

## CHAPTER XXIX

### ADRIAN COMES HOME AGAIN

They landed on the island, wading to it through the mud, which at this spot had a gravelly bottom; all of them except Elsa, who remained on the boat to keep watch. Following otter-paths through the thick rushes they came to the centre of the islet, some thirty yards away. Here, at a spot which Martha ascertained by a few hurried pacings, grew a dense tuft of reeds. In the midst of these reeds was a duck's nest with the young just hatching out, off which the old bird flew with terrified quackings.

Beneath this nest lay the treasure, if it were still there.

"At any rate the place has not been disturbed lately," said Foy. Then, even in his frantic haste, lifting the little fledglings--for he loved all things that had life, and did not wish to see them hurt--he deposited them where they might be found again by the mother.

"Nothing to dig with," muttered Martin, "not even a stone." Thereon Martha pushed her way to a willow bush that grew near, and with the smaller of the two axes, which she held in her hand, cut down the thickest of its stems and ran back with them. By the help of these sharpened stakes, and with their axes, they began to dig furiously, till at length the point of Foy's implement struck upon the head of a barrel.

"The stuff is still here, keep to it, friends," he said, and they worked on with a will till three of the five barrels were almost free from the mud.

"Best make sure of these," said Martin. "Help me, master," and between them one by one they rolled them to the water's edge, and with great efforts, Elsa aiding them, lifted them into the boat. As they approached with the third cask they found her staring white-faced over the tops of the feathery reeds.

"What is it, sweet?" asked Foy.

"The sail, the following sail," she answered.

They rested the barrel of gold upon the gunwale and looked back across the little island. Yes, there it came, sure enough, a tall, white sail not eight hundred yards away and bearing down straight upon the place. Martin rolled the barrel into position.

"I hoped that they would not find it," he said, "but Martha draws maps well, too well. Once, before she married, she painted pictures, and that is why."

"What is to be done?" asked Elsa.

"I don't know," he answered, and as he spoke Martha ran up, for she also

had seen the boat. "You see," he went on, "if we try to escape they will catch us, for oars can't race a sail."

"Oh!" said Elsa, "must we be taken after all?"

"I hope not, girl," said Martha, "but it is as God wills. Listen, Martin," and she whispered in his ear.

"Good," he said, "if it can be done, but you must watch your chance. Come, now, there is no time to lose. And you, lady, come also, for you can help to roll the last two barrels."

Then they ran back to the hole, whence Foy and Adrian, with great toil, had just dragged the last of the tubs. For they, too, had seen the sail, and knew that time was short.

"Heer, Adrian," said Martin, "you have the cross-bow and the bolts, and you used to be the best shot of all three of us; will you help me to hold the causeway?"

Now Adrian knew that Martin said this, not because he was a good shot with the cross-bow, but because he did not trust him, and wished to have him close to his hand, but he answered:

"With all my heart, as well as I am able."

"Very good," said Martin. "Now let the rest of you get those two casks into the boat, leaving the Jufvrouw hidden in the reeds to watch by it, while you, Foy and Martha, come back to help us. Lady, if they sail round the island, call and let us know."

So Martin and Adrian went down to the end of the little gravelly tongue and crouched among the tall meadow-sweet and grasses, while the others, working furiously, rolled the two barrels to the water-edge and shipped them, throwing rushes over them that they might not catch the eye of the Spaniards.

The sailing boat drew on. In the stern-sheets of it sat Ramiro, an open paper, which he was studying, upon his knee, and still slung about his body the great sword Silence.

"Before I am half an hour older," reflected Martin, for even now he did not like to trust his thoughts to Adrian, "either I will have that sword back again, or I shall be a dead man. But the odds are great, eleven of them, all tough fellows, and we but three and two women."

Just then Ramiro's voice reached them across the stillness of the water.

"Down with the sail," he cried cheerily, "for without a doubt that is the place--there are the six islets in a line, there in front the other island shaped like a herring, and there the little promontory marked 'landing place.' How well this artist draws to be sure!"

The rest of his remarks were lost in the creaking of the blocks as the sail came down.

"Shallow water ahead, Senor," said a man in the bows sounding with a boat hook.

"Good," answered Ramiro, throwing out the little anchor, "we will wade ashore."

As he spoke the Spanish soldier with the boat-hook suddenly pitched head first into the water, a quarrel from Adrian's crossbow through his heart.

"Ah!" said Ramiro, "so they are here before us. Well, there can't be many of them. Now then, prepare to land."

Another quarrel whistled through the air and stuck in the mast, doing no hurt. After this no more bolts came, for in his eagerness Adrian had broken the mechanism of the bow by over-winding it, so that it became useless. They leaped into the water, Ramiro with them, and charged for the land, when of a sudden, almost at the tip of the little promontory, from among the reeds rose the gigantic shape of Red Martin, clad in his tattered jerkin and bearing in his hand a heavy axe, while behind him appeared Foy and Adrian.

"Why, by the Saints!" cried Ramiro, "there's my weather-cock son again, fighting against us this time. Well, Weather-cock, this is your last veer," then he began to wade towards the promontory. "Charge," he cried, but not a man would advance within reach of that axe. They stood here and there in the water looking at it doubtfully, for although they were brave enough, there was none of them but knew of the strength and deeds of the red Frisian giant, and half-starved as he was, feared to meet him face to face. Moreover, he had a position of advantage, of that there could be no doubt.

"Can I help you to land, friends?" said Martin, mocking them. "No, it is no use looking right or left, the mud there is very deep."

"An arquebus, shoot him with an arquebus!" shouted the men in front; but there was no such weapon in the boat, for the Spaniards, who had left in a hurry, and without expecting to meet Red Martin, had nothing but their swords and knives.

Ramiro considered a moment, for he saw that to attempt to storm this little landing-place would cost many lives, even if it were possible. Then he gave an order, "Back aboard." The men obeyed with alacrity. "Out oars and up anchor!" he cried.

"He is clever," said Foy; "he knows that our boat must be somewhere, and he is going to seek for it."

Martin nodded, and for the first time looked afraid. Then, as soon as Ramiro had begun to row round the islet, leaving Martha to watch that he did not return and rush the landing-stage, they crossed through the reeds to the other side and climbed into their boat. Scarcely were they there, when Ramiro and his men appeared, and a shout announced that they were discovered.

On crept the Spaniards as near as they dared, that is to within a dozen fathoms of them, and anchored, for they were afraid to run their own heavy sailing cutter upon the mud lest they might be unable to get her off again. Also, for evident reasons, being without firearms and knowing the character of the defenders, they feared to make a direct attack. The position was curious and threatened to be prolonged. At last Ramiro rose and addressed them across the water.

"Gentlemen and lady of the enemy," he said, "for I think that I see my little captive of the Red Mill among you, let us take counsel together. We have both of us made this expedition for a purpose, have we not--namely, to secure certain filthy lucre which, after all, would be of slight value to dead men? Now, as you, or some of you, know, I am a man opposed to violence; I wish to hurry the end of none, nor even to inflict suffering, if it can be avoided. But there is money in the question, to secure which I have already gone through a great deal of inconvenience and anxiety, and, to be brief, that money I must have, while you, on the other hand are doubtless anxious to escape hence with

your lives. So I make you an offer. Let one of our party come under safe conduct on board your boat and search it, just to see if anything lies beneath those rushes for instance. Then, if it is found empty, we will withdraw to a distance and let you go, or the same if full, that is, upon its contents being unladen into the mud."

"Are those all your terms?" asked Foy.

"Not quite all, worthy Heer van Goorl. Among you I observe a young gentleman whom doubtless you have managed to carry off against his will, to wit, my beloved son, Adrian. In his own interests, for he will scarcely be a welcome guest in Leyden, I ask that, before you depart, you should place this noble cavalier ashore in a position where we can see him. Now, what is your answer?"

"That you may go back to hell to look for it," replied Martin rudely, while Foy added:

"What other answer do you expect from folk who have escaped out of your clutches in Haarlem?"

As he said the words, at a nod from Martin, Martha, who by now had crept up to them, under cover of his great form and of surrounding reeds, let go the stern of the boat and vanished.

"Plain words from plain, uncultivated people, not unnaturally irritated



by the course of political events with which, although Fortune has mixed me up in them, I have nothing whatever to do," answered Ramiro. "But once more I beg of you to consider. It is probable that you have no food upon your boat, whereas we have plenty. Also, in due course, darkness will fall, which must give us a certain advantage; moreover, I have reason to hope for assistance. Therefore, in a waiting game like this the cards are with me, and as I think your poor prisoner, Adrian, will tell you, I know how to play a hand at cards."

About eight yards from the cutter, in a thick patch of water-lilies, just at this moment an otter rose to take air--an old dog-otter, for it was grey-headed. One of the Spaniards in the boat caught sight of the ring it made, and picking up a stone from the ballast threw it at it idly. The otter vanished.

"We have been seeking each other a long while, but have never come to blows yet, although, being a brave man, I know you would wish it," said Red Martin modestly. "Senor Ramiro, will you do me the honour to overlook my humble birth and come ashore with me for a few minutes, man against man. The odds would be in your favour, for you have armour and I have nothing but a worn bull's hide, also you have my good sword Silence and I only a wood-man's axe. Still I will risk it, and, what is more, trusting to your good faith, we are willing to wager the treasure of Hendrik Brant upon the issue."

So soon as they understood this challenge a roar of laughter went up

from the Spaniards in the boat, in which Ramiro himself joined heartily. The idea of anyone voluntarily entering upon a single combat with the terrible Frisian giant, who for months had been a name of fear among the thousands that beleaguered Haarlem, struck them as really ludicrous.

But of a sudden they ceased laughing, and one and all stared with a strange anxiety at the bottom of their boat, much as terrier dogs stare at the earth beneath which they hear invisible vermin on the move. Then a great shouting arose among them, and they looked eagerly over the gunwales; yes, and began to stab at the water with their swords. But all the while through the tumult and voices came a steady, regular sound as of a person knocking heavily on the further side of a thick door.

"Mother of Heaven!" screamed someone in the cutter, "we are scuttled," and they began to tear at the false bottom of their boat, while others stabbed still more furiously at the surface of the Mere.

Now, rising one by one to the face of that quiet water, could be seen bubbles, and the line of them ran from the cutter towards the rowing boat. Presently, within six feet of it, axe in hand, rose the strange and dreadful figure of a naked, skeleton-like woman covered with mud and green weeds, and bleeding from great wounds in the back and sides.

There it stood, shaking an axe at the terror-stricken Spaniards, and screaming in short gasps,

"Paid back! paid back, Ramiro! Now sink and drown, you dog, or come, visit Red Martin on the shore."

"Well done, Martha," roared Martin, as he dragged her dying into the boat. While he spoke, lo! the cutter began to fill and sink.

"There is but one chance for it," cried Ramiro, "overboard and at them. It is not deep," and springing into the water, which reached to his neck, he began to wade towards the shore.

"Push off," cried Foy, and they thrust and pulled. But the gold was heavy, and their boat had settled far into the mud. Do what they might, she would not stir. Then uttering some strange Frisian oath, Martin sprang over her stern, and putting out all his mighty strength thrust at it to loose her. Still she would not move. The Spaniards came up, now the water reached only to their thighs, and their bright swords flashed in the sunlight.

"Cut them down!" yelled Ramiro. "At them for your lives' sake."

The boat trembled, but she would not stir.

"Too heavy in the bows," screamed Martha, and struggling to her feet, with one wild scream she launched herself straight at the throat of the nearest Spaniard. She gripped him with her long arms, and down they went together. Once they rose, then fell again, and through a cloud of mud

might be seen struggling upon the bottom of the Mere till presently they lay still, both of them.

The lightened boat lifted, and in answer to Martin's mighty efforts glided forward through the clinging mud. Again he thrust, and she was clear.

"Climb in, Martin, climb in," shouted Foy as he stabbed at a Spaniard.

"By heaven! no," roared Ramiro splashing towards him with the face of a devil.

For a second Martin stood still. Then he bent, and the sword-cut fell harmless upon his leather jerkin. Now very suddenly his great arms shot out; yes, he seized Ramiro by the thighs and lifted, and there was seen the sight of a man thrown into the air as though he were a ball tossed by a child at play, to fall headlong upon the casks of treasure in the skiff prow where he lay still.

Martin sprang forward and gripped the tiller with his outstretched hand as it glided away from him.

"Row, master, row," he cried, and Foy rowed madly until they were clear of the last Spaniard, clear by ten yards. Even Elsa snatched a rollock, and with it struck a soldier on the hand who tried to stay them, forcing him to loose his grip; a deed of valour she boasted of with pride all

her life through. Then they dragged Martin into the boat.

"Now, you Spanish dogs," the great man roared back at them as he shook the water from his flaming hair and beard, "go dig for Brant's treasure and live on ducks' eggs here till Don Frederic sends to fetch you."

The island had melted away into a mist of other islands. No living thing was to be seen save the wild creatures and birds of the great lake, and no sound was to be heard except their calling and the voices of the wind and water. They were alone--alone and safe, and there at a distance towards the skyline rose the church towers of Leyden, for which they headed.

"Jufvrouw," said Martin presently, "there is another flagon of wine in that locker, and we should be glad of a pull at it."

Elsa, who was steering the boat, rose and found the wine and a horn mug, which she filled and handed first to Foy.

"Here's a health," said Foy as he drank, "to the memory of Mother Martha, who saved us all. Well, she died as she would have wished to die, taking a Spaniard for company, and her story will live on."

"Amen," said Martin. Then a thought struck him, and, leaving his oars

for a minute, for he rowed two as against Foy's and Adrian's one, he went forward to where Ramiro lay stricken senseless on the kegs of specie and jewels in the bows, and took from him the great sword Silence. But he strapped the Spaniard's legs together with his belt.

"That crack on the head keeps him quiet enough," he said in explanation, "but he might come to and give trouble, or try to swim for it, since such cats have many lives. Ah! Senor Ramiro, I told you I would have my sword back before I was half an hour older, or go where I shouldn't want one." Then he touched the spring in the hilt and examined the cavity. "Why," he said, "here's my legacy left in it safe and sound. No wonder my good angel made me mad to get that sword again."

"No wonder," echoed Foy, "especially as you got Ramiro with it," and he glanced at Adrian, who was labouring at the bow oar, looking, now that the excitement of the fight had gone by, most downcast and wretched. Well he might, seeing the welcome that, as he feared, awaited him in Leyden.

For a while they rowed on in silence. All that they had gone through during the last four and twenty hours and the seven preceding months of war and privation, had broken their nerve. Even now, although they had escaped the danger and won back the buried gold, capturing the arch-villain who had brought them so much death and misery, and their home, which, for the present moment at any rate, was a strong place of refuge, lay before them, still they could not be at ease. Where so

many had died, where the risks had been so fearful, it seemed almost incredible that they four should be living and hale, though weary, with a prospect of continuing to live for many years.

That the girl whom he loved so dearly, and whom he had so nearly lost, should be sitting before him safe and sound, ready to become his wife whensoever he might wish it, seemed to Foy also a thing too good to be true. Too good to be true was it, moreover, that his brother, the wayward, passionate, weak, poetical-minded Adrian, made by nature to be the tool of others, and bear the burden of their evil doing, should have been dragged before it was over late, out of the net of the fowler, have repented of his sins and follies, and, at the risk of his own life, shown that he was still a man, no longer the base slave of passion and self-love. For Foy always loved his brother, and knowing him better than any others knew him, had found it hard to believe that however black things might look against him, he was at heart a villain.

Thus he thought, and Elsa too had her thoughts, which may be guessed. They were silent all of them, till of a sudden, Elsa seated in the stern-sheets, saw Adrian suddenly let fall his oar, throw his arms wide, and pitch forward against the back of Martin. Yes, and in place of where he had sat appeared the dreadful countenance of Ramiro, stamped with a grin of hideous hate such as Satan might wear when souls escape him at the last. Ramiro recovered and sitting up, for to his feet he could not rise because of the sword strap, in his hand a thin, deadly-looking knife.

"Habet!" he said with a short laugh, "habes, Weather-cock!" and he turned the knife against himself.

But Martin was on him, and in five more seconds he lay trussed like a fowl in the bottom of the boat.

"Shall I kill him?" said Martin to Foy, who with Elsa was bending over Adrian.

"No," answered Foy grimly, "let him take his trial in Leyden. Oh! what accursed fools were we not to search him!"

Ramiro's face turned a shade more ghastly.

"It is your hour," he said in a hoarse voice, "you have won, thanks to that dog of a son of mine, who, I trust, may linger long before he dies, as die he must. Ah! well, this is what comes of breaking my oath to the Virgin and again lifting my hand against a woman." He looked at Elsa and shuddered, then went on: "It is your hour, make an end of me at once. I do not wish to appear thus before those boors."

"Gag him," said Foy to Martin, "lest our ears be poisoned," and Martin obeyed with good will. Then he flung him down, and there the man lay, his back supported by the kegs of treasure he had worked so hard and sinned so deeply to win, making, as he knew well, his last journey to



death and to whatever may lie beyond that solemn gate.

They were passing the island that, many years ago, had formed the turning post of the great sledge race in which his passenger had been the fair Leyden heiress, Lysbeth van Hout. Ramiro could see her now as she was that day; he could see also how that race, which he just failed to win, had been for him an augury of disaster. Had not the Hollander again beaten him at the post, and that Hollander--Lysbeth's own son by another father--helped to it by her son born of himself, who now lay there death-stricken by him that gave him life. . . . They would take him to Lysbeth, he knew it; she would be his judge, that woman against whom he had piled up injury after injury, whom, even when she seemed to be in his power, he had feared more than any living being. . . . And after he had met her eyes for the last time, then would come the end. What sort of an end would it be for the captain red-handed from the siege of Haarlem, for the man who had brought Dirk van Goorl to his death, for the father who had just planted a dagger between the shoulders of his son because, at the last, that son had chosen to be true to his own people, and to deliver them from a dreadful doom? . . . Why did it come back to him, that horrible dream which had risen in his mind when, for the first time after many years, he met Lysbeth face to face there in the Gevangenhuis, that dream of the pitiful little man falling, falling through endless space, and at the bottom of the gulf two great hands, hands hideous and suggestive, reaching through the shadows to receive him?

Like his son, Adrian, Ramiro was superstitious; more, his intellect, his reading, which in youth had been considerable, his observation of men and women, all led him to the conclusion that death is a wall with many doors in it; that on this side of the wall we may not linger or sleep, but must pass each of us through his appointed portal straight to the domain prepared for us. If so, what would be his lot, and who would be waiting to greet him yonder? Oh! terrors may attend the wicked after death, but in the case of some they do not tarry until death; they leap forward to him whom it is decreed must die, forcing attention with their eager, craving hands, with their obscure and ominous voices. . . . About him the sweet breath of the summer afternoon, the skimming swallows, the meadows starred with flowers; within him every hell at which the imagination can so much as hint.

Before he passed the gates of Leyden, in those few short hours, Ramiro, to Elsa's eyes, had aged by twenty years.

Their little boat was heavy laden, the wind was against them, and they had a dying man and a prisoner aboard. So it came about that the day was closing before the soldiers challenged them from the watergate, asking who they were and whither they went. Foy stood up and said:

"We are Foy van Goorl, Red Martin, Elsa Brant, a wounded man and a prisoner, escaped from Haarlem, and we go to the house of Lysbeth van

Goorl in the Bree Straat."

Then they let them through the watergate, and there, on the further side, were many gathered who thanked God for their deliverance, and begged tidings of them.

"Come to the house in the Bree Straat and we will tell you from the balcony," answered Foy.

So they rowed from one cut and canal to another till at last they came to the private boat-house of the van Goorls, and entered it, and thus by the small door into the house.

Lysbeth van Goorl, recovered from her illness now, but aged and grown stern with suffering, sat in an armchair in the great parlour of her home in the Bree Straat, the room where as a girl she had cursed Montalvo; where too not a year ago, she had driven his son, the traitor Adrian, from her presence. At her side was a table on which stood a silver bell and two brass holders with candles ready to be lighted. She rang the bell and a woman-servant entered, the same who, with Elsa, had nursed her in the plague.

"What is that murmuring in the street?" Lysbeth asked. "I hear the sound of many voices. Is there more news from Haarlem?"

"Alas! yes," answered the woman. "A fugitive says that the executioners there are weary, so now they tie the poor prisoners back to back and throw them into the mere to drown."

A groan burst from Lysbeth's lips. "Foy, my son, is there," she muttered, "and Elsa Brant his affianced wife, and Martin his servant, and many another friend. Oh! God, how long, how long?" and her head sank upon her bosom.

Soon she raised it again and said, "Light the candles, woman, this place grows dark, and in its gloom I see the ghosts of all my dead."

They burned up--two stars of light in the great room.

"Whose feet are those upon the stairs?" asked Lysbeth, "the feet of men who bear burdens. Open the large doors, woman, and let that enter which it pleases God to send us."

So the doors were flung wide, and through them came people carrying a wounded man, then following him Foy and Elsa, and, lastly, towering above them all, Red Martin, who thrust before him another man. Lysbeth rose from her chair to look.

"Do I dream?" she said, "or, son Foy, hath the Angel of the Lord delivered you out of the hell of Haarlem?"

"We are here, mother," he answered.

"And whom," she said, pointing to the figure covered with a cloak, "do you bring with you?"

"Adrian, mother, who is dying."

"Then, son Foy, take him hence; alive, dying, or dead, I have done with----" Here her eyes fell upon Red Martin and the man he held, "Martin the Frisian," she muttered, "but who----"

Martin heard, and by way of answer lifted up his prisoner so that the fading light from the balcony windows fell full upon his face.

"What!" she cried. "Juan de Montalvo as well as his son Adrian, and in this room----" Then she checked herself and added, "Foy, tell me your story."

In few words and brief he told it, or so much as she need know to understand. His last words were: "Mother, be merciful to Adrian; from the first he meant no ill; he saved all our lives, and he lies dying by that man's dagger."

"Lift him up," she said.

So they lifted him up, and Adrian, who, since the knife pierced him had uttered no word, spoke for the first and last time, muttering hoarsely:

"Mother, take back your words and forgive me--before I die."

Now the sorrow-frozen heart of Lysbeth melted, and she bent over him and said, speaking so that all might hear:

"Welcome to your home again, Adrian. You who once were led astray, have done bravely, and I am proud to call you son. Though you have left the faith in which you were bred, here and hereafter may God bless you and reward you, beloved Adrian!" Then she bent down and kissed his dying lips. Foy and Elsa kissed him also in farewell before they bore him, smiling happily to himself, to the chamber, his own chamber, where within some few hours death found him.

Adrian had been borne away, and for a little while there was silence.

Then, none commanding him, but as though an instinct pushed him forward,

Red Martin began to move up the length of the long room, half dragging, half carrying his captive Ramiro. It was as if some automaton had suddenly been put in motion, some machine of gigantic strength that nothing could stop. The man in his grip set his heels in the floor and hung back, but Martin scarcely seemed to heed his resistance. On he came, and the victim with him, till they stood together before the oaken chair and the stern-faced, white-haired woman who sat in it, her

cold countenance lit by the light of the two candles. She looked and shuddered. Then she spoke, asking:

"Why do you bring this man to me, Martin?"

"For judgment, Lysbeth van Goorl," he answered.

"Who made me a judge over him?" she asked.

"My master, Dirk van Goorl, your son, Adrian, and Hendrik Brant. Their blood makes you judge of his blood."

"I will have none of it," Lysbeth said passionately, "let the people judge him." As she spoke, from the crowd in the street below there swelled a sudden clamour.

"Good," said Martin, "the people shall judge," and he began to turn towards the window, when suddenly, by a desperate effort, Ramiro wrenched his doublet from his hand, and flung himself at Lysbeth's feet and grovelled there.

"What do you seek?" she asked, drawing back her dress so that he should not touch it.

"Mercy," he gasped.

"Mercy! Look, son and daughter, this man asks for mercy who for many a year has given none. Well, Juan de Montalvo, take your prayer to God and to the people. I have done with you."

"Mercy, mercy!" he cried again.

"Eight months ago," she said, "I uttered that prayer to you, begging of you in the Name of Christ to spare the life of an innocent man, and what was your answer, Juan de Montalvo?"

"Once you were my wife," he pleaded; "being a woman, does not that weigh with you?"

"Once he was my husband, being a man did that weigh with you? The last word is said. Take him, Martin, to those who deal with murderers."

Then that look came upon Montalvo which twice or thrice before Lysbeth has seen written in his face--once when the race was run and lost, and once when in after years she had petitioned for the life of her husband. Lo! it was no longer the face of a man, but such a countenance as might have been worn by a devil or a beast. The eyeball started, the grey moustache curled upwards, the cheek-bones grew high and sharp.

"Night after night," he gasped, "you lay at my side, and I might have killed you, as I have killed that brat of yours--and I spared you, I spared you."



"God spared me, Juan de Montalvo, that He might bring us to this hour; let Him spare you also if He will. I do not judge. He judges and the people," and Lysbeth rose from her chair.

"Stay!" he cried, gnashing his teeth.

"No, I stay not, I go to receive the last breath of him you have murdered, my son and yours."

He raised himself upon his knees, and for a moment their eyes met for the last time.

"Do you remember?" she said in a quiet voice, "many years ago, in this very room, after you had bought me at the cost of Dirk's life, certain words I spoke to you? Now I do not think that it was I who spoke, Juan de Montalvo."

And she swept past him and through the wide doorway.

Red Martin stood upon the balcony gripping the man Ramiro. Beneath him the broad street was packed with people, hundreds and thousands of them, a dense mass seething in the shadows, save here and again where a torch or a lantern flared showing their white faces, for the moon, which

shone upon Martin and his captive, scarcely reached those down below. As gaunt, haggard, and long-haired, he stepped upon the balcony, they saw him and his burden, and there went up such a yell as shook the very roofs of Leyden. Martin held up his hand, and there was silence, deep silence, through which the breath of all that multitude rose in sighs, like the sighing of a little wind.

"Citizens my Leyden, my masters," the Frisian cried, in a great, deep voice that echoed down the street, "I have a word to say to you. This man here--do you know him?"

Back came an answering yell of "Aye!"

"He is a Spaniard," went on Martin, "the noble Count Juan de Montalvo, who many years past forced one Lysbeth van Hout of this city into a false marriage, buying her at the price of the life of her affianced husband, Dirk van Goorl, that he might win her fortune."

"We know it," they shouted.

"Afterwards he was sent to the galleys for his crimes. He came back, and was made Governor of the Gevangenhuis by the bloody Alva, where he brought to death your brother and past burgomaster, Dirk van Goorl. Afterwards he kidnapped the person of Elsa Brant, the daughter of Hendrik Brant, whom the Inquisition murdered at The Hague. We rescued her from him, my master, Foy van Goorl, and I. Afterwards he served

with the Spaniards as a captain of their forces in the siege of Haarlem yonder--Haarlem that fell three days ago, and whose citizens they are murdering to-night, throwing them two by two to drown in the waters of the Mere."

"Kill him! Cast him down!" roared the mob. "Give him to us, Red Martin."

Again the Frisian lifted his hand and again there was silence; a sudden, terrible silence.

"This man had a son; my mistress, Lysbeth van Goorl, to her shame and sorrow, was the mother of him. That son, repenting, saved us from the sack of Haarlem, yea, through him the three of us, Foy van Goorl, Elsa Brant, and I, Martin Roos, their servant, are alive to-night. This man and his Spaniards overtook us on the lake, and there we conquered him by the help of Martha the Mare, Martha whom they made to carry her own husband to the fire. We conquered him, but she--she died in the fray; they stabbed her to death in the water as men stab an otter. Well, that son, the Heer Adrian, he was murdered in the boat with a knife-blow given by his own father from behind, and he lies here in this house dead or dying.

"My master and I, we brought this man, who to-day is called Ramiro, to be judged by the woman whose husband and son he slew. But she would not judge him; she said, 'Take him to the people, let them judge.' So judge

now, ye people," and with an effort of his mighty strength Martin swung the struggling body of Ramiro over the parapet of the balcony and let him hang there above their heads.

They yelled, they screamed in their ravenous hate and rage; they leapt up as hounds leap at a wolf upon a wall.

"Give him to us, give him to us!" that was their cry.

Martin laughed aloud. "Take him then," he said; "take him, ye people, and judge him as you will," and with one great heave he hurled the thing that writhed between his hands far out into the centre of the street.

The crowd below gathered themselves into a heap like water above a boat sinking in the heart of a whirlpool. For a minute or more they snarled and surged and twisted. Then they broke up and went away, talking in short, eager sentences. And there, small and dreadful on the stones, lay something that once had been a man.

Thus did the burghers of Leyden pass judgment and execute it upon that noble Spaniard, the Count Juan de Montalvo.