ЭЖЕН СЮ

THE POCKET BIBLE; OR, CHRISTIAN THE PRINTER: A TALE OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

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Сю Э. Ж.

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Содержание

Eugène Sue
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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

The epoch covered by this, the 16th story of Eugene Sue's dramatic historic series, entitled *The Mysteries of the People; or, History of a Proletarian Family Across the Ages*, extends over the turbulent yet formative era known in history as the Religious Reformation.

The social system that had been developing since the epoch initiated by the 8th story of the series, *The Abbatial Crosier; or, Bonaik and Septimine*, that is, the feudal system, and which is depicted in full bloom in the 14th story of the series, *The Iron Trevet; or, Jocelyn the Champion*, had been since suffering general collapse with the approach of the bourgeois, or capitalist system, which found its first open, or political, expression in the Reformation, and which was urged into life by Luther, Calvin and other leading adversaries of the Roman Catholic regime.

The history of the Reformation, or rather, of the conflict between the clerical polity which symbolized the old and the clerical polity which symbolized the new social order, is compressed within the covers of this one story with the skill at once of the historian, the scientist, the philosopher and the novelist. The various springs from which human action flows, the various types which human crises produce, the virtues and the vices which great historic conflicts heat into activity – all these features of social motion, never jointly reproduced in works of history, are here drawn in vivid colors and present a historic canvas that is prime in the domain of literature.

In view of the exceptional importance of some of the footnotes in which Sue refers the reader to the pages of original authorities in French cited by him, the pages of an accessible American edition are in those cases either substituted or added in this translation.

DANIEL DE LEON.

New York, February, 1910.

PART I
THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

INTRODUCTION

What great changes, sons of Joel, have taken place in Paris since the time when our ancestor Eidiol the Parisian skipper lived in this city, in the Ninth Century, at the time of the Northman invasion! How many changes even since 1350, when our ancestor Jocelyn the Champion fell wounded beside Etienne Marcel, who was assassinated by John Maillart and the royalists!

The population of this great city now, in the year 1534, runs up to about four hundred thousand souls; daily new houses rise in the suburbs and outside the city walls, whose boundaries have become too narrow, although they enclose from twelve to thirteen thousand houses. But now, the same as in the past, Paris remains divided into four towns, so to speak, by two thoroughfares that cross each other at right angles. St. Martin, prolonged by St. James Street, traverses the city from east to west; St. Honoré, prolonged by St. Antoine Street, traverses it from north to south. The Louvre is the quarter of the people of the court; the quarter of the Bastille, of the Arsenal, filled with arms, and of the Temple is that of the people whose profession is war; the quarter of the University is that of the men of letters; finally the quarter of Notre Dame and St. Germain, where lie the convents of the Cordeliers, of the Chartreux, of the Jacobins, of the Augustinians, of the Dominicans and of many other hives of monks and nuns besides the monasteries that are scattered throughout the city, is that of the men of the Church. The merchants, as a general thing, occupy the center of Paris towards St. Denis Street; the manufacturers are found in the eastern, the shabbiest of all the quarters, where, for one liard, workingmen can find lodging for the night. The larger number of the bourgeois houses as well as all the convents are now built of stone, and are no longer frame structures as they formerly were. These modern buildings, topped with slate or lead roofs and ornamented with sculptured facades, become every day more numerous.

Likewise with crimes of all natures; their increase is beyond measure. With nightfall, murderers and bandits take possession of the streets. Their numbers rise to twenty-five or thirty thousand, all organized into bands – the *Guilleris*, the *Plumets*, the *Rougets*, the *Tire-Laines*,[1] the latter of whom rob bourgeois, who are inhibited from carrying arms. The *Tire-Soies*,[2] a more daring band, fall upon the noblemen, who are always armed. The *Barbets* disguise themselves as artisans of several trades, or as monks of several Orders and introduce themselves into the houses for the purpose of stealing. Besides these there are the bands of *Mattes* or *Fins-Mattois*, skilled cut-purses and pick-pockets; and finally the *Mauvais-Garçons*,[3] the most redoubtable of all, who publicly, for a price chaffered over and finally agreed upon, offer their daggers to whomsoever wishes to rid himself of an enemy.

Nor is this the worst aspect presented by the crowded city. Paris runs over with lost women and courtesans of all degrees. Never yet did immorality, to which the royal court, the Church and the seigniory set so shocking a pace, cause such widespread ravages. A repulsive disease imported from America by the Spaniards since the conquests of Christopher Columbus poisons life at its very source.

Finally, Paris presents a nameless mixture of fanaticism, debauchery and ferocity. Above the doors of houses of ill fame, images of male and female saints are seen in their niches, before which thieves, murderers and courtesans uncover and bend the knee as they hurry by, bent on their respective

[1] Tire-Laines means literally Wool-Pluckers.

[2] Tire-Soies: literally Silk-Pluckers.

[3] Mauvais-Garçons; literally Bad Boys.

pursuits. The Tire-Laines, the Guilleris and other brigands burn candles at the altars of the Virgin or pay for masses for the success of their crimes in contemplation. Superstition spreads in even step with criminality. Pious physicians are cited who regularly take the weekly communion, and who, bought by impatient heirs, poison with their pharmaceutical concoctions the rich patients, whose decease is too slow in arriving. The most horrid felonies have lost their dreadfulness, especially since the papal indulgences, sold for cash, insure absolution and impunity to the criminals. The virtues of the hearth and all good morals seem to have fled to the bosom of those families only who have discarded the paganism of Rome and, although styled heretics, practice the simplicity of evangelical morality. One of these families is that of Christian the Printer, the great-grandchild of Jocelyn the Champion's son, who, due to the rapid progress made by the printing press, which rendered manuscript books useless and unnecessarily expensive, found it ever more difficult to earn his living at his trade of copyist and illuminator of manuscripts.

Accordingly, after the death of his father, who was the son of Jocelyn the Champion and continued to live at Vaucouleurs after witnessing the martyrdom of Joan of Arc, Allan Lebrenn moved to Paris, induced thereto by John Saurin, a master-printer of this city who, having during a short sojourn at Vaucouleurs been struck by the young man's intelligence at his trade, promised to aid him in finding work in the large city. He accepted the offer and speedily succeeded in his new field. He married in 1465, died in 1474, and left a son, Melar Lebrenn, who was born in 1466 and was the father of Christian the Printer.

Melar Lebrenn followed his father's occupation, and worked long after his father's death in John Saurin's establishment, where his services were highly appreciated. But after John Saurin's death, Melar Lebrenn, who had in the meantime married and had three children, Christian and two daughters, was dismissed by Saurin's successor, a man named Noel Compaign. Compaign was a religious bigot. He was incensed at what he termed Melar Lebrenn's unbelief, hounded him with odious calumnies, and spoke of him to the other members of the guild as dishonest and otherwise unfit. Melar Lebrenn soon felt the effect of these calumnies; his trade went down; his savings were consumed; his family was breadless; he had nothing left to him but the legends and relics of his family, that were handed down from generation to generation.

Under these circumstances Melar Lebrenn made one more and desperate effort to rise to his feet. He knew by reputation Henry Estienne, the most celebrated printer of the last century. Estienne's goodness of heart as well as his knowledge were matters of common repute. Melar Lebrenn decided to turn to him, but he found Estienne strongly prejudiced against him through the calumnies that Compaign had circulated. But Melar Lebrenn was not yet discouraged. He explained to Estienne circumstantially the reason of Compaign's hatred, and offered Estienne to serve him on trial. The offer was accepted, and Melar Lebrenn soon acquitted himself so well both as a typesetter and a reader of proof, that Master Henry Estienne, judging from the falseness of the accusations concerning Melar Lebrenn's skill at his trade, concluded he was equally wronged in his private character. From that time on, Estienne took a deep interest in Melar and was soon singularly attached to him, as much by reason of his skill, as for the probity of his character and the kindness of his heart.

The two daughters of Melar Lebrenn were carried away by the pest that swept over Paris in 1512; his wife survived them only a short time; and Melar himself died in 1519. His only surviving child, Christian, married Bridget Ardouin, an embroiderer in gold and silver thread. Christian entered the printing establishment of Henry Estienne as an apprentice at his twelfth year. After the death of the venerated Henry Estienne, Christian remained under the employ of Robert Estienne, his father's heir in virtue and his superior in scientific acquirements. The editions that Robert Estienne issued of the old Greek, Hebrew or Latin authors are the admiration of the learned by the correctness of the text, the beauty of the type, and the perfection of the printing. Among other things he published a pocket edition of the New Testament, translated into French, a veritable masterpiece of typography.

The bonds that united Master Robert Estienne and his workman Christian Lebrenn became of the closest.

Three children were born of the marriage of Christian Lebrenn with Bridget Ardouin – a boy, born in 1516, and at the commencement of this history eighteen years of age; a girl in 1518, and a boy in 1520. The latter is named Odelin; he is an apprentice in the establishment of Master Raimbaud, one of the most celebrated armorers of Paris. The eldest son is named Hervé, in memory of his mother's father, and he follows his father Christian's profession of printer. The girl is named Hena in remembrance of the Virgin of the Isle of Sen.

CHAPTER I.
THE THEFT

It was one evening towards the middle of the month of August of 1534. Christian Lebrenn occupied a modest house situated at about the center of the Exchange Bridge. Almost all the other bridges thrown over the two arms of the Seine are, like this one, lined with houses and constitute a street under which the river flows. The kitchen, where the meals were taken, was on the first floor, even with the street; behind this room, the door and window of which opened upon the public thoroughfare, was a smaller one, used for bed chamber by Hervé, Christian's eldest son, and the younger brother Odelin, the apprentice at Master Raimbaud's. At the time, however, when this narrative opens, Odelin was absent from Paris, traveling in Italy with his master, who had gone to Milan in order to study the process by which the Milanese armors, as celebrated as those of Toledo, were manufactured. The upper floor of Christian's house consisted of two rooms. One of these he occupied himself with his wife Bridget; his daughter Hena occupied the other. Finally, a garret that served as storeroom for winter provisions, topped the house and had a window that opened upon the river.

On this evening Christian was in an animated conversation with his wife. It was late. The children were both asleep. A lamp lighted the room of the husband and wife. Near the window, with its small lozenge-shaped panes fastened between ribs of lead, lay the embroideries at which Bridget and Hena had been at work. In the rear of this rather spacious chamber stood the conjugal bed, surmounted with its canopy and enclosed by its curtains of orange serge. A little further away was a little book-case containing in neat rows the volumes in the printing of which Christian and his father contributed at the printing establishment of Masters Henry and Robert Estienne. In the same case Christian kept under lock his family legends and relics, together with whatever else that he attached special value to. Above the case an old cross-bow and battle axe hung from the wall. It was always well to have some arms in the house in order to repel the attacks of bandits who had of late grown increasingly bold. Two flat leather covered coffers for clothes and a few stools completed the humble furnishings of the room. Christian seemed greatly troubled in mind. Bridget, looking no less concerned than her husband, dropped the work that she expected to finish by lamp-light, and stepped towards her husband. With his eyes fixed upon the ground, his elbows upon his knees and his head in his hands, the latter observed:

"There can be no doubt. The person who stole the money, here, in this room, out of that case, and without breaking the lock, must be familiar with our house."

"I can assure you, Christian, since yesterday when we discovered the theft, I have been in a continuous fever."

"None but we and our children enter this room."

"No, excepting our customers or their employees. But as I am well aware that the Barbets are bold and wily enough to put on the disguise of honest merchants, whenever occasion demands it, in order to gain access to a house and steal, and that they might play that trick upon me under the pretext of bringing an order for some embroidery, neither Hena nor I ever leave the room when a stranger is with us."

"I am ransacking my mind for the intimate acquaintance who could have entered the room," the printer proceeded as if communing with himself with painful anxiety. "Occasionally, Lefevre spends an evening with us; I have come up into this room with him several times when he requested me to read some of our family legends to him."

"But, my friend, it is a long time since we have seen Lefevre; you yourself were wondering the other day what may have become of him; moreover, it is out of all question to suspect your friend, a man of austere morals, always wrapt in science."

"God prevent my suspecting him! I was only going over the extremely small number of persons who visit us familiarly."

"Then there is my brother. The fellow is, true enough, a soldier of adventure; he has his faults, grave faults, but – "

"Ah, Bridget, Josephin has for you and our children so tender a love, so touching – I hold him capable of doing almost anything in a hostile country, as is customary with people of his vocation; but he, who almost every day sits at our hearth – he, commit a theft in our house? Such a thought never crossed my mind – and never will!"

"Oh, I thank you for these words! I thank you!"

"And did you suppose that I suspected your brother? No! A thousand times, no!"

"What shall I say? The vagabond life that he has led since his early youth – the habits of violence and rapine with which the 'Franc-Taupins,' the 'Pendards,' and the other soldiers of adventure who are my brother's habitual companions are so justly reproached, might have caused suspicion to rise in some prejudiced mind, and – but my God – Christian – what ails you, tell me what ails you?" cried Bridget, seeing her husband hide his face between his hands in utter despair, and then suddenly rise and pace the room, as if pursued by a thought from which he sought to flee. "My friend," insisted Bridget, "what sudden thought has struck and afflicts you? There are tears in your eyes. Your face is strangely distorted. Answer me, I pray you!"

"I take heaven to witness," cried the artisan, raising his hands heavenward with a face that betrayed the tortures of his heart, "the loss of the twenty gold crowns, that we gathered so laboriously, is a serious matter to me; it was our daughter's dower; but that loss is as nothing beside – "

"Beside what? Let me know!"

"No. Oh, no! It is too horrible!"

"Christian, what have you in mind?"

"Leave me! Leave me!" but immediately regretting the involuntary rudeness, the artisan took Bridget's hands in his own, and said to her in a deeply moved voice: "Excuse me, poor, dear wife. You see, when I think of this affair I lose my head. When, at the printing shop, to-day, the horrible suspicion flashed through my mind, I feared it would drive me crazy! I struggled against it all I could – but a minute ago, as I was running over with you our intimate acquaintances who might be thought guilty of the theft, the frightful suspicion recurred to me. That is the reason of my distress."

Christian threw himself down again upon his stool; again a shudder ran over his frame and he hid his face between his hands.

"Tell me, my friend, what is the suspicion that assails you and that you so violently resist? Impart it to me, I pray you."

After a painful struggle with himself that lasted several minutes, the artisan murmured in a faint voice as if every word burnt his lips:

"Like myself, you noticed, recently – since about the time of Odelin's departure for Milan – you noticed, like myself, that a marked change has been coming over the nature and the habits of Hervé."

"Our son!" cried Bridget stupefied; and she added: "Mercy! Would you suspect him of so infamous an act?"

Christian remained steeped in a gloomy silence that Bridget, distracted with grief as she was, did not at first venture to disturb. Presently she proceeded:

"Impossible! Hervé, whom we brought up in the same principles as his brother – Hervé, who never was away from us – "

"Bridget, I told you, the suspicion is horrible; I have struggled against it with all my might," and the artisan's voice was smothered with sobs. "And yet, if after all it should be so! If our son is indeed the guilty one!"

"My friend, your suspicion bereaves me of my senses. You love Hervé so dearly, and your judgment is always so sound, your mind so penetrating, that I can not conceive how so unjustifiable

a thought could take possession of you. Our son is continuously at the printing shop, at your side, as Hena is at mine; better than anyone else should you know your son's heart." Bridget remained silent for a moment and then proceeded while scalding tears rolled down her cheeks: "Oh, I feel it, even if your suspicion is never justified, it will embitter the rest of my life! Oh, to think our son capable of stealing!"

"And for that very reason there is no one else in the world but you, and you alone, to whom I confide the horrid suspicion. Oh, Bridget, it is more than a suspicion. Let us not exaggerate matters; let us not be unnecessarily cast down; let us calmly look into the affair; let us carefully refresh our memories; we may arrive – may God hear my words – at the conclusion that the suspicion is unfounded. As I was just saying, a great change has lately come over Hervé. You noticed the singular manifestations as well as I."

"Yes, recently, he, who formerly was so cheerful, so open, so affectionate, has of late been cold and somber, dreamy and silent. He has grown pale and thin; he is quickly irritated. Shortly before the departure of our little Odelin, he often and without cause scolded the poor boy, for whom he always before had only kind words. And often since then, have I had occasion to reproach Hervé for his rudeness, I should almost say harshness towards his sister, whom he dearly loved. He now seems to avoid her company. At times I simply cannot understand his conduct towards her. Why, only yesterday, when you and he came home from the printing shop, after embracing you, as is her custom, Hena offered her forehead to her brother – but he rudely pushed her aside."

"I did not notice that; but I did notice the growing indifference of Hervé towards his sister. What mystery can lie below that?"

"And yet, my friend, we love all our children equally. Hervé might feel hurt if we showed any preference for Hena or Odelin. But we do not. We are equally kind to all the three."

"Yes, indeed. We shall have to look elsewhere for the cause of the change that afflicts us. Can it be that, without our knowledge, he keeps bad company? There is one circumstance in this affair that has struck me. Paternal love does not blind me. I see great aptitudes in Hervé. Not to mention the gift of an easy flowing eloquence that is exceptional at his age, he has become an excellent Latinist. Owing to his aptitude in that direction he has more than once been chosen to gather precious manuscripts at the houses of some men of letters, who are the friends of Master Robert Estienne. Usually our son attended to such work with accuracy and despatch. Of late, however, his absence from the shop on such errands is often long, unnecessarily so and also frequent, and he does not attend properly to his errands, sometimes does not attend to them at all. Master Robert Estienne has complained to me in a friendly way, saying that Hervé should be watched, that he was drawing near his eighteenth year and might contract acquaintances that would be cause of trouble for us later."

"On that very subject, my friend, only a few days ago I was reproaching Hervé for his estrangement from the friends of his boyhood, all of whom are good and honest lads. He flees their company and spurns their cordial advances. The only person with whom he seems to be intimate is Fra Girard, the Franciscan friar and son of our neighbor the mercer."

"I would prefer some other company for our son, but not that I accuse Fra Girard of being, like so many other monks, an improper person to associate with. He is said to be of austere morals, but being older than Hervé, he has, I am afraid, gained considerable influence over him, and rendered him savagely intolerant. Several of the artisans at the shop of Master Estienne are, like he himself, partisans of the religious reform; some are openly so, despite the danger that their outspokenness entails, others more privately. More than once did our son raise his voice with excessive violence against the new ideas which he calls heresies. And yet he knows that you and I share them."

"Alas! my friend, what woman, what mother would not share the reform ideas, seeing that they reject auricular confession? Did we not find ourselves compelled to stop our daughter from attending the confessional on account of the shameful questions that a priest dared to put to her and which, in the candor of her soul, she repeated to us? But to return to Hervé, even though, in some respects, I

dislike his intimacy with Fra Girard and fear it may tend to render him intolerant, the influence of the monk, the austerity of whose morals is commented upon, must have had the effect of keeping far from our son's mind an act so ugly that we can not mention it without shedding tears of sorrow," added Bridget wiping her moist eyes; "Hervé's piety, my friend, becomes daily more fervent; as you know, the unhappy boy imposes upon himself, at the risk of impairing his health, ever longer fasts. Did I not discover from the traces of blood upon his shirt that on certain days he carries close to his skin a belt that is furnished within with sharp iron pricks? That is not the conduct of a hypocrite! He sought to conceal from all eyes the secret macerations that he inflicts upon himself in penitence. It was only accidentally that I discovered the fact. I deplore such fanaticism; but his fanaticism may also be a safeguard. The very exaggeration to which Hervé carries his religious principles must strengthen him against temptation. Heaven be blessed! You were right, Christian; by closely considering the circumstances, we can come at no other conclusion than that such suspicions are unfounded. Our son is innocent, do you not think so, Christian?"

Gloomy and pensive the artisan listened to his wife without interrupting her. He replied:

"No, dear wife; fanaticism is no safeguard against evil. Alas! differently from you, the more I consider the facts that you adduce – I hardly dare say so to you – my suspicions, so far from being removed, grow in weight. Yes, I believe our son guilty."

"Great God! What a horrible thought!"

"I believe our son is sincere in his devout practices, however exaggerated these may be. But I also know that one of the most frightful consequences of fanaticism is that it clouds and perverts the most elemental principles of right and wrong, of justice and injustice, with those whom it dominates. Religious faith substitutes morality."

"But theft, seeing that I must mention the word – theft – how can fanaticism excuse that? You must be mistaken upon that subject!"

"Listen, Bridget. A few days ago – and it was the recollection of the circumstance that first awoke my suspicions – a few days ago one of our fellow workmen at the shop expressed himself with indignation at the traffic of indulgences that has recently been carried on in Paris, and he said emphatically that besides the immorality of the trade that was being practiced in the Pope's name, the extortion of money by such means from ignorance and from popular credulity was nothing short of a fraud practiced upon the people. And do you know the answer that our son made? 'That is a lie! It is impious! The money that is devoted to a pious deed, even if it be the fruit of a theft, of a murder, is purified and sanctified from the moment that it is employed to the greater glory of the Lord!'"

Bridget grew pale, and murmured in a voice smothered by sobs:

"Oh! now I fear – I also fear! May God have mercy upon us!"

"Do you now understand how, if our son is indeed guilty of the shameful act which we hesitate to impugn to him, in his blind fanaticism the unhappy boy will have believed that he was doing a meritorious act if he employed the money in some such work of devotion as ordering the saying of masses?"

CHAPTER II.
THE NEOPHYTE

As Christian was saying these words, he heard, first at a distance and soon after on the Exchange Bridge itself, the loud clang of several bells and the sharp twirl of metal rattles, intercepted with a lugubrious psalmody, at the close of which the noise of bells and rattles became deafening. No less astonished than his wife, the artisan rose from his seat, opened the window, and saw a long procession filing before the house. At its head marched a detachment of archers carrying their cross-bows on their left shoulders and long thick wax candles in their right hands; behind them came several Dominican monks in their white robes and black cowls, ringing the bells and turning the rattles; after these followed a cart drawn by two horses caparisoned in black and silver network. The four sides of the cart were of considerable height and constituted a huge quadrangular transparency, lighted from within, and representing the figures of men and women of all ages, together with children, plunged up to the waist in a sea of flames, and, amid desperate contortions, raising their suppliant arms towards an image of God seated on a throne. On each of the four sides of the wagon and above the painting the following inscription was to be seen, printed in thick black and red letters:

PRAY

FOR THE SOULS IN PURGATORY

TO-MORROW

AAT

THE CHURCH OF THE CONVENT OF ST. DOMINIC

THE INDULGENCE

WILL RAISE ITS THRONE

PRAY AND GIVE

FOR THE POOR SOULS THAT ARE IN PURGATORY

Four monks equipped with long gilded staves, topped with glass lanthorns, on which also souls in torture were painted, marched on either side of the cart. A large number of other Dominican

monks carrying a large silver crucifix at their head, followed the cart. The monks chanted in a loud voice the following lugubrious psalm of penitence:

"De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine;
Domine, exaudi vocem meam.
Fiant aures tuæ intendentes
In vocem deprecationis meæ!" [4]

Every time, at the close of the funereal chant, the clatter of bells and rattles was struck up anew as the procession marched along. Finally, a second detachment of archers brought up the rear. A crowd of ragged men and women, all with cynic and even ruffianly faces, almost all night-strollers, if not worse, followed in the wake of the march. They held one another by the arms, sang, crossed themselves and shouted:

"Glory to the Holy Father!"

"He sends us indulgences!"

"We need them!"

"Blessings upon him!"

Interspersed between these exclamations, coarse and even obscene jokes were exchanged. The mob nevertheless bore the impress of conviction in the most deplorable of superstitions. A large number of the inhabitants of the houses built upon the bridge threw open their windows as the procession filed by; some of these reverently knelt down at their windows. After the procession had passed and the noise sounded only from a distance, Christian re-shut the window of his room, and said to his wife in voice that was even sadder than before:

"Alas, this procession seems to me to bode us only ill."

"I do not understand you, my friend."

"You saw, Bridget, the picture on the transparency of the cart that these monks surrounded. It represented the souls in purgatory, writhing in flames. The Dominican monks, whom the Pope has delegated to sell plenary indulgences, also sell the ransoming of souls in pain. All those who share that belief are convinced that, by means of money, they are able to snatch from the flames of purgatory, not only the near relatives or friends whom they imagine exposed to such torture, but also strangers to them. Could not Hervé have thought to himself: 'With the gold that I purloin from my father I shall be able to ransom twenty souls – fifty souls from purgatory'?"

"Say no more, Christian, say no more!" cried Bridget with a shudder; "say no more! My doubts, alas! almost turn into certainty;" but suddenly interrupting herself and listening in the direction of the door of the room, she added in a low voice: "Listen – listen."

Husband and wife remained silent. In the midst of the profound silence of the night they heard a noise that sounded like the intermittent strapping of a body. A thought flashed through Christian's mind; he motioned his wife not to stir; took up the lamp, and gently opened the door leading to the wooden staircase through which the lower floor was reached. Leaning over the banister with his hand shading the lamp, Christian saw Hervé, whom, no doubt, the clatter of bells and rattles of the procession had awakened, kneeling in only his shirt and trousers upon the floor and inflicting a rude discipline upon his sides and shoulders by means of a cat-o'-nine-tails, the thongs of which ended in knots. The lad flagellated himself with such intense exaltation that he did not notice the proximity of his father on the staircase, although the light shed by the lamp projected its rays into the lower hall. Bridget had followed her husband with tears in her eyes, walking on tip-toe. He felt

[4] From the bowels of the earth I have cried up to thee, O, Lord;O, Lord, give ear unto my voice.May thy ears be ready to listenTo the voice of my supplications.

the trembling hand of his wife upon his shoulder and in his ear the whispered words of distress that forced themselves through her sobs:

"Oh, the unhappy boy!"

"Come, my dear wife; the moment is favorable to obtain a confession from our son."

"And if he confesses, let everything be pardoned," replied the indulgent mother. "He must have succumbed to an impulse of fanatical charity."

With the lamp in his hand the artisan descended into the kitchen with his wife without seeking to conceal their approach. The sound of their steps and the creak of the wooden staircase under their feet finally attracted Hervé's attention. He suddenly turned his head, and, seeing his father and mother, rose from the floor with a start as if propelled by a spring. In his surprise the lad dropped his instrument of torture.

Christian's son was almost eighteen years of age. His once open, happy and blooming face, that breathed frankness, had become pale and somber; his unsteady, restless eyes seemed to eschew observation. The unexpected presence of his parents seemed at first to cause him a painful impression; he looked embarrassed; but doubtlessly calling himself to account for the unguarded impulse of false shame, he said resolutely without raising his eyes:

"I was administering a discipline to myself – I thought I was alone – I was fulfilling a penance – "

"My son," replied the artisan, "seeing that you are up, sit down upon that chair – your mother and I have serious matters to speak about with you; we shall be better here than upstairs, where our voice might wake up your sister."

Not a little astonished, the lad sat down, on a stool. Christian also sat down; Bridget remained standing near her husband, leaning upon his shoulder, with her eyes resting compassionately upon her son.

"My boy," said Christian, "I wish, first of all, to assure you that neither I nor your mother have ever thought of crossing you in the religious practices that you have of late been indulging in with all the impetuous ardor of a neophyte. But seeing that the occasion presents itself, I wish to make some observations to you upon the subject in all fatherly love."

"I listen, father; speak."

"You, as well as your sister and brother, have been brought up by us in the evangelical doctrine – love one another, do not unto others what you would not like to be done to, pardon those who trespass against you, pity the sinners, help the sorrowful, honor those who repent, be industrious and honest. These few words sum up the eternal morality that your mother and myself have preached and held up to you since your infancy as the example to be followed. When you reached riper years of intelligence I sought to inculcate in your mind that belief of our fathers that we are immortal, body and soul, and that after what is called death, a moment of transition between the existence that ends and that which begins, we are born again, or, rather, continue to live, spirit and matter, in other spheres, thus rising successively, at each of those stages of our eternal existence, towards infinite perfection equal to that of the Creator."

"That, father, is heresy, and flies in the face of Catholic dogma."

"Be it so. I do not force the belief upon you. Every man is free to strive in his religious aspirations after his own ideal of the relations between the Creator and the creature. The freedom to do so is the most priceless attribute of the soul, the sublimest right of human conscience."

"There is no religion in the world beside the Catholic religion, the revealed religion," put in Hervé in a sharp voice. "All other belief is false – "

"My friend," said Christian interrupting his son, "I do not wish to enter into a theological discussion with you. You have of late lost your former happy disposition, you seem to mistrust us, you grow more and more reserved and taciturn, your absences from the printing shop are becoming frequent and are prolonged beyond all measure; your nature, once so pleasant and buoyant, has become irritable and sour, even to the point of rudeness towards your brother Odelin before his

departure for Milan. Besides that and since, your asperity towards your sister is ever more marked – and yet you know that she loves you dearly."

At these last words a thrill ran over Hervé's frame. At the mention of his sister, his physiognomy grew more intensely somber and assumed an undefinable expression. For a moment he remained silent, whereupon his voice, that sounded sharp and positive shortly before in his answers regarding religious matters, became unsteady as he stammered:

"At times I am subject to fits of bad humor that I pray God to free me of. If – I have been – rude – to my sister – it is without meaning to. I entertain a strong affection for her."

"We are certain of that, my child," Bridget replied; "your father only mentions the circumstance as one of the symptoms of the change that we notice in you, and that so much alarms us."

"In short," Christian proceeded, "we regret to see you give up the company of the friends of your childhood, and no longer share the innocent pleasures that become your age."

Hervé's voice, that seemed so much out of his control when his sister Hena was the topic, became again harsh and firm:

"The friends whom I formerly visited are worldly, they are running to perdition; the thoughts that to-day engage me are not theirs."

"You are free to choose your connections, my friend, provided they be honorable. I see you have become an intimate friend of Fra Girard, the Franciscan monk – "

"God sent him across my path – he is a saint! His place is marked in paradise."

"I shall not dispute the sanctity of Fra Girard; he is said to be a man of probity, and I believe it. I must admit, however, that I would have preferred to see you form some other friendship; the monk is several years your senior; you seem to have a blind faith in him; I fear lest the fervor of his zeal may render you intolerant, and lead you to share his own excessive religious exaltation. For all that, I never reproached you for your intimacy with Fra Girard – "

"Despite anything that you could have done or said, father, I would have seen to my own salvation. God before the family."

"And do you imagine, my son, that we could be opposed to your welfare?" asked Bridget in an accent of affectionate reproach. "Do you not know how much we love you? Are not all our thoughts dictated by our attachment to you? Can you doubt our affection?"

"Happiness lies in the faith, and the faith comes to us from heaven. There is no welfare outside of the bosom of the Church."

"It would have become you better to answer your mother's kind words with other terms," observed Christian, as he saw his wife hurt and saddened by the harshness of Hervé's words. "If your faith comes from heaven, filial love also is a celestial sentiment; may God forfend that it be weakened in your heart – in fine, may God forfend that Fra Girard's influence over you should tend to pervert, despite himself and despite yourself, your sense of right and wrong."

"I do not understand you, father."

The artisan cast a significant look at Bridget, who, guessing her husband's secret thoughts, felt assailed by mortal anguish.

"I shall explain myself more clearly," Christian continued. "Do you remember a few days ago at the shop when some of our fellow workmen expressed indignation at the traffic in indulgences?"

"Yes, father; and I withered the blasphemous utterances with the contempt that they deserved. Indulgences open the gates of heaven."

"One of our fellow workingmen loudly likened the commerce in indulgences to a theft," Christian proceeded, unable completely to overcome his emotion, while Bridget in vain sought to catch the eyes of her son, who, from the start of this conversation held his eyes nailed to the floor. "Upon hearing so severe an opinion expressed upon the indulgences," Christian added, "you, my son, shouted that all money, even if it proceeded from theft, became holy if devoted to pious works; you said so, did you not? You thereby justified a reprehensible action."

"It is my conviction."

After a momentary silence the artisan again resumed:

"My boy, you were surely awakened to-night, as we ourselves were, by the noise of the procession. It was the procession of indulgences."

"Yes, father – and in order to render my prayers for the deliverance of the souls in purgatory more efficacious, I macerated myself."

"The monks claim that the souls in purgatory can be ransomed by money; do they not make the claim?"

"It is the doctrine of the Catholic Church, father. The Church can not err."

"Hervé, let me suppose that you find on the street a purse full of gold; would you believe yourself justified to dispose of it in behalf of the souls in purgatory, without first inquiring after the rightful owner of the purse?"

"I would not hesitate a minute to do what you said. I would take it to the Church."

Christian and Bridget exchanged looks of distress at this answer. Their suspicions were almost confirmed. They now counted at least with Hervé's frankness. Convinced that all means were legitimate in order to compass the salvation of souls in pain, he would assuredly admit the theft. The artisan proceeded:

"My son, we never set you the example of duplicity. Particularly at this moment when we must appeal to your frankness, we shall speak without circumlocution. I have this to say to you: The fruits of your mother's laborious savings and my own have been recently purloined; the sum amounted to twenty gold crowns."

Hervé remained impassable and silent.

"The theft was committed yesterday or the day before," pursued Christian, painfully affected by his son's impassiveness. "The money was deposited in the case in our bedroom, and could have been taken away by none except a person familiar in our house."

With his hands crossed over his knees and his eyes on the floor, Hervé remained silent, impenetrable.

"Your mother and I first cudgeled our brains to ascertain who could have committed the guilty act," Christian proceeded, driving the point nearer and nearer home, and he added slowly, accentuating these last words: "It then occurred to us that, seeing the theft was justifiable by your convictions – that is to say, that it was legitimate if committed for the sake of some pious work – you might – in a moment of mental aberration – have appropriated the sum for the purpose of consecrating it to the ransoming of souls in purgatory."

The husband and wife awaited their son's answer with mortal anxiety. Christian watched him closely and observed that, despite Hervé's apparent impassiveness, a slight flush suffused his face; although the lad did not raise his eyes, he cast furtive glances at his parents. The somber and guilty glances, caught by Christian, surprised and distressed him. He no longer doubted his son's guilt, he even despaired of drawing from the lad a frank admission that might somewhat have extenuated the ugly action. Christian continued with a penetrating voice:

"My son, I have acquainted you with the painful suspicions that weigh upon our hearts – have you no answer to make?"

"Father," said Hervé firmly and tersely, "I have not touched your money."

"He lies," thought the desolate artisan to himself; "it is our own son who committed the theft."

"Hervé," cried Bridget with her face bathed in tears and throwing herself at the feet of her son, around whom she threw her arms, "my son, be frank – we shall not scold you! Good God, we believe in the sincerity of your new convictions – they are your only excuse! You certainly must have believed that with the aid of that money, which lay idle on the shelf of the book-case, you might redeem poor souls from the tortures of purgatory. The charitable purpose of such a superstition might, aye, it is bound to, carry away a young head like yours. I repeat to you; we shall look upon that as your

excuse; we shall accept the excuse, in the hope of leading you back again to more wholesome ideas of good and evil. From your point of view, so far from your action being wrongful, it must have seemed meritorious to you. Why not admit it? Is it shame that restrains you, my poor boy? Fear not. The secret will remain with your father and me." And embracing the lad with maternal warmth, Bridget added: "Do not the principles in which we brought you up make us feel sure that, despite your temporary blindness, you will know better in the future? Could you possibly become confirmed in dishonesty, you, my son? You who until now gave us so much cause for happiness? Come, Hervé, make a manly effort – tell us the truth – you will thereby change our sorrow into joy; your confession will prove your frankness and your confidence in our indulgence and tenderness. You still are silent? – not a word – you have not a word for me?" cried the wretched woman, seeing her son remaining imperturbable. "What! we who should complain, are imploring you! You should be in tears, and yet it is I alone who weep! You should be at our feet, and I am at yours! And yet you remain like a piece of icy marble! Oh, unhappy child!"

"Mother," repeated Hervé with inflexible voice without raising his eyes, "I have not touched your money."

In despair at such insensibility, Bridget rose and threw herself convulsively sobbing into the arms of her husband: "I am a mother to be pitied."

"My son," now said Christian in a severe tone, "if you are guilty – and I regret but too deeply that I fear you are – learn this: Even if you should have employed the money that has been purloined from my room in what you term 'pious works,' you would not therefore be less guilty of a theft, do you understand? – a theft in all the disgraceful sense of the word! I was not mistaken! It has turned out so! By means of unworthy sophisms, your friend Fra Girard has perverted your one-time sense of right and wrong! Oh, whatever insane or impostor monks may say to the contrary, human and divine morality will always condemn theft, whatever the disguises or hypocritical pretexts may be under which it is committed. To believe that such a disgraceful action deserves no punishment – worse yet, that it is meritorious – by reason of the fruits thereof being consecrated to charitable works, is about the most monstrous mental aberration that can ever insult the conscience of an honest man!" Christian thereupon supported and led Bridget in tears back towards the staircase, took up the lamp, and walked upstairs with these parting words to his son: "May heaven open your eyes, my son and inspire you with repentance!"

Imperturbable as ever, Hervé did not seem to hear his father's last words. When the latter re-entered his own room with his wife and closed the door, the young man, who had remained in the dark, threw himself down upon his knees, picked up his instrument of discipline and began flagellating himself with savage fury. The lad smothered the cries that the pain involuntarily forced from him, and, a prey to delirious paroxysms, only murmured from time to time, with bated breath, the name of his sister Hena.

CHAPTER III.
THE SALE OF INDULGENCES

The morning after the trying night experienced by Christian and his wife, a large crowd filled the church of the Dominican Convent. It was a bizarre crowd. It consisted of people of all conditions. Thieves and mendicants, artisans, bourgeois and seigneurs, lost women and devout old dames, ladies of distinction and plebeian women and children of all ages, elbowed one another. They were all attracted by that day's religious celebration; they crowded especially near the choir. This space was shut off by an iron railing four feet in height; it was to be the theater of the most important incidents in the ceremony. Among the spectators nearest to the choir stood Hervé Lebrenn together with his friend Fra Girard. The Franciscan monk was about twenty-five years of age, and of a cadaverous, austere countenance. The mask of asceticism concealed an infernal knave gifted with superior intelligence. The monk enveloped his young companion, so to speak, with a fascinating gaze; the latter, apparently a prey to profound preoccupation, bent his head and crossed his arms over his breast.

"Hervé," said Fra Girard in a low voice, "do you remember the day when in a fit of despair and terror you came to me to confession – and confessed a thing that you hardly dared admit to yourself?"

"Yes," answered Hervé with a shudder and dropping his eyes still lower; "yes, I remember the day."

"I then told you," the Franciscan proceeded to say, "that the Catholic Church, from which you were separated from childhood by an impious education, afforded consolation to troubled hearts – even better, held out hope – still better than that, gave positive assurance even to the worst of sinners, provided they had faith. By little and little our long and frequent conversations succeeded in causing the divine light to penetrate your mind, and the scales dropped from your eyes. The faith that I then preached to you, has since filled and now overflows your soul. Fasting, maceration and ardent prayer have smoothed the way for your salvation. The hour of your reward has arrived. Blessed be the Lord!"

Fra Girard had hardly uttered these words when the deep notes of the organ filled with a melancholic harmony the lugubrious church into which the light of day broke only through narrow windows of colored glass. A procession that issued from the interior of the Dominican cloister entered the church and marched around the aisles. The cortege was headed by four footmen clad in red, the papal livery, who held aloft four standards upon which the pontifical coat-of-arms was emblazoned; they were followed by priests in surplices surrounding a cross and chanting psalms of penitence; behind these came another platoon of papal footmen, bearing a stretcher covered with gold cloth, and in the center of which, on a cushion of crimson velvet, lay a red box containing the bull of Leo X empowering the Order of St. Dominic to dispense indulgences. Several censer-bearers walked backward before the stretcher, and stopped from time to time in order to swing their copper and silver censers from which clouds of perfumed vapor issued and circled upward. A Dominican prior walked behind the stretcher clasping a large cross of red wood in his arms; this dignitary – a man in the full vigor of age, tall of stature and so corpulent that his paunch threatened to burst his frock – was the Apostolic Commissioner entrusted with the sale of indulgences; a heavy black beard framed in his high-colored face; the monk's triumphant gait and the haughty looks that he cast around him pointed him out as the hero of the approaching ceremony. He was followed by a long line of penitentiaries and sub-Apostolic Commissioners with white wands in their hands. A last squad of papal footmen, holding by leather straps a huge coffer also covered with crimson velvet and locked with three gilded clasps, closed the procession. A slit, similar to that of the poor-boxes in churches, was cut into the lid of the coffer. Through it the moneys were to be dropped by the purchasers of indulgences, or by the faithful, anxious to redeem the souls in purgatory.

When the procession, at the passage of which the crowd prostrated itself religiously, completed the circuit of the church, the papal footmen who bore the banners grouped them as trophies upon

the main altar, before which the stretcher, covered with gold cloth, the bull, and the big coffer were processionally borne. The Apostolic Commissioner with the cross of red wood in his hand placed himself near the coffer; the penitentiaries ranked themselves in front of several confessionals that were set up for the occasion near the choir, and all of which bore the pontifical arms.

The excitement and curiosity awakened by the procession together with the peals of the organ and the chant of the priests excited a considerable agitation in the church. By degrees quiet was restored, the kneeling faithful rose again to their feet, and all eyes turned impatiently towards the choir. Hervé, who had been one of the first to prostrate himself, was among the last to rise; the lad was a prey to profound agony; perspiration bathed his now livid face; he was hardly able to breathe. Turning his wandering eyes towards Fra Girard, he said to the monk in broken accents:

"Oh, if I only can rely upon your promises! The moment has arrived when I must believe. I tremble!"

"Oh, man of little faith!" answered the Franciscan with severity and pointing to the papal commissioner, who was preparing to speak; "listen – and repent that you doubted. Ask God to pardon you."

The silence became profound; the dealer in indulgences deftly rolled up the sleeves of his robe, just as a juggler in the market would have done in order not to be hindered in the tumultuous motions of his performance, and pointing to the red cross which he placed beside him, he cried in a stentorian voice fit to make the glass windows of the building rattle:

"In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, Amen![5] You see this cross, my beloved brothers? Well, this cross is as efficacious as the cross of Jesus Christ! You will ask me, How so? My answer is that this is, so to speak, the symbol of the indulgences that our Holy Father has commissioned me to dispense. But what are these indulgences? you will then ask? What they are, my brothers? They are the most precious gift, the most miraculous, the most wonderful that the Lord has ever bestowed upon His faithful! Therefore, I say unto you – Come, come to me; I shall give you letters furnished with the seal of our Holy Father, and thanks to these letters, my brothers – would you believe it? – not only will the sins that you have committed be pardoned, but they will give you absolution for the sins that you desire to commit!"

"Did you hear that?" Fra Girard whispered to Hervé. "One can obtain absolution both for the sins that he has committed, and for the sins that he intends to commit!"

"But – there – are – things – crimes and outrages," stammered Hervé with secret horror, "that, may be, one can not obtain absolution for! Oh, woe is me! I feel myself sliding down a fatal slope!

"Listen," replied the Franciscan, "listen to the end; you will then understand."

The mass of people that were crowded in the church received with indescribable signs of satisfaction the words uttered by the Dominican seller of indulgences; especially did those whose purses were well lined hail with delight the prospect of their salvation if they but took the precaution of equipping themselves in advance with an absolution that embraced the past, the present and the future. The Apostolic Commissioner observed the magic effect that his words produced; in a jovial and familiar tone he proceeded to harangue the audience amidst violent contortions of both face and limbs:

"Now, let us have a heart-to-heart talk, my brothers; let us reason together. Let us suppose that you wish to undertake a voyage into some strange country that is infested with thieves; fearing that you will be rifled of all that you carry about you before you attain the end of your journey, you do not wish to take your money with you. What do you do? You take your money to a banker, do you not? You allow him a slight profit, and he furnishes you with a draft, by means of which the money

[5] This whole sermon la a reproduction from the records of the time. See Merle d'Aubigné, *History of the Reformation in the XVI Century*, vol. 1. p. 332. (Pp. 86, 87, edition H. W. Hagemann Publishing Co., New York, 1894.)

that you deposited with him is paid over to you in the strange country, upon your arrival there. Do you understand me well, my beloved brothers?"

"Yes," answered several of the faithful; "we understand – proceed with your discourse."

"Miserable sinners!" replied the Dominican suddenly changing his jovial tone into a thundering voice. "Miserable sinners! You understand me, say you? and yet you hesitate to buy from me for the small price of a few crowns a draft of salvation! What! Despite all the sins that you may render yourselves guilty of during the voyage of life, infested as that road is with diabolical temptations that are infinitely more dangerous than thieves, this draft will be paid to you in paradise in the divine money of eternal salvation by the Almighty, upon whom we, the bankers of souls, have drawn in your name – and yet you hesitate to insure to yourselves at so small a cost your share of the celestial enjoyments reserved for the blissful! No! No! You will not hesitate, my brothers! You will buy my indulgences!" the Dominican now proceeded to say with a resumption of familiar and even paternal solicitude. "Nor is this all, my brothers; my indulgences do not save the living only, they redeem the dead! Aye, the dead, be they even as hardened as Lucifer himself! But, you may ask, how can your indulgences deliver the dead?" cried the merchant of salvation again shouting at the top of his voice, "How will my indulgences save the dead? Can it be that you do not hear the voices of your parents, your friends, even of strangers to you – but what does that matter, seeing that you are Christians? – can it be that you do not hear their frightful concert of maledictions, of groans, of gnashing of teeth which rises from the bottom of the abyss of fire, where those poor souls are writhing in the furnace of purgatory – where they writhe, waiting for the mercy of God or the pious works of man to deliver them from their dreadful tortures? Can it be that you do not hear those miserable sinners, the piteous meanings of those unhappy people, who from the bottom of the yawning gulf where the flames are devouring them cry out to you: 'Oh, ye stony hearts! we are enduring frightful torture! An alms would deliver us! You can give it! Will you refuse to give it?' Will you refuse, my brothers? No! I know you will give the alms. I know you will give it when you consider that the very instant your gold crowns drop into this trunk," (pointing to it) "crack – psitt – the soul pops out of purgatory and flies into heaven like a dove liberated from its cage! Amen! Empty your purses, empty your purses, my friends!"

The majority of the audience before the Dominican seemed little concerned about the deliverance of souls in pain. However blind their superstitious belief, it had a certain charitable side, but that side had no attraction whatever for the faithful ones who were attracted only by the expectation of being able, by means of indulgences, to give a loose, in perfect security of conscience, to whatever excesses or crimes they had in mind.

A man with a gallows-bird face named Pichrocholle, one of the Mauvais-Garçons who hired out their homicidal daggers to the highest bidder, said in a low voice to a Tire-Laine, another bandit, and one of the worst of his kind:

"As truly as the Franc-Taupin whom I was speaking about to you a short time ago saved my life at the battle of Marignan, I would not give six silver sous for the redemption of the souls in purgatory! Oh, if I only were rich enough to purchase a good letter of absolution – 'sdeath! – I would pay for it gladly and spot-cash, too! Once the papal absolution is in your pocket, your hand is firmer at its work; it does not tremble when dispatching your man! With an absolution duly executed, you can defy the fork of Satan on the Judgment Day. But by St. Cadouin, what do I care for the souls in purgatory! I laugh at their deliverance! And you, Grippe-Minaud?"

"I confess," answered the Tire-Laine, "I bother as little about the souls in purgatory as about an empty purse. But tell me, Pichrocholle," added Grippe-Minaud with a pensive air, "letters of absolution are too dear for poor devils like ourselves – suppose we stole one of those blessed letters from the commissioner, would the theft be a sin?"

"'Sdeath! How could it be? Does it not give absolution in advance? But those jewels are kept too safely to be pilfered."

While the Mauvais-Garçon and the Tire-Laine were exchanging these observations, the Apostolic Commissioner rolled his sleeves still higher, and continued his sermon, interspersing his words with smiles or violent gestures according as the occasion demanded:

"But, my brothers, you will say to me: You puff your indulgences a good deal; nevertheless there are such frightful crimes, crimes that are so abominable, so monstrous that your indulgences could never reach them! You are mistaken, my brothers. No! A thousand times no! My indulgences are so good, they are so sure, they are so efficacious, so powerful that they absolve everything – yes, everything! Do you want an example? Let us suppose an impossible thing – let us suppose that someone were to rape the holy Mother of God – an abominable act of sacrilege!"[6]

A long murmur expressive of dreadful suspense and hope received these last words of the trafficker in indulgences; a boundless horizon was opened for all manner of the blackest and most unheard-of felonies. Among others in the crowd, Hervé remained hanging upon the lips of the Dominican; the lad was seized with dizziness; he imagined himself oppressed by a nightmare. The hollow-sounding voice of Fra Girard awoke him to reality. With a triumphant accent the Franciscan whispered to his disciple:

"An insult to the Mother of God herself would be pardoned! Even such a crime would be reached by an indulgence! Did you hear him? Did you? An indulgence would cover even that!"

A tremor ran through Hervé from head to foot; he made no answer, hid his face in his hands, and feeling himself reel like an intoxicated man and even his knees to yield under him, the lad found himself obliged to lean upon the arms of the Franciscan, who contemplated him with an expression of infernal joy.

The merchant of indulgences had paused for a moment upon uttering his abominable supposition in order the better to assure himself of its effect; he then proceeded in a stentorian voice:

"You tremble, my brothers! So much the better! That proves that you appreciate in the fulness of its horror the sacrilege which I cited as an example! Now, then, the more horrible the sacrilege, all the more sovereign is the virtue of my indulgences, seeing that they give absolution therefor! Yes, my brothers, whatever the sacrilege that you may commit, you will be pardoned – provided you pay for it – provided you pay bountifully for it! That is clearer than day! Our Lord God will have no power over you, he ceases to be God, having assigned His pardoning power to the Pope. But, you may still ask, why does our Holy Father so bountifully distribute the boon of his indulgences? Why?" repeated the Dominican in a voice of deep lament; "why? Alas! alas! alas! my brothers, it is in order to be enabled, thanks to the returns from the sales of these indulgences, to rebuild the Basilica of St. Peter and St. Paul in Rome with such splendor that there is none to match it in the world. Indeed, none other must be like that basilica, which contains the sacred bodies of the two apostles! And this notwithstanding – would you believe it, my brothers? – the Cathedral of Rome is in such a state of dilapidation that the holy bones, the sacrosanct bones of St. Peter and St. Paul are so constantly exposed to the peltings of rain and hail, they are so soiled and dishonored by dust and vermin that they are falling to pieces!"

A shudder of painful indignation ran over the faithful crowd assembled before the Dominican when thus informed that the relics of the apostles were exposed to the inclemencies of the weather and the soilure of vermin as a result of the dilapidated state of the Basilica of Rome, while, since then, the most marvelous monument of architecture that immortalizes the genius of Michael Angelo, was reared to the admiration of the world. Perceiving the effect made by his peroration, the Dominican proceeded in a thundering voice:

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[6] We consider it our duty to cite literally the monstrous fact against which the heart rises in revolt, and reason feels indignant:"Sub commissariis insuper ac praedicatoribus veniarum imponere ut si quis, per impossibile. *Dei genetricem*, semper virginem violasset, quod eundem indulgentiarum vigore absolvere posset luce clarius est…" – (l'ositiones fratris J. Tezelil, quibus defendit indulgentias contra Lutherum. Theses 99, 100 and 101). Cited by Merle d'Aubigné, *History of the Reformation in the XVI Century*, p. 86, edition H. W. Hagemann Publishing Co., New York, 1894.

"No, my brothers! No! The sacred ashes of the apostles shall no longer remain in dirt and disgrace! No! Indulgence has set up its throne in the Church of St. Dominic!" and pointing to the large coffer and beating with his fists a tattoo upon the lid, the Apostolic Commissioner added with the roar of a bull: "Now, bring your money! Bring it, good people! Bring plenty! I shall put you the example of charity. I consecrate this gold piece to the redemption of souls in purgatory!"

And pulling out of his pocket a half ducat which he held up glistening to the eyes of the crowd, he dropped it into the coffer through the slit in the lid, upon which he continued to strike with his fists, keeping time to his words as he cried:

"Fetch your money! Fetch it, good people! Fetch your ducats!"

The front ranks of the crowd broke in response to the summons of the trafficker in indulgences and hastened to empty their purses. But the Dominican held back the surging crowd with a gesture of his hand and said:

"One more word, my dear brothers! Do you see these confessionals decorated with the armorial bearings of the Holy Father? The priests who will take your confessions represent the apostolic penitentiaries of Rome on the occasions of grand jubilees. All those who wish to participate in the three principal indulgences will proceed to these confessionals and will conscientiously notify the confessor of the amount of money that they are disposed to deprive themselves of in order to obtain the following favors:

"The first is the absolute remission of all sins – past, present and future.

"The second is freedom from participation in the works of the Holy Church, such as fasts, prayers, pilgrimages and macerations of all nature.

"The third – listen carefully, my brothers, pay particular attention to the last words, as the saying is – this indulgence exceeds all that the most faithful believers can wish for!"

"Listen," whispered Fra Girard to Hervé; "listen, and repent your having doubted the resources of the faith."

"Oh, I doubt no longer, and yet I hardly dare to hope," murmured the son of Christian with bated breath, while the Dominican proceeded to announce aloud:

"The third favor, my brothers, gives you the right to choose a confessor, who, every time that you fear you are about to die, will be bound – by virtue of the letter of absolution that you will have purchased and which you will display before him – to give you absolution not only for your ordinary sins, but also for those greater crimes the remission of which is reserved to the apostolic See, to wit, bestiality, the crime against nature, parricide and incest."

The Dominican had hardly pronounced these words when Hervé's features became frightful to behold. The lad's eyes shot fire, and a smile of the damned curled his lips as Fra Girard stooped down to him and whispered in his ear:

"Did I deceive you? The indulgence is absolute, even for incest."

"Finally, my brothers," the Apostolic Commissioner proceeded to say, "the fourth favor consists in redeeming souls from purgatory. For this favor, my brothers, it is not necessary, as for the three first ones, to be contrite of heart and to confess. No, no! It is enough if you drop your offerings in this coffer. You will thereby snatch the souls of the dead from the tortures that they are undergoing; and you will be moreover contributing towards the holy work of restoring the Basilica of St. Peter and St. Paul at Rome. Now, then, my brothers," he added, thumping anew upon the coffer, "come forward with your money! Come forward with your ducats! Come!"

Upon this last exhortation the railing of the choir was thrown open. The small number of the charitably disposed who wished to deliver the souls in pain began filing before the coffer into which they dropped their offerings after making the sign of the cross; the confessionals, however, in which the pontifical penitentiaries took their seats, ready to issue letters of absolution, were immediately besieged by a mob of men and women, anxious to obtain impunity in the eyes of heaven and of their own conscience for sins ranging from the most venial up to monstrous deeds that cause nature

to shudder. It was a frightful sight, the spectacle presented by the mob around these confessionals crowding to the quarry of impunity for crime.

Good God! Your vicars order and exploit the traffic! Behold human conscience upturned, shaken at its very foundation, losing even the sense of discrimination between vice and virtue! The moral sense is perverted, it is smothered by sacrilegious superstition! Mankind is lashed to a vertigo of folly and evil by the assurance of impunity, feeling certain, Oh, God of justice! of having You for an accomplice! Souls, until then innocent, no longer recoil before any passion however execrable, the bare thought of which is a crime! Does not the Pope of Rome absolve for all eternity, in exchange for a few gold crowns, even parricide and incest? If only its faith is strong enough the incestuous or parricidal heart knows, feels itself absolved! Oh, in honor at least to the religious sentiment – the divine gift implanted in man's heart, whatever the dogma may be in which it is wrapped – there are Catholic priests of austere morals who, despite their intolerance, have, in these accursed times, indignantly repudiated the monstrous idolatries and savage fetichism that even ancient paganism knew nothing of! No! No! Christ, your celestial gospel is and will remain the most scathing condemnation of the horrors that are committed in your venerated name. Those papal penitentiaries in the confessionals emblazoned with the pontifical arms, those new dealers in merchandise in the Temple dare to sell for cash patents of salvation! Alas! After a few hurried words exchanged with Fra Girard, Hervé was one of the first to hurry to the confessionals and kneel down; he did not long remain there; those near him heard the papal penitentiary first utter a cry of surprise; silence ensued, broken by the intermittent sobs of the lad; the chinking of the money that was being counted out to the priest in the confessional announced the close of the absolutional conversation. Hervé issued out of the tribunal of penitence holding a parchment with a convulsive clutch, closely followed by Fra Girard; he cleaved the compact mass of people, and withdrew to one of the lateral chapels; there he knelt down before a sanctuary of the Virgin that a lamp illumined, and by its light read the letter of absolution that he had just bought with his father's money. The pontifical letter was couched in the following terms:

May our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon you [here followed a blank space into which the name of the owner of the letter was to be inserted]; may He absolve you by the virtue of the Holy Passion. And I, in virtue of the apostolical power in me vested, do hereby absolve you from all ecclesiastical censures, judgments and punishments that you may have deserved; furthermore *of all excesses, sins and crimes that you may have committed, however grave and enormous these may be, and whatever the cause thereof*, even if such sins and crimes be those reserved to our Holy Father the Pope and to the apostolic See —*such as bestiality, the sin against nature, parricide and incest*. I hereby efface from you all traces of inability, all the marks of infamy that you may have drawn upon yourself on such occasions; I induct you anew as a participant of the sacraments of the Church; I re-incorporate you in the community of saints; I restore you to the innocence and purity that you were in at the hour of your baptism, so that, at the hour of your death, the door through which one passes to the place of torments and pain shall be closed to you, while on the contrary, the gate that leads to the Paradise of joy shall be wide open to you, *and should you not die speedily, Oh, my son! this token of mercy shall remain unalterable until your ultimate end*.

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Amen!

BROTHER JOHN TEZEL,
Apostolic Commissioner, signed by his own hand.[7]

Without rising from his knees Hervé frequently interrupted the reading of the document with suppressed signs of pleased and blissful astonishment. The absolution that he was now the owner of extended to the past, it covered the present, it reached the future. As Fra Girard called the purchaser's attention to the fact, the document bore no date and thereby extended the apostolic efficacy over

[7] Merle d'Aubigné. *History of the Reformation in the XVI Century*, vol. I, pp. 328, 329. (P. 88, edition H. W. Hagemann Publishing Co., New York, 1894.)

all the sins, all the crimes that the holder of the indulgence might commit to the end of his days. Hervé folded the parchment and inserted it into the scapulary that hung from his neck under his shirt, bowed down till his forehead touched the slab of the floor at the foot of the sanctuary and kissed it devoutly. Alas! The unfortunate lad was sincere in his frightful thankfulness towards the divine power that granted him the remission. His mind being led astray by a detestable influence, he felt himself, he believed himself, absolved of all the wrongs that his delirious imagination raved over. Fra Girard contemplated the prostrate lad with an expression of sinister triumph. The latter suddenly rose and, as if seized with a vertigo, staggered towards the railing of the chapel. The Franciscan held him back by the arm, and pointing at the image of the Virgin, arrayed in a flowing robe of silver cloth studded with pearls, and her head crowned with a golden crown that glistened in the semi-darkness of the dimly-lighted sanctuary, said in a solemn voice:

"Behold the image of the mother of our Savior, and remember the words of the Apostolic Commissioner. Even if the horrible sacrilege that he mentioned were a feasible thing, it could be absolved by the letter that you now own. If that is so, and it may not be doubted, what then becomes of the remorse and the terrors that have assailed you during the last three months? Since the day when, distracted with despair by the discovery of the frightful secret that had lain concealed in the bottom of your heart, you came to me, and yielding, despite yourself, to the irresistible instinct that whispered to you: 'Only in faith will you be healed,' you confessed your trials to me – since that day you have hourly realized that your instinct guided you rightly and that my words were true. To-day you are assured of a place in paradise. Hervé – do you hear me?"

"I hear," and after a moment of pensiveness: "Oh, celestial miracle for which, with my forehead in the dust, I rendered thanks to the mother of our Savior. Yes, since a minute ago, from the moment that I became the owner of this sacred schedule, my conscience has regained its former serenity, my mind is in peace, my heart is full of hope. I now only need to will and to dare – I shall will, I shall dare! Mine is the bliss of paradise!"

Hervé uttered these words with calm conviction. He did not lie. No, his conscience was serene, his mind at peace, his heart full of hope, even the lines on his face seemed suddenly transfigured; their savage and tormented expression made room for a sort of blissful ecstasy, a slight flush again enlivened the cheeks that frequent fasts, macerations and mental conflicts had paled. The monk smiled silently at the metamorphosis; he took Hervé by the arm, walked with him out of the church, and as the two stepped out upon the street said to him:

"You have now entered upon the path of salvation; your faith has been tried – will you still hesitate to join the ranks of the militants, who openly preach and cause this faith to triumph, the miraculous efficacy of which you have yourself experienced this day? Think of the glory of our holy mother the Church."

"Speak not now to me of such things. My thoughts are elsewhere – they are near my sister Hena."

"Very well; but, Hervé, never forget what I have often told you, and that your modesty makes you disregard. Your intelligence is exceptional; your erudition extensive; heaven has endowed you with the precious gift of a persuasive eloquence; the monastic Orders, especially the one to which I belong, I say so in all humility, recruit themselves carefully with young men whose gifts give promise of a brilliant future; this is enough to tell you of what priceless value you would be to our Order; you could make with us a rapid and brilliant career; you might even become the prior of our monastery. But I shall not pursue this subject; you are not listening to me; we shall take up the matter later. Where are you going so fast?"

"I am going back to my father, to the printing shop of Master Robert Estienne."

"Be prudent – above all, no indiscretion!"

"Girard," answered Hervé with a slightly moved voice and after a second's reflection, "I know not what may happen during the next few days; I will, and I shall dare; can I at all events count upon obtaining asylum in your cell?"

"Whatever the hour of the day or night may be, you may ring at the little gate of the convent, where the faithful repair who come to ask our assistance for the dying; ask the brother gateman for me; that will let you in and you will find an inviolable asylum within our walls; you will there be sheltered from all pursuit."

"I thank you for the promise, and I rely upon it. Adieu. Think of me in your prayers."

"Adieu, and let me see you soon again," answered the Franciscan as he followed with his eyes the rapidly retreating figure of Hervé. "Whatever may happen," added Fra Girard to himself, "he now belongs to us, body and soul. Such acquisitions are precious in these days of implacable struggle against heresy. God be praised!"

CHAPTER IV.
THE "TEST OF THE LUTHERANS."

At the time of this narrative there rose at about the middle of St. John of Beauvais Street a large, new house built in the simple and graceful style recently imported from Italy. Upon a gilt sign, ornamented with the symbolical arms of the University of Paris, and placed immediately over the door, the inscription: ROBERT ESTIENNE, PRINTER was painted in bold letters. Heavy iron bars protected the windows of the ground floor against any bold attempts that might be contemplated by the bandits that the city was infested with, and the defensive precaution was completed by a heavy sheet of iron fastened with heavy nails to an already solid and massive door that was surmounted by a sculptured allegory of the Arts and Sciences, an elegant piece of work from the chisel of one of the best pupils of Primaticio, a celebrated Italian artist whom Francis I called to France. The house belonged to Master Robert Estienne, the celebrated printer, the worthy successor of his father in that learned industry, and one of the most erudite men of the century. Profoundly versed in the Latin, Greek and Hebrew languages, Master Robert Estienne raised the art of printing to a high degree of perfection. Passionately devoted to his art, he lavished so much care upon the publications that issued from his establishment, that not only did he himself correct the proofs of the Latin, Greek and Hebrew works which he printed, but he furthermore stuck the revised proofs to his office door and kept them there for a certain time with the offer of a reward to whomsoever should point out an error or blemish. Among the handsomest works published by Master Robert Estienne were a Bible and a New Testament, both translated into French. These two productions were the admiration of the learned and the source of profound uneasiness to the Sorbonne[8] and the clergy, who felt as alarmed as irritated to see the press popularize the textual knowledge of the holy books that condemned a mass of abuses, idolatrous practices and exactions which the Church of Rome had for centuries been introducing into the Catholic cult.

Robert Estienne was recently wedded to Perrine Bade, a young and handsome woman, the daughter of another learned printer, and herself well versed in the Latin. The home of Robert Estienne presented the noble example of those bourgeois families whose pure morals and virile domestic virtues so strongly contrasted with the prevalent corruption of those days. Accused of being a partisan of the religious Reformation, and both the Sorbonne and parliament, both of which were bound by personal and material interests to the Catholic cause, having expressed their anger at him, Robert Estienne would long before have been dragged to the pyre as a heretic, but for the powerful protection of Princess Marguerite of Valois, the sister of Francis I, a woman of letters, of daring spirit, a generous nature, and withal secretly inclined to the reform. The King himself, who loved the arts and letters more out of vanity and the desire to imitate the princes of Italy than out of true intellectual loftiness, extended his protection to Robert Estienne, whom he considered an illustrious man whose glory would reflect upon his prince as a Maecenas. His rare mental equipment, his talent, and, last not least, the considerable wealth that he had inherited from his father and increased by his own labor, had won for the celebrated printer numerous and bitter enemies: his fellow tradesmen were jealous of the inimitable perfection of his works: the members of the Sorbonne, of the parliament and of the court, among all of whom the King and his evil genius, the Cardinal and Chancellor Duprat, distributed the goods confiscated from the heretics, had many times and oft expected to be about to enrich themselves with the plunder of Robert Estienne's establishment. But ever, thanks to the potent influence of Princess Marguerite, the printer's adversaries had remained impotent in their machinations against him. Nevertheless, knowing but too well how capricious and precarious royal

[8] The seat of the University of Paris.

favor is, Robert Estienne was ever ready for the worst with the serenity of the wise man and the clear conscience of a man of honor, while the affection of his young wife was a source of inexhaustible support in his struggle with the evil-minded.

The workshop of Master Robert Estienne occupied the ground floor of the house. His artisans, all carefully selected by himself, and almost all of whom were the sons of workmen whom his father had employed before him, were worthy of the confidence that he reposed in them. More than once did they have to repel with arms the assaults of fanatical bandits, egged on by the monks, who pointed at the printing shop as a hot-bed of diabolical inventions that should be demolished and burned down. The populace, ignorant and credulous, rushed upon the house of Robert Estienne, and but for the courage displayed by the defenders of the establishment, the place would have been looted. Due to such possibilities many employers felt under the necessity of building around themselves a sort of bodyguard composed of their own workmen. The famous goldsmith Benvenuto Cellini, whom Francis I invited from Florence to settle in Paris, was in such constant dread of the jealousy of the French and Italian artists, that he never went out upon the street without being accompanied by several of his pupils, all armed to the teeth. And not long ago he had sustained a regular siege in the little Castle of Neste of which the King had made him a present. The fray lasted two full days; victory remained with Benvenuto and his private garrison; and Francis I was highly amused at the occurrence. Such is the order that reigns in the city, such the security enjoyed by the citizens in these sad days.

Robert Estienne's establishment resembled an arsenal as much as it did a printing shop. Pikes, arquebuses and swords hung near the presses, the composers' cases or the stone tables. Although it was night, Christian remained on this evening at the shop; he remained behind upon his master's request, and was waiting for him. The artisan's face, which had borne the marks of worry since the conversation that he had with his son Hervé on the preceding night, now looked cheerful. When Hervé returned from the Church of St. Dominic, long after the customary hour for work to be begun at Master Estienne's shop, and saw his father surprised and displeased at the renewed absence from work, he said hypocritically:

"Please do not judge me by appearances; be sure, father, that I shall again be worthy of you – you will pardon me a fatal slip. I begin to realize the danger of the influence that I was blindly yielding to."

Saying this, the lad had hastened to make good the lost time, and diligently set to work. Shortly after, the conversation among the workingmen turned accidentally upon the sale of indulgences, which they condemned with renewed energy. So far from violently taking up the cudgels for the nefarious traffic, as he had done on previous occasions, Hervé remained silent and even looked confused. Christian drew favorable conclusions from his son's embarrassment.

"Our last night's conversation must have borne good fruit," thought the artisan to himself; "the poor boy's eyes must have been opened; he must have realized that fanaticism was driving him down into an abyss. Patience! The principles in which I brought him up will win the upper hand. I may now hope for the better."

When towards the close of the day's work he was notified by Master Estienne that he wished to speak with him, and was asked to remain behind, Christian told his son to inform Bridget of the reason of his anticipated delay, in order that she be not alarmed at not seeing him home at the usual hour. When he was finally left alone at the shop, he continued the paging of a Latin book by the light of a lamp. In the midst of this work he was interrupted by one of his friends named Justin, a pressman in the shop. Some urgent presswork had kept him in a contiguous room. Surprised at finding Christian still at work, Justin said:

"I did not expect to find you here so late, dear comrade. The hour for rest has sounded."

"Master Estienne sent me word asking that I wait for him after the shop closed. He wishes to speak with me."

"That fits in with my plans. I had meant to call at your house this evening and propose a trip for to-morrow to Montmartre, in order to visit the place that you know of – the more I think of the matter, the more convinced am I that we could select no better place for our purpose."

"I am inclined to believe you after all the details that you have given me upon the matter. But are you quite certain that the place offers us all the requisite guarantees of secrecy and safety?"

"In order to convince ourselves fully upon the matter, I wished to examine the place once more with you. It is a long time since I was there. Maybe the place is no longer what it was. Well, shall we make the investigation to-morrow evening?"

"Yes; I think it is high time for us to set to work, and organize our army, Justin! I can see no other means to combat our powerful enemies; they seem almost all-powerful. From day to day they become more threatening. On their side they have force, numbers, power, audacity, the judges, the trained soldiers, the priests, the jailers and executioners, moss-grown tradition, the ferocious fanaticism of a populace whose mind is poisoned and who are misled by the monks. And we, what have we? This," added Christian pointing to a printing press that stood in the center of the shop, "that instrument, that lever of irresistible force – thought – the mind! Courage, my friend! Let us, humble soldiers of reason, know how to wait. The printing press will change the face of the earth – and all our casqued, mitred and crowned tyrants will have seen their day! The printing press will be the weapon of emancipation!"

"As well as you, Christian, I have faith in that future, whether it be near or far away. Thought, subtle as light itself, will penetrate everywhere. The midnight darkness of ignorance will be dispelled, and freedom will dart its rays upon all. Let us to work, Christian. The moment we shall have chosen our place, we will put our projects into execution. I shall be at your house to-morrow evening. The moon will be up late; her light will guide us; and – " here Justin interrupted himself saying: "Here is our master; I shall leave you. Until to-morrow! I shall be promptly on time."

"Till to-morrow," answered Christian as his friend left by a door of the shop that opened upon a deserted side street.

Master Robert Estienne, a man of about thirty years of age, was of middle size, and of a firm, kind and at once serious physiognomy. His eyes sparkled with intelligence; a few premature lines furrowed his wide forehead; study and concentration of mind had begun to thin out his hair. He wore a coat and puffed-out hose of black taffeta; a white crumpled cap sat upon his head, and seemed fastened under his chin by a light and closely cropped beard that ended in a point.

"Christian," said Robert Estienne, "I have a service to ask of you, a great service."

"Speak, Master Estienne; you know the feelings that I entertain for your house and all that concerns you; I am as devoted to you as my father was to yours. If it pleases God," added the artisan smothering a sigh, "it will be so with my son towards yours."

"These long-continued relations between our two families honor them both, Christian. It is for that reason that I do not hesitate to ask a great service from you. This is the matter: As you know, my house is a thorn in the side of my enemies; without mentioning the assault that it had to sustain against the wretched fanatics whom the monks aroused against it, the place is constantly spied upon. The persecutions redouble in number and vehemence against all those who are suspected of favoring the religious Reformation, especially since printed placards violently hostile to the Church of Rome were posted over night in the streets of Paris. John Morin, the Criminal Lieutenant and worthy instrument of Cardinal-Chancellor Duprat, who keeps himself informed by the miserable spy who goes under the name of Gainier, keeps Paris in a state of terror through his police searches. Only the other day he issued an order by which the sergeants of the gendarmes are empowered at all hours of the day or night to search from cellar to garret the residence of whomsoever is accused of heresy. I am among these. Despite the protection of Princess Marguerite, it may happen that, at any moment, my domicile is invaded by the lackeys of Duprat's lieutenant."

"That is unfortunately true; your enemies are powerful and numerous."

"Well, now, Christian, a man whom I love like my own brother, an honorable man, foe to the priests, and proscribed by them, has asked me for asylum. He is here since last evening, in hiding. I am in constant apprehension of having my house searched, and my friend's place of refuge discovered. His life is at stake."

"Great God! I can understand your uneasiness. Your friend is, indeed, in great peril."

"Driven to this extremity, I determined to turn to you. It occurred to me that your happy obscurity saves you from the espionage that pursues me. Could you extend hospitality to my friend for two or three days, and take him this very evening to your house? You would be running no risk."

"With all my heart!"

"I shall never forget this service," said Master Robert Estienne, warmly pressing the artisan's hand; "I knew I could count upon your generosity."

"All I wish to remind you of, sir, is that the asylum is as humble as it is safe."

"The proscribed man has for several months been accustomed to travel from city to city; more than once, the generous apostle has spent the night in the woods and the day in some dark cavern. Any place of refuge is good to him."

"That being so, I have this proposition to make to you. I live, as you know, on the Exchange Bridge; there is a garret under the roof of the house; it is so very low one can hardly stand in it; but it is sufficiently ventilated by a little window that opens upon the river. To-morrow morning, after my son and I shall have left the house to come to the shop, my wife – I shall have to take her into the secret, but I answer for her as for myself – "

"I know it, Bridget deserves your full confidence; you may tell her everything."

"Well, then, to-morrow morning, after we shall have left the house, my wife will send my daughter on some errand or other, and will, during her absence, transport to the garret a mattress, some bed linen and whatever else may be necessary in order to render the refuge bearable. To-night, however, our guest will have to resign himself to a simple quilt for bedding; but a night is soon over – "

"That matters little. But how is he to be taken to your house to-night without the knowledge of your family? I know your domestic habits. Your wife and children are now waiting for you to take supper in the ground floor room, the door of which opens on the bridge. They will all see you come in with the stranger. Then also, it occurs to me, does not your wife's brother, the old Franc-Taupin, join you almost every evening at meals? That is an additional difficulty to be overcome."

"That is true; and I do not intend to take him into the secret, although his faults – and these are numerous with the poor soldier of adventure – are wholly counterbalanced in my eyes by his devotion to my family; he fairly worships his sister and her children."

"How, then, shall we manage this evening?"

"I shall take the proscribed man to my house as an old friend whom I met and invited to supper. As customary, my son and daughter will withdraw to their rooms after the meal, and my wife, her brother the Franc-Taupin, if he calls this evening, and I will remain alone with my guest. I shall then request my wife's brother to go out for a pot of wine in order that we close the day pleasantly. The wine is sold at a tavern near the wharf and at some little distance from my house. I shall profit by the Franc-Taupin's absence in order to apprize my wife in a few words of the secret; my guest will go up into the garret: and when my brother-in-law returns I shall tell him that our guest feared it would grow too late, and left, requesting me to present his regards to the Franc-Taupin and bid him adieu. As you see, the matter can be safely and secretly arranged."

"Yes, very well. But, Christian, there is a matter that I must seriously call your attention to. It is not an impossible thing that, despite all your precautions, the proscribed man may be discovered in your house by the police of Duprat's lieutenant; it is my duty to remind you that, in such an event, you run the risk of imprisonment, perhaps even of a severer, more terrible punishment; remember that justice can not be relied upon in these days. The ecclesiastical tribunals are implacable; it is with them – torture or death."

"Master Estienne, do you think me accessible to fear?"

"No, I know your devotion to me. But I wish you to feel sure that were it not for the strictness of the surveillance that is kept over my house, and that renders it impossible for me to offer asylum to the friend whom I entrust to you, I would not then expose you to dangers that I would otherwise be anxious myself to brave. I first thought of hiding him in my cottage at St. Ouen; that country-seat is secluded and far enough from the village. But for several reasons that I am not yet free to communicate to you, my friend should remain hidden in the very heart of Paris. I repeat it, Christian: if, however improbable, it should betide that you are put to trouble, if harm should come to you by reason of the service that you will have rendered me, your wife and your children will find protection and support in my family."

"Master Estienne, I shall never forget that my father, laboring under the shameless calumnies of the successor of the printer John Saurin, would have himself and his family died of hunger and despair but for the generous assistance of your father. Whatever I may do, never could I pay that debt of gratitude to you and yours. My modest havings and myself are at your disposal."

"My father acted like an upright man, that was all; but if you absolutely insist upon considering yourself in our debt, your noble assistance in this instance will be to us one more proof of your gratitude. But I have not yet told you all, worthy Christian. Yielding no doubt to a feeling of delicacy, you have not asked me in behalf of whom I solicited asylum with you."

"The proscribed man is worthy of your friendship; he is an apostle, Master Estienne; need I know more?"

"Without imparting to you a secret that is not mine, I feel free to inform you that this proscribed man is the bravest of the apostles of the Reformation. I owe only to your personal attachment the service that you render to me, seeing that, in granting asylum to my friend, you are not yet aware whether you are in accord with his ideas. Your generous action is dictated by your affection towards me and mine; in my turn, I now contract a debt of gratitude towards you and yours. And once upon this subject, Christian," added Master Estienne in penetrating accents, "allow me frankly to state my thoughts to you with respect to your son. We have recently talked more than once upon the worry that he caused you; I regret the circumstance doubly; I expected great things from Hervé. He has developed a variety of aptitudes in other directions besides the mechanical part of our art in which he begins to excel. The lad's precocious knowledge, his exceptional eloquence – all these qualities ranked him in my eye among that small number of men who are destined to shine in whatever career they embrace. Finally, that which enhanced with me Hervé's intellectual powers was the goodness of his heart and the straightforwardness of his character. But his habits have latterly become irregular; his one-time affectionate, open and communicative nature has undergone a change. I have hitherto refrained from letting him perceive the grief that his conduct caused me. In the midst of all this I imagine he has preserved some love and respect for me. Would you authorize me to have a serious and paternal conversation with him? It may have a salutary effect."

"I thank you, Master Estienne, for your kind offer. I am glad to be able to say that I have reasons to think that since to-day my son has turned to better thoughts; that a sudden and happy change has come over him, because – " Christian could not finish his sentence. Madam Estienne, a handsome young woman of a sweet and grave countenance, precipitately entered the shop and handing to her husband an open letter said to him in a moved voice:

"Read, my friend; as you will see, there is not a minute to lose;" and turning aside to Christian: "Can we count with you?"

"Absolutely and in all things, madam."

"There is no longer any doubt!" cried Master Estienne after he read the letter. "Our house will be searched, this very night perhaps; they are on my friend's tracks."

"I shall run for him," said Madam Estienne; "Christian and he will go out by the side street. I think the house is watched on the St. John of Beauvais Street side."

"Master Estienne," said the artisan to his employer, "in order to make assurance doubly sure I shall go down to the end of the side alley and reconnoiter whether the passage is clear; I shall explore it thoroughly."

"Go, my friend, you will find us in the small yard with the proscribed man."

Christian left the shop, crossed the small yard, drew the bolt of a door that opened into the side alley and stepped out. He found the lane completely deserted, from end to end not a soul was in sight. Although it was night there was light enough to see a long distance ahead. Having convinced himself that the issue was safe, Christian returned to the door of the yard where he found Master Estienne pressing in his own the hand of a man of middle size and clad in plain black.

"Master Estienne," said Christian to his employer, "the alley is deserted; we can go out without being seen by anyone."

"Adieu, my friend," said Master Estienne in a trembling voice to the proscribed man. "You may rely upon your guide as upon me. Follow him and observe all that he may recommend to you for your safety. May heaven protect your precious life!"

"Adieu! Adieu!" answered the unknown who seemed to be no less moved than the printer; saying which he followed Christian. After issuing from the alley and walking for a while in the direction of the Exchange Bridge, the two men arrived at a gate which they had to pass in order to cross the Cour-Dieu. At that place their progress was delayed by a compact mass of people who were gathered near the gate, in the center of which was a turnstile intended to keep horses and wagons from entering the square. Many patrolmen were seen among the crowd.

"What is the meaning of this gathering?" inquired Christian from a man of athletic carriage, with the sleeves of his shirt turned up, a blood-bespattered apron and a long knife by his side.

"St. James!" exclaimed the butcher in a tone of pious satisfaction; "the reverend Franciscan fathers of the Cour-Dieu have been struck by a good idea."

"In what way?" again Christian asked. "What is their idea? Inform us of what is going on."

"The good monks have placed upon the square in front of the door of their convent a lighted chapel at the foot of a beautiful station of the Holy Virgin, and a mendicant monk stands on either side of the statue, with a club in one hand and a purse in the other – "

"And what is the purpose of the chapel and the mendicant monks and their clubs?"

"St. James!" and the butcher crossed himself; "thanks to that chapel the Lutheran dogs can be discovered as they pass by."

"How can they be recognized?"

"If they pass before the chapel without kneeling down at the feet of the Holy Virgin, and without dropping a piece of money into the purse of the mendicant monks, it is a proof that the painim are heretics – they are immediately set upon, they are slain, they are torn to shreds. Listen! Do you hear that?"

Indeed, at that moment, piercing shrieks half drowned by an angry roar of many voices went up from the interior of the Cour-Dieu. As the turnstile allowed a passage to only one person at a time, the approaches of the square were blocked by a crowd that swelled from moment to moment and that was swayed with the ardent desire to witness the *Test of the Lutherans*, as the process was called. Every time that the cries of a victim ceased, the clamor subsided, and the mob awaited the next execution. The butcher resumed:

"That painim has ceased to scream – his account is settled. May the fire of St. Anthony consume those laggards who are getting so slowly through the gate! I shall not be able to witness the killing of a single one of those accursed fellows!"

"My friend," said the mysterious companion of Christian to the butcher, "those Lutherans must be very great criminals, are they not? I ask you because I am a stranger here – "

A score of voices charitably hastened to answer the unknown man, who, together with Christian was so completely hemmed in by the crowd that they had no choice but patiently to wait for their turn at the turnstile.

"Poor man, where do you come from?" said some, addressing the unknown. "What! You ask whether the Lutherans are criminals? Why, they are infamous brigands!"

And thereupon they vied with one another in citing the felonies that the reformers were guilty of:

"They read the Bible in French!"

"They do not confess!"

"They do not sing mass!"

"They believe neither in the Pope, nor the saints, nor in the virginity of Mary, nor in holy relics!"

"Nor in the blood of our Savior! – nor in the drop of milk of his holy mother! – nor in the miraculous tooth of St. Loup!"

"And what do those demons substitute for the holy mass? Abominable incantations and orgies!"

"Yes, yes – it is so!"

"I, who now speak to you, knew the son of a tailor who was once caught in the net of those ministers of the devil. I'll tell you what he saw – he told me all about it the next day. The Lutherans assembled at night – at midnight – in a large cave, men, young girls and women to celebrate their *Luthery*. A rich bourgeois woman, who lived on the same street with the tailor attended the incantation with her two daughters. When all the canting hypocrites were assembled, their priest donned a robe of goatskin with a headgear of spreading oxhorns; he then took a little child, spread the poor little fellow upon a table lighted by two tall wax candles, and, while the other heretics sang their psalms in French, interspersed with magical invocations, their priest cut the child's throat!"

"The assassins! The monsters! The demons!"

"The priest of Lucifer thereupon gathered the child's blood in a vase and sprinkled the assembly with the warm gore! He then tore out the child's heart and ate it up! That closed the celebration of the Luthery."

"Holy St. James, and shall we not bleed these sons of Satan to the last man?" cried the butcher, carrying his hand to his knife, while the proscribed man exchanged significant glances with Christian and remarked to those standing near him:

"Can such monstrosities be possible? Could such things have happened?"

"Whether they are possible! Why, Brother St. Lawrence-on-the-gridiron, a reverend Carmelite who is my confessor, told me, Marotte, there never was an assembly of those heretics held without at least one or two little children being sacrificed."

"Jesus, God! Everybody knows that," pursued the first narrator; "the tailor's son that I am talking about witnessed the heretical orgy; he saw everything with his own eyes; then, after the Lutherans had been sprinkled with the child's blood as a sort of baptism, their priest spoke up and said: 'Now, take off your clothes, and pray to God in our fashion. Long live hell and the Luthery!' As soon as he said this, he put out the two wax candles, whereupon all the he and she canting hypocrites, with as much clothing on as Adam and Eve, men, women and young girls, all thrown helter-skelter in the dark – well, you understand – it is an abomination!"[9]

"What a horror! Malediction upon them!"

"Mercy! May God protect us from such heretics!"

"Confession! Such infamies portend the end of the world!"

"Brother St. Lawrence-on-the-gridiron, the reverend Carmelite friar, my confessor, told me, Marotte, that all the Lutheries closed in the same fashion. The good father felt so indignant that he

[9] For these horrible calumnies spread by the clergy against the Reformation, see De Thou, vol. I, book II, p. 97.

gave me accurate details upon the devilish heretics; they were details that made my cheeks burn red and hot like a piece of coal."

These snatches of reports, that summed up the stupid and atrocious calumnies spread about by the monks against the reformers, were interrupted by new shrieks and vociferations that went up from the Cour-Dieu. Listening with secret disgust and silent indignation to the calumnious indignities that were huckstered about by an ignorant and credulous populace, Christian and the unknown man in his charge had followed the stream of the crowd, and presently found themselves under the vault of the gate that led to the square, whence they could take in at a glance what was happening there. A sort of altar lighted with wax candles rose in front of the main entrance to the Franciscan Convent; a life-sized statue of the Virgin wrought in wood and gorgeously attired in a robe of gold brocade and with her face painted like a picture, surmounted the altar. Several Franciscan monks, among whom Christian recognized Fra Girard were stationed near the lighted chapel. Two of them, holding large velvet purses in their hands, were posted one on either side of the statue. A large crowd of tattered men and women, of cynical, repulsive or brutal countenances, all armed with clubs and grouped near the door of the convent, stood waiting for the moment when, at a signal from the monks, they were to rush upon the ill-starred passer-by who was designated as suspected of heresy. Each passer-by had inevitably to cross the square at only a slight distance from the statue of the Virgin. If they knelt down before it and dropped their alms into the purse of the mendicant friars, no danger threatened them. But if they failed to fulfil this act of devotion, the ferocious band that stood in waiting would be let loose at the signal from the monks, and would rush upon the Lutheran, beat him with their sticks, and not infrequently leave him lying dead upon the square. All the persons who were just ahead of Christian and the unknown man proceeded straight to the altar, and either out of fear or out of piety knelt down before the image of the Virgin and then rose and deposited their offerings in the purse held out by the Franciscans. A man, still young but frail and short of stature, behind whom Christian stood, said to himself in an undertone just as he was about to thread the turnstile and emerge into the square:

"I am a Catholic, but by the blood of God! I prefer to be cut to pieces rather than submit to such extortion. May the devil take the monks!"

"You will be wrong," said Christian to him in a low voice. "I revolt as much as you at the indignity. But what is to be done against force? Submit to the ignominy."

"I shall protest at the peril of my life! Such excesses dishonor religion," the man answered Christian, and stepping out of the gate into the square with a firm step, he crossed the place without turning his head in the direction of the altar. Hardly, however, had he passed by when the tattered mob who stood near the monks, ready at the latters' beck, rushed forward in pursuit of the unhappy fellow; they overtook him, surrounded, and bawled at him: "Heretic!" "Lutheran!" "He insults the image of the mother of the Savior!" "Down on your knees!" "The canting hypocrite!" "Down on your knees!" "Death to the heretic!"

While these fanatics surrounded their victim, Christian said to his companion:

"Let us profit by the tumult to escape from these ferocious beasts; unfortunately it were idle to seek to snatch that senseless but stout-hearted man from the clutches of his assailants."

Christian and the unknown man in turn stepped out of the gate into the square and were hurriedly walking towards the opposite issue without stopping at the altar when, being caught sight of by the monks, the latter cried out:

"There go two other heretics! They are trying to escape without kneeling before the holy Virgin! Stop them! Bring them back and make them empty their purses!"

The voices of the Franciscans did not reach the ears of the demoniac pack, greedy as it was for its prey; they emitted savage yells as they beat to death, not a heretic, but a Catholic, whose sin consisted in refusing to submit to an adoration imposed upon him in a brutal manner, and which he otherwise would cheerfully have complied with. After the unhappy fellow had bravely defended

himself with his cane, the only weapon that he carried, he was finally overwhelmed by numbers and fell livid, bleeding, and almost unconscious upon the pavement. A horrid-looking shrew seized him by the hair and while she dragged the almost lifeless body towards the altar other dastards from the dregs of the mob struck him in the face with their feet.

"Mercy!" cried the unhappy fellow in a faint voice. "Jesus! – My God! – Have pity upon me! – They are murdering a good Catholic!"

These were the brave fellow's last words. His voice was soon heard no more. The butcher with whom Christian had exchanged a few words ran towards and joined the assassin mob. He piously knelt down before the statue of the Virgin, then rose, drew his knife, and brandishing it in the air cried:

"St. James! Let me bleed the damned Lutheran! It will be worth an indulgence to me! You know, bleeding is my profession!"

The sanguinary sally was received with loud outbursts of laughter; room was made for the butcher near the bleeding body; he squatted upon its still palpitating chest, slashed his knife through the prostrate man's throat, cut the head from the trunk, seized it by the hair, and, holding up the shocking trophy to the gaze of the mob, he cried with wild ecstasy:

"The heretic dog would not bow down before the mother of the Savior – he shall now plant his forehead on the pavement at her feet!"

So said, so done. Followed by the demented band at his heels, the butcher ran back to the altar, holding the livid head in his hands, red and streaming with the warm blood of the victim; he knelt down himself, and slammed the head face down upon the ground at the feet of Mary, amidst the savage acclaim of his fellow assassins, all of whom piously threw themselves down upon their knees like himself.

"Oh, monsieur, this is frightful!" murmured Christian suffocating for breath as his companion and he stepped out of the square. "To think that such horrors are perpetrated in the name of the benign mother of Christ! Oh, the wretches, as stupid as they are bloodthirsty!"

"Ignorance, misery and fanaticism! – that is their excuse. Let us not blame these unhappy people; they are what the monks have made them," answered the unknown with a bitter and desolate smile. "Oh, these monks, these monks! When will society be finally purged of the infernal breed!"

Christian and his companion hastened their steps towards the artisan's house, nor dared they to turn and look behind.

CHAPTER V.
MONSIEUR JOHN

"Fear not; I have a certain means of regaining the good graces of my family" – such were among the last words said by Hervé to Fra Girard as they stepped out of the Church of St. Dominic, where he purchased the letter of indulgence that absolved him in advance from all his future misdeeds. Hervé was, alas! true to his promise. Back long in advance of his father that evening under the paternal roof, he pursued his plan of infernal hypocrisy, and succeeded in awaking in his mother's breast the same hopes for the better that he awoke in the breast of Christian. Seeing Hervé pray her feelingly to suspend her judgment with regard to himself on the theft that he was suspected of; seeing him admit that, however late, he now realized the fatal effect of a dangerous influence over himself; finally, seeing her son respond with unexpected effusiveness to the affectionate greeting of his sister, Bridget said to herself, as Christian had done: "Let us hope; Hervé is returning to better sentiments; the painful conversation of last night has borne its fruit; our remonstrances have had a salutary effect upon him; the principles that we have inculcated in him, will regain their sway. Let us hope!"

With a heart, now as brimful of joy as it was of distress on the previous evening, the happy mother busied herself with preparing the evening meal. No less joyful than Bridget at the return of Hervé's tenderness, Hena was radiant with happiness, and the sentiment enhanced her beauty. Barely in her seventeenth year, lithesome and generously built, the young girl wore her golden-blonde hair braided in two strands coiled over her head and crowning her blooming cheeks. The gentleness of her features, that were of angelic beauty, would have inspired the divine Raphael Sanzio. White as a lily, she had a lily's chaste splendor; candor and kindness stood out clear in the azure of her eyes. Often did those eyes rest upon that naughty yet so dearly beloved brother, of whom the poor child had feared she was disliked. Seated beside him, and engaged at some needle-work, she now felt herself, as in former days, filled with sweet confidence in Hervé, while the latter, once more affectionate and jovial as ever before, entertained himself pleasantly with his sister. By a tacit accord, neither made any allusion to the recent and painful past, and chatted as familiarly as if their fraternal intimacy had never suffered the slightest jar. Despite his self-control and profound powers of dissimulation, Hervé was ill at ease; he felt the necessity of speaking, and sought distraction in the sound of words in order to escape the obsession of his secret thoughts. He rambled at haphazard from one subject to the other. Brother and sister were thus engaged as Bridget absented herself for a moment on the floor above in pursuit of some household duty.

"Hervé," the young girl was saying to her brother, thoughtfully, "your account interests me greatly. How old would you take that monk to be?"

"I could not tell; perhaps twenty-five."

"He had a face that was at once handsome, sad and benign, did he not? His beard is of a somewhat lighter hue than his auburn hair; his eyes are black, and he is very pale; he has a sympathetic countenance."

While thus chatting with her brother, Hena proceeded to sew and could not notice the expression of surprise that Hervé's face betrayed. His feelings notwithstanding, he answered:

"That is a very accurate description. One must have observed a person very attentively in order to preserve so life-like a picture of him. But what induces you to believe that the monk in question is the handsome auburn-haired monk, whose picture you have just sketched?"

"Why, did you not just tell me, dear brother, that you recently witnessed a touching action of which a monk was the author? Well, it struck me that probably he was the friar that I described. But proceed with the story."

"But who is that monk? Where did you see him? How did you happen to know him?" Hervé interrogated his sister in short, set words, inspired by an ill-suppressed agonizing feeling of jealousy.

The naïve girl, however, mistaking the sentiment that prompted her brother's question, answered him merrily:

"Oh! Oh! Seigneur Hervé, you are very inquisitive. First finish your story; I shall tell you afterwards."

Affecting a pleasant tone, Hervé replied as he cast upon his sister a sharp and penetrating look: "Oh! Oh! Mademoiselle Hena, you twit me with being inquisitive, but, it seems to me, that you are no less so. Never mind, I shall accommodate you. Well, as I was saying, when passing this morning by the porch of St. Merry's Church, I saw a crowd gathered, and I inquired the reason. I was answered that a babe, six months old at the most, had been left over night at the portal of the church."

"Poor little creature!"

"At that moment a young monk parted the crowd, took up the child in his arms, and with tears in his eyes and his face marked with touching compassion, he warmed with his breath the numb hands of the poor little waif, wrapped the baby carefully in one of the long sleeves of his robe, and disappeared as happy as if he carried away a treasure. The crowd applauded, and I heard some people around me say that the monk belonged to the Order of the Augustinians and was called Brother St. Ernest-Martyr."

"Why 'Martyr' – and he so charitable?"

"You do not seem to know, sister, that when taking orders a monk renounces his family names and assumes the name of some saint – such as St. Peter-in-bonds, or St. Sebastian-pierced-with-arrows, or St. Lawrence-on-the-gridiron, or St. Anthony-with-the-pig – "

"Oh, what mournful names! They make one shudder. But the last one is really grotesque."

"Well," proceeded Hervé, without detaching his prying eyes from Hena, "Brother St. Ernest-Martyr was hastily walking away with his precious burden when I heard someone remark:

"'I am quite sure the good monk will take the poor little one to Mary La Catelle' – "

"I thought so!" exclaimed Hena ingenuously; "I knew it was he; it is my monk!"

"How, your monk?" asked Bridget smiling, her heart dilating with joy as she descended the stairs and saw her son and daughter engaged in cordial conversation as was their former wont. "Of what monk are you talking, Hena, with so much unction?"

"Do you not know, mother, La Catelle and her school? Do you remember that charming woman?"

"Certainly, I do. I remember the young widow Mary La Catelle. The school that she founded for poor children is a work of touching charity, which, however, also owes a good deal to John Dubourg, the linen draper of St. Denis Street, and to another rich bourgeois, Monsieur Laforge. They both generously sustain La Catelle and her sister Martha, the wife of Poille, the architect, who shares with her the maternal cares that she bestows upon poor orphans whom she takes up in her house – a place which has justly earned the name of 'the house of God'."

"Do you remember, mother," Hena proceeded with her reminiscences, "that when we went to the house of La Catelle, it happened to be school hour?"

"Yes, an Augustinian monk was instructing a group of children who stood around him or sat at his feet, and some were seated on his knees."

"Well mother, I listened to the monk as he was explaining to the children the parable of: 'Wicked are they who live on the milk of a sheep, who clothe themselves in her fleece, and yet leave the poor beast without pasture.' He uttered upon that subject words imprinted with such sweet and tender charity, and yet so easy for the intelligence of children to grasp, that tears came to my eyes."

"And I shared your sister's emotion, Hervé," replied Bridget, addressing her son, who, silent and absorbed in his own thoughts, had dropped out of the conversation. "You can not imagine with what charming benignity the young monk instructed those little ones; he measured his words to their intelligence, in order to indoctrinate them with the simple and pure evangelical morality. Mary La Catelle assured us that his knowledge was no less than his virtue."

Two raps at the street door from without interrupted the conversation.

"At last!" said Bridget to Hervé. "This is surely your father. The streets are not quite safe at night. I prefer to see him indoors. I hardly think we shall see my brother this evening. The hour for supper is long gone by," observed Bridget, stepping towards her husband, to whom Hervé had opened the house door.

Christian came in accompanied with the unknown personage, a young man of, however, a striking countenance by reason of its expression of deliberate firmness. His black eyes, instinct with intelligence and fire, were set so close that they imparted a singular character to his pale and austere visage. At the sight of the unexpected visitor Bridget made a gesture of surprise.

"Dear wife," said Christian, "I have brought Monsieur John along for supper. He is an old friend whom I accidentally met to-day."

"He is welcome to our house," answered Bridget, while the two children looked at the stranger with curiosity. As was her custom, Hena embraced her father affectionately; but Hervé, looking at him with a timid and repentant eye, seemed doubtful whether to follow his sister's example. The artisan opened his arms to his son and whispered in his ear as he pressed him to his heart:

"I have not forgotten your fair promises of this morning," and turning to his guest: "This is my family – my daughter is an embroiderer, like her mother; my eldest son is, like myself, a printer in Monsieur Robert Estienne's workshop; my second son, who is apprenticed to an armorer, is now traveling in Italy. Thanks to God our children are wise and industrious, and deserve to be loved as my worthy wife and I love them."

"May the blessing of God continue upon your family," answered Monsieur John in an affectionate voice, while Hena and her brother arranged the covers and set upon the table the dishes that had been prepared for the family meal.

"Bridget," said Christian, "where is your brother?"

"I had just been wondering at his absence, my friend; I would feel uneasy, if it were not that I rely upon his bravery, his long sword – in short, upon his general appearance, which is not exactly attractive to sneaking night thieves," added Bridget with a smile. "Neither Tire-Laines nor Guilleris will be very anxious to attack a Franc-Taupin. We need not wait for him; if he comes he will know how to make up for lost time at table, and will take double mouthfuls."

The family and their guest sat down to table, with Monsieur John placed between Christian and Bridget. Addressing her, he said:

"Such order and exquisite propriety reigns in this house, madam, that the housekeeper deserves to be complimented."

"Household duties are a pleasure to me and to my daughter, monsieur; order and cleanliness are the only luxuries that we, poor people, can indulge in."

"*Sancta simplicitas!*" said the stranger, and he proceeded with a smile: "It is a good and old motto – Holy simplicity. You will pardon me, madam, for having spoken in Latin. It was an oversight on my part."

"By the way of Latin," put in the artisan, addressing his wife, "did Lefevre drop in during the day?"

"No, my friend; I am as much surprised as yourself at the increasing rareness of his calls; formerly few were the days that he did not visit us; perhaps he is sick, or absent from Paris. I shall inquire after him to-morrow."

"Lefevre is a learned Latinist," said Christian, addressing Monsieur John; "he is one of my oldest friends; he teaches at the University. He is a rough and tough mountaineer from Savoy. But under his rude external appearance beats an excellent heart. We think very highly of him."

Christian was about to proceed when he was interrupted by the following ditty that came from the street, and was sung by a sonorous voice:

"A Franc-Taupin had an ash-tree bow,
All eaten with worms, and all knotted its cord;
His arrow was made out of paper, and plumed,
And tipped at the end with a capon's spur.
Derideron, vignette on vignon! Derideron!"

"It is uncle! His favorite song announces him!" said Hena joyfully, as she rose to open the house-door.

CHAPTER VI.
THE FRANC-TAUPIN

Josephin, Bridget's brother, surnamed Tocquedillon the Franc-Taupin, stepped into the room. A soldier of adventure since his fifteenth year, he had run away from the paternal home, and soon thereafter enrolled with the Franc-Taupins, a sort of irregular militia, whose duty it was to dig the trenches intended to cover the approaches of the assailants at the siege of a city. These mercenary soldiers were named "Franc-Taupins" because, like the franc archers, they were "frank" or free from taxation, and because their underground work bore great resemblance to that of the *taupe*– mole. Once out of their trenches, the saying was, the Franc-Taupins displayed but little courage. Whether justly or unjustly, the poltroonery of the Franc-Taupin became proverbial, as evidenced by the favorite song of Bridget's brother. This personage, however, was anything but a poltroon. Just the reverse. After he had twice or three times turned up the earth at as many sieges, he disdained to belong to a corps of such cowardly renown, and enrolled in another irregular militia, one that stood in general dread – the Adventurers or Pendards, of whom a contemporaneous writer drew the following and, unfortunately, but too truthful picture:

"What a vagabond, flagitious, murderous set are these Pendards! They are deniers of God, ravishing wolves, violators of women, devourers of the people! They drive the good man out of his house, empty his pot of wine and sleep in his bed. Their garb matches their disorderly habits. They wear shirts with long sleeves, open in front and exposing their hirsute chests; their streaked hose do not cover their flesh; their calves are left bare and they carry their socks in their belts for fear of wearing them out. Poultry trembles in the hen-coops at their approach, and so does bacon in the pantry. Brawling, roistering, audacious, ever with their mouths wide open, they love nothing better than to guzzle in company the wine that they have jointly stolen."

Despite his intrepidity in war, and without resembling at all points this picture of the Pendards, Tocquedillon the Franc-Taupin, preserved strong features of the same. For all that, however, he adored, venerated his sister, and from the moment that he sat down at her hearth he would seem metamorphosed. Nothing in either his words or his conduct would then recall the audacious adventurer. Timid, affectionate, realizing how unbecoming the slang of the tavern or of even worse places would be in the presence of Bridget's children, of whom he was as fond as of her herself, he always controlled himself and never uttered in their presence any but decorous language. For Christian he had as much love as respect. As the saying goes, he would have gone through fire for the family. The Franc-Taupin was at this time about thirty years of age; he was lean, bony and about six feet high. Scarred with innumerable wounds, and partly blinded in battle, he wore a large black patch over his left eye. He kept his hair close cropped, his beard cut into a point under his chin, and his moustache twisted upward. His nose was pimply through excessive indulgence in wine, and his thick-lipped mouth, slit from ear to ear, exposed two rows of desultory shark's teeth every time that, as a true roisterer, he gave a loose to his imperturbable mirthfulness.

The moment he stepped into the room, the Franc-Taupin deposited his old and weather-beaten sword in a corner, embraced his sister and her two children, shook hands cordially with Christian, bowed respectfully to the unknown man, and timidly took his usual place at the family table.

Christian came to the relief of his brother-in-law's embarrassment and said to him jovially:

"We would have felt uneasy at your absence, Josephin, if we did not know that you are of those who, with their swords at their side, defy the world and are able to defend themselves against all assailants."

"Oh, brother, the best sword in the world will not protect one against a surprise; the surprise that I have just experienced has knocked me down. As my surprise tastes strongly of salt, I am dying with thirst – allow me to empty a cup." After his cup was emptied the Franc-Taupin proceeded with

a scared look: "By the bowels of St. Quenet, what did I see! I'm quite certain that I am not deceived; I have only one eye left, but it is good for two. By all the devils, I saw him! I saw him distinctly! A singular encounter!"

"Whom did you see, Josephin?"

"I saw, just now, just before nightfall, here, in Paris, Captain Don Ignatius Loyola, a Spanish nobleman – a devil of a fighter and an inveterate lover of amorous adventures – a terrible man."

At the mentioning of Ignatius Loyola's name the guest at Christian's table shuddered, while Christian himself asked the Franc-Taupin:

"But who is that Spanish captain the sight of whom in Paris affects you so greatly?"

"Did you really know the man?" inquired Monsieur John in an accent of deep interest. "Did you know Ignatius Loyola personally?"

"I should think I did! I was his page."

"And so, Loyola was a captain?" again inquired Monsieur John, more and more interested in what the Franc-Taupin said. "You must, then, have some information on the man's life, his character, his habits. Please tell us something about him."

"By the bowels of St. Quenet! I was continuously with him for three whole months! By all the devils, I never left his side, either day or night!"

"What were his morals?"

"Oh! Oh! friend guest, I would not like to answer that question in my sister's presence – it is too racy a story."

"Friend Christian," said Monsieur John, "I notice that you are surprised at my curiosity concerning the Spanish captain. You will some day understand that the information in question interests you as well. It will be an interesting history for you to know."

"Hena, Hervé," said the artisan, "supper is nearly ended, my children; it is growing late; you may retire."

"And I," put in Bridget, "have some embroidery to finish; I shall go upstairs and work at it with Hena; I shall come down later and put away the dishes. You can call for me, Christian, if you need anything. You and Josephin can entertain our guest."

Hervé embraced his father with an affectation of increased tenderness, and withdrew to his bedroom; Bridget and her daughter went upstairs. The unknown man and Christian remained alone with the Franc-Taupin, and the latter proceeded, laughing:

"My sister and her children being out of the way, my tongue is at freedom. Tell me, brother, did you ever hear the story of the greyhound? The handsomest bitches sighed after him; he remained insensible to all their tender growls; one day a monk's frock was thrown upon him, and he immediately became as amorous as one possessed. Well, Captain Loyola was as possessed for love adventures as the greyhound in the story, without, however, having need of a monk's frock to give him the start; and – but I was almost forgetting. Do you know, brother, in whose company I saw the fire-eater and hell-rake this evening? With your friend Lefevre."

Christian remained for an instant speechless with astonishment; and turning to Monsieur John, he said:

"I must admit that great is my astonishment. Lefevre, whose name I mentioned to you before, is an austere man, wholly absorbed in scientific pursuits and in study. What can he have in common with the Spanish libertine? I am unable to explain the mystery."

"If you are surprised, brother, no less so am I," replied the Franc-Taupin. "Captain Loyola, whom fourteen or fifteen years ago I knew as the handsomest, gayest and most dissolute of cavaliers, dressed in velvets, silks and lace, looks to-day as tattered as any tramp or starving beggar. The transformation is so radical, that I never would have thought of looking for my frisky Spanish captain under the black smock-frock of a halepopin, had it not been for Lefevre, who, stopping me near the

booths of the market place, which I was then crossing, inquired after you. It was then that I looked more attentively at his seedy companion and recognized – Don Ignatius!"

"The man's relations astonish me so much, Josephin, that I am no less impatient than our guest to hear you."

"Well, it was in the year 1521, during the siege of Pampeluna," the adventurer began, "and shortly after my enrollment with the Franc-Taupins. I was digging a trench with them before the place; we were throwing up the earth like veritable moles. The Spaniards made a sortie in order to destroy our works. At the first shot of the Spanish arquebuses, all my companions threw themselves flat down, with their noses in the hole. Their cowardice angered me. I took up my pick and rushed into the melee, plying my improvised weapon upon the Spaniards. A blow with a mace over my head knocked me down half dead. When I recovered consciousness I found myself lying upon the battle field among several of our men, all prisoners like myself. A company of Spanish arquebusiers surrounded us. Their captain, with the visor of his casque raised and mounted upon a Moorish horse as black as ebony, the housings of which were of red velvet embroidered with silver, was wiping his long, blood-stained sword upon the animal's mane. The captain was Don Ignatius Loyola. Moustache turned up in Castilian style, goatee, an olive complexion, intrepid mien, haughty and martial bearing – such was his portrait. He had noticed me pounding his soldiers with my pick, and took a fancy both to my pick and my youth. When he saw that I had regained consciousness, he started to laugh and addressed me in French: 'Will you be my page? Your wideawake face denotes an intelligent scapegrace; I shall furnish you a silver-embroidered red livery and a ducat a month, and you can eat your fill at my residence.' Oh, brother, an offer to eat my fill, to me whose stomach had long been as hollow as the barrel of St. Benoit and as open as an advocate's purse! The prospect of putting on a beautiful silver-embroidered livery, when my hose had for some time been reporting to me from which corner the wind blew! The thought of pocketing every month a ducat, when all my earnings during the whole campaign had so far been a wooden bowl that I plundered somewhere, and that I used for a hat! In token of glad acceptance I seized my pick that lay near me, threw it as far away as I could, and I told Don Ignatius that I accepted, and would follow him to the very devil's residence. The long and short of the affair was that I entered Pampeluna with my new master."

"I feel more and more mystified," interjected Christian; "what service could a page, ignorant of the country's language, render to Don Ignatius?"

"The devil take it! That was the very reason why I was employed by the cunning slyboots of a Don Ignatius. No sooner did I arrive at his residence, than an old majordomo, the only one of his men who spoke French, rigged me up in new clothes, from my feet to my head, – puffed hose of red velvet, white satin jacket, short cloak with silver trimmings, ruffs and bonnet after the Spanish style. Thus behold me, brother, attired as a genuine court page. In those days I had both my eyes – two luminaries of deviltry, besides the cunning nose of a fox cub. Thus dressed up in spick and span dashing new clothes, the majordomo led me to Captain Loyola, 'Do you know,' he asked me, 'why I take you, a Frenchman, for my page? It is because, as you do not know Spanish, you can not choose but be discreet towards the people in my house and those outside.'"

"That is not badly planned," remarked Christian; "Don Ignatius had, I suppose, many amorous secrets to conceal?"

"By the bowels of St. Quenet! I knew him to have as many as three sweethearts at a time: a charming merchant's wife, a haughty marchioness, and a bedeviled gipsy girl, the most beautiful daughter of Bohemia that ever trilled a tambourine. But Captain Loyola, a veritable Franc-Taupin in matters of love, courted behind concealed trenches. He reveled in mystery. 'What is not known does not exist' was, with him, a favorite maxim that the old majordomo, his master's echo, often repeated to me."

"'What is not known does not exist,'" repeated Monsieur John pensively. "Yes, judging by the motto, the man must be just what he has been described to me to be."

"Just listen," Josephin proceeded; "I shall describe to you the experiences that I made the first evening that I served Don Ignatius as page. You will then be able to judge of the scamp's calibre. A fifteen-days' truce was agreed upon between the French and the Spaniards, as a result of the sortie at which I was taken prisoner. As a longheaded man, Captain Loyola proposed to profit by the truce in his amorous intrigues. Towards midnight he summoned me to his side. The devil! If the fellow looked martial in battle outfit, he looked frisky in his court costume! A jacket slashed with gold-embroidered velvet, puffed hose of white satin, shoes turned like a crawfish, plumed bonnet, a gold bejeweled chain on his neck! What shall I say? He shone and glittered, and besides, smelled of balsam! A veritable muskrat! He hands for me to carry a silken ladder and a guitar; takes his dagger and sword; and wraps himself up to the eyes in a taffeta mantle of light yellow. The old majordomo opens a secret door to us; we issue out of the house; after crossing a few narrow streets, we arrive at a deserted little square. My master glides under a balcony that is shut with lattices, takes the guitar from my hands, and there you have him warbling his roundelay. In response to the carol of the moustachioed nightingale, one of the shutters of the balcony opens slightly, and a bouquet of pomegranate blossoms drops at our feet. Don Ignatius picks it up, extracts from amidst the flowers a little note concealed among them, and gives me the guitar together with the bouquet to hold for him. I imagined our evening performance concluded. By the bowels of St. Quenet, it had only commenced! Don Ignatius fanned the sparks of his libidinousness with his guitarade, on the same principle that one fans the sparks of his thirst by chewing on a pork-rind dipped in mustard. But by the way of thirst, brother, let us imbibe that pot; appetite comes with eating, but thirst goes with drinking. He who drinks without being thirsty drinks for the thirst that is to come. Thirst is an animal's quality, but to crave for drink is a quality of man. By St Pansard and St. Goguelu, let's moisten, let's moisten our whistles! Our tongues will dry up soon enough! Unhappy Shrove-Tuesday, the patron of pots and sausages – and the devil take the Pope and all his friarhood!"

"Josephin," said Christian, smiling and filling the Franc-Taupin's cup, as he broke into the midst of the latter's flow of bacchic invocations, "I know you to be an expert in the matter of quaffing, but our guest and myself are more curious about the end of your story."

"God's head! As truly as the mere shadow of a Carmelite convent is enough to cure any woman of sterility, I shall not allow the end of the adventure of Don Ignatius to drown at the bottom of this cup! There, it is now empty!"

Saying this, the Franc-Taupin passed the back of his hand over his moustache, moist with wine, wiped it dry, and proceeded:

"Well, as I was saying, after his guitarade, Don Ignatius proceeded with his nocturnal adventure on the streets of Pampeluna. We moved away, and pulled up next before a pretentious dwelling. My master plants himself under a balcony at some distance from the main entrance; passes his long sword over to me to keep with the guitar, and retains no weapon other than his dagger; he then disengages himself of his mantle also, which he throws over my arm and says to me: 'You will hold the lower end of the ladder while I climb up to the balcony; you will then keep a sharp lookout near the door of this house; if you see anyone go in, you will run quickly under this window and clap your hands twice; I shall hear your signal.' This being agreed upon, Don Ignatius himself claps his hands three times. Immediately thereupon I see through the darkness of the night, a white form lean over the balustrade and drop us a cord. My master ties his ladder to it; the white form draws it up; the upper end of the ladder is fastened to the balcony; I steady it by holding the lower rung in my hands; and there you have Captain Loyola clambering up nimbly and light of heel, like a tom-cat running over a roof-pipe. As to myself, no less distressed than the dog of the cook who is turning the roast on the spit over a fire, and looks at the savory meat out of the corner of his eyes without partaking of it, I run and place myself in ambush near the door. The devil! A few minutes later, what is that I see? Several seigneurs, lighted by lackeys with torches in their hands turn into the street. One of them walks straight to the door near which I stand on the watch, and enters the house where my master is regaling himself. Obedient to the

watchword, but forgetting that the flames of the torches are lighting me, I run to the balcony and clap my hands twice. By the bowels of St. Quenet, I am perceived! Two lackeys seize me at the moment when, notified by my signal, Captain Loyola is straddling the balustrade in order to descend into the street. He is recognized by the light of the torches. 'It is he!' 'There he is!' cry the seigneurs who stand in a bunch in the street. Although discovered, Don Ignatius glides bravely down the ladder, touches ground and calls: 'Halloa, there, page, my sword!' 'Don Ignatius of Loyola, I am Don Alonzo, the brother of Donna Carmen,' says one of the cavaliers. 'I am ready to give you satisfaction,' answers the captain proudly. But by the bowels of St. Quenet, it was with Don Ignatius's duels as with his amorous appointments: before the one was well finished the next commenced. Suddenly, the man whom I had seen enter the house, in short, the husband, Don Hercules Luga, appeared at the balcony; he held a bleeding sword in his hand. He leans forward into the street and cries: 'Friends, justice is done to the woman! There now remains justice to be done to her accomplice. Hold him. I am coming down!'"

"Poor woman!" said Christian. "The death that he was the cause of must have horrified the libertine."

"Him? The devil! Horrified at so little? Judge for yourself. At the moment he learned of the death of his inamorata he receives his sword from the hands of Don Alonzo, who had taken it away from me. Don Ignatius pricks its point into the tip of his shoe, and without winking bends the blade in order to satisfy himself on its temper. That shows how frightened he was at the death of his lady-love. The husband, Don Hercules, comes out of the house, steps up to my master and says to him: 'Don Ignatius of Loyola, I received you as a friend at my hearth; you have led my wife astray; you are a felon, unworthy of knighthood!' And what do you imagine, brother, is the answer that Captain Loyola made to that? If you can guess, I shall be willing to die of thirst. But no; a pox on these funereal prognostics! I prefer to drink, to drink until my soles sweat wine!"

"Proceed, Josephin; proceed with your story."

"'Don Hercules,' answers Captain Loyola loftily, 'in leading Carmen astray, it was not *your* woman[10] that I led astray, but *a* woman, as any other! You insult me by accusing me of a felony. You shall pay dearly, and on the spot, for such an insult. I shall kill you like a dog.'"

"Did you grasp that? Can you imagine a more odious subtlety?" asked Christian of Monsieur John. "What a hypocritical distinction! The libertine seduced the unfortunate woman, but not his friend's wife – only the *woman*, as a *woman*! Just God, such subtle quibbling! and that while his victim's corpse is still warm!"

"That is, indeed, the man as he has been described to me," repeated the guest, with a pensive air. "What I am learning is a revelation to me."

"The issue of the duel could not be doubtful," proceeded the Franc-Taupin. "Captain Loyola enjoyed the reputation of being the most skilful swordsman in Spain. He fully deserved his reputation. Don Hercules drops dead upon the ground. Don Alonzo endeavors to avenge his sister and brother-in-law, but the young man is readily disarmed by Don Ignatius, who, raising his sword, says: 'Your life belongs to me; you have insulted me by sharing the unworthy suspicions of Don Hercules, who accused me of having betrayed his friendship. But go in peace, young man, repent your evil thoughts – I pardon you!' After which Captain Loyola repaired to the gypsy girl and spent with her the rest of the night. I heard the two (always like the cook's dog) laugh, sing and carouse, clinking their glasses filled with Spanish wine. We returned home at dawn. Now tell me, brother Christian, what do you think of the gallant? You may judge by the experience of that night the number of pretty women whom the captain Loyolized!"

"Oh, the man's infernal hypocrisy only deepens the blackness of his debaucheries and swordsman's prowess!"

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[10] In Spanish, as well as French, "woman" and "wife" are the same word. Loyola punned upon the word.

Absorbed in his private thoughts, Monsieur John remained in a brown study. Presently he said to the Franc-Taupin:

"You followed Loyola to war. Was the captain's regiment well disciplined? How did he treat his soldiers?"

"His soldiers? By the bowels of St. Quenet! Imagine, not men, but iron statues, that, with but a gesture, a wink of his eye, Don Ignatius either moved or petrified, as he chose. Broken in and harnessed to his command like so many machines, he said: 'Go!' – and they went, not only into battle but whithersoever he ordered. They were no longer themselves, but he. What the devil, Captain Loyola controlled men and women like horses – by the identical methods."

"What methods, let us hear them, Josephin."

"Well, one day a wild stallion of Cordova was brought to him; the animal was savage, a veritable demon; two strong stablemen were hardly able to hold him by the halter. Don Ignatius ordered the wild beast to be taken to a small enclosed yard, and remained there alone with him. I was outside, behind the gate. First I heard the stallion neigh with fury, then with pain, and then there was silence. Two hours later Captain Loyola issued from the yard mounted on the animal which steamed with foam and still trembled with fear, but as docile as a curate's mule."

"That is wonderful!" cried Christian. "Was the man possessed of a magic charm with which to curb wild beasts?"

"Exactly so, brother, and his talisman consisted in a set of reins so fearfully and skilfully contrived that, if the horse yielded passive obedience to the hand that guided him, he felt no pain whatever; but at the slightest show of resistance, Captain Loyola set in motion a certain steel saw contrivance supplied with sharp points and fastened in the bit. Immediately the animal would neigh with pain, remain motionless and sink down upon his haunches, whereupon Don Ignatius would pat it with his hand and give it some cream cakes. By the bowels of St. Quenet! Iron reins and cream cakes – this was the trick wherewith the captain Loyolized men, women and horses!"

"And did his soldiers love him, despite his inflexible yoke?" asked Monsieur John.

"Did they love him? The devil! Do you forget the cream cakes? Puddings, sausages, capons, fatted geese, pouches filled with Val-de-Peñas wine, gay wenches, high jinks in the barracks; in the enemy's country, free pillage, free rape, fire, blood and sack, and long live the saturnalia! These were the cream cakes of Captain Loyola. Whenever occasion required, he would treat his soldiers to these dainties out of his own pocket like a magnificent seigneur; but to allow his soldiers to reflect, to think, to reason, to will? – Never! To ask why this and why that? Never! 'Kill,' the captain would say, and the response was: 'Listen, he says kill – we kill!' But it is your friend, your brother, your father, your sister, your mother that he orders you to kill. 'Makes no difference, he said kill – we kill, and we kill;' and then come the cream cakes and more cream cakes, otherwise the reins begin to play, and they play so severely – clubbings, strappings, croppings of ears, hanging by the limbs and other devices of the devil. 'Our dear master,' often did the old majordomo say to me, 'our dear master is everything to all of us, provided all of us let him have his own will untrammeled; omnipotence is the secret joy of the dear Don Ignatius; to possess a woman, curb a mettlesome horse, manoeuvre his men of iron as one bends a reed – that is his enjoyment! He delights in absorbing souls. As to bodies, he fondles, caresses, indulges, dandles, fattens and greases them – provided they move at his will.' It is ever so, he who holds the soul holds the body."

Christian hesitated to believe the account of the Franc-Taupin; he could hardly give credence to the monstrous description. Monsieur John looked less surprised, but more alarmed. He said to Josephin, who, having wished to help himself to some more wine, sighed at finding the pot empty:

"But by what combination of circumstances could Ignatius Loyola, such as you described him to us and such as, I do believe, he was, metamorphose himself to the extent of coming here, to Paris, and seat himself on the benches of the Montaigu College among the youngest of the students?"

"What!" cried Christian, stupefied. "Is Ignatius Loyola to-day a simple student?"

"He attended the College," replied Monsieur John; "and one day he submitted to be publicly whipped in punishment for a slip of memory. There is something unexplainable, or frightful, in such humility on the part of such a man."

"Ignatius Loyola! the debauchee, the skilful swordsman! The haughty nobleman, did he do that?" cried Christian. "Can it be possible?"

"By the bowels of St. Quenet, brother," put in the Franc-Taupin in his turn, "as well tell me that the monks of Citeaux left their kegs empty after vintage! Even such a thing would sound less enormous than that Captain Loyola slipped down his hose to receive a flogging! The devil take me!" cried the Franc-Taupin vainly trying to extract a few more drops from the pot. "I am choked with surprise!"

"But you must not be allowed to choke with thirst, good Josephin," put in Christian, smiling and exchanging a look of intelligence with Monsieur John. "The pot is empty. As soon as your story is ended, and in order to feast our guest, I shall have to ask you to go to the tavern that you know of and fetch us a pot of Argenteuil wine. That is agreed, brother."

"St. Pansard, have pity upon my paunch! By my faith, brother, the pots are empty. I guess the reason why. One time I used to drink it all – now I leave nothing. Did you say a pot of wine? Amen!" said the Franc-Taupin rising from his seat. "We shall furnish our guest with a red border, like a cardinal! Yes, brother, it is agreed. And so I shall go for the pot, but not for one only – for two, or three."

"Not so fast, first finish your story; I am interested in it more than you can imagine," said Monsieur John with great earnestness. "I must again ask you: To what do you, who knew Loyola so well, attribute this incredible change?"

"May my own blood smother me; may the quartain fever settle my hash, if I understand it! A few hours ago I strained my remaining eye fit to give it a squint, in contemplating Don Ignatius. Seeing him so threadbare, so wan, so seedy and leaning upon his staff, I had not the courage to remind him of me. By the bowels of St. Quenet, I felt ashamed of having been page to the worn-out old crippled hunch-back."

"How is that! You described him as having been such a fine-looking cavalier and such a skilful swordsman – and yet he was hunch-backed?"

"He was crippled through two wounds that he received at the siege of Pampeluna. The devil! All the fathers, all the brothers, all the husbands whose daughters, sisters and wives the captain Loyolized, would have felt themselves thoroughly revenged if, like myself, they had seen him writhe like one possessed and howling like a hundred wolves from the pain of his wounds. By the bowels of the Pope, what horrible grimaces the man made!"

"But how could so intrepid a man display such weakness at pain?"

"Not at the pain itself; not that. On the contrary. As a result of his wounds he voluntarily endured positive torture, beside which his first agonies were gentle caresses."

"And why did he submit to such tortures? Can you explain that?"

"Yes. The truce between the Spaniards and the French lasted several days. At its close Captain Loyola mounted his horse, and placing himself at the head of his forces ordered a sortie. He made havoc among the enemy; but in the melee he received two shots from an arquebus. One of them fractured his right leg just below the knee, the other took him under the left hip. My gallant was carried to his house and we laid him in his bed. Do you know what were the first words that Don Ignatius uttered? They were these: 'Death and passion, I may remain deformed all my life!' And would you believe it? Captain Loyola wept like a woman! Aye, he wept, not with pain, no, by the bowels of St. Quenet, but with rage! You may imagine how crossed the handsome and roistering cavalier felt at the prospect. Imagine a limping cripple strolling under balconies and warbling his love songs! Imagine such a figure running after the señoras! What a sight it would be to have such a disjointed lover throwing himself at their feet at the risk of being unable to pick himself up again and yelling

with pain: 'Oh, my leg! Oh, my knee!' Just think of such a lame duck attempting to try conclusions with jealous and irate husbands and brothers, arms in hand! Don Ignatius must have thought of all that – and wept!"

"It is almost incomprehensible that a man of his temper could be so enamoured of his physical advantages," remarked Christian.

"Not at all!" replied Monsieur John thoughtfully. "Oh, what an abyss is the human soul! I now think I understand – " but suddenly breaking off he asked the Franc-Taupin: "Accordingly, Don Ignatius was dominated by the fear of remaining crippled for life?"

"That was his only worry. But I must hurry on. I have a horror of empty wine pots. My present worry is about the wine spigot. Well, all the same, after healing, Captain Loyola's legs remained, as he feared, of unequal length. 'Oh, dogs! Jews! Pagan surgeons!' bawled Don Ignatius when he made the discovery. 'Fetch me here the robed asses! the brothers of Beelzebub! I shall have them quartered!' Summoned in great hurry, the poor wretches of surgeons hastened to Don Ignatius. They trembled; turned and turned him about; they examined and re-examined his leg; after all of which, the slashers of Christian flesh and sawers of Christian bones declared that they could render Captain Loyola as nimble of foot as ever he was. 'A hundred ducats to each of you if you keep your promise!' he cried, already seeing himself prancing on horseback, prinking in his finery, strutting about, warbling love songs under balconies, parading, and above all Loyolizing. 'Yes, señor; the lameness will disappear,' answered the bone-setters, 'but, we shall have, first of all, to break your leg over again, where it was fractured before; in the second place, señor, we shall have to cut away the flesh that has grown over the bone below your knee; in the third place, we shall have to saw off a little bone that protrudes; that all being done, no doe of the forest will be more agile than your Excellency.' 'Break, re-set, cut off, saw off, by the death of God!' cried Captain Loyola 'provided I can walk straight! Go ahead! Start to work!'"

"But that series of operations must have caused him frightful pain!"

"By the bowels of St. Quenet! When the protruding bone was being sawed off, the grinding of Captain Loyola's teeth drowned the sound of the saw's teeth. The contortions that he went through made him look like a veritable demon. His suffering was dreadful."

"And did he heal?"

"Perfectly. But there still remained the left thigh in its bandages. The fraternity of surgeons swore that that limb would be as good if not better than before the injury that it sustained. At the end of six weeks Captain Loyola rose and tried to walk. He did walk. Glory to the bone-setters! He no longer limped of the right leg; but, the devil! his left thigh had shrunk by two inches by reason of a tendon that was wounded. And there was my gallant still hobbling, worse than ever. It had all to be done over again."

"Don Ignatius's fury must have been fierce!"

"Howling tigers and roaring lions would have been as bleating lambs beside Captain Loyola in his boiling rage. 'Dear, sweet master,' his old majordomo said to him, 'the saints will help you; why despair? The surgeons performed a miracle on your right leg; why should not they be equally able to do the same thing on your left thigh?' The drowning man clings to a straw. 'Halloa, page, run to the surgeons!' yelled my master at me; 'bring them here instantly!' The surgeons came. 'Here they are, señor.' 'I suffered the pangs of death for the cure of my right leg; I am willing to suffer as much or worse for the lengthening of my left thigh. Can you do it?' said Don Ignatius to the bone-setters. Whereupon they fell to feeling, pressing, kneading and manipulating the twisted thigh of the patient; without desisting from their work at the member after a while they raised their heads and mumbled between their teeth: 'Señor, yes, we can free you from this limp – but, firstly, we shall have to strap you down upon your back, where you will have to lie, motionless, for two months; secondly, a strap will have to be passed under your arms and fastened firmly to the head of your couch; thirdly, a weight of fifty pounds will have to be adjusted to a ring and fastened to your left leg, to the end

that the weight slowly, steadily, and constantly distend your thigh. The result will then be obtained, seeing you will be held firm and motionless by the two straps, the one that binds you down to your bed and the other, under your arms, that holds you to the head of your couch. With the aid of these contrivances, your thigh will be restored to its normal condition at the end of two months, and the does of the forest will then be less agile than your Excellency.' 'Do it!' was Loyola's answer. 'Strap, distend, stretch me out, blood of God, provided I can walk!'"

"That is frightful!" cried Christian. "It is the 'wooden horse' torture, prolonged beyond the point of human endurance."

"By the bowels of St. Quenet! There is nothing beyond endurance to a gallant who is determined not to hobble. Don Ignatius underwent the torture for the two months. The old majordomo and myself nursed our master. At times he screamed – Oh, such screams! They were heard a thousand feet from the house. Exhausted with pain, his eyelids would droop in sleep, but only to be suddenly reawakened with a start by his shooting pains. At such times the sounds that he emitted were screams no longer, but the howlings of the damned. At the end of two months of insomnia and continuous agony, which left nothing but the skin on his bones, but during which he was held up at least with the hope of final cure, Captain Loyola's surgeons held a consultation, and allowed him to leave his bed of torture. He rose, walked – but, the devil! not only was his left thigh not sufficiently lengthened, but his right knee, that had been previously operated upon, had become ossified from lying motionless for so long a time! Captain Loyola said not a word; he became livid as a corpse and dropped unconscious to the floor. We all thought he was dead. The next day the majordomo notified me that our master did no longer need a page. My wages were paid me; I left Spain and returned to France with other prisoners who had been set free. After all that, and after the lapse of fourteen or fifteen years, I ran a few hours ago across Don Ignatius, near a booth on the market place, in the company of your friend Lefevre. That, brother, ends my story. Jarnigoy! Is it not racy? But by the bowels of St. Quenet, my tongue is parched; it cleaves to the roof of my mouth; my whistle burns; it is on the point of breaking out into flame; help! help! wine! wine! Let the wine act as water to put out the fire! I shall now run out for the promised nectar of Argenteuil!" added the Franc-Taupin, rising from his seat. "I shall be back in a jiffy! And then we shall drinkedrille, drinkedraille, gaily clink glasses with our guest. A full pot calls for a wide throat!"

So saying, Josephin went out, singing in a sonorous voice his favorite refrain:

"A Franc-Taupin had an ash-tree bow,
All eaten with worms, and all knotted its cord;
His arrow was made out of paper, and plumed,
And tipped at the end with a capon's spur.
Derideron, vignette on vignon! Derideron!"

CHAPTER VII.
BROTHER ST. ERNEST-MARTYR

The moment the Franc-Taupin left the house the stranger said to Christian:

"Your brother-in-law's story is a revelation to me. The past life of Ignatius Loyola explains to me his present life."

"But who is that man? Whence the interest, curiosity and even alarm that he seems to inspire you with?"

Christian was saying these words when his wife descended from the floor above. The sight of her reminded him it was urgent that the stranger be taken to the garret before the return of Josephin. "Bridget," he accordingly said to his wife, "has Hena gone to bed?"

"Yes; both the dear children have retired for the night."

"Master Robert Estienne has confided a secret to me and asked of me a service, dear Bridget. For two or three days we are to hide Monsieur John, our guest of this evening, in this house. The garret seems to me to offer a safe retreat. I have temporarily got your brother out of the way. Take our refugee upstairs; I shall remain here to wait for Josephin."

Bridget took up again the lamp that she had deposited upon the table, and said to the stranger as she prepared to lead the way upstairs:

"Come, monsieur; your secret will remain with Christian and myself; you may rely upon our discretion."

"I am certain of that, madam," answered Monsieur John; "I shall never forget your generous hospitality;" and addressing the artisan: "Could you join me later, after your brother-in-law has gone? I should like to speak with you."

"I shall join monsieur after Josephin's departure," Christian answered the stranger, who followed Bridget to the upper loft.

The latter two had both withdrawn when suddenly an uproar was heard in the street. Peals of laughter were interspersed with the plaintive cries of a woman. Although quite familiar with these nocturnal disorders, seeing that the Guilleris, the Mauvais-Garçons, the Tire-Laines and other bandits infested the streets at night, and not infrequently disturbed the carousals of the young seigneurs bent upon their debauches, Christian's first impulse was to go out to the help of the woman whose cries resounded ever more plaintive. Considering, however, that no decent woman would venture outside of her house at such a late hour, and, above all, fearing that by interfering in the affray he might provoke an assault upon his house and thereby put the safety of his guest in jeopardy, he contented himself with partly opening the window, whereupon, by the light of the torches held by several pages dressed in rich liveries, he saw three seigneurs, evidently just come from some orgy, surrounding a woman. The seigneurs were in an advanced stage of intoxication and sought to drag the woman after them; she resisted and held her arms closely clasped around a large cross that stood in the center of the bridge. The woman cried imploringly: "Oh, leave me, seigneurs. In the name of heaven, leave me! Mercy! Have pity for a woman – mercy, seigneurs!"

"May the flames of St. Anthony consume me if you do not come with us, strumpet!" yelled one of the seigneurs, seizing the woman by the waist. "A street walker to put on such airs! Come, my belle, either walk or we shall strip you on the spot!"

"You are mistaken, seigneurs," answered the poor creature panting for breath in the unequal struggle; "I am an honest widow."

"Honest and a widow!" exclaimed one of the debauchees. "'Sdeath, what a windfall! We shall marry you over again."

Saying which the seigneurs tried anew to tear their victim from the foot of the cross to which she clung with terror and screamed aloud for help. Attracted by the cries, a young monk, who happened

to be in a nearby side street, ran to the scene, saw the distressed condition of the persecuted woman, and rushed at her aggressors, saying in a deeply moved voice:

"Oh, brothers, to outrage a woman at the very foot of the cross! That is a cowardly act, condemned by God!"

"What business is that of yours, you frockist, you convent rat!" cried one of the assailants, stepping towards the monk with a menacing gesture. "Do you know whom it is that you are talking with? Do you know that I have the power, not only to kill you, but to excommunicate you, you beggar? I am the Marquis of Fleurange, the colonel of the regiment of Normandy, and over and above that, Bishop of Coutances. So, then, go your ways quickly and without further ado, you tonsured knave and mumbler of masses. If you do not, I shall use my spiritual powers and my temporal powers – I shall excommunicate you and run you through with my sword!"

"Oh, Brother St. Ernest-Martyr! Come to my help! It is I, Mary La Catelle!" cried the young widow, as she recognized the monk by the light of the torches. "For pity's sake stand by me!"

"Oh, my brothers!" cried the monk indignantly, running towards Mary. "The woman whom you are outraging is a saint! She gathers the little children that are left unprotected; she instructs them; she is blessed by all who know her; she is entitled to your respect."

"If she is a saint, I am a bishop – and between a female saint and a bishop the relations are close!" answered the Marquis of Fleurange with a winey guffaw. "She loves children! 'Sdeath, she shall be delighted! I shall swell her family!"

"You shall kill me before you reach her!" cried the monk, vigorously thrusting the marquis back. The latter, being heavily in his cups, reeled, swore and blasphemed, while Brother St. Ernest-Martyr threw himself between the widow, who clung to the cross, and her assailants. Crossing his arms over his chest, he looked defiantly at the seigneurs and said to them challengingly, as he barred their way to their victim:

"Come forward, if you will; but you will have to kill me before you touch this woman!"

"Insolent frockist! You dare threaten us and to raise your hand against me!" yelled the colonel-bishop furious and tottering on his unsteady limbs; and drawing his sword in its scabbard out of his baldric, he took it in both his hands, and struck so hard a blow with its heavy hilt upon the forehead of the monk, that the latter was dazed by the blow, staggered backward, and fell bleeding from an ugly scalp wound at the feet of Mary La Catelle.

Despite the caution that his guest's safety imposed upon him, Christian could no longer remain a passive witness of such acts of brutality; he entertained a respectful esteem for the young widow whose virtuous life he was acquainted with; moreover, he feared lest the monk, who had so generously interposed between the drunken seigneurs and their victim, be subjected to further maltreatment. Christian shut the window, armed himself with a heavy iron bar, slipped quietly out of his house, shut the door after him without making any noise, in order to prevent its being known from whence he came, and, seeing several of his neighbors, whom the disturbance had drawn to their windows, he shouted:

"To your clubs, my friends, to your clubs! Will you allow women to be assailed, and defenseless men to be killed? To your clubs, my friends, to your clubs! Let us save the victims!"

Saying this, Christian ran resolutely upon the three seigneurs and their pages. At that very moment, the Franc-Taupin returned upon the bridge with the pot of Argenteuil wine that he had gone after. Seeing the artisan by the light of the torches and hearing him summon the neighbors to their clubs, the Franc-Taupin deposited the pot of wine at the threshold of the door, drew his sword and rushed to the fray crying:

"By the bowels of St. Quenet, here I am! My fine blade has not taken the air for a long time! It itches in my hands! Death to the enemies of the good people of Paris! Death to the nobles and their pages!"

Several of Christian's neighbors answered his summons and issued from their houses, some armed with clubs, others with pikes. For a moment the three seigneurs stood their ground bravely; they drew close abreast of one another and drew their swords. Their pages, however, as much out of fear of being hurt in the broil as out of mischief, suddenly put out their torches and screamed:

"Seigneurs! There is a squad of armed constables coming this way! There, on the bridge! Look out! Run who run can!"

Upon shouting this lie the pages ran off as fast as their legs could carry them and left their masters and their assailants in utter darkness. The three seigneurs did not feel much concern on the score of the constables, who never dared to suppress the disorders of the nobility; but realizing that they had to do with eight or ten determined men, the assailants of the defenseless woman profited by the darkness in which they found themselves to slip away upon the heels of their pages, while Christian's neighbors called for lanthorns in order to raise the wounded man. The artisan ran back into his house, lighted, and came out with a taper. By the light the monk was discovered stretched out at the foot of the cross, with his head bathed in the blood that ran profusely from his scalp wound. On her knees beside him, and weeping tears of thankfulness, Mary La Catelle sought to staunch the wound of her defender. Brother St. Ernest-Martyr was carried into Christian's house with the help of the Franc-Taupin and some neighbors. The artisan offered asylum also to the widow, who was almost fainting with fright. Commissioned by her husband to conduct the stranger to the garret, the only window of which opened upon the river, Bridget remained ignorant of what was occurring upon the street. When, however, she returned downstairs, great was her surprise and alarm at the sight of Mary La Catelle, pale, her dress thrown into disorder, and leaning against a table compassionately contemplating the wounded young monk. The latter was slowly regaining consciousness, thanks to the attention that he was receiving from the artisan and the Franc-Taupin.

"Good God!" cried Bridget, hastening to approach the young widow. "Look at the poor monk covered with blood. What has happened, Mary?"

"I was delayed at a friend's longer than I had expected; her maid servant accompanied me home; we were crossing the bridge when several swaggering seigneurs approached and made insulting remarks to us. The poor servant was frightened and ran away, leaving me alone. The men sought to drag me away with them. Brother St. Ernest-Martyr happening by, came to my rescue; he received on the forehead a blow with the hilt of a sword and fell bleeding at my feet. Happily your husband and several neighbors rushed to our help; thanks to them we escaped further maltreatment from our assailants; but the poor monk is wounded."

"Dear sister, let me have some fresh water and some lint," said the Franc-Taupin to Bridget. Having often been wounded in war the soldier of adventure had some knowledge of the dressing of wounds.

"I shall go upstairs for the lint, and bring my daughter down to help you," answered Bridget as she proceeded to the storey above.

Slightly recovered from her own fright, Mary La Catelle drew nearer to the monk with deepening interest. The Franc-Taupin looked around and said to Christian:

"What has become of your guest? Did he show the white feather? I would have preferred he were a braver man."

"No, no, Josephin. Our guest left the house shortly before the disturbance on the street; he feared it was growing too late for him."

"Why did he not wait for me? I would have escorted him home safely after emptying our pot of Argenteuil. But, coming to think of it," the Franc-Taupin broke off, while he left Christian to hold up the head of the friar, "I shall pour a few drops of wine down the wounded man's throat; the devil! wine has the miraculous power of being as helpful to the sick as to the well;" and taking up the pot he approached it to his own lips. "Before administering the potion to others let me try it myself – it is the duty of all prudent pharmacists to assure themselves of the quality of their own medicine."

While the Franc-Taupin was thoroughly "trying" the beverage, Bridget came down again with her daughter. The latter had hastily put on her clothes. Her brother also, whom the noise had awakened, dressed himself and came out of his room. Hervé was on the point of inquiring from his father what was the cause of the commotion in the house when his eyes alighted upon St. Ernest-Martyr, and he recognized the man whom his sister Hena had ingenuously called "her monk." A flash of lightning shot from Hervé's eyes and for an instant his looks assumed a ferocious expression. The lad, however, controlled his sentiments and closely watched his sister and the friar, to the latter of whom the Franc-Taupin was administering a few mouthfuls of the comforting wine. Speedily recalled to himself by the strengthening elixir, Brother St. Ernest-Martyr opened his eyes. Before him he saw, like a celestial apparition, the angelic countenance of Hena, who, with eyes moist with pity, held out to her uncle with a trembling hand the lint that he was using to dress the wound of the monk whose head Christian held in his hands. When he had completely regained consciousness and collected his thoughts, the monk became aware of the solicitude with which he was surrounded by the family that had taken him in; tears of gratitude and tenderness welled up in his eyes and rolled down his face, which, pale with the loss of blood, recalled the touching beauty that painters impart to the image of Christ. The expression of ineffable gratitude on the monk's countenance gave it at the moment so sweet a charm that Hervé trembled with suppressed rage. His anger was such that it even threatened to break out when he surprised the eyes of the monk and of his sister once as they accidentally met. The lad noticed that both dropped their eyes and seemed embarrassed. These circumstances escaped all the other members of the family. Brother St. Ernest-Martyr turned his head towards Christian and said to him in a feeble voice:

"It is to you, no doubt, monsieur, that I owe my life. And yet I am a stranger to you. May heaven place it some day in my power to attest to you the gratitude with which I am penetrated. I thank you for your help."

"Brother," answered the artisan, "I would have fulfilled my duty as a Christian by assisting you even if you were a stranger to me; but often did our mutual friend Mary La Catelle speak to us of you and of the esteem that you deserve. Besides, my wife often was present when you were teaching the little ones. She has preserved cherished recollections of the evangelical morality that you preached to them."

"Oh, we could never sufficiently praise the good brother!" exclaimed Mary La Catelle. "What is known of him is like nothing beside the numerous acts of charity that he practices in secret – "

"Sister, sister," said the monk, blushing with modesty and interrupting the widow, "do not exaggerate my poor deserts; I love little ones; to instruct them is a pleasure to me and their affection more than rewards me for the little that I do for them. My duty squares with my pleasure."

"Well, brother, I shall say no more," replied Mary La Catelle; "I shall not say how highly I think of you, and how I but re-echo the sentiments of all who know you; I shall say nothing of how, a short time ago, you rushed to my defense at the risk of your life; I shall not say how, only yesterday, a man who fell into the river near the isle of Notre Dame was being carried down stream and about to sink when you threw yourself – "

"Dear sister," insisted Brother St. Ernest-Martyr with a melancholy smile, and again interrupting the widow whose praises of the monk placed Hervé upon the rack, "your style of not saying things is too transparent. Oblige me; draw a veil over the acts that you refer to; anyone else would have done as much. We all in this world owe assistance to our fellows." As the young monk spoke these words, his eyes involuntarily again encountered Hena's; he sought to flee from their influence upon him; he rose from his stool, and said to Christian: "Adieu, monsieur; I am only a poor friar of the Order of St. Augustine; I can only preserve the deepest gratitude for your timely help. Believe me, the remembrance of yourself and of your sympathetic family will always be present in my mind. May the blessing of God rest upon your house."

"What, brother," interposed the artisan, "your wound is barely dressed, and you would leave the house so soon? Rest yourself a little longer; you are still too weak to proceed on your route."

"It is late, and I feel quite strong enough to return to my convent. I went with the Superior's consent to carry some consolation to a good old priest of Notre Dame who lies dangerously ill. Night is now far advanced, allow me to withdraw. I think that the fresh air will do me good," and respectfully bowing to Hena and her mother, blushingly he said to Mary La Catelle: "To-morrow will be school day, dear sister; I hope I shall be able to go to your house as usual, and give the children their lessons."

"May it please God that you can keep your promise, dear brother," answered the young widow; "but I am less courageous than you; I would not dare to return home to-night any more; I shall request Bridget to be so kind as to afford me asylum for the night."

"Do you imagine, dear Mary, that I would have allowed you to go?" answered Christian's wife. "You shall share Hena's bed."

After the monk's wound was dressed, the Franc-Taupin had remained silent, sharing, as he did, the interest felt by the whole family, Hervé, alas, only excepted, in poor Brother St. Ernest-Martyr. The latter's modest bearing, the sweetness of his countenance, the good words that all had for him, deeply moved Josephin, who, his soldier's manners and the adventurous life he led notwithstanding, was susceptible to generous emotions. Seeing the friar, after expressing his thanks anew to Christian, move towards the door, the Franc-Taupin took up his sword, put on his hat, and said:

"My reverend man, you shall not go out alone. I shall escort you to the Augustinian Convent. It is common with blows received on the skull, to be followed after a while by dizziness. You might be seized with such a fit on your way. Let me offer you my arm."

"Thanks, Josephin," said Bridget affectionately; "thanks for your kind thoughtfulness, my friend. Do accompany the worthy monk."

"I am obliged to you for your offer," answered the monk to the Franc-Taupin; "but I can not consent to your troubling yourself by escorting me. The function with which I am clad, besides my robe, will be ample protection against marauders."

"Your robe! Were it not that I know how worthy a man is inside of it, I would let it depart alone. By the bowels of St. Quenet! I have no love for frockists. Monkeys do not watch houses like dogs, they do not draw the plow like oxen, they do not carry loads like horses. Very much like the useless monkey, monks do not till the soil like the peasant, they do not defend the country like the soldier, they do not heal the sick like the physician. By the bowels of St. Quenet! These frockists deafen their neighborhood with the clatter of their bells, on the theory that the mass that is well rung is half said. They mumble their prayers in order to earn their fat soups, not to save souls. You, however, my reverend man, you who plow the field of science, you who defend the oppressed, you who comfort the sorrowful, you who sacrifice your life for others, you who are the prop of the poor, you who indoctrinate the little ones like a good evangelical doctor – you are not one of those mumblers of prayers, of those traffickers in masses, although you wear their costume. It might, therefore, well happen that some gang of Mauvais-Garçons, or of Tire-Laines, or of the associates of these *in partibus*, mendicant monks, might scent the honest man under your frock, and hurt you out of sheer hatred of good. For that reason you shall take my arm, by the devil, and I shall escort you whether you want it or not."

At first alarmed at the unconventionality of the Franc-Taupin's words, the family of Christian soon felt easier, and, so far from interrupting him, took pleasure in listening to him bestowing, after his own fashion, praise upon the friar. Hena, above all, seemed with her ingenuous and delighted smile to applaud her uncle, while Hervé, on the contrary, was hardly able to repress his annoyance, and cast jealous side glances at St. Ernest-Martyr.

The monk answered the Franc-Taupin: "My dear brother, if the larger part of my brotherhood are, indeed, such as you depict them, I would request you rather to pity and pardon them; if they are different from what you take them for, if they are worthy beings, pray devoutly that they may

persevere in the right path. You offer me your arm; I accept it. If I were to refuse you, you might think that I resent your satirical outburst."

"Resent! You, my reverend man! One might as well expect ferocity from the lamb. Good night, sister; good night, children," added the Franc-Taupin as he embraced Bridget, Hena and Hervé successively. "The only one wanting to my hugs is my little Odelin. But by the bowels of St. Quenet! I shall not do like the paymaster of my company, who pockets the pay of the absent men. When the darling apprentice to the armorer is back again, I shall pay him the full arrears of hugs due him."

"The dear boy!" observed Bridget tenderly, as her thoughts flew to her absent son. "May he soon again be back in our midst! It looks so long to us before his return."

"His absence grieves me as much as it does you," interjected Christian. "It seems to me so long since his place is vacant at our hearth."

"You will see him return to us grown up, but so grown that we shall hardly know him," put in Hena. "How we shall celebrate his return! What a joy it will be to us to make him forget the trials of the journey! What a delight it will be to hear him tell us all about his trip to Milan, his experiences on the road, and his excursions in Italy!"

Hervé alone had not a word on the absence of his brother.

Rising from the seat into which he had dropped for a moment, the young monk took leave of the artisan, saying:

"May the heavens continue to bless your hospitality and your happy home, the sanctuary of the domestic virtues that are so rare in these days!"

"The devil, my friend! Your words are golden!" exclaimed the Franc-Taupin, as he offered the monk the support of his arm. "Whenever I step into this poor but dear house, it seems to me I leave the big devil of hell behind me at the door; and whenever I go out again, I feel as if I am quitting paradise. Look out! Who knows but Beelzebub, the wicked one with the cloven hoofs, is waiting for me outside? But to-night, seeing me in your company, my reverend man, he will not dare to grab me. Come, let's start, reverend sir!"

So saying, the Franc-Taupin left with the monk; Bridget led La Catelle to Hena's chamber; and Christian climbed up to the garret for a chat with Monsieur John.

Left alone in the lower apartment, his fists clenched and his lips drawn tight together, Hervé murmured moodily:

"Oh, that monk – that accursed monk!" The lad relapsed into gloomy thoughts; suddenly he resumed: "What a scheme! Yes, yes – it will remove even the shadow of a suspicion. I shall follow the inspiration, whether it proceed from the devil or from God – "

Hervé did not finish his sentence. He listened in the direction of the staircase by which Mary La Catelle, Bridget and Hena and his father had just mounted to the floor above.

CHAPTER VIII.
IN THE GARRET

Cautiously climbing the ladder that led up to the garret, Christian found the stranger seated upon the sill of the narrow window that opened upon the river. The moon, then on the wane, was rising in a sky studded with stars, and shed her pale light upon the austere visage of the unknown guest. Drawn from his absorbing thoughts, he turned towards Christian:

"I thought I heard some noise toward the bridge. Has anything happened?"

"Some seigneurs, out on a carousal, attempted to do violence to a woman. Several of our neighbors rushed to her aid with me and my brother-in-law. Thanks be to God, Mary La Catelle is safe."

"What!" cried Monsieur John with deep concern, breaking in upon the artisan's report. "Was that worthy widow, who is associated with John Dubourg, the draper of St. Denis Street, with Etienne Laforge, the rich bourgeois of Tournay, and the architect Poille in the charitable work of gathering abandoned orphans, in peril? Poor woman, her charity, the purity of her principles and her devotion to the little ones entitle her to the esteem of all right-minded people."

"The task that she has imposed upon herself bristles with dangers. The monks and friars of her quarter suspect her of partaking of the ideas and hopes of the reformers. Already has she been locked up in the Chatelet, and her school been closed. Thanks, however, to the intervention of one of her relatives, who is in the service of Princess Marguerite, a protector of the reform, Mary was set at liberty and her school was re-opened. But the persecutions of the heretics are redoubling, and I apprehend fresh dangers for our friend, whose faith is unshakable."

"Yes, the persecutions are redoubling," rejoined Monsieur John thoughtfully. "Monsieur Christian Lebrenn, I know I can unbosom myself to you with all frankness. I am a stranger in Paris; you know the city. Could I find within the walls, or even without, some secluded spot where about a hundred persons could be gathered secretly and safely? I must warn you, these persons belong to the Reformation."

The artisan reflected for a moment and answered: "It would be difficult and dangerous to assemble so large a number of people within Paris. Gainier, the chief spy of the Criminal Lieutenant, expends undefatigable activity to discover and denounce all assemblages that he suspects. His agents are spread everywhere. So considerable a gathering would undoubtedly call their attention. Outside of Paris, however, we need not apprehend the same watchfulness. I may be able to indicate some safe place to you. But before proceeding farther, I should make a confidential disclosure to you. A friend of mine and myself contemplate printing secretly a few handbills intended to propagate the reform movement. We are in the hope that, scattered through Paris, or posted over night on the walls, these placards may stir public opinion. Only one obstacle has, so far, held us back – the finding of some safe and secluded place, where, without danger of being detected, we might set up our little printing establishment. I understand from my friend that he has at last found a suitable place for our purpose. It may turn out to be suitable for yours also."

"Is the house outside the walls of Paris?"

"It is not a house; it is an abandoned quarry situated on Montmartre. My friend was born in that suburb; his mother still lives there; he is familiar with every nook and corner of that rocky hill. He is of the opinion that a certain wide and deep grotto which he inspected will guarantee to us the seclusion and safety that we are in search of. If he is not mistaken, the meeting that you have mentioned to me might be held at Montmartre. To-morrow evening I am to go with my friend to look the place over. When I shall have done so, I shall acquaint you with the circumstances, and if the place is fit, you may fix the day of your gathering."

"Suppose that your excursion to Montmartre to-morrow evening satisfies you that the quarry is suitable for my meeting, that it offers perfect safety; in what manner could the people, whom I shall convoke, be furnished with the necessary directions to find the place?"

"I think that would be an easy matter, after the locality had been carefully inspected. I shall be able to furnish you to-morrow with the full particulars."

"Monsieur Christian, could you also tell me where I could find some trustworthy person whom I could commission to carry the letters of convocation to certain persons, who, in their turn, would notify their friends?"

"I shall carry those letters myself, if you will, monsieur. I realize the gravity of such a mission."

"In the name of the Cause that we both serve, Monsieur Christian, I thank you heartily for your generous offer," replied the stranger with effusion. "Oh, the times bode evil. The conversation that we had this evening with your brother-in-law was almost a revelation to me concerning the singular man, the intrepid swordsman, the former runner of gallant adventures, whose darksome dealings I was previously acquainted with."

"Ignatius Loyola? And what may be his scheme?"

"Some slight overtures made by him to a man whom I hold worthy of all credence, and whom he hoped to capture, were reported to me. I was thereby enabled to penetrate the infernal project pursued by Ignatius Loyola, and – "

Bridget's voice, sounding from the middle of the ladder that led up to the garret, and cautiously calling her husband, interrupted the unknown. Christian listened and heard his wife say:

"Come down quick; I heard Hervé come out of his room; I hear him coming upstairs; he may want to see us."

The artisan made a sign to his guest that he had nothing to fear, and quickly descended the stairs into a dark closet, the only door of which opened into the chamber occupied by himself and his wife. Christian had just time to close noiselessly the door of the closet and to sit down, when Hervé rapped gently at his father's door and called him. Bridget opened and said to her son:

"What do you want, my child?"

"Dear parents, grant me a few words with you."

"Gladly," responded Christian, "but let us go downstairs. Our poor friend Mary La Catelle is sharing your sister's bed; the woman needs rest; our conversation might disturb her sleep."

CHAPTER IX.
THE PENITENT

Father, mother and son proceeded downstairs to the room on the ground floor where the distressing scene of the night before was enacted. Hardly had they touched the lowermost step of the staircase when Hervé threw himself upon his knees, took his father's hands, kissed them tearfully and murmured in a smothered voice:

"I beg your pardon – for my past conduct – pardon me – my good parents!"

"God be praised! We were not deceived in the boy," was the thought that rushed to the minds of Christian and Bridget as they exchanged a look of profound satisfaction. "The unfortunate lad has been touched by repentance."

"My son," said the artisan, "rise."

"No, not before I have obtained from you and my mother forgiveness for my infamous act;" and he added, amid sobs: "It was myself, I, your son – it was I who stole your gold!"

"Hervé," replied Christian, deeply moved by the manifestations of remorse which he took to be sincere, "last night, in this same room, your mother and I said to you: 'If you forgot yourself for a moment and committed the theft, admit it – you will be forgiven.'"

"And we shall gladly keep our promise," added Bridget. "We pardon you, seeing that you repent. Rise."

"Oh, never more so than at this moment am I penetrated with the unworthiness of my conduct. Good God! So much kindness on your part, and so much baseness on mine! My whole life shall be consecrated to the atonement of my infamy!" said Hervé, rising from the floor.

"I shall not conceal it from you, my boy," proceeded Christian with paternal kindness. "I was quite prepared for this admission of your guilt. Certain happy symptoms that your mother and myself noticed to-day, led us to expect your return to the right path, to the principles of honesty in which we brought you up."

"Did I not tell you so, yesterday?" broke in Bridget. "Could our son really become unworthy of our tenderness, unworthy of the example that we set to him, as well as to his sister and brother? No; no; we will regain him; he will see the error of his ways. So you see, dear, dear boy," she added embracing him effusively, "I knew you better than you knew yourself! Blessed be God for your return to the path of righteousness!"

The consummate hypocrite threw himself upon his mother's neck, and answering her caresses with feigned affection, said in a moved voice:

"Good father, good mother, the confession of my shameful act earned your pardon for me. Later I hope your esteem for me may return, when you will have been able to judge of the sincerity of my remorse. Let me tell you the cause of my repentance, the suddenness of which may astonish you."

"A sweet astonishment, thanks be to God. Speak, speak, my son!"

"You surmised rightly, father. Yes, led astray, corrupted by the counsel of Fra Girard, I pilfered your money for the purpose of consecrating it to works that I took to be pious."

"Ah, it is with pride both for us and yourself that I say it," cried Bridget; "never once, while we suspected you, did we believe you capable of the guilty act out of love for gold, out of a craving for selfish enjoyment, or out of cupidity! No, a thousand times no!"

"Thanks! Oh, thanks, good mother, to do me at least that justice, or, rather, to do it to the bringing up that I owe you! No; the fruit of my larceny has not been dissipated in prodigality. No; I did not keep it like a miser, out of love for gold. The gold pieces were all thrown into the chest of the Apostolic Commissioner of indulgences, for the purpose of obtaining the redemption of the souls in purgatory."

"I believe you, my son. The charitable and generous side of that idolatry, that is so profitable to the cupidity of the Church of Rome, must have had its fascination for your heart. But how did you discover the fraud of that monastic traffic? Explain that to me."

"This morning, after I deposited my offering in the chest of indulgences that was set up in the Church of St. Dominic, I heard the Apostolic Commissioner preach. Oh, father, all the still lingering sentiments of honor within me revolted at his words. My eyes were suddenly opened; I fathomed the depth of the abyss that blind fanaticism leads to. Do you know what that monk, who claimed to speak in the name of the Almighty, dared to say to the mass of people gathered in the church? 'The virtue of my indulgences is so efficacious,' the monk cried out, 'so very efficacious, that, even if it were possible for any man to have raped the mother of our Savior, that crime without name would be remitted to him by the virtue of my indulgences. So, then, buy them, my brothers! Bring, bring your money! Rummage in your purses, rummage' – "

Christian and his wife listened to their son's tale in silent affright. The sacrilegious words which the lad reported to them caused them to shiver with horror and their own horror explained to them the repentance and remorse of Hervé.

"Oh, I now see it all, my child!" cried Christian. "The sacrilegious monstrosity was a revelation to you! It shocked you back to your senses! Yes, your eyes were suddenly opened to the light; you conceived a horror for those infamous priests; you recoiled with dread from the fatal slope down which superstition was driving you!"

"Yes, father, the monstrous thought was a revelation to me; the veil was torn; I regained my sight. I was to be either the dupe or the accomplice of these abominable frauds. Disgust and indignation recalled me to myself. It was to me as if I awoke from a painful dream. When I recalled that, for several months, I had been dominated by the influence of Fra Girard, I cursed the detestable charm under which the man had held me captive, and which was alienating me from a cherished, a venerated family. I cursed the devilish sophisms, which, exactly as you expressed it, father, were corrupting in my mind the most elemental principles of right and wrong, and led me to the commission of a theft, an act that was doubly infamous seeing that it was perpetrated under the trusting security of the paternal roof! Oh, mother, in the measure that I thus regained the possession of my soul, overwhelmed with shame as I was, and torn with remorse, I felt there was but one way of safety – repentance! Only one hope – your pardon! Only one refuge – your love. I have returned to you, beloved parents."

Christian and Bridget could not suspect their son's sincerity. They reposed faith in his repentance, in the return of his filial devotion, in the horror that the past inspired him with. Father and mother devoutly rendered thanks to God for having restored their son to them. When the two closed their eyes in sleep that night their last thought concerned their son Hervé – alas, a treacherous happiness.

CHAPTER X.
LOYOLA AND HIS DISCIPLES

The day after the proscribed stranger and friend of Robert Estienne had found an asylum in the home of Christian, the latter sallied forth after dark with his friend Justin for the purpose of inspecting the abandoned quarry where the two expected to be able to set up their secret press. The secluded spot was also expected speedily to serve as the trysting place for the leaders of the Reformation in Paris. The late moon was rising when the two artisans arrived in the neighborhood of the Abbey of Montmartre. They struck a road to the left of the church, leading to a hillock crowned with a cross. Arrived there they descended a steep path at the bottom of which was the entrance to the quarry.

"Unless the recollections of my childhood deceive me," said Justin to Christian, "I'm under the impression that this quarry formerly had two openings – one being this, through which we are about to enter, the other, the issue of a sort of underground gallery, located at the opposite slope of the hill, and through which the descent is steep down to the bottom of the quarry. I even recall that a portion of the gallery bore traces of some very ancient masonry."

"It probably is one of those places of refuge that, centuries ago, were dug into the bowels of the earth by the inhabitants of these regions, in the days of the invasions of the Northman pirates."[11]

"Quite probable. At the same time, seeing it is well to be prepared for all emergencies, this quarry can be rendered an all the safer meeting place for our friends of the Reformation by placing a watchman at each entrance. The alarm being given from either side, escape could then be safely made by the other. The agents of the Criminal Lieutenant have a hundred eyes and as many ears. We cannot take too many precautions."

"If your recollections are correct, that double entrance would be a priceless fact. The meeting place would be doubly guarded."

"We can easily make sure of that," said Justin. Saying this he fumbled in his pocket for his tinder and flint, while Christian drew out of his pocket the butt of a candle that he had provided himself with for the occasion.

The jagged opening of the grotto was overhung by an abutting ledge of lime rock, covered with a few inches of earth overgrown with briars and furze. A rather abrupt path led to the species of platform that lay under the beetling rock. The two artisans stepped in. They did not light their candle at first for fear it would be extinguished by the wind. But after having groped their way through the dark for a few paces, they struck a light, and presently the feeble flame of the candle threw its light into the wide though low-arched cavern. A huge boulder, about five or six feet high and from eight to ten through, that doubtlessly had been loosened and dropped from the walls of the cave, seemed to mark the further extremity of the underground walk.

"I now remember the place exactly," said Justin; "the inside opening of the gallery that I spoke of to you must be on the other side of the stone. Let's move on. We are on the right path."

Saying this, and followed by his friend, Justin stepped into a narrow space left between the natural wall and the boulder. Suddenly they heard the noise of footsteps and the voices of several persons drawing near from the side of the opening through which they had themselves shortly before entered the cavern. As much surprised as alarmed, the first motion of Justin was to extinguish the candle, and approaching his lips to the ear of Christian he whispered: "Let us not budge from this spot. We may here remain unseen, should these people come this way."

[11] For a thrilling account of one of these invasions, see "The Iron Arrow Head," the tenth of this series.

The two artisans held their breath and remained motionless in their hiding place, wondering with as much astonishment as anxiety who it might be that was resorting at so late an hour to so solitary a spot.

The personages who penetrated into the quarry had also equipped themselves with lighting materials. One of them lighted a large wax candle, the reddish glare of which illuminated the features of the new arrivals, seven in number. The one who came in last, cast around him soon as the torch was lighted, looks indicative of the retreat being familiar to him. He walked with difficulty, and he stooped low as he leaned upon a heavy staff much resembling a crutch. Yet he seemed to be a man in the maturity of life. Black, threadbare and shabby clothes outlined his tall and robust stature. A Spanish ruff of doubtful white set off his long and olive-hued visage that terminated in a pointed beard. His head was almost bare of hair. His dominating eyes, his imperious brow, the haughty carriage of his head – all imparted to his strongly marked physiognomy the impression of absolute inflexibility. That personage stepped forward. It was Ignatius Loyola.

His six companions were James Lainez, a Spaniard; Alfonso Salmeron, Inigo of Bobadilla, and Rodriguez of Azevedo, Portuguese; Francis Xavier, a French nobleman; and lastly, Peter Lefevre, a native of the mountains of Savoy, the same who, for ten years, had been the intimate friend of Christian Lebrenn.

Francis Xavier held the lighted wax candle. Lefevre carried on his shoulder a large bundle. Motionless and mute the six disciples of Loyola fixed their eyes upon their master, not in order to discover his thoughts – they were incapable of such audacity – but in order to forestall his will, whatever it might be.

Looking around in silent contemplation of the interior of the grotto, Loyola broke the silence in a solemn voice: "I greet thee, secret retreat, where, as formerly in the cavern of Manres, I have often meditated, and matured my purposes!" He then sat down upon a nearby stone, crossed his hands over his staff, leaned his chin upon his hands, let his eyes travel slowly over his disciples, who, impassive as statues stood beside him, and, after an instant of silent meditation resumed: "My children, I said to you this evening: 'Come!' You came, ignorant of whither I was leading you. Why did you follow me? Answer, Xavier. To hear one of my disciples is to hear them all – to hear one of them to-day, is to hear all those who are to follow them from age to age – all will be but the distant echoes of my thought."

"Master, you said to us: 'Come!' We came. Command, and you shall be obeyed."

"Without inquiring whither I led you; without even seeking to ascertain what I might demand of you? Answer, Lefevre."

"Master, we followed you without reflecting – without inquiring."

"Why without reflecting, without inquiring? Answer, Lainez."

"The members of the body obey the will that directs them; they do not interrogate that will; they obey."

"Xavier," resumed Loyola, "plant your candle in some interstice of that boulder. Lefevre, deposit your bundle at your feet. It contains your sacerdotal vestments and the articles necessary to celebrate the holy sacrifice of the mass."

Francis Xavier planted the lighted candle firmly between two stones. Lefevre deposited his bundle on the ground. The other disciples remained standing, their eyes lowered. Still keeping his seat, and with his chin resting on the handle of his staff, Loyola resumed:

"Francis Xavier, when I first met you on the benches of the University – what was then your nature? What were your habits?"

"Master, I was passionately given to the pleasures of life."

"And you, Inigo of Bobadilla?"

"Master, all obstacles upset me. I was weak and pusillanimous. My spirit lacked energy. My nature was cowardly and springless."

"And you, John Lainez?"

"Master, I had excessive confidence in myself. Extreme vanity – "

"And you, Rodriguez of Azevedo?"

"Master, my heart ran over with tenderness. A touching act, an affectionate word, was enough to bring the tears to my eyes. I was kind to all, was ever eager to run to the help of our fellow men. I was of a confiding and accessible nature."

"And you, Alfonso Salmeron?"

"Master, pride dominated me. I was proud of my vigor of bone and of my intelligence. I deemed myself a superior man."

"And you, John Lefevre?"

"Master, my mountaineer tenacity never looked upon any obstruction but to overcome it. I brooked no contradiction."

"Aye! Such were you. And what are you now? Answer, John Lefevre. To hear one of you is to hear all the rest."

"Master, we are no longer ourselves. Your soul has absorbed ours. We are now the instruments of your will. We are the body, you the spirit. We are submissive slaves, you the inflexible master. We are the clubs, you the hand. Without your animating breath we are but corpses."

"How did you arrive at this complete self-effacement? In what manner was the absorption of your personalities in mine effected?"

"Master, the study of your *Spiritual Exercises* effected the miracle."

Loyola seemed satisfied. With his chin resting upon his two hands crossed over the head of his heavy staff, he remained silent for a moment. Presently he resumed: "Yes, that you were; now you are this. And I myself, what was I, and what have I become? I shall tell you. I was a haughty Grandee of Viscaya, a handsome cavalier, a valiant captain, a daring seducer, and lucky swordsman. The hand of God suddenly smote me in war and rendered me a cripple. Great was my despair! To renounce women, dueling, horses, the battle, the command of my regiment, which I had broken in, drilled and fashioned by military discipline! Nailed to a couch of tortures, which I welcomed in the hope of removing my deformity, I was seized by Grace! I felt myself full of strength and of energy. I was possessed of an invincible craving for dominion. At that juncture the Holy Ghost said to me: 'Devote thyself to the triumph of the Catholic Church. Thy dominion shall extend in the measure of thy faith.' I then asked myself what services could I render the Catholic Church. I looked around me. What did I see? The spirit of Liberty, that pestilential emanation of a fallen humanity, everywhere at war with Authority, that sacred emanation of Divinity. I promised to myself to curb the spirit of Liberty with the inflexible curb of Authority, identically as I had formerly subjugated indomitable horses. The goal being set, what were the means to reach it? I looked for them. I wished first to experiment upon myself, to determine upon myself the extent to which, sustained by faith in the idea a man pursues, he can shake off his former self. Rich by birth, I begged my bread; a haughty Grandee, I exposed myself to outrage; a skilful swordsman, I submitted to insult; sumptuous in my habits of dress, careful of my personal appearance, I have lived in rags and in the gutter. Ignorant of letters, I took my seat at the age of thirty among children on the benches of the Montaigu College, where any slight inattention was visited upon me with the whip. Some of my purposes, being detected by orthodox priests, earned for me their persecution and I was ostracised. I stood it all without a murmur. From that time, certain that I could demand from my disciples the sacrifices I imposed upon myself, I made you that which you are required to be. You have said it. You are the members, I the spirit; you are the instrument, I the will. The hour for action has come; our work calls us. What work is that?"

"That work is the insurance of the reign of authority upon earth."

"What authority?"

"Master, there is but one. The authority of God, visibly incarnated in His vicar, the Pope, who is in Rome."

"Do you understand by that the spiritual or the temporal authority?"

"Master, he who has authority over the soul must have authority over the body also. He who dictates the Divine law must dictate the human law also."

"What must the Pope be?"

"Pontiff and Emperor of the Catholic world."

"Who, under him, is to govern the nations?"

"The clergy."

"Must temporal authority, accordingly, also belong to the Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church?"

"All authority flows from God. His ministers are by divine right the masters of the nations, and must be invested with full authority."

"Is that, then, the work in hand?"

"Yes, master."

"Are there any obstacles to its accomplishment?"

"Enormous ones."

"What are they?"

"First of all, the Kings."

"Next?" queried Loyola impatiently. "Next?"

"The indocility of the bourgeois classes."

"Next?"

"The new heresy known by the name of the Reformation."

"Next?"

"The printing press, that scourge that every day and everywhere spreads its ravages."

"Next?"

"The too publicly scandalous habits of the ecclesiastics."

"And lastly?"

"Often the ineptness, the feebleness, the insatiable cupidity and the excesses of the papacy."

"These, then, are the obstacles to the absolute rule of the Catholic world by her Church?"

"Yes, master."

"Is it possible to overcome these obstacles?"

"We can, master, provided your spirit speaks through our mouths, and your will dictates our actions."

"All honor to the Lord – let's begin with the Kings. What are they with regard to the Popes?"

"Their rivals."

"What should they be?"

"Their first subjects."

"Would it not be preferable for the greater glory and security of the Catholic Church that royalty were abolished?"

"That would be preferable."

"How are Kings to be absolutely subordinated to the Popes? Or, rather, how is royalty to be destroyed?"

"By causing all its subjects to rise against it."

"By what process?"

"By unchaining the passions of an ignorant populace; by exploiting the old commune spirit of the bourgeoisie; by fanning the hatred of the seigneurs, once the peers of Kings in feudal days; by setting the people against one another."

"Is there a last resort for the riddance of Kings?"

"The dagger, or poison."

"Do you understand by that that a member of the Church may and has the right to stab a King; may and has the right to poison a King?"

"Master, it is not the part of a monk to kill a King, whether openly or covertly. The King should first be paternally admonished, then excommunicated, then declared forfeit of royal authority. After that *his execution falls to others*."[12]

"And who is it that declares Kings forfeit of royal authority, and thus places them under the ban of mankind, and outside the pale of human and divine law?"

"Either the people's voice, or an assembly of priests and theologians, or the decision of men of sense."[13]

"Suppose royal authority is overthrown by murder, or otherwise, will not the power thereby fall either into the hands of the nobility and the seigneurs, or into those of the bourgeoisie, or into the hands of the populace?"

"Yes, but only for a short interval. If the power falls into the hands of the populace, the seigneurs, that is, the nobility and the bourgeoisie, are to be turned against the populace. If the power should fall into the hands of the bourgeoisie, then the populace and the nobility are to be turned against the bourgeoisie; finally, in case the power falls into the hands of the nobility, the bourgeoisie and the populace are to be turned against the nobility."

"Civil war being over, what will be the state of things?"

"All powers being annihilated, the one destroyed by the other, only the Catholic Church will remain standing, imperishable."

"You spoke of operating upon the populace, upon the bourgeoisie, upon the nobility, to the end of using these several classes for the overthrow of royal power, and subsequently of letting them loose against one another. What lever will you operate upon them?"

"The direction of their conscience, especially that of their wives, through the confessional."

"In what manner do you expect to be able to direct their conscience?"

"By establishing maxims so sweet, so flexible, so comfortable, so complaisant to men's passions, vices and sins that the larger number of men and women will choose us for their confessors, and will thereby hand over to us the direction of their souls.[14] To direct the souls of the living is to secure the empire of the world."

"Let us consider the application of this doctrine," said Loyola. "Suppose I am a monk, you, I suppose," he added addressing his disciples successively, "are my confessor. I say to you: 'Father, it is forbidden, under penalty of excommunication, to doff, even for an instant, the garb of our Order. I accuse myself of having put on lay vestments.'"

"'My son,' I would answer," responded one of the disciples of Ignatius, "'let us distinguish. If you doffed your religious garb in order not to soil it with some disgraceful act, such as going on a pickpocket expedition, or patronizing a gambling house, or indulging in debauchery, you obeyed a sentiment of shame, and you do not then deserve excommunication.'"[15]

"Now," resumed Loyola, "I am a trustee, under obligation to pay a life annuity to someone or other, and I desire his death that I may be free of the obligation; or, say, I am the heir of a rich father, and am anxious to see his last day – I accuse myself of harboring these sentiments."

"'My son,' I would answer, 'a trustee may, without sin, desire the death of those who receive a pension from his trust, for the reason that what he really desires is, not the death of his beneficiary,

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[12] "Executio ad alios pertinet." – Bellarmin, vol. I, chap. VII, p. 147.

[13] Mariana, *De Rege, vol. I*, chap. VI, p. 60.

[14] "'Alas', the monk explained, ' … men have arrived at such a pitch of corruption now-a-days, that unable to make them come to us, we must e'en go to them, otherwise they would cast us off altogether; … our casuists have taken under consideration the vices to which people of various conditions are most addicted, with a view of laying down maxims which … are so gentle that he must be a very impracticable subject indeed who is not pleased with them.'" – Blaise Pascal, *Letters to a Provincial*, Letter VI, pp. 219, 220, edition Houghton, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1880.

[15] *Practice According to the School of the Society of Jesus (Praxis ex Societatis Jesu Schola).* The passage reads: "Si habitum dimmittat ut furetur occulte, vel fornicetur." – Treatise 6, example 7, number 103. Also in Diana: "Ut eat incognitus ad lupanar." – Cited by Blaise Pascal, *Letters to a Provincial*, Letter VI, p. 215, edition Houghton, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1880.

but the cancellation of the debt. My son,' I would answer the penitent, 'you would be committing an abominable sin were you, out of pure wickedness, to desire the death of your father; but you commit no manner of sin if you harbor the wish, not with parricidal intent, but solely out of impatience to enjoy his inheritance.'"[16]

"I am a valet, and have come to accuse myself of acting as go-between in the amours of my master, and, besides, of having robbed him."

"'My son,' I would answer, 'to carry letters or presents to the concubine of your master, even to assist him in scaling her window by holding the ladder, are permissible and indifferent matters, because, in your quality of servant, it is not your will that you obey, but the will of another.[17] As to the thefts that you have committed, it is clear that if, driven by necessity, you have been forced to accept wages that are too small, you are justified in recouping your legitimate salary in some other way.'"[18]

"I am a swordsman. I accuse myself before the penitential tribunal of having fought a duel."

"'My son,' I would answer, 'if in fighting you yielded, not to a homicidal impulse, but to the legitimate call to avenge your honor, you have committed no sin.'"[19]

"I am a coward. I rid myself of my enemy by murdering him from ambush. I come to make the admission to you, my confessor, and to ask absolution."

"'My son,' I would answer, 'if you committed the murder, not for the sake of the murder itself, but in order to escape the dangers which your enemy might have thrown you into, in that case you have not sinned at all. In such cases it is legitimate to kill one's enemy in the absence of witnesses.'"[20]

"I am a judge. I accuse myself of having rendered a decision in favor of one of the litigants, in consideration of a present made to me by him."

"'Where is the wrong in that, my son?' I would ask. 'In consideration of a present you rendered a decision favorable to the giver of the gift. Could you not, by virtue of your own will, have favored whom you pleased? You stand in no need of absolution.'"[21]

"I am a usurer. I accuse myself of having frequently derived large profits from my money. Have I sinned according to the law of the Church?"

"'My son,' I would answer, 'this is the way you should in future conduct yourself in such affairs: Someone asks a loan of you. You will answer: "I have no money to loan, but I have some ready to be honestly invested. If you will guarantee to reimburse me my capital, and, besides that, to pay me a certain profit, I shall entrust the sum in your hands so that you may turn it to use. But I shall not loan it to you."[22] For the rest, my son, you have not sinned, if, however large the interest you may have received from your money, the same was looked upon by you simply as a token of gratitude, and not a condition for the loan.[23] Go in peace, my son.'"

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[16] Father Gaspar Hurtado, *On the Subject of Sins (De Sub. Pecc.)*, diff. 9; Diana, p. 5; treatise 14, r. 99. – Cited by Blaise Pascal, *Letters to a Provincial*, Letter VII, p. 234, edition Houghton, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1880.

[17] Father Anthony Escobar of Mendoza, *Exposition of Uncontroverted Opinions in Moral Theology*, treatise 7, example 4, no. 223. – Cited by Pascal, *Letters to a Provincial*, Letter VI, p. 226, edition Houghton, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1880.

[18] Father Etienne Bauny, *Summary of Sins* (1633), sixth edition, pp. 213, 214. – Cited by Pascal, *Letters to a Provincial*, Letter VI, p. 226, edition Houghton, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1880.

[19] "Non ut malum pro malo reddat, sed ut conservet honorem." are the words of Reginaldus, in *Practice According to the School of the Society of Jesus*, book 21, no. 62, p. 260. Also Lessius, *Concerning Justice (De Justitia)*, book 2, chap. 9, division 12, no. 79. – Cited by Pascal, *Letters to a Provincial*, Letter VII, pp. 233, 234, edition Houghton, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1880.

[20] Sanchez, *Moral Theology*, book 2, chap. 39, no. 7. – Cited by Pascal, *Letters to a Provincial*, Letter VII, p. 237, edition Houghton, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1880.

[21] Molina, vol. 1, treatise 2, division 88, no. 6. Also Escobar, *Moral Theology*, treatise 6, example 6, no. 48. – Cited by Pascal, *Letters to a Provincial*, Letter VIII, pp. 249, 250, edition Houghton, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1880.

[22] Father Bauny, *Summary of Sins*, chap. 14. – Cited by Pascal, *Letters to a Provincial*, Letter VIII, p. 252, edition Houghton, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1880.

[23] "Media benevolentia." – Escobar, *Moral Theology*, treatise 3, example 5, no. 4.33,34. – Cited by Pascal, *Letters to a Provincial*, Letter VIII, p. 253, edition Houghton, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1880.

"I am a bankrupt. I accuse myself of having concealed a considerable sum from the knowledge of my creditors."

"'My son,' I would answer, 'the sin is grave if you retained the sum out of base cupidity. But if your purpose was merely to insure to yourself and your family a comfortable existence, even some little luxury, you are absolved.'"[24]

"I am a woman. I accuse myself of having committed adultery, and of having in that way obtained considerable wealth from my paramour. May I enjoy that wealth with an easy conscience?"

"'My daughter,' I would answer, 'the wealth acquired through gallantry and adultery has, it is true, an illegitimate source. Nevertheless, its possession may be considered legitimate, seeing that no human or divine law pronounces against such possession.'"[25]

"I have stolen a large sum. I accuse myself of the theft, and ask for your absolution."

"'My son,' I would answer, 'it is a crime to steal, unless one is driven thereto by extreme necessity; and even less so if grave reasons prompt the act.'"[26]

"I am rich, but I give alms sparingly, if at all. I accuse myself."

"'My son,' I would answer, 'charity towards our fellows is a Christian duty. Nevertheless, if superfluity is needed by you, you commit no sin by not depriving yourself of those things which, in your eyes, are necessaries.[27] I absolve you.'"

"I coveted a certain inheritance. I accuse myself of having poisoned the man from whom I was to inherit. May I retain the property?"

"'My son,' I would answer, 'the possession of property, acquired by unworthy means, and even through manslaughter, is legitimate, so far as possession is concerned. You may retain the property.'"[28]

"I am summoned to take an oath. My conscience forbids, my interest orders me to commit perjury. You are my confessor. I wish to consult you on the matter."

"'You can, my son, reconcile your interest and your conscience. This way – I suppose you will be asked: "Do you swear you did not commit such and such an act?" You will answer aloud: "I swear before God and man that I have not committed that act," and then you add mentally: "*On such and such a day*." Or, you are asked: "Do you swear you will never do such or such a thing?" You will answer: "I swear," and mentally you add: "*Unless I change my mind; in which case I shall do the thing*."'"[29]

"I am an unmarried woman. I have yielded to a seducer. I fear the anger and reproaches of my family."

"'My daughter,' I would answer, 'take courage. A woman of your age is free to dispose of her body and herself. Have all the lovers you please. I absolve you.'"[30]

"I am a woman, passionately addicted to gambling. I accuse myself of having purloined some moneys from my husband, in order to repay my losses at the gaming table."

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[24] Lessius, confirmed by Escobar, treatise 3, example 2, no. 163. – Cited by Pascal, *Letters to a Provincial*, Letter VIII, pp. 254, 255, edition Houghton, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1880.

[25] Lessius, book 2, chap. 14, division 8; approved and endorsed by Escobar: "Quamvis mulier illicite acquirat, licite tamen retinet acquisita." treatise 1, example 8, no. 59. – Cited by Pascal, *Letters to a Provincial*, Letter VIII, pp. 257, 258, edition Houghton, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1880.

[26] Lessius, book 2, chap. 14, division 8. Also Escobar, treatise 1, example 9, no. 9. – Cited by Pascal, *Letters to a Provincial*, Letter VIII, p. 256, edition Houghton, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1880.

[27] Vasquez, *Treatise upon Alms*, chap. 4. So, also, Diana. – Cited by Pascal, *Letters to a Provincial*, Letter VI, p. 214, edition Houghton, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1880.

[28] Escobar, treatise 3, example 1, no. 23; treatise 5, example 5, no. 53. – Cited by Pascal, *Letters to a Provincial*, Letter VIII, p. 258, edition Houghton, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1880.

[29] Sanchez, part 2, book 3, chap. 6, no. 13; Filiutius, treatise 25, chap. 11, nos. 331, 328. – Cited by Pascal, *Letters to a Provincial*, Letter IX, pp. 276, 277, edition Houghton, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1880.

[30] Father Bauny, *Summary of Sins*, p. 148. – Cited by Pascal, *Letters to a Provincial*, Letter IX, p. 279, edition Houghton, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1880.

"'My daughter,' I would answer, 'seeing that, between man and wife, everything is, or ought to be, in common, you have not sinned by drawing from the common purse.[31] You may continue to do so. I absolve you.'"

"I am a woman. I love ornaments. I accuse myself."

"'My daughter,' I would answer, 'if you ornament yourself without impure intentions, and only in order to satisfy your natural taste for ornamentation, you do not sin.'"[32]

"I accuse myself of having seduced the wife of my best friend."

"'My son,' I would answer, 'let us distinguish: If you treacherously seduced the woman just because she was the wife of your best friend, then you have sinned. But if you seduced her, as you might have done any other woman, you have not outraged friendship.[33] It is a natural thing to desire the possession of a handsome woman. You have not sinned. There is no occasion for absolution.'"

"Well done!" exclaimed Loyola. "But I notice you grant absolution for all that human morality and the Fathers of the Church condemn."

"Master, you said: 'Absolved penitents will never complain.'"

"What is the object of the complaisance of your doctrines in all circumstances?"

"At this season an incurable corruption reigns among mankind. Rigor would estrange them from us. Our tolerance for their vices is calculated to deliver the penitents to us, body and soul. By leaving to us the direction of their souls, this corrupt generation will later relinquish to us the absolute education of their children. We will then raise those generations as may be suitable, by taking them in charge from the cradle to the grave; by molding them; by petrifying them in such manner that, their appetites being satisfied, and their minds for all time delivered from the temptation of those three infernal rebels – Reason, Dignity and Freedom – those generations will bless their sweet servitude, and will be to us, master, what we are to you – servile slaves, body and soul, mere corpses!"

"Among the obstacles that our work will, or may encounter, you mentioned the papacy."

"Yes, master, because the elections of the sacred college may call to the pontifical throne Popes that are weak, stupid or vicious."

"What is the remedy at such a juncture?"

"To organize, outside of the papacy, of the college of cardinals, of the episcopacy, of the regular clergy and of the religious Orders, a society to whose members it shall be strictly forbidden ever to be elected Pope, or to accept any Catholic office, however high or however low the office may be. Thus this society will ever preserve its independence of action for or against the Church, free to oppose or uphold its Chief."

"What shall be the organization of that redoubtable society?"

"A General, elected by its own members, shall have sovereign direction over it."

"What pledge are its members to take towards him?"

"Dumb, blind and servile obedience."

"What are they to be in his hands?"

"That which we are in yours, O, master! Instruments as docile as the cane in the hand of the man who leans upon it."

"What will be the theater of the society's work?"

"The whole world."

"Into what parts will it divide the universe?"

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[31] Escobar, chapter on thieving, treatise 1, example 9, no. 13. – Cited by Pascal, *Letters to a Provincial*, Letter IX, p. 281, edition Houghton, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1880.

[32] "Ob naturalem fastus inclinationem" – Escobar, treatise 1, example 8, no. 5. – Cited by Pascal, *Letters to a Provincial*, Letter IX, pp. 279, 280, edition Houghton, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1880.

[33] Father Bauny, *Summary of Sins*, p. 165. – Alluded to by Pascal, *Letters to a Provincial*, Letter IX, p. 279, edition Houghton, Osgood & Co., Boston, 1880.

"Into provinces – the province of France, the province of Spain, the province of Germany, the province of England, the province of India, the province of Asia, and others. Each will be under the government of a 'provincial,' appointed by the General of the society."

"The society being organized, what name is it to assume?"

"The name of the Society of Jesus."

"In what manner is the Society of Jesus to become a counterpoise to the papacy, and, if need be, dominate the papacy itself, should the latter swerve from the route it should pursue in order to insure the absolute government of the nations of the world to the Catholic Church?"

"Independent of the established Church, from whom it neither expects nor demands aught – neither the purple, nor the cross, nor benefices – the Society of Jesus, thanks to its accommodating and tolerant doctrines, will speedily conquer the empire of the human conscience. It will be the confessor of Kings and lackeys, of the mendicant monk and the cardinal, of the courtesan and the princess, the female bourgeois and her cook, of the concubine and the empress. The concert of this immense clientage, acting as one man under the breath of the Society of Jesus, and inspired by its General, will insure to him such a power that, at a given moment, he will be able to dictate his orders to the papacy, threatening to unchain against it all the consciences and arms over which he disposes. The General will be more powerful than the Pope himself."

"Besides its action upon the conscience, will the Society of Jesus dispose over any other and secondary levers?"

"Yes, master, and very effective ones. Whosoever, whether lay or clerical, poor or rich, woman or man, great or small, will blindly surrender his soul to the direction of the Society of Jesus, will always and everywhere, and against whomsoever, be sustained, protected, favored, defended and held scathless by the Society and its adherents. The penitent of a Jesuit will see the horizon of his most ardent hopes open before him; the path to honors and wealth will be smoothed before his feet; a tutelary mantle will cover his defects, his errors and his crimes; his enemies will be the Society's enemies; it will pursue them, track them, overtake them and smite them, whoever and wherever they may be, and with all available means. Thus the penitent of a Jesuit may aspire to anything. To incur his resentment will be a dread ordeal."

"Accordingly, you have faith in the accomplishment of our work?"

"An absolute faith."

"From whom do you derive that faith?"

"From you, master; from you, Ignatius Loyola, whose breath inspires us; from you, our master, him through whom we live."

"The work is immense – to dominate the world! And yet there are only seven of us."

"Master, when you command, we are legion."

"Seven – only seven, my sons – without other power than our faith in our work."

"Master, faith removes mountains. Command."

"Oh, my brave disciples!" exclaimed Ignatius Loyola rising and supporting himself with his staff. "What joy it is to me to have thus imbued you with my substance, and nourished you with the marrow of my doctrine! Be up! Be up! The moment for action has come. That is the reason I have caused you to gather this evening here at Montmartre, where I have so often come to meditate in this hollow, this second to that cavern of Manres, where, in Spain, after long years of concentration, I at last perceived the full depth, the immensity of my work. Yes, in order to weld you together in this work, I have broken, bent and absorbed your personalities. I have turned you into instruments of my will as docile as the cane in the hand of the man who leans upon it. Yes, I have captured your souls. Yes, you are now only corpses in my hands. Oh, my dear corpses! my canes! my serfs! my slaves! glorify your servitude. It delivers to you the empire of the world! You will be the masters of all the men! You will be supreme rulers of all the women!"

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.