIII.

It seemed as if this worthy monarch of the Restoration would have to wear his crown without anointment, when, fortunately, a new and interesting item of news was made public. It was declared by a number of ecclesiastics that the curé, M. Seraine, had given only a part of the oil to Philippe Hourelle, and had himself kept the remainder. He had told them so, but, as it proved, not a man of them all knew what he had done with it. He had died, and the secret with him. Months passed away; spring vanished; summer came; then new tidings bloomed. A priest of Berry-au-Bac, M. Bouré by name, sought M. de Chevrières, and gladdened his heart with the announcement that the missing relic was in his possession, having been consigned to him by M. Seraine. It was rendered doubly precious by being wrapped in a portion of the winding sheet of the blessed St. Remy himself.

Nor was this all. Within a week another portion of the lost treasure was brought forward. It had been preserved in a manner almost miraculous. Its possessor was a gentleman named M. Champagne Provotian, who had the following interesting story to tell. He had, a quarter of a century before, in 1793, been standing near Citizen Rhul when that scion of the Revolution destroyed the vial of St. Remy, at the foot of the statue of Louis XV., in front of the Cathedral of Rheims. When he struck the vial he did so with such force that fragments of it flew right and left, some of them falling on the coat-sleeve of the young man beside him, M. Champagne. These he dexterously concealed from the iconoclastic citizen, took home, and preserved. He now produced them.

Here were three separate portions of the precious ointment. A commission was appointed to examine them. They were pronounced genuine, oil and glass alike. Enough had been saved to crown a king.

"There is nothing now to obstruct the coronation of your Majesty," said an officer of the court to Louis XVIII.

His majesty laughed incredulously. He was an unbeliever as regarded legend and a democrat as regarded ceremony, and gave the gentleman to understand that he was content to reign without being anointed.

"What shall be done with the ointment?" asked the disappointed official.

"Lock it up in the vestry and say no more about it," replied the king.

This was done, and the precious relics were restored to the tomb of St. Remy, whence they originally came; being placed there in a silver reliquary lined with white silk, and enclosed in a metal case, with three locks. And there they lay till 1825, when a new king came to the throne, in the person of Charles X.

Now, for the last time, the old ceremony was revived, the knights of the Sainte Ampoule being created, and their office duly performed. With such dignity as he could assume and such grandeur as he could display, Charles entered the choir of the cathedral and advanced to the grand altar, at whose foot he knelt.

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On rising, he was led to the centre of the sanctuary, and took his seat in a throne-like chair, placed there to receive him. In a semi-circle round him stood a richly-dressed group of nobles and courtiers.

Then came forward in stately procession the chevaliers of the Sainte Ampoule, bearing the minute remnants of that sacred oil which was claimed to have been first used in the anointing of Clovis, thirteen hundred years before. An imposing group of churchmen stood ready to receive the ointment, including three prelates, an archbishop, and two bishops. These dignitaries carried the precious relic to the high altar, consecrated it, and anointed the king with a solemn ceremony highly edifying to the observers, and greatly gratifying to the vanity of the new monarch.

It cannot be said that this ceremonious proceeding appealed to the people of France. It was the nineteenth century, and the Revolution lay between the new and the old age. All men of wit laughed at the pompous affair, and five years afterwards the people of Paris dispensed with Charles X. as their king, despite the flavor of coronation that hung about him. The dynasty of the Bourbons was at an end, and the knights of the Saint Ampoule had been created for the last time.

In conclusion, there is a story connected with the coronation ceremony which may be of interest. Legend or history tells us that at one time the English took the city of Rheims, plundered it, and, as part of their plunder, carried off the Saint Ampoule, which their desecrating hands had stolen from the tomb of St. Remy. The people of the suburb of Chène la Populeux pursued the invaders, fell upon them and recovered this precious treasure. From that time, in memory of their deed, the inhabitants of Chène claimed the right to walk in the procession of the Sainte Ampoule, and to fall heir to the horse ridden by the Grand Prior. This horse was furnished by the government, and was claimed by the prior as the property of the abbey, in recompense for his services. He denied the claim of the people of Chène, said that their story was a fable, and that at the best they were but low-born rogues. As a result of all this, hot blood existed between the rival claimants to the white horse of the coronation.

At the crowning of Louis XIV. the monks and the people of Chène came to blows, in support of their respective claims. The villagers pulled the prior from his horse, pummelled the monks who came to his aid, thrashed the knights out of every semblance of dignity, tore the canopy into shreds, and led off the white horse in triumph. Law followed blows; the cost of a dozen horses was wasted on the lawyers; in the end the monks won, and the people of Chène had to restore the four-footed prize to the prior.

At the subsequent coronations of Louis XV. and Louis XVI. they renewed their claim, and violence was again threatened. The trouble was overcome by special decrees, which prohibited the people of Chène from meddling with the claim of the prior. By the time of the coronation of Charles X., all such mediæval folly was at an end, and the stately old ceremony had become a matter of popular ridicule.

The story of the Sainte Ampoule is not without its interest in showing the growth of ideas. At the end of the ninth century, a bishop could gravely state, and a nation unquestionably accept his statement, that a dove had flown down from heaven bearing a vial of holy oil for the anointment of its kings. At the end of the nineteenth century the same nation has lost its last vestige of reverence for the "divinity which doth hedge a king," and has no longer any use for divinely-commissioned potentates or heaven-sent ointments.

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CHAPTER XXVIII

THE FLIGHT OF THE KING

At midnight of the 22nd of June, 1791, a heavy and lumbering carriage rolled slowly into the town of Varennes, situated in the department of Meuse, in northeastern France. It had set out from Paris at an early hour of the preceding day, and had now left that turbulent capital more than a hundred and fifty miles behind it, pursuing a direct route towards the nearest frontier of the kingdom.

There were in this clumsy vehicle several plainly-dressed ladies, a man attired as a servant, and a half-grown boy. They all seemed in the best of spirits, and felicitated themselves on having come so far without question or obstruction. As they neared Varennes, however, an alarming sound was borne on the midnight air to their ears,—that of a clanging bell, ringing quickly, as if in alarm. They entered the town and drove to the post-house.

"Let us have horses at once," was the demand of the outriders; "we must go forward without delay."

"There are no horses ready," was the reply. "Have you your passports?"

The papers were presented and taken to M. Sausse, the public officer of the commune, a timid little shop-keeper, sadly incompetent to deal with any matter that needed bold decision. He cast his eye over the passports, which shook in his trembling hand. Yet they appeared to be all right, being made out in the name of Baron Korf, the man in the carriage being named as a valet de chambre to the baron.

But the disturbed little commune officer knew better than that. A young man named Drouet, son of the postmaster at St. Menehould, had, a half-hour or so before, ridden at furious speed into the town, giving startling information to such of the citizens as he found awake. There quickly followed that ringing of the alarm-bell which had pealed trouble into the ears of the approaching travellers.

M. Sausse approached the carriage, and bowed with the deepest respect before the seeming servant within.

"Will you not enter my house?" he asked. "There is a rumor abroad that we are so fortunate as to have our king in our midst. If you remain in the carriage, while the municipal authorities are in council, your Majesty might be exposed to insult."

The secret was out; it was the king of France who was thus masquerading in the dress of a lackey and speeding with all haste towards the frontier. The town was alarmed: a group of armed men stood at the shopkeeper's door as the traveller entered; some of them told him rudely that they knew him to be the king.

"If you recognize him," sharply answered the lady who followed, "speak to him with the respect you owe your king."

It was Marie Antoinette, though her dress was rather that of a waiting-maid than a queen. The ladies who followed her were Madame Elizabeth, the princess, and the governess of the royal children. The boy was the dauphin of France.

This flight had been undertaken under the management of General Bouillé, who had done all in his power to make it successful, by stationing relays of soldiers along the road, procuring passports, and other necessary details. But those intrusted with its execution had, aside from keeping the project a secret, clumsily managed its details. The carriage procured was of great size, and loaded like a furniture van with luggage. There was a day's delay in the start. Even the setting out was awkwardly managed; the queen leaving the palace on foot, losing her way, and keeping her companions perilously waiting. The detachments of troops on the road were sure to attract

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attention. Careful precautions for the defeat of the enterprise seemed to have been taken.

Yet all went well until St. Menehould was reached, though the king was recognized by more than one person on the road. "We passed through the large town of Châlons-sur-Marne," wrote the young princess, "where we were quite recognized. Many people praised God at seeing the king, and made vows for his escape."

All France had not yet reached the republican virulence of Paris. "All goes well, François," said the queen in a glad tone to Valory, her courier. "If we were to have been stopped, it would have taken place already."

At St. Menehould, however, they found the people in a different temper. The king was recognized, and though his carriage was not stopped, a detachment of dragoons, who had followed him at a distance, was not suffered to proceed, the people cutting the girths of the horses. Young Drouet, of whom we have already spoken, sprang on horseback and rode hurriedly on towards Varennes, preceding the carriage.

The soldiers who had been posted at Varennes were in no condition to assist the king. The son of Marquis Bouillé, who had accompanied the royal party, found them helplessly intoxicated, and rode off at full speed to inform his father of the alarming condition of affairs.

Meanwhile, the king, who had taken refuge in the shop of the grocer Sausse, awaited the municipal authorities in no small perturbation of spirits. They presented themselves at length before him, bowing with great show of respect, and humbly asking his orders.

"Have the horses put to my carriage without delay," he said, with no further attempt at concealment, "that I may start for Montmédy."

They continued respectful, but were provided with various reasons why they could not obey: the horses were at a distance; those in the stables were not in condition to travel; pretext after pretext was advanced for delay. In truth, no pretext was needed; the adjoining street was filled with armed revolutionists, and in no case would the carriage have been suffered to proceed.

As daybreak approached a detachment of dragoons rode into the town. They were those who had been posted near Châlons, and who had ridden on towards Montmédy after the king's passage. Missing him, they had returned. Choiseul, their commander, pushed through the people and entered the shop.

"You are environed here," he said to the king. "We are not strong enough to take the carriage through; but if you will mount on horseback we can force a passage through the crowd."

"If I were alone I should try it," said Louis. "I cannot do it as matters stand. I am waiting for daylight; they do not refuse to let me go on; moreover, M. de Bouillé will soon be here."

He did not recognize the danger of delay. The crowd in the streets was increasing; the bridge was barricaded; the authorities had sent a messenger in haste to Paris to tell what had happened and ask orders from the National Assembly.

"Tell M. de Bouillé that I am a prisoner," said the king to Captain Deslon, the commander of a detachment, who had just reached him. "I suspect that he cannot do anything for me, but I desire him to do what he can."

The queen meanwhile was urgently entreating Madame Sausse to use her influence with her husband and procure an order for the king's release. She found the good woman by no means inclined to favor her.

"You are thinking of the king," she said; "I am thinking of M. Sausse; each is for her own husband."

By this time the throng in the streets was growing impatient and violent. "To Paris! to Paris!" shouted the people. The king grew frightened. Bouillé had failed to appear. There

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was no indication of his approach. The excitement grew momentarily greater.

During this anxious interval two officers rode rapidly up on the road from Paris, and presented themselves before the king. They were aides-de-camp of General Lafayette, commander of the National Guard. One of them, Romeuf by name, handed Louis a decree of the assembly ordering pursuit and return of the king. It cited an act which forbade any public functionary to remove himself more than twenty leagues from his post.

"I never sanctioned that," cried the king, angrily, flinging the paper on the bed where the dauphin lay.

The queen snatched it up hastily, exclaiming that the bed of her children should not be soiled by such a document.

"Madame," said Romeuf, warningly, "do you wish that other eyes than mine should witness your anger?"

The queen blushed, and recovered with an effort the composure which she had suffered herself to lose.

A messenger now arrived from Bouillé bringing word that the detachments he had posted were moving towards Varennes, and that he himself was on the way thither. But the tumult in the streets had grown hour by hour; the people were becoming furious at the delay; it seemed certain that the arrival of the troops would be the signal for a battle with the armed populace, who had strongly barricaded the town. Utterly disheartened, the king gave orders for the carriage; he had decided to return to Paris.

An hour afterwards Bouillé, breathless from a long and hurried ride, arrived within sight of Varennes. Its barricades met his eyes. He was told that the king had set out on his return an hour before. The game was up; Louis had lost his last hope of escape; the loyal general took the road for Stenay, and that same evening crossed the French frontier.

The king's carriage made its way back to Paris through a throng that lined the roads, and which became dense when the city was reached. The National Guards held their arms reversed; none of the spectators uncovered their heads; the flight of the king had put an end to his authority and to the respect of the people. It was a sad procession that slowly made its way, in the evening light, along the boulevards towards the Tuileries. When the king and queen entered the palace the doors were closed behind them, and armed guards stationed to prevent egress. The palace had become a prison; Louis XVI. had ceased to reign; the National Assembly was now the governing power in France.

What followed a few words may tell. In the succeeding year the Reign of Terror began, and Louis was taken from the Tuileries to the Temple, a true prison. In December he was tried for treason and condemned to death, and on January 21, 1793, his head fell under the knife of the guillotine. In October of the same year his unhappy queen shared his fate.

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CHAPTER XXIX

THE END OF THE TERROR

No period of equal length in the whole era of history yields us such a succession of exciting and startling events as those few years between the convening of the States-General in France and the rise of Napoleon to power, and particularly that portion of the Revolution known as the Reign of Terror. A volume of thrilling stories might have been made from its incidents alone; but it would have been a volume so full of tales of blood and woe, of misery and massacre, of the dominance of those wild-beast passions which civilization seeks to subdue in man, that we may well be spared the telling. As with the fall of the Bastille began the long dominion of the populace, so with the fall of Robespierre it ended, and civil order returned to unhappy France. We have told the story of the one; we shall conclude with that of the other.

Three men dominated the Terror,—Danton, Marat, and Robespierre; the first named best deserving the title of man, for he possessed certain qualities of manliness not shown by his brutal colleagues. As Lamartine says, "Nothing was wanting to make Danton a great man except virtue." He had too much manliness, as it seems, for the purposes of Robespierre, and was brought by him to the guillotine on April 5, 1794.

The triumvirate of the Reign of Terror was broken by his death and that of Marat, who had fallen under the avenging knife of Charlotte Corday in July, 1793. Robespierre was left sole director of the Revolution, being president of the Committee of Public Safety, leader of the Jacobin Club, favorite of the extreme terrorists, and lord and master of the Convention, whose members were held in subjection by his violence and their fears.

His dominion was not to be of long continuance. It was signalized by such a frightful activity of the guillotine, in which multitudes of innocent persons daily perished, that the terror which he produced was quickly followed by indignation, and a combination of many of the leading spirits of the Convention was formed against him. One after another he had vanquished all his enemies, and stood alone. But he stood on such a ghastly pyramid of the dead that he could not hope to maintain his dangerous elevation. The voice of vengeance, long choked by terror, at length began to rise against this wholesale executioner.

THE LAST VICTIMS OF THE REIGN OF TERROR.

The outbreak was precipitated by a demand of Saint-Just, the most prominent supporter of Robespierre, that a dictatorship should be established in France, and that the "virtuous and inflexible, as well as incorruptible citizen," Robespierre, should be made Dictator. It was a declaration of war. Many of the members of the Convention knew that it meant their death. Once give their terrible foe the extreme power which this demand indicated, and every known enemy of Robespierre in France would be doomed. Yet to oppose it was to oppose the Jacobins and the revolutionary sections, the controlling powers in Paris. The boldest members of the Convention might well pause and tremble before assailing their seemingly impregnable foe. But the rule of Robespierre had been opposed in committee; it had ceased to be a secret that he had enemies in the Convention; as

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yet the sentiment against him had spoken only in the dark, but the time was rapidly approaching when an open struggle could no longer be avoided.

Robespierre himself began the battle. He said to a deputation from Aisne, "In the situation in which it now is, gangrened by corruption, and without power to remedy it, the Convention can no longer save the republic; both will perish together."

He repeated this accusation before the Convention itself, in a threatening speech, in which he declared that there was in its midst a conspiracy against public liberty; there were traitors in the national councils; the Convention must be purged and purified; the conspirators must be punished. His words were listened to in sullen silence. When he had ceased no word was spoken, except in whispers from member to member. The glove of defiance had been cast into their midst; were there none among them with the courage to take it up, or must they all yield themselves as the slaves or the victims of this merciless autocrat? No; there were men of courage and patriotism left. Three delegates rose simultaneously, three voices struggled for precedence in the right to attack the tyrant and dare the worst.

"The man who has made himself master of everything, the man who paralyzes our will, is he who has just spoken—Robespierre!" cried Cambon, in ringing tones of defiance.

"It is Robespierre! It is Robespierre," came from other unsealed voices. "Let him give an account of the crimes of the members whose death he demanded from the Jacobins."

The attack was so unexpected and so vehement that Robespierre hesitated to reply.

"You who pretend to have the courage of virtue, have the courage of truth," cried Charlier; "name the individuals you accuse."

Tumult and confusion followed these daring words. Robespierre, unable to gain the ear of the assembly, which now seemed filled with his enemies, and finding the feeling against him rapidly spreading, left the hall and took refuge with the Jacobins, where he repeated his address, this time to applauding hearers. Violent councils followed. Henriot, commandant of the troops, proposed to march on the Convention and put an end to its existence. "Name thy enemies," shouted the members to Robespierre; "we will deliver them to thee." Yet there was hesitation and doubt among the leaders; they feared the result of violent measures, and felt inclined to temporize and wait.

The Convention met the next day. It met inspired with a new spirit. Courage animated the members. They had crossed the Rubicon, and felt that there was no return. During the interval since the last session their forces had been organized, their plans considered. Saint-Just appeared and sought to speak. He was interrupted and his words drowned by the voices of indignant members.

"I see here," cried Billaud-Varennes, who stood beside him, "one of the men who yesterday, at the Jacobins, promised the massacre of the National Convention; let him be arrested."

The officers obeyed this order. Saint-Just was in custody. Billaud continued his remarks, declaring that the members were in danger of massacre, denouncing Robespierre and his supporters, bidding them to be firm and resolute. His boldness infected the assembly; the deputies stood up and waved their hats, shouting their approval. In the midst of this scene Robespierre appeared, livid with rage, his eyes flashing with the fury which inspired him.

"I demand liberty to speak," he exclaimed.

"Down with the tyrant!" rose in a roar from a hundred voices.

Tallien, the leader of the opposition, sprang into the tribune.

"I demand that the veil be torn away instantly," he exclaimed. "The work is done, the conspirators are unmasked.

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Yesterday, at the Jacobins, I saw the army of the new Cromwell formed, and I have come here armed with a dagger to pierce his heart if the Assembly dares not decree his accusation. I demand the arrest of Henriot and his staff."

The debate went on, growing more violent minute by minute. Several times Robespierre strove to speak, but each time his voice was drowned in cries of "Down with the tyrant!" Pale with rage and fear, he turned from his opponents towards his former supporters, both hands nervously clutching the tribune.

"It is to you, pure and virtuous men," he said, "that I address myself. I do not talk with scoundrels."

"Down with the tyrant!" was the response of the members addressed. Evidently the whole assembly had turned against him.

Henriot, the president, rang his bell for order.

"President of assassins," cried Robespierre, in a voice that grew feebler, "I once more demand liberty to speak."

"The blood of Danton is choking him!" cried Garnier de l'Aude.

"Shall this man longer remain master of the Convention?" asked Charles Duval.

"Let us make an end! A decree! a decree!" shouted Lasseau.

"A tyrant is hard to strike down!" exclaimed Fréron.

Robespierre stood in the midst of his circle of enemies, assailed on all sides, nervously turning in his hands an open knife. "Send me to death!" he ejaculated.

"You have merited it a thousand times," cried his foes. "Down with the tyrant!"

In the midst of the tumult a decree for his arrest was offered and carried. In it were included the names of his brother, of Couthon, and of Saint-Just. Henriot proclaimed the decree, while wild acclamations of triumph shook the room.

"Long live liberty! Long live the republic! Down with the tyrants! To the bar with the accused!" came from the lips of those who the day before had not dared to speak. The floodgates were down and the torrent of long repressed fury was rushing on the accused. The exciting scene ended in the removal of the prisoners, who were taken to separate prisons.

Tidings of what had taken place in the Convention ran like wildfire through Paris. Thousands of households were inspired with hope. The terrorists were filled with fury and dismay. The Commune and the Jacobins swore to support Robespierre. The tocsin peal rang out; the people gathered; the gates of Paris were closed; Henriot, half drunk, galloped along the streets, crying out that the representatives of the people were being massacred; an insurrection against the Convention was rapidly organized, headed by desperate men, among them Robespierre himself, who was again free, having been taken from the hands of the officers.

All was in peril. The Convention had assembled again, but had taken no steps in self-defence. Startling tidings were brought to the members in quick succession. It was said that the National Guard was coming with artillery, to direct it against the hall. The roar of the insurrection filled street and building. For the time it looked as if Robespierre had conquered, and all was at an end.

"I propose," cried Elie Lacoste, "that Henriot be outlawed."

As he spoke these words, the man named stood in the street without, ordering the artillerists, whose cannon were trained upon the Convention hall, to fire. The gunners hesitated. It was a critical moment. The fate of France hung in the balance. A group of the deputies came hastily from the hall and faced Henriot and his men.

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"What are you doing, soldiers?" they exclaimed. "That man is a rebel, who has just been outlawed."

The gunners lowered their matches. The Convention was saved. The National Guard had deserted Robespierre. Henriot put spurs to his horse, and fled at full gallop.

"Outlaw all who shall take arms against the Convention, or who shall oppose its decrees," said Barère; "as well as those who have defied it by eluding arrest."

This decree, repeated to the insurgents, completed their discomfiture. Rapidly they dispersed. Public opinion had changed; the Convention had triumphed. The gunners who had marched with the insurrection deserted their pieces; and a few hours afterwards returned to them, to protect the Convention.

The members of the Convention had run a serious risk in not taking active steps to assemble their friends, and in thus giving so perilous an opportunity to their enemies. This error was now retrieved; a section of their supporters came together, commanded by Lèonard Bourdon and a gendarme named Méda. They reached the Hôtel de Ville without opposition. Méda entered it, crying, probably as a strategem, "Long live Robespierre!" He reached the hall where the Jacobin leaders were gathered in silent dismay around the fallen dictator. Robespierre sat at a table, his head resting on his hand. Méda stepped towards him, pistols in hand.

"Surrender, traitor!" he exclaimed.

"It is you who are a traitor," retorted Robespierre, "and I will have you shot."

His words were barely spoken when Méda fired, his bullet shattering Robespierre's lower jaw. It is well to state here, however, that in the belief of many Robespierre shot himself.

This decided action created consternation in the room. The younger Robespierre leaped from a window, receiving mortal injury from the fall. Saint-Just turned towards Lebas and said to him, "Kill me."

"I have something better to do," answered Lebas, shooting himself through the head.

A report from the stairway quickly followed. Méda with his second pistol had shot Couthon and badly wounded him. The hall had suddenly become a place of blood and death. The Jacobin chiefs, lately all-powerful, now condemned, dead, or dying, presented a frightful spectacle. Two days had changed the course of events in France. The Reign of Terror was at an an end.

Robespierre lay on a table, his head supported by a small deal box. The blood flowed slowly from his mouth. He was silent, giving no sign of pain or feeling. He was taken to the Conciergerie, whither other prisoners of his faction were being brought. Saint-Just and Couthon were already there.

Five o'clock came. The carts had drawn up as usual at the gate of the prison, waiting for the condemned. This time there was a new spectacle for the people, who had become wearied with executions, but were on the alert for the fresh sensation promised them. It was no time to temporize. The Convention had ordered the immediate execution of its foes. As Robespierre, with a blood-stained cloth round his face, entered the cart, there was a shout of joy and triumph from the assembled crowd. The late all-powerful man had not a friend left.

On the scaffold the executioner tore the cloth from Robespierre's wounded face. A terrible cry of pain followed, the first sign of suffering he had given. In a minute more his head had fallen into the gory basket, and France was avenged. It was the 28th of July, 1794, less than four months after the death of Danton had left all the power in his hands. In that and the following days one hundred and three executions sealed the fate of the defeated enemies of the Convention. Justice had been done; the Terror was at an end.

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CHAPTER XXX

THE BURNING OF MOSCOW

From west to east across Europe had marched the army of the great conqueror, no nation daring to draw a hostile sword, none venturing to place an obstacle in its path. Across Russia it had marched almost as triumphantly, breaking irresistibly through the dams of armed men in its way, sweeping onward with the strength and majesty of fate. At length it had reached the heart of the empire of the czars, and before it lay displayed the ancient capital of the Muscovite kings, time-honored Moscow.

This great city was revealed to the eyes of the weary soldiers with the suddenness of a mirage in the desert. Throughout that day an interminable outreach of level country had seemed to spread before them, dreary, uninviting, disheartening. Now, from the summit of a hill, their triumphant eyes gazed suddenly upon the roofs and spires of a mighty city, splendid, far-reaching, stretching far across the plain that lay revealed before their eyes. It seemed to them truly as if the hand of a magician had touched the desert, and caused this city to spring up across their path.

It was a remarkable spectacle that met their gaze. Here were visible what seemed hundreds of gilded domes and shining spires, thousands of habitations rich with varied colors, a strange compound of palaces and cottages, churches and bell-towers, woods and lakes, Western and Oriental architecture, the Gothic arches and spires of Europe mingled with the strange forms of Byzantine and Asiatic edifices. Outwardly, a line of monasteries flanked with towers appeared to encircle the city. Centrally, crowning an eminence, rose a great citadel, from whose towers one could look down on columned temples and imperial palaces, embattled walls crowned with majestic domes, from whose summits, above the reversed crescent, rose the cross, Russia's emblem of conquest over the fanatical sectaries of the East. It was the Kremlin which they here beheld, the sacred centre of the Russian empire, the ancient dwelling-place and citadel of the czars.

A wild cry of wonder and triumph burst from the soldiers who had first reached the summit of the hill. "Moscow! Moscow!" they shouted, their imaginations strongly excited by the magnificent spectacle. This cry lent wings to those behind them. In crowding hosts the eager soldiers rushed up the long slope, all ranks mingling in their burning desire to gaze upon that great city which was the goal of their far-extended march. Deep were the emotions, intense the joy, with which they gazed on this dazzling vision, with all its domes and spires burning in the warm rays of the sun. Napoleon himself, who hastened to the spot, was struck with admiration, and new dreams of glory doubtless sprang up in his soul as he stood gazing with deep emotion on what must have seemed to him the key of the East, the gateway to conquests never yet surpassed by man. Little did he dream that it was ruin upon which he gazed, the fatal turning-point in his long career of victory. Still certain of his genius, still confident in his good fortune, he looked forward to new conquests which would throw those of the past into the shade, and as his eyes rested on that mighty city of the czars, the intoxication of glory filled his soul.

The conqueror gave but little time to these dreams. The steps to realize them must be taken. Murat was bidden to march forward quickly and to repress all disorders which might break out in the city. Denniée was ordered to hasten and arrange for the food and lodging of the soldiers. Durosnel received orders to communicate with the authorities, to calm their fears, and to lead them to the conqueror, that he might receive their homage. Fancying that the inhabitants awaited his coming in trembling fear, Napoleon halted until these preliminaries should be arranged, before making his triumphant entry into the conquered capital of Muscovy.

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Murat, at the head of the light cavalry, galloped rapidly forward, quickly reaching the bridge over the Moskowa. Here he found a rear-guard of the Russian army, in rapid retreat. The meeting was not a hostile one; Murat rode to the Russian line, and asked if there was an officer among them who spoke French. A young Russian immediately presented himself, and asked him what he wanted.

THE CITY OF MOSCOW.

"Who is the commander of this rear-guard?" he asked.

The Russian pointed to a white-haired officer, who wore a long cloak of fur. Murat advanced and held out his hand. The officer took and pressed it warmly.

"Do you know me?" asked the Frenchman.

"Yes," answered the Russian, courteously; "we have seen enough of you under fire to know you."

A short colloquy succeeded, during which Murat could not keep his eyes from the officer's fur cloak, which looked as if it would be very comfortable in a winter bivouac. The Russian, noticing his looks, took off the mantle and offered it to him, begging him to accept it as a present from an admiring foe. Murat courteously accepted it, and in return presented the officer with a beautiful and valuable watch, which was accepted in the same spirit of courteous good-will.

The Russian officer now joined his men, who were filing rapidly away, and Murat rode onward into the streets of the captured city, his staff and a detachment of cavalry accompanying him. Through street after street he passed, here finding himself moving between rows of narrow wooden houses, there through avenues bordered by palatial residences, which rose from rich and ample gardens, but all silent and seemingly deserted.

The city was there, but where were the people? Solitude surrounded him. Not an inhabitant was to be seen. It seemed a city of the dead. Into Berlin, Vienna, and other capitals had the French army entered, but never had it seen anything like this utter solitude. The inhabitants, so the surprised soldiers fancied, must be cowering in terror within their houses. This desolation could not continue. Moscow was known as one of the most bustling cities in Europe. As soon as the people learned that no harm was meant them, the streets would again swarm with busy life. Hugging this flattering opinion to his soul, Murat rode on, threading the silent city.

Ah! here were some of the people. A few distracted individuals had appeared in the streets. Murat rode up to them, to find that they were French, belonging to the foreign colony of Moscow. They begged piteously for protection from the robbers, who, they said, had become masters of the town. They told Murat more than this, destroying the pleasant picture of a submissive and contented population with which he had solaced his mind. The population had fled, they said; no one was left in the city except a few strangers and some Russians who knew the ways of the French and did not fear them. In their place was a crew of thieves and bandits whom the Count of Rostopchin had let loose on deserted Moscow, emptying the prisons and setting these convicts free to ravage the city at their will.

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Further evidence of this disheartening story was soon forthcoming. When the French approached the Kremlin they were saluted by a discharge of musketry. Some of the villanous crew had invaded the capitol, seized on the guns in the arsenal, and were firing on the invaders. A few minutes settled this last effort in the defence of Moscow. The citadel was entered at a charge, several of the villanous crew were sabred, and the others put to flight. The French had the town, but it was an empty one, its only inmates being thieves and strangers.

The next morning, September 15, 1812, Napoleon made his triumphal march into Moscow, at the head of his conquering legions. But for the first time in his career of victory he found himself in the streets of a deserted city, advancing through empty avenues, to whose windows the tread of marching feet called not an eye to witness the triumph of France. It was a gloomy and threatening impression which was experienced by the grand army in its progress through those silent and lifeless streets. The ancient city of the czars seemed a body without a soul.

But if the people were gone, their dwellings remained. Moscow was taken, with all its palaces and treasures. It was a signal conquest. Napoleon hastened to the Kremlin, mounted to the top of the lofty tower of Ivan, and from its height looked with eyes of pride on the far-extending city. It was grand, that vision of palatial mansions, but it was mournful in its silence and gloom, the tramp of soldiery its only sound, the flutter of multitudes of birds—ravens and crows, which haunted the city in thousands—its only sign of life. Two days before Moscow had been one of the busiest cities in the world. Now it was the most silent. But the conqueror had this satisfaction, that while abandoned like other Russian towns, it was not burned like them, he might find here winter-quarters for his army and by mild measures lure the frightened people back to their homes again. Comforted with this hopeful view, Napoleon descended the stairs again, filled with confidence and triumph.

His confidence was misplaced. Disaster lowered upon the devoted city. On the day succeeding his entrance a column of flame suddenly appeared, rising from a large building in which was stored an abundant supply of spirits. The soldiers ran thither without thought of alarm, fancying that this was due to some imprudence on the part of their own men. In a short time the fire was mastered, and a feeling of confidence returned.

But immediately afterwards a new fire broke out in a great collection of buildings called the Bazaar, in which were the richest shops of the city, filled with costly goods, the beautiful fabrics of Persia and India, and rare and precious commodities from all quarters of the world. Here the flames spread with extraordinary rapidity, consuming the inflammable goods with frightful haste, despite the frantic efforts of the soldiers to arrest their progress. Despairing of success, they strove to save something from the vast riches of the establishment, carrying out furs, costly wines, valuable tissues, and other precious treasures. Such as remained of the people of the town aided in these efforts, in the natural desire to save something from the flames.

Until now all this seemed ordinary accident, and no one dreamed that these fires were the result of hostile design. They were soon to learn more of the unconquerable determination of the Russians. During the following night the wind rose suddenly, and carried the flames of the burning Bazaar along several of the most beautiful streets of Moscow, the fire spreading rapidly among the wooden buildings, and consuming them with alarming rapidity.

But this was not the most disturbing indication. Rockets were seen in the distance, ascending into the air, and immediately afterwards fire broke out in a dozen quarters, and hired bandits were seen carrying combustibles at the end of long poles, and seeking to extend the empire of the flames. A number of these were arrested, and under threat of death revealed a frightful secret. The Count of Rostopchin had ordered that the great city of Moscow should be set on fire and burned, with as

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little heed for the immense loss involved as he would have had in ordering the burning of a wayside village.

The news filled the whole army with consternation. Waiting till the wind had risen, the ferocious count had sent up his signal-rockets to order the work to begin. He had done more. On running to the pumps to obtain water to extinguish the flames, there were none to be found. They had been removed and the fire-extinguishing apparatus destroyed in preparation for this incendiary work.

Napoleon, alarmed and incensed, ordered that all caught in the act of firing buildings should be executed on the spot. The army was directed to use every effort to extinguish the flames. But the high wind set all their efforts at defiance. It increased in fury and varied in direction, carrying the conflagration over new quarters. From the Kremlin could be seen vast columns of fire, shooting from building to building, wrapping the wooden structures in lurid sheets of flame, sweeping destruction forward at frightful speed. The roar of the flames, the explosions that from time to time took place, the burning fragments which filled the air, borne on the wings of the wind, all went to make a scene as grand and fearful as human eye has ever gazed upon. To Napoleon and his men, who saw their hopes of safe and pleasant winter-quarters thus vanishing in flame, it must have been a most alarming and disquieting spectacle.

After blowing for some hours from the north-west, the wind shifted to the south-west, and the conflagration invaded new regions of the city. The Kremlin, hitherto out of the range of the flames, was now in danger. Fiery sparks, borne by the wind, fell on its roof and in its court-yard. The most frightful danger of the whole night now threatened the imperilled army. In the court-yards of the Kremlin had been placed more than four hundred wagons of ammunition; in its arsenal were a hundred thousand pounds of powder. Should the flames reach these, Napoleon and his guards would be blown into the air.

All who were near him pressed him to hasten from this imminent peril. General Lariboisière begged him to fly, as a duty which he owed to his army. Officers who came in from the streets reported that it was almost impossible to pass through the avenues of the town, and that delay would increase the danger. To remain where they were much longer might render escape impossible.

Napoleon, convinced by these words, left the Kremlin, after some twenty-four hours' possession of this old palace of the czars, and descended to the quay of the Moskowa, where he found his horses awaiting him. Mounting, he rode through the fire-invaded streets towards the north-west, but with no little difficulty and danger, for the flames from the other quarters of the city were now spreading here.

The wind seemed steadily to increase in violence, torrents of smoke, cinders, and sparks were driven down into the streets; sheets of flame seemed to bend downward as if to sweep the ground; on every side the troops were flying for their lives, on every side the conflagration pursued them; it was through imminent peril that the grand army, which on the morning before had marched so triumphantly into that abandoned city, now succeeded in gaining a safe location outside, whence they could look back in despair on that hell of flames in which their dearest hopes were being consumed.

A small number of the inhabitants who had remained concealed in their houses now came out, carrying away with them what treasures they most esteemed; in some cases, women their children, men their aged parents; many of them barely saving their clothes, and disputing the possession of even these with the band of robbers whom Rostopchin had let loose, and who, like spirits of evil, danced with glee in the midst of the terrible conflagration which had been kindled by their hands.

So ended one of the most startling events in history,—the burning of a great city to dispossess a victorious foe. It proved successful. When Napoleon left the Kremlin on that fearful night

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he began his downward career. The conflagration, it is true, did not drive him at once from Moscow. He lingered for more than a month amid its ruins, in the vain hope that the czar would ask him for terms of peace. But the czar kept silent, the city was untenable for winter-quarters, and retreat became imperative. When, at length, the grand army marched, winter marched with it,—a winter such as even Russia had rarely seen. Napoleon had delayed too long. The north gathered its forces and swooped upon his shivering ranks, with death in its blasts. The Russians, recovering from their losses, rushed upon his freezing columns, pouring destruction upon them as they marched. All was at an end. The great victor's tide of success had definitely turned. He had entered Russia with nearly half a million of men; hardly a tenth part of this great army followed him from that fatal land.

CHAPTER XXXI

NAPOLEON'S RETURN FROM ELBA

All was quiet in Elba. Nothing was talked of at Porto-Ferrajo but the ball to be given by Pauline, the sister of Napoleon, who had exchanged his imperial dominion over half Europe for kingship over that little Mediterranean island. Evening came. The fête was a brilliant one. Napoleon was present, gay, cheerful, easy, to all appearance fully satisfied with his little kingdom, and without thought of wider empire or heavier cares. He stayed till a late hour, and went home with two of his old generals, Bertrand and Drouet, to tell them the news which had come to him from the continent. This news was not altogether to his liking. The Congress at Vienna had decreed his transportation to the Azores. Elba was too near France.

Such was the state of affairs on the night of February 25, 1815. At sunset of the next day there might have been seen a small flotilla moving before a south wind along the shores of Elba. It consisted of a brig, the Inconstant by name, a schooner, and five smaller vessels. The brig evidently carried guns. The decks of the other vessels were crowded with men in uniform. On the deck of the Inconstant stood Napoleon, his face filled with hope and joy, his hand waving an adieu to his sister Pauline, who watched him from the château windows, on the island shore.

The next day came. The sea was motionless. Not a breath of wind could be felt. The island was still close at hand. At a distance might be seen the French and English cruisers which guarded that side of the island, now moveless upon a moveless sea. It was doubtful if the flotilla had not better return. But the wind rose again, and their progress was resumed.

Four in the afternoon found them off the heights of Leghorn. Five leagues to leeward lay one frigate; near the shores

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of Corsica was another; to windward could be seen a third, making its way towards the flotilla. It was the Zephyr, of the French navy, commanded by Captain Andrieux. Now had come a vital moment in the enterprise. Should the Emperor declare himself and seek to gain over Andrieux? It was too dangerous a venture; he bade the grenadiers on the deck to conceal themselves; it was a situation in which strategy seemed better than boldness. At six the two vessels were close together. Lieutenant Taillade of the Inconstant knew and saluted Captain Andrieux. A speaking-trumpet colloquy followed.

ARC DE TRIOMPHE AND CHAMPS ELYSEES, PARIS.

"Where are you bound?" asked Taillade.

"To Leghorn. And you?"

"To Genoa. Have you any commissions I can execute there?"

"Thanks, not any. How is the Emperor?"

"Very well."

"So much the better."

The two vessels moved on, and soon lost sight of each other in the growing darkness. The other frigates had disappeared.

The next day dawned. There was visible a large frigate in the distance, but it was not moving towards the flotilla. No danger was to be feared from this source. But the vessel's head had been turned to the southward, to Taillade's surprise.

"Gentlemen," he called to the officers on the bridge, "are we bound for Spain or for Africa?"

Napoleon, who had perceived the same thing, summoned Taillade from his conference with the officers.

"Where are we?" he asked.

"Sire, we are headed for Africa."

"I don't wish to go there. Take me to France."

"Your Majesty shall be there before noon tomorrow."

The face of Napoleon beamed on hearing these words. He turned to the soldiers of the Old Guard who accompanied him, and said,—

"Yes, grenadiers, we are going to France, to Paris." Enthusiastic "vivas" followed his announcement, which told a tale of future glory to those war-hardened veterans. They had fought for the Emperor on many a mighty field. They were ready to dare new dangers in the hope of new triumphs.

On the morning of Wednesday, March 1, the shores of France were visible from the vessel's deck. At three in the afternoon anchor was dropped in the Bay of Juan. Cheers and salvos of artillery greeted those welcome shores; the boats were quickly dropped, and by five o'clock the whole expedition was on shore. The soldiers made their bivouac in an olive grove on the borders of the bay.

"Happy omen!" said Napoleon; "the olive is the emblem of peace."

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He plucked some violets, and then sat down and consulted his maps, which were spread on a table before him. There were two routes which might be taken; an easy one through Provence, and a difficult one over the snowy mountains of Dauphiny. But on the former he could not count on the loyalty of the people; on the latter he could: the difficult route was chosen.

It proved a cold and wearying journey. The men were obliged to march in single file along narrow roads which bordered precipices. Several mules, one of them laden with gold, lost their footing and were plunged down the cliff. Napoleon was forced to dismount and go on foot to keep warm. For a short time he rested beside the brush-wood fire of a cabin whose only tenant was an old woman.

"Have you any news from Paris?" he asked her. "Do you know what the king is doing?"

"The king? You mean the Emperor," answered the old woman. "He is always down yonder."

So, here was a Frenchwoman who had not heard a word of the last year's doings. Was this the stuff of glory? Napoleon looked at General Drouet, and said, in pensive tones, "Do you hear this, Drouet? What, after all, is the good of troubling the world in order to fill it with our name?"

We cannot follow their progress step by step. That small army of a thousand men was marching to conquer a kingdom, but for days it had only the mountains and the snows to overcome. As yet not a soldier had been encountered, and they had been a week on shore. But the news of the landing had now spread far and wide, and soldiers were marching to stop the advance of the "Brigand of Elba," as the royalists in Paris called Napoleon. How would they receive him,—with volleys or acclamations? That was soon to be learned. The troops in that part of France were concentrated at Grenoble and its vicinity. The Emperor was approaching them. The problem would soon be solved.

At nine o'clock of March 7 Napoleon separated his small force into three divisions, himself taking station in the midst of the advance-guard, on horseback, wearing his famous gray overcoat and the broad ribbon of the Legion of Honor. About one o'clock the small battalion approached a regiment of the troops of the king, who were drawn up in line across the road. Napoleon dismounted.

"Colonel Mallet," he said, "tell the soldiers to put their weapons under their left arms, points down."

"Sire," said the colonel, "is it not dangerous to act thus in presence of troops whose sentiments we do not know, and whose first fire may be so fatal?"

"Mallet, tell them to put the weapons under their arms," repeated Napoleon.

The order was obeyed. The two battalions faced each other, at short pistol-shot, in absolute silence. Napoleon advanced alone towards the royal troops.

"Present arms!" he commanded.

They obeyed, levelling their guns at their old commander. He advanced slowly, with impassive face. Reaching their front, he touched his cap and saluted.

"Soldiers of the Fifth," he cried, loudly, "do you recognize me?"

"Yes, yes," came from some voices, filled with barely-repressed enthusiasm.

"Soldiers, behold your general; behold your emperor," he continued. "Let any of you who wishes to kill him, fire."

Fire?—Their guns went to the earth; they flung themselves on their knees before him, called him father, shed tears, shouted as if in frenzy, waved their shakos on their bayonets and sabres.

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"All is over," said Napoleon to Bertrand and Drouet. "In ten days we shall be in the Tuileries."

In a brief time the Emperor moved on, the king's regiment, now wearing the tricolor cockade, following with his former troop. As they drew near Grenoble throngs of peasantry gathered, with enthusiastic cheers. Another regiment approached, the seventh of the line, commanded by Colonel de Labédoyère. He had taken the eagle of the regiment from a chest, brandished his sword, and crying "Long live the Emperor! Those who love me follow me!" led the way from Grenoble. The whole regiment followed. Meeting Napoleon, the colonel and the Emperor sprang from their horses and warmly embraced.

NAPOLEON'S RETURN FORM ELBA.

"Colonel," said Napoleon, "it is you who will replace me on the throne."

It was night when they reached Grenoble. The royalist authorities had closed the gates, but the ramparts were thronged with men. The darkness was profound, but Labédoyère called out loudly,— "Soldiers, it is I, Labédoyère, colonel of the Seventh. We bring you Napoleon. He is yonder. It is for you to receive him and to repeat with us the rallying-cry of the former conquerors of Europe: Live the Emperor!"

His words were followed by a ringing shout from the ramparts. Many ran to the gates. Finding them closed and barred they furiously attacked them with axes, while the peasants outside hammered on them as fiercely. Thus doubly assailed they soon gave way, and the stream of new-comers rushed in, torches and flambeaux illuminating the scene. Napoleon had no little difficulty in making his way through the crowd, which was delirious with joy, and reaching an inn, the Three Dauphins, where he designed to pass the night.

On the 9th he left Grenoble, followed by six thousand of his old soldiers. His march was an ovation. He reached Lyons on the 10th. Several regiments had been collected here to oppose him, but they all trampled the white cockade of the king underfoot, assumed the tricolor, and fraternized with the Emperor's troops.

Marshal Ney was the only hope left to the royalists. He had, they said, promised Louis XVIII. to bring back Napoleon in an iron cage. This hope vanished when Ney issued a proclamation beginning, "The cause of the Bourbons is lost forever;" which was followed, on March 18, by his embracing the Emperor openly at Auxerre.

All was over for Louis XVIII. Near midnight of March 19 some travelling carriages rolled away from the court-yard of the Touileries in a torrent of rain, and amid a furious wind-storm that extinguished the carriage lights. It was Louis XVIII. going into exile. On the 20th, at nine o'clock in the evening, the Emperor Napoleon drove through the streets of Paris towards the abandoned palace through hosts of shouting soldiers and a population that was wild with joy. The officers tore him from his carriage and carried him on their arms, kissing his hands, embracing his old gray overcoat, not letting his feet touch ground till they had borne him to the foot of the grand stairway of the Tuileries.

It was twenty days since he had landed, and France was his, the people, the soldiers, alike mad with delight, none, to all

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appearance, dreaming of what renewed miseries this ill-omened return of their worshipped emperor meant.

It meant, as we now know, bloodshed, slaughter, and ruin; it meant Waterloo and St. Helena; it meant a hundred days of renewed empire, and then the final end of the power of the great conqueror. On August 7, less than five months from the date of the triumphant entry to the Tuileries, Napoleon stepped on board the British frigate Northumberland, to be borne to the far-off isle of St. Helena, his future home.

Twenty-five years after the date of these events Napoleon returned again to France, but under very different auspices from those described. On the 29th of November, 1840, there anchored at Cherbourg, amid the salutes of forts and ships, a French war-vessel called the Belle Poule, on which were the mortal remains of the great conqueror, long since conquered by death, and now brought back to the land over which he had so long reigned. On December 8 the coffin was transferred to the steamer Normandie, amid a salute of two thousand guns, and taken by it to the Seine. On December 15 the coffin, placed on a splendid car drawn by sixteen horses, moved in solemn procession through the streets of Paris, attended by the noblest escort the city could provide, and passing through avenues thronged with adoring multitudes, who forgot the injuries the great soldier had done to France and remembered only his fame. The funeral train was received by King Louis Philippe, the royal family, and all the high dignitaries of the government at the Church of the Invalides, in which a noble and worthy final resting-place had been prepared for the corpse of the once mighty emperor. "Napoleon," says Bourrienne, "had again and finally conquered. While every throne in Europe was shaking, the Great Conqueror came to claim and receive from posterity the crown for which he had sacrificed so much. In the Invalides the Emperor had at last found a resting-place, 'by the banks of the Seine, among the French people whom he had loved so well.'"

CHAPTER XXXII

THE PRUSSIAN WAR AND THE PARIS COMMUNE

There have been two critical periods in the story of France in which history was made at a rate of rapidity rarely equaled in the history of the world. The first of these was the era of the Revolution and the Napoleonic régime, which has no parallel among human events in the rapidity and momentous gravity of its changes. The second was the period from August, 1870, to the summer of 1871, less than a year in length, yet crowded with important events to an unprecedented degree.

Within that year was fought a great war between France and Germany, in which the military power of France, in an incredibly brief period, was utterly overthrown, and that nation left at the mercy of its opponent. Within the same period the second empire of France came to a sudden and disastrous end, and a republic, the third in French history, was built upon its ruins. Simultaneously a new and powerful empire was founded, that of Germany, the palace at Versailles being the scene of this highly important change in the political conditions of Europe. During this period also a political revolution took place in Italy, in consequence of the French war, and Paris sustained two sieges; the first by the German army; the second and most bitter by the French themselves, fighting against a mob of fanatical revolutionists and ending in a frightful saturnalia of murder, ruin and revenge.

Has there ever been a year in the world's history more crowded with momentous events? Within that year the political status of France, Germany, and Italy was transformed, the late emperor of France suddenly found himself a throneless fugitive, and the people of Paris passed through an experience unparalleled in the diversified history of that ancient city. Of all

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the sieges to which Paris has been subjected, far the strangest was that in which the scum of the city, miscalled the commune, fought with tiger-like ferocity against the forces of the newly-formed republic, filled with the revengeful and murderous spirit which had inspired the masses in the first revolution.

It is the story of this tragic interlude which we propose here to tell, premising with a brief résumé of the events which led up to it.

Louis Napoleon, posing as Emperor Napoleon III. of France, a position which he had been enabled to gain through the glamour of the name of his famous uncle, was infected throughout his reign with the desire to emulate the deeds of the great Napoleon. He hoped to shine as one of the military stars of Europe, and was encouraged by the success of the war which he fomented in Italy. His second effort in this direction was the invasion of Mexico and the attempt to establish an empire, under his tutelage, upon American soil. In this he ran counter to the Monroe Doctrine and the power of the United States and was forced to retire with his feathers scorched and his prestige sadly diminished.

But what he probably proposed to make the great military triumph of his reign came in 1870, when, on a flimsy pretence, a misunderstanding which called only for diplomatic adjustment, he suddenly declared war against Germany and rashly put his armies into the field to cope with that powerful rival. Never had there been a more unwise or suicidal proceeding. In shameful ignorance of the real condition of the army, which he was made to believe was "five times ready," "ready to the last gaiter button," he marshaled against the thoroughly prepared military power of Germany an army ill-organized, ill-supplied, without proper reserves, and led by commanders of appalling incapacity. Maps and plans were bad; strategy was an unknown quantity; no study had been made of the use of the railway in war; almost everything except courage was lacking, and courage without leadership was hopeless against the thoroughly drilled and supplied German army and the science of Yon Moltke, the great German strategist.

Had it been the first Napoleon, he would have made himself sure personally as to "the last gaiter button" and all other details, but with sublime self-satisfaction and inane blindness the Second Napoleon put himself at the head of this unready army, inspired apparently with the "on to Berlin" confidence of the cheering Parisian mob.

He was to be awakened suddenly and painfully from his dream of victory and military fame. The first collision of the two armies took place on August 2. On September 2, just one month later, the derelict emperor was a prisoner of war in the hands of the King of Prussia, together with his army of more than 80,000 men. He had proved an utter failure as a commander, a mere encumbrance, without a plan of campaign, a conception of leadership, or an idea of strategic movements. Recognizing, when too late, his incapacity, he had resigned the general command to Marshal Bazaine, who withdrew with a large army into Metz, and subsequently, in a northward movement for Bazaine's relief, he found himself surrounded at Sedan by an irresistible force and was obliged to surrender to save his army from impending annihilation.

Such was the first act in this lugubrious drama. Two days later, on September 4, France was proclaimed a republic. Before the end of October Bazaine surrendered Metz to the Germans and his great army of 180,000 men was lost to France. The military force of France was vanishing with alarming rapidity. Another event of the period, of interest in this connection, was the loss of the temporal power of the pope, above alluded to. The papacy had been defended by Napoleon III. against the Italian revolutionists, and the withdrawal of the French force from Rome left that city open to the army of Victor Emmanuel. It was occupied in September and became the capital of the new kingdom of Italy. In December another important event took place, the King of Prussia being proclaimed at Versailles the

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head of a new empire of Germany, which embraced all the German states except Austria.

SCENE FROM THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR.

Events of great moment, as may be seen, were occurring with startling rapidity. Before the surrender of Bazaine the advance of the German army had appeared before Paris and on September 19 the siege of that city began. Soon it was so closely invested that food could not enter and the only way out was by balloon. The German bombardment did little damage to the great city, which was defended obstinately. But the Germans had a powerful ally within, where the grisly demon of famine threatened the defenders.

Meanwhile Gambetta, the most ardent patriot left to France, was seeking with nervous energy to raise fresh armies in the south; Garibaldi, his sword free from duty in Italy, had come to the aid of France; all patriots were called to the ranks and a struggle of some importance took place. But all this practically ceased on the 28th of January, 1871, when an armistice brought the hopeless resistance of Paris to an end. Almost at once the war died out on all sides, the Germans occupied all the forts around Paris, and France lay at the mercy of Germany, after a struggle of six months' duration.

The first siege of Paris had terminated; a second and more desperately contested one was at hand. On March 13 the German army around Paris, which had been given the triumph of a march into the conquered city, set out on its return home and the authorities of the new republic prepared to take possession of their freed capital.

They were to find the task one of unlooked-for difficulty. On March 18 the revolutionary element of the city rose en masse, organized under the name of the Commune, took possession of Paris, and prepared to defend it to the death against the leaders of the new-formed government, whom they contemned as aristocrats.

The story of the Commune is a shameful and terrible one. Beginning in a fraternization of the National Guard with the mob, its advent was sealed with murder. In a contest on the 18th for the possession of some cannon General Lecomte ordered his men to fire on the insurgents. They refused. A gentleman standing in a crowd of angry men on the street corner said: "General Lecomte is right." He was immediately seized and quickly recognised as General Clément Thomas, a brave officer who had done gallant service during the siege. This sufficed him nothing with the mob. He and General Lecomte were at once dragged away to prison. At 4 o'clock that same day they were brought out by a party of the insurgent National Guards, and after a mock trial were taken to a walled enclosure and shot down in cold blood. They were the first victims of the mob, which had early begun to burn its bridges behind it.

On the following day the leaders of the outbreak met at the Hôtel-de-Ville. They all belonged to the International, a secret society formed for the abolition of property, religion, rulers, government, and the upper classes, and the reduction of the community to a state of anarchy or something resembling it. They called upon the citizens to meet in their sections and elect a commune—the new form of government advocated by the Anarchists, in which destruction of all existing institutions was to precede reconstruction from the bottom upwards.

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Events now moved rapidly. A delegation from the few men of note left in Paris proceeded to Versailles, where the government of the republic was in session, and demanded that special municipal rights should be given to the people of Paris. The refusal of this request precipitated the insurrection. The furious people at once elected a revolutionary government, choosing the most extreme of the revolutionists, who organized what was called the Council of the Commune. This consisted of eighty members, of varied nationality, seventy of them never having been heard of in Paris before. They had risen from the bottom of the deep sea of anarchy to assume control.

On the 3rd of April the civil war broke out—Paris against Versailles, the army under the Assembly of the republic against the National Guard in sympathy with the Commune. The Germans, who still held two of the forts in the vicinity of Paris, looked grimly on at the tragedy about to be played upon the stage which their hands had erected.

The war began with murder. Dr. Pasquier, a distinguished surgeon, bearing a flag of truce, met two National Guards on the bridge of Courbevoie, near Neuilly, where the body of Napoleon had been brought ashore thirty years before. After a brief debate one of the soldiers ended the colloquy by blowing out the doctor's brains. As soon as General Vinoy, in command of the army of order, heard of this murderous act he ordered the guns of Fort Varélien to be turned upon the city.

On the following morning five columns of the troops of the Commune marched out to take the fort, lured by the confident impression that the soldiers under Vinoy would fraternize with them. They were mistaken. The guns of Fort Varélien hurled death-dealing missiles into their columns and they were quickly in full retreat. Flourens, a scientist of fame who had joined their ranks, fell dead. Duval, one of their generals, was captured and was quickly shot as a traitor. The other leaders were at once sent to prison by the angry Council on their return and the Commune ordered that Paris should be filled with barricades.

Though the Commune had imprisoned the unsuccessful generals, they were infuriated at the execution of General Duval and sought in the dignitaries of the church the most exalted hostages they could find against such summary acts. On the night of the 6th Monseigneur Darboy, Archbishop of Paris, his chaplain, and eight other priests were arrested. The curé of the Madeleine and his vicar had before been seized. Other priests were later taken into custody and the prison at Mazas was well filled with these so-called hostages. The fury of the leaders of the revolt led them to other excesses against religion, the churches being closed, the arms cut from the crosses, and red flags hung in their stead.

The outrages were not confined to the church. In the words of a resident of Paris: "The motto of the Commune soon became fraternity of that sort which means arrest of each other." Before the Council was two weeks old many of its leading members had found their way to prison. Dissensions had broken out in its midst, and the stronger victimized the weaker.

By April 7 a personage calling himself General Cluseret had, as some one expressed it, "swallowed up the Commune." He called himself an American, and had been in the Union service in the American civil war, but no one knew where he was born. He had served in the Chasseurs d'Afrique and in the Papal Zouaves, and after the fall of the Commune escaped from Paris and became a general of the Fenians, nearly capturing Chester Castle in their service.

This man became absolute dictator over the revolted city, with its two million of inhabitants; yet after three weeks of this dictatorial rule his star declined and he found himself in prison at Mazas, to which he had sent so many others.

Leaving these details for the present, we must return to the war, which was soon in full blast. The assault of April 4 repulsed, the guns of Fort Varélien were opened upon the city and the second bombardment of Paris in that memorable year began. The guns of its friends were more destructive than those

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of its foes, the forts taking part in the bombardment being much nearer the centre of the city. Their shells damaged the Arch of Triumph, which the Prussians had spared; they fell alike on homes, public buildings and churches; alike on men, women and children, friend and foe.

Under order of General Cluseret, the dictator of the Commune, every man was ordered to take part in the defence of the city. His neighbors were required to see that he did so and to arrest him if he showed a disposition to decline. For the seventy-three days that the power of the Commune lasted Paris was a veritable pandemonium, the fighting, the arrests, the bombardment keeping the excitement at an intense pitch. The people deserted the streets, which were silent and empty, except for the soldiers of the Commune—a disorderly crew in motley uniforms—the movement of ammunition wagons, and the other scenes incident to a state of war. But the usual swarming life of Paris had vanished. There was no movement, scarcely any sound. The shop-windows were shut, many of them boarded up, red flags hanging from a few, but as a rule the very buildings seemed dead.

This is the story told by one observer, but another—perhaps at a different period of the bombardment—speaks of well-dressed people "loitering in the boulevards as if nothing were going on. The cafés, indeed, were ordered to close their doors at midnight, but behind closed shutters went on gambling, drinking and debauchery. After spending a riotous night, fast men and women considered it a joke to drive out to the Arch of Triumph and see how the fight was going on."

On the 9th of April the army of Versailles began to make active assaults upon the forts held by the soldiers of the Commune, and with such effect that confusion and dismay quickly pervaded its councils. As the struggle went on the fury and spirit of retaliation of the insurgents increased. New hostages were arrested, the palace of the archbishop was pillaged, and in the first week of May the destruction of the house of M. Thiers, the president of the republic, was decreed. It was a beautiful mansion, filled with objects of art and valuable documents used by him in writing his historical works. Some of these were removed, but most of them were consumed by the flames. On the 12th of May the Commune, now inspired by the spirit of destruction, ordered the levelling of the famous column in the Place Vendôme, describing it as a symbol of brute force and false glory.

This famous column, one hundred and thirty-five feet high, formed on the model of Trajan's column at Rome, had been erected by Napoleon I., cast from cannon taken from his foes, and surmounted by a statue of Napoleon in his imperial robes. On May 16 this proud work of art fell, being pulled down with a tremendous crash by the aid of ropes fastened to its upper part. It is pleasant to be able to state that this fine work of art has been restored. Its attempted destruction filled the army of Versailles with a spirit of revenge, which led them, on their entering Paris a few days later, to deal with the insurrectionists with brutal and merciless energy. They had other and abundant cause for this feeling, as the reader will perceive in the recital of the later deeds of the desperate Commune.

By the date now reached the army of order was rapidly gaining ground. The fort of Vauves was taken; that of Mont Rouge was dismantled; breaches were opened in the barricades, and by the 20th of May the army was in the streets and fighting its way onward against a desperate defence. The carnage was frightful; Dambrowski, a Pole and the only able general of the Commune, was killed; prisoners on both sides were shot down without mercy; there were barricades in almost every street and these were hotly defended, the courage of despair in their defenders making the progress of the besieging army a slow and bloody one.

The rest of the story is all blood and horror. The desperate leaders of the Commune determined that, if they must perish, Paris should be their funeral pyre. On the night of May 24 the city became a scene of incendiary rage. The Hôtel-de-Ville was in flames; the Palace of the Tuileries was burning like

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a great furnace; the Palace of the Legion of Honor, the Ministry of War, the Treasury were lurid volcanoes of flames; on all sides the torch had been applied.

Not only these great public buildings, but many private houses were consigned to the flames. All the sewers beneath Paris had been strewn with torpedoes, bombs, and inflammable materials, connected with electric wires, and the catacombs in the eastern quarter of the city were similarly prepared. It was the intention of the desperate revolutionists to blow up the city, but fortunately, before their preparations were completed, the army of order was in control and sappers and miners were sent underground to cut the electric wires leading to these mines of death-dealing explosives.

But the capture of the city came too late to save the lives of many of the "hostages" whom the Commune had sent to prison. Not content with burning the architectural monuments of the city, as the last effort of baffled rage they condemned these innocent victims of their wrath to death. On Wednesday, May 24, the venerable archbishop and five others of the imprisoned priests were taken from their cells and shot to death. On Thursday fifty more, priests and others, were similarly slaughtered.

A large number of captives remained shut up in the prison of La Roquette, around which, on Saturday the 27th, a yelling crowd gathered, thirsting for their lives. They, knowing that their rescuers were fighting within the city, determined to defend themselves and convert the prison into a fortress. Poiret, one of the warders, horrified by what had already been done, was the leader in the resolution, in which he was joined by the Abbé Lamazan, who called out:

"Don't let us be shot, my friends; let us defend ourselves. Trust in God; he is on our side."

The *sergents de ville*, captives in the story below, had made the same resolution. They had no arms, but they barricaded the doors and resolved to defend themselves from the murderous throng outside, howling for their blood. Two guns and a mortar had been brought by the mob to fire on the prison and the moment was critical.

Suddenly there came a lull in the uproar. Something had taken place. In a few minutes more the crowd broke up and dispersed, dragging away the guns they had brought. Word had reached them that the Council had fled from its headquarters to Belleville and a sudden panic seized the mob. Yet that night they returned, howling and cursing, while a barricade near by was still held by the insurgents. But with the early dawn this was abandoned, the mob melted away, and soon after a batallion of rescuers marched up and took possession of the prison. The captives were saved. Their resistance, seemingly so desperate, had proved successful. That day, Sunday, May 28, ended the rule of the Commune. The Versailles troops, who had been fighting their way steadily from street to street since the 21st, completed their work, the whole great city was in their hands, and the rule of the Commune was over.

The Commune had left devastation behind it. On every side were smoldering ruins, including the great municipal buildings, the law courts, and other public edifices, two theatres, eight whole streets, and innumerable private houses, while the dead bodies of its victims lay where they had been shot down. The soldiers, infuriated by the ruin which they beheld on all sides, were savage in their revenge. Every man seized whose hands were black with powder was instantly shot, many innocent persons perishing, since numbers had been forced to the barricades. The story of what took place during those bloody days of retribution is too long to tell, and it must suffice to sum it up in the frightful death roll of fourteen thousand persons—six thousand of them killed in open fight, eight thousand executed in bitter revenge.

The executions over, the prisons were filled to bursting. Count Orsi tells us that six hundred men were locked up in the wine cellars of Versailles, forty-five feet underground. He himself, falsely seized through the malice of an enemy, spent ten

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days in this horrible place amid the scum of the insurgents. As for the members of the Council of the Commune, some escaped, some were executed, others were transported to New Caledonia, a lonely isle in the far Pacific—from which they were subsequently freed when the hot blood of that year of revengeful retribution cooled down.

Thus ends the remarkable story of that year of war, insurrection, and devastation, the whole due to the overweening ambition of one man, Louis Napoleon, who wished to shine as a great conqueror. The destiny of France lay in his hand alone. He blindly decided upon war. The result was the humiliation of France, the death of thousands of her sons, the overthrow of her government, the frightful saturnalia of the rule of the Commune, and the loss to France of two of her provinces, those of Alsace and Lorraine, and a war indemnity of one thousand million dollars. Such terrors march in the train of blind and unrestrained ambition.

THE END.

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