

# Droll Stories

Volume II: *The Second Ten Tales*

by

Honore de  
Balzac

*Droll Stories*  
*Collected from the Abbeys of Touraine*

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## VOLUME II: *The Second Ten Tales*

### PROLOGUE

CERTAIN PERSONS have reproached the Author for knowing no more about the language of the olden times than hares do of telling stories. Formerly these people would have been vilified, called cannibals, churls, and sycophants, and Gomorrah would have been hinted at as their natal place. But the Author consents to spare them the flowery epithets of ancient criticism; he contents himself with wishing not to be in their skin, for he would be disgusted with himself, and esteem himself the vilest of scribblers thus to calumniate a poor little book which is not in the style of any spoil-paper of these times. Ah! ill-natured wretches! you should save your breath to cool your own

porridge! The Author consoles himself for his want of success in not pleasing everyone by remembering that an old Tourainian, of eternal memory, had put up with such contumely, that losing all patience, he declared in one of his prologues, that he would never more put pen to paper. Another age, but the same manners. Nothing changes, neither God above nor men below. Thereupon of the Author continues his task with a light heart, relying upon the future to reward his heavy labours.

And certes, it is a hard task to invent *a hundred droll tales*, since not only have ruffians and envious men opened fire upon him, but his friends have imitated their example, and come to him saying “Are you mad? Do you think it is possible? No man ever had in the depths of his imagination a hundred such tales. Change the hyperbolic title of your budget. You will never finish it.” These people are neither misanthropes nor cannibals; whether they are ruffians I know not; but for certain they are kind, good-natured friends; friends who have the courage to tell you disagreeable things all your life along, who are rough and sharp as currycombs, under the pretence that they are yours to command, in all the mishaps of life, and in the hour of extreme unction, all their worth will be known. If such people would only keep these sad kindnesses; but they will not. When their terrors are proved to have been idle, they exclaimed triumphantly, “Ha! ha! I knew it. I always said so.”

In order not to discourage fine sentiments, intolerable though they be, the Author leaves to his friends his old shoes, and in order to make their minds easy, assures them that he has, legally protected and exempt from seizure, seventy droll stories, in that reservoir of nature, his brain. By the gods! they are precious yarns, well rigged out with phrases, carefully furnished with catastrophes, amply clothed with original humour, rich in diurnal and nocturnal effects, nor lacking that plot which the human race has woven each minute, each hour, each week, month, and year of the great ecclesiastical computation, commenced at a time when the sun could scarcely see, and the moon waited to be shown her way. These seventy subjects, which he gives you leave to call bad subjects, full of tricks and impudence, lust, lies, jokes, jests, and ribaldry, joined to the two portions here given, are, by the prophet! a small instalment on the aforesaid hundred.

Were it not a bad time for a bibliopolists, bibliomaniacs, bibliographers, and bibliothèques which hinder bibliolatry, he would have given them in a bumper, and not drop by drop as if he were afflicted with dysury of the brain. He cannot possibly be suspected of this infirmity, since he often gives good weight, putting several stories into one, as is clearly demonstrated by several in this volume. You may rely on it, that he has chosen for the finish, the best and most ribald of the lot, in order that he may not be accused of a senile discourse. Put then more likes with your dislikes, and dislikes with your likes. Forgetting the niggardly behaviour of nature to storytellers, of whom there are not more than seven perfect in the great ocean of human writers, others, although friendly, have been of opinion that, at a time when everyone went about dressed in black, as if in mourning for something, it was necessary to concoct works either wearisomely serious or seriously wearisome; that a writer could only live henceforward by enshrining his ideas in some vast edifice, and that those who were unable to construct cathedrals and castles of which neither stone nor cement could be moved, would die unknown, like the Pope's slippers. The friends were requested to declare which they liked best, a pint of good wine, or a tun of cheap rubbish; a diamond of twenty-two carats, or a flintstone weighing a hundred pounds; the ring of Hans Carvel, as told by Rabelais, or a modern narrative pitifully expectorated by a schoolboy. Seeing them dumbfounded and abashed, it was calmly said to them, "Do you thoroughly understand, good people? Then go your ways and mind your own businesses."

The following, however, must be added, for the benefit of all of whom it may concern:—The good man to whom we owe fables and stories of sempiternal authority only used his tool on them, having taken his material from others; but the workmanship expended on these little figures has given them a high value; and although he was, like M. Louis Ariosto, vituperated for thinking of idle pranks and trifles, there is a certain insect engraved by him which has since become a monument of perennity more assured than that of the most solidly built works. In the especial jurisprudence of wit and wisdom the custom is to steal more dearly a leaf wrested from the book of Nature and Truth, than all the indifferent volumes from

which, however fine they be, it is impossible to extract either a laugh or a tear. The author has licence to say this without any impropriety, since it is not his intention to stand upon tiptoe in order to obtain an unnatural height, but because it is a question of the majesty of his art, and not of himself—a poor clerk of the court, whose business it is to have ink in his pen, to listen to the gentleman on the bench, and take down the sayings of each witness in this case. He is responsible for workmanship, Nature for the rest, since from the Venus of Phidias the Athenian, down to the little old fellow, Godenot, commonly called the *Sieur Breloque*, a character carefully elaborated by one of the most celebrated authors of the present day, everything is studied from the eternal model of human imitations which belongs to all. At this honest business, happy are the robbers that they are not hanged, but esteemed and beloved. But he is a triple fool, a fool with ten horns on his head, who struts, boasts, and is puffed up at an advantage due to the hazard of dispositions, because glory lies only in the cultivation of the faculties, in patience and courage.

As for the soft-voiced and pretty-mouthed ones, who have whispered delicately in the author's ear, complaining to him that they have disarranged their tresses and spoiled their petticoats in certain places, he would say to them, "Why did you go there?" To these remarks he is compelled, through the notable slanders of certain people, to add a notice to the well-disposed, in order that they may use it, and end the calumnies of the aforesaid scribblers concerning him.

These droll tales are written—according to all authorities—at that period when Queen Catherine, of the house of Medici, was hard at work; for, during a great portion of the reign, she was always interfering with public affairs to the advantage of our holy religion. The which time has seized many people by the throat, from our defunct Master Francis, first of that name, to the Assembly at Blois, where fell M. de Guise. Now, even schoolboys who play at chuck-farthing, know that at this period of insurrection, pacifications and disturbances, the language of France was a little disturbed also, on account of the inventions of the poets, who at that time, as at this, used each to make a language for himself, besides the strange Greek, Latin, Italian, German, and Swiss words, foreign phrases, and Spanish jargon, introduced by foreigners, so that a poor writer has plenty of

elbow room in this Babelish language, which has since been taken in hand by Messieurs de Balzac, Blaise Pascal, Furetiere, Menage, St. Evremonde, de Malherbe, and others, who first cleaned out the French language, sent foreign words to the rightabout, and gave the right of citizenship to legitimate words used and known by everyone, but of which the Sieur Ronsard was ashamed.

Having finished, the author returns to his lady-love, wishing every happiness to those by whom he is beloved; to the others misfortune according to their deserts. When the swallows fly homeward, he will come again, not without the third and fourth volume, which he here promises to the Pantagruelists, merry knaves, and honest wags of all degrees, who have a wholesome horror of the sadness, sombre meditation and melancholy of literary croakers.

## THE THREE CLERKS OF ST. NICHOLAS

THE *INN OF THE THREE BARBELS* was formerly at Tours, the best place in the town for sumptuous fare; and the landlord, reputed the best of cooks, went to prepare wedding breakfasts as far as Chatelherault, Loches, Vendome, and Blois. This said man, an old fox, perfect in his business, never lighted lamps in the day time, knew how to skin a flint, charged for wool, leather, and feathers, had an eye to everything, did not easily let anyone pay with chaff instead of coin, and for a penny less than his account would have affronted even a prince. For the rest, he was a good banterer, drinking and laughing with his regular customers, hat in hand always before the persons furnished with plenary indulgences entitled *Sit nomen Domini benedictum*, running them into expense, and proving to them, if need were, by sound argument, that wines were dear, and that whatever they might think, nothing was given away in Touraine, everything had to be bought, and, at the same time, paid for. In short, if he could without disgrace have done so, he would have reckoned so much for the good air, and so much for the view of the country. Thus he built up a tidy fortune with other people's money, became as round as a butt, larded with fat, and was called Monsieur. At the time of the last fair three young fellows, who were apprentices in knavery, in whom there was more of the material that makes thieves than saints, and who knew just how far it was possible to go without catching their necks in the branches of trees, made up their minds to amuse themselves, and live well, condemning certain hawkers or others in all the expenses. Now these limbs of Satan gave the slip to their masters, under whom they had been studying the art of parchment scrawling, and came to stay at the hotel of the Three Barbels, where they demanded the best

rooms, turned the place inside out, turned up their noses at everything, bespoke all the lampreys in the market, and announced themselves as first-class merchants, who never carried their goods with them, and travelled only with their persons. The host bustled about, turned the spits, and prepared a glorious repast, for these three dodgers, who had already made noise enough for a hundred crowns, and who most certainly would not even have given up the copper coins which one of them was jingling in his pocket. But if they were hard up for money they did not want for ingenuity, and all three arranged to play their parts like thieves at a fair. Theirs was a farce in which there was plenty of eating and drinking, since for five days they so heartily attacked every kind of provision that a party of German soldiers would have spoiled less than they obtained by fraud. These three cunning fellows made their way to the fair after breakfast, well primed, gorged, and big in the belly, and did as they liked with the greenhorns and others, robbing, filching, playing, and losing, taking down the writings and signs and changing them, putting that of the toyman over the jeweller's, and that of the jeweller's outside the shoe maker's, turning the shops inside out, making the dogs fight, cutting the ropes of tethered horses, throwing cats among the crowd, crying, "Stop thief!" And saying to every one they met, "Are you not Monsieur D'Enterfesse of Angiers?" Then they hustled everyone, making holes in the sacks of flour, looking for their handkerchiefs in ladies' pockets, raising their skirts, crying, looking for a lost jewel and saying to them—

"Ladies, it has fallen into a hole!"

They directed the little children wrongly, slapped the stomachs of those who were gaping in the air, and prowled about, fleecing and annoying every one. In short, the devil would have been a gentleman in comparison with these blackguard students, who would have been hanged rather than do an honest action; as well have expected charity from two angry litigants. They left the fair, not fatigued, but tired of ill-doing, and spent the remainder of their time over dinner until the evening when they recommenced their pranks by torchlight. After the peddlers, they commenced operations on the ladies of the town, to whom, by a thousand dodges, they gave only that which they received, according to the axiom of Justinian: *Cuiquam jus tribuere.*

“To every one his own juice;” and afterwards jokingly said to the poor wenches—

“We are in the right and you are in the wrong.”

At last, at supper-time, having nothing else to do, they began to knock each other about, and to keep the game alive, complained of the flies to the landlord, remonstrating with him that elsewhere the innkeepers had them caught in order that gentleman of position might not be annoyed by them. However, towards the fifth day, which is the critical day of fevers, the host not having seen, although he kept his eyes wide open, the royal surface of a crown, and knowing that if all that glittered were gold it would be cheaper, began to knit his brows and go more slowly about that which his high-class merchants required of him. Fearing that he had made a bad bargain with them, he tried to sound the depth of their pockets; perceiving which the three clerks ordered him with the assurance of a Provost hanging his man, to serve them quickly with a good supper as they had to depart immediately. Their merry countenances dismissed the host's suspicions. Thinking that rogues without money would certainly look grave, he prepared a supper worthy of a canon, wishing even to see them drunk, in order the more easily to clap them in jail in the event of an accident. Not knowing how to make their escape from the room, in which they were about as much at their ease as are fish upon straw, the three companions ate and drank immoderately, looking at the situation of the windows, waiting the moment to decamp, but not getting the opportunity. Cursing their luck, one of them wished to go and undo his waistcoat, on account of a colic, the other to fetch a doctor to the third, who did his best to faint. The cursed landlord kept dodging about from the kitchen into the room, and from the room into the kitchen, watching the nameless ones, and going a step forward to save his crowns, and going a step back to save his crown, in case they should be real gentlemen; and he acted like a brave and prudent host who likes halfpence and objects to kicks; but under pretence of properly attending to them, he always had an ear in the room, and a foot in the court; fancied he was always being called by them, came every time they laughed, showing them a face with an unsettled look upon it, and always said, “Gentlemen, what is your pleasure?” This was an interrogatory in reply to which they would

willingly have given him ten inches of his own spit in his stomach, because he appeared as if he knew very well what would please them at this juncture, seeing that to have twenty crowns, full weight, they would each of them have sold a third of his eternity. You can imagine they sat on their seats as if they were gridirons, that their feet itched and their posteriors were rather warm. Already the host had put the pears, the cheese, and the preserves near their noses, but they, sipping their liquor, and picking at the dishes, looked at each other to see if either of them had found a good piece of roguery in his sack, and they all began to enjoy themselves rather woefully. The most cunning of the three clerks, who was a Burgundian, smiled and said, seeing the hour of payment arrived, "This must stand over for a week," as if they had been at the Palais de Justice. The two others, in spite of the danger, began to laugh.

"What do we owe?" asked he who had in his belt the heretofore mentioned twelve sols and he turned them about as though he would make them breed little ones by this excited movement. He was a native of Picardy, and very passionate; a man to take offence at anything in order that he might throw the landlord out the window in all security of conscience. Now he said these words with the air of a man of immense wealth.

"Six crowns, gentlemen," replied the host, holding out his hand.

"I cannot permit myself to be entertained by you alone, Viscount," said the third student, who was from Anjou, and as artful as a woman in love.

"Neither can I," said the Burgundian.

"Gentlemen! Gentlemen!" replied the Picardian "you are jesting. I am yours to command."

"Sambreguoy!" cried he of Anjou. "You will not let us pay three times; our host would not suffer it."

"Well then," said the Burgundian, "whichever of us shall tell the worst tale shall justify the landlord."

"Who will be the judge?" asked the Picardian, dropping his twelve sols to the bottom of his pocket.

"Pardieu! our host. He should be capable, seeing that he is a man of taste," said he of Anjou. "Come along, great chef, sit you down, drink, and lend us both your ears. The audience is open."

Thereupon the host sat down, but not until he had poured out a

gobletful of wine.

“My turn first,” said the Anjou man. “I commence.”

“In our Duchy of Anjou, the country people are very faithful servants to our Holy of Catholic religion, and none of them will lose his portion of paradise for lack of doing penance or killing a heretic. If a professor of heresy passed that way, he quickly found himself under the grass, without knowing whence his death had proceeded. A good man of Larze, returning one night from his evening prayer to the wine flasks of Pomme-de-Pin, where he had left his understanding and memory, fell into a ditch full of water near his house, and found he was up to his neck. One of the neighbours finding him shortly afterwards nearly frozen, for it was winter time, said jokingly to him—

“Hulloa! What are you waiting for there?”

“A thaw’, said the tipsy fellow, finding himself held by the ice.

“Then Godenot, like a good Christian, released him from his dilemma, and opened the door of the house to him, out of respect to the wine, which is lord of this country. The good man then went and got into the bed of the maid-servant, who was a young and pretty wench. The old bungler, bemuddled with wine, went ploughing in the wrong land, fancying all the time it was his wife by his side, and thanking her for the youth and freshness she still retained. On hearing her husband, the wife began to cry out, and by her terrible shrieks the man was awakened to the fact that he was not in the road to salvation, which made the poor labourer sorrowful beyond expression.

“Ah! said he; ‘God has punished me for not going to vespers at Church.’

“And he began to excuse himself as best he could, saying, that the wine had muddled his understanding, and getting into his own bed he kept repeating to his good wife, that for his best cow he would not have had this sin upon his conscience.

“‘My dear’, said she, ‘go and confess the first thing tomorrow morning, and let us say no more about it.’

“The good man trotted to confessional, and related his case with all humility to the rector of the parish, who was a good old priest, capable of being up above, the slipper of the holy foot.

“‘An error is not a sin,’ said he to the penitent. ‘You will fast to-

morrow, and be absolved.’

“Fast!—with pleasure,’ said the good man. ‘That does not mean go without drink.’

“Oh!’ replied the rector, ‘you must drink water, and eat nothing but a quarter of a loaf and an apple.’

“Then the good man, who had no confidence in his memory, went home, repeating to himself the penance ordered. But having loyally commenced with a quarter of a loaf and an apple, he arrived at home, saying, a quarter of apples, and a loaf.

“Then, to purify his soul, he set about accomplishing his fast, and his good woman having given him a loaf from the safe, and unhooked a string of apples from the beam, he set sorrowfully to work. As he heaved a sigh on taking the last mouthful of bread hardly knowing where to put it, for he was full to the chin, his wife remonstrated with him, that God did not desire the death of a sinner, and that for lack of putting a crust of bread in his belly, he would not be reproached for having put things in their wrong places.

“Hold your tongue, wife!’ said he. ‘If it chokes me, I must fast.’”

“I’ve payed my share, it’s your turn, Viscount,” added he of Anjou, giving the Picardian a knowing wink.

“The goblets are empty. Hi, there! More wine.”

“Let us drink,” cried the Picardian. “Moist stories slip out easier.”

At the same time he tossed off a glassful without leaving a drop at the bottom, and after a preliminary little cough, he related the following:—

“You must know that the maids of Picardy, before setting up house-keeping, are accustomed honestly to gain their linen, vessels, and chests; in short, all the needed household utensils. To accomplish this, they go into service in Peronne, Abbeville, Amiens, and other towns, where they are tire-women, wash up glasses, clean plates, fold linen, and carry up the dinner, or anything that there is to be carried. They are all married as soon as they possess something else besides that which they naturally bring to their husbands. These women are the best housewives, because they understand the business and everything else thoroughly. One belonging to Azonville, which is the land of which I am lord by inheritance, having heard speak of Paris, where the people did not put themselves out of the way for anyone, and

where one could subsist for a whole day by passing the cook's shops, and smelling the steam, so fattening was it, took it into her head to go there. She trudged bravely along the road, and arrived with a pocket full of emptiness. There she fell in, at the Porte St. Denise, with a company of soldiers, placed there for a time as a vidette, for the Protestants had assumed a dangerous attitude. The sergeant seeing this hooded linnnet coming, stuck his headpiece on one side, straightened his feather, twisted his moustache, cleared his throat, rolled his eyes, put his hand on his hips, and stopped the Picardian to see if her ears were properly pierced, since it was forbidden to girls to enter otherwise into Paris. Then he asked her, by way of a joke, but with a serious face, what brought her there, he pretending to believe she had come to take the keys of Paris by assault. To which the poor innocent replied, that she was in search of a good situation, and had no evil intentions, only desiring to gain something.

“Very well; I will employ you,” said the wag. ‘I am from Picardy, and will get you taken in here, where you will be treated as a queen would often like to be, and you will be able to make a good thing of it.’

“Then he led her to the guard-house, where he told her to sweep the floor, polish the saucepans, stir the fire, and keep a watch on everything, adding that she should have thirty sols a head from the men if their service pleased her. Now seeing that the squad was there for a month, she would be able to gain ten crowns, and at their departure would find fresh arrivals who would make good arrangements with her, and by this means she would be able to take back money and presents to her people. The girl cleaned the room and prepared the meals so well, singing and humming, that this day the soldiers found in their den the look of a monk's refectory. Then all being well content, each of them gave a sol to their handmaiden. Well satisfied, they put her into the bed of their commandant, who was in town with his lady, and they petted and caressed her after the manner of philosophical soldiers, that is, soldiers partial to that which is good. She was soon comfortably ensconced between the sheets. But to avoid quarrels and strife, my noble warriors drew lots for their turn, arranged themselves in single file, playing well at Pique hardie, saying not a word, but each one taking at least twenty-six sols worth of the girl's society. Although not accustomed to work for so

many, the poor girl did her best, and by this means never closed her eyes the whole night. In the morning, seeing the soldiers were fast asleep, she rose happy at bearing no marks of the sharp skirmish, and although slightly fatigued, managed to get across the fields into the open country with her thirty sols. On the route to Picardy, she met one of her friends, who, like herself, wished to try service in Paris, and was hurrying thither, and seeing her, asked her what sort of places they were.

“Ah! Perrine; do not go. You want to be made of iron, and even if you were it would soon be worn away,” was the answer.

“Now, big-belly of Burgundy,” said he, giving his neighbour a hearty slap, “spit out your story or pay!”

“By the queen of Antlers!” replied the Burgundian, “by my faith, by the saints, by God! and by the devil, I know only stories of the Court of Burgundy, which are only current coin in our own land.”

“Eh, ventre Dieu! are we not in the land of Beaufremont?” cried the other, pointing to the empty goblets.

“I will tell you, then, an adventure well known at Dijon, which happened at the time I was in command there, and was worth being written down. There was a sergeant of justice named Franc-Taupin, who was an old lump of mischief, always grumbling, always fighting; stiff and starchy, and never comforting those he was leading to the hulks, with little jokes by the way; and in short, he was just the man to find lice in bald heads, and bad behaviour in the Almighty. This said Taupin, spurned by every one, took unto himself a wife, and by chance he was blessed with one as mild as the peel of an onion, who, noticing the peculiar humour of her husband, took more pains to bring joy to his house than would another to bestow horns upon him. But although she was careful to obey him in all things, and to live at peace would have tried to excrete gold for him, had God permitted it, this man was always surly and crabbed, and no more spared his wife blows, than does a debtor promises to the bailiff’s man. This unpleasant treatment continuing in spite of the carefulness and angelic behaviour of the poor woman, she being unable to accustom herself to it, was compelled to inform her relations, who thereupon came to the house. When they arrived, the husband declared to them that his wife was an idiot, that she displeased him

in every possible way, and made his life almost unbearable; that she would wake him out of his first sleep, never came to the door when he knocked, but would leave him out in the rain and the cold, and that the house was always untidy. His garments were buttonless, his laces wanted tags. The linen was spoiling, the wine turning sour, the wood damp, and the bed was always creaking at unreasonable moments. In short, everything was going wrong. To this tissue of falsehoods, the wife replied by pointing to the clothes and things, all in a state of thorough repair. Then the sergeant said that he was very badly treated, that his dinner was never ready for him, or if it was, the broth was thin or the soup cold, either the wine or the glasses were forgotten, the meat was without gravy or parsley, the mustard had turned, he either found hairs in the dish or the cloth was dirty and took away his appetite, indeed nothing did she ever get for him that was to his liking. The wife, astonished, contented herself with stoutly denying the fault imputed to her. 'Ah,' said he, 'you dirty hussy! You deny it, do you! Very well then, my friends, you come and dine here to-day, you shall be witnesses of her misconduct. And if she can for once serve me properly, I will confess myself wrong in all I have stated, and will never lift my hand against her again, but will resign to her my halberd and my breeches, and give her full authority here.'

"'Oh, well,' said she, joyfully, 'I shall then henceforth be both wife and mistress!'

"Then the husband, confident of the nature and imperfections of his wife, desired that the dinner should be served under the vine arbor, thinking that he would be able to shout at her if she did not hurry quickly enough from the table to the pantry. The good housewife set to work with a will. The plates were clean enough to see one's face in, the mustard was fresh and well made, the dinner beautifully cooked, as appetising as stolen fruit; the glasses were clear, the wine was cool, and everything so nice, so clean and white, that the repast would have done honour to a bishop's chatterbox. Just as she was standing before the table, casting that last glance which all good housewives like to give everything, her husband knocked at the door. At that very moment a cursed hen, who had taken it into her head to get on top of the arbor to gorge herself with grapes, let fall a large lump of dirt right in the middle of the cloth. The poor woman was

half dead with fright; so great was her despair, she could think of no other way of remedying the thoughtlessness of the fowl than by covering the unseemly patch with a plate in which she put the fine fruits taken at random from her pocket, losing sight altogether of the symmetry of the table. Then, in order that no one should notice it, she instantly fetched the soup, seated every one in his place, and begged them to enjoy themselves.

“Now, all of them seeing everything so well arranged, uttered exclamations of pleasure, except the diabolical husband, who remained moody and sullen, knitting his brows and looking for a straw on which to hang a quarrel with his wife. Thinking it safe to give him one for himself, her relations being present, she said to him, ‘Here’s your dinner, nice and hot, well served, the cloth is clean, the salt-cellars full, the plates clean, the wine fresh, the bread well baked. What is there lacking? What do you require? What do you desire? What else do you want?’

“‘Oh, filth!’ said he, in a great rage.

“The good woman instantly lifted the plate, and replied—

“‘There you are, my dear!’

“Seeing which, the husband was dumbfounded, thinking that the devil was in league with his wife. He was immediately gravely reproached by the relations, who declared him to be in the wrong, abused him, and made more jokes at his expense than a recorder writes words in a month. From that time forward the sergeant lived comfortably and peaceably with his wife, who at the least appearance of temper on his part, would say to him—

“‘Do you want some filth?’”

“Who has told the worst now?” cried the Anjou man, giving the host a tap on the shoulder.

“He has! He has!” said the two others. Then they began to dispute among themselves, like the holy fathers in council; seeking, by creating a confusion, throwing the glasses at each other, and jumping about, a lucky chance, to make a run of it.

“I’ll settle the question,” cried the host, seeing that whereas they had all three been ready with their own accounts, not one of them was thinking of his.

They stopped terrified.

“I will tell you a better one than all, then you will have to give ten sols a head.”

“Silence for the landlord,” said the one from Anjou.

“In our fauborg of Notre-dame la Riche, in which this inn is situated, there lived a beautiful girl, who besides her natural advantages, had a good round sum in her keeping. Therefore, as soon as she was old enough, and strong enough to bear the matrimonial yoke, she had as many lovers as there are sols in St. Gatien’s money-box on the Paschal-day. The girl chose one who, saving your presence, was as good a worker, night and day, as any two monks together. They were soon betrothed, and the marriage was arranged; but the joy of the first night did not draw nearer without occasioning some slight apprehensions to the lady, as she was liable, through an infirmity, to expel vapours, which came out like bombshells. Now, fearing that when thinking of something else, during the first night, she might give the reins to her eccentricities, she stated the case to her mother, whose assistance she invoked. That good lady informed her that this faculty of engineering wind was inherent in the family; that in her time she had been greatly embarrassed by it, but only in the earlier period of her life. God had been kind to her, and since the age of seven, she had evaporated nothing except on the last occasion when she had bestowed upon her dead husband a farewell blow. ‘But,’ said she to her daughter, ‘I have ever a sure specific, left to me by my mother, which brings these surplus explosions to nothing, and exhales them noiselessly. By this means these sighs become odourless, and scandal is avoided.’

“The girl, much pleased, learned how to sail close to the wind, thanked her mother, and danced away merrily, storing up her flatulence like an organ-blower waiting for the first note of mass. Entering the nuptial chamber, she determined to expel it when getting into bed, but the fantastic element was beyond control. The husband came; I leave you to imagine how love’s conflict sped. In the middle of the night, the bride arose under a false pretext, and quickly returned again; but when climbing into her place, the pent up force went off with such a loud discharge, that you would have thought with me that the curtains were split.

“‘Ha! I’ve missed my aim!’ said she.

“‘Sdeath, my dear!’ I replied, ‘then spare your powder. You would earn a good living in the army with that artillery.’

“It was my wife.”

“Ha! ha! ha!” went the clerks.

And they roared with laughter, holding their sides and complimenting their host.

“Did you ever hear a better story, Viscount?”

“Ah, what a story!”

“That is a story!”

“A master story!”

“The king of stories!”

“Ha, ha! It beats all the other stories hollow. After that I say there are no stories like the stories of our host.”

“By the faith of a Christian, I never heard a better story in my life.”

“Why, I can hear the report.”

“I should like to kiss the orchestra.”

“Ah! gentlemen,” said the Burgundian, gravely, “we cannot leave without seeing the hostess, and if we do not ask to kiss this famous wind-instrument, it is a out of respect for so good a story-teller.”

Thereupon they all exalted the host, his story, and his wife’s trumpet so well that the old fellow, believing in these knaves’ laughter and pompous eulogies, called to his wife. But as she did not come, the clerks said, not without frustrative intention, “Let us go to her.”

Thereupon they all went out of the room. The host took the candle and went upstairs first, to light them and show them the way; but seeing the street door ajar, the rascals took to their heels, and were off like shadows, leaving the host to take in settlement of his account another of his wife’s offerings.

## THE CONTINENCE OF KING FRANCIS THE FIRST

EVERY ONE KNOWS through what adventure King Francis, the first of that name, was taken like a silly bird and led into the town of Madrid, in Spain. There the Emperor Charles V. kept him carefully locked up, like an article of great value, in one of his castles, in the which our defunct sire, of immortal memory, soon became listless and weary, seeing that he loved the open air, and his little comforts, and no more understood being shut up in a cage than a cat would folding up lace. He fell into moods of such strange melancholy that his letters having been read in full council, Madame d'Angouleme, his mother; Madame Catherine, the Dauphine, Monsieur de Montmorency, and those who were at the head of affairs in France knowing the great lechery of the king, determined after mature deliberation, to send Queen Marguerite to him, from whom he would doubtless receive alleviation of his sufferings, that good lady being much loved by him, and merry, and learned in all necessary wisdom. But she, alleging that it would be dangerous for her soul, because it was impossible for her, without great danger to be alone with the king in his cell, a sharp secretary, the Sieur de Fizes, was sent to the Court of Rome, with orders to beg of the pontiff a papal brief of special indulgences, containing proper absolutions for the petty sins which, looking at their consanguinity, the said queen might commit with a view to cure the king's melancholy.

At this time, Adrian VI., the Dutchman, still wore the tiara, who, a good fellow, for the rest did not forget, in spite of the scholastic ties which united him to the emperor, that the eldest son of the Catholic Church was concerned in the affair, and was good enough to send to Spain an express legate, furnished with full powers, to attempt the

salvation of the queen's soul, and the king's body, without prejudice to God. This most urgent affair made the gentleman very uneasy, and caused an itching in the feet of the ladies, who, from great devotion to the crown, would all have offered to go to Madrid, but for the dark mistrust of Charles the Fifth, who would not grant the king's permission to any of his subjects, nor even the members of his family. It was therefore necessary to negotiate the departure of the Queen of Navarre. Then, nothing else was spoken about but this deplorable abstinence, and the lack of amorous exercise so vexatious to a prince, who was much accustomed to it. In short, from one thing to another, the women finished by thinking more of the king's condition, than of the king himself. The queen was the first to say that she wished she had wings. To this Monseigneur Odet de Chatillon replied, that she had no need of them to be an angel. One that was Madame l'Amirale, blamed God that it was not possible to send by a messenger that which the poor king so much required; and every one of the ladies would have lent it in her turn.

"God has done very well to fix it," said the Dauphine, quietly; "for our husbands would leave us rather badly off during their absence."

So much was said and so much thought upon the subject, that at her departure the Queen of all Marguerites was charged, by these good Christians, to kiss the captive heartily for all the ladies of the realm; and if it had been permissible to prepare pleasure like mustard, the queen would have been laden with enough to sell to the two Castiles.

While Madame Marguerite was, in spite of the snow, crossing the mountains, by relays of mule, hurrying on to these consolations as to a fire, the king found himself harder pressed by unsatisfied desire than he had ever been before, or would be again. In this reverberation of nature, he opened his heart to the Emperor Charles, in order that he might be provided with a merciful specific, urging upon him that it would be an everlasting disgrace to one king to let another die for lack of gallantry. The Castilian showed himself to be a generous man. Thinking that he would be able to recuperate himself for the favour granted out of his guest's ransom, he hinted quietly to the people commissioned to guard the prisoner, that they might gratify him in this respect. Thereupon a certain Don Hiios de Lara y Lopez Barra di

Pinto, a poor captain, whose pockets were empty in spite of his genealogy, and who had been for some time thinking of seeking his fortune at the Court of France, fancied that by procuring his majesty a soft cataplasm of warm flesh, he would open for himself an honestly fertile door; and indeed, those who know the character of the good king and his court, can decide if he deceived himself.

When the above mentioned captain came in his turn into the chamber of the French king, he asked him respectfully if it was his good pleasure to permit him an interrogation on a subject concerning which he was as curious as about papal indulgences? To which the Prince, casting aside his hypochondriacal demeanour, and twisting round on the chair in which he was seated, gave a sign of consent. The captain begged him not to be offended at the licence of his language, and confessed to him, that he the king was said to be one of the most amorous men in France, and he would be glad to learn from him if the ladies of the court were expert in the adventures of love. The poor king, calling to mind his many adventures, gave vent to a deep-drawn sigh, and exclaimed, that no woman of any country, including those of the moon, knew better than the ladies of France the secrets of this alchemy and at the remembrance of the savoury, gracious, and vigorous fondling of one alone, he felt himself the man, were she then within his reach, to clasp her to his heart, even on a rotten plank a hundred feet above a precipice.

Say which, this good king, a ribald fellow, if ever there was one, shot forth so fiercely life and light from his eyes, that the captain, though a brave man, felt a quaking in his inside so fiercely flamed the sacred majesty of royal love. But recovering his courage he began to defend the Spanish ladies, declaring that in Castile alone was love properly understood, because it was the most religious place in Christendom, and the more fear the women had of damning themselves by yielding to a lover, the more their souls were in the affair, because they knew they must take their pleasure then against eternity. He further added, that if the Lord King would wager one of the best and most profitable manors in the kingdom of France, he would give him a Spanish night of love, in which a casual queen should, unless he took care, draw his soul from his body.

“Done,” said the king, jumping from his chair. “I’ll give thee, by

God, the manor of Ville-aux-Dames in my province of Touraine, with full privilege of chase, of high and low jurisdiction.”

Then, the captain, who was acquainted with the Donna of the Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo requested her to smother the King of France with kindness, and demonstrate to him the great advantage of the Castilian imagination over the simple movement of the French. To which the Marchesa of Amaesguy consented for the honour of Spain, and also for the pleasure of knowing of what paste God made Kings, a matter in which she was ignorant, having experience only of the princes of the Church. Then she became passionate as a lion that has broken out of his cage, and made the bones of the king crack in a manner that would have killed any other man. But the above-named lord was so well furnished, so greedy, and so will bitten, he no longer felt a bite; and from this terrible duel the Marchesa emerged abashed, believing she had the devil to confess.

The captain, confident in his agent, came to salute his lord, thinking to do honour for his fief. Thereupon the king said to him, in a jocular manner, that the Spanish ladies were of a passable temperature, and their system a fair one, but that when gentleness was required they substituted frenzy; that he kept fancying each thrill was a sneeze, or a case of violence; in short, that the embrace of a French woman brought back the drinker more thirsty than ever, tiring him never; and that with the ladies of his court, love was a gentle pleasure without parallel, and not the labour of a master baker in his kneading trough.

The poor captain was strongly piqued at his language. In spite of the nice sense of honour which the king pretended to possess, he fancied that his majesty wished to bilk him like a student, stealing a slice of love at a brothel in Paris. Nevertheless, not knowing for the matter of that, if the Marchesa had not over-spanished the king, he demanded his revenge from the captive, pledging him his word, that he should have for certain a veritable fay, and that he would yet gain the fief. The king was too courteous and gallant a knight to refuse this request, and even made a pretty and right royal speech, intimating his desire to lose the wager. Then, after vespers, the guard passed fresh and warm into the king's chamber, a lady most dazzlingly white—most delicately wanton, with long tresses and velvet hands,

filling out her dress at the least movement, for she was gracefully plump, with a laughing mouth, and eyes moist in advance, a woman to beautify hell, and whose first word had such cordial power that the king's garment was cracked by it. On the morrow, after the fair one had slipped out after the king's breakfast, the good captain came radiant and triumphant into the chamber.

At sight of him the prisoner then exclaimed—

“Baron de la Ville-aux-Dames! God grant you joys like to mine! I like my jail! By'r lady, I will not judge between the love of our lands, but pay the wager.”

“I was sure of it,” said the captain.

“How so?” said the King.

“Sire, it was my wife.”

This was the origin of Larray de la Ville-aux-Dames in our country, since from corruption of the names, that of Lara-y-Lopez, finished by becoming Larray. It was a good family, delighting in serving the kings of France, and it multiplied exceedingly. Soon after, the Queen of Navarre came in due course to the king, who, weary of Spanish customs, wished to disport himself after the fashion of France; but remainder is not the subject of this narrative. I reserve to myself the right to relate elsewhere how the legate managed to sponge the sin of the thing off the great slate, and the delicate remark of our Queen of Marguerites, who merits a saint's niche in this collection; she who first concocted such good stories. The morality of this one is easy to understand.

In the the first place, kings should never let themselves be taken in battle any more than their archetype in the game of the Grecian chief Palamedes. But from this, it appears the captivity of its king is a most calamitous and horrible evil to fall on the populace. If it had been a queen, or even a princess, what worse fate? But I believe the thing could not happen again, except with cannibals. Can there ever be a reason for imprisoning the flower of a realm? I think too well of Ashtaroth, Lucifer, and others, to imagine that did they reign, they would hide the joy of all the beneficent light, at which poor sufferers warm themselves. And it was necessary that the worst of devils, /id est/ , a wicked old heretic woman, should find herself upon a throne, to keep a prisoner sweet Mary of Scotland, to the shame of all the knights of Christendom, who should have come without previous assignation to the foot of Fotheringay, and have left thereof no single stone.

## THE MERRY TATTLE OF THE NUNS OF POISSY

THE ABBEY OF POISSY has been rendered famous by old authors as a place of pleasure, where the misconduct of the nuns first began, and whence proceeded so many good stories calculated to make laymen laugh at the expense of our holy religion. The said abbey by this means became fertile in proverbs, which none of the clever folks of our day understand, although they sift and chew them in order to digest them.

If you ask one of them what the *olives of Poissy* are, they will answer you gravely that it is a periphrase relating to truffles, and that the *way to serve them*, of which one formerly spoke, when joking with these virtuous maidens, meant a peculiar kind of sauce. That's the way the scribblers hit on truth once in a hundred times. To return to these good recluses, it was said—by way of a joke, of course—that they preferred finding a harlot in their chemises to a good woman. Certain other jokers reproached them with imitating the lives of the saints, in their own fashion, and said that all they admired in Mary of Egypt was her fashion of paying the boatmen. From whence the raillery: To honour the saints after the fashion of Poissy. There is still the crucifix of Poissy, which kept the stomachs warm; and the matins of Poissy, which concluded with a little chorister. Finally, of a hearty jade well acquainted with the ways of love, it was said—She is a nun of Poissy. That property of a man which he can only lend, was The key of the Abbey of Poissy. What the gate of the said abbey was can easily be guessed. This gate, door, wicket, opening, or road was always half open, was easier to open than to shut, and cost much in repairs. In short, at that period, there was no fresh device in love invented, that had not its origin in the good convent of Poissy. You may be sure there is a good deal of untruth and hyperbolic empha-

sis, in these proverbs, jests, jokes, and idle tales. The nuns of the said Poissy were good young ladies, who now this way, now that, cheated God to the profit of the devil, as many others did, which was but natural, because our nature is weak; and although they were nuns, they had their little imperfections. They found themselves barren in a certain particular, hence the evil. But the truth of the matter is, all these wickednesses were the deeds of an abbess who had fourteen children, all born alive, since they had been perfected at leisure. The fantastic amours and the wild conduct of this woman, who was of royal blood, caused the convent of Poissy to become fashionable; and thereafter no pleasant adventure happened in the abbeys of France which was not credited to these poor girls, who would have been well satisfied with a tenth of them. Then the abbey was reformed, and these holy sisters were deprived of the little happiness and liberty which they had enjoyed. In an old cartulary of the abbey of Turpenay, near Chinon, which in those later troublous times had found a resting place in the library of Azay, where the custodian was only too glad to receive it, I met with a fragment under the head of The Hours of Poissy, which had evidently been put together by a merry abbot of Turpenay for the diversion of his neighbours of Usee, Azay, Mongaugar, Sacchez, and other places of this province. I give them under the authority of the clerical garb, but altered to my own style, because I have been compelled to turn them from Latin into French. I commence:—At Poissy the nuns were accustomed to, when Mademoiselle, the king's daughter, their abbess, had gone to bed. . . . It was she who first called it /faire la petite oie/, to stick to the preliminaries of love, the prologues, prefaces, protocols, warnings, notices, introductions, summaries, prospectuses, arguments, notices, epigraphs, titles, false-titles, current titles, scholia, marginal remarks, frontispieces, observations, gilt edges, bookmarks, reglets, vignettes, tail pieces, and engravings, without once opening the merry book to read, re-read, and study to apprehend and comprehend the contents. And she gathered together in a body all those extra-judicial little pleasures of that sweet language, which come indeed from the lips, yet make no noise, and practised them so well, that she died a virgin and perfect in shape. The gay science was after deeply studied by the ladies of the court, who took lovers for *la petite oie*, others for honour,

and at times also certain ones who had over them the right of high and low jurisdiction, and were masters of everything—a state of things much preferred. But to continue: When this virtuous princess was naked and shameless between the sheets, the said girls (those whose cheeks were unwrinkled and their hearts gay) would steal noiselessly out of their cells, and hide themselves in that of one of the sisters who was much liked by all of them. There they would have cosy little chats, enlivened with sweetmeats, pasties, liqueurs, and girlish quarrels, worry their elders, imitating them grotesquely, innocently mocking them, telling stories that made them laugh till the tears came and playing a thousand pranks. At times they would measure their feet, to see whose were the smallest, compare the white plumpness of their arms, see whose nose had the infirmity of blushing after supper, count their freckles, tell each other where their skin marks were situated, dispute whose complexion was the clearest, whose hair the prettiest colour, and whose figure the best. You can imagine that among these figures sanctified to God there were fine ones, stout ones, lank ones, thin ones, plump ones, supple ones, shrunken ones, and figures of all kinds. Then they would quarrel amongst themselves as to who took the least to make a girdle, and she who spanned the least was pleased without knowing why. At times they would relate their dreams and what they had seen in them. Often one or two, at times all of them, had dreamed they had tight hold of the keys of the abbey. Then they would consult each other about their little ailments. One had scratched her finger, another had a whitlow; this one had risen in the morning with the white of her eye blood-shot; that one had put her finger out, telling her beads. All had some little thing the matter with them.

“Ah! you have lied to our mother; your nails are marked with white,” said one to her neighbour.

“You stopped a long time at confession this morning, sister,” said another. “You must have a good many little sins to confess.”

As there is nothing resembles a pussy-cat so much as a tom-cat, they would swear eternal friendship, quarrel, sulk, dispute and make it up again; would be jealous, laugh and pinch, pinch and laugh, and play tricks upon the novices.

At times they would say, “Suppose a gendarme came here one rainy

day, where should we put him?”

“With Sister Ovide; her cell is so big he could get into it with his helmet on.”

“What do you mean?” cried Sister Ovide, “are not all our cells alike?”

Thereupon the girls burst out laughing like ripe figs. One evening they increased their council by a little novice, about seventeen years of age, who appeared innocent as a new-born babe, and would have had the host without confession. This maiden’s mouth had long watered for their secret confabulations, little feasts and rejoicings by which the nuns softened the holy captivity of their bodies, and had wept at not being admitted to them.

“Well,” said Sister Ovide to her, “have you had a good night’s rest, little one?”

“Oh no!” said she, “I have been bitten by fleas.”

“Ha! you have fleas in your cell? But you must get rid of them at once. Do you know how the rules of our order enjoin them to be driven out, so that never again during her conventional life shall a sister see so much as the tail of one?”

“No,” replied the novice.

“Well then, I will teach you. Do you see any fleas here? Do you notice any trace of fleas? Do you smell an odour of fleas? Is there any appearance of fleas in my cell? Look!”

“I can’t find any,” said the little novice, who was Mademoiselle de Fiennes, “and smell no odour other than our own.”

“Do as I am about to tell you, and be no more bitten. Directly you feel yourself pricked, you must strip yourself, lift your chemise, and be careful not to sin while looking all over your body; think only of the cursed flea, looking for it, in good faith, without paying attention to other things; trying only to catch the flea, which is a difficult job, as you may easily be deceived by the little black spots on your skin, which you were born with. Have you any, little one?”

“Yes,” cried she. “I have two dark freckles, one on my shoulder and one on my back, rather low down, but it is hidden in a fold of the flesh.”

“How did you see it?” asked Sister Perpetue.

“I did not know it. It was Monsieur de Montresor who found it out.”

“Ha, ha!” said the sister, “is that all he saw?”

“He saw everything,” said she, “I was quite little; he was about nine years old, and we were playing together....”

The nuns hardly being able to restrain their laughter, Sister Ovide went on—

“The above-mentioned flea will jump from your legs to your eyes, will try and hide himself in apertures and crevices, will leap from valley to mountain, endeavouring to escape you; but the rules of the house order you courageously to pursue, repeating aves. Ordinarily at the third ave the beast is taken.”

“The flea?” asked the novice.

“Certainly the flea,” replied Sister Ovide; “but in order to avoid the dangers of this chase, you must be careful in whatever spot you put your finger on the beast, to touch nothing else.... Then without regarding its cries, plaints, groans, efforts, and writhings, and the rebellion which frequently it attempts, you will press it under your thumb or other finger of the hand engaged in holding it, and with the other hand you will search for a veil to bind the flea’s eyes and prevent it from leaping, as the beast seeing no longer clearly will not know where to go. Nevertheless, as it will still be able to bite you, and will be getting terribly enraged, you must gently open its mouth and delicately insert therein a twig of the blessed brush that hangs over your pillow. Thus the beast will be compelled to behave properly. But remember that the discipline of our order allows you to retain no property, and the beast cannot belong to you. You must take into consideration that it is one of God’s creatures, and strive to render it more agreeable. Therefore, before all things, it is necessary to verify three serious things—viz.: If the flea be a male, if it be female, or if it be a virgin; supposing it to be a virgin, which is extremely rare, since these beasts have no morals, are all wild hussies, and yield to the first seducer who comes, you will seize her hinder feet, and drawing them under her little caparison, you must bind them with one of your hairs, and carry it to your superior, who will decide upon its fate after having consulted the chapter. If it be a male—”

“How can one tell that a flea is a virgin? asked the curious novice.

“First of all,” replied Sister Ovide, “she is sad and melancholy, does not laugh like the others, does not bite so sharp, has her mouth less

wide open, blushes when touched—you know where.”

“In that case,” replied the novice, “I have been bitten by a male.”

At this the sisters burst out laughing so heartily that one of them sounded a bass note and voided a little water and Sister Ovide pointing to it on the floor, said—

“You see there’s never wind without rain.”

The novice laughed herself, thinking that these chuckles were caused by the sister’s exclamation.

“Now,” went on Sister Ovide, “if it be a male flea, you take your scissors, or your lover’s dagger, if by chance he has given you one as a souvenir, previous to your entry into the convent. In short, furnished with a cutting instrument, you carefully slit open the flanks of the flea. Expect to hear him howl, cough, spit, beg your pardon; to see him twist about, sweat, make sheep’s eyes, and anything that may come into his head to put off this operation. But be not astonished; pluck up your courage when thinking that you are acting thus to bring a perverted creature into the ways of salvation. Then you will dextrously take the reins, the liver, the heart, the gizzard, and noble parts, and dip them all several times into the holy water, washing and purifying them there, at the same time imploring the Holy Ghost to sanctify the interior of the beast. Afterwards you will replace all these intestinal things in the body of the flea, who will be anxious to get them back again. Being by this means baptised, the soul of the creature has become Catholic. Immediately you will get a needle and thread and sew up the belly of the flea with great care, with such regard and attention as is due to a fellow Christian; you will even pray for it—a kindness to which you will see it is sensible by its genuflections and the attentive glances which it will bestow upon you. In short, it will cry no more, and have no further desire to kill you; and fleas are often encountered who die from pleasure at being thus converted to our holy religion. You will do the same to all you catch; and the others perceiving it, after staring at the convert, will go away, so perverse are they, and so terrified at the idea of becoming Christians.”

“And they are therefore wicked,” said the novice. “Is there any greater happiness than to be in the bosom of the Church?”

“Certainly!” answered sister Ursula, “here we are sheltered from the

dangers of the world and of love, in which there are so many.”

“Is there any other danger than that of having a child at an unseasonable time?” asked a young sister.

“During the present reign,” replied Ursula, raising her head, “love has inherited leprosy, St Anthony’s fire, the Ardennes’ sickness, and the red rash, and has heaped up all the fevers, agonies, drugs and sufferings of the lot in his pretty mortar, to draw out therefrom a terrible compound, of which the devil has given the receipt, luckily for convents, because there are a great number of frightened ladies, who become virtuous for fear of this love.”

Thereupon they huddled up close together, alarmed at these words, but wishing to know more.

“And is it enough to love, to suffer?” asked a sister.

“Oh, yes!” cried Sister Ovide.

“You love just for one little once a pretty gentleman,” replied Ursula, “and you have the chance of seeing your teeth go one by one, your hair fall off, your cheeks grow pallid, and your eyebrows drop, and the disappearance of your prized charms will cost you many a sigh. There are poor women who have scabs come upon their noses, and others who have a horrid animal with a hundred claws, which gnaws their tenderest parts. The Pope has at last been compelled to excommunicate this kind of love.”

“Ah! how lucky I am to have had nothing of that sort,” cried the novice.

Hearing this souvenir of love, the sisters suspected that the little one had gone astray through the heat of a crucifix of Poissy, and had been joking with the Sister Ovide, and drawing her out. All congratulated themselves on having so merry a jade in their company, and asked her to what adventure they were indebted for that pleasure.

“Ah!” said she, “I let myself be bitten by a big flea, who had already been baptised.”

At this speech, the sister of the bass note could not restrain a second sign.

“Ah!” said Sister Ovide, “you are bound to give us the third. If you spoke that language in the choir, the abbess would diet you like Sister Petronille; so put a sordine in your trumpet.”

“Is it true that you knew in her lifetime that Sister Petronille on

whom God bestowed the gift of only going twice a year to the bank of deposit?" asked Sister Ursula.

"Yes," replied Ovide. "And one evening it happened she had to remain enthroned until matins, saying, 'I am here by the will of God.' But at the first verse, she was delivered, in order that she should not miss the office. Nevertheless, the late abbess would not allow that this was an especial favour, granted from on high, and said that God did not look so low. Here are the facts of the case. Our defunct sister, whose canonisation the order are now endeavouring to obtain at the court of the Pope, and would have had it if they could have paid the proper costs of the papal brief; this Petronille, then, had an ambition to have her name included in the Calendar of Saints, which was in no way prejudicial to our order. She lived in prayer alone, would remain in ecstasy before the altar of the virgin, which is on the side of the fields, and pretend so distinctly to hear the angels flying in Paradise, that she was able to hum the tunes they were singing. You all know that she took from them the chant *Adoremus*, of which no man could have invented a note. She remained for days with her eyes fixed like the star, fasting, and putting no more nourishment into her body than I could into my eye. She had made a vow never to taste meat, either cooked or raw, and ate only a crust of bread a day; but on great feast days she would add thereto a morsel of salt fish, without any sauce. On this diet she became dreadfully thin, yellow and saffron, and dry as an old bone in a cemetery; for she was of an ardent disposition, and anyone who had had the happiness of knocking up against her, would have drawn fire as from a flint. However, little as she ate, she could not escape an infirmity to which, luckily or unluckily, we are all more or less subject. If it were otherwise, we should be very much embarrassed. The affair in question, is the obligation of expelling after eating, like all the other animals, matter more or less agreeable, according to constitution. Now Sister Petronille differed from all others, because she expelled matter such as is left by a deer, and these are the hardest substances that any gizzard produces, as you must know, if you have ever put your foot upon them in the forest glade, and from their hardness they are called bullets in the language of forestry. This peculiarity of Sister Petronille's was not unnatural, since long fasts kept her temperament at a permanent heat.

According to the old sisters, her nature was so burning, that when water touched her, she went frist! like a hot coal. There are sisters who have accused her of secretly cooking eggs, in the night, between her toes, in order to support her austerities. But these were scandals, invented to tarnish this great sanctity of which all the other nunneries were jealous. Our sister was piloted in the way of salvation and divine perfection by the Abbot of St. Germaine-des-Pres de Paris—a holy man, who always finished his injunctions with a last one, which was to offer to God all our troubles, and submit ourselves to His will, since nothing happened without His express commandment. This doctrine, which appears wise at first sight, has furnished matter for great controversies, and has been finally condemned on the statement of the Cardinal of Chatillon, who declared that then there would be no such thing as sin, which would considerably diminish the revenues of the Church. But Sister Petronille lived imbued with this feeling, without knowing the danger of it. After Lent, and the fasts of the great jubilee, for the first time for eight months she had need to go to the little room, and to it she went. There, bravely lifting her dress, she put herself into a position to do that which we poor sinners do rather oftener. But Sister Petronille could only manage to expectorate the commencement of the thing, which kept her puffing without the remainder making up its mind to follow. In spite of every effort, pursing of the lips and squeezing of body, her guest preferred to remain in her blessed body, merely putting his head out of the window, like a frog taking the air, and felt no inclination to fall into the vale of misery among the others, alleging that he would not be there in the odour of sanctity. And his idea was a good one for a simple lump of dirt like himself. The good saint having used all methods of coercion, having overstretched her muscles, and tried the nerves of her thin face till they bulged out, recognised the fact that no suffering in the world was so great, and her anguish attaining the apogee of sphincterial terrors, she exclaimed, ‘Oh! my God, to Thee I offer it!’ At this orison, the stoney matter broke off short, and fell like a flint against the wall of the privy, making a croc, croc, croc, paf! You can easily understand, my sisters, that she had no need of a torch-cul, and drew back the remainder.”

“Then did she see angels?” asked one.

“Have they a behind?” asked another.

“Certainly not,” said Ursula. “Do you not know that one general meeting day, God having ordered them to be seated, they answered Him that they had not the wherewithal.”

Thereupon they went off to bed, some alone, others nearly alone. They were good girls, who harmed only themselves.

I cannot leave them without relating an adventure which took place in their house, when Reform was passing a sponge over it, and making them all saints, as before stated. At that time, there was in the episcopal chair of Paris a veritable saint, who did not brag about what he did, and cared for naught but the poor and suffering, whom the dear old Bishop lodged in his heart, neglecting his own interests for theirs, and seeking out misery in order that he might heal it with words, with help, with attentions, and with money, according to the case: as ready to solace the rich in their misfortunes as the poor, patching up their souls and bringing them back to God; and tearing about hither and thither, watching his troop, the dear shepherd! Now the good man went about careless of the state of his cassocks, mantles, and breeches, so that the naked members of the church were covered. He was so charitable that he would have pawned himself to save an infidel from distress. His servants were obliged to look after him carefully. Ofttimes he would scold them when they changed unasked his tattered vestments for new; and he used to have them darned and patched, as long as they would hold together. Now this good archbishop knew that the late *Sieur de Poissy* had left a daughter, without a sou or a rag, after having eaten, drunk, and gambled away her inheritance. This poor young lady lived in a hovel, without fire in winter or cherries in spring; and did needlework, not wishing either to marry beneath her or sell her virtue. Awaiting the time when he should be able to find a young husband for her, the prelate took it into his head to send her the outside case of one to mend, in the person of his old breeches, a task which the young lady, in her present position, would be glad to undertake. One day that the archbishop was thinking to himself that he must go to the convent of *Poissy*, to see after the reformed inmates, he gave to one of his servants, the oldest of his nether garments, which was sorely in need of stitches, saying, “Take this, *Saintot*, to the young ladies of *Poissy*,” meaning

to say, "the young lady of Poissy." Thinking of affairs connected with the cloister, he did not inform his varlet of the situation of the lady's house; her desperate condition having been by him discreetly kept a secret. Saintot took the breeches and went his way towards Poissy, gay as a grasshopper, stopping to chat with friends he met on the way, slaking his thirst at the wayside inns, and showing many things to the breeches during the journey that might hereafter be useful to them. At last he arrived at the convent, and informed the abbess that his master had sent him to give her these articles. When the varlet departed, leaving with the reverend mother, the garment accustomed to model in relief the archiepiscopal proportions of the continent nature of the good man, according to the fashion of the period, beside the image of those things of which the Eternal Father had deprived His angels, and which in the good prelate did not want for amplitude. Madame the abbess having informed the sisters of the precious message of the good archbishop they came in haste, curious and hustling, as ants into whose republic a chestnut husk has fallen. When they undid the breeches, which gaped horribly, they shrieked out, covering their eyes with one hand, in great fear of seeing the devil come out, the abbess exclaiming, "Hide yourselves my daughters! This is the abode of mortal sin!"

The mother of the novices, giving a little look between her fingers, revived the courage of the holy troop, swearing by an Ave that no living head was domiciled in the breeches. Then they all blushed at their ease, while examining this habitavit, thinking that perhaps the desire of the prelate was that they should discover therein some sage admonition or evangelical parable. Although this sight caused certain ravages in the hearts of those most virtuous maidens, they paid little attention to the flutterings of their reins, but sprinkling a little holy water in the bottom of the abyss, one touched it, another passed her finger through a hole, and grew bolder looking at it. It has even been pretended that, their first stir over, the abbess found a voice sufficiently firm to say, "What is there at the bottom of this? With what idea has our father sent us that which consummates the ruin of women?"

"It's fifteen years, dear mother, since I have been permitted to gaze upon the demon's den."

"Silence, my daughter. You prevent me thinking what is best to be done."

Then so much were these archiepiscopal breeches turned and twisted about, admired and re-admired, pulled here, pulled there, and turned inside out—so much were they talked about, fought about, thought about, dreamed about, night and day, that on the morrow a little sister said, after having sung the matins, to which the convent had a verse and two responses—”Sisters, I have found out the parable of the archbishop. He has sent us as a mortification his garment to mend, as a holy warning to avoid idleness, the mother abbess of all the vices.”

Thereupon there was a scramble to get hold of the breeches; but the abbess, using her high authority, reserved to herself the meditation over this patchwork. She was occupied during ten days, praying, and sewing the said breeches, lining them with silk, and making double hems, well sewn, and in all humility. Then the chapter being assembled, it was arranged that the convent should testify by a pretty souvenir to the said archbishop their delight that he thought of his daughters in God. Then all of them, to the very youngest, had to do some work on these blessed breeches, in order to do honour to the virtue of the good man.

Meanwhile the prelate had had so much to attend to, that he had forgotten all about his garment. This is how it came about. He made the acquaintance of a noble of the court, who, having lost his wife—a she-fiend and sterile—said to the good priest, that he had a great ambition to meet with a virtuous woman, confiding in God, with whom he was not likely to quarrel, and was likely to have pretty children. Such a one he desired to hold by the hand, and have confidence in. Then the holy man drew such a picture of Mademoiselle de Poissy, that this fair one soon became Madame de Genoilhac. The wedding was celebrated at the archiepiscopal palace, where was a feast of the first quality and a table bordered with ladies of the highest lineage, and the fashionable world of the court, among whom the bride appeared the most beautiful, since it has certain that she was a virgin, the archbishop guaranteeing her virtue.

When the fruit, conserves, and pastry were with many ornaments arranged on the cloth, Saintot said to the archbishop, “Monseigneur, your well-beloved daughters of Poissy send you a fine dish for the centre.”

“Put it there,” said the good man, gazing with admiration at an edifice of velvet and satin, embroidered with fine ribbon, in the shape of an ancient vase, the lid of which exhaled a thousand superfine odours.

Immediately the bride, uncovering it, found therein sweetmeats, cakes, and those delicious confections to which the ladies are so partial. But of one of them—some curious devotee—seeing a little piece of silk, pulled it towards her, and exposed to view the habitation of the human compass, to the great confusion of the prelate, for laughter rang round the table like a discharge of artillery.

“Well have they made the centre dish,” said the bridegroom. “These young ladies are of good understanding. Therein are all the sweets of matrimony.”

Can there be any better moral than that deduced by Monsieur de Genoilhac? Then no other is needed.

## HOW THE CHATEAU D'AZAY CAME TO BE BUILT

JEHAN, son of Simon Fourniez, called Simonnin, a citizen of Tours—originally of the village of Moulinot, near to Beaune, whence, in imitation of certain persons, he took the name when he became steward to Louis the Eleventh—had to fly one day into Languedoc with his wife, having fallen into great disgrace, and left his son Jacques penniless in Touraine. This youth, who possessed nothing in the world except his good looks, his sword, and spurs, but whom worn-out old men would have considered very well off, had in his head a firm intention to save his father, and make his fortune at the court, then holden in Touraine. At early dawn this good Tourainian left his lodging, and, enveloped in his mantle, all except his nose, which he left open to the air, and his stomach empty, walked about the town without any trouble of digestion. He entered the churches, thought them beautiful, looked into the chapels, flicked the flies from the pictures, and counted the columns all after the manner of a man who knew not what to do with his time or his money. At other times he feigned to recite his paternosters, but really made mute prayers to the ladies, offered them holy water when leaving, followed them afar off, and endeavoured by these little services to encounter some adventure, in which at the peril of his life he would find for himself a protector or a gracious mistress. He had in his girdle two doubloons which he spared far more than his skin, because that would be replaced, but the doubloons never. Each day he took from his little hoard the price of a roll and a few apples, with which he sustained life, and drank at his will and his discretion of the water of the Loire. This wholesome and prudent diet, besides being good for his doubloons, kept him frisky and light as a greyhound, gave him a clear understanding and a

warm heart for the water of the Loire is of all syrups the most strengthening, because having its course afar off it is invigorated by its long run, through many strands, before it reaches Tours. So you may be sure that the poor fellow imagined a thousand and one good fortunes and lucky adventures, and what is more, almost believed them true. Oh! The good times! One evening Jacques de Beaune (he kept the name although he was not lord of Beaune) was walking along the embankment, occupied in cursing his star and everything, for his last doubloon was with scant respect upon the point of quitting him; when at the corner of a little street, he nearly ran against a veiled lady, whose sweet odour gratified his amorous senses. This fair pedestrian was bravely mounted on pretty pattens, wore a beautiful dress of Italian velvet, with wide slashed satin sleeves; while as a sign of her great fortune, through her veil a white diamond of reasonable size shone upon her forehead like the rays of the setting sun, among her tresses, which were delicately rolled, built up, and so neat, that they must have taken her maids quite three hours to arrange. She walked like a lady who was only accustomed to a litter. One of her pages followed her, well armed. She was evidently some light o'love belonging to a noble of high rank or a lady of the court, since she held her dress high off the ground, and bent her back like a woman of quality. Lady or courtesan she pleased Jacques de Beaune, who, far from turning up his nose at her, conceived the wild idea of attaching himself to her for life. With this in view he determined to follow her in order to ascertain whither she would lead him—to Paradise or to the limbo of hell—to a gibbet or to an abode of love. Anything was a glean of hope to him in the depth of his misery. The lady strolled along the bank of the Loire towards Plessis inhaling like a fish the fine freshness of the water, toying, sauntering like a little mouse who wishes to see and taste everything. When the page perceived that Jacques de Beaune persistently followed his mistress in all her movements, stopped when she stopped, and watched her trifling in a barefaced fashion, as if he had a right so to do, he turned briskly round with a savage and threatening face, like that of a dog whose says, "Stand back, sir!" But the good Tourainian had his wits about him. Believing that if a cat may look at king, he, a baptised Christian, might certainly look at a pretty woman, he stepped forward, and

feigning to grin at the page, he strutted now behind and now before the lady. She said nothing, but looked at the sky, which was putting on its nightcap, the stars, and everything which could give her pleasure. So things went on. At last, arrived outside Portillon, she stood still, and in order to see better, cast her veil back over her shoulder, and in so doing cast upon the youth the glance of a clever woman who looks round to see if there is any danger of being robbed. I may tell you that Jacques de Beaune was a thorough ladies' man, could walk by the side of a princess without disgracing her, had a brave and resolute air which please the sex, and if he was a little browned by the sun from being so much in the open air, his skin would look white enough under the canopy of a bed. The glance, keen as a needle, which the lady threw him, appeared to him more animated than that with which she would have honoured her prayer-book. Upon it he built the hope of a windfall of love, and resolved to push the adventure to the very edge of the petticoat, risking to go still further, not only his lips, which he held of little count, but his two ears and something else besides. He followed into the town the lady, who returned by the Rue des Trois-Pucelles, and led the gallant through a labyrinth of little streets, to the square in which is at the present time situated the Hotel de la Cruzille. There she stopped at the door of a splendid mansion, at which the page knocked. A servant opened it, and the lady went in and closed the door, leaving the Sieur de Beaune open-mouthed, stupefied, and as foolish as Monseigneur St. Denis when he was trying to pick up his head. He raised his nose in the air to see if some token of favour would be thrown to him, and saw nothing except a light which went up the stairs, through the rooms, and rested before a fine window, where probably the lady was also. You can believe that the poor lover remained melancholy and dreaming, and not knowing what to do. The window gave a sudden creak and broke his reverie. Fancying that his lady was about to call him, he looked up again, and but for the friendly shelter of the balcony, which was a helmet to him, he would have received a stream of water and the utensil which contained it, since the handle only remained in the grasp of the person who delivered the deluge. Jacques de Beaune, delighted at this, did not lose the opportunity, but flung himself against the wall, crying "I am killed," with a feeble voice. Then stretch-

ing himself upon the fragments of broken china, he lay as if dead, awaiting the issue. The servants rushed out in a state of alarm, fearing their mistress, to whom they had confessed their fault, and picked up the wounded man, who could hardly restrain his laughter at being then carried up the stairs.

“He is cold,” said the page.

“He is covered with blood,” said the butler, who while feeling his pulse had wetted his hand.

“If he revives,” said the guilty one, “I will pay for a mass to St. Gatien.”

“Madame takes after her late father, and if she does not have thee hanged, the least mitigation of thy penalty will be that thou wilt be kicked out of her house and service,” said another. “Certes, he’s dead enough, he is so heavy.”

“Ah! I am in the house of a very great lady,” thought Jacques.

“Alas! is he really dead?” demanded the author of the calamity. While with great labour the Tourainian was being carried up the stairs, his doublet caught on a projection, and the dead man cried, “Ah, my doublet!”

“He groans,” said the culprit, with a sigh of relief. The Regent’s servants (for this was the house of the Regent, the daughter of King Louis XI. of virtuous memory) brought Jacques de Beaune into a room, and laid him stiff and stark upon a table, not thinking for a moment that he could be saved.

“Run and fetch a surgeon,” cried Madame de Beaujeu. “Run here, run there!”

The servants were down the stairs in a trice. The good lady Regent dispatched her attendants for ointment, for linen to bind the wounds, for goulard-water, for so many things, that she remained alone. Gazing upon this splendid and senseless man, she cried aloud, admiring his presence and his features, handsome even in death. “Ah! God wishes to punish me. Just for one little time in my life has there been born in me, and taken possession of me, a naughty idea, and my patron saint is angry, and deprives me of the sweetest gentleman I have ever seen. By the rood, and by the soul of my father, I will hang every man who has had a hand in this!”

“Madame,” cried Jacques de Beaune, springing from the table, and

falling at the feet of the Regent, "I will live to serve you, and am so little bruised that that I promise you this night as many joys as there are months in the year, in imitation of the *Sieur Hercules*, a pagan baron. For the last twenty days," he went on (thinking that matters would be smoothed by a little lying), "I have met you again and again. I fell madly in love with you, yet dared not, by reason of my great respect for your person, make an advance. You can imagine how intoxicated I must have been with your royal beauties, to have invented the trick to which I owe the happiness of being at your feet."

Thereupon he kissed her amorously, and gave her a look that would have overcome any scruples. The Regent, by means of time, which respects not queens, was, as everyone knows, in her middle age. In this critical and autumnal season, women formally virtuous and loveless desire now here, now there, to enjoy, unknown to the world, certain hours of love, in order that they may not arrive in the other world with hands and heart alike empty, through having left the fruit of the tree of knowledge untasted. The lady of Beaujeu, without appearing to be astonished while listening to the promises of this young man, since royal personages ought to be accustomed to having them by dozens, kept this ambitious speech in the depths of her memory or of her registry of love, which caught fire at his words. Then she raised the Tourainian, who still found in his misery the courage to smile at his mistress, who had the majesty of a full-blown rose, ears like shoes, and the complexion of a sick cat, but was so well-dressed, so fine in figure, so royal of foot, and so queenly in carriage, that he might still find in this affair means to gain his original object.

"Who are you?" said the Regent, putting on the stern look of her father.

"I am your very faithful subject, *Jacques de Beaune*, son of your steward, who has fallen into disgrace in spite of his faithful services."

"Ah, well!" replied the lady, "lay yourself on the table again. I hear someone coming; and it is not fit that my people should think me your accomplice in this farce and mummery."

The good fellow perceived, by the soft sound of her voice, that he was pardoned the enormity of his love. He lay down upon the table again, and remembered how certain lords had ridden to court in an

old stirrup—a thought which perfectly reconciled him to his present position.

“Good,” said the Regent to her maid-servants, “nothing is needed. This gentleman is better; thanks to heaven and the Holy Virgin, there will have been no murder in my house.”

Thus saying, she passed her hand through the locks of the lover who had fallen to her from the skies, and taking a little reviving water she bathed his temples, undid his doublet, and under pretence of aiding his recovery, verified better than an expert how soft and young was the skin on this young fellow and bold promiser of bliss, and all the bystanders, men and women, were amazed to see the Regent act thus. But humanity never misbecomes those of royal blood. Jacques stood up, and appeared to come to his senses, thanked the Regent most humbly, and dismissed the physicians, master surgeons, and other imps in black, saying that he had thoroughly recovered. Then he gave his name, and saluting Madame de Beaujeu, wished to depart, as though afraid of her on account of his father’s disgrace, but no doubt horrified at his terrible vow.

“I cannot permit it,” said she. “Persons who come to my house should not meet with such treatment as you have encountered. The Sieur de Beaune will sup here,” she added to her major domo. “He who has so unduly insulted him will be at his mercy if he makes himself known immediately; otherwise, I will have him found out and hanged by the provost.”

Hearing this, the page who had attended the lady during her promenade stepped forward.

“Madame,” said Jacques, “at my request pray both pardon and reward him, since to him I owe the felicity of seeing you, the favour of supping in your company, and perhaps that of getting my father re-established in the office to which it pleased your glorious father to appoint him.”

“Well said,” replied the Regent. “D’Estouteville,” said she, turning towards the page, “I give thee command of a company of archers. But for the future do not throw things out of the window.”

Then she, delighted with de Beaune, offered him her hand, and led him most gallantly into her room, where they conversed freely together while supper was being prepared. There the Sieur Jacques

did not fail to exhibit his talents, justify his father, and raise himself in the estimation of the lady, who, as is well known, was like a father in disposition, and did everything at random. Jacques de Beaune thought to himself that it would be rather difficult for him to remain all night with the Regent. Such matters are not so easily arranged as the amours of cats, who have always a convenient refuge upon the housetops for their moments of dalliance. So he rejoiced that he was known to the Regent without being compelled to fulfil his rash promise, since for this to be carried out it was necessary that the servants and others should be out of the way, and her reputation safe. Nevertheless, suspecting the powers of intrigue of the good lady, at times he would ask himself if he were equal to the task. But beneath the surface of conversation, the same thing was in the mind of the Regent, who had already managed affairs quite as difficult, and she began most cleverly to arrange the means. She sent for one of her secretaries, an adept in all arts necessary for the perfect government of a kingdom, and ordered him to give her secretly a false message during the supper. Then came the repast, which the lady did not touch, since her heart had swollen like a sponge, and so diminished her stomach, for she kept thinking of this handsome and desirable man, having no appetite save for him. Jacques did not fail to make a good meal for many reasons. The messenger came, madame began to storm, and to knit her brows after the manner of the late king, and to say, "Is there never to be peace in this land? *Pasques Dieu!* can we not have one quiet evening?" Then she rose and strode about the room. "Ho there! My horse! Where is Monsieur de Vieilleville, my squire? Ah, he is in Picardy. D'Estouteville, you will rejoin me with my household at the Chateau d'Amboise...." And looking at Jacques, she said, "You shall be my squire, *Sieur de Beaune*. You wish to serve the state. The occasion is a good one. *Pasques Dieu!* come! There are rebels to subdue, and faithful knights are needed."

In less time than an old beggar would have taken to say thank you, the horses were bridled, saddled, and ready. Madame was on her mare, and the Tourainian at her side, galloping at full speed to her castle at Amboise, followed by the men-at-arms. To be brief and come to the facts without further commentary, the De Beaune was lodged not twenty yards from Madame, far from prying eyes. The

courtiers and the household, much astonished, ran about inquiring from what quarter the danger might be expected; but our hero, taken at his word, knew well enough where to find it. The virtue of the Regent, well known in the kingdom, saved her from suspicion, since she was supposed to be as impregnable as the Chateau de Peronne. At curfew, when everything was shut, both ears and eyes, and the castle silent, Madame de Beaujeu sent away her handmaid, and called for her squire. The squire came. Then the lady and the adventurer sat side by side upon a velvet couch, in the shadow of a lofty fireplace, and the curious Regent, with a tender voice, asked of Jacques "Are you bruised? It was very wrong of me to make a knight, wounded by one of my servants, ride twelve miles. I was so anxious about it that I would not go to bed without having seen you. Do you suffer?"

"I suffer with impatience," said he of the dozen, thinking it would not do to appear reluctant. "I see well," continued he, "my noble and beautiful mistress, that your servant has found favour in your sight."

"There, there!" replied she; "did you not tell a story when you said—"

"What?" said he.

"Why, that you had followed me dozens of times to churches, and other places to which I went."

"Certainly," said he.

"I am astonished," replied the Regent, "never to have seen until today a noble youth whose courage is so apparent in his countenance. I am not ashamed of that which you heard me say when I believed you dead. You are agreeable to me, you please me, and you wish to do well."

Then the hour of the dreaded sacrifice having struck, Jacques fell at the knees of the Regent, kissed her feet, her hands, and everything, it is said; and while kissing her, previous to retirement, proved by many arguments to the aged virtue of his sovereign, that a lady bearing the burden of the state had a perfect right to enjoy herself—a theory which was not directly admitted by the Regent, who determined to be forced, in order to throw the burden of this sin upon her lover. This notwithstanding, you may be sure that she had highly perfumed and elegantly attired herself for the night, and shone with desire for embraces, for desire lent her a high colour which greatly improved her complexion;

and in spite of her feeble resistance she was, like a young girl, carried by assault in her royal couch, where the good lady and her young dozener, embraced each other. Then from play to quarrel, quarrel to riot, from riot to ribaldry, from thread to needle, the Regent declared that she believed more in the virginity of the Holy Mary than in the promised dozen. Now, by chance, Jacques de Beaune did not find this great lady so very old between the sheets, since everything is metamorphosed by the light of the lamps of the night. Many women of fifty by day are twenty at midnight, as others are twenty at mid-day and a hundred after vespers. Jacques, happier at this sight than at that of the King on a hanging day, renewed his undertaking. Madame, herself astonished, promised every assistance on her part. The manor of Azay-le-Brule, with a good title thereto, she undertook to confer upon her cavalier, as well as the pardon of his father, if from this encounter she came forth vanquished, then the clever fellows said to himself, "This is to save my father from punishment! this for the fief! this for the letting and selling! this for the forest of Azay! item for the right of fishing! another for the Isles of the Indre! this for the meadows! I may as well release from confiscation our land of La Carte, so dearly bought by my father! Once more for a place at court!" Arriving without hindrance at this point, he believed his dignity involved, and fancied that having France under him, it was a question of the honour of the crown. In short, at the cost of a vow which he made to his patron, Monsieur St. Jacques, to build him a chapel at Azay, he presented his liege homage to the Regent eleven clear, clean, limpid, and genuine periphrases. Concerning the epilogue of this slow conversation, the Tourainian had the great self-confidence to wish excellently to regale the Regent, keeping for her on her waking the salute of an honest man, as it was necessary for the lord of Azay to thank his sovereign, which was wisely thought. But when nature is oppressed, she acts like a spirited horse, lays down, and will die under the whip sooner than move until it pleases her to rise reinvigorated. Thus, when in the morning the seignior of the castle of Azay desired to salute the daughter of King Louis XI., he was constrained, in spite of his courtesy, to make the salute as royal salutes should be made—with blank cartridge only. Therefore the Regent, after getting up, and while she was breakfasting with Jacques, who called himself the legitimate Lord of Azay, seized the occasion of this

insufficiency to contradict her esquire, and pretend, that as he had not gained his wager, he had not earned the manor.

“Ventre-Saint-Paterne! I have been near enough,” said Jacques. “But my dear lady and noble sovereign it is not proper for either you or me to judge in this cause. The case being an allodial case, must be brought before your council, since the fief of Azay is held from the crown.”

“Pasques dieu!” replied the Regent with a forced laugh. “I give you the place of the Sieur de Vieilleville in my house. Don’t trouble about your father. I will give you Azay, and will place you in a royal office if you can, without injury to my honour, state the case in full council; but if one word falls to the damage of my reputation as a virtuous woman, I—”

“May I be hanged,” said Jacques, turning the thing into a joke, because there was a shade of anger in the face of Madame de Beaujeu.

In fact, the daughter of King Louis thought more of her royalty than of the roguish dozen, which she considered as nothing, since fancying she had had her night’s amusement without loosening her purse-strings, she preferred the difficult recital of his claim to another dozen offered her by the Tourainian.

“Then, my lady,” replied her good companion, “I shall certainly be your squire.”

The captains, secretaries, and other persons holding office under the regency, astonished at the sudden departure of Madame de Beaujeu, learned the cause of her anxiety, and came in haste to the castle of Amboise to discover whence preceded the rebellion, and were in readiness to hold a council when her Majesty had arisen. She called them together, not to be suspected of having deceived them, and gave them certain falsehoods to consider, which they considered most wisely. At the close of the sitting, came the new squire to accompany his mistress. Seeing the councillors rising, the bold Tourainian begged them to decide a point of law which concerned both himself and the property of the Crown.

“Listen to him,” said the Regent. “He speaks truly.”

Then Jacques de Beaune, without being nervous at the sight of this august court, spoke as follows, or thereabouts:—“Noble Lords, I beg you, although I am about to speak to you of walnut shells, to

give your attention to this case, and pardon me the trifling nature of my language. One lord was walking with another in a fruit garden, and noticed a fine walnut tree, well planted, well grown, worth looking at, worth keeping, although a little empty; a nut tree always fresh, sweet-smelling, the tree which you would not leave if you once saw it, a tree of love which seemed the tree of good and evil, forbidden by the Lord, through which were banished our mother Eve and the gentleman her husband. Now, my lords, this said walnut tree was the subject of a slight dispute between the two, and one of those many wagers which are occasionally made between friends. The younger boasted that he could throw twelve times through it a stick which he had in his hand at the time—as many people have who walk in a garden—and with each flight of the stick he would send a nut to the ground—”

“That is, I believe the knotty point of the case,” said Jacques turning towards the Regent.

“Yes, gentlemen,” replied she, surprised at the craft of her squire.

“The other wagered to the contrary,” went on the pleader. “Now the first named throws his stick with such precision of aim, so gently, and so well that both derived pleasure therefrom, and by the joyous protection of the saints, who no doubt were amused spectators, with each throw there fell a nut; in fact, there fell twelve. But by chance the last of the fallen nuts was empty, and had no nourishing pulp from which could have come another nut tree, had the gardener planted it. Has the man with the stick gained his wager? Judge.”

“The thing is clear enough,” said Messire Adam Fumee, a Tourainian, who at that time was the keeper of the seals. “There is only one thing for the other to do.”

“What is that?” said the Regent.

“To pay the wager, Madame.”

“He is rather too clever,” said she, tapping her squire on the cheek. “He will be hanged one of these days.”

She meant it as a joke, but these words were the real horoscope of the steward, who mounted the gallows by the ladder of royal favour, through the vengeance of another old woman, and the notorious treason of a man of Ballan, his secretary, whose fortune he had made, and whose name was Prevost, and not Rene Gentil, as certain per-

sons have wrongly called him. The Ganelon and bad servant gave, it is said, to Madame d'Angouleme, the receipt for the money which had been given him by Jacques de Beaune, then become Baron of Samblancay, lord of La Carte and Azay, and one of the foremost men in the state. Of his two sons, one was Archbishop of Tours the other Minister of Finance and Governor of Touraine. But this is not the subject of the present history.

Now that which concerns the present narrative, is that Madame de Beaujeu, to whom the pleasure of love had come rather late in the day, well pleased with the great wisdom and knowledge of public affairs which her chance lover possessed, made him Lord of the Privy Purse, in which office he behaved so well, and added so much to the contents of it, that his great renown procured for him one day the handling of the revenues which he superintended and controlled most admirably, and with great profit to himself, which was but fair. The good Regent paid the bet, and handed over to her squire the manor of Azay-le-Brule, of which the castle had long before been demolished by the first bombardiers who came from Touraine, as everyone knows. For this powdery miracle, but for the intervention of the king, the said engineers would have been condemned as heretics and abettors of Satan, by the ecclesiastical tribune of the chapter.

At this time there was being built with great care by Messire Bohier, Minister of Finance, the Castle of Chenonceaux, which as a curiosity and novel design, was placed right across the river Cher.

Now the Baron de Samblancay, wishing to oppose the said Bohier, determined to lay the foundation of this at the bottom of the Indre, where it still stands, the gem of this fair green valley, so solidly was it placed upon the piles. It cost Jacques de Beaune thirty thousand crowns, not counting the work done by his vassals. You may take it for granted this castle was one of the finest, prettiest, most exquisite and most elaborate castles of our sweet Touraine, and laves itself in the Indre like a princely creature, gayly decked with pavilions and lace curtained windows, with fine weather-beaten soldiers on her vanes, turning whichever way the wind blows, as all soldiers do. But Samblancay was hanged before it was finished, and since that time no one has been found with sufficient money to complete it. Nevertheless, his master, King Francis the First, was once his guest, and the royal chamber is still shown there.

When the king was going to bed, Samblancay, whom the king called “old fellow,” in honour of his white hairs, hearing his royal master, to whom he was devotedly attached, remark, “Your clock has just struck twelve, old fellow!” replied, “Ah! sire, to twelve strokes of a hammer, an old one now, but years ago a good one, at this hour of the clock do I owe my lands, the money spent on this place, and honour of being in your service.”

The king wished to know what his minister meant by these strange words; and when his majesty was getting into bed, Jacques de Beaune narrated to him the history with which you are acquainted. Now Francis the First, who was partial to these spicy stories, thought the adventure a very droll one, and was the more amused thereat because at that time his mother, the Duchess d’Angouleme, in the decline of life, was pursuing the Constable of Bourbon, in order to obtain of him one of these dozens. Wicked love of a wicked woman, for therefrom proceeded the peril of the kingdom, the capture of the king, and the death—as has been before mentioned—of poor Samblancay.

I have here endeavoured to relate how the Chateau d’Azay came to be built, because it is certain that thus was commenced the great fortune of that Samblancay who did so much for his natal town, which he adorned; and also spent such immense sums upon the completion of the towers of the cathedral. This lucky adventure has been handed down from father to son, and lord to lord, in the said place of Azay-les-Ridel, where the story frisks still under the curtains of the king, which have been curiously respected down to the present day. It is therefore the falsest of falsities which attributes the dozen of the Tourainian to a German knight, who by this deed would have secured the domains of Austria to the House of Hapsburgh. The author of our days, who brought this history to light, although a learned man, has allowed himself to be deceived by certain chroniclers, since the archives of the Roman Empire make no mention of an acquisition of this kind. I am angry with him for having believed that a “braguette” nourished with beer, could have been equal to the alchemical operations of the Chinonian “braguettes,” so much esteemed by Rabelais. And I have for the advantage of the country, the glory of Azay, the conscience of the castle, and renown of the House of Beaune, from which sprang the Sauves and the Noirmoutiers, re-

established the facts in all their veritable, historical, and admirable beauty. Should any ladies pay a visit to the castle, there are still dozens to be found in the neighbourhood, but they can only be procured retail.

## THE FALSE COURTESAN

THAT WHICH certain people do not know, is a the truth concerning the decease of the Duke of Orleans, brother of King Charles VI., a death which proceeded from a great number of causes, one of which will be the subject of this narrative. This prince was for certain the most lecherous of all the royal race of Monseigneur St. Louis (who was in his life time King of France), without even putting on one side some of the most debauched of this fine family, which was so concordant with the vices and especial qualities of our brave and pleasure-seeking nation, that you could more easily imagine Hell without Satan than France without her valorous, glorious, and jovial kings. So you can laugh as loudly at those muckworms of philosophy who go about saying, "Our fathers were better," as at the good, philanthropical old bunglers who pretend that mankind is on the right road to perfection. These are old blind bats, who observe neither the plumage of oysters nor the shells of birds, which change no more than our ways. Hip, hip, huzzah! then, make merry while you're young. Keep your throats wet and your eyes dry, since a hundred-weight of melancholy is worth less than an ounce of jollity. The wrong doings of this lord, lover of Queen Isabella, whom he doted upon, brought about pleasant adventures, since he was a great wit, of Alcibaidescal nature, and a chip off the old block. It was he who first conceived the idea of a relay of sweethearts, so that when he went from Paris to Bordeaux, every time he unsettled his nag he found ready for him a good meal and a bed with as much lace inside as out. Happy Prince! who died on horseback, for he was always across something in-doors and out. Of his comical jokes our most excellent King Louis the Eleventh has given a splendid sample in the book of "Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles," written under his superintendence during his exile, at the Court of Burgundy, where, during the long evenings, in

order to amuse themselves, he and his cousin Charolois would relate to each other the good tricks and jokes of the period; and when they were hard up for true stories, each of the courtiers tried who could invent the best one. But out of respect for the royal blood, the Dauphin has credited a townsman with that which happened to the Lady of Cany. It is given under the title of “*La Medaille a revers*”, in the collection of which it is one of the brightest jewels, and commences the hundred. But now for mine.

The Duc d’Orleans had in his suite a lord of the province of Picardy, named Raoul d’Hocquetonville, who had taken for a wife, to the future trouble of the prince, a young lady related to the house of Burgundy, and rich in domains. But, an exception to the general run of heiresses, she was of so dazzling a beauty, that all the ladies of the court, even the Queen and Madame Valentine, were thrown into the shade; nevertheless, this was as nothing in the lady of Hocquetonville, compared with her Burgundian consanguinity, her inheritances, her prettiness, and gentle nature, because these rare advantages received a religious lustre from her supreme innocence, sweet modesty, and chaste education. The Duke had not long gazed upon this heaven-sent flower before he was seized with the fever of love. He fell into a state of melancholy, frequented no bad places, and only with regret now and then did he take a bite at his royal and dainty German morsel Isabella. He became passionate, and swore either by sorcery, by force, by trickery, or with her consent, to enjoy the flavours of this gentle lady, who, by the sight of her sweet body, forced him to the last extremity, during his now long and weary nights. At first, he pursued her with honied words, but he soon knew by her untroubled air that she was determined to remain virtuous, for without appearing astonished at his proceedings, or getting angry like certain other ladies, she replied to him, “My lord, I must inform you that I do not desire to trouble myself with the love of other persons, not that I despise the joys which are therein to be experienced (as supreme they must be, since so many ladies cast into the abyss of love their homes, their honour, their future, and everything), but from the love I bear my children. Never would I be the cause of a blush upon their cheeks, for in this idea will I bring up my daughters—that in virtue alone is happiness to be found. For, my lord, if the days of our old age are more numer-

ous than those of our youth, of them must we think. From those who brought me up I learned to properly estimate this life, and I know that everything therein is transitory, except the security of the natural affections. Thus I wish for the esteem of everyone, and above all that of my husband, who is all the world to me. Therefore do I desire to appear honest in his sight. I have finished, and I entreat you to allow me unmolested to attend to my household affairs, otherwise I will unhesitatingly refer the matter to my lord and master, who will quit your service.”

This brave reply rendered the king's brother more amorous than ever, and he endeavoured to ensnare this noble woman in order to possess her, dead or alive, and he never doubted a bit that he would have her in his clutches, relying upon his dexterity at this kind of sport, the most joyous of all, in which it is necessary to employ the weapons of all other kinds of sport, seeing that this sweet game is taken running, by taking aim, by torchlight, by night, by day, in the town, in the country, in the woods, by the waterside, in nets, with falcons, with the lance, with the horn, with the gun, with the decoy bird, in snares, in the toils, with a bird call, by the scent, on the wing, with the cornet, in slime, with a bait, with the lime-twigg—indeed, by means of all the snares invented since the banishment of Adam. And gets killed in various different ways, but generally is overridden.

The artful fellow ceased to mention his desires, but had a post of honour given to the Lady of Hocquetonville, in the queen's household. Now, one day that the said Isabella went to Vincennes, to visit the sick King, and left him master of the Hotel St. Paul, he commanded the chef to have a delicate and royal supper prepared, and to serve it in the queen's apartments. Then he sent for his obstinate lady by express command, and by one of the pages of the household. The Countess d'Hocquetonville, believing that she was desired by Madame Isabella for some service appertaining to her post, or invited to some sudden amusement, hastened to the room. In consequence of the precautions taken by the disloyal lover, no one had been able to inform the noble dame of the princess's departure, so she hastened to the splendid chamber, which, in the Hotel St. Paul, led into the queen's bedchamber; there she found the Duc d'Orleans alone. Suspecting some treacherous plot, she went quickly into the other room,

found no queen, but heard the Prince give vent to a hearty laugh.

“I am undone!” said she. Then she endeavoured to run away.

But the good lady-killer had posted about devoted attendants, who, without knowing what was going on, closed the hotel, barricaded the doors, and in this mansion, so large that it equalled a fourth of Paris, the Lady d’Hocquetonville was as in a desert, with no other aid than that of her patron saint and God. Then, suspecting the truth, the poor lady trembled from head to foot and fell into a chair; and then the working of this snare, so cleverly conceived, was, with many a hearty laugh, revealed to her by her lover. Directly the duke made a movement to approach her this woman rose and exclaimed, arming herself first with her tongue, and flashing one thousand maledictions from her eyes—

“You will possess me—but dead! Ha! my lord, do not force me to a struggle which must become known to certain people. I may yet retire, and the Sire d’Hocquetonville shall be ignorant of the sorrow with which you have forever tinged my life. Duke, you look too often in the ladies’ faces to find time to study men’s, and you do not therefore know your man. The Sire d’Hocquetonville would let himself be hacked to pieces in your service, so devoted is he to you, in memory of your kindness to him, and also because he is partial to you. But as he loves so does he hate; and I believe him to be the man to bring his mace down upon your head, to take his revenge, if you but compel me to utter one cry. Do you desire both my death and your own? But be assured that, as an honest woman, whatever happens to me, good or evil, I shall keep no secret. Now, will you let me go?”

The bad fellow began to whistle. Hearing his whistling, the good woman went suddenly into the queen’s chamber, and took from a place known to her therein, a sharp stiletto. Then, when the duke followed her to ascertain what this flight meant, “When you pass that line,” cried she, pointing to a board, “I will kill myself.”

My lord, without being in the least terrified, took a chair, placed it at the very edge of the plank in question, and commenced a glowing description of certain things, hoping to influence the mind of this brave woman, and work her to that point that her brain, her heart, and everything should be at his mercy. Then he commenced to say to her, in that delicate manner to which princes are accustomed, that, in

the first place, virtuous women pay dearly for their virtue, since in order to gain the uncertain blessings of the future, they lose all the sweetest joys of the present, because husbands were compelled, from motives of conjugal policy, not show them all the jewels in the shrine of love, since the said jewels would so affect their hearts, was so rapturously delicious, so titillatingly voluptuous, that a woman would no longer consent to dwell in the cold regions of domestic life; and he declared this marital abomination to be a great felony, because the least thing a man could do in recognition of the virtuous life of a good woman and her great merits, was to overwork himself, to exert, to exterminate himself, to please her in every way, with fondlings and kissings and wrestlings, and all the delicacies and sweet confectionery of love; and that, if she would taste a little of the seraphic joys of these little ways to her unknown, she would believe all the other things of life as not worth a straw; and that, if such were her wish, he would forever be as silent as the grave, and last no scandal would besmear her virtue. And the lewd fellow, perceiving that the lady did not stop her ears, commenced to describe to her, after the fashion of arabesque pictures, which at that time were much esteemed, the wanton inventions of debauchery. Then did his eyes shoot flame, his words burn, and his voice ring, and he himself took great pleasure in calling to mind the various ways of his ladies, naming them to Madame d'Hocquetonville, and even revealing to her the tricks, caresses, and amorous ways of Queen Isabella, and he made use of expression so gracious and so ardently inciting, that, fancying it caused the lady to relax her hold upon the stiletto a little, he made as if to approach her. But she, ashamed to be found buried in thought, gazed proudly at the diabolical leviathan who tempted her, and said to him, "Fine sir, I thank you. You have caused me to love my husband all the more, for from your discourse I learn how much he esteems me by holding me in such respect that he does not dishonour his couch with the tricks of street-walkers and bad women. I should think myself forever disgraced, and should be contaminated to all eternity if I put my foot in these sloughs where go these shameless hussies. A man's wife is one thing, and his mistress another."

"I will wager," said the duke, smiling, "that, nevertheless, for the future you spur the Sire d'Hocquetonville to a little sharper pace."

At this the good woman trembled, and cried, "You are a wicked man. Now I both despise and abominate you! What! unable to rob me of my honour, you attempt to poison my mind! Ah, my lord, this night's work will cost you dear—"

"If I forget it, a yet,  
God will not forget.

"Are not those of verse is yours?"

"Madame," said the duke, turning pale with anger, "I can have you bound—"

"Oh no! I can free myself," replied she, brandishing the stiletto.

The rapsallion began to laugh.

"Never mind," said he. "I have a means of plunging you into the sloughs of three brazen hussies, as you call them."

"Never, while I live."

"Head and heels you shall go in—with your two feet, two hands, two ivory breasts, and two other things, white as snow—your teeth, your hair, and everything. You will go of your own accord; you shall enter into it lasciviously, and in a way to crush your cavalier, as a wild horse does its rider—stamping, leaping, and snorting. I swear it by Saint Castud!"

Instantly he whistled for one of his pages. And when the page came, he secretly ordered him to go and seek the Sire d'Hocquetonville, Savoisy, Tanneguy, Cypierre, and other members of his band, asking them to these rooms to supper, not without at the same time inviting to meet his guests a pretty petticoat or two.

Then he came and sat down in his chair again, ten paces from the lady, off whom he had not taken his eye while giving his commands to the page in a whisper.

"Raoul is jealous," said he. "Now let me give you a word of advice. In this place," he added, pointing to a secret door, "are the oils and superfine perfumes of the queen; in this other little closet she performs her ablutions and little feminine offices. I know by much experience that each one of you gentle creatures has her own special perfume, by which she is smelt and recognised. So if, as you say, Raoul is overwhelmingly jealous with the worst of all jealousies, you will use these

fast hussies' scents, because your danger approaches fast."

"Ah, my lord, what do you intend to do?"

"You will know when it is necessary that you should know. I wish you no harm, and pledge you my honour, as a loyal knight, that I will almost thoroughly respect you, and be forever silent concerning my discomfiture. In short, you will know that the Duc d'Orleans has a good heart, and revenges himself nobly on ladies who treat him with disdain, by placing in their hands the key of Paradise. Only keep your ears open to the joyous words that will be handed from mouth to mouth in the next room, and cough not if you love your children."

Since there was no egress from the royal chamber, and the bars crossing hardly left room to put one's head through, the good prince closed the door of the room, certain of keeping the lady a safe prisoner there, and again impressed upon her the necessity of silence. Then came the merry blades in great haste, and found a good and substantial supper smiling at them from the silver plates upon the table, and the table well arranged and well lighted, loaded with fine silver cups, and cups full of royal wine. Then said their master to them—

"Come! Come! to your places my good friends. I was becoming very weary. Thinking of you, I wished to arrange with you a merry feast after the ancient method, when the Greeks and Romans said their Pater noster to Master Priapus, and the learned god called in all countries Bacchus. The feast will be proper and a right hearty one, since at our libation there will be present some pretty crows with three beaks, of which I know from great experience the best one to kiss."

Then all of them recognising their master in all things, took pleasure in this discourse, except Raoul d'Hocquetonville, who advanced and said to the prince—

"My lord, I will aid you willingly in any battle but that of the petticoats, in that of spear and axe, but not of the wine flasks. My good companions here present have not wives at home, it is otherwise with me. I have a sweet wife, to whom I owe my company, and an account of all my deeds and actions."

"Then, since I am a married man I am to blame?" said the duke.

"Ah! my dear master, you are a prince, and can do as you please."

These brave speeches made, as you can imagine, the heart of the lady prisoner hot and cold.

“Ah! my Raoul,” thought she, “thou art a noble man!”

“You are,” said the duke, “a man whom I love, and consider more faithful and praiseworthy than any of my people. The others,” said he, looking at the three lords, “are wicked men. But, Raoul,” he continued, “sit thee down. When the linnets come—they are linnets of high degree—you can make your way home. S’death! I had treated thee as a virtuous man, ignorant of the extra-conjugal joys of love, and had carefully put for thee in that room the queen of raptures—a fair demon, in whom is concentrated all feminine inventions. I wished that once in thy life thou, who has never tasted the essence of love, and dreamed but of war, should know the secret marvels of the gallant amusement, since it is shameful that one of my followers should serve a fair lady badly.”

Thereupon the Sire d’Hocquetonville sat down to a table in order to please his prince as far as he could lawfully do so. Then they all commenced to laugh, joke, and talk about the ladies; and according to their custom, they related to each other their good fortunes and their love adventures, sparing no woman except the queen of the house, and betraying the little habits of each one, to which followed horrible little confidences, which increased in treachery and lechery as the contents of the goblets grew less. The duke, gay as a universal legatee, drew the guests out, telling lies himself to learn the truth from them; and his companions ate at a trot, drank at a full gallop, and their tongues rattled away faster than either.

Now, listening to them, and heating his brain with wine, the Sire d’Hocquetonville unharnessed himself little by little from the reluctance. In spite of his virtues, he indulged certain desires, and became soaked in these impurities like a saint who defiles himself while saying his prayers. Perceiving which, the prince, on the alert to satisfy his ire and his bile, began to say to him, joking him—

“By Saint Castud, Raoul, we are all tarred with the same brush, all discreet away from here. Go; we will say nothing to Madame. By heaven! man, I wish thee to taste of the joys of paradise. There,” said he, tapping the door of the room in which was Madame d’Hocquetonville, “in there is a lady of the court and a friend of the queen, but the greatest priestess of Venus that ever was, and her equal is not to be found in any courtesan, harlot, dancer, doxy, or hussy. She

was engendered at a moment when paradise was radiant with joy, when nature was procreating, when the planets were whispering vows of love, when the beasts were frisking and capering, and everything was aglow with desire. Although the women make an altar of her bed, she is nevertheless too great a lady to allow herself to be seen, and too well known to utter any words but the sounds of love. No light will you need, for her eyes flash fire, and attempt no conversation, since she speaks only with movements and twistings more rapid than those of a deer surprised in the forest. Only, my dear Raoul, but so merry a nag look to your stirrups, sit light in the saddle, since with one plunge she would hurl thee to the ceiling, if you are not careful. She burns always, and is always longing for male society. Our poor dead friend, the young Sire de Giac, met his death through her; she drained his marrow in one springtime. God's truth! to know such bliss as that of which she rings the bells and lights the fires, what man would not forfeit a third of his future happiness? and he who has known her once would for a second night forfeit without regret eternity."

"But," said Raoul, "in things which should be so much alike, how is it that there is so great a difference?"

"Ha! Ha! Ha!"

Thereupon the company burst out laughing, and animated by the wine and a wink from their master, they all commenced relating droll and quaint conceits, laughing, shouting, and making a great noise. Now, knowing not that an innocent scholar was there, these jokers, who had drowned their sense of shame in the wine-cups, said things to make the figures on the mantel shake, the walls and the ceilings blush; and the duke surpassed them all, saying, that the lady who was in bed in the next room awaiting a gallant should be the empress of these warm imaginations, because she practised them every night. Upon this the flagons being empty, the duke pushed Raoul, who let himself be pushed willingly, into the room, and by this means the prince compelled the lady to deliberate by which dagger she would live or die. At midnight the Sire d'Hocquetonville came out gleefully, not without remorse at having been false to his good wife. Then the Duc d'Orleans led Madame d'Hocquetonville out by a garden door, so that she gained her residence before her husband arrived here.

“This,” said she, in the prince’s ear, as she passed the postern, “will cost us all dear.”

One year afterwards, in the old Rue du Temple, Raoul d’Hocquetonville, who had quitted the service of the Duke for that of Jehan of Burgundy, gave the king’s brother a blow on the head with a club, and killed him, as everyone knows. In the same year died the Lady d’Hocquetonville, having faded like a flower deprived of air and eaten by a worm. Her good husband had engraved upon her marble tomb, which is in one of the cloisters of Peronne, the following inscription—

*Here lies Berta de Bourgonge the noble and comely wife of Raoul,  
Sire de Hocquetonville.*

*Alas! Pray not for her soul. She blossomed again in paradise. The  
Eleventh Day of January in the Year of Our Lord MCCCCVIII., in  
the Twenty-third Year of Her Age, Leaving Two Sons and Her Lord  
Spouse Inconsolable.*

This epitaph was written in elegant Latin, but for the convenience of all it was necessary to translate it, although the word comely is feeble beside that of formosa, which signifies beautiful in shape. The Duke of Burgundy, called the Fearless, in whom previous to his death the Sire d’Hocquetonville confided the troubles cemented with lime and sand in his heart, used to say, in spite of his hardheartedness in these matters, that this epitaph plunged him into a state of melancholy for a month, and that among all the abominations of his cousin of Orleans, there was one for which he would kill him over again if the deed had not already been done, because this wicked man had villianously defaced with vice the most divine virtue in the world and had prostituted two noble hearts, the one by the other. When saying this he would think of the lady of Hocquetonville and of his own, which portrait had been unwarrantably placed in the cabinet where his cousin placed the likeness of his wenches.

The adventure was so extremely shocking, that when it was related by the Count de Charolois to the Dauphin, afterwards Louis XI., the latter would not allow his secretaries to publish it in his collection, out of respect for his great uncle the Duke d’Orleans, and for Dunois his

old comrade, the son of the same. But the person of the lady of Hocquetonville is so sublimely virtuous, so exquisitely melancholy, that in her favour the present publication of this narrative will be forgiven, in spite of the diabolical invention and vengeance of Monseigneur d'Orleans. The just death of this rascal nevertheless caused many serious rebellions, which finally Louis XI., losing all patience, put down with fire and sword.

This shows us that there is a woman at the bottom of everything, in France as elsewhere, and that sooner or later we must pay for our follies.

## THE DANGER OF BEING TOO INNOCENT

THE LORD OF MONTCONTOUR was a brave soldier of Tours, who in honour of the battle gained by the Duke of Anjou, afterwards our right glorious king, caused to be built at Vouvray the castle thus named, for he had borne himself most bravely in that affair, where he overcame the greatest of heretics, and from that was authorised to take the name. Now this said captain had two sons, good Catholics, of whom the eldest was in favour at court. After the peace, which was concluded before the stratagem arranged for St Bartholomew's Day, the good man returned to his manor, which was not ornamented as it is at the present day. There he received the sad announcement of the death of his son, slain in a duel by the lord of Villequier. The poor father was the more cut up at this, as he had arranged a capital marriage for the said son with a young lady of the male branch of Amboise. Now, by this death most piteously inopportune, vanished all the future and advantages of his family, of which he wished to make a great and noble house. With this idea, he had put his other son in a monastery, under the guidance and government of a man renowned for his holiness, who brought him up in a Christian manner, according to the desire of his father, who wished from high ambition to make him a cardinal of renown. For this the good abbot kept the young man in a private house, and had to sleep by his side in his cell, allowed no evil weeds to grow in his mind, brought him up in purity of soul and true condition, as all priests should be. This said clerk, when turned nineteen years, knew no other love than the love of God, no other nature than that of the angels who had not our carnal properties, in order that they may live in purity, seeing that otherwise they would make good use of them. The which the King

on high, who wished to have His pages always proper, was afraid of. He has done well, because His good little people cannot drink in dram shops or riot in brothels as ours do. He is divinely served; but then remember, He is Lord of all. Now in this plight the lord of Montcontour determined to withdraw his second son from the cloister, and invest him with the purple of the soldier and courtier, in the place of the ecclesiastical purple; and determined to give him in marriage to the maiden, affianced to the dead man, which was wisely determined because wrapped round with continence and sobriety in all ways as was the little monk, the bride would be as well used and happier than she would have been with the elder, already well hauled over, upset, and spoiled by the ladies of the court. The befrocked, unfrocked, and very sheepish in his ways, followed the sacred wishes of his father, and consented to the said marriage without knowing what a wife, and—what is more curious—what a girl was. By chance, his journey having been hindered by the troubles and marches of conflicting parties, this innocent—more innocent than it is lawful for a man to be innocent—only came to the castle of Montcontour the evening before the wedding, which was performed with dispensations bought in by the archbishopric of Tours. It is necessary here to describe the bride. Her mother, long time a widow, lived in the House of M. de Braguelongne, civil lieutenant of the Chatelet de Paris, whose wife lived with lord of Lignieres, to the great scandal of the period. But everyone then had so many joists in his own eye that he had no right to notice the rafters in the eyes of others. Now, in all families people go to perdition, without noticing their neighbours, some at an amble, others at a gentle trot, many at a gallop, and a small number walking, seeing that the road is all downhill. Thus in these times the devil had many a good orgy in all things, since that misconduct was fashionable. The poor old lady Virtue had retired trembling, no one knew whither, but now here, now there, lived miserably in company with honest women.

In the most noble house Amboise there still lived the Dowager of Chaumont, an old woman of well proved virtue, in whom had retired all the religion and good conduct of this fine family. The said lady had taken to her bosom, from the age of ten years, the little maiden who is concerned in this adventure, and who had never caused

Madame Amboise the least anxiety, but left her free in her movements, and she came to see her daughter once a year, when the court passed that way. In spite of this high maternal reserve, Madame Amboise was invited to her daughter's wedding, and also the lord of Braguelongne, by the good old soldier, who knew his people. But the dear dowager came not to Montcontour, because she could not obtain relief from her sciatica, her cold, nor the state of her legs, which gamboled no longer. Over this the good woman cried copiously. It hurt her much to let go into the dangers of the court and of life this gentle maiden, as pretty as it was possible for a pretty girl to be, but she was obliged to give her her wings. But it was not without promising her many masses and orisons every evening for her happiness. And comforted a little, the good old lady began to think that the staff of her old age was passing into the hands of a quasi-saint, brought up to do good by the above-mentioned abbot, with whom she was acquainted, the which had aided considerably in the prompt exchange of spouses. At length, embracing her with tears, the virtuous dowager made those last recommendations to her that ladies make to young brides, as that she ought to be respectful to his mother, and obey her husband in everything.

Then the maid arrived with a great noise, conducted by servants, chamberlains, grooms, gentlemen, and people of the house of Chaumont, so that you would have imagined her suite to be that of a cardinal legate. So arrived the two spouses the evening before marriage. Then, the feasting over, they were married with great pomp on the Lord's Day, a mass being said at the castle by the Bishop of Blois, who was a great friend of the lord of Montcontour; in short, the feasting, the dancing, and the festivities of all sorts lasted till the morning. But on the stroke of midnight the bridesmaids went to put the bride to bed, according to the custom of Touraine; and during this time they kept quarrelling with the innocent husband, to prevent him going to this innocent wife, who sided with them from ignorance. However, the good lord of Montcontour interrupted the jokers and the wits, because it was necessary that his son should occupy himself in well-doing. Then went the innocent into the chamber of his wife, whom he thought more beautiful than the Virgin Mary painted in Italian, Flemish, and other pictures, at whose feet he

had said his prayers. But you may be sure he felt very much embarrassed at having so soon become a husband, because he knew nothing of his business, and saw that certain forms had to be gone through concerning which from great and modest reserve, he had no time to question even his father, who had said sharply to him—

“You know what you have to do; be valiant therein.”

Then he saw the gentle girl who was given him, comfortably tucked up in the bedclothes, terribly curious, her head buried under, but hazarding a glance as at the point of a halberd, and saying to herself—

“I must obey him.”

And knowing nothing, she awaited the will of this slightly ecclesiastical gentleman, to whom, in fact, she belonged. Seeing which, the Chevalier de Montcontour came close to the bed, scratched his ear, and knelt down, a thing in which he was expert.

“Have you said your prayers?” said he.

“No,” said she; “I have forgotten them. Do wish me to say them?”

Then the young couple commenced the business of a housekeeping by imploring God, which was not at all out of place. But unfortunately the devil heard, and at once replied to their requests, God being much occupied at that time with the new and abominable reformed religion.

“What did they tell you to do?” said the husband.

“To love you,” said she, in perfect innocence.

“This has not been told to me; but I love you, I am ashamed to say, better than I love God.”

This speech did not alarm the bride.

“I should like,” said the husband, “to repose myself in your bed, if it will not disturb you.”

“I will make room for you willingly because I am to submit myself to you.”

“Well,” said he, “don’t look at me again. I’m going to take my clothes off, and come.”

At this virtuous speech, the young damsel turned herself towards the wall in great expectation, seeing that it was for the very first time that she was about to find herself separated from a man by the confines of a shirt only. Then came the innocent, gliding into bed, and

thus they found themselves, so to speak, united, but far from what you can imagine what. Did you ever see a monkey brought from across the seas, who for the first time is given a nut to crack? This ape, knowing by high apish imagination how delicious is the food hidden under the shell, sniffs and twists himself about in a thousand apish ways, saying, I know not what, between his chattering jaws. Ah! with what affection he studies it, with what study he examines it, in what examination he holds it, then throws it, rolls and tosses it about with passion, and often, when it is an ape of low extraction and intelligence, leaves the nut. As much did the poor innocent who, towards the dawn, was obliged to confess to his dear wife that, not knowing how to perform his office, or what that office was, or where to obtain the said office, it would be necessary for him to inquire concerning it, and have help and aid.

“Yes,” said she; “since, unhappily, I cannot instruct you.”

In fact, in spite of their efforts, essay of all kinds—in spite of a thousand things which the innocents invent, and which the wise in matters of love know nothing about—the pair dropped off to sleep, wretched at having been unable to discover the secret of marriage. But they wisely agreed to say that they had done so. When the wife got up, still a maiden, seeing that she had not been crowned, she boasted of her night, and said she had the king of husbands, and went on with her chattering and repartee as briskly as those who know nothing of these things. Then everyone found the maiden a little too sharp, since for a two-edged joke a lady of Roche-Corbon having incited a young maiden, *de la Bourdaisiere*, who knew nothing of such things, to ask the bride—

“How many loaves did your husband put in the oven?”

“Twenty-four,” she replied.

Now, as the bridegroom was roaming sadly about, thereby distressing his wife, who followed him with her eyes, hoping to see his state of innocence come to an end, the ladies believed that the joy of that night had cost him dear, and that the said bride was already regretting having so quickly ruined him. And at breakfast came the bad jokes, which at that time were relished as excellent, one said that the bride had an open expression; another, that there had been some good strokes of business done that night in the castle; this one, that the oven

had been burned; that one that the two families have lost something that night that they would never find again. And a thousand other jokes, stupidities, and double meanings that, unfortunately the husband did not understand. But on account of the great affluence of the relations, neighbours, and others, no one had been to bed; all had danced, rollicked, and frolicked, as is the custom at noble weddings.

At this was quite contented my said *Sieur de Braguelongne*, upon whom my lady of Amboise, excited by the thought of the good things which were happening to her daughter, cast the glances of a falcon in matters of gallant assignation. The poor Lieutenant civil, learned in bailiffs' men and sergeants, and who nabbed all the pick-pockets and scamps of Paris, pretended not to see his good fortune, although his good lady required him to do. You may be sure this great lady's love weighed heavily upon him, so he only kept to her from a spirit of justice, because it was not seeming in a lieutenant judiciary to change his mistresses as often as a man at court, because he had under his charge morals, the police and religion. This notwithstanding his rebellion must come to an end. On the day after the wedding a great number of the guests departed; then Madame d'Amboise and Monsieur de Braguelongne could go to bed, their guests having decamped. Sitting down to supper, the lieutenant received a half-verbal summons to which it was not becoming, as in legal matters, to oppose any reasons for delay.

During supper the said lady d'Amboise made more than a hundred little signs in order to draw the good Braguelongne from the room where he was with the bride, but out came instead of the lieutenant the husband, to walk about in company with the mother of his sweet wife. Now, in the mind of this innocent there had sprung up like a mushroom an expedient—namely, to interrogate this good lady, whom he considered discreet, for remembering the religious precepts of his abbot, who had told him to inquire concerning all things of old people expert in the ways of life, he thought of confiding his case to the said lady d'Amboise. But he made first awkwardly and shyly certain twists and turns, finding no terms in which to unfold his case. And the lady was also perfectly silent, since she was outrageously struck with the blindness, deafness and voluntary paralysis of the lord of Braguelongne; and said to herself, walking by

the side of this delicate morsel, a young innocent of whom she did not think, little imagining that this cat so well provided with young bacon could think of old—

“This Ho, Ho, with a beard of flies’ legs, a flimsy, old, grey, ruined, shaggy beard—beard without comprehension, beard without shame, without any feminine respect—beard which pretends neither to feel nor to hear, nor to see, a pared away beard, a beaten down, disordered, gutted beard. May the Italian sickness deliver me from this vile joker with a squashed nose, fiery nose, frozen nose, nose without religion, nose dry as a lute table, pale nose, nose without a soul, nose which is nothing but a shadow; nose which sees not, nose wrinkled like the leaf of a vine; nose that I hate, old nose, nose full of mud—dead nose. Where had my eyes been to attach myself to truffle nose, to this old hulk that no longer knows his way? I give my share to the devil of this juiceless beard, of this grey beard, of this monkey face, of these old tatters, of this old rag of a man, of this—I know not what; and I’ll take a young husband who’ll marry me properly, and ... and often—every day—and well—”

In this wise train of thought was she when the innocent began his anthem to this woman, so warmly excited, who at the first paraphrase took fire in her understanding, like a piece of old touchwood from the carbine of a soldier; and finding it wise to try her son-in-law, said to herself—

“Ah! young beard, sweet scented! Ah! pretty new nose—fresh beard—innocent nose—virgin appeared—nose full of joy it—beard of springtime, small key of love!”

She kept on talking the round of the garden, which was long, and then arranged with the Innocent that, night come, he should sally forth from his room and get into hers, where she engaged to render him more learned than ever was his father. And the husband was well content, and thanked Madame d’Amboise, begging her to say nothing of this arrangement.

During this time the good old Braguelongne had been growling and saying to himself, “Old ha, ha! old ho, ho! May the plague take thee! may a cancer eat thee!—worthless old currycomb! old slipper, too big for the foot! old arquebus! ten year old codfish! old spider that spins no more! old death with open eyes! old devil’s cradle! vile lantern of an old town-crier too! Old wretch whose look kills! old

moustache of an old theriacler! old wretch to make dead men weep! old organ-pedal! old sheath with a hundred knives! old church porch, worn out by the knees! old poor-box in which everyone has dropped. I'll give all my future to be quit of thee!" As he finished these gentle thoughts the pretty bride, who was thinking of her young husband's great sorrow at not knowing the particulars of that essential item of marriage, and not having the slightest idea what it was, thought to save him much tribulation, shame, and labour by instructing herself. And she counted upon much astonishing and rejoicing him the next night when she should say to him, teaching him his duty, "That's the thing my love!" Brought up in great respect of old people by her dear dowager, she thought of inquiring of this good man in her sweetest manner to distil for her the sweet mysteries of the commerce. Now, the lord of Braguelongne, ashamed of being lost in sad contemplation of this evening's work, and of saying nothing to his gay companion, put this summary interrogation to the fair bride—"If she was not happy with so good a young husband—"

"He is very good," said she.

"Too good, perhaps," said the lieutenant smiling.

To be brief, matters were so well arranged between them that the Lord engaged to spare no pains to enlighten the understanding of Madame d'Amboise's daughter-in-law, who promised to come and study her lesson in his room. The said lady d'Amboise pretended after supper to play terrible music in a high key to Monsieur Braguelongne saying that he had no gratitude for the blessings she had brought him—her position, her wealth, her fidelity, etc. In fact, she talked for half an hour without having exhausted a quarter of her ire. From this a hundred knives were drawn between them, but they kept the sheaths. Meanwhile the spouses in bed were arranging to themselves how to get away, in order to please each other. Then the innocent began to say he fell quite giddy, he knew not from what, and wanted to go into the open air. And his maiden wife told him to take a stroll in the moonlight. And then the good fellow began to pity his wife in being left alone a moment. At her desire, both of them at different times left their conjugal couch and came to their preceptors, both very impatient, as you can well believe; and good instruction was given to them. How? I cannot say, because everyone

has his own method and practice, and of all sciences this is the most variable in principle. You may be sure that never did scholars receive more gayly the precepts of any language, grammar, or lessons whatsoever. And the two spouses returned to their nest, delighted at being able to communicate to each other the discoveries of their scientific peregrinations.

“Ah, my dear,” said the bride, “you already know more than my master.”

From these curious tests came their domestic joy and perfect fidelity; because immediately after their entry into the married state they found out how much better each of them was adapted for love than anyone else, their masters included. Thus for the remainder of their days they kept to the legitimate substance of their own persons; and the lord of Montcontour said in old age to his friends—

“Do like me, be cuckolds in the blade, and not in the sheath.”

Which is the true morality of the conjugal condition.

## THE DEAR NIGHT OF LOVE

IN THAT WINTER when commenced that first taking up of arms by those of the religion, which was called the Riot of Amboise, an advocate, named Avenelles, lent his house, situated in the Rue des Marmousets for the interviews and conventions of the Huguenots, being one of them, without knowing, however, that the Prince of Conde, La Regnaudie, and others, intended to carry off the king.

The said Avenelles wore a nasty red beard, as shiny as a stick of liquorice, and was devilishly pale, as are all the rogues who take refuge in the darkness of the law; in short, the most evil-minded advocate that has ever lived, laughing at the gallows, selling everybody, and a true Judas. According to certain authors of a great experience in subtle rogues he was in this affair, half knave, half fool, as it is abundantly proved by this narrative. This procureur had married a very lovely lady of Paris, of whom he was jealous enough to kill her for a pleat in the sheets, for which she could not account, which would have been wrong, because honest creases are often met with. But she folded her clothes very well, so there's the end of the matter. Be assured that, knowing the murderous and evil nature of this man, his wife was faithful enough to him, always ready, like a candlestick, arranged for her duty like a chest which never moves, and opens to order. Nevertheless, the advocate had placed her under the guardianship and pursuing eye of an old servant, a duenna as ugly as a pot without a handle, who had brought up the *Sieur Avenelles*, and was very fond of him. His poor wife, for all pleasure in her cold domestic life, used to go to the Church of St. Jehan, on the Place de Greve, where, as everyone knows, the fashionable world was accustomed to meet; and while saying her paternosters to God she feasted her eyes

upon all these gallants, curled, adorned, and starched, young, comely, and flitting about like true butterflies, and finished by picking out from among the lot a good gentleman, lover of the queen-mother, and a handsome Italian, with whom she was smitten because he was in the May of his age, nobly dressed, a graceful mover, brave in mien, and was all that a lover should be to bestow a heart full of love upon an honest married woman too tightly squeezed by the bonds of matrimony, which torment her, and always excite her to unharness herself from the conjugal yoke. And you can imagine that the young gentleman grew to admire Madame, whose silent love spoke secretly to him, without either the devil or themselves knowing how. Both one and the other had their correspondence of love. At first, the advocate's wife adorned herself only to come to church, and always came in some new sumptuousness; and instead of thinking of God, she made God angry by thinking of her handsome gentleman, and leaving her prayers, she gave herself up to the fire which consumed her heart, and moistened her eyes, her lips, and everything, seeing that this fire always dissolves itself in water; and often said to herself: "Ha! I would give my life for a single embrace with this pretty lover who loves me." Often, too, in place of saying her litanies to Madame the Virgin, she thought in her heart: "To feel the glorious youth of this gentle lover, to have the full joys of love, to taste all in one moment, little should I mind the flames into which the heretics are thrown." Then the gentleman gazing at the charms of this good wife, and her burning blushes when he glanced at her, came always close to her stool, and addressed to her those requests which the ladies understand so well. Then he said aside to himself: "By the double horn on my father, I swear to have the woman, though it cost me my life."

And when the duenna turned her head, the two lovers squeezed, pressed, breathed, ate, devoured, and kissed each other by a look which would have set light to the match of a musketeer, if the musketeer had been there. It was certain that a love so far advanced in the heart should have an end. The gentleman dressed as a scholar of Montaigne, began to regale the clerks of the said Avenelles, and to joke in the company, in order to learn the habits of the husband, his hours of absence, his journeys, and everything, watching for an opportunity to stick his horns on. And this was how, to his injury, the

opportunity occurred. The advocate, obliged to follow the course of this conspiracy, and, in case of failure, intending to revenge himself upon the Guises, determined to go to Blois, where the court then was in great danger of being carried off. Knowing this, the gentleman came first to the town of Blois, and there arranged a master-trap, into which the *Sieur Avenelles* should fall, in spite of his cunning, and not come out until steeped in a crimson cuckoldom. The said Italian, intoxicated with love, called together all his pages and vassals, and posted them in such a manner that on the arrival of the advocate, his wife, and her *duenna*, it was stated to them at all the hostelries at which they wished to put up that the hostelry being full, in consequence of the sojourn of the court, they must go elsewhere. Then the gentleman made such an arrangement with the landlord of the *Soleil Royal*, that he had the whole of the house, and occupied, without any of the usual servants of the place remaining there. For greater security, my lord sent the said master and his people into the country, and put his own in their places, so that the advocate should know nothing of this arrangement. Behold my good gentleman who lodges his friends to come to the court in the hostelry, and for himself keeps a room situated above those in which he intends to put his lovely mistress, her advocate, and the *duenna*, not without first having cut a trap in the boards. And his steward being charged to play the part of the innkeeper, his pages dressed like guests, and his female servants like servants of the inn, he waited for spies to convey to him the *dramatis personae* of this farce—viz., wife, husband, and *duenna*, none of whom failed to come. Seeing the immense wealth of the great lords, merchants, warriors, members of the service, and others, brought by the sojourn of the young king, of two queens, the Guises, and all the court, no one had a right to be astonished or to talk of the roguish trap, or of the confusion come to the *Soleil Royal*. Behold now the *Sieur Avenelles*, on his arrival, bundled about, he, his wife and the *duenna* from inn to inn, and thinking themselves very fortunate in being received at the *Soleil Royal*, where the gallant was getting warm, and love was burning. The advocate, being lodged, the lover walked about the courtyard, watching and waiting for a glance from the lady; and he did not have to wait very long, since the fair *Avenelles*, looking soon into the court, after the custom of the ladies,

there recognised not without great throbbing of the heart, her gallant and well-beloved gentleman. At that she was very happy; and if by a lucky chance both had been alone together for an ounce of time, that good gentleman would not have had to wait for his good fortune, so burning was she from head to foot.

“How warm it is in the rays of this lord,” said she, meaning to say sun, since it was then shining fiercely.

Hearing this, the advocate sprang to the window, and beheld my gentleman.

“Ha! you want lords, my dear, do you?” said the advocate, dragging her by the arm, and throwing her like one of his bags on to the bed. “Remember that if I have a pencase at my side instead of a sword, I have a penknife in this pencase, and that penknife will go into your heart on the least suspicion of conjugal impropriety. I believe I have seen that gentleman somewhere.”

The advocate was so terribly spiteful that the lady rose, and said to him—

“Well, kill me. I am not afraid of deceiving you. Never touch me again, after having thus menaced me. And from to-day I shall never think of sleeping save with a lover more gentle than you are.”

“There, there, my little one!” said the advocate, surprised. “We have gone a little too far. Kiss me, chick-a-biddy, and forgive me.”

“I will neither kiss nor pardon you,” said she “You are a wretch!”

Avenelles, enraged, wished to take by force that which his wife denied him, and from this resulted a combat, from which the husband emerged clawed all over. But the worst of it was, that the advocate, covered with scratches, being expected by the conspirators, who were holding a council, was obliged to quit his good wife, leaving her to the care of the old woman.

The knave having departed, the gentleman putting one of his servants to keep watch at the corner of the street, mounts to his blessed trap, lifts it noiselessly, and calls the lady by a gentle psit! psit! which was understood by the heart, which generally understands everything. The lady lifts her head, and sees her pretty lover four flea jumps above her. Upon a sign, she takes hold of two cords of black silk, to which were attached loops, through which she passes her arms, and in the twinkling of an eye is translated by two pulleys from her bed

through the ceiling into the room above, and the trap closing as it has opened, left the old duenna in a state of great flabbergastation, when, turning her head, she neither saw robe nor woman, and perceived that the women had been robbed. How? by whom? in what way? where?—Presto! Foro! Magico! As much knew the alchemists at their furnaces reading Herr Trippa. Only the old woman knew well the crucible, and the great work—the one was cuckoldom, and the other the private property of Madame Advocate. She remained dumbfounded, watching for the Sieur Avenelles—as well say death, for in his rage he would attack everything, and the poor duenna could not run away, because with great prudence the jealous man had taken the keys with him. At first sight, Madame Avenelles found a dainty supper, a good fire in the grate, but a better in the heart of her lover, who seized her, and kissed her, with tears of joy, on the eyes first of all, to thank them for their sweet glances during devotion at the church of St Jehan en Greve. Nor did the glowing better half of the lawyer refuse her little mouth to his love, but allowed herself to be properly pressed, adored, caressed, delighting to be properly pressed, admirably adored, and calorously caressed after the manner of eager lovers. And both agreed to be all in all to each other the whole night long, no matter what the result might be, she counting the future as a fig in comparison with the joys of this night, he relying upon his cunning and his sword to obtain many another. In short, both of them caring little for life, because at one stroke they consummated a thousand lives, enjoyed with each other a thousand delights, giving to each other the double of their own—believing, he and she, that they were falling into an abyss, and wishing to roll there closely clasped, hurling all the love of their souls with rage in one throw. Therein they loved each other well. Thus they knew not love, the poor citizens, who live mechanically with their good wives, since they know not the fierce beating of the heart, the hot gush of life, and the vigorous clasp as of two young lovers, closely united and glowing with passion, who embrace in face of the danger of death. Now the youthful lady and the gentleman ate little supper, but retired early to rest. Let us leave them there, since no words, except those of paradise unknown to us, would describe their delightful agonies, and agonising delights. Meanwhile, the husband, so well

cuckolded that all memory of marriage had been swept away by love,—the said Avenelles found himself in a great fix. To the council of the Huguenots came the Prince of Conde, accompanied by all the chiefs and bigwigs, and there it was resolved to carry off the queen-mother, the Guises, the young king, the young queen, and to change the government. This becoming serious, the advocate seeing his head at stake, did not feel the ornaments being planted there, and ran to divulge the conspiracy to the cardinal of Lorraine, who took the rogue to the duke, his brother, and all three held a consultation, making fine promises to the *Sieur Avenelles*, whom with the greatest difficulty they allowed, towards midnight, to depart, at which hour he issued secretly from the castle. At this moment the pages of the gentleman and all his people were having a right jovial supper in honour of the fortuitous wedding of their master. Now, arriving at the height of the festivities, in the middle of the intoxication and joyous huzzahs, he was assailed with jeers, jokes, and laughter that turned him sick when he came into his room. The poor servant wished to speak, but the advocate promptly planted a blow in her stomach, and by a gesture commanded her to be silent. Then he felt in his valise, and took therefrom a good poniard. While he was opening and shutting it, a frank, naive, joyous, amorous, pretty, celestial roar of laughter, followed by certain words of easy comprehension, came down through the trap. The cunning advocate, blowing out his candle, saw through the cracks in the boards caused by the shrinking of the door a light, which vaguely explained the mystery to him, for he recognised the voice of his wife, and that of the combatant. The husband took the duenna by the arm, and went softly at the stairs searching for the door of the chamber in which were the lovers, and did not fail to find it. Fancy! that like a horrid, rude advocate, he burst open the door, and with one spring was on the bed, in which he surprised his wife, half dressed, in the arms of the gentleman.

“Ah!” said she.

The lover having avoided the blow, tried to snatch the poniard from the hands of the knave, who held it firmly.

Now, in this struggle of life and death, the husband finding himself hindered by his lieutenant, who clutched him tightly with his fingers of iron, and bitten by his wife, who tore away at him with a

will, gnawing him as a dog gnaws a bone, he thought instantly of a better way to gratify his rage. Then the devil, newly horned, maliciously ordered, in his patois, the servants to tie the lovers with the silken cords of the trap, and throwing the poniard away, he helped the duenna to make them fast. And the thing thus done in a moment, he rammed some linen into their mouths to stop their cries, and ran to his good poniard without saying a word. At this moment there entered several officers of the Duke of Guise, whom during the struggle no one had heard turning the house upside down, looking for the *Sieur Avenelles*. These soldiers, suddenly warned by the cries of the pages of the lord, bound, gagged and half killed, threw themselves between the man with the poniard and the lovers, disarmed him, and accomplished their mission by arresting him, and marching him off to the castle prison, he, his wife, and the duenna. At the same time the people of the Guises, recognising one of their master's friends, with whom at this moment the queen was most anxious to consult, and whom they were enjoined to summon to the council, invited him to come with them. Then the gentleman soon untied, dressing himself, said aside to the chief of the escort, that on his account, for the love for him, he should be careful to keep the husband away from his wife, promising him his favour, good advancement, and even a few deniers, if he were careful to obey him on this point. And for greater surety he explained to him the why and the wherefore of the affair, adding that if the husband found himself within reach of this fair lady he would give her for certain a blow in the belly from which she would never recover. Finally he ordered him to place the lady in the jail of the castle, in a pleasant place level with gardens, and the advocate in a safe dungeon, not without chaining him hand and foot. The which the said office promised, and arranged matters according to the wish of the gentleman, who accompanied the lady as far as the courtyard of the castle, assuring her that this business would make her a widow, and that he would perhaps espouse her in legitimate marriage. In fact, the *Sieur Avenelles* was thrown into a damp dungeon, without air, and his pretty wife placed in a room above him, out of consideration for her lover, who was the *Sieur Scipion Sardini*, a noble of Lucca, exceedingly rich, and, as has been before stated, a friend of Queen Catherine de Medici,

who at that time did everything in concert with the Guises. Then he went up quickly to the queen's apartments, where a great secret council was then being held, and there the Italian learned what was going on, and the danger of the court. Monseigneur Sardini found the privy counsellors much embarrassed and surprised at this dilemma, but he made them all agree, telling them to turn it to their own advantage; and to his advice was due the clever idea of lodging the king in the castle of Amboise, in order to catch the heretics there like foxes in a bag, and there to slay them all. Indeed, everyone knows how the queen-mother and Guises dissimulated, and how the Riot of Amboise terminated. This is not, however, the subject of the present narrative. When in the morning everyone had quitted the chamber of the queen-mother, where everything had been arranged, Monseigneur Sardini, in no way oblivious of his love for the fair Avenelles, although he was at the time deeply smitten with the lovely Limeuil, a girl belonging to the queen-mother, and her relation by the house of La Tour de Turenne, asked why the good Judas had been caged. Then the Cardinal of Lorraine told him his intention was not in any way to harm the rogue, but that fearing his repentance, and for greater security of his silence until the end of the affair, he put him out of the way, and would liberate him at the proper time.

“Liberate him!” said the Luccanese. “Never! Put him in a sack, and throw the old black gown into the Loire. In the first place I know him; he is not the man to forgive you his imprisonment, and will return to the Protestant Church. Thus this will be a work pleasant to God, to rid him of a heretic. Then no one will know your secrets, and not one of his adherents will think of asking you what has become of him, because he is a traitor. Let me procure the escape of his wife and arrange the rest; I will take it off your hands.”

“Ha, ha!” said the cardinal; “you give good council. Now I will, before distilling your advice, have them both more securely guarded. Hi, there!”

Came an officer of police, who was ordered to let no person whoever he might be, communicate with the two prisoners. Then the cardinal begged Sardini to say at his hotel that the said advocate had departed from Blois to return to his causes in Paris. The men charged with the arrest of the advocate had received a verbal order to treat

him as a man of importance, so they neither stripped nor robbed him. Now the advocate had kept thirty gold crowns in his purse, and resolved to lose them all to assure his vengeance, and proved by good arguments to the jailers that it was allowable for him to see his wife, on whom he doted, and whose legitimate embrace he desired. Monseigneur Sardini, fearing for his mistress the danger of the proximity of this red learned rogue, and for her having great fear of certain evils, determined to carry her off in the night, and put her in a place of safety. Then he hired some boatmen and also their boat, placing them near the bridge, and ordered three of his most active servants to file the bars of the cell, seize the lady, and conduct her to the wall of the gardens where he would await her.

These preparations being made, and good files bought, he obtained an interview in the morning with the queen-mother, whose apartments were situated above the stronghold in which lay the said advocate and his wife, believing that the queen would willingly lend herself to this flight. Presently he was received by her, and begged her not to think it wrong that, at the instigation of the cardinal and of the Duke of Guise, he should deliver this lady; and besides this, urged her very strongly to tell the cardinal to throw the man into the water. To which the queen said "Amen." Then the lover sent quickly to his lady a letter in a plate of cucumbers, to advise her of her approaching widowhood, and the hour of flight, with all of which was the fair citizen well content. Then at dusk the soldiers of the watch being got out of the way by the queen, who sent them to look at a ray of the moon, which frightened her, behold the servants raised the grating, and caught the lady, who came quickly enough, and was led through the house to Monseigneur Sardini.

But the postern closed, and the Italian outside with the lady, behold the lady throw aside her mantle, see the lady change into an advocate, and see my said advocate seize his cuckold by the collar, and half strangle him, dragging him towards the water to throw him to the bottom of the Loire; and Sardini began to defend himself, to shout, and to struggle, without being able, in spite of his dagger, to shake off this devil in long robes. Then he was quiet, falling into a slough under the feet of the advocate, whom he recognised through the mists of this diabolical combat, and by the light of the moon, his face splashed with

the blood of his wife. The enraged advocate quitted the Italian, believing him to be dead, and also because servants armed with torches, came running up. But he had to jump into the boat and push off in great haste.

Thus poor Madame Avenelles died alone, since Monseigneur Sardini, badly strangled, was found, and revived from this murder; and later, as everyone knows, married the fair Limeuil after this sweet girl had been brought to bed in the queen's cabinet—a great scandal, which from friendship the queen-mother wished to conceal, and which from great love Sardini, to whom Catherine gave the splendid estate of Chaumont-sur-Loire, and also the castle, covered with marriage.

But he had been so brutally used by the husband, that he did not make old bones, and the fair Limeuil was left a widow in her spring-time. In spite of his misdeeds the advocate was not searched after. He was cunning enough eventually to get included in the number of those conspirators who were not prosecuted, and returned to the Huguenots, for whom he worked hard in Germany.

Poor Madame Avenelles, pray for her soul! for she was hurled no one knew where, and had neither the prayers of the Church nor Christian burial. Alas! shed a tear for her, ye ladies lucky in your loves.

## THE SERMON OF THE MERRY VICAR OF MEUDON

WHEN, for the last time, came Master Francis Rabelais, to the court of King Henry the Second of the name, it was in that winter when the will of nature compelled him to quit for ever his fleshly garb, and live forever in his writings resplendent with that good philosophy to which we shall always be obliged to return. The good man had, at that time, counted as nearly as possible seventy flights of the swallow. His Homeric head was but scantily ornamented with hair, but his beard was still perfect in its flowing majesty; there was still an air of spring-time in his quiet smile, and wisdom on his ample brow. He was a fine old man according to the statement of those who had the happiness to gaze upon his face, to which Socrates and Aristophanes, formerly enemies, but then become friends, contributed their features. Hearing his last hours tinkling in his ears he determined to go and pay his respects to the king of France, because he was having just at that time arrived in his castle of Tournelles, the good man's house being situated in the gardens of St Paul, was not a stone's throw distant from the court. He soon found himself in the presence of Queen Catherine, Madame Diana, whom she received from motives of policy, the king, the constable, the cardinals of Lorraine and Bellay, Messieurs de Guise, the Sieur de Birague, and other Italians, who at that time stood well at court in consequence of the king's protection; the admiral, Montgomery, the officers of the household, and certain poets, such as Melin de St. Gelay, Philibert de l'Orme, and the Sieur Brantome.

Perceiving the good man, the king, who knew his wit, said to him,

with a smile, after a short conversation—

“Hast thou ever delivered a sermon to thy parishioners of Meudon?”

Master Rabelais, thinking that the king was joking, since he had never troubled himself further about his post than to collect the revenues accruing from it, replied—

“Sire, my listeners are in every place, and my sermon heard throughout Christendom.”

Then glancing at all the courtiers, who, with the exception of Messieurs du Bellay and Chatillon, considered him to be nothing but a learned merry-andrew, while he was really the king of all wits, and a far better king than he whose crown only the courtiers venerate, there came into the good man’s head the malicious idea to philosophically pump over their heads, just as it pleased Gargantua to give the Parisians a bath from the turrets of Notre Dame, so he added—

“If you are in a good humour, sire, I can regale you with a capital little sermon, always appropriate, and which I have kept under the tympanum of my left ear in order to deliver it in a fit place, by way of an aulic parable.”

“Gentlemen,” said the king, “Master Francis Rabelais has the floor of the court, and our salvation is concerned in his speech. Be silent, I pray you, and give heed; he is fruitful in evangelical drolleries.”

“Sire,” said the good vicar, “I commence.”

All the courtiers became silent, and arranged themselves into a circle, pliant as osiers before the father of Pantagruel who unfolded to them the following tale, in words the illustrious eloquence of which it is impossible to equal. But since this tale has only been verbally handed down to us, the author will be pardoned if he write after his own fashion.

“In his old age Gargantua took to strange habits, which greatly astonished his household, but the which he was forgiven since he was seven hundred and four years old, in spite of the statement of St. Clement of Alexandra in his *Stromates*, which makes out that at this time he was a quarter of a day less, which matters little to us. Now this paternal master, seeing that everything was going wrong in his house, and that every one was fleecing him, conceived a great fear that he would in his last moments be stripped of everything, and resolved to invent a more perfect system of management in his do-

mains, and he did well. In a cellar of Gargantuan abode he hid away a fine heap of red wheat, beside twenty jars of mustard and several delicacies, such as plums and Tourainian rolls, articles of a dessert, Olivet cheese, goat cheese, and others, well known between Langeais and Loches, pots of butter, hare pasties, preserved ducks, pigs' trotters in bran, boatloads and pots full of crushed peas, pretty little pots of Orleans quince preserve, hogsheads of lampreys, measures of green sauce, river game, such as francolins, teal, sheldrake, heron, and flamingo, all preserved in sea-salt, dried raisins, tongues smoked in the manner invented by Happe-Mousche, his celebrated ancestor, and sweetstuff for Garga-melle on feast days; and a thousand other things which are detailed in the records of the Ripuary laws and in certain folios of the Capitularies, Pragmatics, royal establishments, ordinances and institutions of the period. To be brief, the good man, putting his spectacles on his nose or his nose in his spectacles, looked about for a fine flying dragon or unicorn to whom the guard of this precious treasure could be committed. With this thought in his head he strolled about the gardens. He did not desire a Coquecigrue, because the Egyptians were afraid of them, as it appeared in the Hieroglyphics. He dismissed the idea of engaging the legions of Cauquemarres, because emperors disliked them and also the Romans according to that sulky fellow Tacitus. He rejected the Pechrocholiens in council assembled, the Magi, the Druids, the legion or Papimania, and the Massorets, who grew like quelch-grass and over-ran all the land, as he had been told by his son, Pantagruel, on his return from his journey. The good man calling to mind old stories, had no confidence in any race, and if it had been permissible would have implored the Creator for a new one, but not daring to trouble Him about such trifles, did not know whom to choose, and was thinking that his wealth would be a great trouble to him, when he met in his path a pretty little shrew-mouse of the noble race of shrew-mice, who bear all gules on an azure ground. By the gods! be sure that it was a splendid animal, with the finest tail of the whole family, and was strutting about in the sun like a brave shrew-mouse. It was proud of having been in this world since the Deluge, according to letters-patent of indisputable nobility, registered by the parliament of the universe, since it appears from the Ecumenical Inquiry a shrew-mouse was in Noah's Ark."

Here Master Alcofribas raised his cap slightly, and said, reverently, "It was Noah, my lords, who planted the vine, and first had the honour of getting drunk upon the juice of its fruit."

"For it is certain," he continued, "that a shrew-mouse was in the vessel from which we all came; but the men have made bad marriages; not so the mice, because they are more jealous of their coat of arms than any other animals, and would not receive a field-mouse among them, even though he had the especial gift of being able to convert grains of sand to fine fresh hazelnuts. This fine gentlemanly character so pleased the good Gargantua, that he decided to give the post of watching his granaries to the shrew-mouse, with the most ample of powers—of justice, *comittimus*, *missi dominici*, clergy, men-at-arms, and all. The shrew-mouse promised faithfully to accomplish his task, and to do his duty as a loyal beast, on condition that he lived on a heap of grain, which Gargantua thought perfectly fair. The shrew-mouse began to caper about in his domain as happy as a prince who is happy, reconnoitering his immense empire of mustard, countries of sugar, provinces of ham, duchies of raisins, counties of chitterlings, and baronies of all sorts, scrambling on to the heap of grain and frisking his tail against everything. To be brief, everywhere was the shrew-mouse received with honour by the pots, which kept a respectful silence, except two golden tankards, which knocked against each other like the bells of a church ringing a tocsin, at which he was much pleased, and thanked them, right and left, by a nod of the head, while promenading in the rays of the sun, which were illuminating his domain. Therein so splendidly did the brown colour of his hair shine forth, that one would have thought him a northern king in his sable furs. After his twists, turns, jumps and capers, he munched two grains of corn, sat upon the heap like a king in full court, and fancied himself the most illustrious of shrew-mice. At this moment they came from their accustomed holes the gentlemen of the night-prowling court, who scamper with their little feet across the floors; these gentlemen being the rats, mice, and other gnawing, thieving, and crafty animals, of whom the citizens and housewives complain. When they saw the shrew-mouse they took fright, and all remained shyly at the threshold of their dens. Among these common people, in spite of the danger, one old infidel of the trot-

ting, nibbling race of mice, advanced a little, and putting his nose in the air, had the courage to stare my lord shrew-mouse full in the face, although the latter was proudly squatted upon his rump, with his tail in the air; and he came to the conclusion that he was a devil, from whom nothing but scratches were to be gained. And from these facts, Gargantua, in order that the high authority of his lieutenant might be universally known by all of the shrew-mice, cats, weasels, martins, field-mice, mice, rats, and other bad characters of the same kidney, had lightly dipped his muzzle, pointed as a larding pin, in oil of musk, which all shrew-mice have since inherited, because this one, in spite of the sage advice of Gargantua, rubbed himself against others of his breed. From this sprang the troubles in the Muzaraignia of which I will give you a good account in an historical book when I get an opportunity.

“Then an old mouse, or rat—the rabbis of Talmud have not yet agreed concerning the species—perceiving by this perfume that this shrew-mouse was appointed to guard the grain of Gargantua, and had been sprinkled with virtues, invested with full powers, and armed at all points, was alarmed lest he should no longer be able to live, according to the custom of mice, upon the meats, morsels, crusts, crumbs, leavings, bits, atoms, and fragments of this Canaan of rats. In this dilemma the good mouse, artful as an old courtier who had lived under two regencies and three kings, resolved to try the mettle of the shrew-mouse, and devote himself to the salvation of the jaws of his race. This would have been a laudable thing in a man, but it was far more so in a mouse, belonging to a tribe who live for themselves alone, barefacedly and shamelessly, and in order to gratify themselves would defile a consecrated wafer, gnaw a priest’s stole without shame, and would drink out of a Communion cup, caring nothing for God. The mouse advanced with many a bow and scrape, and the shrew-mouse let him advance rather near—for, to tell the truth, these animals are naturally short-sighted. Then this Curtius of nibblers made his little speech, not the jargon of common mice, but in the polite language of shrew-mice:—’My lord, I have heard with much concern of your glorious family, of which I am one of the most devoted slaves. I know the legend of your ancestors, who were thought much of by the ancient Egyptians, who held them in great venera-

tion, and adored them like other sacred birds. Nevertheless, your fur robe is so royally perfumed, and its colour is so splendiferously tanned, that I am doubtful if I recognise you as belonging to this race, since I have never seen any of them so gloriously attired. However you have swallowed the grain after the antique fashion. Your proboscis is a proboscis of sapience; you have kicked like a learned shrew-mouse; but if you are a true shrew-mouse, you should have in I know not what part of your ear—I know not what special auditorial channel, which I know not, what wonderful door, closes I know not how, and I know not with what movements, by your secret commands to give you, I know not why, licence not to listen to I know not what things, which would be displeasing to you, on account of the special and peculiar perfection of your faculty of hearing everything, which would often pain you.”

“‘True,’ said the shrew-mouse, ‘the door has just fallen. I hear nothing!’

“‘Ah, I see,’ said the old rogue.

“And he made for the pile of corn, from which he commenced to take his store for the winter.

“‘Did you hear anything?’ asked he.

“‘I hear the pit-a-pat of my heart.’

“‘Kouick!’ cried all the mice; ‘we shall be able to hoodwink him.’

“The shrew-mouse, fancying that he had met with a faithful vassal, opened the trap of his musical orifice, and heard the noise of the grain going towards the hole. Then, without having recourse to forfeiture, the justice of commissaries, he sprang upon the old mouse and squeezed him to death. Glorious death! for the hero died in the thick of the grain, and was canonised as a martyr. The shrew-mouse took him by the ears and placed him on the door the granary, after the fashion of the Ottoman Porte, where my good Panurge was within an ace of being spitted. At the cries of the dying wretch the rats, mice, and others made for their holes in great haste. When the night had fallen they came to the cellar, convoked for the purpose of holding a council to consider public affairs; to which meeting, in virtue of the Papyrian and other laws, their lawful wives were admitted. The rats wished to pass before the mice, and serious quarrels about precedence nearly spoiled everything; but a big rat gave his arm to a

mouse, and the gaffer rats and gammer mice being paired off in the same way, all were soon seated on their rumps, tails in air, muzzles stretched, whiskers stiff, and their eyes brilliant as those of a falcon. Then commenced a deliberation, which finished up with insults and a confusion worthy of an ecumenical council of holy fathers. One said this and another said that, and a cat passing by took fright and ran away, hearing these strange noises: 'Bou, bou, grou, ou, ou, houic, houic, briff, briffnac, nac, nac, fouix, fouix, trr, trr, trr, trr, za, za, zaaa, brr, brr, raaa, ra, ra, ra, fouix!' so well blended together in a babel of sound, that a council at the Hotel de Ville could not have made a greater hubbub. During this tempest a little mouse, who was not old enough to enter parliament, thrust through a chink her inquiring snout, the hair on which was as downy as that of all mice, too downy to be caught. As the tumult increased, by degrees her body followed her nose, until she came to the hoop of a cask, against which she so dextrously squatted that she might have been mistaken for a work of art carved in antique bas-relief. Lifting his eyes to heaven to implore a remedy for the misfortunes of the state, an old rat perceived this pretty mouse, so gentle and shapely, and declared that the State might be saved by her. All the muzzles turned to this Lady of Good Help, became silent, and agreed to let her loose upon the shrew-mouse, and in spite of the anger of certain envious mice, she was triumphantly marched around the cellar, where, seeing her walk mincingly, mechanically move her tail, shake her cunning little head, twitch her diaphanous ears, and lick with her little red tongue the hairs just sprouting on her cheeks, the old rats fell in love with her and wagged their wrinkled, white-whiskered jaws with delight at the sight of her, as did formerly the old men of Troy, admiring the lovely Helen, returning from her bath. Then the maiden was conducted to the granary, with instructions to make a conquest of the shrew-mouse's heart, and save the fine red grain, as did formerly the fair Hebrew, Esther, for the chosen people, with the Emperor Ahasuerus, as is written in the master-book, for Bible comes from the Greek word biblos, as if to say the only book. The mouse promised to deliver the granaries, for by a lucky chance she was the queen of mice, a fair, plump, pretty little mouse, the most delicate little lady that ever scampered merrily across the floors, scratched between the walls, and

gave utterance to little cries of joy at finding nuts, meal, and crumbs of bread in her path; a true fay, pretty and playful, with an eye clear as crystal, a little head, sleek skin, amorous body, rosy feet, and velvet tail—a high born mouse and a polished speaker with a natural love of bed and idleness—a merry mouse, more cunning than an old Doctor of Sorbonne fed on parchment, lively, white bellied, streaked on the back, with sweet moulded breasts, pearl-white teeth, and of a frank open nature—in fact, a true king’s morsel.”

This portraiture was so bold—the mouse appearing to have been the living image of Madame Diana, then present—that the courtiers stood aghast. Queen Catherine smiled, but the king was in no laughing humour. But Rabelais went on without paying any attention to the winks of the Cardinal Bellay and de Chatillon, who were terrified for the good man.

“The pretty mouse,” said he, continuing, “did not beat long about the bush, and from the first moment that she trotted before the shrew-mouse, she had enslaved him for ever by her coquetries, affectations, friskings, provocations, little refusals, piercing glances, and wiles of a maiden who desires yet dares not, amorous ogling, little caresses, preparatory tricks, pride of a mouse who knows her value, laughings and squeakings, triflings and other endearments, feminine, treacherous and captivating ways, all traps which are abundantly used by the females of all nations. When, after many wriggings, smacks in the face, nose lickings, gallantries of amorous shrew-mice, frowns, sighs, serenades, titbits, suppers and dinners on the pile of corn, and other attentions, the superintendent overcame the scruples of his beautiful mistress, he became the slave of this incestuous and illicit love, and the mouse, leading her lord by the snout, became queen of everything, nibbled his cheese, ate the sweets, and foraged everywhere. This the shrew-mouse permitted to the empress of his heart, although he was ill at ease, having broken his oath made to Gargantua, and betrayed the confidence placed in him. Pursuing her advantage with the pertinacity of a woman, one night they were joking together, the mouse remembered the dear old fellow her father, and desiring that he should make his meals off the grain, she threatened to leave her lover cold and lonely in his domain if he did not allow her to indulge her filial piety. In the twinkling of a mouse’s eye he had granted letters patent, sealed with a green seal,

with tags of crimson silk, to his wench's father, so that the Gargantuan palace was open to him at all hours, and he was at liberty see his good, virtuous daughter, kiss her on the forehead, and eat his fill, but always in a corner. Then there arrived a venerable old rat, weighing about twenty-five ounces, with a white tail, marching like the president of a Court of Justice, wagging his head, and followed by fifteen or twenty nephews, all with teeth as sharp as saws, who demonstrated to the shrew-mouse by little speeches and questions of all kinds that they, his relations, would soon be loyally attached to him, and would help him to count the things committed to his charge, arrange and ticket them, in order that when Gargantua came to visit them he would find everything in perfect order. There was an air of truth about these promises. The poor shrew-mouse was, however, in spite of this speech, troubled by ideas from on high, and serious pricking of shrew-mousian conscience. Seeing that he turned up his nose at everything, went about slowly and with a careworn face, one morning the mouse who was pregnant by him, conceived the idea of calming his doubts and easing his mind by a Sorbonnical consultation, and sent for the doctors of his tribe. During the day she introduced to him one, *Sieur Evegault*, who had just stepped out of a cheese where he lived in perfect abstinence, an old confessor of high degree, a merry fellow of good appearance, with a fine black skin, firm as a rock, and slightly tonsured on the head by the pat of a cat's claw. He was a grave rat, with a monastical paunch, having much studied scientific authorities by nibbling at their works in parchments, papers, books and volumes of which certain fragments had remained upon his grey beard. In honour of and great reverence for his great virtue and wisdom, and his modest life, he was accompanied by a black troop of black rats, all bringing with them pretty little mice, their sweethearts, for not having adopted the canons of the council of Chesil, it was lawful for them to have respectable women for concubines. These beneficed rats, being arranged in two lines, you might have fancied them a procession of the university authorities going to Lendit. And they all began to sniff the victuals.

“When the ceremony of placing them all was complete, the old cardinal of the rats lifted up his voice, and in a good rat-latin oration pointed out to the guardian of the grain that no one but God was superior to him; and that to God alone he owed obedience,

and he entertained him with many fine phrases, stuffed with evangelical quotations, to disturb the principal and fog his flock; in fact, fine argument interlarded with much sound sense. The discourse finished with a peroration full of high sounding words in honour of shrew-mice, among whom his hearer was the most illustrious and best beneath the sun; and this oration considerably bewildered the keeper of the granary.

“This good gentleman’s head was thoroughly turned, and he installed this fine speaking rat and his tribe in his manor, where night and day his praises and little songs in his honour were sung, not forgetting his lady, whose little paw was kissed and little tail was sniffed at by all. Finally, the mistress, knowing that certain young rats were still fasting, determined to finish her work. Then she kissed her lord tenderly, loading him with love, and performing those little endearing antics of which one alone was sufficient to send a beast to perdition; and said to the shrew-mouse that he wasted the precious time due to their love by travelling about, that he was always going here or there, and that she never had her proper share of him; that when she wanted his society, he was on the leads chasing the cats, and that she wished him always to be ready to her hand like a lance, and kind as a bird. Then in her great grief she tore out a grey hair, declaring herself, weepingly, to be the most wretched little mouse in the world. The shrew-mouse pointed out to her that she was the mistress of everything, and wished to resist, but after the lady had shed a torrent of tears he implored a truce and considered her request. Then instantly drying her tears, and giving him her paw to kiss, she advised him to arm some soldiers, trusty and tried rats, old warriors, who would go the rounds to keep watch. Everything was thus wisely arranged. The shrew-mouse had the rest of the day to dance, play, and amuse himself, listen to the roundelays and ballads which the poets composed in his honour, play the lute and the mandore, make acrostics, eat, drink and be merry. One day his mistress having just risen from her confinement, after having given birth to the sweetest little mouse-sorex or sorex-mouse, I know not what name was given to this mongrel food of love, whom you may be sure, the gentlemen in the long robe would manage to legitimise” (the constable of Montmorency, who had married his son to a legitimised bastard of the king’s, here put his hand to his sword and clutched the handle fiercely), “a

grand feast was given in the granaries, to which no court festival or gala could be compared, not even that of the Field of the Cloth of Gold. In every corner mice were making merry. Everywhere there were dances, concerts, banquets, sarabands, music, joyous songs, and epithalamia. The rats had broken open the pots, and uncovered the jars, lapped the gallipots, and unpacked the stores. The mustard was strewn over the place, the hams were mangled and the corn scattered. Everything was rolling, tumbling, and falling about the floor, and the little rats dabbled in puddles of green sauce, the mice navigated oceans of sweetmeats, and the old folks carried off the pasties. There were mice astride salt tongues. Field-mice were swimming in the pots, and the most cunning of them were carrying the corn into their private holes, profiting by the confusion to make ample provision for themselves. No one passed the quince confection of Orleans without saluting it with one nibble, and oftener with two. It was like a Roman carnival. In short, anyone with a sharp ear might have heard the frizzling frying-pans, the cries and clamours of the kitchens, the crackling of their furnaces, the noise of the turnspits, the creaking of baskets, the haste of the confectioners, the click of the meat-jacks, and the noise of the little feet scampering thick as hail over the floor. It was a bustling wedding-feast, where people come and go, footmen, stablemen, cooks, musicians, buffoons, where everyone pays compliments and makes a noise. In short, so great was the delight that they kept up a general wagging of the head to celebrate this eventful night. But suddenly there was heard the horrible foot-fall of Gargantua, who was ascending the stairs of his house to visit the granaries, and made the planks, the beams, and everything else tremble. Certain old rats asked each other what might mean this seignorial footstep, with which they were unacquainted, and some of them decamped, and they did well, for the lord and master entered suddenly. Perceiving the confusion these gentleman had made, seeing his preserves eaten, his mustard unpacked, and everything dirtied and scratched about, he put his feet upon these lively vermin without giving them time to squeak, and thus spoiled their best clothes, satins, pearls, velvets, and rubbish, and upset the feast.”

“And what became of the shrew-mouse?” said the king, waking from his reverie.

“Ah, sire!” replied Rabelais, “herein we see the injustice of the Gar-

gantuan tribe. He was put to death, but being a gentleman he was beheaded. That was ill done, for he had been betrayed.”

“You go rather far, my good man,” said the king.

“No sire,” replied Rabelais, “but rather high. Have you not sunk the crown beneath the pulpit? You asked me for a sermon; I have given you one which is gospel.”

“My fine vicar,” said Madame Diana, in his ear, “suppose I were spiteful?”

“Madame,” said Rabelais, “was it not well then of me to warn the king, your master, against the queen’s Italians, who are as plentiful here as cockchafers?”

“Poor preacher,” said Cardinal Odet, in his ear, “go to another country.”

“Ah! monsieur,” replied the old fellow, “ere long I shall be in another land.”

“God’s truth! Mr. Scribbler,” said the constable (whose son, as everyone knows, had treacherously deserted Mademoiselle de Piennes, to whom he was betrothed, to espouse Diana of France, daughter of the mistress of certain high personages and of the king), “who made thee so bold as to slander persons of quality? Ah, wretched poet, you like to raise yourself high; well then, I promise to put you in a good high place.”

“We shall all go there, my lord constable,” replied the old man: “but if you are friendly to the state and to the king you will thank me for having warned him against the hordes of Lorraine, who are evils that will devour everything.”

“My good man,” whispered Cardinal Charles of Lorraine, “if you need a few gold crowns to publish your fifth book of Pantagruel you can come to me for them, because you have put the case clearly to the enemy, who has bewitched the king, and also to her pack.”

“Well, gentlemen,” said the king, “what do you think of the sermon?”

“Sire,” said Mellin de Saint-Gelais, seeing that all were well pleased, “I had never heard a better Pantagruelian prognostication. Much do we owe to him who made these leonine verses in the Abbey of Theleme:—

*“Cy vous entrez, qui le saint Evangile  
En sens agile annoncez, quoy qu'on gronde,  
Ceans aurez une refuge et bastile,  
Contre l'hostile erreur qui tant postille  
Par son faux style empoisonner le monde.”*

[“Should ye who enter here profess in jubilation  
Our gospel of elation, then suffer dolts to curse!  
Here refuge shall ye find, and sure circumvallation  
Against the protestation of those whose delectation  
Brings false abomination to blight the universe.”]

All the courtiers having applauded their companion, each one complimented Rabelais, who took his departure accompanied with great honour by the king's pages, who, by express command held torches before him.

Some persons have charged Francis Rabelais, the imperial honour of our land, with spiteful tricks and apish pranks, unworthy of his Homeric philosophy, of this prince of wisdom of this fatherly centre, from which have issued since the rising of his subterranean light a good number of marvellous works. Out upon those who would defile this divine head! All their life long may they find grit between their teeth, those who have ignored his good and moderate nourishment.

Dear drinker of pure water, faithful servant or monachal abstinence, wisest of wise men, how would thy sides ache with laughter, how wouldst thou chuckle, if thou couldst come again for a little while to Chinon, and read the idiotic mouthings, and the maniacal babble of the fools who have interpreted, commentated, torn, disgraced, misunderstood, betrayed, defiled, adulterated and meddled with thy peerless book. As many dogs as Panurge found busy with his lady's robe at church, so many two-legged academic puppies have busied themselves with befouling the high marble pyramid in which is cemented for ever the seed of all fantastic and comic inventions, besides magnificent instruction in all things. Although rare are the pilgrims who have the breath to follow thy bark in its sublime peregrination through the ocean of ideas, methods, varieties, religions, wisdom, and human trickeries, at least their worship is unalloyed, pure,

and unadulterated, and thine omnipotence, omniscience, and omnilinguage are by them bravely recognised. Therefore has a poor son of our merry Touraine here been anxious, however unworthily, to do thee homage by magnifying thine image, and glorifying the works of eternal memory, so cherished by those who love the concentrative works wherein the universal moral is contained, wherein are found, pressed like sardines in their boxes, philosophical ideas on every subject, science, art and eloquence, as well as theatrical mummeries.

# THE SUCCUBUS

## Prologue

A NUMBER OF PERSONS of the noble country of Touraine, considerably edified by the warm search which the author is making into the antiquities, adventures, good jokes, and pretty tales of that blessed land, and believing for certain that he should know everything, have asked him (after drinking with him of course understood), if he had discovered the etymological reason, concerning which all the ladies of the town are so curious, and from which a certain street in Tours is called the Rue Chaude. By him it was replied, that he was much astonished to see that the ancient inhabitants had forgotten the great number of convents situated in this street, where the severe continence of the monks and nuns might have caused the walls to be made so hot that some woman of position should increase in size from walking too slowly along them to vespers. A troublesome fellow, wishing to appear learned, declared that formerly all the scandalmongers of the neighbourhood were wont to meet in this place. Another entangled himself in the minute suffrages of science, and poured forth golden words without being understood, qualifying words, harmonising the melodies of the ancient and modern, congregating customs, distilling verbs, alchemising all languages since the Deluge, of the Hebrew, Chaldeans, Egyptians, Greeks, Latins, and of Turnus, the ancient founder of Tours; and the good man finished by declaring that *chaude* or *chaulde* with the exception of the H and the L, came from *Cauda*, and that there was a tail in the affair, but the ladies only understood the end of it. An old man observed that in this same place was formerly a source of thermal water, of which his great great grandfather had drunk. In short, in less time than it

takes a fly to embrace its sweetheart, there had been a pocketful of etymologies, in which the truth of the matter had been less easily found than a louse in the filthy beard of a Capuchin friar. But a man well learned and well informed, through having left his footprint in many monasteries, consumed much midnight oil, and manured his brain with many a volume—himself more encumbered with pieces, dyptic fragments, boxes, charters, and registers concerning the history of Touraine than is a gleaner with stalks of straw in the month of August—this man, old, infirm, and gouty, who had been drinking in his corner without saying a word, smiled the smile of a wise man and knitted his brows, the said smile finally resolving itself into a pish! well articulated, which the Author heard and understood it to be big with an adventure historically good, the delights of which he would be able to unfold in this sweet collection.

To be brief, on the morrow this gouty old fellow said to him, “By your poem, which is called ‘The Venial Sin,’ you have forever gained my esteem, because everything therein is true from head to foot—which I believe to be a precious superabundance in such matters. But doubtless you do not know what became of the Moor placed in religion by the said knight, Bruyn de la Roche-Corbon. I know very well. Now if this etymology of the street harass you, and also the Egyptian nun, I will lend you a curious and antique parchment, found by me in the Olim of the episcopal palace, of which the libraries were a little knocked about at a period when none of us knew if he would have the pleasure of his head’s society on the morrow. Now will not this yield you a perfect contentment?”

“Good!” said the author.

Then this worthy collector of truths gave certain rare and dusty parchments to the author, the which he has, not without great labour, translated into French, and which were fragments of a most ancient ecclesiastical process. He has believed that nothing would be more amusing than the actual resurrection of this antique affair, wherein shines forth the illiterate simplicity of the good old times. Now, then, give ear. This is the order in which were the manuscripts, of which the author has made use in his own fashion, because the language was devilishly difficult.

*I What the Succubus Was.*

*In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.*

In the year of our Lord, one thousand two hundred and seventy-one, before me, Hierome Cornille, grand inquisitor and ecclesiastical judge (thereto commissioned by the members of the chapter of Saint Maurice, the cathedral of Tours, having of this deliberated in the presence of our Lord Jean de Montsoreau, archbishop—namely, the grievances and complaints of the inhabitants of the said town, whose request is here subjoined), have appeared certain noblemen, citizens, and inhabitants of the diocese, who have stated the following facts concerning a demon suspected of having taken the features of a woman, who has much afflicted the minds of the diocese, and is at present a prisoner in the jail of the chapter; and in order to arrive at the truth of the said charge we have opened the present court, this Monday, the eleventh day of December, after mass, to communicate the evidence of each witness to the said demon, to interrogate her upon the said crimes to her imputed, and to judge her according to the laws enforced /contra demonios/.

In this inquiry has assisted me to write the evidence therein given, Guillaume Tournebouche, rubrican of the chapter, a learned man.

Firstly has come before us one Jehan, surnamed Tortebras, a citizen of Tours, keeping by licence the hostelry of La Cigoynes, situated on the Place du Pont, and who has sworn by the salvation of his soul, his hand upon the holy Evangelists, to state no other thing than that which by himself hath been seen and heard.

He hath stated as here followeth:—

“I declare that about two years before the feast of St. Jehan, upon which are the grand illuminations, a gentleman, at first unknown to me, but belonging without doubt to our lord the King, and at that time returned to our country from the Holy Land, came to me with the proposition that I should let to him at rental a certain country-house by me built, in the quit rent of the chapter over against the place called of St. Etienne, and the which I let to him for nine years, for the consideration of three besans of fine gold. In the said house

was placed by the said knight a fair wench having the appearance of a woman, dressed in the strange fashion of the Saracens Mohammedans, whom he would allow by none to be seen or to be approached within a bow-shot, but whom I have seen with mine own eyes, weird feathers upon her head, and eyes so flaming that I cannot adequately describe them, and from which gleamed forth a fire of hell. The defunct knight having threatened with death whoever should appear to spy about the said house, I have by reason of great fear left the said house, and I have until this day secretly kept to my mind certain presumptions and doubts concerning the bad appearance of the said foreigner, who was more strange than any woman, her equal not having as yet by me been seen.

“Many persons of all conditions having at the time believed the said knight to be dead, but kept upon his feet by virtue of the said charms, philters, spells, and diabolical sorceries of this seeming woman, who wished to settle in our country, I declare that I have always seen the said knight so ghastly pale that I can only compare his face to the wax of a Paschal candle, and to the knowledge of all the people of the hostelry of La Cigoynes, this knight was interred nine days after his first coming. According to the statement of his groom, the defunct had been chalarously coupled with the said Moorish woman during seven whole days shut up in my house, without coming out from her, the which I heard him horribly avow upon his deathbed. Certain persons at the present time have accused this she-devil of holding the said gentleman in her clutches by her long hair, the which was furnished with certain warm properties by means of which are communicated to Christians the flames of hell in the form of love, which work in them until their souls are by this means drawn from their bodies and possessed by Satan. But I declare that I have seen nothing of this excepting the said dead knight, boweless, emaciated, wishing, in spite of his confessor, still to go to this wench; and then he has been recognised as the lord de Bueil, who was a crusader, and who was, according to certain persons of the town, under the spell of a demon whom he had met in the Asiatic country of Damascus or elsewhere.

“Afterwards I have let my house to the said unknown lady, according to the clauses of the deed of lease. The said lord of Bueil, being

defunct, I had nevertheless been into my house in order to learn from the said foreign woman if she wished to remain in my dwelling, and after great trouble was led before her by a strange, half-naked black man, whose eyes were white.

“Then I have seen the said Moorish woman in a little room, shining with gold and jewels, lighted with strange lights, upon an Asiatic carpet, where she was seated, lightly attired, with another gentleman, who was there imperiling his soul; and I had not the heart bold enough to look upon her, seeing that her eyes would have incited me immediately to yield myself up to her, for already her voice thrilled into my very belly, filled my brain, and debauched my mind. Finding this, from the fear of God, and also of hell, I have departed with swift feet, leaving my house to her as long as she liked to retain it, so dangerous was it to behold that Moorish complexion from which radiated diabolical heats, besides a foot smaller than it was lawful in a real woman to possess; and to hear her voice, which pierced into one’s heart! And from that day I have lacked the courage to enter my house from great fear of falling into hell. I have said my say.”

To the said Tortebras we have then shown an Abyssinian, Nubian or Ethiopian, who, black from head to foot, had been found wanting in certain virile properties with which all good Christians are usually furnished, who, having persevered in his silence, after having been tormented and tortured many times, not without much moaning, has persisted in being unable to speak the language of our country. And the said Tortebras has recognised the said Abyss heretic as having been in his house in company with the said demoniacal spirit, and is suspected of having lent his aid to her sorcery.

And the said Tortebras has confessed his great faith in the Catholic religion, and declared no other things to be within his knowledge save certain rumours which were known to every one, of which he had been in no way a witness except in the hearing of them.

In obedience to the citations served upon him, has appeared then, Matthew, surname Cognefestu, a day-labourer of St. Etienne, whom, after having sworn by the holy Evangelists to speak the truth, has confessed to us always to have seen a bright light in the dwelling of the said foreign woman, and heard much wild and diabolical laugh-

ter on the days and nights of feasts and fasts, notably during the days of the holy and Christmas weeks, as if a great number of people were in the house. And he has sworn to have seen by the windows of the said dwellings, green buds of all kinds in the winter, growing as if by magic, especially roses in a time of frost, and other things for which there was a need of a great heat; but of this he was in no way astonished, seeing that the said foreigner threw out so much heat that when she walked in the evening by the side of his wall he found on the morrow his salad grown; and on certain occasions she had by the touching of her petticoats, caused the trees to put forth leaves and hasten the buds. Finally, the said, Cognefestu has declared to us to know no more, because he worked from early morning, and went to bed at the same hour as the fowls.

Afterwards the wife of the aforesaid Cognefestu has by us been required to state also upon oath the things come to her cognisance in this process, and has avowed naught save praises of the said foreigner, because since her coming her man had treated her better in consequence of the neighbourhood of this good lady, who filled the air with love, as the sun did light, and other incongruous nonsense, which we have not committed to writing.

To the said Cognefestu and to his wife we have shown the said unknown African, who has been seen by them in the gardens of the house, and is stated by them for certain to belong to the said demon. In the third place, has advanced Harduin V., lord of Maille, who being by us reverentially begged to enlighten the religion of the church, has expressed his willingness so to do, and has, moreover, engaged his word, as a gallant knight, to say no other thing than that which he has seen. Then he has testified to have known in the army of the Crusades the demon in question, and in the town of Damascus to have seen the knight of Bueil, since defunct, fight at close quarters to be her sole possessor. The above-mentioned wench, or demon, belonged at that time to the knight Geoffroy IV., Lord of Roche-Pozay, by whom she was said to have been brought from Touraine, although she was a Saracen; concerning which the knights of France marvelled much, as well as at her beauty, which made a great noise and a thousand scandalous ravages in the camp. During the voyage this wench was the cause of many deaths, seeing that Roche-Pozay had already

discomfited certain Crusaders, who wished to keep her to themselves, because she shed, according to certain knights petted by her in secret, joys around her comparable to none others. But in the end the knight of Bueil, having killed Geoffroy de la Roche-Pozay, became lord and master of this young murderess, and placed her in a convent, or harem, according to the Saracen custom. About this time one used to see her and hear her chattering as entertainment many foreign dialects, such as the Greek or the Latin empire, Moorish, and, above all, French better than any of those who knew the language of France best in the Christian host, from which sprang the belief that she was demoniacal.

The said knight Harduin has confessed to us not to have tilted for her in the Holy Land, not from fear, coldness or other cause, so much as that he believed the time had arrived for him to bear away a portion of the true cross, and also he had belonging to him a noble lady of the Greek country, who saved him from this danger in denuding him of love, morning and night, seeing that she took all of it substantially from him, leaving him none in his heart or elsewhere for others.

And the said knight has assured us that the woman living in the country house of Tortebas, was really the said Saracen woman, come into the country from Syria, because he had been invited to a midnight feast at her house by the young Lord of Croixmare, who expired the seventh day afterwards, according to the statement of the Dame de Croixmare, his mother, ruined all points by the said wench, whose commerce with him had consumed his vital spirit, and whose strange phantasies had squandered his fortune.

Afterwards questioned in his quality of a man full of prudence, wisdom and authority in this country, upon the ideas entertained concerning the said woman, and summoned by us to open his conscience, seeing that it was a question of a most abominable case of Christian faith and divine justice, answer has been made by the said knight:—

That by certain of the host of Crusaders it has been stated to him that always this she-devil was a maid to him who embraced her, and that Mammon was for certain occupied in her, making for her a new

virtue for each of her lovers, and a thousand other foolish sayings of drunken men, which were not of a nature to form a fifth gospel. But for a fact, he, an old knight on that turn of life, and knowing nothing more of the aforesaid, felt himself again a young man in that last supper with which he had been regaled by the lord of Croixmare; then the voice of this demon went straight to his heart before flowing into his ears, and had awakened so great a love in his body that his life was ebbing from the place whence it should flow, and that eventually, but for the assistance of Cyprus wine, which he had drunk to blind his sight, and his getting under the table in order no longer to gaze upon the fiery eyes of his diabolical hostess, and not to rend his heart from her, without doubt he would have fought the young Croixmare, in order to enjoy for a single moment this supernatural woman. Since then he had had absolution from his confessor for the wicked thought. Then, by advice from on high, he had carried back to his house his portion of the true Cross, and had remained in his own manor, where, in spite of his Christian precautions, the said voice still at certain times tickled his brain, and in the morning often had he in remembrance this demon, warm as brimstone; and because the look of this wench was so warm that it made him burn like a young man, be half dead, and because it cost him then many transshipments of the vital spirit, the said knight has requested us not to confront him with the empress of love to whom, if it were not the devil, God the Father had granted strange liberties with the minds of men. Afterwards, he retired, after reading over his statement, not without having first recognised the above-mentioned African to be the servant and page of the lady.

In the fourth place, upon the faith pledged in us in the name of the Chapter and of our Lord Archbishop, that he should not be tormented, tortured, nor harassed in any manner, nor further cited after his statement, in consequence of his commercial journeys, and upon the assurance that he should retire in perfect freedom, has come before us a Jew, Salomon al Rastchid, who, in spite of the infamy of his person and his Judaism, has been heard by us to this one end, to know everything concerning the conduct of the aforesaid demon. Thus he has not been required to take any oath this Salomon, seeing that he is beyond the

pale of the Church, separated from us by the blood of our saviour (trucidatus Salvatore inter nos). Interrogated by us as to why he appeared without the green cap upon his head, and the yellow wheel in the apparent locality of the heart in his garment, according to the ecclesiastical and royal ordinances, the said de Rastchid has exhibited to us letters patent of the seneschal of Touraine and Poitou. Then the said Jew has declared to us to have done a large business for the lady dwelling in the house of the innkeeper Tortebras, to have sold to her golden chandeliers, with many branches, minutely engraved, plates of red silver, cups enriched with stones, emeralds and rubies; to have brought for her from the Levant a number of rare stuffs, Persian carpets, silks, and fine linen; in fact, things so magnificent that no queen in Christendom could say she was so well furnished with jewels and household goods; and that he had for his part received from her three hundred thousand pounds for the rarity of the purchases in which he had been employed, such as Indian flowers, poppingjays, birds' feathers, spices, Greek wines, and diamonds. Requested by us, the judge, to say if he had furnished certain ingredients of magical conjuration, the blood of new-born children, conjuring books, and things generally and whatsoever made use of by sorcerers, giving him licence to state his case without that thereupon he should be the subject to any further inquest or inquiry, the said al Rastchid has sworn by his Hebrew faith never to have had any such commerce; and has stated that he was involved in too high interests to give himself to such miseries, seeing that he was the agent of certain most powerful lords, such as the Marquis de Montferrat, the King of England, the King of Cyprus and Jerusalem, the Court of Provence, lords of Venice, and many German gentleman; to have belonging to him merchant galleys of all kinds, going into Egypt with the permission of the Sultan, and he trafficking in precious articles of silver and of gold, which took him often into the exchange of Tours. Moreover, he has declared that he considered the said lady, the subject of inquiry, to be a right royal and natural woman, with the sweetest limbs, and the smallest he has ever seen. That in consequence of her renown for a diabolical spirit, pushed by a wild imagination, and also because that he was smitten with her, he had heard once that she was husbandless, proposed to her to be her gallant, to which proposition she willingly acceded. Now, although from that night he felt his

bones disjointed and his bowels crushed, he had not yet experienced, as certain persons say, that who once yielded was free no more; he went to his fate as lead into the crucible of the alchemist. Then the said Salomon, to whom we have granted his liberty according to the safe conduct, in spite of the statement, which proves abundantly his commerce with the devil, because he had been saved there where all Christians have succumbed, has admitted to us an agreement concerning the said demon. To make known that he had made an offer to the chapter of the cathedral to give for the said semblance of a woman such a ransom, if she were condemned to be burned alive, that the highest of the towers of the Church of St. Maurice, at present in course of construction, could therewith be finished.

The which we have noted to be deliberated upon at an opportune time by the assembled chapter. And the said Salomon has taken his departure without being willing to indicate his residence, and has told us that he can be informed of the deliberation of the chapter by a Jew of the synagogue of Tours, a name Tobias Nathaneus. The said Jew has before his departure been shown the African, and has recognised him as the page of the demon, and has stated the Saracens to have the custom of mutilating their slaves thus, to commit to them the task of guarding their women by an ancient usage, as it appears in the profane histories of Narsez, general of Constantinople, and others.

On the morrow after mass has appeared before us the most noble and illustrious lady of Croixmare. The same has worn her faith in the holy Evangelists, and has related to us with tears how she had placed her eldest son beneath the earth, dead by reason of his extravagant amours with this female demon. The which noble gentleman was three-and-twenty years of age; of good complexion, very manly and well bearded like his defunct sire. Notwithstanding his great vigour, in ninety days he had little by little withered, ruined by his commerce with the succubus of the Rue Chaude, according to the statement of the common people; and her maternal authority over the son had been powerless. Finally in his latter days he appeared like a poor dried up worm, such as housekeepers meet with in a corner when they clean out the dwelling-rooms. And always, so long as he had the strength to go, he went to shorten his life with this cursed woman; where, also, he emptied his cash-box. When he was in his

bed, and knew his last hour had come, he swore at, cursed, and threatened and heaped upon all—his sister, his brother, and upon her his mother—a thousand insults, rebelled in the face of the chaplain; denied God, and wished to die in damnation; at which were much afflicted the retainers of the family, who, to save his soul and pluck it from hell, have founded two annual masses in the cathedral. And in order to have him buried in consecrated ground, the house of Croixmare has undertaken to give to the chapter, during one hundred years, the wax candles for the chapels and the church, upon the day of the Paschal feast. And, in conclusion, saving the wicked words heard by the reverend person, Dom Loys Pot, a nun of Marmoustiers, who came to assist in his last hours the said Baron de Croixmaire affirms never to have heard any words offered by the defunct, touching the demon who had undone him.

And therewith has retired the noble and illustrious lady in deep mourning.

In the sixth place has appeared before us, after adjournment, Jacquette, called Vieux-Oing, a kitchen scullion, going to houses to wash dishes, residing at present in the Fishmarket, who, after having placed her word to say nothing she did not hold to be true, has declared as here follows:—Namely, that one day she, being come into the kitchen of the said demon, of whom she had no fear, because she was wont to regale herself only upon males, she had the opportunity of seeing in the garden this female demon, superbly attired, walking in company with a knight, with whom she was laughing, like a natural woman. Then she had recognised in this demon that true likeness of the Moorish woman placed as a nun in the convent of Notre Dame de l'Egrignolles by the defunct seneschal of Touraine and Poitou, Messire Bruyn, Count of Roche-Corbon, the which Moorish woman had been left in the situation and place of the image of our Lady the Virgin, the mother of our Blessed Saviour, stolen by the Egyptians about eighteen years since. Of this time, in consequence of the troubles come about in Touraine, no record has been kept. This girl, aged about twelve years, was saved from the stake at which she would have been burned by being baptised; and the said defunct and his wife had then been godfather and godmother to this child of hell. Being at that time laundress at the con-

vent, she who bears witness has remembrance of the flight which the said Egyptian took twenty months after her entry into the convent, so subtly that it has never been known how or by what means she escaped. At that time it was thought by all, that with the devil's aid she had flown away in the air, seeing that not withstanding much search, no trace of her flight was found in the convent, where everything remained in its accustomed order.

The African having been shown to the said scullion, she has declared not to have seen him before, although she was curious to do so, as he was commissioned to guard the place in which the Moorish woman combated with those whom she drained through the spigot.

In the seventh place has been brought before us Hugues de Fou, son of the Sieur de Bridore, who, aged twenty years, has been placed in the hands of his father, under caution of his estates, and by him is represented in this process, whom it concerns if should be duly attained and convicted of having, assisted by several unknown and bad young men, laid siege to the jail of the archbishop and of the chapter, and of having lent himself to disturb the force of ecclesiastical justice, by causing the escape of the demon now under consideration. In spite of the evil disposition we have commanded the said Hugues de Fou to testify truly, touching the things he should know concerning the said demon, with whom he is vehemently reputed to have had commerce, pointing out to him that it was a question of his salvation and of the life of the said demon. He, after having taken the oath, he said:—

“I swear by my eternal salvation, and by the holy Evangelists here present under my hand, to hold the woman suspected of being a demon to be an angel, a perfect woman, and even more so in mind than in body, living in all honesty, full of the migniard charms and delights of love, in no way wicked, but most generous, assisting greatly the poor and suffering. I declare that I have seen her weeping veritable tears for the death of my friend, the knight of Croixmare. And because on that day she had made a vow to our Lady the Virgin no more to receive the love of young noblemen too weak in her service; she has to me constantly and with great courage denied the enjoyment of her body, and has only granted to me love, and the posses-

sion of her heart, of which she has made sovereign. Since this gracious gift, in spite of my increasing flame I have remained alone in her dwelling, where I have spent the greater part of my days, happy in seeing and in hearing her. Oh! I would eat near her, partake of the air which entered into her lungs, of the light which shone in her sweet eyes, and found in this occupation more joy than have the lords of paradise. Elected by me to be forever my lady, chosen to be one day my dove, my wife, and only sweetheart, I, poor fool, have received from her no advances on the joys of the future, but, on the contrary, a thousand virtuous admonitions; such as that I should acquire renown as a good knight, become a strong man and a fine one, fear nothing except God; honour the ladies, serve but one and love them in memory of that one; that when I should be strengthened by the work of war, if her heart still pleased mine, at that time only would she be mine, because she would be able to wait for me, loving me so much.”

So saying the young Sire Hugues wept, and weeping, added:—

“That thinking of this graceful and feeble woman, whose arms seemed scarcely large enough to sustain the light weight of her golden chains, he did not know how to contain himself while fancying the irons which would wound her, and the miseries with which she would traitorously be loaded, and from this cause came his rebellion. And that he had licence to express his sorrow before justice, because his life was so bound up with that of his delicious mistress and sweetheart that on the day when evil came to her he would surely die.”

And the same young man has vociferated a thousand other praises of the said demon, which bear witness to the vehement sorcery practised upon him, and prove, moreover, the abominable, unalterable, and incurable life and the fraudulent witcheries to which he is at present subject, concerning which our lord the archbishop will judge, in order to save by exorcisms and penitences this young soul from the snares of hell, if the devil has not gained too strong a hold of it.

Then we have handed back the said young nobleman into the custody of the noble lord his father, after that by the said Hugues, the African has been recognised as the servant of the accused.

In the eighth place, before us, have the footguards of our lord the

archbishop led in great state the *Most High and Reverend Lady Jacqueline De Champchevrier, Abbess of the Convent of Notre-Dame*, under the invocation of Mount Carmel, to whose control has been submitted by the late seneschal of Touraine, father of Monseigneur the Count of Roche-Corbon, present advocate of the said convent, the Egyptian, named at the baptismal font Blanche Bruyn.

To the said abbess we have shortly stated the present cause, in which is involved the holy church, the glory of God, and the eternal future of the people of the diocese afflicted with a demon, and also the life of a creature who it was possible might be quite innocent. Then the cause elaborated, we have requested the said noble abbess to testify that which was within her knowledge concerning the magical disappearance of her daughter in God, Blanche Bruyn, espoused by our Saviour under the name of Sister Clare.

Then has stated the very high, very noble, and very illustrious lady abbess as follows:—

“The Sister Clare, of origin to her unknown, but suspected to be of an heretic father and mother, people inimical to God, has truly been placed in religion in the convent of which the government had canonically come to her in spite of her unworthiness; that the said sister had properly concluded her noviciate, and made her vows according to the holy rule of the order. That the vows taken, she had fallen into great sadness, and had much drooped. Interrogated by her, the abbess, concerning her melancholy malady, the said sister had replied with tears that she herself did not know the cause. That one thousand and one tears engendered themselves in her at feeling no more her splendid hair upon her head; that besides this she thirsted for air, and could not resist her desire to jump up into the trees, to climb and tumble about according to her wont during her open air life; that she passed her nights in tears, dreaming of the forests under the leaves of which in other days she slept; and in remembrance of this she abhorred the quality of the air of the cloisters, which troubled her respiration; that in her inside she was troubled with evil vapours; that at times she was inwardly diverted in church by thoughts which made her lose countenance. Then I have repeated over and over again to the poor creature the holy directions of the church, have reminded her of the eternal happiness which women without seeing enjoy in

paradise, and how transitory was life here below, and certain the goodness of God, who for first certain bitter pleasures lost, kept for us a love without end. In spite of this wise maternal advice the evil spirit has persisted in the said sister; and always would she gaze upon the leaves of the trees and grass of the meadows through the windows of the church during the offices and times of prayer; and persisted in becoming as white as linen in order that she might stay in her bed, and at certain times she would run about the cloisters like a goat broken loose from its fastening. Finally, she had grown thin, lost much of the great beauty, and shrunk away to nothing. While in this condition by us, the abbess her mother, was she placed in the sick-room, we daily expecting her to die. One winter's morning the said sister had fled, without leaving any trace of her steps, without breaking the door, forcing of locks, or opening of windows, nor any sign whatever of the manner of her passage; a frightful adventure which was believed to have taken place by the aid of the demon which has annoyed and tormented her. For the rest it was settled by the authorities of the metropolitan church that the mission of this daughter of hell was to divert the nuns from their holy ways, and blinded by their perfect lives, she had returned through the air on the wings of the sorcerer, who had left her for mockery of our holy religion in the place of our Virgin Mary."

The which having said, the lady abbess was, with great honour and according to the command of our lord the archbishop, accompanied as far as the convent of Carmel.

In the ninth place, before us has come, agreeably to the citation served upon him, Joseph, called Leschalopier, a money-changer, living on the bridge at the sign of the Besant d'Or, who, after having pledged his Catholic faith to say no other thing than the truth, and that known to him, touching the process before the ecclesiastical tribunal, has testified as follows:—"I am a poor father, much afflicted by the sacred will of God. Before the coming of the Succubus of the Rue Chaude, I had, for all good, a son as handsome as a noble, learned as a clerk, and having made more than a dozen voyages into foreign lands; for the rest a good Catholic; keeping himself on guard against the needles of love, because he avoided marriage, knowing himself to

be the support of my old days, the love for my eyes, and the constant delight of my heart. He was a son of whom the King of France might have been proud—a good and courageous man, the light on my commerce, the joy of my roof, and, above all, an inestimable blessing, seeing that I am alone in the world, having had the misfortune to lose my wife, and being too old to take another. Now, monseigneur, this treasure without equal has been taken from me, and cast into hell by the demon. Yes, my lord judge, directly he beheld this mischievous jade, this she-devil, in whom it is a whole workshop of perdition, a conjunction of pleasure and delectation, and whom nothing can satiate, my poor child stuck himself fast into the gluepot of love, and afterwards lived only between the columns of Venus, and there did not live long, because in that place like so great a heat that nothing can satisfy the thirst of this gulf, not even should you plunge therein the germs of the entire world. Alas! then, my poor boy—his fortune, his generative hopes, his eternal future, his entire self, more than himself, have been engulfed in this sewer, like a grain of corn in the jaws of a bull. By this means become an old orphan I, who speak, shall have no greater joy than to see burning, this demon, nourished with blood and gold. This Arachne who has drawn out and sucked more marriages, more families in the seed, more hearts, more Christians than there are lepers in all the lazar houses or Christendom. Burn, torment this fiend—this vampire who feeds on souls, this tigerish nature that drinks blood, this amorous lamp in which burns the venom of all the vipers. Close this abyss, the bottom of which no man can find.... I offer my deniers to the chapter for the stake, and my arm to light the fire. Watch well, my lord judge, to surely guard this devil, seeing that she has a fire more flaming than all other terrestrial fires; she has all the fire of hell in her, the strength of Samson in her hair, and the sound of celestial music in her voice. She charms to kill the body and the soul at one stroke; she smiles to bite, she kisses to devour; in short, she would wheedle an angel, and make him deny his God. My son! my son! where is he at this hour? The flower of my life—a flower cut by this feminine needlecase as with scissors. Ha, lord! why have I been called? Who will give me back my son, whose soul has been absorbed by a womb which gives death to all, and life to none? The devil alone copulates,

and engenders not. This is my evidence, which I pray Master Tournebouche to write without omitting one iota, and to grant me a schedule, that I may tell it to God every evening in my prayer, to this end to make the blood of the innocent cry aloud into His ears, and to obtain from His infinite mercy the pardon for my son.”

Here followed twenty and seven other statements, of which the transcription in their true objectivity, in all their quality of space would be over-fastidious, would draw to a great length, and divert the thread of this curious process—a narrative which, according to ancient precepts, should go straight to the fact, like a bull to his principal office. Therefore, here is, in a few words, the substance of these testimonies.

A great number of good Christians, townsmen and townswomen, inhabitants of the noble town of Tours, testified the demon to have held every day wedding feasts and royal festivities, never to have been seen in any church, to have cursed God, to have mocked the priests, never to have crossed herself in any place; to have spoken all the languages of the earth—a gift which has only been granted by God to the blessed Apostles; to have been many times met in the fields, mounted upon an unknown animal who went before the clouds; not to grow old, and to have always a youthful face; to have received the father and the son on the same day, saying that her door sinned not; to have visible malign influences which flowed from her, for that a pastrycook, seated on a bench at her door, having perceived her one evening, received such a gust of warm love that, going in and getting to bed, he had with great passion embraced his wife, and was found dead on the morrow, that the old men of the town went to spend the remainder of their days and of their money with her, to taste the joys of the sins of their youth, and that they died like fleas on their bellies, and that certain of them, while dying, became as black as Moors; that this demon never allowed herself to be seen neither at dinner, nor at breakfast, nor at supper, but ate alone, because she lived upon human brains; that several had seen her during the night go to the cemeteries, and there embrace the young dead men, because she was not able to assuage otherwise the devil who worked in her entrails, and there raged like a tempest, and from that came the astringent biting, nitrous shooting, precipitant, and dia-

bolical movements, squeezings, and writhings of love and voluptuousness, from which several men had emerged bruised, torn, bitten, pinched and crushed; and that since the coming of our Saviour, who had imprisoned the master devil in the bellies of the swine, no malignant beast had ever been seen in any portion of the earth so mischievous, venomous and so clutching; so much so that if one threw the town of Tours into this field of Venus, she would there transmute it into the grain of cities, and this demon would swallow it like a strawberry.

And a thousand other statements, sayings, and depositions, from which was evident in perfect clearness the infernal generation of this woman, daughter, sister, niece, spouse, or brother of the devil, beside abundant proofs of her evil doing, and of the calamity spread by her in all families. And if it were possible to put them here conformably with the catalogue preserved by the good man to whom he accused the discovery, it would seem like a sample of the horrible cries which the Egyptians gave forth on the day of the seventh plague. Also this examination has covered with great honour Messire Guillaume Tournebouche, by whom are quoted all the memoranda. In the tenth vacation was thus closed this inquest, arriving at a maturity of proof, furnished with authentic testimony and sufficiently engrossed with the particulars, complaints, interdicts, contradictions, charges, assignments, withdrawals, confessions public and private, oaths, adjournments, appearances and controversies, to which the said demon must reply. And the townspeople say everywhere if there were really a she-devil, and furnished with internal horns planted in her nature, with which she drank the men, and broke them, this woman might swim a long time in this sea of writing before being landed safe and sound in hell.

## *II The Proceedings Taken Relative to This Female Vampire.*

*In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.*

In the year of our Lord one thousand two hundred and seventy-one, before us, Hierome Cornille, grand penitentiary and ecclesiastical judge to this, canonically appointed, have appeared—

The Sire Philippe d'Idre, bailiff of the town and city of Tours and province of Touraine, living in his hotel in the Rue de la Rotisserie, in

Chateauneuf; Master Jehan Ribou, provost of the brotherhood and company of drapers, residing on the Quay de Bretaingne, at the image of St. Pierre-es-liens; Messire Antoine Jehan, alderman and chief of the Brotherhood of Changers, residing in the Place du Pont, at the image of St. Mark-counting-tournoise-pounds; Master Martin Beaupertuys, captain of the archers of the town residing at the castle; Jehan Rabelais, a ships' painter and boat maker residing at the port at the isle of St. Jacques, treasurer of the brotherhood of the mariners of the Loire; Mark Hierome, called Maschefer, hosier, at the sign of Saint-Sebastian, president of the trades council; and Jacques, called de Villedomer, master tavern-keeper and vine dresser, residing in the High Street, at the Pomme de Pin; to the said Sire d'Idre, and to the said citizens, we have read the following petition by them, written, signed, and deliberated upon, to be brought under the notice of the ecclesiastical tribunal:—

*Petition*

We, the undersigned, all citizens of Tours, are come into the hotel of his worship the Sire d'Idre, bailiff of Touraine, in the absence of our mayor, and have requested him to hear our complaints and statements concerning the following facts, which we intend to bring before the tribunal of the archbishop, the judge of ecclesiastical crimes, to whom should be deferred the conduct of the cause which we here expose:—

A long time ago there came into this town a wicked demon in the form of a woman, who lives in the parish of Saint-Etienne, in the house of the innkeeper Tortebras, situated in the quit-rent of the chapter, and under the temporal jurisdiction of the archiepiscopal domain. The which foreigner carries on the business of a gay woman in a prodigal and abusive manner, and with such increase of infamy that she threatens to ruin the Catholic faith in this town, because those who go to her come back again with their souls lost in every way, and refuse the assistance of the Church with a thousand scandalous discourses.

Now considering that a great number of those who yielded to her are dead, and that arrived in our town with no other wealth than her beauty, she has, according to public clamour, infinite riches and right

royal treasure, the acquisition of which is vehemently attributed to sorcery, or at least to robberies committed by the aid of magical attractions and her supernaturally amorous person.

Considering that it is a question of the honour and security of our families, and that never before has been seen in this country a woman wild of body or a daughter of pleasure, carrying on with such mischief of vocation of light o' love, and menacing so openly and bitterly the life, the savings, the morals, chastity, religion, and the everything of the inhabitants of this town;

Considering that there is need of a inquiry into her person, her wealth and her deportment, in order to verify if these effects of love are legitimate, and to not proceed, as would seem indicated by her manners, from a bewitchment of Satan, who often visits Christianity under the form of a female, as appears in the holy books, in which it is stated that our blessed Saviour was carried away into a mountain, from which Lucifer or Astaroth showed him the fertile plains of Judea and that in many places have been seen succubi or demons, having the faces of women, who, not wishing to return to hell, and having with them an insatiable fire, attempt to refresh and sustain themselves by sucking in souls;

Considering that in the case of the said woman a thousand proofs of diablerie are met with, of which certain inhabitants speak openly, and that it is necessary for the repose of the said woman that the matter be sifted, in order that she shall not be attacked by certain people, ruined by the result of her wickedness;

For these causes we pray that it will please you to submit to our spiritual lord, father of this diocese, the most noble and blessed archbishop Jehan de Monsoreau, the troubles of his afflicted flock, to the end that he may advise upon them.

By doing so you will fulfil the duties of your office, as we do those of preservers of the security of this town, each one according to the things of which he has charge in his locality.

And we have signed the present, in the year of our Lord one thousand two hundred and seventy-one, of All Saints' Day, after mass.

Master Tournebouche having finished the reading of this petition, by us, Hierome Cornille, has it been said to the petitioners—

“Gentlemen, do you, at the present time, persist in these state-

ments? have you proofs other than those come within your own knowledge, and do you undertake to maintain the truth of this before God, before man, and before the accused?"

All, with the exception of Master Jehan Rabelais, have persisted in their belief, and the aforesaid Rabelais has withdrawn from the process, saying that he considered the said Moorish woman to be a natural woman and a good wench who had no other fault than that of keeping up a very high temperature of love.

Then we, the judge appointed, have, after mature deliberation, found matter upon which to proceed in the petition of the aforesaid citizens, and have commanded that the woman at present in the jail of the chapter shall be proceeded against by all legal methods, as written in the canons and ordinances, /*contra demonios*/. The said ordinance, embodied in a writ, shall be published by the town-crier in all parts, and with the sound of the trumpet, in order to make it known to all, and that each witness may, according to his knowledge, be confronted with the said demon, and finally the said accused to be provided with a defender, according to custom, and the interrogations, and the process to be congruously conducted.

(Signed) *Hiermome Cornille*.

And, lower-down.

*Tournebouche*.

*In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.*

In the year of our Lord one thousand two hundred and seventy-one, the 10th day of February, after mass, by command of us, Hierome Cornille, ecclesiastical judge, has been brought from the jail of the chapter and led before us the woman taken in the house of the inn-keeper Tortebras, situated in the domains of the chapter and the cathedral of St. Maurice, and are subject to the temporal and seigneurial justice of the Archbishop of Tours; besides which, in consequence of the nature of the crimes imputed to her, she is liable to the tribunal and council of ecclesiastical justice, the which we have made known to her, to the end that she should not ignore it.

And after a serious reading, entirely at will understood by her, in

the first place of the petition of the town, then of the statements, complaints, accusations, and proceedings which written in twenty-four quires by Master Tournebouche, and are above related, we have, with the invocation and assistance of God and the Church, resolved to ascertain the truth, first by interrogatories made to the said accused.

In the first interrogation we have requested the aforesaid to inform us in what land or town she had been born. By her who speaks was it answered: "In Mauritania."

We have then inquired: "If she had a father or mother, or any relations?" By her who speaks has it been replied: "That she had never known them." By us requested to declare her name. By her who speaks has been replied: "Zulma," in Arabian tongue.

By us has it been demanded: "Why she spoke our language?" By her who speaks has it been said: "Because she had come into this country." By us has it been asked: "At what time?" By her who speaks has it been replied: "About twelve years."

By us has it been asked: "What age she then was?" By her who speaks has it been answered: "Fifteen years or thereabout."

By us has it been said: "Then you acknowledge yourself to be twenty-seven years of age?" By her who speaks has it been replied: "Yes."

By us has it been said to her: "That she was then the Moorish child found in the niche of Madame the Virgin, baptised by the Archbishop, held at the font by the late Lord of Roche-Corbon and the Lady of Azay, his wife, afterwards by them placed in religion at the convent of Mount Carmel, where by her had been made vows of chastity, poverty, silence, and the love of God, under the divine assistance of St. Clare?" By her who speaks has been said: "That is true."

By us has it been asked her: "If, then, she allowed to be true the declarations of the very noble and illustrious lady the abbess of Mount Carmel, also the statements of Jacqueline, called Vieux-Oing, being kitchen scullion?" By the accused has been answered: "These words are true in great measure."

Then by us has it been said to her: "Then you are a Christian?" And by her who speaks has been answered: "Yes, my father."

Then by us has she been requested to make the sign of the cross, and to take holy water from the brush placed by Master Tournebouche in

her hand; the which having been done, and by us having been witnessed, it has been admitted as an indisputable fact, that Zulma, the Moorish woman, called in our country Blanche Bruyn, a nun of the convent under the invocation of Mount Carmel, there named Sister Clare, and suspected to be the false appearance of a woman under which is concealed a demon, has in our presence made act of religion and thus recognised the justice of the ecclesiastical tribunal.

Then by us have these words been said to her: "My daughter, you are vehemently suspected to have had recourse to the devil from the manner in which you left the convent, which was supernatural in every way." By her who speaks has it been stated, that she at that time gained naturally the fields by the street door after vespers, enveloped in the robes of Jehan de Marsilis, visitor of the convent, who had hidden her, the person speaking, in a little hovel belonging to him, situated in the Cupidon Lane, near a tower in the town. That there this said priest had to her then speaking, at great length, and most thoroughly taught the depths of love, of which she then speaking was before in all points ignorant, for which delights she had a great taste, finding them of great use. That the Sire d'Amboise having perceived her then speaking at the window of this retreat, had been smitten with a great love for her. That she loved him more heartily than the monk, and fled from the hovel where she was detained for profit of his pleasure by Don Marsilis. And then she had gone in great haste to Amboise, the castle of the said lord, where she had had a thousand pastimes, hunting, and dancing, and beautiful dresses fit for a queen. One day the Sire de la Roche-Pozay having been invited by the Sire d'Amboise to come and feast and enjoy himself, the Baron d'Amboise had allowed him to see her then speaking, as she came out naked from her bath. That at this sight the said Sire de la Roche-Pozay having fallen violently in love with her, had on the morrow discomfited in single combat the Sire d'Amboise, and by great violence, had, in spite of her tears, taken her to the Holy Land, where she who was speaking had lived the life of a woman well beloved, and had been held in great respect on account of her great beauty. That after numerous adventures, she who was speaking had returned into this country in spite of the apprehensions of misfortune, because such was the will of her lord and master, the Baron de Bueil, who

was dying of grief in Asiatic lands, and desired to return to his patrimonial manor. Now he had promised her who was speaking to preserve her from peril. Now she who was speaking had faith and belief in him, the more so as she loved him very much; but on his arrival in this country, the Sire de Bueil was seized with an illness, and died deplorably, without taking any remedies, this spite of the fervent requests which she who was speaking had addressed to him, but without success, because he hated physicians, master surgeons, and apothecaries; and that this was the whole truth.

Then by us has it been said to the accused that she then held to be true the statements of the good Sire Harduin and of the innkeeper Tortebras. By her who speaks has it been replied, that she recognised as evidence the greater part, and also as malicious, calumnious, and imbecile certain portions.

Then by us has the accused been required to declare if she had had pleasure and carnal commerce with all the men, nobles, citizens, and others as set forth in the complaints and declarations of the inhabitants. To which her who speaks has it been answered with great effrontery: "Pleasure, yes! Commerce, I do not know."

By us has it been said to her, that all had died by her acts. By her who speaks has it been said that their deaths could not be the result of her acts, because she had always refused herself to them, and the more she fled from them the more they came and embraced her with infinite passion, and that when she who was speaking was taken by them she gave herself up to them with all her strength, by the grace of God, because she had in that more joy than in anything, and has stated, she who speaks, that she avows her secret sentiments solely because she had been requested by us to state the whole truth, and that she the speaker stood in great fear of the torments of the torturers.

Then by us has she been requested to answer, under pain of torture, in what state of mind she was when a young nobleman died in consequence of his commerce with her. Then by her speaking has it been replied, that she remained quite melancholy and wished to destroy herself; and prayed God, the Virgin, and the saints to receive her into Paradise, because never had she met with any but lovely and good hearts in which was no guile, and beholding them die she fell into a great sadness, fancying herself to be an evil creature or subject

to an evil fate, which she communicated like the plague.

Then by us has she been requested to state where she paid her orisons.

By her speaking has it been said that she played in her oratory on her knees before God, who according to the Evangelists, sees and hears all things and resides in all places.

Then by us has it been demanded why she never frequented the churches, the offices, nor the feasts. To this by her speaking has it been answered, that those who came to love her had elected the feast days for that purpose, and that she speaking did all things to their liking.

By us has it been remonstrated that, by so doing, she was submissive to man rather than to the commandments of God.

Then by her speaking has it been stated, that for those who loved her well she speaking would have thrown herself into a flaming pile, never having followed in her love any course but that of nature, and that for the weight of the world in gold she would not have lent her body or her love to a king who did not love her with his heart, feet, hair, forehead, and all over. In short and moreover the speaker had never made an act of harlotry in selling one single grain of love to a man whom she had not chosen to be hers, and that he who held her in his arms one hour or kissed her on the mouth a little, possessed her for the remainder of her days.

Then by us has she been requested to state whence preceded the jewels, gold plate, silver, precious stones, regal furniture, carpets, et cetera, worth 200,000 doubloons, according to the inventory found in her residence and placed in the custody of the treasurer of the chapter. By the speaker answer has been made, that in us she placed all her hopes, even as much as in God, but that she dare not reply to this, because it involved the sweetest things of love upon which she had always lived. And interpellated anew, the speaker has said that if the judge knew with what fervour she held him she loved, with what obedience she followed him in good or evil ways, with what study she submitted to him, with what happiness she listened to his desires, and inhaled the sacred words with which his mouth gratified her, in what adoration she held his person, even we, an old judge, would believe with her well-beloved, that no sum could pay for this

great affection which all the men ran after. After the speaker has declared never from any man loved by her, to have solicited any present or gift, and that she rested perfectly contented to live in their hearts, that she would there curl herself up with indestructible and ineffable pleasure, finding herself richer with this heart than with anything, and thinking of no other thing than to give them more pleasure and happiness than she received from them. But in spite of the iterated refusals of the speaker her lovers persisted in graciously rewarding her. At times one came to her with a necklace of pearls, saying, "This is to show my darling that the satin of her skin did not falsely appear to me whiter than pearls" and would put it on the speaker's neck, kissing her lovingly. The speaker would be angry at these follies, but could not refuse to keep a jewel that gave them pleasure to see it there where they placed it. Each one had a different fancy. At times another liked to tear the precious garments which the speaker wore to gratify him; another to deck out the speaker with sapphires on her arms, on her legs, on her neck, and in her hair; another to seat her on the carpet, clad in silk or black velvet, and to remain for days together in ecstasy at the perfections of the speaker the whom the things desired by her lovers gave infinite pleasure, because these things rendered them quite happy. And the speaker has said, that as we love nothing so much as our pleasure, and wish that everything should shine in beauty and harmonise, outside as well as inside the heart, so they all wished to see the place inhabited by the speaker adorned with handsome objects, and from this idea all her lovers were pleased as much as she was in spreading thereabout gold, silks and flowers. Now seeing that these lovely things spoil nothing, the speaker had no force or commandment by which to prevent a knight, or even a rich citizen beloved by her, having his will, and thus found herself constrained to receive rare perfumes and other satisfaction with which the speaker was loaded, and that such was the source of the gold, plate, carpets, and jewels seized at her house by the officers of justice. This terminates the first interrogation made to the said Sister Clare, suspected to be a demon, because we the judge and Guillaume Tournebouche, are greatly fatigued with having the voice of the aforesaid, in our ears, and finding our understanding in every way muddled.

By us the judge has the second interrogatory been appointed, three

days from to-day, in order that the proofs of the possession and presence of the demon in the body of the aforesaid may be sought, and the accused, according to the order of the judge, has been taken back to the jail under the conduct of Master Guillaume Tournebouche.

*In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.*

On the thirteenth day following of the said month of the February before us, Hierome Cornille, et cetera, has been produced the Sister Clare above-mentioned, in order to be interrogated upon the facts and deeds to her imputed, and of them to be convicted.

By us, the judge, has it been said to the accused that, looking at the divers responses by her given to the proceeding interrogatories, it was certain that it never had been in the power of a simple woman, even if she were authorised, if such licence were allowed to lead the life of a loose woman, to give pleasure to all, to cause so many deaths, and to accomplish sorceries so perfect, without the assistance of a special demon lodged in her body, and to whom her soul had been sold by an especial compact. That it had been clearly demonstrated that under her outward appearance lies and moves a demon, the author of these evils, and that she was now called upon to declare at what age she had received the demon, to vow the agreement existing between herself and him, and to tell the truth concerning their common evil doings. By the speaker was it replied that she would answer us, man, as to God, who would be judge of all of us. Then has the speaker pretended never to have seen the demon, neither to have spoken with him, nor in any way to desire to see him; never to have led the life of a courtesan, because she, the speaker, had never practised the various delights that love invents, other than those furnished by the pleasure which the Sovereign Creator has put in the thing, and to have always been incited more from the desire of being sweet and good to the dear lord loved by her, than by an incessantly raging desire. But if such had been her inclination, the speaker begged us to bear in mind that she was a poor African girl, in whom God had placed very hot blood, and in her brain so easy an understanding of the delights of love, that if a man only looked at her she felt greatly moved in her heart. That if from desire of acquaintance an amorous

gentleman touched the speaker her on any portion of the body, there passing his hand, she was, in spite of everything, under his power, because her heart failed her instantly. By this touch, the apprehension and remembrance of all the sweet joys of love woke again in her breast, and there caused an intense heat, which mounted up, flamed in her veins, and made her love and joy from head to foot. And since the day when Don Marsilis had first awakened the understanding of the speaker concerning these things, she had never had any other thought, and thenceforth recognised love to be a thing so perfectly concordant with her nature, that it had since been proved to the speaker that in default of love and natural relief she would have died, withered at the said convent. As evidence of which, the speaker affirms as a certainty, that after her flight from the said convent she had not passed a single day or one particle of time in melancholy and sadness, but always was she joyous, and thus followed the sacred will of God, which she believed to have been diverted during the time lost by her in the convent.

To this was it objected by us, Hierome Cornille, to the said demon, that in this response she had openly blasphemed against God, because we had all been made to his greater glory, and placed in the world to honour and to serve Him, to have before our eyes His blessed commandments, and to live in sanctity, in order to gain eternal life, and not to be always in bed, doing that which even the beasts only do at a certain time. Then by the said sister, has answer been made, that she honoured God greatly, that in all countries she had taken care of the poor and suffering, giving them both money and raiment, and that at the last judgement-day she hoped to have around her a goodly company of holy works pleasant to God, which would intercede for her. That but for her humility, a fear of being reproached and of displeasing the gentlemen of the chapter, she would with joy have spent her wealth in finishing the cathedral of St. Maurice, and there have established foundations for the welfare of her soul—would have spared therein neither her pleasure nor her person, and that with this idea she would have taken double pleasure in her nights, because each one of her amours would have added a stone to the building of this basilic. Also the more this purpose, and for the eternal welfare of the speaker, would they have right heartily given their wealth.

Then by us has it been said to this demon that she could not justify the fact of her sterility, because in spite of so much commerce, no child had been born of her, the which proved the presence of a demon in her. Moreover, Astaroth alone, or an apostle, could speak all languages, and she spoke after the manner of all countries, the which proved the presence of the devil in her. Thereupon the speaker has asked: "In what consisted the said diversity of language?"—that of Greek she knew nothing but a Kyrie eleison, of which she made great use; of Latin, nothing, save Amen, which she said to God, wishing therewith to obtain her liberty. That for the rest the speaker had felt great sorrow, being without children, and if the good wives had them, she believed it was because they took so little pleasure in the business, and she, the speaker, a little too much. But that such was doubtless the will of God, who thought that from too great happiness, the world would be in danger of perishing. Taking this into consideration, and a thousand other reasons, which sufficiently establish the presence of the devil in the body of the sister, because the peculiar property of Lucifer is to always find arguments having the semblance of truth, we have ordered that in our presence the torture be applied to the said accused, and that she be well tormented in order to reduce the said demon by suffering to submit to the authority of the Church, and have requested to render us assistance one Francois de Hangest, master surgeon and doctor to the chapter, charging him by a codicil hereunder written to investigate the qualities of the feminine nature (*virtutes vulvae*) of the above-mentioned woman, to enlighten our religion on the methods employed by this demon to lay hold of souls in that way, and see if any article was there apparent.

Then the said Moorish women had wept bitterly, tortured in advance, and in spite of her irons, has knelt down imploring with cries and clamour the revocation of this order, objecting that her limbs were in such a feeble state, and her bones so tender, that they would break like glass; and finally, has offered to purchase her freedom from this by the gift all her goods to the chapter, and to quit incontinently the country.

Upon this, by us has she been required to voluntarily declare herself to be, and to have always been, demon of the nature of the

Succubus, which is a female devil whose business it is to corrupt Christians by the blandishments and flagitious delights of love. To this the speaker has replied that the affirmation would be an abominable falsehood, seeing that she had always felt herself to be a most natural woman.

Then her irons being struck off by the torturer, the aforesaid has removed her dress, and has maliciously and with evil design bewildered and attacked our understandings with the sight of her body, the which, for a fact, exercises upon a man supernatural coercion.

Master Guillaume Tournebouche has, by reason of nature, quitted the pen at this period, and retired, objecting that he was unable, without incredible temptations, which worked in his brain, to be a witness of this torture, because he felt the devil violently gaining his person.

This finishes the second interrogatory; and as the apparitor and janitor of the chapter have stated Master Francois de Hangest to be in the country, the torture and interrogations are appointed for tomorrow at the hour of noon after mass.

This has been written verbally by me, Hierome, in the absence of Master Guillaume Tournebouche, on whose behalf it is signed.

*Hierome Cornille* Grand Penitentiary.

### *Petition*

Today, the fourteenth day of the month of February, in the presence of me, Hierome Cornille, have appeared the said Masters Jehan Ribou, Antoine Jehan, Martin Beaupertuys, Hierome Maschefer, Jacques de Ville d'Omer, and the Sire d'Idre, in place of the mayor of the city of Tours, for the time absent. All plaintiffs designated in the act of process made at the Town Hall, to whom we have, at the request of Blanche Bruyn (now confessing herself a nun of the convent of Mount Carmel, under the name of Sister Clare), declared the appeal made to the Judgment of God by the said person accused of demonical possession, and her offer to pass through the ordeal of fire and water, in presence of the Chapter and of the town of Tours, in order to prove her reality as a woman and her innocence.

To this request have agreed for their parts, the said accusers, who,

on condition that the town is security for it, have engaged to prepare a suitable place and a pile, to be approved by the godparents of the accused.

Then by us, the judge, has the first day of the new year been appointed for the day of the ordeal—which will be next Paschal Day—and we have indicated the hour of noon, after mass, each of the parties having acknowledged this delay to be sufficient.

And the present proclamation shall be cited, at the suit of each of them, in all the towns, boroughs, and castles of Touraine and the land of France, at their request and at their cost and suit.

*Hierome Cornille.*

*III What the Succubus Did to Suck Out the Soul of the Old Judge,  
and What Came of the Diabolical Delectation.*

This the act of extreme confession made the first day of the month of March, in the year one thousand two hundred and seventy-one, after the coming of our blessed Saviour, by Hierome Cornille, priest, canon of the chapter of the cathedral of St. Maurice, grand penitentiary, of all acknowledging himself unworthy, who, finding his last hour to be come, and contrite of his sins, evil doings, forfeits, bad deeds, and wickednesses, has desired his avowal to be published to serve the preconisation of the truth, the glory of God, the justice of the tribunal, and to be an alleviation to him of his punishment, in the other world. The said Hierome Cornille being on his deathbed, there had been convoked to hear his declarations, Jehan de la Haye (de Hago), vicar of the church of St. Maurice; Pietro Guyard, treasurer of the chapter, appointed by our Lord Jean de Monsoreau, Archbishop, to write his words; and Dom Louis Pot, a monk of maius *Monasterium* (Marmoustier), chosen by him for a spiritual father and confessor; all three assisted by the great and illustrious Dr Guillaume de Censoris, Roman Archdeacon, at present sent into the diocese (*legatus*), by our Holy Father the Pope; and, finally, in the presence of a great number of Christians come to be witnesses of the death of the said Hierome Cornille, upon his known wish to make act of public repentance, seeing that he was fast sinking, and that his words might open the eyes of Christians about to fall into hell.

And before him, Hierome, who, by reason of his great weakness could not speak, has Dom Louis Pot read the following confession to the great agitation of the said company:—

“My brethren, until the seventy-first year of my age, which is the one in which I now am, with the exception of the little sins through which, all holy though he be, a Christian renders himself culpable before God, but which it is allowed to us to repurchase by penitence, I believe I led a Christian life, and merited the praise and renown bestowed upon me in this diocese, where I was raised to the high office of grand penitentiary, of which I am unworthy. Now, struck with the knowledge of the infinite glory of God, horrified at the agonies which await the wicked and prevaricators in hell, I have thought to lessen the enormity of my sins by the greatest penitence I can show in the extreme hour at which I am. Thus I have prayed of the Church, whom I have deceived and betrayed, whose rights and judicial renown I have sold, to grant me the opportunity of accusing myself publicly in the manner of ancient Christians. I hoped, in order to show my great repentance, to have still enough life in me to be reviled at the door of the cathedral by all my brethren, to remain there an entire day on my knees, holding a candle, a cord around my neck, and my feet naked, seeing that I had followed the way of hell with regard to the sacred instincts of the Church. But in this great shipwreck of my fragile virtue, which will be to you as a warning to fly from vice and the snares of the demon, and to take refuge in the Church, where all help is, I have been so bewitched by Lucifer that our Saviour Jesus Christ will take, by the intercession of all you whose help and prayers I request, pity on me, a poor abused Christian, whose eyes now stream with tears. So would I have another life to spend in works of penitence. Now then listen and tremble with great fear! Elected by the assembled Chapter to carry it out, instruct, and complete the process commenced against a demon, who had appeared in a feminine shape, in the person of a relapse nun—an abominable person, denying God, and bearing the name of Zulma in the infidel country whence she comes; the which devil is known in the diocese under that of Clare, of the convent of Mount Carmel, and has much afflicted the town by putting herself under an infinite number of men to gain their souls to Mammon, Astaroth, and Satan—princes

of hell, by making them leave this world in a state of mortal sin, and causing their death where life has its source, I have, I the judge, fallen in my latter days into this snare, and have lost my senses, while acquitting myself traitorously of the functions committed with great confidence by the Chapter to my cold senility. Hear how subtle the demon is, and stand firm against her artifices. While listening to the first response of the aforesaid Succubus, I saw with horror that the irons placed upon her feet and hands left no mark there, and was astonished at her hidden strength and at her apparent weakness. Then my mind was troubled suddenly at the sight of the natural perfections with which the devil was endowed. I listened to the music of her voice, which warmed me from head to foot, and made me desire to be young, to give myself up to this demon, thinking that for an hour passed in her company my eternal salvation was but poor payment for the pleasure of love tasted in those slender arms. Then I lost that firmness with which all judges should be furnished. This demon by me questioned, reasoned with me in such a manner that at the second interrogatory I was firmly persuaded I should be committing a crime in fining and torturing a poor little creature who cried like an innocent child. Then warned by a voice from on high to do my duty, and that these golden words, the music of celestial appearance, were diabolical mummeries, that this body, so pretty, so infatuating, would transmute itself into a bristly beast with sharp claws, those eyes so soft into flames of hell, her behind into a scaly tail, the pretty rosebud mouth and gentle lips into the jaws of a crocodile, I came back to my intention of having the said Succubus tortured until she avowed her permission, as this practice had already been followed in Christianity. Now when this demon showed herself stripped to me, to be put to the torture, I was suddenly placed in her power by magical conjurations. I felt my old bones crack, my brain received a warm light, my heart transhipped young and boiling blood. I was light in myself, and by virtue of the magic philter thrown into my eyes the snows on my forehead melted away. I lost all conscience of my Christian life and found myself a schoolboy, running about the country, escaped from class and stealing apples. I had not the power to make the sign of the cross, neither did I remember the Church, God the Father, nor the sweet Saviour of men. A prey to this design, I went

about the streets thinking over the delights of that voice, the abominable, pretty body of this demon, and saying a thousand wicked things to myself. Then pierced and drawn by a blow of the devil's fork, who had planted himself already in my head as a serpent in an oak, I was conducted by this sharp prong towards the jail, in spite of my guardian angel, who from time to time pulled me by the arm and defended me against these temptations, but in spite of his holy advice and his assistance I was dragged by a million claws stuck into my heart, and soon found myself in the jail. As soon as the door was opened to me I saw no longer any appearance of a prison, because the Succubus had there, with the assistance of evil genii or fays, constructed a pavilion of purple and silk, full of perfumes and flowers, where she was seated, superbly attired with neither irons on her neck nor chains on her feet. I allowed myself to be stripped of my ecclesiastical vestments, and was put into a scent bath. Then the demon covered me with a Saracen robe, entertained me with a repast of rare viands contained in precious vases, gold cups, Asiatic wines, songs and marvellous music, and a thousand sweet sounds that tickled my soul by means of my ears. At my side kept always the said Succubus, and her sweet, delectable embrace distilled new ardour into my members. My guardian angel quitted me. Then I lived only by the terrible light of the Moorish woman's eyes, coveted the warm embraces of the delicate body, wished always to feel her red lips, that I believed natural, and had no fear of the bite of those teeth which drew me to the bottom of hell, I delighted to feel the unequalled softness of her hands without thinking that they were unnatural claws. In short, I acted like husband desiring to go to his affianced without thinking that that spouse was everlasting death. I had no thought for the things of this world nor the interests of God, dreaming only of love, of the sweet breasts of this woman, who made me burn, and of the gate of hell in which I wished to cast myself. Alas! my brethren, during three days and three nights was I thus constrained to toil without being able to stop the stream which flowed from my reins, in which were plunged, like two pikes, the hands of the Succubus, which communicated to my poor old age and to my dried up bones, I know not what sweat of love. At first this demon, to draw me to her, caused to flow in my inside the softness of milk, then came poignant joys

which pricked like a hundred needles my bones, my marrow, my brain, and my nerves. Then all this gone, all things became inflamed, my head, my blood, my nerves, my flesh, my bones, and then I burned with the real fire of hell, which caused me torments in my joints, and an incredible, intolerable, tearing voluptuousness which loosened the bonds of my life. The tresses of this demon, which enveloped my poor body, poured upon me a stream of flame, and I felt each lock like a bar of red iron. During this mortal delectation I saw the ardent face of the said Succubus, who laughed and addressed to me a thousand exciting words; such as that I was her knight, her lord, her lance, her day, her joy, her hero, her life, her good, her rider, and that she would like to clasp me even closer, wishing to be in my skin or have me in hers. Hearing which, under the prick of this tongue which sucked out my soul, I plunged and precipitated myself finally into hell without finding the bottom. And then when I had no more a drop of blood in my veins, when my heart no longer beat in my body, and I was ruined at all points, the demon, still fresh, white, rubicund, glowing, and laughing, said to me—

“Poor fool, to think me a demon! Had I asked thee to sell thy soul for a kiss, wouldst thou not give it to me with all thy heart?”

“Yes,” said I.

“And if always to act thus it were necessary for thee to nourish thyself with the blood of new-born children in order always to have new life to spend in my arms, would you not imbibe it willingly?”

“Yes,” said I.

“And to be always my gallant horseman, gay as a man in his prime, feeling life, drinking pleasure, plunging to the depths of joy as a swimmer into the Loire, wouldst thou not deny God, wouldst thou not spit in the face of Jesus?”

“Yes,” said I.

“Then I felt a hundred sharp claws which tore my diaphragm as if the beaks of a thousand birds there took their bellyfuls, shrieking. Then I was lifted suddenly above the earth upon the said Succubus, who had spread her wings, and cried to me—

“Ride, ride, my gallant rider! Hold yourself firmly on the back of thy mule, by her mane, by her neck; and ride, ride, my gallant rider—everything rides!” And then I saw, as a thick fog, the cities of the

earth, where by a special gift I perceived each one coupled with a female demon, and tossing about, and engendering in great concupiscence, all shrieking a thousand words of love and exclamations of all kinds, and all toiling away with ecstasy. Then my horse with the Moorish head pointed out to me, still flying and galloping beyond the clouds, the earth coupled with the sun in a conjunction, from which proceeded a germ of stars, and there each female world was embracing a male world; but in place of the words used by creatures, the worlds were giving forth the howls of tempests, throwing up lightnings and crying thunders. Then still rising, I saw overhead the female nature of all things in love with the Prince of Movement. Now, by way of mockery, the Succubus placed me in the centre of this horrible and perpetual conflict, where I was lost as a grain of sand in the sea. Then still cried my white mare to me, 'Ride, ride my gallant rider—all things ride!' Now, thinking how little was a priest in this torment of the seed of worlds, nature always clasped together, and metals, stones, waters, airs, thunders, fish, plants, animals, men, spirits, worlds and planets, all embracing with rage, I denied the Catholic faith. Then the Succubus, pointing out to me the great patch of stars seen in heavens, said to me, 'That way is a drop of celestial seed escaped from great flow of the worlds in conjunction.' Thereupon I instantly clasped the Succubus with passion by the light of a thousand million of stars, and I wished in clasping her to feel the nature of those thousand million creatures. Then by this great effort of love I fell impotent in every way, and heard a great infernal laugh. Then I found myself in my bed, surrounded by my servitors, who had had the courage to struggle with the demon, throwing into the bed where I was stretched a basin full of holy water, and saying fervent prayers to God. Then had I to sustain, in spite of this assistance, a horrible combat with the said Succubus, whose claws still clutched my heart, causing me infinite pains; still, while reanimated by the voice of my servitors, relations, and friends, I tried to make the sacred sign of the cross; the Succubus perched on my bed, on the bolster, at the foot, everywhere, occupying herself in distracting my nerves, laughing, grimacing, putting before my eyes a thousand obscene images, and causing me a thousand wicked desires. Nevertheless, taking pity on me, my lord the Archbishop caused the relics of St. Gatien

to be brought, and the moment the shrine had touched my bed the said Succubus was obliged to depart, leaving an odour of sulphur and of hell, which made the throats of my servants, friends, and others sore for a whole day. Then the celestial light of God having enlightened my soul, I knew I was, through my sins and my combat with the evil spirit, in great danger of dying. Then did I implore the especial mercy, to live just a little time to render glory to God and his Church, objecting the infinite merits of Jesus dead upon the cross for the salvation of the Christians. By this prayer I obtained the favour of recovering sufficient strength to accuse myself of my sins, and to beg of the members of the Church of St. Maurice their aid and assistance to deliver me from purgatory, where I am about to atone for my faults by infinite agonies. Finally, I declare that my proclamation, wherein the said demon appeals the judgment of God by the ordeals of holy water and a fire, is a subterfuge due to an evil design suggested by the said demon, who would thus have had the power to escape the justice of the tribunal of the Archbishop and of the Chapter, seeing that she secretly confessed to me, to be able to make another demon accustomed to the ordeal appear in her place. And, in conclusion, I give and bequeath to the Chapter of the Church of St. Maurice my property of all kinds, to found a chapter in the said church, to build it and adorn it and put it under the invocation of St. Hierome and St. Gatien, of whom one is my patron and the other the saviour of my soul.”

This, heard by all the company, has been brought to the notice of the ecclesiastical tribunal by Jehan to la Haye (Johannes de Haga).

We, Jehan de la Haye (Johannes de Haga), elected grand penitentiary of St. Maurice by the general assembly of the Chapter, according to the usage and custom of that church, and appointed to pursue afresh the trial of the demon Succubus, at present in the jail of the Chapter, have ordered a new inquest, at which will be heard all those of this diocese having cognisance of the facts relative thereto. We declared void the other proceedings, interrogations, and decrees, and annul them in the name of the members of the Church in general, and sovereign Chapter assembled, and declare that the appeal to God, traitorously made by the demon, shall not take place, in consequence

of the notorious treachery of the devil in this affair. And the said judgment shall be cried by sound of trumpet in all parts of the diocese in which have been published the false edicts of the preceding month, all notoriously due to the instigation of the demon, according to the confession of the late Hierome Cornille.

Let all good Christians be of assistance to our Holy Church, and to her commandments.

*Jehan de la Haye.*

*IV How the Moorish Woman of the Rue Chaude Twisted about so Briskly That with Great Difficulty Was She Burned and Cooked Alive, to the Great Loss of the Infernal Regions.*

This was written in the month of May, of the year 1360, after the manner of a testament.

“My very dear and well-beloved son, when it shall be lawful for thee to read this I shall be, I thy father, reposing in the tomb, imploring thy prayers, and supplicating thee to conduct thyself in life as it will be commanded thee in this rescript, bequeathed for the good government of thy family, thy future, and safety; for I have done this at a period when I had my senses and understanding, still recently affected by the sovereign injustice of men. In my virile age I had a great ambition to raise myself in the Church, and therein to obtain the highest dignities, because no life appeared to me more splendid. Now with this earnest idea, I learned to read and write, and with great trouble became in a fit condition to enter the clergy. But because I had no protection, or good advice to superintend my training I had an idea of becoming the writer, tabellion, and rubrican of the Chapter of St. Maurice, in which were the highest and richest personages of Christendom, since the King of France is only therein a simple canon. Now there I should be able better than anywhere else to find services to render to certain lords, and thus to find a master or gain patronage, and by this assistance enter into religion, and be mitred and esconced in an archiepiscopal chair, somewhere or other. But this first vision was over credulous, and a little too ambitious, the which God caused me clearly to perceive by the sequel. In fact, Messire

Jehan de Villedomer, who afterwards became cardinal, was given this appointment, and I was rejected, discomfited. Now in this unhappy hour I received an alleviation of my troubles, by the advice of the good old Hierome Cornille, of whom I have often spoken to you. This dear man induced me, by his kindness, to become penman to the Chapter of St. Maurice and the Archbishop of Tours, the which offer I accepted with joy, since I was reputed a scrivener. At the time I was about to enter into the presbytery commenced the famous process against the devil of the Rue Chaude, of which the old folk still talk, and which in its time, has been recounted in every home in France. Now, believing that it would be of great advantage to my ambition, and that for this assistance the Chapter would raise me to some dignity, my good master had me appointed for the purpose of writing all of that should be in this grave cause, subject to writing. At the very outset Monseigneur Hierome Cornille, a man approaching eighty years, of great sense, justice, and sound understanding, suspected some spitefulness in this cause, although he was not partial to immodest girls, and had never been involved with a woman in his life, and was holy and venerable, with a sanctity which had caused him to be selected as a judge, all this notwithstanding. As soon as the depositions were completed, and the poor wench heard, it remained clear that although this merry doxy had broken her religious vows, she was innocent of all devilry, and that her great wealth was coveted by her enemies, and other persons, whom I must not name to thee for reasons of prudence. At this time every one believed her to be so well furnished with silver and gold that she could have bought the whole county of Touraine, if so it had pleased her. A thousand falsehoods and calumnious words concerning the girl, envied by all the honest women, were circulated and believed in as gospel. At this period Master Hierome Cornille, having ascertained that no demon other than that of love was in the girl, made her consent to remain in a convent for the remainder of her days. And having ascertained certain noble knights brave in war and rich in domains, that they would do everything to save her, he invited her secretly to demand of her accusers the judgment of God, at the same time giving her goods to the chapter, in order to silence mischievous tongues. By this means would be saved from the stake the most delicate flower that ever

heaven has allowed to fall upon our earth; the which flower yielded only from excessive tenderness and amiability to the malady of love, cast by her eyes into the hearts of all her pursuers. But the real devil, under the form of a monk, mixed himself up in this affair; in this wise: great enemy of the virtue, wisdom, and sanctity of Monsignor Hierome Cornille, named Jehan de la Haye, having learned that in the jail, the poor girl was treated like a queen, wickedly accused the grand penitentiary of connivance with her and of being her servitor, because, said this wicked priest, she makes him young, amorous, and happy, from which the poor old man died of grief in one day, knowing by this that Jehan de la Haye had worn his ruin and coveted his dignities. In fact, our lord the archbishop visited the jail, and found the Moorish woman in a pleasant place, reposing comfortably, and without irons, because, having placed a diamond in a place when none could have believed she could have held it, she had purchased the clemency of her jailer. At the time certain persons said that this jailer was smitten with her, and that from love, or perhaps in great fear of the young barons, lovers of this woman, he had planned her escape. The good man Cornille being at the point of death, through the treachery of Jehan de la Haye, the Chapter thinking it necessary to make null and void the proceedings taken by the penitentiary, and also his decrees, the said Jehan de la Haye, at that time a simple vicar of the cathedral, pointed out that to do this it would be sufficient to obtain a public confession from the good man on his death-bed. Then was the moribund tortured and tormented by the gentleman of the Chapter, those of Saint Martin, those of Marmoustiers, by the archbishop and also by the Pope's legate, in order that he might recant to the advantage of the Church, to which the good man would not consent. But after a thousand ills, the public confession was prepared, at which the most noteworthy people of the town assisted, and the which spread more horror and consternation than I can describe. The churches of the diocese held public prayers for this calamity, and every one expected to see the devil tumble into his house by the chimney. But the truth of it is that the good Master Hierome had a fever, and saw cows in his room, and then was this recantation obtained of him. The access passed, the poor saint wept copiously on learning this trick from me. In fact, he died in my arms, assisted by

his physicians, heartbroken at this mummery, telling us that he was going to the feet of God to pray to prevent the consummation of this deplorable iniquity. The poor Moorish woman had touched him much by her tears and repentance, seeing that before making her demand for the judgment of God he had minutely confessed her, and by that means had disentangled the soul divine which was in the body, and of which he spoke as of a diamond worthy of adorning the holy crown of God, when she should have departed this life, after repenting her sins. Then, my dear son, knowing by the statements made in the town, and by the naive responses of this unhappy wretch, all the trickery of this affair, I determined by the advice of Master Francois de Hangest, physician of the chapter, to feign an illness and quit the service of the Church of St. Maurice and of the archbishopric, in order not to dip my hands in the innocent blood, which still cries and will continue to cry aloud unto God until the day of the last judgment. Then was the jailer dismissed, and in his place was put the second son of the torturer, who threw the Moorish woman into a dungeon, and inhumanly put upon her hands and feet chains weighing fifty pounds, besides a wooden waistband; and the jail were watched by the crossbowmen of the town and the people of the archbishop. The wench was tormented and tortured, and her bones were broken; conquered by sorrow, she made an avowal according to the wishes of Jehan de la Haye, and was instantly condemned to be burned in the enclosure of St. Etienne, having been previously placed in the portals of the church, attired in a chemise of sulphur, and her goods given over to the Chapter, et cetera. This order was the cause of great disturbances and fighting in the town, because three young knights of Touraine swore to die in the service of the poor girl, and to deliver her in all possible ways. Then they came into the town, accompanied by thousands of sufferers, labouring people, old soldiers, warriors, courtesans, and others, whom the said girls had succoured, saved from misfortune, from hunger and misery, and searched all the poor dwellings of the town where lay those to whom she had done good. Thus all were stirred up and called together to the plain of Mount-Louis under the protection of the soldiers of the said lords; they had for companions all the scapegraces of the said twenty leagues around, and came one morning to

lay siege to the prison of the archbishop, demanding that the Moorish woman should be given up to them as though they would put her to death, but in fact to set her free, and to place her secretly upon a swift horse, that she might gain the open country, seeing that she rode like a groom. Then in this frightful tempest of men have we seen between the battlements of the archiepiscopal palace and the bridges, more than ten thousand men swarming, besides those who were perched upon the roofs of the houses and climbing on all the balconies to see the sedition; in short it was easy to hear the horrible cries of the Christians, who were terribly in earnest, and of those who surrounded the jail with the intention of setting the poor girl free, across the Loire, the other side of Saint Symphorien. The suffocation and squeezing of bodies was so great in this immense crowd, bloodthirsty for the poor creature at whose knees they would have fallen had they had the opportunity of seeing her, that seven children, eleven women, and eight citizens were crushed and smashed beyond all recognition, since they were like splodges of mud; in short, so wide open was the great mouth of this popular leviathan, this horrible monster, that the clamour was heard at Montils-les-Tours. All cried 'Death to the Succubus! Throw out the demon! Ha! I'd like a quarter! I'll have her skin! The foot for me, the mane for thee! The head for me! The something for me! Is it red? Shall we see? Will it be grilled? Death to her! death!' Each one had his say. But the cry, 'Largesse to God! Death to the Succubus!' was yelled at the same time by the crowd so hoarsely and so cruelly that one's ears and heart bled therefrom; and the other cries were scarcely heard in the houses. The archbishop decided, in order to calm this storm which threatened to overthrow everything, to come out with great pomp from the church, bearing the host, which would deliver the Chapter from ruin, since the wicked young men and the lords had sworn to destroy and burn the cloisters and all the canons. Now by this stratagem the crowd was obliged to break up, and from lack of provisions return to their houses. Then the monks of Touraine, the lords, and the citizens, in great apprehension of pillage on the morrow, held a nocturnal council, and accepted the advice of the Chapter. By their efforts the men-at-arms, archers, knights, and citizens, in a large number, kept watch, and killed a party of shepherds, road menders, and vagrants, who,

knowing the disturbed state of Tours, came to swell the ranks of the malcontents. The Sire Harduin de Maille, an old nobleman, reasoned with the young knights, who were the champions of the Moorish woman, and argued sagely with them, asking them if for so small a woman they wished to put Touraine to fire and sword; that even if they were victorious they would be masters of the bad characters brought together by them; that these said freebooters, after having sacked the castles of their enemies, would turn to those of their chiefs. That the rebellion commenced had had no success in the first attack, because up to that time the place was untouched, could they have any over the church, which would invoke the aid of the king? And a thousand other arguments. To these reasons the young knights replied, that it was easy for the Chapter to aid the girl's escape in the night, and that thus the cause of the sedition would be removed. To this humane and wise requests replied Monseigneur de Censoris, the Pope's legate, that it was necessary that strength should remain with the religion of the Church. And thereupon the poor wench payed for all, since it was agreed that no inquiry should be made concerning this sedition.

“Then the Chapter had full licence to proceed to the penance of the girl, to which act and ecclesiastical ceremony the people came from twelve leagues around. So that on the day when, after divine satisfaction, the Succubus was to be delivered up to secular justice, in order to be publicly burnt at a stake, not for a gold pound would a lord or even an abbot have been found lodging in the town of Tours. The night before many camped outside the town in tents, or slept upon straw. Provisions were lacking, and many who came with their bellies full, returned with their bellies empty, having seen nothing but the reflection of the fire in the distance. And the bad characters did good strokes of business by the way.

“The poor courtesan was half dead; her hair had whitened. She was, to tell the truth, nothing but a skeleton, scarcely covered with flesh, and her chains weighed more than she did. If she had had joy in her life, she paid dearly for it at this moment. Those who saw her pass say that she wept and shrieked in a way that should have earned the pity of her hardest pursuers; and in the church there were compelled to put a piece of wood in her mouth, which she bit as a lizard

bites a stick. Then the executioner tied her to a stake to sustain her, since she let herself roll at times and fell for want of strength. Then she suddenly recovered a vigorous handful, because, this notwithstanding, she was able, it is said to break her cords and escape into the church, where in remembrance of her old vocation, she climbed quickly into galleries above, flying like a bird along the little columns and small friezes. She was about to escape on to the roof when a soldier perceived her, and thrust his spear in the sole of her foot. In spite of her foot half cut through, the poor girl still ran along the church without noticing it, going along with her bones broken and her blood gushing out, so great fear had she of the flames of the stake. At last she was taken and bound, thrown into a tumbrel and led to the stake, without being afterwards heard to utter a cry. The account of her flight in the church assisted in making the common people believe that she was the devil, and some of them said that she had flown in the air. As soon as the executioner of the town threw her into the flames, she made two or three horrible leaps and fell down into the bottom of the pile, which burned day and night. On the following evening I went to see if anything remained of this gentle girl, so sweet, so loving, but I found nothing but a fragment of the 'os stomachal,' in which, in spite of this, there still remained some moisture, and which some say still trembled like a woman does in the same place. It is impossible to tell, my dear son, the sadnesses, without number and without equal, which for about ten years weighed upon me; always was I thinking of this angel burnt by wicked men, and always I beheld her with her eyes full of love. In short the supernatural gifts of this artless child were shining day and night before me, and I prayed for her in the church, where she had been martyred. At length I had neither the strength nor the courage to look without trembling upon the grand penitentiary Jehan de la Haye, who died eaten up by lice. Leprosy was his punishment. Fire burned his house and his wife; and all those who had a hand in the burning had their own hands singed.

"This, my well-beloved son, was the cause of a thousand ideas, which I have here put into writing to be forever the rule of conduct in our family.

"I quitted the service of the church, and espoused your mother,

from whom I received infinite blessings, and with whom I shared my life, my goods, my soul, and all. And she agreed with me in following precepts —Firstly, that to live happily, it is necessary to keep far away from church people, to honour them much without giving them leave to enter your house, any more than to those who by right, just or unjust, are supposed to be superior to us. Secondly, to take a modest condition, and to keep oneself in it without wishing to appear in any way rich. To have a care to excite no envy, nor strike any onesoever in any manner, because it is needful to be as strong as an oak, which kills the plants at its feet, to crush envious heads, and even then would one succumb, since human oaks are especially rare and that no Tournebouche should flatter himself that he is one, granting that he be a Tournebouche. Thirdly, never to spend more than one quarter of one's income, conceal one's wealth, hide one's goods and chattels, to undertake no office, to go to church like other people, and always keep one's thoughts to oneself, seeing that they belong to you and not to others, who twist them about, turn them after their own fashion, and make calumnies therefrom. Fourthly, always to remain in the condition of the Tournebouches, who are now and forever drapers. To marry your daughters to good drapers, send your sons to be drapers in other towns of France furnished with these wise precepts, and to bring them up to the honour of drapery, and without leaving any dream of ambition in their minds. A draper like a Tournebouche should be their glory, their arms, their name, their motto, their life. Thus by being always drapers, they will be always Tournebouches, and rub on like the good little insects, who, once lodged in the beam, made their dens, and go on with security to the end of their ball of thread. Fifthly never to speak any other language than that of drapery, and never to dispute concerning religion or government. And even though the government of the state, the province, religion, and God turn about, or have a fancy to go to the right or to the left, always in your quality of Tournebouche, stick to your cloth. Thus unnoticed by the others of the town, the Tournebouches will live in peace with their little Tournebouches—paying the tithes and taxes, and all that they are required by force to give, be it to God, or to the king, to the town or to the parish, with all of whom it is unwise to struggle. Also it is necessary to keep the

patrimonial treasure, to have peace and to buy peace, never to owe anything, to have corn in the house, and enjoy yourselves with the doors and windows shut.

“By this means none will take from the Tournebouches, neither the state, nor the Church, nor the Lords, to whom should the case be that force is employed, you will lend a few crowns without cherishing the idea of ever seeing him again—I mean the crowns.

“Thus, in all seasons people will love the Tournebouches, will mock the Tournebouches as poor people—as the slow Tournebouches, as Tournebouches of no understanding. Let the know-nothings say on. The Tournebouches will neither be burned nor hanged, to the advantage of King or Church, or other people; and the wise Tournebouches will have secretly money in their pockets, and joy in their houses, hidden from all.

“Now, my dear son, follow this the counsel of a modest and middle-class life. Maintain this in thy family as a county charter; and when you die, let your successor maintain it as the sacred gospel of the Tournebouches, until God wills it that there be no longer Tournebouches in this world.”

This letter has been found at the time of the inventory made in the house of Francois Tournebouche, lord of Veretz, chancellor to Monseigneur the Dauphin, and condemned at the time of the rebellion of the said lord against the King to lose his head, and have all his goods confiscated by order of the Parliament of Paris. The said letter has been handed to the Governor of Touraine as an historical curiosity, and joined to the pieces of the process in the archbishopric of Tours, by me, Pierre Gaultier, Sheriff, President of the Trades Council.

The author having finished the transcription and deciphering of these parchments, translating them from their strange language into French, the donor of them declared that the Rue Chaude at Tours was so called, according to certain people, because the sun remained there longer than in all other parts. But in spite of this version, people of lofty understanding will find, in the warm way of the said Succubus, the real origin of the said name. In which acquiesces the author. This teaches us not to abuse our body, but use it wisely in view of our salvation.

## DESPAIR IN LOVE

AT THE TIME when King Charles the Eighth took it into his head to decorate the castle of Amboise, they came with him certain workmen, master sculptors, good painters, and masons, or architects, who ornamented the galleries with splendid works, which, through neglect, have since been much spoiled.

At that time the court was staying in this beautiful locality, and, as everyone knows, the king took great pleasure in watching his people work out their ideas. Among these foreign gentlemen was an Italian, named Angelo Cappara, a most worthy young man, and, in spite of his age, a better sculptor and engraver than any of them; and it astonished many to see one in the April of his life so clever. Indeed, there had scarcely sprouted upon his visage the hair which imprints upon a man virile majesty. To this Angelo the ladies took a great fancy because he was charming as a dream, and as melancholy as a dove left solitary in its nest by the death of its mate. And this was the reason thereof: this sculptor knew the curse of poverty, which mars and troubles all the actions of life; he lived miserably, eating little, ashamed of his pennilessness, and made use of his talents only through great despair, wishing by any means to win that idle life which is the best all for those whose minds are occupied. The Florentine, out of bravado, came to the court gallantly attired, and from the timidity of youth and misfortune dared not ask his money from the king, who, seeing him thus dressed, believed him well with everything. The courtiers and the ladies used all to admire his beautiful works, and also their author; but of money he got none. All, and the ladies above all, finding him rich by nature, esteemed him well off with his youth, his long black hair, and bright eyes, and did not give a thought to lucre, while thinking of these things and the rest. Indeed they were quite right, since these advantages gave to many a rascal of the court,

lands, money and all. In spite of his youthful appearance, Master Angelo was twenty years of age, and no fool, had a large heart, a head full of poetry; and more than that, was a man of lofty imaginings. But although he had little confidence in himself, like all poor and unfortunate people, he was astonished at the success of the ignorant. He fancied that he was ill-fashioned, either in body or mind, and kept his thoughts to himself. I am wrong, for he told them in the clear starlight nights to the shadows, to God, to the devil, and everything about him. At such times he would lament his fate in having a heart so warm, that doubtless the ladies avoided him as they would a red-hot iron; then he would say to himself how he would worship a beautiful mistress, how all his life long he would honour her, and with what fidelity he would attach himself to her, with what affection serve her, how studiously obey her commands, with what sports he would dispel the light clouds of her melancholy sadness on the days when the skies should be overcast. Fashioning himself one out of his imagination, he would throw himself at her feet, kiss, fondle, caress, bite, and clasp her with as much reality as a prisoner scampers over the grass when he sees the green fields through the bars of his cell. Thus he would appeal to her mercy; overcome with his feelings, would stop her breath with his embraces, would become daring in spite of his respect, and passionately bite the clothes of his bed, seeking this celestial lady, full of courage when by himself, but abashed on the morrow if he passed one by. Nevertheless, inflamed by these amorous advances, he would hammer way anew at his marble figures, would carve beautiful breasts, to bring the water into one's mouth at the sight of those sweet fruits of love, without counting the other things that he raised, carved, and caressed with the chisels, smoothed down with his file, and fashioned in a manner that would make their use intelligible to the mind of a greenhorn, and stain his verdure in a single day. The ladies would criticise these beauties, and all of them were smitten with the youthful Cappara. And the youthful Cappara would eye them up and down, swearing that the day one of them gave him her little finger to kiss, he would have his desire.

Among these high-born ladies there came one day one by herself to the young Florentine, asking him why he was so shy, and if none of the court ladies could make him sociable. Then she graciously invited him to come to her house that evening.

Master Angelo perfumes himself, purchases a velvet mantle with a double fringe of satin, borrows from a friend a cloak with wide sleeves, a slashed doublet, and silken hose, arrives at the house, and ascends the stairs with hasty feet, hope beaming from his eyes, knowing not what to do with his heart, which leaped and bounded like a goat; and, to sum up, so much over head and ears in love, that the perspiration trickled down his back.

You may be sure the lady was a beautiful, and Master Cappara was the more aware of it, since in his profession he had studied the mouldings of the arms, the lines of the body, the secret surroundings of the sex, and other mysteries. Now this lady satisfied the especial rules of art; and besides being fair and slender, she had a voice to disturb life in its source, to stir fire of a heart, brain, and everything; in short, she put into one's imagination delicious images of love without thinking of it, which is the characteristic of these cursed women.

The sculptor found her seated by the fire in a high chair, and the lady immediately commenced to converse at her ease, although Angelo could find no other replies than "Yes" and "No," could get no other words from his throat nor idea in his brain, and would have beaten his head against the fireplace but for the happiness of gazing at and listening to his lovely mistress, who was playing there like a young fly in the sunshine. Because, which this mute admiration, both remained until the middle of the night, wandering slowly down the flowery path of love, the good sculptor went away radiant with happiness. On the road, he concluded in his own mind, that if a noble lady kept him rather close to her skirts during four hours of the night, it would not matter a straw if she kept him there the remainder. Drawing from these premises certain corollaries, he resolved to ask her favours as a simple woman. Then he determined to kill everybody—the husband, the wife, or himself—rather than lose the distaff whereon to spin one hour of joy. Indeed, he was so mad with love, that he believed life to be but a small stake in the game of love, since one single day of it was worth a thousand lives.

The Florentine chiselled away at his statues, thinking of his evening, and thus spoiled many a nose thinking of something else. Noticing this, he left his work, perfumed himself, and went to listen to the sweet words of his lady, with the hope of turning them into deeds;

but when he was in the presence of his sovereign, her feminine majesty made itself felt, and poor Cappara, such a lion in street, looked sheepish when gazing at his victim. This notwithstanding, towards the hour when desire becomes heated, he was almost in the lady's lap and held her tightly clasped. He had obtained a kiss, had taken it, much to his delight; for, when they give it, the ladies retain the right of refusal, but when they left it to be taken, the lover may take a thousand. This is the reason why all of them are accustomed to let it be taken. The Florentine has stolen a great number, and things were going on admirably, when the lady, who had been thrifty with her favours, cried, "My husband!"

And, in fact, my lord had just returned from playing tennis, and the sculptor had to leave the place, but not without receiving a warm glance from the lady interrupted in her pleasure. This was all his substance, pittance and enjoyment during a whole month, since on the brink of his joy always came the said husband, and he always arrived wisely between a point-blank refusal and those little sweet caresses with which women always season their refusals—little things which reanimate love and render it all the stronger. And when the sculptor, out of patience, commenced, immediately upon his arrival, the skirmish of the skirt, in order that victory might arrive before the husband, to whom, no doubt, these disturbances were not without profit, his fine lady, seeing desire written in the eyes of her sculptor, commenced endless quarrels and altercations; at first she pretended to be jealous in order to rail against love; then appeased the anger of the little one with the moisture of a kiss, then kept the conversation to herself, and kept on saying that her lover should be good, obedient to her will, otherwise she would not yield to him her life and soul; that a desire was a small thing to offer a mistress; that she was more courageous, because loving more she sacrificed more, and to his propositions she would exclaim, "Silence, sir!" with the air of a queen, and at times she would put on an angry look, to reply to the reproachs of Cappara: "If you are not as I wish you to be, I will no longer love you."

The poor Italian saw, when it was too late, that this was not a noble love, one of those which does not mete out joy as a miser his crowns; and that this lady took delight in letting him jump about

outside the hedge and be master of everything, provided he touched not the garden of love. At this business Cappara became a savage enough to kill anyone, and took with him trusty companions, his friends, to whom he gave the task of attacking the husband while walking home to bed after his game of tennis with the king. He came to his lady at the accustomed hour when the sweet sports of love were in full swing, which sports were long, lasting kisses, hair twisted and untwisted, hand bitten with passion, ears as well; indeed, the whole business, with the exception of that especial thing which good authors rightly find abominable. The Florentine exclaims between two hearty kisses—

“Sweet one, do you love me more than anything?”

“Yes,” said she, because words never cost anything.

“Well then,” replied the lover, “be mine in deed as in word.”

“But,” said she, “my husband will be here directly.”

“Is that the only reason?” said he.

“Yes.”

“I have friends who will cross him, and will not let him go unless I show a torch at this window. If he complain to the king, my friends will say, they thought they were playing a joke on one of their own set.”

“Ah, my dear,” said she, “let me see if everyone in the house is gone to bed.”

She rose, and held the light to the window. Seeing which Cappara blew out the candle, seized his sword, and placing himself in front of the woman, whose scorn and evil mind he recognised.

“I will not kill you, madame,” said he, “but I will mark your face in such a manner you will never again coquette with young lovers whose lives you waste. You have deceived me shamefully, and are not a respectable woman. You must know that a kiss will never sustain life in a true lover, and that a kissed mouth needs the rest. You have made my life forever dull and wretched; now I will make you remember forever my death, which you have caused. You shall never again behold yourself in a glass without seeing there my face also.” Then he raised his arm, and held the sword ready to cut off a good slice of the fresh fair cheek, where still all the traces of his kiss remained. And the lady exclaimed, “You wretch!”

“Hold your tongue,” said he; “you told me that you loved me better than anything. Now you say otherwise; each evening have you raised me a little nearer to heaven; with one blow you cast me into hell, and you think that your petticoat can save you from a lover’s wrath—No!”

“Ah, my Angelo! I am thine,” said she, marvelling at this man glaring with rage.

But he, stepping three paces back, replied, “Ah, woman of the court and wicked heart, thou lovest, then, thy face better than thy lover.”

She turned pale, and humbly held up her face, for she understood that at this moment her past perfidy wronged her present love. With a single blow Angelo slashed her face, then left her house, and quitted the country. The husband not having been stopped by reason of that light which was seen by the Florentines, found his wife minus her left cheek. But she spoke not a word in spite of her agony; she loved her Cappara more than life itself. Nevertheless, the husband wished to know whence preceded this wound. No one having been there except the Florentine, he complained to the king, who had his workman hastily pursued, and ordered him to be hanged at Blois. On the day of execution a noble lady was seized with a desire to save this courageous man, whom she believed to be a lover of the right sort. She begged the king to give him to her, which he did willingly. But Cappara declaring that he belonged entirely to his lady, the memory of whom he could not banish entirely, entered the Church, became a cardinal and a great savant, and used to say in his old age that he had existed upon the remembrance of the joys tasted in those poor hours of anguish; in which he was, at the same time, both very well and very badly treated by his lady. There are authors saying afterwards he succeeded better with his old sweetheart, whose cheek healed; but I cannot believe this, because he was a man of heart, who had a high opinion of the holy joys of love.

This teaches us nothing worth knowing, unless it be that there are unlucky meetings in life, since this tale is in every way true. If in other places the author has overshot the truth, this one will gain for him the indulgence of the conclave or lovers.

## EPILOGUE

THIS SECOND SERIES comes in the merry month of June, when all is green and gay, because the poor muse, whose slave the author is, has been more capricious than the love of a queen, and has mysteriously wished to bring forth her fruit in the time of flowers. No one can boast himself master of this fay. At times, when grave thoughts occupy the mind and grieve the brain, comes the jade whispering her merry tales in the author's ear, tickling her lips with her feathers, dancing sarabands, and making the house echo with her laughter. If by chance the writer, abandoning science for pleasure, says to her, "Wait a moment, little one, till I come," and runs in great haste to play with the madcap, she has disappeared. She has gone into her hole, hides herself there, rolls herself up, and retires. Take the poker, take a staff, a cudgel, a cane, raise them, strike the wench, and rave at her, she moans; strap her, she moans; caress her, fondle her, she moans; kiss her, say to her, "Here, little one," she moans. Now she's cold, now she is going to die; adieu to love, adieu to laughter, adieu to merriment, adieu to good stories. Wear mourning for her, weep and fancy her dead, groan. Then she raises her head, her merry laugh rings out again; she spreads her white wings, flies one knows not wither, turns in the air, capers, shows her impish tail, her woman's breasts, her strong loins, and her angelic face, shakes her perfumed tresses, gambols in the rays of the sun, shines forth in all her beauty, changes her colours like the breast of a dove, laughs until she cries, cast the tears of her eyes into the sea, where the fishermen find them transmuted into pretty pearls, which are gathered to adorn the foreheads of queens. She twists about like a colt broken loose, exposing her virgin charms, and a thousand things so fair that a pope would peril his salvation for her at the mere sight of them. During these wild pranks of the ungovernable beast you meet fools and friends, who

say to the poor poet, "Where are your tales? Where are your new volumes? You are a pagan prognosticator. Oh yes, you are known. You go to fetes and feasts, and do nothing between your meals. Where's your work?"

Although I am by nature partial to kindness, I should like to see one of these people impaled in the Turkish fashion, and thus equipped, sent on the Love Chase. Here endeth the second series; make the devil give it a lift with his horns, and it will be well received by a smiling Christendom.

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