BARING-GOULD SABINE

FREAKS OF FANATICISM, AND OTHER STRANGE EVENTS

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Содержание

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PREFACE

This Volume, that originally appeared as a Second Series to "Historic Oddities and Strange Events," is now issued under a new title which describes the peculiar nature of the majority of its contents. Several of the articles are concerned with the history of mysticism, a phase of human nature that deserves careful and close study. Mysticism is the outbreak in man of a spiritual element which cannot be ignored, cannot be wholly suppressed, and is man's noblest element when rightly directed and balanced. It is capable of regulation, but unregulated, it may become even a mischievous faculty.

When the Jews are being expelled from Russia, and are regarded with bitter hostility in other parts of Eastern Europe, the article on the accusations brought against them may prove not uninstructive reading.

There is political as well as religious and racial fanaticism, and the story of the "Poisoned Parsnips" illustrates the readiness with which false accusations against political enemies are made

and accepted without examination. "Jean Aymon" exhibits the same unscrupulousness where religious passions are concerned. The curious episode to "The Northern Raphael" shows the craving after notoriety that characterises so much of sentimental, hysterical piety.

S. Baring Gould.

Lew Trenchard, Devon,
September 1st, 1891.

A Swiss Passion Play

We are a little surprised, and perhaps a little shocked, at the illiberality of the Swiss Government, in even such Protestant cantons as Geneva, Zürich, and Berne, in forbidding the performances on their ground of the "Salvation Army," and think that such conduct is not in accordance with Protestant liberty of judgment and democratic independence. But the experiences gone through in Switzerland as in Germany of the confusion and mischief sometimes wrought by fanaticism, we will not say justify, but in a measure explain, the objection the Government has to a recrudescence of religious mysticism in its more flagrant forms. The following story exemplifies the extravagance to which such spiritual exaltation runs occasionally – fortunately only occasionally.

About eight miles from Schaffhausen, a little way on one side of the road to Winterthür, in a valley, lies the insignificant hamlet of Wildisbuch, its meadows overshadowed by leafy walnut trees. The hamlet is in the parish of Trüllikon. Here, at the beginning of this century, in a farmhouse, standing by itself, lived John Peter, a widower, with several of his children. He had but one son, Caspar, married in 1812, and divorced from his wife; he was, however, blessed with five daughters – Barbara, married to a blacksmith in Trüllikon; Susanna, Elizabeth, Magdalena married to John Moser, a shoemaker; and Margaretta, born in

1794, his youngest, and favourite child. Not long after the birth of Margaretta, her mother died, and thenceforth the child was the object of the tenderest and most devoted solicitude to her sisters and to her father. Margaretta grew up to be a remarkable child. At school she distinguished herself by her aptitude in learning, and in church by the devotion with which she followed the tedious Zwinglian service. The pastor who prepared her for confirmation was struck by her enthusiasm and eagerness to know about religion. She was clearly an imaginative person, and to one constituted as she was, the barnlike church, destitute of every element of beauty, studiously made as hideous as a perverse fancy could scheme, and the sacred functions reduced to utter dreariness, with every element of devotion bled out of them, were incapable of satisfying the internal spiritual fire that consumed her.

There is in every human soul a divine aspiration, a tension after the invisible and spiritual, in some more developed than in others, in certain souls existing only in that rudimentary condition in which, it is said, feet are found in the eel, and eyes in the oyster, but in others it is a predominating faculty, a veritable passion. Unless this faculty be given legitimate scope, be disciplined and guided, it breaks forth in abnormal and unhealthy manifestations. We know what is the result when the regular action of the pores of the skin is prevented, or the circulation of the blood is impeded. Fever and hallucination ensue. So is it with the spiritual life in man. If that be not given

free passage for healthy discharge of its activity, it will resolve itself into fanaticism, that is to say it will assume a diseased form of manifestation.

Margaretta was far ahead of her father, brother and sisters in intellectual culture, and in moral force of character. Susanna, the second daughter of John Peter, was an amiable, industrious, young woman, without independence of character. The third daughter, Elizabeth, was a quiet girl, rather dull in brain; Barbara was married when Margaretta was only nine, and Magdalena not long after; neither of them, however, escaped the influence of their youngest sister, who dominated over their wills almost as completely as she did over those of her two unmarried sisters, with whom she consorted daily.

How great her power over her sisters was may be judged from what they declared in after years in prison, and from what they endured for her sake.

Barbara, the eldest, professed to the prison chaplain in Zürich, in 1823, "I am satisfied that God worked in mighty power, and in grace through Margaret, up to the hour of her death." The father himself declared after the ruin of his family and the death of two of his daughters, "I am assured that my youngest daughter was set apart by God for some extraordinary purpose."

When Margaret was six, she was able to read her Bible, and would summon the family about her to listen to her lectures out of the sacred volume. She would also at the same time pray with great ardour, and exhort her father and sisters to lead God-fearing

lives. When she read the narrative of the Passion, she was unable to refrain from tears; her emotion communicated itself to all assembled round her, and the whole family sobbed and prayed aloud. She was a veritable "ministering child" to her household in all things spiritual. As she had been born at Christmas, it was thought that this very fact indicated some special privilege and grace accorded to her. In 1811, when aged seventeen, she received her first communion and edified all the church with the unction and exaltation of soul with which she presented herself at the table. In after years the pastor of Trüllikon said of her, "Unquestionably Margaretta was the cleverest of the family. She often came to thank me for the instructions I had given her in spiritual things. Her promises to observe all I had taught her were most fervent. I had the best hopes for her, although I observed somewhat of extravagance in her. Margaretta speedily obtained an absolute supremacy in her father's house. All must do what she ordered. Her will expressed by word of mouth, or by letter when absent, was obeyed as the will of God."

In personal appearance Margaretta was engaging. She was finely moulded, had a well-proportioned body, a long neck on which her head was held very upright; large, grey-blue eyes, fair hair, a lofty, well-arched brow. The nose was well-shaped, but the chin and mouth were somewhat coarse.

In 1816, her mother's brother, a small farmer at Rudolfingen, invited her to come and manage his house for him. She went, and was of the utmost assistance. Everything prospered under

her hand. Her uncle thought that she had brought the blessing of the Almighty on both his house and his land.

Whilst at Rudolfingen, the holy maiden was brought in contact with the Pietists of Schaffhausen. She attended their prayer-meetings and expositions of Scripture. This deepened her religious convictions, and produced a depression in her manner that struck her sisters when she visited them. In answer to their inquiries why she was reserved and melancholy, she replied that God was revealing Himself to her more and more every day, so that she became daily more conscious of her own sinfulness. If this had really been the case it would have saved her from what ensued, but this sense of her own sinfulness was a mere phrase, that meant actually an overweening self-consciousness. She endured only about a twelve month of the pietistic exercises at Schaffhausen, and then felt a call to preach, testify and prophesy herself, instead of sitting at the feet of others. Accordingly, she threw up her place with her uncle, and returned to Wildisbuch, in March, 1817, when she began operations as a revivalist.

The paternal household was now somewhat enlarged. The old farmer had taken on a hand to help him in field and stable, called Heinrich Ernst, and a young woman as maid called Margaret Jäggli. Ernst was a faithful, amiable young fellow whom old Peters thoroughly trusted, and he became devoted heart and soul to the family. Margaret Jäggli was a person of very indifferent character, who, for her immoralities, had been turned out of

her native village. She was subject to epileptic fits, which she supposed were possession by the devil, and she came to the farm of the Peter's family in hopes of being there cured by the prayers of the saintly Margaretta.

Another inmate of the house was Ursula Kündig, who entered it at the age of nineteen, and lived there as a veritable maid-of-all-work, though paid no wages. This damsel was of the sweetest, gentlest disposition. Her parish pastor gave testimony to her, "She was always so good that even scandal-mongers were unable to find occasion for slander in her conduct." Her countenance was full of intelligence, purity, and had in it a nobility above her birth and education. Her home had been unhappy; she had been engaged to be married to a young man, but finding that he did not care for her, and sought only her small property, she broke off the engagement, to her father's great annoyance. It was owing to a quarrel at home relative to this, that she went to Wildisbuch to entreat Margaretta Peter to be "her spiritual guide through life into eternity." Ursula had at first only paid occasional visits to Wildisbuch, but gradually these visits became long, and finally she took up her residence in the house. The soul of the unhappy girl was as wax in the hands of the saint, whom she venerated with intensest admiration as the Elect of the Lord; and she professed her unshaken conviction "that Christ revealed Himself in the flesh through her, and that through her many thousands of souls were saved." The house at Wildisbuch became thenceforth a great gathering place for all the spiritually-

minded in the neighbourhood, who desired instruction, guidance, enlightenment, and Margaretta, the high priestess of mysticism to all such as could find no satisfaction for the deepest hunger of their souls in the Zwinglian services of their parish church.

Man is composed of two parts; he has a spiritual nature which he shares with the angels, and an animal nature that he possesses in common with the beasts. There is in him, consequently, a double tendency, one to the indefinite, unconfined, spiritual; the other to the limited, sensible and material. The religious history of all times shows us this higher nature striving after emancipation from the law of the body, and never succeeding in accomplishing the escape, always falling back, like Dædalus, into destruction, when attempting to defy the laws of nature and soar too near to the ineffable light. The mysticism of the old heathen world, the mysticism of the Gnostic sects, the mysticism of mediæval heretics, almost invariably resolved itself into orgies of licentiousness. God has bound soul and body together, and an attempt to dissociate them in religion is fatally doomed to ruin.

The incarnation of the Son of God was the indissoluble union of Spirit with form as the basis of true religion. Thenceforth, Spirit was no more to be dissociated from matter, authority from a visible Church, grace from a sacramental sign, morality from a fixed law. All the great revolts against Catholicism in the middle-ages, were more or less revolts against this principle and were reversions to pure spiritualism. The Reformation was taken advantage of for the mystic aspirations of men to run riot.

Individual emotion became the supreme and sole criticism of right and wrong, of truth and falsehood, and sole authority to which submission must be tendered.

In the autumn of 1817, Margaretta of Wildisbuch met a woman who was also remarkable in her way, and the head of another revivalist movement. This was Julianne von Krüdner; about whom a word must now be said.

Julianne was born in 1766, at Riga, the daughter of a noble and wealthy family. Her father visited Paris and took the child with him, where she made the acquaintance of the rationalistic and speculative spirits of French society, before the Revolution. In a Voltairean atmosphere, the little Julianne grew up without religious faith or moral principle. At the age of fourteen she was married to a man much older than herself, the Baron von Krüdner, Russian Ambassador at Venice. There her notorious immoralities resulted in a separation, and Julianne was obliged to return to her father's house at Riga. This did not satisfy her love of pleasure and vanity, and she went to St. Petersburg and then to Paris, where she threw herself into every sort of dissipation. She wrote a novel, "Valérie," in which she frankly admitted that woman, when young, must give herself up to pleasure, then take up with art, and finally, when nothing else was left her, devote herself to religion. At the age of forty she had already entered on this final phase. She went to Berlin, was admitted to companionship with the Queen, Louise, and endeavoured to "convert" her. The sweet, holy queen required no conversion,

and the Baroness von Krüdner was obliged to leave Berlin. She wandered thenceforth from place to place, was now in Paris, then in Geneva, and then in Germany. At Karlsruhe she met Jung-Stilling; and thenceforth threw herself heart and soul into the pietistic revival. Her mission now was – so she conceived – to preach the Gospel to the poor. In 1814 she obtained access to the Russian Court, where her prophecies and exhortations produced such an effect on the spirit of the Czar, Alexander I., that he entreated her to accompany him to Paris. She did so, and held spiritual conferences and prayer meetings in the French capital. Alexander soon tired of her, and she departed to Basel, where she won to her the Genevan Pastor Empeytaz and the Basel Professor Lachenal. Her meetings for revival, which were largely attended, caused general excitement, but led to many domestic quarrels, so that the city council gave her notice to leave the town. She then made a pilgrimage along the Rhine, but her proceedings were everywhere objected to by the police and town authorities, and she was sent back under police supervision first to Leipzig, and thence into Russia.

Thence in 1824 she departed for the Crimea, where she had resolved to start a colony on the plan of the Moravian settlements, and there died before accomplishing her intention.

It was in 1817, when she was conducting her apostolic progress along the Rhine, that she and Margaretta of Wildisbuch met. Apparently the latter made a deeper impression on the excitable baroness than had the holy Julianne on Margaretta. The

two aruspices did not laugh when they met, for they were both in deadly earnest, and had not the smallest suspicion that they were deluding themselves first, and then others.

The meeting with the Krüdner had a double effect. In the first place, the holy Julianne, when forced to leave the neighbourhood by the unregenerate police, commended her disciples to the blessed Margaret; and, in the second place, the latter had the shrewdness to perceive, that, if she was to play anything like the part of her fellow-apostle, she must acquire a little more education. Consequently Margaret took pains to write grammatically, and to spell correctly.

The result of the commendation by Saint Julianne of her disciples to Margaret was that thenceforth a regular pilgrimage set in to Wildisbuch of devout persons in landaus and buggies, on horse and on foot.

Some additional actors in the drama must now be introduced.

Magdalena Peter, the fourth daughter of John Peter, was married to the cobbler, John Moser. The influence of Margaret speedily made itself felt in their house. At first Moser's old mother lived with the couple, along with Conrad, John Moser's younger brother. The first token of the conversion of Moser and his wife was that they kicked the old mother out of the house, because she was worldly and void of "saving grace." Conrad was a plodding, hard-working lad, very useful, and therefore not to be dispensed with. The chosen vessels finding he did not sympathise with them, and finding him too valuable to be done

without, starved him till he yielded to their fancies, saw visions, and professed himself "saved." Barbara, also, married to the blacksmith Baumann, was next converted, and brought all her spiritual artillery to bear on the blacksmith, but in vain. He let her go her own way, but he would have nothing himself to say to the great spiritual revival in the house of the Peters. Barbara, not finding a kindred soul in her husband, had taken up with a man of like soaring piety, a tailor, named Hablützel.

Another person who comes into this story is Jacob Ganz, a tailor, who had been mixed up with the movement at Basel under Julianne the Holy.

Margaret's brother Caspar was a man of infamous character; he was separated from his wife, whom he had treated with brutality; had become the father of an illegitimate child, and now loafed about the country preaching the Gospel.

Ganz, the tailor, had thrown aside his shears, and constituted himself a roving preacher. In one of his apostolic tours he had made the acquaintance of Saint Margaret, and had been deeply impressed by her. He had an elect disciple at Illnau, in the Kempthal, south of Winterthür. This was a shoemaker named Jacob Morf, a married man, aged thirty; small, with a head like a pumpkin. To this shoemaker Ganz spoke with enthusiasm of the spiritual elevation of the holy Margaret, and Morf was filled with a lively desire of seeing and hearing her.

Margaretta seems after a while to have wearied of the monotony of life in her father's house, or else the spirit within her

drove her abroad to carry her light into the many dark corners of her native canton. She resolved to be like Ganz, a roving apostle. Sometimes she started on her missionary journeys alone, sometimes along with her sister Elizabeth, who submitted to her with blind and stanch obedience, or else with Ursula Kündig. These journeys began in 1820, and extended as far Zürich and along the shores of that lovely lake. In May of the same year she visited Illnau, where she was received with enthusiasm by the faithful, who assembled in the house of a certain Ruegg, and there for the first time she met with Jacob Morf. The acquaintance then begun soon quickened into friendship. When a few weeks later he went to Schaffhausen to purchase leather, he turned aside to Wildisbuch. After this his visits there became not only frequent, but were protracted.

Margaret was the greatest comfort to him in his troubled state of soul. She described to him the searchings and anxieties she had undergone, so that he cried "for very joy that he had encountered one who had gone through the same experience as himself."

In November, 1820, Margaret took up her abode for some time in the house of a disciple, Caspar Notz, near Zürich, and made it the centre whence she started on a series of missionary excursions. Here also gathered the elect out of Zürich to hear her expound Scripture, and pray. And hither also came the cobbler Morf seeking ease for his troubled soul, and on occasions stayed in the house there with her for a week at a time. At last his wife, the worthy Regula Morf, came from Illnau to find her husband,

and persuaded him to return with her to his cobbling at home.

At the end of January in 1821, Margaret visited Illnau again, and drew away after her the bewitched Jacob, who followed her all the way home, to Wildisbuch, and remained at her father's house ten days further.

On Ascension Day following, he was again with her, and then she revealed to him that it was the will of heaven that they should ascend together, without tasting death, into the mansions of the blessed, and were to occupy one throne together for all eternity. Throughout this year, when the cobbler, Jacob, was not at Wildisbuch, or Saint Margaretta at Illnau, the pair were writing incessantly to each other, and their correspondence is still preserved in the archives of Zürich. Here is a specimen of the style of the holy Margaret. "My dear child! your dear letter filled me with joy. O, my dear child, how gladly would I tell you how it fares with me! When we parted, I was forced to go aside where none might see, to relieve my heart with tears. O, my heart, I cannot describe to you the distress into which I fell. I lay as one senseless for an hour. For anguish of heart I could not go home, such unspeakable pains did I suffer! My former separation from you was but a shadow of this parting. O, why are you so unutterably dear to me, &c.," and then a flow of sickly, pious twaddle that makes the gorge rise.

Regula Morf read this letter and shook her head over it. She had shaken her head over another letter received by her husband a month earlier, in which the holy damsel had written: "O, how

great is my love! It is stronger than death. O, how dear are you to me. I could hug you to my heart a thousand times." And had scribbled on the margin, "These words are for your eye alone." However, Regula saw them, shook her head and told her husband that the letter seemed to her unenlightened mind to be very much like a love-letter. "Nothing of the sort," answered the cobbler, "it speaks of spiritual affection only."

We must now pass over a trait in the life of the holy maid which is to the last degree unedifying, but which is merely another exemplification of that truth which the history of mysticism enforces in every age, that spiritual exaltation runs naturally, inevitably, into licentiousness, unless held in the iron bands of discipline to the moral law. A mystic is a law to himself. He bows before no exterior authority. However much he may transgress the code laid down by religion, he feels no compunction, no scruples, for his heart condemns him not. It was so with the holy Margaret. Her lapse or lapses in no way roused her to a sense of sin, but served only to drive her further forward on the mad career of self-righteous exaltation.

She had disappeared for many months from her father's house, along with her sister Elizabeth. The police had inquired as to their whereabouts of old John Peter, but he had given them no information as to where his daughters were. He professed not to know. He was threatened unless they were produced by a certain day that he would be fined. The police were sent in search in every direction but the right one.

Suddenly in the night of January 11th, 1823, the sisters reappeared, Margaret, white, weak, and prostrate with sickness.

A fortnight after her return, Jacob Morf was again at Wildisbuch, as he said afterwards before court, "led thither because assured by Margaret that they were to ascend together to heaven without dying."

From this time forward, Margaretta's conduct went into another phase. Instead of resuming her pilgrim's staff and travelling round the country preaching the Gospel, she remained all day in one room with her sister Elizabeth, the shutters closed, reading the Bible, meditating, and praying, and writing letters to her "dear child" Jacob. The transgressions she had committed were crosses laid on her shoulder by God. "Oh! why," she wrote in one of her epistles, "did my Heavenly Father choose *that* from all eternity in His providence for me? There were thousands upon thousands of other crosses He might have laid on me. But He elected that one which would be heaviest for me, heavier than all the persecutions to which I am subjected by the devil, and which all but overthrow me. From the foundation of the world He has never so tried any of His saints as He has us. It gives joy to all the host of heaven when we suffer to the end." Again, "the greater the humiliation and shame we undergo, and have to endure from our enemies here below" – consider, brought on herself by her own scandalous conduct – "the more unspeakable our glorification in heaven."

In the evening, Margaretta would come downstairs and

receive visitors, and preach and prophesy to them. The entire house was given over to religious ecstasy that intensified as Easter approached. Every now and then the saint assembled the household and exhorted them to watch and pray, for a great trial of their faith was at hand. Once she asked them whether they were ready to lay down their lives for Christ. One day she said, in the spirit of prophecy, "Behold! I see the host of Satan drawing nearer and nearer to encompass me. He strives to overcome me. Let me alone that I may fight him." Then she flung her arms about and struck in the air with her open hands.

The idea grew in her that the world was in danger, that the devil was gaining supremacy over it, and would carry all souls into captivity once more, and that she – and almost only she – stood in his way and was protecting the world of men against his power.

For years she had exercised her authority, that grew with every year, over everyone in the house, and not a soul there had thought of resisting her, of evading the commands she laid on them, of questioning her word.

The house was closed against all but the very elect. The pastor of the parish, as "worldly," was not suffered to cross the threshold. At a tap, the door was opened, and those deemed worthy were admitted, and the door hastily barred and bolted behind them. Everything was viewed in a spiritual light. One evening Ursula Kündig and Margaretta Jäggli were sitting spinning near the stove. Suddenly there was a pop. A knot in the

pine-logs in the stove had exploded. But up sprang Jäggli, threw over her spinning-wheel, and shrieked out – "Hearken! Satan is banging at the window. He wants me. He will fetch me!" She fell convulsed on the floor, foaming at the mouth. Margaret, the saint, was summoned. The writhing girl shrieked out, "Pray for me! Save me! Fight for my soul!" and Margaretta at once began her spiritual exercises to ban the evil spirit from the afflicted and possessed servant maid. She beat with her hands in the air, cried out, "Depart, thou murderer of souls, accursed one, to hell-fire. Wilt thou try to rob me of my sheep that was lost? My sheep – whom I have pledged myself to save?"

One day, the maid had a specially bad epileptic fit. Around her bed stood old John Peter, Elizabeth and Susanna, Ursula Kündig, and John Moser, as well as the saint. Margaret was fighting with the Evil One with her fists and her cries, when John Moser fell into ecstasy and saw a vision. His account shall be given in his own words: "I saw Christ and Satan, and the latter held a book open before Christ and bade Him see how many claims he had on the soul of Jäggli. The book was scored diagonally with red lines on all the pages. I saw this distinctly, and therefore concluded that the account was cancelled. Then I saw all the saints in heaven snatch the book away, and tear it into a thousand pieces that fell down in a rain."

But Satan was not to be defeated and driven away so easily. He had made himself a nest, so Margaret stated, under the roof of the house, and only a desperate effort of faith and contest with

spiritual arms could expel him. For this Armageddon she bade all prepare. It is hardly necessary to add that it could not be fought without the presence of the dearly beloved Jacob. She wrote to him and invited him to come to the great and final struggle with the devil and all his host, and the obedient cobbler girded his loins and hastened to Wildisbuch, where he arrived on Saturday the 8th March, 1823.

On Monday, in answer, probably, to her summons, came also John Moser and his brother Conrad. Then also Margaret's own and only brother, Caspar.

Before proceeding to the climax of this story we may well pause to ask whether the heroine was in her senses or not; whether she set the avalanche in motion that overwhelmed herself and her house, with deliberation and consciousness as to the end to which she was aiming. The woman was no vulgar impostor; she deceived herself to her own destruction. In her senses, so far, she had set plainly before her the object to which she was about to hurry her dupes, but her reason and intelligence were smothered under her overweening self-esteem, that had grown like a great spiritual cancer, till it had sapped common-sense, and all natural affection, even the very instinct of self-preservation. Before her diseased eyes, the salvation of the whole world depended on herself. If she failed in her struggle with the evil principle, all mankind fell under the bondage of Satan; but she could not fail – she was all-powerful, exalted above every chance of failure in the battle, just as she was exalted above every

lapse in virtue, do what she might, which to the ordinary sense of mankind is immoral. Every mystic does not go as far as Margaret Peter, happily, but all take some strides along that road that leads to self-deification and *anomia*. In Margaret's conduct, in preparation for the final tragedy, there was a good deal of shrewd calculation; she led up to it by a long isolation and envelopment of herself and her doings in mystery; and she called her chosen disciples to witness it. Each stage in the drama was calculated to produce a certain effect, and she measured her influence over her creatures before she advanced another step. On Monday all were assembled and in expectation; Armageddon was to be fought, but when the battle would begin, and how it would be carried through, were unknown. Tuesday arrived; some of the household went about their daily work, the rest were gathered together in the room where Margaret was, lost in silent prayer. Every now and then the hush in the darkened room was broken by a wail of the saint: "I am sore straitened! I am in anguish! – but I refresh my soul at the prospect of the coming exaltation!" or, "My struggle with Satan is severe. He strives to retain the souls which I will wrest from his hold; some have been for two hundred, even three hundred years in his power."

One can imagine the scene – the effect produced on those assembled about the pale, striving ecstatic. All who were present afterwards testified that on the Tuesday and the following days they hardly left the room, hardly allowed themselves time to snatch a hasty meal, so full of expectation were they that

some great and awful event was about to take place. The holy enthusiasm was general, and if one or two, such as old Peter and his son, Caspar, were less magnetised than the rest, they were far removed from the thought of in any way contesting the will of the prophetess, or putting the smallest impediment in the way of her accomplishing what she desired.

When evening came, she ascended to an upper room, followed by the whole company, and there she declared, "Lo! I see Satan and his first-born floating in the air. They are dispersing their emissaries to all corners of the earth to summon their armies together." Elizabeth, somewhat tired of playing a passive part, added, "Yes – I see them also." Then the holy maid relapsed into her mysterious silence. After waiting another hour, all went to bed, seeing that nothing further would happen that night. Next day, Wednesday, she summoned the household into her bedroom; seated on her bed, she bade them all kneel down and pray to the Lord to strengthen her hands for the great contest. They continued striving in prayer till noon, and then, feeling hungry, all went downstairs to get some food. When they had stilled their appetites, Margaret was again seized by the spirit of prophecy, and declared, "The Lord has revealed to me what will happen in the latter days. The son of Napoleon" (that poor, feeble mortal the Duke of Reichstadt) "will appear before the world as anti-Christ, and will strive to bring the world over to his side. He will undergo a great conflict; but what will be the result is not shown me at the present moment; but I am promised

a spiritual token of this revelation." And the token followed. The dearly-loved Jacob, John Moser, and Ursula Kündig cried out that they saw two evil spirits, one in the form of Napoleon, pass into Margaret Jäggli, and the other, in that of his son, enter into Elizabeth. Whereupon Elizabeth, possessed by the spirit of that poor, little, sickly Duke of Reichstadt, began to march about the room and assume a haughty, military air. Thereupon the prophetess wrestled in spirit and overcame these devils and expelled them. Thereat Elizabeth gave up her military flourishes.

From daybreak on the following day the blessed Margaret "had again a desperate struggle," but without the assistance of the household, which was summoned to take their share in the battle in the afternoon only. She bade them follow her to the upper chamber, and a procession ascended the steep stairs, consisting of Margaret, followed by Elizabeth and Susanna Peter, Ursula Kündig and Jäggli, the old father and his son, Caspar, the serving-man, Heinrich Ernst, then Jacob Morf, John Moser, and the rear was brought up by the young Conrad. As soon as the prophetess had taken her seat on the bed, she declared, "Last night it was revealed to me that you are all of you to unite with me in the battle with the devil, lest he should conquer Christ. I must strive, lest your souls and those of so many, many others should be lost. Come, then! strive with me; but first of all, kneel down, lay your faces in the dust and pray." Thereupon, all prostrated themselves on the floor and prayed in silence. Presently the prophetess exclaimed from her throne on the bed, "The hour

is come in which the conflict must take place, so that Christ may gather together His Church, and contend with anti-Christ. After Christ has assembled His Church, 1260 days will elapse, and then anti-Christ will appear in human form, and with sweet and enticing words will strive to seduce the elect; but all true Christians will hold aloof." After a pause, she said solemnly, "In verity, anti-Christ is already among us."

Then with a leap she was off the bed, turning her eyes about, throwing up her hands, rushing about the room, striking the chairs and clothes-boxes with her fists, crying, "The scoundrel, the murderer of souls!" And, finding a hammer, she began to beat the wall with it.

The company looked on in breathless amaze. But the epileptic Jäggli went into convulsions, writhed on the ground, groaned, shrieked and wrung her hands. Then the holy Margaretta cried, "I see in spirit the old Napoleon gathering a mighty host, and marching against me. The contest will be terrible. You must wrestle unto blood. Go! fly! fetch me axes, clubs, whatever you can find. Bar the doors, curtain all the windows in the house, and close every shutter."

Whilst her commands were being fulfilled in all haste, and the required weapons were sought out, John Moser, who remained behind, saw the room "filled with a dazzling glory, such as no tongue could describe," and wept for joy. The excitement had already mounted to visionary ecstasy. It was five o'clock when the weapons were brought upstairs. The holy Margaretta was then

seated on her bed, wringing her hands, and crying to all to pray, "Help! help! all of you, that Christ may not be overcome in me. Strike, smite, cleave – everywhere, on all sides – the floor, the walls! It is the will of God! smite on till I bid you stay. Smite and lose your lives if need be."

It was a wonder that lives were not lost in the extraordinary scene that ensued; the room was full of men and women; there were ten of them armed with hatchets, crowbars, clubs, pick-axes, raining blows on walls and floors, on chairs, tables, cupboards and chests. This lasted for three hours. Margaret remained on the bed, encouraging the party to continue; when any arm flagged she singled out the weary person, and exhorted him, as he loved his soul, to fight more valiantly and utterly defeat and destroy the devil. "Strike him! cut him down! the old adversary! the arch-fiend! whoso loseth his life shall find it. Fear nothing! smite till your blood runs down as sweat. There he is in yonder corner; now at him," and Elizabeth served as her echo, "Smite! strike on! He is a murderer, he is the young Napoleon, the coming anti-Christ, who entered into me and almost destroyed me."

This lasted, as already said, for three hours. The room was full of dust. The warriors steamed with their exertions, and the sweat rolled off them. Never had men and women fought with greater enthusiasm. The battle of Don Quixote against the wind-mills was nothing to this. What blows and wounds the devil and the young Duke of Reichstadt obtained is unrecorded, but walls and

floor and furniture in the room were wrecked; indeed pitchfork and axe had broken down one wall of the house and exposed what went on inside to the eyes of a gaping crowd that had assembled without, amazed at the riot that went on in the house that was regarded as a very sanctuary of religion.

No sooner did the saint behold the faces of the crowd outside than she shrieked forth, "Behold them! the enemies of God! the host of Satan, coming on! But fear them not, we shall overcome."

At last the combatants were no longer able to raise their arms or maintain themselves on their feet. Then Margaret exclaimed, "The victory is won! follow me!" She led them downstairs into the common sitting-room, where close-drawn curtains and fastened shutters excluded the rude gaze of the profane. Here a rushlight was kindled, and by its light the battle continued with an alteration in the tactics.

In complete indifference to the mob that surrounded the house and clamoured at the door for admission, the saint ordered all to throw themselves on the ground and thank heaven for the victory they had won. Then, after a pause of more than an hour the same scene began again, and that it could recommence is evidence how much a man can do and endure, when possessed by a holy craze.

It was afterwards supposed that the whole pious community was drunk with schnaps; but with injustice. Their stomachs were empty; it was their brains that were drunk.

The holy Margaret, standing in the midst of the prostrate worshippers, now ordered them to beat themselves with their

fists on their heads and breasts, and they obeyed. Elizabeth yelled, "O, Margaret! Do thou strike me! Let me die for Christ."

Thereupon the holy one struck her sister repeatedly with her fists, so that Elizabeth cried out with pain, "Bear it!" exclaimed Margaret; "It is the wrath of God!"

The prima-donna of the whole comedy in the meanwhile looked well about her to see that none of the actors spared themselves. When she saw anyone slack in his self-chastisement, she called to him to redouble his blows. As the old man did not exhibit quite sufficient enthusiasm in self-torture, she cried, "Father, you do not beat yourself sufficiently!" and then began to batter him with her own fists. The ill-treated old man groaned under her blows, but she cheered him with, "I am only driving out the old Adam, father! It does not hurt you," and redoubled her pommelling of his head and back. Then out went the light.

All this while the crowd listened and passed remarks outside. No one would interfere, as it was no one's duty to interfere. Tidings of what was going on did, however, reach the amtmann of the parish, but he was an underling, and did not care to meddle without higher authority, so sent word to the amtmann of the district. This latter called to him his secretary, his constable and a policeman, and reached the house of the Peter's family at ten o'clock. In his report to the police at Zürich he says: "On the 13th about 10 o'clock at night I reached Wildisbuch, and then heard that the noise in the house of the Peter's family had ceased, that all lights were out, and that no one was stirring. I thought

it advisable not to disturb this tranquillity, so left orders that the house should be watched," and then he went into the house of a neighbour. At midnight, the policeman who had been left on guard came to announce that there was a renewal of disturbance in the house of the Peters. The amtmann went to the spot and heard muffled cries of "Save us! have mercy on us! Strike away! he is a murderer! spare him not!" and a trampling, and a sound of blows, "as though falling on soft bodies." The amtmann knocked at the window and ordered those within to admit him. As no attention was paid to his commands, he bade the constable break open the house door. This was done, but the sitting-room door was now found to be fast barred. The constable then ascended to the upper room and saw in what a condition of wreckage it was. He descended and informed the amtmann of what he had seen. Again the window was knocked at, and orders were repeated that the door should be opened. No notice was taken of this; whereupon the worthy magistrate broke in a pane of glass, and thrust a candle through the window into the room.

"I now went to the opened window, and observed four or five men standing with their backs against the door. Another lay as dead on the floor. At a little distance was a coil of human beings, men and women, lying in a heap on the floor, beside them a woman on her knees beating the rest, and crying out at every blow, 'Lord, have mercy!' Finally, near the stove was another similar group."

The amtmann now ordered the sitting-room door to be broken

open. Conrad Moser, who had offered to open to the magistrate, was rebuked by the saint, who cried out to him: "What, will you give admission to the devil?"

"The men," says the magistrate in his report, "offered resistance excited thereto by the women, who continued screaming. The holy Margaret especially distinguished herself, and was on her knees vigorously beating another woman who lay flat on the floor on her face. A second group consisted of a coil of two men and two women lying on the floor, the head of one woman on the body of a man, and the head of a man on that of a girl. The rest staggered to their feet one after another. I tried remonstrances, but they were unavailing in the hubbub. Then I ordered the old Peter to be removed from the room. Thereupon men and women flung themselves upon him, in spite of all our assurances that no harm would be done him. With difficulty we got him out of the room, with all the rest hanging on him, so that he was thrown on the floor, and the rest clinging to him tumbled over him in a heap. I repeated my remonstrance, and insisted on silence, but without avail. When old Peter prepared to answer, the holy Margaret stayed him with, 'Father, make no reply. Pray!' All then recommenced the uproar. Margaret cried out: 'Let us all die! I will die for Christ!' Others called out, 'Lord, save us!' and others, 'Have mercy on us!'"

The amtmann gave orders that the police were to divide the party and keep guard over some in the kitchen, and the rest in the sitting-room, through the night, and not to allow them to speak to

each other. The latter order was, however, more than the police could execute. In spite of all their efforts, Margaretta and the others continued to exhort and comfort one another through the night.

Next morning each was brought before the magistrate and subjected to examination. All were sullen, resolute, and convinced that they were doing God's will. As the holy Margaretta was led away from examination, she said to Ursula and the servant Heinrich, "The world opposes, but can not frustrate my work."

Her words came true, the world was too slow in its movements. The amtmann did not send in his report to the authorities of Zürich till the 16th, whereupon it was taken into consideration, and orders were transmitted to him that Margaret and Elizabeth were to be sent to an asylum. It was then too late.

After the investigation, the amtmann required the cobbler, John Morf, to march home to Illnau, John and Conrad Moser to return to their home, and Ursula Kündig to be sent back to her father. This command was not properly executed. Ursula remained, and though John Moser obeyed, he was prepared to return to the holy Margaret directly he was summoned.

As soon as the high priestess had come out of the room where she had been examined by the amtmann, she went to her own bed-chamber, where boards had been laid over the gaps between the rafters broken by the axes and picks, during the night. Elizabeth, Susanna, Ursula, and the maid sat or stood

round her and prayed.

At eight o'clock, the father and his son, Caspar, rejoined her, also her eldest sister, Barbara, arrived from Trüllikon. The servant, Heinrich, formed one more in the re-assembled community, and the ensuing night was passed in prayer and spiritual exercises. These were not conducted in quiet. To the exhortations of Margaret, both Elizabeth and the housemaid entreated that the devil might be beaten out of them. But now Ursula interfered, as the poor girl Elizabeth had been badly bruised in her bosom by the blows she had received on the preceding night. When the Saturday morning dawned, Margaret stood up on her bed and said, "I see the many souls seeking salvation through me. They must be assisted; would that a sword were in my hand that I might fight for them." A little later she said, with a sigh of relief, "The Lamb has conquered. Go to your work."

Tranquillity lasted for but a few hours. Magdalena, Moser's wife, had arrived, together with her husband and Conrad. The only one missing was the dearly beloved Jacob, who was far on his way homeward to Illnau and his hardly used wife, Regula.

At ten o'clock, the old father, his five daughters, his son, the two brothers, John and Conrad Moser, Ursula Kündig, the maid Jäggli, and the man Heinrich Ernst, twelve in all, were assembled in the upper room.

Margaret and Elizabeth sat side by side on the bed, the latter half stupified, looking fixedly before her, Margaret, however,

in a condition of violent nervous surrexitation. Many of the weapons used in wrecking the furniture lay about; among these were the large hammer, and an iron wedge used for splitting wood. All there assembled felt that something extraordinary was about to happen. They had everyone passed the line that divides healthy common-sense from mania.

Margaretta now solemnly announced, "I have given a pledge for many souls that Satan may not have them. Among these is the soul of my brother Caspar. But I cannot conquer in the strife for him without the shedding of blood." Thereupon she bade all present recommence beating themselves with their fists, so as to expel the devil, and they executed her orders with wildest fanaticism.

The holy maid now laid hold of the iron wedge, drew her brother Caspar to her, and said, "Behold, the Evil One is striving to possess thy soul!" and thereupon she began to strike him on head and breast with the wedge. Caspar staggered back; she pursued him, striking him and cutting his head open, so that he was covered with blood. As he afterwards declared, he had not the smallest thought of resistance; the power to oppose her seemed to be taken from him. At length, half stunned, he fell to the ground, and was carried to his bed by his father and the maid Jäggli. The old man no more returned upstairs, consequently he was not present at the terrible scene that ensued. But he took no steps to prevent it. Not only so, but he warded off all interruption from without. Whilst he was below, someone knocked at the

door. At that moment Susanna was in the room with him, and he bade her inquire who was without. The man gave his name as Elias Vogal, a mason, and asked leave to come in. Old Peter refused, as he said the surgeon was within. Elias endeavoured to push his way in but was resisted, and the door barred against him. Vogel went away, and meeting a policeman told him what had taken place, and added that he had noticed blood-stains on the sleeves of both old Peter and Susanna. The policeman, thinking that Peter's lie was truth, and that the surgeon was really in the house, and had been bleeding the half-crazy people there, took no further notice of what he had heard, and went his way.

Meanwhile, in the upper room the comedy had been changed into a ghastly tragedy. As soon as the wounded Caspar had been removed, the three sisters, Barbara, Magdalena, and Susanna left the room, the two latter, however, only for a short while. Then the holy Margaret said to those who remained with her, "To-day is a day of great events. The contest has been long and must now be decided. Blood must flow. I see the spirit of my mother calling to me to offer up my life." After a pause she said, "And you – all – are you ready to give your lives?" They all responded eagerly that they were. Then said Margaret, "No, no; I see you will not readily die. But I – I must die."

Thereupon Elizabeth exclaimed, "I will gladly die for the saving of the souls of my brother and father. Strike me dead, strike me dead!" Then she threw herself on the bed and began to batter her head with a wooden mallet.

"It has been revealed to me," said Margaret, "that Elizabeth will sacrifice herself." Then taking up the iron hammer, she struck her sister on the head. At once a spiritual fury seized on all the elect souls, and seizing weapons they began to beat the poor girl to death. Margaret in her mania struck at random about her, and wounded both John Moser and Ursula Kündig. Then she suddenly caught the latter by the wrist and bade her kill Elizabeth with the iron wedge. Ursula shrank back, "I cannot! I love her too dearly!" "You must," screamed the saint; "it is ordained." "I am ready to die" moaned Elizabeth. "I cannot! I cannot!" cried Ursula. "You must," shouted Margaret. "I will raise my sister again, and I also will rise again after three days. May God strengthen your arm."

As though a demoniacal influence flowed out of the holy maid, and maddened those about her, all were again seized with frenzy. John Moser snatched the hammer out of her hand, and smote the prostrate girl with it again, and yet again, on head and bosom and shoulders. Susanna brought down a crow-bar across her body, the servant-man Heinrich belaboured her with a fragment of the floor planking, and Ursula, swept away by the current, beat in her skull with the wedge. Throughout the turmoil, the holy maid yelled: "God strengthen your arms! Ursula, strike home! Die for Christ, Elizabeth!" The last words heard from the martyred girl were an exclamation of resignation to the will of God, as expressed by her sister.

One would have supposed that when the life was thus battered

out of the unfortunate victim, the murderers would have come to their senses and been filled with terror and remorse. But it was not so. Margaret sat beside the body of her murdered sister, the blaze of spiritual ecstasy in her eyes, the blood-stained hammer in her right hand, terrible in her inflexible determination, and in the demoniacal energy which was to possess her to the last breath she drew. Her bosom heaved, her body quivered, but her voice was firm and her tone authoritative, as she said, "More blood must flow. I have pledged myself for the saving of many souls. I must die now. You must crucify me." John Moser and Ursula, shivering with horror, entreated, "O do not demand that of us." She replied, "It is better that I should die than that thousands of souls should perish."

So saying she struck herself with the hammer on the left temple. Then she held out the weapon to John Moser, and ordered him and Ursula to batter her with it. Both hesitated for a moment.

"What!" cried Margaret turning to her favourite disciple, "will you not do this? Strike and may God brace your arm!" Moser and Ursula now struck her with the hammer, but not so as to stun her.

"And now," said she with raised voice, "crucify me! You, Ursula, must do the deed."

"I cannot! I cannot!" sobbed the wretched girl.

"What! will you withdraw your hand from the work of God, now the hour approaches? You will be responsible for all the souls that will be lost, unless you fulfil what I have appointed

you to do."

"But O! not I – !" pleaded Ursula.

"Yes – you. If the police authorities had executed me, it would not have fallen to you to do this, but now it is for you to accomplish the work. Go, Susan, and fetch nails, and the rest of you make ready the cross."

In the meantime, Heinrich, the man-servant, frightened at what had taken place, and not wishing to have anything more to do with the horrible scene in the upper chamber, had gone quietly down into the wood-house, and was making stakes for the vines. There Susanna found him, and asked him for nails, telling him for what they were designed. He composedly picked her out nails of suitable length, and then resumed his work of making vine stakes. Susanna re-ascended to the upper room, and found Margaret extended on the bed beside the body of Elizabeth, with the arms, breast, and feet resting on blocks of wood, arranged, whilst Susanna was absent, by John Moser and Ursula, under her in the fashion of a cross.

Then began the horrible act of crucifixion, which is only conceivable as an outburst of religious mania, depriving all who took part in it of every feeling of humanity, and degrading them to the level of beasts of prey. At the subsequent trial, both Ursula and John Moser described their condition as one of spiritual intoxication.

The hands and feet of the victim were nailed to the blocks of wood. Then Ursula's head swam, and she drew back. Again

Margaret called her to continue her horrible work. "Go on! go on! God strengthen your arm. I will raise Elizabeth from the dead, and rise myself in three days." Nails were driven through both elbows and also through the breasts of Margaret; not for one moment did the victim express pain, nor did her courage fail her. No Indian at the stake endured the cruel ingenuity of his tormentors with more stoicism than did this young woman bear the martyrdom she had invoked for herself. She impressed her murderers with the idea that she was endowed with supernatural strength. It could not be otherwise, for what she endured was beyond the measure of human strength. That in the place of human endurance she was possessed with the Berserker strength of the *furor religiosus*, was what these ignorant peasants could not possibly know. Conrad Moser could barely support himself from fainting, sick and horror-struck at the scene. He exclaimed, "Is not this enough?" His brother, John, standing at the foot of the bed, looked into space with glassy eyes. Ursula, bathed in tears, was bowed over the victim. Magdalena Moser had taken no active part in the crucifixion; she remained the whole time, weeping, leaning against a chest.

The dying woman smiled. "I feel no pain. Be yourselves strong," she whispered. "Now, drive a nail or a knife through my heart."

Ursula endeavoured to do as bidden, but her hand shook and the knife was bent. "Beat in my skull!" this was the last word spoken by Margaret. In their madness Conrad Moser and

Ursula Kündig obeyed, one with the crowbar, the other with the hammer.

It was noon when the sacrifice was accomplished – dinner-time. Accordingly, all descended to the sitting-room, where the meal that Margaret Jäggli had been in the meantime preparing was served and eaten.

They had scarce finished before a policeman entered with a paper for old Peter to sign, in which he made himself answerable to produce his daughters before the magistrates when and where required. He signed it with composure, "I declare that I will cause my daughters, if in good health, to appear before the Upper Amtsmann in Andelfingen when so required." Then the policeman departed without a suspicion that the two girls were lying dead in the room above. On Sunday the 16th, the servant Heinrich was sent on horseback to Illnau to summon Jacob Morf to come to Wildisbuch and witness a great miracle. Jacob came there with Heinrich, but was not told the circumstances of the crucifixion till he reached the house. When he heard what had happened, he was frightened almost out of his few wits, and when taken upstairs to see the bodies, he fainted away. Nothing – no representations would induce him to remain for the miraculous resurrection, and he hastened back to Illnau, where he took to his bed. In his alarm and horror he sent for the pastor, and told him what he had seen.

But the rest of the holy community remained stead-fast in their faith. On the night of Sunday before Monday morning

broke, Ursula Kündig and the servant man Heinrich went upstairs with pincers and drew out the nails that transfixed Margaretta. When asked their reason for so doing, at the subsequent trial, they said that they supposed this would facilitate Margaretta's resurrection. *Sanctus furor* had made way for *sancta simplicitas*.

The night of Monday to Tuesday was spent in prayer and Scripture-reading in the upper chamber, and eager expectation of the promised miracle, which never took place. The catastrophe could no longer be concealed. Something must be done. On Tuesday, old John Peter pulled on his jacket and walked to Trüllikon to inform the pastor that his daughter Elizabeth had died on the Saturday at 10 a.m., and his daughter Margaretta at noon of the same day.

We need say little more. On Dec. 3rd, 1823, the trial of all incriminated in this frightful tragedy took place at Zürich and sentence was pronounced on the following day. Ursula Kündig was sentenced to sixteen years' imprisonment, Conrad Moser and John Peter to eight years, Susanna Peter and John Moser to six years, Heinrich Ernst to four years, Jacob Morf to three, Margaret Jäggli to two years, Barbara Baumann and Casper Peter to one year, and Magdalena Moser to six months with hard labour. The house at Wildisbuch was ordered to be levelled with the dust, the plough drawn over the foundation, and that no house should again be erected on the spot.

Before the destruction, however, a pilgrimage of Pietists and believers in Margaret Peter had visited the scene of her

death, and many had been the exclamations of admiration at her conduct. "Oh, that it had been I who had died!" "Oh, how many souls must she have delivered!" and the like. *Magna est stultitia et prævalebit.*

At a time like the present, when there is a wave of warm, mystic fever sweeping over the country, and carrying away with it thousands of ignorant and impetuous souls, it is well that the story – repulsive though it be – should be brought into notice, as a warning of what this spiritual excitement may lead to – not, indeed, again, maybe, into bloodshed. It is far more likely to lead to, as it has persistently, in every similar outbreak, into moral disorders, the record of which, in the case of Margaretta Peter, we have passed over almost without a word.

Authority: Die Gekreuzigte von Wildisbuch, von J. Scherr, 2nd Edit., St. Gall. 1867. Scherr visited the spot, collected information from eye-witnesses, and made copious extracts from the records of the trial in the Zürich archives, where they are contained in Vol. 166, folio 1044, under the heading: "Akten betreffened die Gräuel – Scenen in Wildisbuch."

A Northern Raphael

Here and there in the galleries of North Germany and Russia may be seen paintings of delicacy and purity, delicacy of colour and purity of design, the author of which was Gerhard von Kügelgen. The majority of his paintings are in private hands; but an Apollo, holding the dying Hyacinthus in his arms, is in the possession of the German Emperor; Moses on Horeb is in the gallery of the Academy of Fine Arts at Dresden; a St. Cæcilia and an Adonis, painted in 1794 and 1795, were purchased by the Earl of Bristol; a Holy Family is in the Gallery at Cassel; and some of the sacred subjects have found their way into churches.

In 1772, the wife of Franz Kügelgen, a merchant of Bacharach on the Rhine, presented her husband with twin sons, the elder of whom by fifteen minutes is the subject of this notice. His brother was named Karl. Their resemblance was so great that even their mother found a difficulty in their early childhood in distinguishing one from the other.

Bacharach was in the Electorate of Cologne, and when the Archbishop-Elector, Maximilian Franz, learned that the twins were fond of art, in 1791 he very liberally gave them a handsome sum of money to enable them to visit Rome and there prosecute their studies.

Gerhard was at once fascinated by the statuary in the Vatican, and by the pictures of Raphael. The ambition of his life

thenceforward was to combine the beauty of modelling of the human form that he saw in the Græco-Roman statues with the beauty of colour that he recognised in Raphael's canvases. Karl, on the other hand, devoted himself to landscapes.

In 1795 the brothers separated, Gerhard that he might visit Munich. Thence, in the autumn, he went to Riga with a friend, and there he remained rather over two years, and painted and disposed of some fifty-four pictures. Then he painted in St. Petersburg and Revel, and finally settled into married life and regular work at Dresden in 1806. There he became a general favourite, not only on account of his artistic genius, but also because of the fascination of his modest and genial manner. He was honoured by the Court, and respected by everyone for his virtues. Orders flowed in on him, and his paintings commanded good prices. The king of Saxony ennobled him, that is to say, raised him out of the bürger-stand, by giving him the privilege of writing a *Von* before his patronymic.

Having received an order from Riga for a large altar picture, he bought a vineyard on the banks of the Elbe, commanding a charming prospect of the river and the distant blue Bohemian mountains. Here he resolved to erect a country house for the summer, with a large studio lighted from the north. The construction of this residence was to him a great pleasure and occupation. In November, 1819, he wrote to his brother, "My house shall be to us a veritable fairy palace, in which to dwell till the time comes, when through a little, narrow and dark door we

pass through into that great habitation of the Heavenly Father in which are many mansions, and where our whole family will be re-united. Should it please God to call me away, then Lily (his wife) will find this an agreeable dower-house, in which she can supervise the education of the children, as the distance from the town is only an hour's walk."

The words were written, perhaps, without much thought, but they foreshadowed a terrible catastrophe. Kügelgen would pass, before his fairy palace was ready to receive him, through that little, narrow door into the heavenly mansions.

The holy week of 1820 found him in a condition of singularly deep religious emotion. He was a Catholic, but had, nevertheless, allowed his son to be confirmed by a Protestant pastor. The ceremony had greatly affected him, and he said to a friend, who was struck at the intensity of his feeling, "I know I shall never be as happy again till I reach Heaven."

On March 27th, on the very day of the confirmation, he went in the afternoon a walk by himself to his vineyard, to look at his buildings. He invited one of his pupils to accompany him, but the young man had some engagement and declined.

At 5 p.m. he was at the new house, where he paid the workmen, gave some instructions, and pointed out where he would do some planting, so as to enchance the picturesqueness of the spot. At some time between six and seven he left, to walk back to Dresden, along the road from Bautzen.

Every one who has been at the Saxon capital knows that road.

The right bank of the Elbe above Dresden rises in picturesque heights covered with gardens and vineyards, from the river, and about a mile from the bridge is the Linkes Bad, with its pleasant gardens, theatre, music and baths. That road is one of the most charming, and, therefore, the most frequented outside the capital. On the evening in question the Easter moon was shining.

Kügelgen did not return home. His wife sent his son, the just confirmed boy, aged 17 years, to the new house, to inquire for her husband. The boy learned there that he had left some hours before. He returned home, and found that still his father had not come in. The police were communicated with, and the night was spent in inquiries and search, but all in vain. On the following morning, at 9 a.m., as the boy was traversing the same road, along with a gensdarme, he deemed it well to explore a footpath beside the river, which was overflown by the Elbe, and there, finally, amongst some reeds they discovered the dead body of the artist, stripped of his clothes to his shirt and drawers, lying on his face.

Gerhard von Kügelgen had been murdered. His features were cut and bruised, his left temple and jaw were broken. Footsteps, as of two persons, were traceable through the river mud and across a field to the highway. Apparently the artist had been murdered on the road, then carried or dragged to the path, stripped there, and then cast among the rushes. About twenty-four paces from where he lay, between him and the highway, his cap was found.

The excitement, the alarm, aroused in Dresden was immense.

Not only was Kügelgen universally respected, but everyone was in dismay at the thought that his own safety was jeopardised, if a murder such as this could be perpetrated on the open road, within a few paces of the gates. Indeed, the place where the crime was committed was but a hundred strides from the Linkes Bad, one of the most popular resorts of the Dresdeners.

It was now remembered that only a few months before, near the same spot, another murder had been committed, that had remained undiscovered. In that case the victim had been a poor carpenter's apprentice.

On the same day as the body of Kügelgen was found, the Government offered a sum equal to £150 for the discovery of the murderer. A little later, some children found among the rubbish, outside the Black Gate of the Dresdener Vorstadt, a blue cloth cloak, folded up and buried under some stones. It was recognised as having belonged to Kügelgen. Moreover, in the pocket was the little "Thomas-à-Kempis" he always carried about with him.

It was concluded that the murderer had not ventured to bring all the clothing of Kügelgen into the town, through the gate, and had, therefore, hidden portions in places whence he could remove them one by one, unobserved. The murderer was, undoubtedly, an inhabitant of the city.

From March 29th to April 4th the police remained without any clue, although a description of the garments worn by the murdered man, and of his watch, was posted up at every corner, and sent round to the nearest towns and villages.

The workmen who had been engaged on Kügelgen's house were brought before the police. They had left after his departure, and had received money from him; but they were discharged, as there was no evidence against them.

As no light seemed to fall on this mysterious case, the police looked up the circumstances of the previous murder. On December 29th, 1819, a carrier on the highroad had found a body on the way. It was ascertained to be that of a carpenter's apprentice, named Winter. His skull had been broken in. Not a trace of the murderer was found; not even footprints had been observed. However, it was learned that the wife of a labourer had been attacked almost at the same spot, on the 28th December, by a man wearing a military cap and cloak; and she had only escaped him by the approach of a carriage, the sound of the wheels having alarmed him, and induced him to fly. He had fled in the direction of the Black Gate and the barracks.

The anxiety of the Dresdeners seemed justified. There was some murderous ruffian inhabiting the Vorstadt, who hovered about the gates, waylaying, not wealthy men only, but poor charwomen and apprentices.

The military cloak and cap, the direction taken by the assailant in his flight, gave a sort of clue – and the police suspected that the murderer must be sought among the soldiers.

On April 4th two Jewish pawnbrokers appeared before the police, and handed over a silver watch which had been left with them at 9 a.m. on the 20th March – that is to say on the morning

after the murder of Kügelgen – and which agreed with the advertised description of the artist's lost watch. It was identified at once. The man who had pawned it, the Jews said, wore the uniform of an artillery soldier.

At the request of the civil authorities, the military officers held an inquisition in the barracks. All the artillery soldiers were made to pass before the Jew brokers, but they were unable to identify the man who had deposited the watch with them. Somewhat later in the day one of these Jews, as he was going through the street, saw a man in civil dress, whom he thought he recognised as the fellow who had given him the watch. He went up to him at once and spoke about the watch. The man at first acknowledged that he had pawned one, then denied, and threatened the Jew when he persevered in clinging to him. A gendarme came up, and hearing what the controversy was about, arrested the man, who gave his name as Fischer, a gunner.

Fischer was at once examined, and he doggedly refused to allow that he had given up a watch to the Jew.

Suspicion against him was deepened by his declaring that he had heard nothing of the murder – a matter of general talk in Dresden – and that he had not seen the notices with the offer of reward for the discovery of the murderer. On the following day, April 5th, however, he admitted having pawned the watch, which he pretended to have found outside the Black Gate. A few hours later he withdrew this confession, saying that he was so bewildered with the questions put to him, and so alarmed at his

arrest, that he did not well know what he said. It was observed that Fischer was a man of very low intellectual power.

The same day he was invested in his uniform, and presented before the pawnbrokers. Both unanimously declared that he was *not* the man who had entered their shop and deposited the watch with them. They both declared that though Fischer had the same height and general build as the man in question, and the same fair hair, yet that the face was different.

With this, the case against Fischer broke down; nevertheless, though he had been handed over by the military authorities to the civil power, he remained under arrest. The public was convinced of his guilt, and the police hoped by keeping him in prison to draw from him later some information which might prove serviceable.

And, in fact, after he had been a fortnight under arrest, he volunteered a statement. He was conducted at once before the magistrate, and confessed that he had murdered Von Kügelgen. He, however, stoutly denied having laid hands on the carpenter Winter. Nevertheless, on the way back to his cell he told his gaoler that he had committed this murder as well. Next day he was again brought before the magistrate, and confessed to both murders. He was taken to the spots where the two corpses had been found, and there he renewed his confession, though without entering into any details.

But on the next morning, April 21, he begged to be again heard, and he then asserted that his former confessions were

false. He had confessed merely because he was weary of his imprisonment and the poor food he was given, and decided to die. When spoken to by the magistrates seriously, and remonstrated with for his contradictions, he cried out that he was innocent. Let them torture him as much as they pleased, he wished to die.

But hardly was he back in his prison than he told the gaoler that it was true that he was the murderer of both Kügelgen and Winter. Again he confessed before the magistrate, and again, on the 27th, withdrew his confession and protested his innocence.

On the 21st April a new element in the case came to light, that perplexed the question not a little.

A Jewish pawnbroker, Löbel Graff, announced that on February 3, 1820, he had received from the gunner Kaltofen, a green coat, and on the 4th April a dark-blue cloth coat, stained with spots of oil, also a pair of cloth trousers. As both coats seemed to him suspicious, and to resemble those described in the advertisements, he had questioned Kaltofen about them, but had received equivocal answers, and Kaltofen at last admitted that he had bought them from the gunner Fischer.

John Gottfried Kaltofen was a young man of 24 years, servant to one of the officers, and therefore did not live in the barracks. He was now taken up. His manner and appearance were in his favour. He was frank, and at once admitted that he had disposed of the two coats to Graff, and that he had bought them of Fischer. On confrontation with the latter he repeated what he had said.

Fischer fell into confusion, denied all knowledge of Kaltofen, protested his innocence, and denied the sale of the coats, one of which had in the meantime been identified as having belonged to Winter, and the other to Kügelgen.

On April 27th a search was made in the lodgings of Kaltofen, and three keys were found there, hidden away, and these proved to have belonged to Kügelgen. At first Kaltofen declared that he knew nothing of these keys, but afterwards said that he remembered on consideration that he had found them in the pocket of the blue coat he had purchased from Fischer, and had put them away before disposing of the coat, and had given them no further thought. Not many minutes after Fischer had been sent back to prison, he begged to be brought before the magistrate again, and now admitted that it was quite true that he had sold both coats to Kaltofen.

Whilst this confession was being taken down, however, he again hesitated, broke down, and denied having sold them to Kaltofen, or any one else. "I can't say anything more," he cried out; "my head is dazed."

By this statement he remained, protesting his innocence, and he declared that he had only confessed his guilt because he was afraid of ill-treatment in the prison if he continued to assert his innocence. It must be remembered that the gaolers were as convinced of his guilt as were the public of Dresden; and it is noticeable that under pressure from them Fischer always acknowledged his guilt; whereas, when before the magistrates

he was ready to proclaim that he was innocent. At this time it was part of the duty of a gaoler, or was supposed to be such, to use every possible effort to bring a prisoner to confession. And now, on April 27th, a third gunner appeared on the scene. His name was Kiessling, and he asked the magistrate to take down his statement, which was to the effect that Kaltofen, who had been discharged, had admitted to him that he had murdered Kügelgen with a cudgel, and that he had still got some of his garments hidden in his lodgings. But – so said Kiessling – Kaltofen had jauntily said he would lay it all on Fischer. Kiessling, moreover, produced a pair of boots, that he said Kaltofen had left with him to be re-soled, as he was regimental shoemaker. And these boots were at once recognised as having been those worn by Kügelgen when he was murdered.

Kaltofen was at once re-arrested, and brought into confrontation with Kiessling. He retained his composure, and said that it was quite true that he had given a pair of boots to Kiessling to re-sole, but they were a pair that he had bought in the market. But, in the meantime, another investigation of his lodgings had been made, and a number of articles found that had certainly belonged to the murdered men, Winter and Kügelgen. They were ranged on the table, together with the pair of boots confided to Kiessling, and Kaltofen was shown them. Hitherto, the young man had displayed phlegmatic composure, and an openness of manner that had impressed all who saw him in his favour. His intelligence, had, moreover, contrasted favourably

with that of Fischer. But the sight of all these articles, produced before him, staggered Kaltofen, and, losing his presence of mind, he turned in a fury upon his comrade, the shoemaker, and swore at him for having betrayed his confidence. Only after he had poured forth a torrent of abuse, could the magistrate bring him to say anything about the charge, and then – still hot and panting from his onslaught on Kiessling – he admitted that he, not Fischer, was the murderer in both cases. Fischer, he said, was wholly innocent, not only of participation in, but of knowledge of the crimes. The summary of his confession, oft repeated and never withdrawn, was as follows: – Being in need of money, he had gone outside the town thrice in one week, at the end of December, 1819, with the intent of murdering and robbing the first person he could attack with security. For this purpose, he had provided himself with a cudgel under his cloak. On the 29th December he selected Winter as his first victim. He allowed him to pass, then stole after him, and suddenly dealt him a blow on the back of his head, before the young man turned to see who was following him. Winter dropped, whereupon he, Kaltofen, had struck him twice again on the head. Then he divested his victim of collar, coat, hat, kerchief, watch, and a little money – not more than four shillings in English coins, and a few tools. He was engaged on pulling off his boots and trousers, when he was alarmed by hearing the tramp of horses and the sound of wheels, and he ran off across the fields with his spoil. He got Kiessling to dispose of the hat for him, the other articles

he himself sold to Jews. Whether it was he also who assaulted the poor woman we are not informed. In like manner Kaltofen proceeded with Kügelgen. He was again in want of money. He had been gambling, and had lost what little he had. On the Monday in Holy Week, 1820, he took his cudgel again and went out along the Bautzen Road. The moon shone brightly, and he met a gentleman walking slowly towards Dresden, in a blue cloak. He allowed him to pass, then followed him. As a woman was walking in the same direction, but at a quicker rate, he delayed his purpose till she had disappeared behind the first houses of the suburb. Then he hastened on, walking lightly, and springing up behind Kügelgen, struck him on the right temple with his cudgel from behind. Kügelgen fell without uttering a cry. Kaltofen at once seized him by the collar and dragged him across a field to the edge of the river. There he dealt him several additional blows, and then proceeded to strip him. Whilst thus engaged, he remembered that the dead man had dropped his walking-stick on the high road when first struck. Kaltofen at once desisted from what he was about, to return to the road and recover the walking-stick. On coming back to his victim, he thought there was still life in him; Kügelgen was moving and endeavouring to rise. Whereupon, with his cudgel, Kaltofen repeatedly struck him, till all signs of life disappeared. He now completed his work of spoliation, pulled off the boots, untied the neckerchief, and ransacked the pockets. He found in addition to the watch the sum of about half-a-guinea. He then stole away among the rushes till

he reached the Linkes Bad, where he returned to the main road. He concealed the cloak at the Black Gate, but carried the rest of his plunder to his lodgings.

His confession was confirmed by several circumstances. Kiessling was again required to repeat what he had heard from Kaltofen, and the story as told by him agreed exactly with that now confessed by the murderer. Kiessling added that Kaltofen had told him he was puzzled to account for Fischer's self-examination, as he knew that the man had nothing to do with the murder. A third examination of Kaltofen's lodgings resulted in the discovery of all the rest of the murdered man's effects. Moreover, when Kaltofen was confronted with the two Jews who had taken the silver watch on the 24th, they immediately recognised him as the man who had disposed of it to them.

Finally, he confessed to having been associated with Kiessling in two robberies, one of which was a burglarious attack on his own master.

The case was made out clearly enough against Kaltofen, and it seemed equally clear that Fischer was innocent. Moreover, from the 24th April onwards, Fischer never swerved from his protestation of complete innocence. When questioned why he had confessed himself guilty, he said that he had been pressed to do so by the gaoler, who had several times fastened him for a whole night into the stocks, and had threatened him with severer measures unless he admitted his guilt. The gaoler admitted having so treated Fischer once, but Fischer insisted that he had

been thus tortured on two consecutive nights.

It was ascertained that Fischer had not only known about the murder of Kügelgen, but had attended his funeral, and yet he had pretended entire, or almost entire, ignorance when first arrested. When asked to explain this, he replied that he was so frightened that he took refuge in lies. That he was a dull-minded, extremely ignorant man, was obvious to the judges and to all who had to do with him; he was aged thirty, and had spent thirteen years in the army, had conducted himself well, but had never been trusted with any important duties on account of his stupidity. He had a dull eye, and a heavy countenance. Kaltofen, on the other hand, was a good-looking, well-built young fellow, of twenty-four, with a bright, intelligent face; his education was above what was ordinary in his class. It was precisely this that had excited in him vanity, and craving for pleasures and amusements which he could not afford. His obliging manners, his trimness, and cheerfulness, had made him a favourite with the officers.

As already intimated, he was fond of play, and it was this that had induced him to commit his murders. He admitted that he had felt little or no compunction, and he said frankly that it was as well for society that he was taken, otherwise the death of Kügelgen would have been followed by others. He spoke of the crimes he had committed with openness and indifference, and maintained this condition of callousness to the end. It seems to have been customary on several occasions for the Lutheran pastors who attended the last hours of criminals to publish their

opinions as to the manner in which they prepared for death, and their ideas as to the motives for the crimes committed, an eminently indecent proceeding to our notions. In this case, the chaplain who attended on Kaltofen rushed into the priest after the execution. He said, "Play may have occasioned that want of feeling which will commit the most atrocious crime, without compunction, for the gratification of a temporary requirement. Kaltofen, without being rude and rough towards his fellows, but on the contrary obliging and courteous, came to regard them with brutal indifference." Only twice did he feel any twinge of conscience, he said, once before his first murder, and again at the funeral of his second victim, which he attended. The criminal was now known, had confessed, and had confessed that he had no accomplice. Moreover, he declared that Fischer was wholly innocent. Not a single particle of evidence was forthcoming to incriminate Fischer, apart from his own retracted confessions. Nevertheless he was not liberated.

The police could not believe that Kaltofen had been without an accomplice. There were stabs in the face and body of Kügelgen, and Kaltofen had professed to have used no other weapon than a cudgel. The murderer said that he had dragged the body over the field to the rushes, and it was agreed that there must have been evidence of this dragging. Some witnesses had, indeed, said they had seen such, but others protested that there were footprints as of two men. This, however, could be explained by Kaltofen's admission that he had gone back to the road for the walking-stick.

Then, again, Fischer, when interrogated, had given particulars which agreed with the circumstances in a remarkable manner. He was asked to explain this. "Well," said he, "he had heard a good deal of talk about the murders, and he was miserable at the thought of spending long years in prison, and so had confessed." When asked how he knew the particulars of the murder of Winter, he said that he had been helped to it by the gaoler. He had said first, "I went to his left side" – whereupon the gaoler had said, "Surely you are wrong, it was on the right," thereat Fischer had corrected himself and said, "Yes, of course – on the right."

The case was now ready for final sentence, and for this purpose all the depositions were forwarded on September 12th to the Judicial Court at Leipzig. But, before judgment was pronounced, the depositions were hastily sent for back to Dresden – for, in the meantime, the case had passed into a new phase. On October 5th, the gaoler – the same man who had brought about the confession of Fischer – announced that Kaltofen had confided to him that Fischer really had been his accomplice in both the murders. Kaltofen at once was summoned before the magistrate, and he calmly, and with emphasis, declared that Fischer had assisted him on both occasions, and that he had not allowed this before, because he and Fischer had sworn that neither would betray the other. Fischer had never mentioned his name, and he had accordingly done his utmost to exculpate Fischer.

According to his account, he and Fischer had been walking

together on the morning of March 26th, between 9 and 10, when they planned a murder together for the following day. However, there was rebutting evidence to the effect that on the morning in question Fischer had been on guard, at the hour named, before the powder magazine; he had not been released till noon. Other statements of Kaltofen proved to be equally untrue.

What could have induced Kaltofen to deliberately charge a comrade in arms with participation in the crime, if he were guiltless? There was no apparent motive. He could gain no reprieve by it. It did not greatly diminish his own guilt.

It was necessary to enter into as close investigation as was possible into the whereabouts of Fischer at the time of the two murders. It was not found possible to determine where he was at the time when Winter was killed, but some of his comrades swore that on March 27th he had been present at the roll-call at 6 p.m., and had come into barrack before the second roll-call at half-past eight. The murder of Kügelgen had taken place at eight o'clock, and the distance between the barrack and the spot where it had been committed was 3487 paces, which would take a man about 25 minutes to traverse. If, as his comrades asserted, Fischer had come in shortly after eight, then it was quite impossible that he could have been present when Kügelgen was murdered; but not great reliance can be placed on the testimony of soldiers as to the hour at which a comrade came into barrack just seven months before on a given day.

The case was perplexing. The counsel for Fischer – his name

was Eisenstück – took a bold line of defence. He charged the gaoler with having manipulated Kaltofen, as he had Fischer. This gaoler's self-esteem was wounded by the discovery that Kaltofen and not Fischer was the murderer, and his credit was damaged by the proceedings which showed that he had goaded an unhappy man, confided to his care, into charging himself with a crime he had never committed. Eisenstück asserted that this new charge was fabricated in the prison by the gaoler in concert with Kaltofen for his own justification. But, whatever may be thought of the character and conduct of this turnkey, it is difficult to understand how he could prevail on a cool-headed man like Kaltofen thus to take on himself the additional guilt of perjury, and such perjury as risked the life of an innocent man. Kaltofen never withdrew this assertion that Fischer was an accomplice. He persisted in it to his last breath.

The depositions were again sent to the faculty at Leipzig, on Dec. 18th, to give judgment on the following points.

1. The examination of the body of Kügelgen had revealed stabs made with a sharp, two-edged instrument, as well as blows dealt by a blunt weapon. Kaltofen would admit that he had used no other instrument than a cudgel.

2. It would have been a difficult matter for one man to drag a dead body from the road to the bed of rushes, without leaving unmistakable traces on the field traversed; and such were not, for certain, found. It was therefore more probable that the dead man had been carried by two persons to the

place where found.

It must be observed that crowds poured out of Dresden to see the place where the body lay as soon as it was known that Kügelgen had been discovered, and consequently no accurate and early examination of tracks across the field had been made.

3. That it would have been difficult for Kaltofen alone to strip the body. This may be doubted; it would be difficult possibly, but not impossible, whilst the body was flexible.

4. A witness had said that she had met two men outside the Black Gate on the evening of the 27th March, of whom one was wrapped in a cloak and seemed to be carrying something under it. We should much like to know when the woman gave this evidence. Unfortunately, that is what is not told us.

5. Kaltofen, in a letter to his parents, had stated that he had an accomplice, but had not named him.

These were the points that made it appear that Kaltofen had an accomplice. An accomplice in some of his crimes he had – Kiessling.

There were other points that made it appear that Fischer had assisted him in the murders.

6. Fischer's denial that he knew anything about the murder of Kügelgen when he was arrested, whereas it was established that he had attended the funeral of the murdered man.

7. His repeated confessions that he had assisted at the murders, and his acquaintance with the particulars and with

the localities.

8. Kaltofen's asseverations that Fischer was his associate in the murders.

In favour of Fischer it may be said that his conduct in the army had for thirteen years been uniformly good, and there was no evidence that he had been in any way guilty of dishonesty. Nor was he a man of extravagant habits like Kaltofen, needing money for his pleasures. He was a simple, inoffensive, and very stupid man. His confessions lose all their effect when we consider how they were extorted from him by undue influence.

Against Kaltofen's later accusation must be set his repeated declaration, during six months, that Fischer was innocent. Not only this, but his assertion in confidence to Kiessling that he was puzzled what could have induced Fischer to avow himself guilty of a crime, of which he – Kaltofen – knew him to be innocent. When Kiessling gave this evidence on April 24th, Kaltofen did not deny that he had said this, but flew into a paroxysm of fury with his comrade for betraying their private conversation.

Again, not a single article appertaining to either of the murdered men was found with Fischer. All had been traced, without exception, to Kaltofen. It was the latter who had concealed Kügelgen's coat, and had given his watch to the Jews. It was he who had got Kiessling to dispose of Winter's hat for him, and had given the boots of the last victim to Kiessling to be repaired.

On January 4th, 1821, the Court at Leipzig issued its

judgment; that Kaltofen, on account of two murders committed and confessed, was to be put to death on the wheel; "but that John George Fischer be discharged on account of lack of evidence of complicity in the murders." The gaoler was discharged his office.

Kaltofen appealed against the sentence, but in vain. The sentence was confirmed. The ground of his appeal was, that he was not alone guilty. The King commuted the penalty of the wheel into execution by the sword.

The sentence of the court produced the liveliest commotion in Dresden. The feeling against Fischer was strong and general; the gaoler had but represented the universal opinion. Fischer – who had confessed to the murder – Fischer, whom Kaltofen protested was as deeply stained in crime as himself, was to go scot free. The police authorities did not carry out the sentence of discharge in its integrity; they indeed released him from prison, but placed him under police supervision, and he was discharged from the Artillery on the plea that he had forsworn himself. The pastor Jaspis was entrusted with the preparation of Kaltofen for death; and we know pretty well what passed between him and the condemned man, as he had the indecency to publish it to the world. Jaspis had, indeed, visited him in prison when he was first arrested, and then Kaltofen had asserted that he had committed the murders entirely unassisted. On Jaspis remarking to him in April, 1820, that there were circumstances that rendered this eminently improbable, Kaltofen cut him short with the answer, "I was by myself." Afterwards, when he had changed his note,

Jaspis reminded him of his previous declaration, but Kaltofen pretended not to remember ever having made it.

Towards the end of his days, Kaltofen was profoundly agitated, and was very restless. When Jaspis gave him a book of prayers and meditations for such as were in trouble, he put it from him, and said the book was unsuitable, and was adapted only to the innocent. He had visitors who combined piety with inquisitiveness, and came to discuss with him the state of his soul. Kaltofen's vanity was inflamed, and he was delighted to pose before these zealots. When he heard that Jaspis had preached about him in the Kreuz Kirche on the Sunday before his execution, he was greatly gratified, and said, "He would really like to hear what had been said about him."

Jaspis thereupon produced his sermon, and read it over to the wretched man – but tells us that even the most touching portions of the address failed to awake any genuine compunction in his soul. Unless he could play the saint, before company, he was cold and indifferent. His great vanity, however, was hurt at the thought that his assertion was disbelieved, that Fischer was his associate in his crimes. He was always eager and inquisitive to know what rumours circulated in the town concerning him, and was gratified to think that he was the topic of the general conversation.

On the night before his execution he slept soundly for five hours, and then lit his pipe and smoked composedly. His condition was, however, not one of bluntness of sense, for he manifested considerable readiness and consciousness up to the

last. He had drawn up a dying address which he handed to pastor Jaspis, and on which he evidently placed great importance, as when his first copy had caught fire when he was drying it, he set to work to compose a second. He knew his man – Jaspis – and was sure he would publish it after the execution. The paper was a rigmarole in which he posed to the world.

On reaching the market-place where the execution was to take place, he repeated his confession, but on this occasion without mention of a confederate. His composure gave way, and he began to sob. On reaching the scaffold, however, the sight of the vast crowd assembled to see him die restored to him some of his composure, as it pleased his vanity; but he again broke down, as he made his last confession to the Lutheran pastor. His voice trembled, and the sweat broke out on his brow. Then he sprang up and shouted, so that all could hear – "Gentlemen, Fischer deserved the same punishment as myself." In another moment his head fell from his body.

The words had been audible throughout the market-place by everyone. Who could doubt that his last words were true?

Fischer happened that very day (July 12th) to be in Dresden. He had been seen, and had been recognised.

He had come to Dresden to see his counsel, and ask him to use his influence to obtain his complete discharge from police supervision, and restoration to his rights as an honest man and a soldier, with a claim to a pension.

A vast crowd of people rolled from the place of execution to

the house of Eisenstück, shouting, and threatening to tear Fischer to pieces.

But Eisenstück was not the man to be terrified. He summoned a carriage, entered it along with Fischer, and drove slowly, with the utmost composure, through the angry crowd.

On August 26th, 1822, by command of the king, Fischer's name was replaced in the army list, and he received his complete discharge from all the consequences of the accusations made against him. He was guaranteed his pension for his "faithful services through 16 years, and in the campaigns of 1813, 1814, and 1815, in which he had conducted himself to the approval of all his officers."

How are we to explain the conduct of Kaltofen? The simplest way is to admit that he spoke the truth; but against this is to be opposed his denial that Fischer was guilty during the first six months that he was under arrest. And it is impossible to believe that Fischer was guilty, on the sole testimony of Kaltofen, without any confirmatory evidence.

It is rather to be supposed that the inordinate vanity of the young culprit induced him to persist in denouncing his innocent brother gunner, so as to throw off his own shoulders some of the burden of that crime, which, he felt, made him hateful in the eyes of his fellow-citizens, and perhaps to induce them to regard him as misled by an older man, more hardened and experienced in crime, thus arousing their pity and sympathy in place of their disgust.

Jaspis, the pastor, did not himself believe in the criminality of Fischer, and proposes a solution which he gives conjecturally only. He suggests that Kaltofen was misled by the confession of Fischer into the belief that he really had committed a murder or two, though not those of Winter and Kügelgen, and that when he declared on the scaffold that "Fischer deserved to die as much as himself," he spoke under this conviction. This explanation is untenable, for the miserable man had repeatedly charged Fischer with assisting him in committing these two particular crimes. The explanation must be found in his self-conceit and eagerness to present himself in the best and most affecting light before the public. And he gained his point to some extent. The mob believed him, pitied him, became sentimental over him, wept tears at his death, and cursed the unfortunate Fischer. The apparent piety, the mock heroics, the graceful attitudes, and the good looks of the murderer had won their sympathies, and the general opinion of the vulgar was that they had assisted at the sublimation of a saint to the seventh heaven, and not at the well-deserved execution of a peculiarly heartless and brutal murderer.

A month had hardly passed since Kaltofen's execution before Dresden was shocked to hear of another murder – on this occasion by a young woman. On August 12th, 1821, this person, who had been in a state of excitement ever since the edifying death of Kaltofen, invited to her house a young girl, just engaged to be married, and deliberately murdered her; then marched off to the police and confessed her crime – the nature of which she

did not disguise. She desired to make the same affecting and edifying end as Kaltofen. Above all, she wanted to get herself talked about by all the mouths in Dresden. The police on visiting her house found the murdered girl lying on the bed. On the door in large letters the murderer had inscribed the date of Kaltofen's martyrdom, July 12th, and she had committed her crime on the same day one month after, desirous to share his glory.

Such was one consequence of this execution. A small farce also succeeded it. Influenced by the general excitement provoked by the murder of Kügelgen, the Jews had assembled and agreed, should any of them be able to discover the murderer, that they would decline the £150 offered by Government for information that might lead to the apprehension of the guilty. But Hirschel Mendel, the Jew who had produced the watch, put in his claim; whereupon Löbel Graff, who had produced the coat, put in a counter claim. This occasioned a lawsuit between the two Jews for the money. A compromise was finally patched up, by which each received half.

Gerhard von Kügelgen had been buried in the Catholic cemetery at Dresden on Maundy Thursday evening by moonlight. A great procession of art students attended the funeral cortège with lighted torches, and an oration was pronounced over his grave by his friend Councillor Böttiger.

His tomb may still be seen in the cemetery; on it is inscribed:

—

Franz Gerhard von kügelgen

Born 6 Feb., 1772

Died 27 March, 1820

On the other side is the text, St. John xiv. 27.

Kügelgen left behind him two sons and a daughter. The eldest son, Wilhelm, pursued his father's profession as an artist, and the Emperor of Russia sent an annual grant of money to assist him in his studies. There is a pleasant book, published anonymously by him, "An Old Man's Youthful Reminiscences," the first edition of which was issued in 1870, and which had reached its eighth edition in 1876.

Kügelgen's twin brother, Karl Ferdinand, after spending some years in St. Petersburg and in Livonia, settled at Reval, and died in 1832. He was the author of a "Picturesque Journey in the Crimea," published in 1823.

Authority: – F. Ch. A. Hasse: Das Leben Gerhards von Kügelgen. Leipzig, 1824. He gives in the Supplement an excerpt from the records of the trial. As frontispiece is a portrait of the artist by himself, very Raphaelesque.

The Poisoned Parsnips

At the time when the banished Bourbons were wandering about Europe seeking temporary asylums, during the period of Napoleon's supremacy, a story circulated in 1804 relative to an attempt made in Warsaw, which then belonged to Prussia, upon the life of the Royal Family then residing there. It was said that a plot had been formed, that was well nigh successful, to kill Louis XVIII., his wife, the Duke and Duchess of Angoulême, and such of the Court as sat at the Royal table, with a dish of poisoned parsnips. It was, moreover, whispered that at the bottom of the plot was no other than Napoleon himself, who sought to remove out of his way the legitimate claimants to the Gallic throne.

The article in which the account of the attempt was made public was in the *London Courier* for August 20th, 1804, from which we will now take the leading facts.

The Royal Family was living in Warsaw. Napoleon Bonaparte employed an agent of the name of Galon Boyer at Warsaw to keep an eye on them, and this man, it was reported, had engaged assassins at the instigation of Napoleon to poison Louis XVIII. and the rest of the Royal Family. The *Courier* of August 21st, 1804, says: "Some of the daily papers, which were not over anxious to discredit the conspiracy imputed to Mr. Drake,[1]

[1] Drake was envoy of the British Government at Munich; he and Spencer Smith, Chargé d'Affaires at Würtemberg, were accused by Napoleon of being at the bottom of

affect to throw some doubt upon the account of the attempt upon the lives of the Royal Family at Warsaw. They seem to think that had Bonaparte desired such a plan, he could have executed it with more secrecy and effect. Undoubtedly his plans of assassination have hitherto been more successful, because his hapless victims were within his power – his wounded soldiers at Jaffa, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Pichegru, and the Duke D'Enghien. He could send his bloodhounds into Germany to seize his prey; but Warsaw was too remote for him; he was under the necessity of having recourse to less open means of sending his assassins to act secretly. But it is deemed extraordinary that the diabolical attempt should have failed. Why is it extraordinary that a beneficent Providence should interpose to save the life of a just prince? Have we not had signal instances of that interposition in this country? For the accuracy of the account we published yesterday, we pledge ourselves[2] that the fullest details, authenticated by all Louis XVIII.'s Ministers – by the venerable Archbishop of Rheims – by the Abbé Edgeworth, who administered the last consolation of religion to Louis the XVI., have been received in this country. All those persons were

a counter revolution, and an attempt to obtain his assassination. It was true that Drake and Smith were in correspondence with parties in France with the object of securing Hagenau and Strassburgo and throwing discord among the troops of the Republic, but they never for a moment thought of obtaining the assassination of the First Consul, as far as we can judge from their correspondence that fell into the hands of the French police.

[2] Unfortunately the British Museum file is imperfect, and does not contain the Number for August 20th.

present when the poisoned preparation was analysed by very eminent physicians, *who are the subjects of the King of Prussia*.

"The two wretches who attempted to corrupt the poor Frenchman were openly protected by the French Consul or Commercial Agent.

"The Prussian Governor would not suffer them to be arrested in order that their guilt or innocence might be legally investigated. Is it to be believed that had there been no foundation for the charge against them, the French agent would have afforded them less open protection, and thereby strengthened the charge brought against them? If they were protected and paid by the French agent, is it probable that he paid them out of his own pocket, employed them in such a plot of his own accord, and without order and instructions from his own Government, from Bonaparte? Besides, did not the President Hoym acknowledge his fears that some attempt would be made upon the life of Louis the XVIII.?

"The accounts transmitted to this country were sent from Warsaw one hour after the king had set out for Grodno."

The *Courier* for August 24th, 1804, has the following note: – "We have another strong fact which is no slight evidence in our minds of Bonaparte's guilt. The plot against Louis the XVIII. was to be executed at the end of July – it would be known about the beginning of August. At that very period Bonaparte prohibits the importation of all foreign journals without exception – that is, of all the means by which the people could be informed of

the diabolical deed. Why does he issue this prohibition at the present moment, or why does he issue it at all? Fouché says in his justification of it that it is to prevent our knowing when the expedition sails. Have we ever received any news about the expedition from the French papers? No, no! the prohibition was with a view to the bloody scene to be acted at Warsaw."

The *Courier* of August 22nd contained full particulars. We will now tell the whole story, from beginning to end, first of all as dressed out by the fancy of Legitimists, and then according to the real facts of the case as far as known.

Napoleon, it will be remembered, had been appointed First Consul for life on August 2nd, 1802, but the Republic came to an end, and the French Empire was established by the Senate on May 18th, 1804.

It was supposed – and we can excuse the excitement and intoxication of wrath in the minds of all adherents of the Bourbons which could suppose it – that Napoleon, who was thus refounding the Empire of Charlemagne, desired to secure the stability of this new throne by sweeping out of his way the legitimate claimants to that of France. The whole legend of the attempt to assassinate Louis XVIII. by means of a dish of poisoned parsnips is given us in complete form by the author of a life of that prince twenty years after the event.[3] It is to this effect:

When the King (Louis XVIII.) was preparing for his journey from Warsaw to Grodno an atrocious attempt to assassinate him

[3] A. de Beauchamp, Vie de Louis XVIII. Paris, 1824.

was brought to light, which leaves no manner of doubt that it was the purpose of those who were the secret movers in the plot to remove by poison both the King and Queen and also the Duke of Angoulême and his wife. Two delegates of Napoleon had been in Warsaw seeking for a man who could execute the plan. A certain Coulon appeared most adapted to their purpose, a man indigent and eager for money. He had previously been in the service of one of the emigré nobles, and had access to the kitchen of the Royal Family.

The agents of Napoleon gave Coulon drink, and as he became friendly and lively under the influence of punch, they communicated to him their scheme, and promised him money, the payment of his debts, and to effect his escape if he would be their faithful servant in the intrigue. Coulon pretended to yield to their solicitations, and a rendezvous was appointed where the plans were to be matured. But no sooner was Coulon at liberty than he went to his former master, the Baron de Milleville, master of horse to the Queen, and told him all. The Baron sought the Duc de Pienne, first gentleman of the Royal household, and he on receiving the information communicated it to the Count d'Avaray, Minister of Louis XVIII. Coulon received orders to pretend to be ready to carry on the plot. He did this with reluctance, but he did it. He told the agents of Napoleon that he was in their hands and would blindly execute their orders. They treated him now to champagne, and revealed to him the details of the attempt. He was to get into the kitchen of the Royal

household, and was to pour the contents of a packet they gave him into one of the pots in which the dinner for the Royal table was being cooked. Coulon then demanded an instalment of his pay, and asked to be given 400 louis d'or. One of the agents then turned to the other and asked if he thought Boyer would be disposed to advance so much – this was Galon Boyer, the head agent sent purposely to Warsaw as spy on the Royal Family, and the principal mover in the attempt.

The other agent replied that Boyer was not at the moment in Warsaw, but he would be back in a couple of days. Coulon stuck to his point, like a clever rascal, and refused to do anything till he felt gold in his palm, and he was bidden wait till Boyer had been communicated with. He was appointed another meeting on the moors at Novawies outside the city.

As, next evening, Coulon was on his way to the place named, he observed that he was followed by a man. Suddenly out of the corn growing beside the road started a second. They were the agents. They paid him a few dollars, promised to provide handsomely for him in France, by giving him 400 louis d'or and a situation under Government; and handed him a bottle of liquor that was to stimulate his courage at the crucial moment, and also a paper packet that contained three parsnips, that had been scooped out and filled with poison. These he was to insinuate into one of the pots cooking for dinner, and induce the cook to overlook what he had done, and serve them up to the Royal Family.

The King then lived in a chateau at Lazienki, about a mile out of Warsaw. Thither hastened Coulon as fast as his legs could carry him, and he committed the parsnips to the Baron de Milleville. The Count d'Avaray and the Archbishop of Rheims put their seals on the parcel; after that the parsnips had first been shown to the Prussian authorities, and they had been asked in all form to attest the production of the poisoned roots, and to order the arrest of the two agents of Napoleon, and to confront them with Coulon – and had declined. Louis, when informed of the attempt, showed his wonted composure. He wrote immediately to the Prussian President, Von Hoym, and requested him to visit him at Lazienki, and consult what was to be done.

Herr Von Hoym did not answer; nor did he go to the King, but communicated with his superiors. Finally there arrived a diplomatic reply declining to interfere in the matter, as it was the concern of the police to investigate it, and it should be taken up in the ordinary way.

Thereupon the King requested that Coulon and his wife should be secured, and that specialists should be appointed who, along with the Royal physician, might examine the parsnips alleged to be poisoned.

But the Prussian Courts declined again to take any steps. The policy of the Prussian Cabinet under Count Haugwitz was favourable to a French alliance, and the King of Prussia was among the first of the greater Powers which had formally recognised the French Emperor. On condition that the French

troops occupying Hanover should not be augmented, and that war, if it broke out with Russia, should be so carried on as not to inconvenience and sweep over Prussian territory, Prussia had undertaken to observe a strict neutrality. In return for these concessions, which were of great moment to Napoleon, he openly proclaimed his intention to augment the strength of Prussia, and it was hoped at Berlin that the price paid would be the incorporation of Hanover with Prussia.

At this moment, consequently, the Prussian Government was most unwilling to meddle in an investigation which threatened to lead to revelations most compromising to the character of Napoleon, and most inconvenient for itself.

As the Prussian courts would not take up the matter of the parsnips, a private investigation was made by the Count d'Avaray, with the Royal physician, Dr. Lefèvre, and the Warsaw physician, Dr. Gagatkiewicz, together with the Apothecary Guidel and a certain Dr. Bergozoni. The seals were broken in their presence, and the three roots were examined. It was ascertained that they were stuffed with a mixture of white, yellow, and red arsenic. This having been ascertained, and a statement of the fact duly drawn up, and signed, the president of the police, Herr von Tilly, was communicated with. He, however, declined to interfere, as had the President von Hoym. "Thus," says M. Beauchamp, "one court shuffled the matter off on another, backwards and forwards, so as not to have to decide on the matter, a specimen of the results of the system adopted at this time by the Prussian

Cabinet."

No other means of investigation remained but for Count d'Avaray to have the matter gone into by the court of the exiled King. They examined Coulon, who held firmly to his story as told to the Baron de Milleville, and all present were convinced that he spoke the truth.

As the King could obtain no justice from the hands of Prussia, he suffered the story to be made public in order that the opinion of all honourable men in Europe might be expressed on the conduct of both Napoleon and of the Prussian Ministry. "The impression made," says M. Beauchamp, "especially in England, was deep. Men recalled Bonaparte's former crimes that had been proved – the poisoning at Jaffa, the – at the time – very fresh indignation provoked by the murder of the Count de Frotté, of Pichegru, of Captain Wright, of the Duke d'Enghien, of Toussaint l'Ouverture; they recalled the lack of success he had experienced in demanding of Louis XVIII. a formal renunciation of his claims, and weighed well the determination of his character. Even the refusal of the Prussian courts to go into the charge (for if it had been investigated they must needs have pronounced judgment on it) – encouraged suspicion. Hardly an English newspaper did not condemn Napoleon as the instigator of an attempt that providentially failed."

Such is the legend as formulated by M. de Beauchamp. Fortunately there exists documentary evidence in the archives of the courts at Berlin that gives an altogether different complexion

to the story, and entirely clears the name of Napoleon from stain of complicity in this matter. It throws, moreover, a light, by no means favourable, on those of the Legitimist party clustered about the fallen monarch.

Louis XVIII., obliged to fly from one land to another before the forces of Napoleon, was staying for a while at Warsaw, in the year 1804, under the incognito of the Count de l'Isle. His misfortunes had not broken his spirit or diminished his pretensions. He was surrounded by a little court in spite of his incognito; and as this little court had no affairs of State to transact, it played a niggling game at petty intrigue. This court consisted of the Count d'Avaray, the Archbishop of Rheims, the Duke de Pienne, the Marquis de Bonney, the Duke d'Avré de Croy, the Count de la Chapelle, the Counts Damas Crux and Stephen de Damas, and the Abbés Edgeworth and Frimont. Louis had assured Napoleon he would rather eat black bread than resign his pretensions. At Warsaw he maintained his pretensions to the full, but did not eat black bread; he kept a very respectable kitchen. The close alliance between Prussia and France forced him to leave Warsaw and migrate into Russia.

At this time there lived in Warsaw a certain Jean Coulon, son of a small shopkeeper at Lyons, who had led an adventurous life. At the age of nine he had run away from home and attached himself to a wandering dramatic company; then had gone into service to a wigmaker, and had lived for three years at Barcelona at his handicraft. But wigs were going out of fashion, and he

threw up an unprofitable trade, and enlisted in a legion of emigrés, but in consequence of some quarrel with a Spaniard was handed over to the Spanish authorities. He purchased his pardon by enlisting in the Spanish army, but deserted and joined the French Republican troops, was in the battle of Novi, ran away, and joined the corps raised at Naples by Cardinal Ruffo. When this corps was dispersed, he went back to Spain, again enlisted, and was shipped for St. Lucia. The vessel in which he was, was captured by an English cruiser, and he was taken into Plymouth and sent up to Dartmoor as prisoner of war. After two years he was exchanged and was shipped to Cuxhaven. Thence he went to Altona, where he asked the intervention of the Duke d'Avré in his favour. The Duke recommended him to the Countess de l'Isle, and he was taken into the service of her master of horse, the Baron de Milleville, and came to Warsaw in September, 1803. There he married, left his service and set up a café and billiard room that was frequented by the retainers and servants of the emigré nobility that hovered about the King and Queen. He was then aged 32, could speak Italian and Spanish as well as French, and was a thorough soldier of fortune, impecunious, loving pleasure, and wholly without principles, political or religious.

The French Chargé d'Affaires at Warsaw was Galon Boyer; he does not appear in the documents relative to the *Affaire Coulon*, not because the Prussian Government shirked its duty, but because he was in no way mixed up with the matter of the parsnips. It is quite true that, as M. de Beauchamp asserts, the

Court of Louis XVIII. did endeavour to involve the Prussian authorities in the investigation, but it was in such a manner that it was not possible for them to act. On July 23rd, when the Count de l'Isle was determined to leave Warsaw, Count d'Avaray called on the President von Hoym, and told him in mysterious language that he was aware of a conspiracy in which were involved several Frenchmen and as many as a dozen Poles that sought the life of his august master. Herr von Hoym doubted. He asked for the grounds of this assertion, and was promised full particulars that same evening at eight o'clock. At the hour appointed, the Count appeared breathless before him, and declared that now he was prepared with a complete disclosure. However, he told nothing, and postponed the revelation to 10 o'clock. Then Avaray informed him that the keeper of the Café Coulon had been hired by some strangers to meet him that same night on the road to Novawies, to plan with him the murder, by poison, of the Count de l'Isle. The whole story seemed suspicious to von Hoym. It was now too late for him to send police to watch the spot where the meeting was to take place, which he might have done had d'Avaray condescended to tell him in time, two hours earlier. He asked d'Avaray where Coulon lived that he might send for him, and the Count professed he did not know the address.

Next day Count d'Avaray read to the President von Hoym a document, which he said had been drawn up by members of the court of the Count de l'Isle, showed him a paper that contained twelve small parsnips, and requested him to subscribe

the document and seal the parcel of parsnips. Naturally, the President declined to do this. He had not seen Coulon, he did not know from whom Coulon had received the parcel, and he mistrusted the whole story. However, he requested that he might be furnished with an exact description of the two mysterious strangers, and when he had received it, communicated with the police, and had inquiry made for them in and about Warsaw. No one had seen or heard of any persons answering to the description.

Presently the Marquis de Bonney arrived to request the President, in the name of the Count de l'Isle, to have the parsnips examined by specialists. He declined to do so.

On July 26th, the Count d'Avaray appeared before the head of the Police, the President von Tilly, and showed him an attestation made by several doctors that they had examined three parsnips that had been shown them, and they had found in them a paste composed of arsenic and orpiment. Von Tilly thought the whole story so questionable that he refused to meddle with it. Moreover, a notary of Warsaw, who had been requested to take down Coulon's statement, had declined to testify to the genuineness of the confession, probably because, as Coulon afterwards insinuated, he had been helped to make it consistent by those who questioned him.

Louis XVIII. left Warsaw on July 30, and as the rumour spread that Coulon's wife had bought some arsenic a week before at an apothecary's shop in the place, the police inspector ordered her

arrest. She was questioned and declared that she had, indeed, bought some rat poison, without the knowledge of her husband. Coulon was now taken up and questioned, and he pretended that he had given his wife orders to buy the rat poison, because he was plagued with vermin in the house.

Then the authorities in Warsaw sent all the documents relating to this matter, including the *procès verbal* drawn up by the courtiers of Louis XVIII., to Berlin, and asked for further instructions.

According to this *procès verbal* Coulon had confessed as follows: On the 20th July two strangers had entered his billiard room, and had assured him that, if he were disposed to make his fortune, they could help him to it. They made him promise silence, and threatened him with death if he disclosed what they said. After he had sworn fidelity and secrecy, they told him that he was required to throw something into the pot in which the soup was being prepared for the King's table. For so doing they would pay him 400 louis d'or. Coulon considered a moment; then the strangers promised they would provide a situation for his wife in France. After that one of them said to his fellow in Italian, "We must be off. We have no time to lose." Next day, in the evening, a third stranger appeared at his door, called him forth into the street, walked about with him through the streets of old and new Warsaw, till he was thoroughly bewildered, and did not know where he was, and, finally, entered with him a house, where he saw the two strangers who had been with him previously.

Champagne was brought on the table, and they all drank, and one of the strangers became tipsy. When Coulon promised to do what was required of him, he was told to secure some of the mutton-chops that were being prepared for the Royal table, and to manipulate them with the powder that was to be given him. That the cook might not notice what he was about, he was to treat him to large draughts of brandy. Coulon agreed, but asked first to touch the 400 louis d'or. Then the tipsy man shouted out, "That is all right, but will Boyer consent to it?" The other stranger tried to check him, and said, "What are you saying? Boyer is not here, he has gone out of town and will not be back for a couple of days." After Coulon had insisted on prepayment, he had been put off till the next evening, when he was to meet the strangers at 11 o'clock on the road to Novawies. There he was to receive money, and the powder for the King. He was then given one ducat, and led home at one o'clock in the morning. On the following night, at 11 o'clock, he went on the way to Novawies, and then followed what we have already given from the story of the man, as recorded by M. de Beauchamp. He received from the men a packet containing the parsnips, and some money – only six dollars. They put a kerchief under the earth beneath a tree, and bade him, if he had accomplished his task, come to the tree and remove the kerchief, as a token to them; if, however, he failed, the kerchief was to be left undisturbed. The tree he had marked well, it was the forty-fifth along the road to Novawies. A small end of the kerchief peeped out from under the soil. The strangers

had then given him a bottle of liqueur to stimulate his courage for the undertaking.

After that Coulon was left alone, he said that he staggered homewards, but felt so faint that he would have fallen to the ground had not a Prussian officer, who came by, noticed his condition and helped him home. At the conclusion of the *procès verbal* came an exact description of the conspirators. Such was the document produced originally by the Count d'Avaray, and we can hardly wonder that, on hearing it, the Prussian civil and police authorities had hesitated about taking action. The so-called confession of Coulon seemed to them to be a rhodomontade got up for the purpose of obtaining money out of the ex-King and his Court.

From Berlin orders were sent to Warsaw to have the matter thoroughly sifted. Coulon and his wife were now again subjected to examination. He adhered at first to his story, but when he endeavoured to explain the purchase of the arsenic, and to fit it into his previous tale, he involved himself in contradictions.

The President at this point addressed him gravely, and warned him of the consequences. His story compromised the French chargé d'affaires, M. Galon Boyer, and this could not be allowed to be passed over without a very searching examination that must inevitably reveal the truth. Coulon was staggered, and hastily asked how matters would stand with him if he told the truth. Then, after a little hesitation, he admitted that "he thought before the departure of the Count de l'Isle he would obtain for himself

a sum of money, with which to escape out of his difficulties. He had reckoned on making 100 ducats out of this affair." He now told quite a different tale. With the departure of the court of the emigrés, he would lose his clientelle, and he was concerned because he owed money for the café and billiard table. He had therefore invented the whole story in hopes of imposing on the court and getting from them a little subvention. But he said he had been dragged on further than he intended by the Count d'Avaray, who had swallowed his lie with avidity, and had urged him to go on with the intrigue so as to produce evidence against the conspirators.

That was why he had made up the figment of the meeting with the strangers on the road and their gift to him of the parsnips, which he admitted that he had himself scooped out and filled with the rat poison paste he had bought at the apothecary's.

So far so good. What he now said was precisely what the cool heads of the Prussian authorities had believed from the first. But Coulon did not adhere to this second confession. After a few days in prison he professed his desire to make another. He was brought before the magistrate, and now he said that the whole story was got up by the Count d'Avaray, M. de Milleville, and others of the surroundings of the exiled King, for the purpose of creating an outbreak of disgust in Europe against Napoleon, and of bringing about a revolt in France. He declared that he had been promised a pension of six ducats monthly, that when he gave his evidence M. de Milleville had paid him 35 ducats, and that he had been

taken into the service, along with his wife, of the ex-Queen, as reward for what he had done.

There were several particulars which gave colour to this last version of Coulon's story. It was true that he had been given some money by Milleville; it was perhaps true that in their eagerness to prove a case of attempted assassination, some of those who conducted the inquiry had helped him to correct certain discrepancies in his narrative. Then, again, it was remarkable that, although the Count d'Avaray knew about the projected murder, he would not tell the Prussian President the facts till 10 o'clock at night, when it was too late to send the police to observe the pretended meeting on the Novawies road; and when Herr von Hoym asked for directions as to where Coulon lived that the police might be sent to arrest him on his return, and during his absence to search the house, the Count had pretended to be unable to say where Coulon lived. It was also true that de Milleville had repeatedly visited Coulon's house during the course of the intrigue, and that it was immediately after Coulon had been at Milleville's house that his wife was sent to buy the rat poison.

Coulon pretended to have heard M. de Milleville say that "This affair might cause a complete change in the situation in France, when tidings of what had been done were published." Moreover, he said that he had been despatched to the Archbishop of Rheim's with the message "Le coup est manqué."

But it is impossible to believe that the emigré court can have

fabricated such a plot by which to cast on the name of Napoleon the stain of attempted assassination. The whole story reads like the clumsy invention of a vulgar adventurer. Coulon's second confession is obviously that of his true motives. He was in debt, he was losing his clientelle by the departure of the Count, and it is precisely what such a scoundrel would do, to invent a lie whereby to enlist their sympathies for himself, and obtain from them some pecuniary acknowledgment for services he pretended to have rendered. The little court was to blame in its gullibility. Its blind hatred of Napoleon led it to believe such a gross and palpable lie, and, if doubts arose in any of their minds as to the verity of the tale told them, they suppressed them.

Coulon was found guilty by the court and was sentenced to five years' imprisonment. The judgment of the court was that he had acted in concert with certain members of the retinue of the Count de l'Isle, but it refrained from naming them.

The Murder of Father Thomas in Damascus

The remarkable case we are about to relate awoke great interest and excitement throughout three quarters of the world, and stirred up that hatred of the Jews which had been laid asleep after the persecutions of the Middle Ages, just at the time when in all European lands the emancipation of the Jew was being recognised as an act of justice. At the time the circumstances were imperfectly known, or were laid before the public in such a partial light that it was difficult to form a correct judgment upon them. Since then, a good deal of light has been thrown on the incident, and it is possible to arrive at a conclusion concerning the murder with more unbiased mind and with fuller information than was possible at the time.

The Latin convents of Syria stand under the immediate jurisdiction of the Pope, and are, for the most part, supplied with recruits from Italy. They are very serviceable to travellers, whom they receive with genial hospitality, and without distinction of creed. They are nurseries of culture and of industry. Every monk and friar is required to exercise a profession or trade, and the old charge against monks of being drones is in no way applicable to the busy members of the religious orders in Palestine.

In the Capuchin Convent at Damascus dwelt, in 1840, a

friar named Father Thomas, a Sardinian by birth. For thirty-three years he had lived there, and had acted as physician and surgeon, attending to whoever called for his services, Mussulman or Christian, Turk, Jew or Frank alike. He set limbs, dosed with quinine for fever, and vaccinated against smallpox. Being well known and trusted, he was in constant practice, and his practice brought him, or, at all events, his order, a handsome annual income. His manners were, unfortunately, not amiable. He was curt, even rude, and somewhat dictatorial; his manners impressed as authoritative in the sickroom, but were resented in the market-place as insolent.

On February 5th, 1840, Father Thomas disappeared, together with his servant, a lay brother who always attended him. This disappearance caused great commotion in Damascus.

France has been considered in the East as the protector of Christians of the Latin confession. The French Consul, the Count Ratti-Menton, considered it his duty to investigate the matter.

Father Thomas had been seen to enter the Jews' quarter. Several Israelites admitted having seen him there. No one saw him leave it: consequently, it was concluded he had disappeared, been made away with, there. As none but Jews occupied the Ghetto, it was argued that Father Thomas had been murdered by Israelites. That was settled as a preliminary. But in the meantime the Austrian Consul had been making investigation as well as the Count Ratti-Menton, and he had obtained information that Father Thomas and his servant had been noticed engaged in a

violent quarrel and contest of words with some Mohammedans of the lowest class, in the market-place. No weight was attached to this, and the French Consul pursued his investigations in the Jews' quarter, and in that quarter alone.

Sheriff Pacha was Governor of Syria, and Count Ratti-Menton required him to allow of his using every means at his disposal for the discovery of the criminal. He also requested the Austrian Consul to allow a domiciliary visitation of all the Jews' houses, the Austrian Government being regarded as the protector of the Hebrews. In both cases consent was given, and the search was begun with zeal.

Then a Turk, named Mohammed-el-Telli, who was in prison for non-payment of taxes, sent word to the French Consul that, if he would obtain his release, he would give such information as would lead to the discovery of the murderer or murderers. He received his freedom, and denounced, in return, several Jews' houses as suspicious. Count Ratti-Menton at the head of a troop of soldiers and workmen, and a rabble assembled in the street, invaded all these houses, and explored them from attic to cellar.

One of the first names given by Mohammed-el-Telli was that of a Jewish barber, Negrin. He gave a confused and contradictory account of himself, but absolutely denied having any knowledge of the murder. In vain were every means used during three days at the French Consulate to bring him to a confession; after that he was handed over to the Turkish authorities. They had him bastinadoed, then tortured. During his torture, Mohammed-el-

Telli was at his side urging him to make a clean breast. Unable to endure his sufferings longer, the barbar declared his readiness to tell all. Whether what he said was based on reports circulating in the town, or was put into his mouth by his tormentors, we cannot tell. According to his story, on the evening of February the 5th a servant of David Arari summoned him into his house. He found the master of the house along with six other Israelitish rabbis and merchants, to wit, Aaron and Isaac Arari, Mussa Abul Afia, Moses Salonichi, and Joseph Laniado. In a corner of the room lay or leaned against the wall Father Thomas, gagged and bound hand and foot. The merchants urged Negrin to murder the Capuchin in their presence, but he stedfastly refused to do so. Finally finding him inflexible, they bought his silence with 600 piastres (hardly £6) and dismissed him.

Thereupon, the governor ordered the arrest of David Arari and the other Jews named, all of whom were the richest merchants in the town – at all events the richest Jewish merchants. They, with one consent, solemnly protested their innocence. They, also, were subjected to the bastinado; but as most of them were aged men, and it was feared that they might succumb under the blows, after a few lashes had been administered, they were raised from the ground and subjected to other tortures. For thirty-six hours the unhappy men were forced to stand upright, and were prevented from sleeping. They still persisted in denial, whereupon some of them were again beaten. At the twentieth blow they fainted. The French Consul complained that

the beating was inefficient – so the Austrian Consul reported, and at his instigation they were again bastinadoed, but again without bringing them to confession.

In the meantime, David Arari's servant, Murad-el-Fallat, was arrested, the man who was said to have been sent for the barber. He was dealt with more sharply than the others. He was beaten most cruelly, and to heighten his pain cold water was poured over his bruised and mangled flesh. Under the anguish he confessed that he had indeed been sent for the barber.

That was an insufficient confession. He was threatened with the bastinado again, and promised his release if he would reveal all he knew. Thereupon he repeated the story of the barber, with additions of his own. He and Negrin, said he, had by command of the seven rich merchants put the Father to death, and had then cut up the body and hidden the remains in a remote water conduit.

The barber, threatened with fresh tortures, confessed to the murder.

Count Ratti-Menton explored the conduit where the two men pretended the mutilated body was concealed, in the presence of the servant and barber, both of whom were in such a condition through the barbarous treatment to which they had been subjected, that they could not walk, and had to be carried to the spot. And actually there some bones were found, together with a cap. A surgeon pronounced that these were human bones. It was at once concluded that these were the remains of Father Thomas, and as such were solemnly buried in the cemetery of

the Capuchin Convent.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.