BOOK EIGHTH.

CHAPTER I. THE CROWN CHANGED INTO A DRY LEAF.

Gringoire and the entire Court of Miracles were suffering mortal anxiety. For a whole month they had not known what had become of la Esmeralda, which greatly pained the Duke of Egypt and his friends the vagabonds, nor what had become of the goat, which redoubled Gringoire's grief. One evening the gypsy had disappeared, and since that time had given no signs of life. All search had proved fruitless. Some tormenting bootblacks had told Gringoire about meeting her that same evening near the Pont Saint-Michel, going off with an officer; but this husband, after the fashion of Bohemia, was an incredulous philosopher, and besides, he, better than any one else, knew to what a point his wife was virginal. He had been able to form a judgment as to the unconquerable modesty resulting from the combined virtues of the amulet and the gypsy, and he had mathematically calculated the resistance of that chastity to the second power. Accordingly, he was at ease on that score.

Still he could not understand this disappearance. It was a profound sorrow. He would have grown thin over it, had that been possible. He had forgotten everything, even his literary tastes, even his great work, De figuris regularibus et irregularibus, which it was his intention to have printed with the first money which he should procure (for he had raved over printing, ever since he had seen the "Didascalon" of Hugues de Saint Victor, printed with the celebrated characters of Vindelin de Spire).

One day, as he was passing sadly before the criminal Tournelle, he perceived a considerable crowd at one of the gates of the Palais de Justice.

"What is this?" he inquired of a young man who was coming out.

"I know not, sir," replied the young man. "'Tis said that they are trying a woman who hath assassinated a gendarme. It appears that there is sorcery at the bottom of it, the archbishop and the official have intervened in the case, and my brother, who is the archdeacon of Josas, can think of nothing else. Now, I wished to speak with him, but I have not been able to reach him because of the throng, which vexes me greatly, as I stand in need of money."

"Alas! sir," said Gringoire, "I would that I could lend you some, but, my breeches are worn to holes, and 'tis not crowns which have done it."

He dared not tell the young man that he was acquainted with his brother

the archdeacon, to whom he had not returned after the scene in the church; a negligence which embarrassed him.

The scholar went his way, and Gringoire set out to follow the crowd which was mounting the staircase of the great chamber. In his opinion, there was nothing like the spectacle of a criminal process for dissipating melancholy, so exhilaratingly stupid are judges as a rule. The populace which he had joined walked and elbowed in silence. After a slow and tiresome march through a long, gloomy corridor, which wound through the court-house like the intestinal canal of the ancient edifice, he arrived near a low door, opening upon a hall which his lofty stature permitted him to survey with a glance over the waving heads of the rabble.

The hall was vast and gloomy, which latter fact made it appear still more spacious. The day was declining; the long, pointed windows permitted only a pale ray of light to enter, which was extinguished before it reached the vaulted ceiling, an enormous trellis-work of sculptured beams, whose thousand figures seemed to move confusedly in the shadows, many candles were already lighted here and there on tables, and beaming on the heads of clerks buried in masses of documents. The anterior portion of the ball was occupied by the crowd; on the right and left were magistrates and tables; at the end, upon a platform, a number of judges, whose rear rank sank into the shadows, sinister and motionless faces. The walls were sown with innumerable fleurs-de-lis. A large figure of Christ might be vaguely descried above the judges, and everywhere there were pikes and halberds, upon whose points the

reflection of the candles placed tips of fire.

"Monsieur," Gringoire inquired of one of his neighbors, "who are all those persons ranged yonder, like prelates in council?"

"Monsieur," replied the neighbor, "those on the right are the counsellors of the grand chamber; those on the left, the councillors of inquiry; the masters in black gowns, the messires in red."

"Who is that big red fellow, yonder above them, who is sweating?" pursued Gringoire.

"It is monsieur the president."

"And those sheep behind him?" continued Gringoire, who as we have seen, did not love the magistracy, which arose, possibly, from the grudge which he cherished against the Palais de Justice since his dramatic misadventure.

"They are messieurs the masters of requests of the king's household."

"And that boar in front of him?"

"He is monsieur the clerk of the Court of Parliament."

"And that crocodile on the right?"

"Master Philippe Lheulier, advocate extraordinary of the king."

"And that big, black tom-cat on the left?"

"Master Jacques Charmolue, procurator of the king in the Ecclesiastical Court, with the gentlemen of the officialty."

"Come now, monsieur," said Gringoire, "pray what are all those fine fellows doing yonder?"

"They are judging."

"Judging whom? I do not see the accused."

"'Tis a woman, sir. You cannot see her. She has her back turned to us, and she is hidden from us by the crowd. Stay, yonder she is, where you see a group of partisans."

"Who is the woman?" asked Gringoire. "Do you know her name?"

"No, monsieur, I have but just arrived. I merely assume that there is some sorcery about it, since the official is present at the trial."

"Come!" said our philosopher, "we are going to see all these magistrates devour human flesh. 'Tis as good a spectacle as any other."

"Monsieur," remarked his neighbor, "think you not, that Master Jacques

Charmolue has a very sweet air?"

"Hum!" replied Gringoire. "I distrust a sweetness which hath pinched nostrils and thin lips."

Here the bystanders imposed silence upon the two chatterers. They were listening to an important deposition.

"Messeigneurs," said an old woman in the middle of the hall, whose form was so concealed beneath her garments that one would have pronounced her

a walking heap of rags; "Messeigneurs, the thing is as true as that I am la Falourdel, established these forty years at the Pont Saint Michel, and paying regularly my rents, lord's dues, and quit rents; at the gate opposite the house of Tassin-Caillart, the dyer, which is on the side up the river--a poor old woman now, but a pretty maid in former days, my lords. Some one said to me lately, 'La Falourdel, don't use your spinning-wheel too much in the evening; the devil is fond of combing the distaffs of old women with his horns. 'Tis certain that the surly monk who was round about the temple last year, now prowls in the City. Take care, La Falourdel, that he doth not knock at your door.' One evening I was spinning on my wheel, there comes a knock at my door; I ask who it is. They swear. I open. Two men enter. A man in black and a handsome officer. Of the black man nothing could be seen but his eyes, two coals of fire. All the rest was hat and cloak. They say to me,--'The Sainte-Marthe chamber.'--'Tis my upper chamber, my lords, my cleanest. They give me a crown. I put the crown in my drawer, and I say: 'This

shall go to buy tripe at the slaughter-house of la Gloriette to-morrow.'
We go up stairs. On arriving at the upper chamber, and while my back is turned, the black man disappears. That dazed me a bit. The officer, who was as handsome as a great lord, goes down stairs again with me. He goes out. In about the time it takes to spin a quarter of a handful of flax, he returns with a beautiful young girl, a doll who would have shone like the sun had she been coiffed. She had with her a goat; a big billy-goat, whether black or white, I no longer remember. That set me to thinking. The girl does not concern me, but the goat! I love not those beasts, they have a beard and horns. They are so like a man. And then, they smack of the witches, sabbath. However, I say nothing. I had the crown. That is right, is it not, Monsieur Judge? I show the captain and the wench to the upper chamber, and I leave them alone; that is to say, with the goat. I go down and set to spinning again--I must inform you that my house has a ground floor and story above. I know not why I fell to thinking of the surly monk whom the goat had put into my head again, and then the beautiful girl was rather strangely decked out. All at once, I hear a cry upstairs, and something falls on the floor and the window opens. I run to mine which is beneath it, and I behold a black mass pass before my eyes and fall into the water. It was a phantom clad like a priest. It was a moonlight night. I saw him quite plainly. He was swimming in the direction of the city. Then, all of a tremble, I call the watch. The gentlemen of the police enter, and not knowing just at the first moment what the matter was, and being merry, they beat me. I explain to them. We go up stairs, and what do we find? my poor chamber all blood, the captain stretched out at full length with a dagger in his neck, the girl pretending to be dead, and the goat all in a fright.

'Pretty work!' I say, 'I shall have to wash that floor for more than a fortnight. It will have to be scraped; it will be a terrible job.' They carried off the officer, poor young man, and the wench with her bosom all bare. But wait, the worst is that on the next day, when I wanted to take the crown to buy tripe, I found a dead leaf in its place."

The old woman ceased. A murmur of horror ran through the audience.

"That phantom, that goat,--all smacks of magic," said one of Gringoire's neighbors.

"And that dry leaf!" added another.

"No doubt about it," joined in a third, "she is a witch who has dealings with the surly monk, for the purpose of plundering officers."

Gringoire himself was not disinclined to regard this as altogether alarming and probable.

"Goody Falourdel," said the president majestically, "have you nothing more to communicate to the court?"

"No, monseigneur," replied the crone, "except that the report has described my house as a hovel and stinking; which is an outrageous fashion of speaking. The houses on the bridge are not imposing, because there are such multitudes of people; but, nevertheless, the butchers continue to dwell there, who are wealthy folk, and married to very

proper and handsome women."

The magistrate who had reminded Gringoire of a crocodile rose,--

"Silence!" said he. "I pray the gentlemen not to lose sight of the fact that a dagger was found on the person of the accused. Goody Falourdel, have you brought that leaf into which the crown which the demon gave you was transformed?

"Yes, monseigneur," she replied; "I found it again. Here it is."

A bailiff banded the dead leaf to the crocodile, who made a doleful shake of the head, and passed it on to the president, who gave it to the procurator of the king in the ecclesiastical court, and thus it made the circuit of the hail.

"It is a birch leaf," said Master Jacques Charmolue. "A fresh proof of magic."

A counsellor took up the word.

"Witness, two men went upstairs together in your house: the black man, whom you first saw disappear and afterwards swimming in the Seine, with his priestly garments, and the officer. Which of the two handed you the crown?" The old woman pondered for a moment and then said,--"The officer."

A murmur ran through the crowd.

"Ah!" thought Gringoire, "this makes some doubt in my mind."

But Master Philippe Lheulier, advocate extraordinary to the king, interposed once more.

"I will recall to these gentlemen, that in the deposition taken at his bedside, the assassinated officer, while declaring that he had a vague idea when the black man accosted him that the latter might be the surly monk, added that the phantom had pressed him eagerly to go and make acquaintance with the accused; and upon his, the captain's, remarking that he had no money, he had given him the crown which the said officer paid to la Falourdel. Hence, that crown is the money of hell."

This conclusive observation appeared to dissipate all the doubts of Gringoire and the other sceptics in the audience.

"You have the documents, gentlemen," added the king's advocate, as he took his seat; "you can consult the testimony of Phoebus de Châteaupers."

At that name, the accused sprang up, her head rose above the throng. Gringoire with horror recognized la Esmeralda.

She was pale; her tresses, formerly so gracefully braided and spangled with sequins, hung in disorder; her lips were blue, her hollow eyes were

terrible. Alas!

"Phoebus!" she said, in bewilderment; "where is he? O messeigneurs! before you kill me, tell me, for pity sake, whether he still lives?"

"Hold your tongue, woman," replied the president, "that is no affair of ours."

"Oh! for mercy's sake, tell me if he is alive!" she repeated, clasping her beautiful emaciated hands; and the sound of her chains in contact with her dress, was heard.

"Well!" said the king's advocate roughly, "he is dying. Are you satisfied?"

The unhappy girl fell back on her criminal's seat, speechless, tearless, white as a wax figure.

The president bent down to a man at his feet, who wore a gold cap and a black gown, a chain on his neck and a wand in his hand.

"Bailiff, bring in the second accused."

All eyes turned towards a small door, which opened, and, to the great agitation of Gringoire, gave passage to a pretty goat with horns and hoofs of gold. The elegant beast halted for a moment on the threshold, stretching out its neck as though, perched on the summit of a rock, it

had before its eyes an immense horizon. Suddenly it caught sight of the gypsy girl, and leaping over the table and the head of a clerk, in two bounds it was at her knees; then it rolled gracefully on its mistress's feet, soliciting a word or a caress; but the accused remained motionless, and poor Djali himself obtained not a glance.

"Eh, why--'tis my villanous beast," said old Falourdel, "I recognize the two perfectly!"

Jacques Charmolue interfered.

"If the gentlemen please, we will proceed to the examination of the goat." He was, in fact, the second criminal. Nothing more simple in those days than a suit of sorcery instituted against an animal. We find, among others in the accounts of the provost's office for 1466, a curious detail concerning the expenses of the trial of Gillet-Soulart and his sow, "executed for their demerits," at Corbeil. Everything is there, the cost of the pens in which to place the sow, the five hundred bundles of brushwood purchased at the port of Morsant, the three pints of wine and the bread, the last repast of the victim fraternally shared by the executioner, down to the eleven days of guard and food for the sow, at eight deniers parisis each. Sometimes, they went even further than animals. The capitularies of Charlemagne and of Louis le Débonnaire impose severe penalties on fiery phantoms which presume to appear in the air.

Meanwhile the procurator had exclaimed: "If the demon which possesses

this goat, and which has resisted all exorcisms, persists in its deeds of witchcraft, if it alarms the court with them, we warn it that we shall be forced to put in requisition against it the gallows or the stake. Gringoire broke out into a cold perspiration. Charmolue took from the table the gypsy's tambourine, and presenting it to the goat, in a certain manner, asked the latter,--

"What o'clock is it?"

The goat looked at it with an intelligent eye, raised its gilded hoof, and struck seven blows.

It was, in fact, seven o'clock. A movement of terror ran through the crowd.

Gringoire could not endure it.

"He is destroying himself!" he cried aloud; "You see well that he does not know what he is doing."

"Silence among the louts at the end of the hail!" said the bailiff sharply.

Jacques Charmolue, by the aid of the same manoeuvres of the tambourine, made the goat perform many other tricks connected with the date of the day, the month of the year, etc., which the reader has already witnessed. And, by virtue of an optical illusion peculiar to judicial

proceedings, these same spectators who had, probably, more than once applauded in the public square Djali's innocent magic were terrified by it beneath the roof of the Palais de Justice. The goat was undoubtedly the devil.

It was far worse when the procurator of the king, having emptied upon a floor a certain bag filled with movable letters, which Djali wore round his neck, they beheld the goat extract with his hoof from the scattered alphabet the fatal name of Phoebus. The witchcraft of which the captain had been the victim appeared irresistibly demonstrated, and in the eyes of all, the gypsy, that ravishing dancer, who had so often dazzled the passers-by with her grace, was no longer anything but a frightful vampire.

However, she betrayed no sign of life; neither Djali's graceful evolutions, nor the menaces of the court, nor the suppressed imprecations of the spectators any longer reached her mind.

In order to arouse her, a police officer was obliged to shake her unmercifully, and the president had to raise his voice,--"Girl, you are of the Bohemian race, addicted to deeds of witchcraft. You, in complicity with the bewitched goat implicated in this suit, during the night of the twenty-ninth of March last, murdered and stabbed, in concert with the powers of darkness, by the aid of charms and underhand practices, a captain of the king's arches of the watch, Phoebus de Châteaupers. Do you persist in denying it?"

"Horror!" exclaimed the young girl, hiding her face in her hands. "My Phoebus! Oh, this is hell!"

"Do you persist in your denial?" demanded the president coldly.

"Do I deny it?" she said with terrible accents; and she rose with flashing eyes.

The president continued squarely,--

"Then how do you explain the facts laid to your charge?"

She replied in a broken voice,--

"I have already told you. I do not know. 'Twas a priest, a priest whom I do not know; an infernal priest who pursues me!"

"That is it," retorted the judge; "the surly monk."

"Oh, gentlemen! have mercy! I am but a poor girl--"

"Of Egypt," said the judge.

Master Jacques Charmolue interposed sweetly,--

"In view of the sad obstinacy of the accused, I demand the application of the torture."

"Granted," said the president.

The unhappy girl quivered in every limb. But she rose at the command of the men with partisans, and walked with a tolerably firm step, preceded by Charmolue and the priests of the officiality, between two rows of halberds, towards a medium-sized door which suddenly opened and closed again behind her, and which produced upon the grief-stricken Gringoire the effect of a horrible mouth which had just devoured her.

When she disappeared, they heard a plaintive bleating; it was the little goat mourning.

The sitting of the court was suspended. A counsellor having remarked that the gentlemen were fatigued, and that it would be a long time to wait until the torture was at an end, the president replied that a magistrate must know how to sacrifice himself to his duty.

"What an annoying and vexatious hussy," said an aged judge, "to get herself put to the question when one has not supped!"

CHAPTER II. CONTINUATION OF THE CROWN WHICH WAS CHANGED INTO A DRY LEAF.

After ascending and descending several steps in the corridors, which were so dark that they were lighted by lamps at mid-day, La Esmeralda, still surrounded by her lugubrious escort, was thrust by the police into a gloomy chamber. This chamber, circular in form, occupied the ground floor of one of those great towers, which, even in our own century, still pierce through the layer of modern edifices with which modern Paris has covered ancient Paris. There were no windows to this cellar; no other opening than the entrance, which was low, and closed by an enormous iron door. Nevertheless, light was not lacking; a furnace had been constructed in the thickness of the wall; a large fire was lighted there, which filled the vault with its crimson reflections and deprived a miserable candle, which stood in one corner, of all radiance. The iron grating which served to close the oven, being raised at that moment, allowed only a view at the mouth of the flaming vent-hole in the dark wall, the lower extremity of its bars, like a row of black and pointed teeth, set flat apart; which made the furnace resemble one of those mouths of dragons which spout forth flames in ancient legends. By the light which escaped from it, the prisoner beheld, all about the room, frightful instruments whose use she did not understand. In the centre lay a leather mattress, placed almost flat upon the ground, over which hung a strap provided with a buckle, attached to a brass ring in the

mouth of a flat-nosed monster carved in the keystone of the vault. Tongs, pincers, large ploughshares, filled the interior of the furnace, and glowed in a confused heap on the coals. The sanguine light of the furnace illuminated in the chamber only a confused mass of horrible things.

This Tartarus was called simply, The Question Chamber.

On the bed, in a negligent attitude, sat Pierrat Torterue, the official torturer. His underlings, two gnomes with square faces, leather aprons, and linen breeches, were moving the iron instruments on the coals.

In vain did the poor girl summon up her courage; on entering this chamber she was stricken with horror.

The sergeants of the bailiff of the courts drew up in line on one side, the priests of the officiality on the other. A clerk, inkhorn, and a table were in one corner.

Master Jacques Charmolue approached the gypsy with a very sweet smile.

"My dear child," said he, "do you still persist in your denial?"

"Yes," she replied, in a dying voice.

"In that case," replied Charmolue, "it will be very painful for us to have to question you more urgently than we should like. Pray take the

trouble to seat yourself on this bed. Master Pierrat, make room for mademoiselle, and close the door."

Pierrat rose with a growl.

"If I shut the door," he muttered, "my fire will go out."

"Well, my dear fellow," replied Charmolue, "leave it open then."

Meanwhile, la Esmeralda had remained standing. That leather bed on which so many unhappy wretches had writhed, frightened her. Terror chilled the very marrow of her bones; she stood there bewildered and stupefied. At a sign from Charmolue, the two assistants took her and placed her in a sitting posture on the bed. They did her no harm; but when these men touched her, when that leather touched her, she felt all her blood retreat to her heart. She cast a frightened look around the chamber. It seemed to her as though she beheld advancing from all quarters towards her, with the intention of crawling up her body and biting and pinching her, all those hideous implements of torture, which as compared to the instruments of all sorts she had hitherto seen, were like what bats, centipedes, and spiders are among insects and birds.

"Where is the physician?" asked Charmolue.

"Here," replied a black gown whom she had not before noticed.

She shuddered.

"Mademoiselle," resumed the caressing voice of the procucrator of the Ecclesiastical court, "for the third time, do you persist in denying the deeds of which you are accused?"

This time she could only make a sign with her head.

"You persist?" said Jacques Charmolue. "Then it grieves me deeply, but I must fulfil my office."

"Monsieur le Procureur du Roi," said Pierrat abruptly, "How shall we begin?"

Charmolue hesitated for a moment with the ambiguous grimace of a poet in search of a rhyme.

"With the boot," he said at last.

The unfortunate girl felt herself so utterly abandoned by God and men, that her head fell upon her breast like an inert thing which has no power in itself.

The tormentor and the physician approached her simultaneously. At the same time, the two assistants began to fumble among their hideous arsenal.

At the clanking of their frightful irons, the unhappy child quivered

like a dead frog which is being galvanized. "Oh!" she murmured, so low that no one heard her; "Oh, my Phoebus!" Then she fell back once more into her immobility and her marble silence. This spectacle would have rent any other heart than those of her judges. One would have pronounced her a poor sinful soul, being tortured by Satan beneath the scarlet wicket of hell. The miserable body which that frightful swarm of saws, wheels, and racks were about to clasp in their clutches, the being who was about to be manipulated by the harsh hands of executioners and pincers, was that gentle, white, fragile creature, a poor grain of millet which human justice was handing over to the terrible mills of torture to grind. Meanwhile, the callous hands of Pierrat Torterue's assistants had bared that charming leg, that tiny foot, which had so often amazed the passers-by with their delicacy and beauty, in the squares of Paris.

"'Tis a shame!" muttered the tormentor, glancing at these graceful and delicate forms.

Had the archdeacon been present, he certainly would have recalled at that moment his symbol of the spider and the fly. Soon the unfortunate girl, through a mist which spread before her eyes, beheld the boot approach; she soon beheld her foot encased between iron plates disappear in the frightful apparatus. Then terror restored her strength.

"Take that off!" she cried angrily; and drawing herself up, with her hair all dishevelled: "Mercy!"

She darted from the bed to fling herself at the feet of the king's procurator, but her leg was fast in the heavy block of oak and iron, and she sank down upon the boot, more crushed than a bee with a lump of lead on its wing.

At a sign from Charmolue, she was replaced on the bed, and two coarse hands adjusted to her delicate waist the strap which hung from the ceiling.

"For the last time, do you confess the facts in the case?" demanded Charmolue, with his imperturbable benignity.

"I am innocent."

"Then, mademoiselle, how do you explain the circumstance laid to your charge?"

"Alas, monseigneur, I do not know."

"So you deny them?"

"All!"

"Proceed," said Charmolue to Pierrat.

Pierrat turned the handle of the screw-jack, the boot was contracted, and the unhappy girl uttered one of those horrible cries which have no

orthography in any human language.

"Stop!" said Charmolue to Pierrat. "Do you confess?" he said to the gypsy.

"All!" cried the wretched girl. "I confess! I confess! Mercy!"

She had not calculated her strength when she faced the torture. Poor child, whose life up to that time had been so joyous, so pleasant, so sweet, the first pain had conquered her!

"Humanity forces me to tell you," remarked the king's procurator, "that in confessing, it is death that you must expect."

"I certainly hope so!" said she. And she fell back upon the leather bed, dying, doubled up, allowing herself to hang suspended from the strap buckled round her waist.

"Come, fair one, hold up a little," said Master Pierrat, raising her. "You have the air of the lamb of the Golden Fleece which hangs from Monsieur de Bourgogne's neck."

Jacques Charmolue raised his voice,

"Clerk, write. Young Bohemian maid, you confess your participation in the feasts, witches' sabbaths, and witchcrafts of hell, with ghosts, hags, and vampires? Answer."

"Yes," she said, so low that her words were lost in her breathing.

"You confess to having seen the ram which Beelzebub causes to appear in the clouds to call together the witches' sabbath, and which is beheld by socerers alone?"

"Yes."

"You confess to having adored the heads of Bophomet, those abominable idols of the Templars?"

"Yes."

"To having had habitual dealings with the devil under the form of a goat familiar, joined with you in the suit?"

"Yes."

"Lastly, you avow and confess to having, with the aid of the demon, and of the phantom vulgarly known as the surly monk, on the night of the twenty-ninth of March last, murdered and assassinated a captain named Phoebus de Châteaupers?"

She raised her large, staring eyes to the magistrate, and replied, as though mechanically, without convulsion or agitation,--

"Yes."

It was evident that everything within her was broken.

"Write, clerk," said Charmolue. And, addressing the torturers, "Release the prisoner, and take her back to the court."

When the prisoner had been "unbooted," the procurator of the ecclesiastical court examined her foot, which was still swollen with pain. "Come," said he, "there's no great harm done. You shrieked in good season. You could still dance, my beauty!"

Then he turned to his acolytes of the officiality,--"Behold justice enlightened at last! This is a solace, gentlemen! Madamoiselle will bear us witness that we have acted with all possible gentleness."

CHAPTER III. END OF THE CROWN WHICH WAS TURNED INTO A DRY LEAF.

When she re-entered the audience hall, pale and limping, she was received with a general murmur of pleasure. On the part of the audience there was the feeling of impatience gratified which one experiences at the theatre at the end of the last entr'acte of the comedy, when the curtain rises and the conclusion is about to begin. On the part of the judges, it was the hope of getting their suppers sooner.

The little goat also bleated with joy. He tried to run towards his mistress, but they had tied him to the bench.

Night was fully set in. The candles, whose number had not been increased, cast so little light, that the walls of the hall could not be seen. The shadows there enveloped all objects in a sort of mist. A few apathetic faces of judges alone could be dimly discerned. Opposite them, at the extremity of the long hail, they could see a vaguely white point standing out against the sombre background. This was the accused.

She had dragged herself to her place. When Charmolue had installed himself in a magisterial manner in his own, he seated himself, then rose and said, without exhibiting too much self-complacency at his success,--"The accused has confessed all."

"Bohemian girl," the president continued, "have you avowed all your deeds of magic, prostitution, and assassination on Phoebus de Châteaupers."

Her heart contracted. She was heard to sob amid the darkness.

"Anything you like," she replied feebly, "but kill me quickly!"

"Monsieur, procurator of the king in the ecclesiastical courts," said the president, "the chamber is ready to hear you in your charge."

Master Charmolue exhibited an alarming note book, and began to read, with many gestures and the exaggerated accentuation of the pleader, an oration in Latin, wherein all the proofs of the suit were piled up in Ciceronian periphrases, flanked with quotations from Plautus, his favorite comic author. We regret that we are not able to offer to our readers this remarkable piece. The orator pronounced it with marvellous action. Before he had finished the exordium, the perspiration was starting from his brow, and his eyes from his bead.

All at once, in the middle of a fine period, he interrupted himself, and his glance, ordinarily so gentle and even stupid, became menacing.

"Gentlemen," he exclaimed (this time in French, for it was not in his copy book), "Satan is so mixed up in this affair, that here he is present at our debates, and making sport of their majesty. Behold!"

So saying, he pointed to the little goat, who, on seeing Charmolue gesticulating, had, in point of fact, thought it appropriate to do the same, and had seated himself on his haunches, reproducing to the best of his ability, with his forepaws and his bearded head the pathetic pantomine of the king's procurator in the ecclesiastical court. This was, if the reader remembers, one of his prettiest accomplishments. This incident, this last proof, produced a great effect. The goat's hoofs were tied, and the king's procurator resumed the thread of his eloquence.

It was very long, but the peroration was admirable. Here is the concluding phrase; let the reader add the hoarse voice and the breathless gestures of Master Charmolue,

"Ideo, domni, coram stryga demonstrata, crimine patente, intentione criminis existente, in nornine sanctoe ecclesioe Nostroe-Domince Parisiensis quoe est in saisina habendi omnimodam altam et bassam justitiam in illa hac intemerata Civitatis insula, tenore proesentium declaremus nos requirere, primo, aliquamdam pecuniariam indemnitatem; secundo, amendationem honorabilem ante portalium maximum Nostroe-Dominoe, ecclesioe cathedralis; tertio, sententiani in virtute cujus ista styrga cum sua capella, seu in trivio vulgariter dicto la Grève, seu in insula exeunte in fluvio Secanoe, juxta pointam juardini regalis, executatoe sint!"*

* The substance of this exordium is contained in the president's sentence.

He put on his cap again and seated himself.

"Eheu!" sighed the broken-hearted Gringoire, "bassa latinitas--bastard latin!"

Another man in a black gown rose near the accused; he was her lawyer.--The judges, who were fasting, began to grumble.

"Advocate, be brief," said the president.

"Monsieur the President," replied the advocate, "since the defendant has confessed the crime, I have only one word to say to these gentlemen. Here is a text from the Salic law; 'If a witch hath eaten a man, and if she be convicted of it, she shall pay a fine of eight thousand deniers, which amount to two hundred sous of gold.' May it please the chamber to condemn my client to the fine?"

"An abrogated text," said the advocate extraordinary of the king.

"Nego, I deny it," replied the advocate.

"Put it to the vote!" said one of the councillors; "the crime is manifest, and it is late."

They proceeded to take a vote without leaving the room. The judges signified their assent without giving their reasons, they were in a hurry. Their capped heads were seen uncovering one after the other, in the gloom, at the lugubrious question addressed to them by the president in a low voice. The poor accused had the appearance of looking at them, but her troubled eye no longer saw.

Then the clerk began to write; then he handed a long parch-ment to the president.

Then the unhappy girl heard the people moving, the pikes clashing, and a freezing voice saying to her,--"Bohemian wench, on the day when it shall seem good to our lord the king, at the hour of noon, you will be taken in a tumbrel, in your shift, with bare feet, and a rope about your neck, before the grand portal of Notre-Dame, and you will there make an apology with a wax torch of the weight of two pounds in your hand, and thence you will be conducted to the Place de Grève, where you will be hanged and strangled on the town gibbet; and likewise your goat; and you will pay to the official three lions of gold, in reparation of the crimes by you committed and by you confessed, of sorcery and magic, debauchery and murder, upon the person of the Sieur Phoebus de Châteaupers. May God have mercy on your soul!"

"Oh! 'tis a dream!" she murmured; and she felt rough hands bearing her away.

CHAPTER IV. LASCIATE OGNI SPERANZA--LEAVE ALL HOPE BEHIND, YE WHO ENTER HERE.

In the Middle Ages, when an edifice was complete, there was almost as much of it in the earth as above it. Unless built upon piles, like Notre-Dame, a palace, a fortress, a church, had always a double bottom. In cathedrals, it was, in some sort, another subterranean cathedral, low, dark, mysterious, blind, and mute, under the upper nave which was overflowing with light and reverberating with organs and bells day and night. Sometimes it was a sepulchre. In palaces, in fortresses, it was a prison, sometimes a sepulchre also, sometimes both together. These mighty buildings, whose mode of formation and vegetation we have elsewhere explained, had not simply foundations, but, so to speak, roots which ran branching through the soil in chambers, galleries, and staircases, like the construction above. Thus churches, palaces, fortresses, had the earth half way up their bodies. The cellars of an edifice formed another edifice, into which one descended instead of ascending, and which extended its subterranean grounds under the external piles of the monument, like those forests and mountains which are reversed in the mirror-like waters of a lake, beneath the forests and mountains of the banks.

At the fortress of Saint-Antoine, at the Palais de Justice of Paris, at the Louvre, these subterranean edifices were prisons. The stories of these prisons, as they sank into the soil, grew constantly narrower and

more gloomy. They were so many zones, where the shades of horror were graduated. Dante could never imagine anything better for his hell. These tunnels of cells usually terminated in a sack of a lowest dungeon, with a vat-like bottom, where Dante placed Satan, where society placed those condemned to death. A miserable human existence, once interred there; farewell light, air, life, ogni speranza--every hope; it only came forth to the scaffold or the stake. Sometimes it rotted there; human justice called this "forgetting." Between men and himself, the condemned man felt a pile of stones and jailers weighing down upon his head; and the entire prison, the massive bastille was nothing more than an enormous, complicated lock, which barred him off from the rest of the world.

It was in a sloping cavity of this description, in the oubliettes excavated by Saint-Louis, in the inpace of the Tournelle, that la Esmeralda had been placed on being condemned to death, through fear of her escape, no doubt, with the colossal court-house over her head. Poor fly, who could not have lifted even one of its blocks of stone!

Assuredly, Providence and society had been equally unjust; such an excess of unhappiness and of torture was not necessary to break so frail a creature.

There she lay, lost in the shadows, buried, hidden, immured. Any one who could have beheld her in this state, after having seen her laugh and dance in the sun, would have shuddered. Cold as night, cold as death, not a breath of air in her tresses, not a human sound in her ear,

no longer a ray of light in her eyes; snapped in twain, crushed with chains, crouching beside a jug and a loaf, on a little straw, in a pool of water, which was formed under her by the sweating of the prison walls; without motion, almost without breath, she had no longer the power to suffer; Phoebus, the sun, midday, the open air, the streets of Paris, the dances with applause, the sweet babblings of love with the officer; then the priest, the old crone, the poignard, the blood, the torture, the gibbet; all this did, indeed, pass before her mind, sometimes as a charming and golden vision, sometimes as a hideous nightmare; but it was no longer anything but a vague and horrible struggle, lost in the gloom, or distant music played up above ground, and which was no longer audible at the depth where the unhappy girl had fallen.

Since she had been there, she had neither waked nor slept. In that misfortune, in that cell, she could no longer distinguish her waking hours from slumber, dreams from reality, any more than day from night. All this was mixed, broken, floating, disseminated confusedly in her thought. She no longer felt, she no longer knew, she no longer thought; at the most, she only dreamed. Never had a living creature been thrust more deeply into nothingness.

Thus benumbed, frozen, petrified, she had barely noticed on two or three occasions, the sound of a trap door opening somewhere above her, without even permitting the passage of a little light, and through which a hand had tossed her a bit of black bread. Nevertheless, this periodical visit of the jailer was the sole communication which was left her with

mankind.

A single thing still mechanically occupied her ear; above her head, the dampness was filtering through the mouldy stones of the vault, and a drop of water dropped from them at regular intervals. She listened stupidly to the noise made by this drop of water as it fell into the pool beside her.

This drop of water falling from time to time into that pool, was the only movement which still went on around her, the only clock which marked the time, the only noise which reached her of all the noise made on the surface of the earth.

To tell the whole, however, she also felt, from time to time, in that cesspool of mire and darkness, something cold passing over her foot or her arm, and she shuddered.

How long had she been there? She did not know. She had a recollection of a sentence of death pronounced somewhere, against some one, then of having been herself carried away, and of waking up in darkness and silence, chilled to the heart. She had dragged herself along on her hands. Then iron rings that cut her ankles, and chains had rattled. She had recognized the fact that all around her was wall, that below her there was a pavement covered with moisture and a truss of straw; but neither lamp nor air-hole. Then she had seated herself on that straw and, sometimes, for the sake of changing her attitude, on the last stone step in her dungeon. For a while she had tried to count the black

minutes measured off for her by the drop of water; but that melancholy labor of an ailing brain had broken off of itself in her head, and had left her in stupor.

At length, one day, or one night, (for midnight and midday were of the same color in that sepulchre), she heard above her a louder noise than was usually made by the turnkey when he brought her bread and jug of water. She raised her head, and beheld a ray of reddish light passing through the crevices in the sort of trapdoor contrived in the roof of the inpace.

At the same time, the heavy lock creaked, the trap grated on its rusty hinges, turned, and she beheld a lantern, a hand, and the lower portions of the bodies of two men, the door being too low to admit of her seeing their heads. The light pained her so acutely that she shut her eyes.

When she opened them again the door was closed, the lantern was deposited on one of the steps of the staircase; a man alone stood before her. A monk's black cloak fell to his feet, a cowl of the same color concealed his face. Nothing was visible of his person, neither face nor hands. It was a long, black shroud standing erect, and beneath which something could be felt moving. She gazed fixedly for several minutes at this sort of spectre. But neither he nor she spoke. One would have pronounced them two statues confronting each other. Two things only seemed alive in that cavern; the wick of the lantern, which sputtered on account of the dampness of the atmosphere, and the drop of water from the roof, which cut this irregular sputtering with its monotonous

splash, and made the light of the lantern quiver in concentric waves on the oily water of the pool.

At last the prisoner broke the silence.

"Who are you?"

"A priest."

The words, the accent, the sound of his voice made her tremble.

The priest continued, in a hollow voice,--

"Are you prepared?"

"For what?"

"To die."

"Oh!" said she, "will it be soon?"

"To-morrow."

Her head, which had been raised with joy, fell back upon her breast.

"'Tis very far away yet!" she murmured; "why could they not have done it to-day?"

"Then you are very unhappy?" asked the priest, after a silence.

"I am very cold," she replied.

She took her feet in her hands, a gesture habitual with unhappy wretches who are cold, as we have already seen in the case of the recluse of the Tour-Roland, and her teeth chattered.

The priest appeared to cast his eyes around the dungeon from beneath his cowl.

"Without light! without fire! in the water! it is horrible!"

"Yes," she replied, with the bewildered air which unhappiness had given her. "The day belongs to every one, why do they give me only night?"

"Do you know," resumed the priest, after a fresh silence, "why you are here?"

"I thought I knew once," she said, passing her thin fingers over her eyelids, as though to aid her memory, "but I know no longer."

All at once she began to weep like a child.

"I should like to get away from here, sir. I am cold, I am afraid, and there are creatures which crawl over my body."

"Well, follow me."

So saying, the priest took her arm. The unhappy girl was frozen to her very soul. Yet that hand produced an impression of cold upon her.

"Oh!" she murmured, "'tis the icy hand of death. Who are you?"

The priest threw back his cowl; she looked. It was the sinister visage which had so long pursued her; that demon's head which had appeared at la Falourdel's, above the head of her adored Phoebus; that eye which she last had seen glittering beside a dagger.

This apparition, always so fatal for her, and which had thus driven her on from misfortune to misfortune, even to torture, roused her from her stupor. It seemed to her that the sort of veil which had lain thick upon her memory was rent away. All the details of her melancholy adventure, from the nocturnal scene at la Falourdel's to her condemnation to the Tournelle, recurred to her memory, no longer vague and confused as heretofore, but distinct, harsh, clear, palpitating, terrible. These souvenirs, half effaced and almost obliterated by excess of suffering, were revived by the sombre figure which stood before her, as the approach of fire causes letters traced upon white paper with invisible ink, to start out perfectly fresh. It seemed to her that all the wounds of her heart opened and bled simultaneously.

"Hah!" she cried, with her hands on her eyes, and a convulsive

trembling, "'tis the priest!"

Then she dropped her arms in discouragement, and remained seated, with lowered head, eyes fixed on the ground, mute and still trembling.

The priest gazed at her with the eye of a hawk which has long been soaring in a circle from the heights of heaven over a poor lark cowering in the wheat, and has long been silently contracting the formidable circles of his flight, and has suddenly swooped down upon his prey like a flash of lightning, and holds it panting in his talons.

She began to murmur in a low voice,--

"Finish! finish! the last blow!" and she drew her head down in terror between her shoulders, like the lamb awaiting the blow of the butcher's axe.

"So I inspire you with horror?" he said at length.

She made no reply.

"Do I inspire you with horror?" he repeated.

Her lips contracted, as though with a smile.

"Yes," said she, "the headsman scoffs at the condemned. Here he has been pursuing me, threatening me, terrifying me for months! Had it not been

for him, my God, how happy it should have been! It was he who cast me into this abyss! Oh heavens! it was he who killed him! my Phoebus!"

Here, bursting into sobs, and raising her eyes to the priest,--

"Oh! wretch, who are you? What have I done to you? Do you then, hate me so? Alas! what have you against me?"

"I love thee!" cried the priest.

Her tears suddenly ceased, she gazed at him with the look of an idiot. He had fallen on his knees and was devouring her with eyes of flame.

"Dost thou understand? I love thee!" he cried again.

"What love!" said the unhappy girl with a shudder.

He resumed,--

"The love of a damned soul."

Both remained silent for several minutes, crushed beneath the weight of their emotions; he maddened, she stupefied.

"Listen," said the priest at last, and a singular calm had come over him; "you shall know all I am about to tell you that which I have hitherto hardly dared to say to myself, when furtively interrogating my

conscience at those deep hours of the night when it is so dark that it seems as though God no longer saw us. Listen. Before I knew you, young girl, I was happy."

"So was I!" she sighed feebly.

"Do not interrupt me. Yes, I was happy, at least I believed myself to be so. I was pure, my soul was filled with limpid light. No head was raised more proudly and more radiantly than mine. Priests consulted me on chastity; doctors, on doctrines. Yes, science was all in all to me; it was a sister to me, and a sister sufficed. Not but that with age other ideas came to me. More than once my flesh had been moved as a woman's form passed by. That force of sex and blood which, in the madness of youth, I had imagined that I had stifled forever had, more than once, convulsively raised the chain of iron vows which bind me, a miserable wretch, to the cold stones of the altar. But fasting, prayer, study, the mortifications of the cloister, rendered my soul mistress of my body once more, and then I avoided women. Moreover, I had but to open a book, and all the impure mists of my brain vanished before the splendors of science. In a few moments, I felt the gross things of earth flee far away, and I found myself once more calm, quieted, and serene, in the presence of the tranquil radiance of eternal truth. As long as the demon sent to attack me only vague shadows of women who passed occasionally before my eyes in church, in the streets, in the fields, and who hardly recurred to my dreams, I easily vanquished him. Alas! if the victory has not remained with me, it is the fault of God, who has not created man and the demon of equal force. Listen. One day--"

Here the priest paused, and the prisoner heard sighs of anguish break from his breast with a sound of the death rattle.

He resumed,--

"One day I was leaning on the window of my cell. What book was I reading then? Oh! all that is a whirlwind in my head. I was reading. The window opened upon a Square. I heard a sound of tambourine and music. Annoyed at being thus disturbed in my revery, I glanced into the Square. What I beheld, others saw beside myself, and yet it was not a spectacle made for human eyes. There, in the middle of the pavement,--it was midday, the sun was shining brightly,--a creature was dancing. A creature so beautiful that God would have preferred her to the Virgin and have chosen her for his mother and have wished to be born of her if she had been in existence when he was made man! Her eyes were black and splendid; in the midst of her black locks, some hairs through which the sun shone glistened like threads of gold. Her feet disappeared in their movements like the spokes of a rapidly turning wheel. Around her head, in her black tresses, there were disks of metal, which glittered in the sun, and formed a coronet of stars on her brow. Her dress thick set with spangles, blue, and dotted with a thousand sparks, gleamed like a summer night. Her brown, supple arms twined and untwined around her waist, like two scarfs. The form of her body was surprisingly beautiful. Oh! what a resplendent figure stood out, like something luminous even in the sunlight! Alas, young girl, it was thou! Surprised, intoxicated, charmed, I allowed myself to gaze upon thee. I looked so long that I

suddenly shuddered with terror; I felt that fate was seizing hold of me."

The priest paused for a moment, overcome with emotion. Then he continued,--

"Already half fascinated, I tried to cling fast to something and hold myself back from falling. I recalled the snares which Satan had already set for me. The creature before my eyes possessed that superhuman beauty which can come only from heaven or hell. It was no simple girl made with a little of our earth, and dimly lighted within by the vacillating ray of a woman's soul. It was an angel! but of shadows and flame, and not of light. At the moment when I was meditating thus, I beheld beside you a

goat, a beast of witches, which smiled as it gazed at me. The midday sun gave him golden horns. Then I perceived the snare of the demon, and I no longer doubted that you had come from hell and that you had come thence for my perdition. I believed it."

Here the priest looked the prisoner full in the face, and added, coldly,--

"I believe it still. Nevertheless, the charm operated little by little; your dancing whirled through my brain; I felt the mysterious spell working within me. All that should have awakened was lulled to sleep; and like those who die in the snow, I felt pleasure in allowing this sleep to draw on. All at once, you began to sing. What could I do,

unhappy wretch? Your song was still more charming than your dancing. I tried to flee. Impossible. I was nailed, rooted to the spot. It seemed to me that the marble of the pavement had risen to my knees. I was forced to remain until the end. My feet were like ice, my head was on fire. At last you took pity on me, you ceased to sing, you disappeared. The reflection of the dazzling vision, the reverberation of the enchanting music disappeared by degrees from my eyes and my ears. Then I fell back into the embrasure of the window, more rigid, more feeble than a statue torn from its base. The vesper bell roused me. I drew myself up; I fled; but alas! something within me had fallen never to rise again, something had come upon me from which I could not flee."

He made another pause and went on,--

"Yes, dating from that day, there was within me a man whom I did not know. I tried to make use of all my remedies. The cloister, the altar, work, books,--follies! Oh, how hollow does science sound when one in despair dashes against it a head full of passions! Do you know, young girl, what I saw thenceforth between my book and me? You, your shade, the image of the luminous apparition which had one day crossed the space before me. But this image had no longer the same color; it was sombre, funereal, gloomy as the black circle which long pursues the vision of the imprudent man who has gazed intently at the sun.

"Unable to rid myself of it, since I heard your song humming ever in my head, beheld your feet dancing always on my breviary, felt even at night, in my dreams, your form in contact with my own, I desired to see

you again, to touch you, to know who you were, to see whether I should really find you like the ideal image which I had retained of you, to shatter my dream, perchance, with reality. At all events, I hoped that a new impression would efface the first, and the first had become insupportable. I sought you. I saw you once more. Calamity! When I had seen you twice, I wanted to see you a thousand times, I wanted to see you always. Then--how stop myself on that slope of hell?--then I no longer belonged to myself. The other end of the thread which the demon had attached to my wings he had fastened to his foot. I became vagrant and wandering like yourself. I waited for you under porches, I stood on the lookout for you at the street corners, I watched for you from the summit of my tower. Every evening I returned to myself more charmed, more despairing, more bewitched, more lost!

"I had learned who you were; an Egyptian, Bohemian, gypsy, zingara. How could I doubt the magic? Listen. I hoped that a trial would free me from the charm. A witch enchanted Bruno d'Ast; he had her burned, and was cured. I knew it. I wanted to try the remedy. First I tried to have you forbidden the square in front of Notre-Dame, hoping to forget you if you returned no more. You paid no heed to it. You returned. Then the idea of abducting you occurred to me. One night I made the attempt. There were two of us. We already had you in our power, when that miserable officer came up. He delivered you. Thus did he begin your unhappiness, mine, and his own. Finally, no longer knowing what to do, and what was to become of me, I denounced you to the official.

"I thought that I should be cured like Bruno d'Ast. I also had a

confused idea that a trial would deliver you into my hands; that, as a prisoner I should hold you, I should have you; that there you could not escape from me; that you had already possessed me a sufficiently long time to give me the right to possess you in my turn. When one does wrong, one must do it thoroughly. 'Tis madness to halt midway in the monstrous! The extreme of crime has its deliriums of joy. A priest and a witch can mingle in delight upon the truss of straw in a dungeon!

"Accordingly, I denounced you. It was then that I terrified you when we met. The plot which I was weaving against you, the storm which I was heaping up above your head, burst from me in threats and lightning glances. Still, I hesitated. My project had its terrible sides which made me shrink back.

"Perhaps I might have renounced it; perhaps my hideous thought would have withered in my brain, without bearing fruit. I thought that it would always depend upon me to follow up or discontinue this prosecution. But every evil thought is inexorable, and insists on becoming a deed; but where I believed myself to be all powerful, fate was more powerful than I. Alas! 'tis fate which has seized you and delivered you to the terrible wheels of the machine which I had constructed doubly. Listen. I am nearing the end.

"One day,--again the sun was shining brilliantly--I behold man pass me uttering your name and laughing, who carries sensuality in his eyes. Damnation! I followed him; you know the rest."

He ceased.

The young girl could find but one word:

"Oh, my Phoebus!"

"Not that name!" said the priest, grasping her arm violently. "Utter not that name! Oh! miserable wretches that we are, 'tis that name which has ruined us! or, rather we have ruined each other by the inexplicable play of fate! you are suffering, are you not? you are cold; the night makes you blind, the dungeon envelops you; but perhaps you still have some light in the bottom of your soul, were it only your childish love for that empty man who played with your heart, while I bear the dungeon within me; within me there is winter, ice, despair; I have night in my soul.

"Do you know what I have suffered? I was present at your trial. I was seated on the official's bench. Yes, under one of the priests' cowls, there were the contortions of the damned. When you were brought in, I was there; when you were questioned, I was there.--Den of wolves!--It was my crime, it was my gallows that I beheld being slowly reared over your head. I was there for every witness, every proof, every plea; I could count each of your steps in the painful path; I was still there when that ferocious beast--oh! I had not foreseen torture! Listen.
I followed you to that chamber of anguish. I beheld you stripped and handled, half naked, by the infamous hands of the tormentor. I beheld your foot, that foot which I would have given an empire to kiss and die,

that foot, beneath which to have had my head crushed I should have felt such rapture,--I beheld it encased in that horrible boot, which converts the limbs of a living being into one bloody clod. Oh, wretch! while I looked on at that, I held beneath my shroud a dagger, with which I lacerated my breast. When you uttered that cry, I plunged it into my flesh; at a second cry, it would have entered my heart. Look! I believe that it still bleeds."

He opened his cassock. His breast was in fact, mangled as by the claw of a tiger, and on his side he had a large and badly healed wound.

The prisoner recoiled with horror.

"Oh!" said the priest, "young girl, have pity upon me! You think yourself unhappy; alas! alas! you know not what unhappiness is. Oh! to love a woman! to be a priest! to be hated! to love with all the fury of one's soul; to feel that one would give for the least of her smiles, one's blood, one's vitals, one's fame, one's salvation, one's immortality and eternity, this life and the other; to regret that one is not a king, emperor, archangel, God, in order that one might place a greater slave beneath her feet; to clasp her night and day in one's dreams and one's thoughts, and to behold her in love with the trappings of a soldier and to have nothing to offer her but a priest's dirty cassock, which will inspire her with fear and disgust! To be present with one's jealousy and one's rage, while she lavishes on a miserable, blustering imbecile, treasures of love and beauty! To behold that body

whose form burns you, that bosom which possesses so much sweetness, that

flesh palpitate and blush beneath the kisses of another! Oh heaven! to love her foot, her arm, her shoulder, to think of her blue veins, of her brown skin, until one writhes for whole nights together on the pavement of one's cell, and to behold all those caresses which one has dreamed of, end in torture! To have succeeded only in stretching her upon the leather bed! Oh! these are the veritable pincers, reddened in the fires of hell. Oh! blessed is he who is sawn between two planks, or torn in pieces by four horses! Do you know what that torture is, which is imposed upon you for long nights by your burning arteries, your bursting heart, your breaking head, your teeth-knawed hands; mad tormentors which

turn you incessantly, as upon a red-hot gridiron, to a thought of love, of jealousy, and of despair! Young girl, mercy! a truce for a moment! a few ashes on these live coals! Wipe away, I beseech you, the perspiration which trickles in great drops from my brow! Child! torture me with one hand, but caress me with the other! Have pity, young girl! Have pity upon me!"

The priest writhed on the wet pavement, beating his head against the corners of the stone steps. The young girl gazed at him, and listened to him.

When he ceased, exhausted and panting, she repeated in a low voice,--

"Oh my Phoebus!"

The priest dragged himself towards her on his knees.

"I beseech you," he cried, "if you have any heart, do not repulse me! Oh! I love you! I am a wretch! When you utter that name, unhappy girl, it is as though you crushed all the fibres of my heart between your teeth. Mercy! If you come from hell I will go thither with you. I have done everything to that end. The hell where you are, shall he paradise; the sight of you is more charming than that of God! Oh! speak! you will have none of me? I should have thought the mountains would be shaken in their foundations on the day when a woman would repulse such a love. Oh! if you only would! Oh! how happy we might be. We would flee--I would help you to flee,--we would go somewhere, we would seek that spot on earth, where the sun is brightest, the sky the bluest, where the trees are most luxuriant. We would love each other, we would pour our two souls into each other, and we would have a thirst for ourselves which we would quench in common and incessantly at that fountain of inexhaustible love."

She interrupted with a terrible and thrilling laugh.

"Look, father, you have blood on your fingers!"

The priest remained for several moments as though petrified, with his eyes fixed upon his hand.

"Well, yes!" he resumed at last, with strange gentleness, "insult me,

scoff at me, overwhelm me with scorn! but come, come. Let us make haste. It is to be to-morrow, I tell you. The gibbet on the Grève, you know it? it stands always ready. It is horrible! to see you ride in that tumbrel! Oh mercy! Until now I have never felt the power of my love for you.--Oh! follow me. You shall take your time to love me after I have saved you. You shall hate me as long as you will. But come. To-morrow! to-morrow! the gallows! your execution! Oh! save yourself! spare me!"

He seized her arm, he was beside himself, he tried to drag her away.

She fixed her eye intently on him.

"What has become of my Phoebus?"

"Ah!" said the priest, releasing her arm, "you are pitiless."

"What has become of Phoebus?" she repeated coldly.

"He is dead!" cried the priest.

"Dead!" said she, still icy and motionless "then why do you talk to me of living?"

He was not listening to her.

"Oh! yes," said he, as though speaking to himself, "he certainly must be dead. The blade pierced deeply. I believe I touched his heart with the

point. Oh! my very soul was at the end of the dagger!"

The young girl flung herself upon him like a raging tigress, and pushed him upon the steps of the staircase with supernatural force.

"Begone, monster! Begone, assassin! Leave me to die! May the blood of both of us make an eternal stain upon your brow! Be thine, priest! Never! never! Nothing shall unite us! not hell itself! Go, accursed man! Never!"

The priest had stumbled on the stairs. He silently disentangled his feet from the folds of his robe, picked up his lantern again, and slowly began the ascent of the steps which led to the door; he opened the door and passed through it.

All at once, the young girl beheld his head reappear; it wore a frightful expression, and he cried, hoarse with rage and despair,--

"I tell you he is dead!"

She fell face downwards upon the floor, and there was no longer any sound audible in the cell than the sob of the drop of water which made the pool palpitate amid the darkness.

CHAPTER V. THE MOTHER.

I do not believe that there is anything sweeter in the world than the ideas which awake in a mother's heart at the sight of her child's tiny shoe; especially if it is a shoe for festivals, for Sunday, for baptism, the shoe embroidered to the very sole, a shoe in which the infant has not yet taken a step. That shoe has so much grace and daintiness, it is so impossible for it to walk, that it seems to the mother as though she saw her child. She smiles upon it, she kisses it, she talks to it; she asks herself whether there can actually be a foot so tiny; and if the child be absent, the pretty shoe suffices to place the sweet and fragile creature before her eyes. She thinks she sees it, she does see it, complete, living, joyous, with its delicate hands, its round head, its pure lips, its serene eyes whose white is blue. If it is in winter, it is yonder, crawling on the carpet, it is laboriously climbing upon an ottoman, and the mother trembles lest it should approach the fire. If it is summer time, it crawls about the yard, in the garden, plucks up the grass between the paving-stones, gazes innocently at the big dogs, the big horses, without fear, plays with the shells, with the flowers, and makes the gardener grumble because he finds sand in the flower-beds and earth in the paths. Everything laughs, and shines and plays around it, like it, even the breath of air and the ray of sun which vie with each other in disporting among the silky ringlets of its hair. The shoe shows all this to the mother, and makes her heart melt as fire melts wax.

But when the child is lost, these thousand images of joy, of charms, of tenderness, which throng around the little shoe, become so many horrible things. The pretty broidered shoe is no longer anything but an instrument of torture which eternally crushes the heart of the mother. It is always the same fibre which vibrates, the tenderest and most sensitive; but instead of an angel caressing it, it is a demon who is wrenching at it.

One May morning, when the sun was rising on one of those dark blue skies against which Garofolo loves to place his Descents from the Cross, the recluse of the Tour-Roland heard a sound of wheels, of horses and irons in the Place de Grève. She was somewhat aroused by it, knotted her hair upon her ears in order to deafen herself, and resumed her contemplation, on her knees, of the inanimate object which she had adored for fifteen years. This little shoe was the universe to her, as we have already said. Her thought was shut up in it, and was destined never more to quit it except at death. The sombre cave of the Tour-Roland alone knew how many bitter imprecations, touching complaints, prayers and sobs she had wafted to heaven in connection with that charming bauble of rose-colored satin. Never was more despair bestowed upon a prettier and more graceful thing.

It seemed as though her grief were breaking forth more violently than usual; and she could be heard outside lamenting in a loud and monotonous voice which rent the heart.

"Oh my daughter!" she said, "my daughter, my poor, dear little child, so

I shall never see thee more! It is over! It always seems to me that it happened yesterday! My God! my God! it would have been better not to give her to me than to take her away so soon. Did you not know that our children are part of ourselves, and that a mother who has lost her child no longer believes in God? Ah! wretch that I am to have gone out that day! Lord! Lord! to have taken her from me thus; you could never have looked at me with her, when I was joyously warming her at my fire, when she laughed as she suckled, when I made her tiny feet creep up my breast to my lips? Oh! if you had looked at that, my God, you would have taken pity on my joy; you would not have taken from me the only love which lingered, in my heart! Was I then, Lord, so miserable a creature, that you could not look at me before condemning me?--Alas! Alas! here is the shoe; where is the foot? where is the rest? Where is the child? My daughter! my daughter! what did they do with thee? Lord, give her back to me. My knees have been worn for fifteen years in praying to thee, my God! Is not that enough? Give her back to me one day, one hour, one minute; one minute, Lord! and then cast me to the demon for all eternity! Oh! if I only knew where the skirt of your garment trails, I would cling to it with both hands, and you would be obliged to give me back my child! Have you no pity on her pretty little shoe? Could you condemn a poor mother to this torture for fifteen years? Good Virgin! good Virgin of heaven! my infant Jesus has been taken from me, has been stolen from me; they devoured her on a heath, they drank her blood, they cracked her bones! Good Virgin, have pity upon me. My daughter, I want my daughter! What is it to me that she is in paradise? I do not want your angel, I want my child! I am a lioness, I want my whelp. Oh! I will writhe on the earth, I will break the stones with my forehead, and I

will damn myself, and I will curse you, Lord, if you keep my child from me! you see plainly that my arms are all bitten, Lord! Has the good God no mercy?--Oh! give me only salt and black bread, only let me have my daughter to warm me like a sun! Alas! Lord my God. Alas! Lord my God, I am only a vile sinner; but my daughter made me pious. I was full of religion for the love of her, and I beheld you through her smile as through an opening into heaven. Oh! if I could only once, just once more, a single time, put this shoe on her pretty little pink foot, I would die blessing you, good Virgin. Ah! fifteen years! she will be grown up now!--Unhappy child! what! it is really true then I shall never see her more, not even in heaven, for I shall not go there myself. Oh! what misery to think that here is her shoe, and that that is all!"

The unhappy woman flung herself upon that shoe; her consolation and her despair for so many years, and her vitals were rent with sobs as on the first day; because, for a mother who has lost her child, it is always the first day. That grief never grows old. The mourning garments may grow white and threadbare, the heart remains dark.

At that moment, the fresh and joyous cries of children passed in front of the cell. Every time that children crossed her vision or struck her ear, the poor mother flung herself into the darkest corner of her sepulchre, and one would have said, that she sought to plunge her head into the stone in order not to hear them. This time, on the contrary, she drew herself upright with a start, and listened eagerly. One of the little boys had just said,--

"They are going to hang a gypsy to-day."

With the abrupt leap of that spider which we have seen fling itself upon a fly at the trembling of its web, she rushed to her air-hole, which opened as the reader knows, on the Place de Grève. A ladder had, in fact, been raised up against the permanent gibbet, and the hangman's assistant was busying himself with adjusting the chains which had been rusted by the rain. There were some people standing about.

The laughing group of children was already far away. The sacked nun sought with her eyes some passer-by whom she might question. All at once, beside her cell, she perceived a priest making a pretext of reading the public breviary, but who was much less occupied with the "lectern of latticed iron," than with the gallows, toward which he cast a fierce and gloomy glance from time to time. She recognized monsieur the archdeacon of Josas, a holy man.

"Father," she inquired, "whom are they about to hang yonder?"

The priest looked at her and made no reply; she repeated her question. Then he said,--

"I know not."

"Some children said that it was a gypsy," went on the recluse.

"I believe so," said the priest.

Then Paquette la Chantefleurie burst into hyena-like laughter.

"Sister," said the archdeacon, "do you then hate the gypsies heartily?"

"Do I hate them!" exclaimed the recluse, "they are vampires, stealers of children! They devoured my little daughter, my child, my only child! I have no longer any heart, they devoured it!"

She was frightful. The priest looked at her coldly.

"There is one in particular whom I hate, and whom I have cursed," she resumed; "it is a young one, of the age which my daughter would be if her mother had not eaten my daughter. Every time that that young viper passes in front of my cell, she sets my blood in a ferment."

"Well, sister, rejoice," said the priest, icy as a sepulchral statue; "that is the one whom you are about to see die."

His head fell upon his bosom and he moved slowly away.

The recluse writhed her arms with joy.

"I predicted it for her, that she would ascend thither! Thanks, priest!" she cried.

And she began to pace up and down with long strides before the grating

of her window, her hair dishevelled, her eyes flashing, with her shoulder striking against the wall, with the wild air of a female wolf in a cage, who has long been famished, and who feels the hour for her repast drawing near.

CHAPTER VI. THREE HUMAN HEARTS DIFFERENTLY CONSTRUCTED.

Phoebus was not dead, however. Men of that stamp die hard. When Master Philippe Lheulier, advocate extraordinary of the king, had said to poor Esmeralda; "He is dying," it was an error or a jest. When the archdeacon had repeated to the condemned girl; "He is dead," the fact is that he knew nothing about it, but that he believed it, that he counted on it, that he did not doubt it, that he devoutly hoped it. It would have been too hard for him to give favorable news of his rival to the woman whom he loved. Any man would have done the same in his place.

It was not that Phoebus's wound had not been serious, but it had not been as much so as the archdeacon believed. The physician, to whom the soldiers of the watch had carried him at the first moment, had feared for his life during the space of a week, and had even told him so in Latin. But youth had gained the upper hand; and, as frequently happens, in spite of prognostications and diagnoses, nature had amused herself by saving the sick man under the physician's very nose. It was while he was still lying on the leech's pallet that he had submitted to the interrogations of Philippe Lheulier and the official inquisitors, which had annoyed him greatly. Hence, one fine morning, feeling himself better, he had left his golden spurs with the leech as payment, and had slipped away. This had not, however, interfered with the progress of the affair. Justice, at that epoch, troubled itself very little about the

clearness and definiteness of a criminal suit. Provided that the accused was hung, that was all that was necessary. Now the judge had plenty of proofs against la Esmeralda. They had supposed Phoebus to be dead, and that was the end of the matter.

Phoebus, on his side, had not fled far. He had simply rejoined his company in garrison at Queue-en-Brie, in the Isle-de-France, a few stages from Paris.

After all, it did not please him in the least to appear in this suit. He had a vague feeling that he should play a ridiculous figure in it. On the whole, he did not know what to think of the whole affair. Superstitious, and not given to devoutness, like every soldier who is only a soldier, when he came to question himself about this adventure, he did not feel assured as to the goat, as to the singular fashion in which he had met La Esmeralda, as to the no less strange manner in which she had allowed him to divine her love, as to her character as a gypsy, and lastly, as to the surly monk. He perceived in all these incidents much more magic than love, probably a sorceress, perhaps the devil; a comedy, in short, or to speak in the language of that day, a very disagreeable mystery, in which he played a very awkward part, the role of blows and derision. The captain was quite put out of countenance about it; he experienced that sort of shame which our La Fontaine has so admirably defined,--

Ashamed as a fox who has been caught by a fowl.

Moreover, he hoped that the affair would not get noised abroad, that his name would hardly be pronounced in it, and that in any case it would not go beyond the courts of the Tournelle. In this he was not mistaken, there was then no "Gazette des Tribunaux;" and as not a week passed which had not its counterfeiter to boil, or its witch to hang, or its heretic to burn, at some one of the innumerable justices of Paris, people were so accustomed to seeing in all the squares the ancient feudal Themis, bare armed, with sleeves stripped up, performing her duty at the gibbets, the ladders, and the pillories, that they hardly paid any heed to it. Fashionable society of that day hardly knew the name of the victim who passed by at the corner of the street, and it was the populace at the most who regaled themselves with this coarse fare. An execution was an habitual incident of the public highways, like the braising-pan of the baker or the slaughter-house of the knacker. The executioner was only a sort of butcher of a little deeper dye than the rest.

Hence Phoebus's mind was soon at ease on the score of the enchantress Esmeralda, or Similar, as he called her, concerning the blow from the dagger of the Bohemian or of the surly monk (it mattered little which to him), and as to the issue of the trial. But as soon as his heart was vacant in that direction, Fleur-de-Lys returned to it. Captain Phoebus's heart, like the physics of that day, abhorred a vacuum.

Queue-en-Brie was a very insipid place to stay at then, a village

of farriers, and cow-girls with chapped hands, a long line of poor dwellings and thatched cottages, which borders the grand road on both sides for half a league; a tail (queue), in short, as its name imports.

Fleur-de-Lys was his last passion but one, a pretty girl, a charming dowry; accordingly, one fine morning, quite cured, and assuming that, after the lapse of two months, the Bohemian affair must be completely finished and forgotten, the amorous cavalier arrived on a prancing horse at the door of the Gondelaurier mansion.

He paid no attention to a tolerably numerous rabble which had assembled in the Place du Parvis, before the portal of Notre-Dame; he remembered that it was the month of May; he supposed that it was some procession, some Pentecost, some festival, hitched his horse to the ring at the door, and gayly ascended the stairs to his beautiful betrothed.

She was alone with her mother.

The scene of the witch, her goat, her cursed alphabet, and Phoebus's long absences, still weighed on Fleur-de-Lys's heart. Nevertheless, when she beheld her captain enter, she thought him so handsome, his doublet so new, his baldrick so shining, and his air so impassioned, that she blushed with pleasure. The noble damsel herself was more charming than ever. Her magnificent blond hair was plaited in a ravishing manner, she was dressed entirely in that sky blue which becomes fair people so well, a bit of coquetry which she had learned from Colombe, and her eyes were swimming in that languor of love which becomes them still better.

Phoebus, who had seen nothing in the line of beauty, since he left the village maids of Queue-en-Brie, was intoxicated with Fleur-de-Lys, which imparted to our officer so eager and gallant an air, that his peace was immediately made. Madame de Gondelaurier herself, still maternally seated in her big arm-chair, had not the heart to scold him. As for Fleur-de-Lys's reproaches, they expired in tender cooings.

The young girl was seated near the window still embroidering her grotto of Neptune. The captain was leaning over the back of her chair, and she was addressing her caressing reproaches to him in a low voice.

"What has become of you these two long months, wicked man?"

"I swear to you," replied Phoebus, somewhat embarrassed by the question, "that you are beautiful enough to set an archbishop to dreaming."

She could not repress a smile.

"Good, good, sir. Let my beauty alone and answer my question. A fine beauty, in sooth!"

"Well, my dear cousin, I was recalled to the garrison.

"And where is that, if you please? and why did not you come to say farewell?"

"At Queue-en-Brie."

Phoebus was delighted with the first question, which helped him to avoid the second.

"But that is quite close by, monsieur. Why did you not come to see me a single time?"

Here Phoebus was rather seriously embarrassed.

"Because--the service--and then, charming cousin, I have been ill."

"Ill!" she repeated in alarm.

"Yes, wounded!"

"Wounded!"

She poor child was completely upset.

"Oh! do not be frightened at that," said Phoebus, carelessly, "it was nothing. A quarrel, a sword cut; what is that to you?"

"What is that to me?" exclaimed Fleur-de-Lys, raising her beautiful eyes filled with tears. "Oh! you do not say what you think when you speak thus. What sword cut was that? I wish to know all."

"Well, my dear fair one, I had a falling out with Mahè Fédy, you know? the lieutenant of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, and we ripped open a few inches of skin for each other. That is all."

The mendacious captain was perfectly well aware that an affair of honor always makes a man stand well in the eyes of a woman. In fact, Fleur-de-Lys looked him full in the face, all agitated with fear, pleasure, and admiration. Still, she was not completely reassured.

"Provided that you are wholly cured, my Phoebus!" said she. "I do not know your Mahè Fédy, but he is a villanous man. And whence arose this quarrel?"

Here Phoebus, whose imagination was endowed with but mediocre power of creation, began to find himself in a quandary as to a means of extricating himself for his prowess.

"Oh! how do I know?--a mere nothing, a horse, a remark! Fair cousin," he exclaimed, for the sake of changing the conversation, "what noise is this in the Cathedral Square?"

He approached the window.

"Oh! Mon Dieu, fair cousin, how many people there are on the Place!"

"I know not," said Fleur-de-Lys; "it appears that a witch is to do penance this morning before the church, and thereafter to be hung."

The captain was so thoroughly persuaded that la Esmeralda's affair was concluded, that he was but little disturbed by Fleur-de-Lys's words. Still, he asked her one or two questions.

"What is the name of this witch?"

"I do not know," she replied.

"And what is she said to have done?"

She shrugged her white shoulders.

"I know not."

"Oh, mon Dieu Jesus!" said her mother; "there are so many witches nowadays that I dare say they burn them without knowing their names. One might as well seek the name of every cloud in the sky. After all, one may be tranquil. The good God keeps his register." Here the venerable dame rose and came to the window. "Good Lord! you are right, Phoebus," said she. "The rabble is indeed great. There are people on all the roofs, blessed be God! Do you know, Phoebus, this reminds me of my best days. The entrance of King Charles VII., when, also, there were many people. I no longer remember in what year that was. When I speak of this to you, it produces upon you the effect,--does it not?--the effect of something very old, and upon me of something very young. Oh! the crowd was far finer than at the present day. They even stood upon the

machicolations of the Porte Sainte-Antoine. The king had the queen on a pillion, and after their highnesses came all the ladies mounted behind all the lords. I remember that they laughed loudly, because beside Amanyon de Garlande, who was very short of stature, there rode the Sire Matefelon, a chevalier of gigantic size, who had killed heaps of English. It was very fine. A procession of all the gentlemen of France, with their oriflammes waving red before the eye. There were some with pennons and some with banners. How can I tell? the Sire de Calm with a pennon; Jean de Châteaumorant with a banner; the Sire de Courcy with a banner, and a more ample one than any of the others except the Duc de Bourbon. Alas! 'tis a sad thing to think that all that has existed and exists no longer!"

The two lovers were not listening to the venerable dowager. Phoebus had returned and was leaning on the back of his betrothed's chair, a charming post whence his libertine glance plunged into all the openings of Fleur-de-Lys's gorget. This gorget gaped so conveniently, and allowed him to see so many exquisite things and to divine so many more, that Phoebus, dazzled by this skin with its gleams of satin, said to himself, "How can any one love anything but a fair skin?"

Both were silent. The young girl raised sweet, enraptured eyes to him from time to time, and their hair mingled in a ray of spring sunshine.

"Phoebus," said Fleur-de-Lys suddenly, in a low voice, "we are to be married three months hence; swear to me that you have never loved any other woman than myself."

"I swear it, fair angel!" replied Phoebus, and his passionate glances aided the sincere tone of his voice in convincing Fleur-de-Lys.

Meanwhile, the good mother, charmed to see the betrothed pair on terms of such perfect understanding, had just quitted the apartment to attend to some domestic matter; Phoebus observed it, and this so emboldened the adventurous captain that very strange ideas mounted to his brain. Fleur-de-Lys loved him, he was her betrothed; she was alone with him; his former taste for her had re-awakened, not with all its fresh-ness but with all its ardor; after all, there is no great harm in tasting one's wheat while it is still in the blade; I do not know whether these ideas passed through his mind, but one thing is certain, that Fleur-de-Lys was suddenly alarmed by the expression of his glance. She looked round and saw that her mother was no longer there.

"Good heavens!" said she, blushing and uneasy, "how very warm I am?"

"I think, in fact," replied Phoebus, "that it cannot be far from midday. The sun is troublesome. We need only lower the curtains."

"No, no," exclaimed the poor little thing, "on the contrary, I need air."

And like a fawn who feels the breath of the pack of hounds, she rose, ran to the window, opened it, and rushed upon the balcony.

Phoebus, much discomfited, followed her.

The Place du Parvis Notre-Dame, upon which the balcony looked, as the reader knows, presented at that moment a singular and sinister spectacle which caused the fright of the timid Fleur-de-Lys to change its nature.

An immense crowd, which overflowed into all the neighboring streets, encumbered the Place, properly speaking. The little wall, breast high, which surrounded the Place, would not have sufficed to keep it free had it not been lined with a thick hedge of sergeants and hackbuteers, culverines in hand. Thanks to this thicket of pikes and arquebuses, the Parvis was empty. Its entrance was guarded by a force of halberdiers with the armorial bearings of the bishop. The large doors of the church were closed, and formed a contrast with the innumerable windows on the Place, which, open to their very gables, allowed a view of thousands of heads heaped up almost like the piles of bullets in a park of artillery.

The surface of this rabble was dingy, dirty, earthy. The spectacle which it was expecting was evidently one of the sort which possess the privilege of bringing out and calling together the vilest among the populace. Nothing is so hideous as the noise which was made by that swarm of yellow caps and dirty heads. In that throng there were more laughs than cries, more women than men.

From time to time, a sharp and vibrating voice pierced the general clamor.

"Ohé! Mahiet Baliffre! Is she to be hung yonder?"

"Fool! t'is here that she is to make her apology in her shift! the good God is going to cough Latin in her face! That is always done here, at midday. If 'tis the gallows that you wish, go to the Grève."

"I will go there, afterwards."

"Tell me, la Boucanbry? Is it true that she has refused a confessor?"

"It appears so, La Bechaigne."

"You see what a pagan she is!"

"'Tis the custom, monsieur. The bailiff of the courts is bound to deliver the malefactor ready judged for execution if he be a layman, to the provost of Paris; if a clerk, to the official of the bishopric."

"Thank you, sir."

"Oh, God!" said Fleur-de-Lys, "the poor creature!"

This thought filled with sadness the glance which she cast upon the populace. The captain, much more occupied with her than with that pack of the rabble, was amorously rumpling her girdle behind. She turned round, entreating and smiling.

"Please let me alone, Phoebus! If my mother were to return, she would see your hand!"

At that moment, midday rang slowly out from the clock of Notre-Dame. A murmur of satisfaction broke out in the crowd. The last vibration of the twelfth stroke had hardly died away when all heads surged like the waves beneath a squall, and an immense shout went up from the pavement, the windows, and the roofs,

"There she is!"

Fleur-de-Lys pressed her hands to her eyes, that she might not see.

"Charming girl," said Phoebus, "do you wish to withdraw?"

"No," she replied; and she opened through curiosity, the eyes which she had closed through fear.

A tumbrel drawn by a stout Norman horse, and all surrounded by cavalry in violet livery with white crosses, had just debouched upon the Place through the Rue Saint-Pierre-aux-Boeufs. The sergeants of the watch were clearing a passage for it through the crowd, by stout blows from their clubs. Beside the cart rode several officers of justice and police, recognizable by their black costume and their awkwardness in the saddle. Master Jacques Charmolue paraded at their head.

In the fatal cart sat a young girl with her arms tied behind her back, and with no priest beside her. She was in her shift; her long black hair (the fashion then was to cut it off only at the foot of the gallows) fell in disorder upon her half-bared throat and shoulders.

Athwart that waving hair, more glossy than the plumage of a raven, a thick, rough, gray rope was visible, twisted and knotted, chafing her delicate collar-bones and twining round the charming neck of the poor girl, like an earthworm round a flower. Beneath that rope glittered a tiny amulet ornamented with bits of green glass, which had been left to her no doubt, because nothing is refused to those who are about to die. The spectators in the windows could see in the bottom of the cart her naked legs which she strove to hide beneath her, as by a final feminine instinct. At her feet lay a little goat, bound. The condemned girl held together with her teeth her imperfectly fastened shift. One would have said that she suffered still more in her misery from being thus exposed almost naked to the eyes of all. Alas! modesty is not made for such shocks.

"Jesus!" said Fleur-de-Lys hastily to the captain. "Look fair cousin, 'tis that wretched Bohemian with the goat."

So saying, she turned to Phoebus. His eyes were fixed on the tumbrel. He was very pale.

"What Bohemian with the goat?" he stammered.

"What!" resumed Fleur-de-Lys, "do you not remember?"

Phoebus interrupted her.

"I do not know what you mean."

He made a step to re-enter the room, but Fleur-de-Lys, whose jealousy, previously so vividly aroused by this same gypsy, had just been re-awakened, Fleur-de-Lys gave him a look full of penetration and distrust. She vaguely recalled at that moment having heard of a captain mixed up in the trial of that witch.

"What is the matter with you?" she said to Phoebus, "one would say, that this woman had disturbed you."

Phoebus forced a sneer,--

"Me! Not the least in the world! Ah! yes, certainly!"

"Remain, then!" she continued imperiously, "and let us see the end."

The unlucky captain was obliged to remain. He was somewhat reassured by the fact that the condemned girl never removed her eyes from the bottom of the cart. It was but too surely la Esmeralda. In this last stage of opprobrium and misfortune, she was still beautiful; her great black eyes appeared still larger, because of the emaciation of her cheeks; her pale profile was pure and sublime. She resembled what she had been, in the same degree that a virgin by Masaccio, resembles a virgin of Raphael,--weaker, thinner, more delicate.

Moreover, there was nothing in her which was not shaken in some sort, and which with the exception of her modesty, she did not let go at will, so profoundly had she been broken by stupor and despair. Her body bounded at every jolt of the tumbrel like a dead or broken thing; her gaze was dull and imbecile. A tear was still visible in her eyes, but motionless and frozen, so to speak.

Meanwhile, the lugubrious cavalcade has traversed the crowd amid cries of joy and curious attitudes. But as a faithful historian, we must state that on beholding her so beautiful, so depressed, many were moved with pity, even among the hardest of them.

The tumbrel had entered the Parvis.

It halted before the central portal. The escort ranged themselves in line on both sides. The crowd became silent, and, in the midst of this

silence full of anxiety and solemnity, the two leaves of the grand door swung back, as of themselves, on their hinges, which gave a creak like the sound of a fife. Then there became visible in all its length, the deep, gloomy church, hung in black, sparely lighted with a few candles gleaming afar off on the principal altar, opened in the midst of the Place which was dazzling with light, like the mouth of a cavern. At the very extremity, in the gloom of the apse, a gigantic silver cross was visible against a black drapery which hung from the vault to the pavement. The whole nave was deserted. But a few heads of priests could be seen moving confusedly in the distant choir stalls, and, at the moment when the great door opened, there escaped from the church a loud, solemn, and monotonous chanting, which cast over the head of the condemned girl, in gusts, fragments of melancholy psalms,--

"Non timebo millia populi circumdantis me: exsurge, Domine; salvum me fac, Deus!"

"Salvum me fac, Deus, quoniam intraverunt aquoe usque ad animam meam.

"Infixus sum in limo profundi; et non est substantia."

At the same time, another voice, separate from the choir, intoned upon the steps of the chief altar, this melancholy offertory,--"Qui verbum meum audit, et credit ei qui misit me, habet vitam oeternam et in judicium non venit; sed transit a morte im vitam*."

* "He that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me, hath eternal life, and hath not come into condemnation; but is passed from death to life."

This chant, which a few old men buried in the gloom sang from afar over that beautiful creature, full of youth and life, caressed by the warm air of spring, inundated with sunlight was the mass for the dead.

The people listened devoutly.

The unhappy girl seemed to lose her sight and her consciousness in the obscure interior of the church. Her white lips moved as though in prayer, and the headsman's assistant who approached to assist her to alight from the cart, heard her repeating this word in a low tone,--"Phoebus."

They untied her hands, made her alight, accompanied by her goat, which had also been unbound, and which bleated with joy at finding itself free: and they made her walk barefoot on the hard pavement to the foot of the steps leading to the door. The rope about her neck trailed behind her. One would have said it was a serpent following her.

Then the chanting in the church ceased. A great golden cross and a row of wax candles began to move through the gloom. The halberds of the motley beadles clanked; and, a few moments later, a long procession of priests in chasubles, and deacons in dalmatics, marched gravely towards

the condemned girl, as they drawled their song, spread out before her view and that of the crowd. But her glance rested on the one who marched at the head, immediately after the cross-bearer.

"Oh!" she said in a low voice, and with a shudder, "'tis he again! the priest!"

It was in fact, the archdeacon. On his left he had the sub-chanter, on his right, the chanter, armed with his official wand. He advanced with head thrown back, his eyes fixed and wide open, intoning in a strong voice,--

"De ventre inferi clamavi, et exaudisti vocem meam.

"Et projecisti me in profundum in corde mans, et flumem circumdedit me*."

* "Out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. For thou hadst cast me into the deep in the midst of the seas, and the floods compassed me about."

At the moment when he made his appearance in the full daylight beneath the lofty arched portal, enveloped in an ample cope of silver barred with a black cross, he was so pale that more than one person in the crowd thought that one of the marble bishops who knelt on the sepulchral

stones of the choir had risen and was come to receive upon the brink of the tomb, the woman who was about to die.

She, no less pale, no less like a statue, had hardly noticed that they had placed in her hand a heavy, lighted candle of yellow wax; she had not heard the yelping voice of the clerk reading the fatal contents of the apology; when they told her to respond with Amen, she responded Amen. She only recovered life and force when she beheld the priest make a sign to her guards to withdraw, and himself advance alone towards her.

Then she felt her blood boil in her head, and a remnant of indignation flashed up in that soul already benumbed and cold.

The archdeacon approached her slowly; even in that extremity, she beheld him cast an eye sparkling with sensuality, jealousy, and desire, over her exposed form. Then he said aloud,--

"Young girl, have you asked God's pardon for your faults and shortcomings?"

He bent down to her ear, and added (the spectators supposed that he was receiving her last confession): "Will you have me? I can still save you!"

She looked intently at him: "Begone, demon, or I will denounce you!"

He gave vent to a horrible smile: "You will not be believed. You will

only add a scandal to a crime. Reply quickly! Will you have me?"

"What have you done with my Phoebus?"

"He is dead!" said the priest.

At that moment the wretched archdeacon raised his head mechanically and beheld at the other end of the Place, in the balcony of the Gondelaurier mansion, the captain standing beside Fleur-de-Lys. He staggered, passed his hand across his eyes, looked again, muttered a curse, and all his features were violently contorted.

"Well, die then!" he hissed between his teeth. "No one shall have you." Then, raising his hand over the gypsy, he exclaimed in a funereal voice:--"I nunc, anima anceps, et sit tibi Deus misenicors!"*

* "Go now, soul, trembling in the balance, and God have mercy upon thee."

This was the dread formula with which it was the custom to conclude these gloomy ceremonies. It was the signal agreed upon between the priest and the executioner.

The crowd knelt.

"Kyrie eleison,"* said the priests, who had remained beneath the arch of the portal.

* "Lord have mercy upon us."

"Kyrie eleison," repeated the throng in that murmur which runs over all heads, like the waves of a troubled sea.

"Amen," said the archdeacon.

He turned his back on the condemned girl, his head sank upon his breast once more, he crossed his hands and rejoined his escort of priests, and a moment later he was seen to disappear, with the cross, the candles, and the copes, beneath the misty arches of the cathedral, and his sonorous voice was extinguished by degrees in the choir, as he chanted this verse of despair,--

"Omnes gurgites tui et fluctus tui super me transierunt."*

* "All thy waves and thy billows have gone over me."

At the same time, the intermittent clash of the iron butts of the beadles' halberds, gradually dying away among the columns of the nave,

produced the effect of a clock hammer striking the last hour of the condemned.

The doors of Notre-Dame remained open, allowing a view of the empty desolate church, draped in mourning, without candles, and without voices.

The condemned girl remained motionless in her place, waiting to be disposed of. One of the sergeants of police was obliged to notify Master Charmolue of the fact, as the latter, during this entire scene, had been engaged in studying the bas-relief of the grand portal which represents, according to some, the sacrifice of Abraham; according to others, the philosopher's alchemical operation: the sun being figured forth by the angel; the fire, by the fagot; the artisan, by Abraham.

There was considerable difficulty in drawing him away from that contemplation, but at length he turned round; and, at a signal which he gave, two men clad in yellow, the executioner's assistants, approached the gypsy to bind her hands once more.

The unhappy creature, at the moment of mounting once again the fatal cart, and proceeding to her last halting-place, was seized, possibly, with some poignant clinging to life. She raised her dry, red eyes to heaven, to the sun, to the silvery clouds, cut here and there by a blue trapezium or triangle; then she lowered them to objects around her, to the earth, the throng, the houses; all at once, while the yellow man was binding her elbows, she uttered a terrible cry, a cry of joy. Yonder, on

that balcony, at the corner of the Place, she had just caught sight of him, of her friend, her lord, Phoebus, the other apparition of her life!

The judge had lied! the priest had lied! it was certainly he, she could not doubt it; he was there, handsome, alive, dressed in his brilliant uniform, his plume on his head, his sword by his side!

"Phoebus!" she cried, "my Phoebus!"

And she tried to stretch towards him arms trembling with love and rapture, but they were bound.

Then she saw the captain frown, a beautiful young girl who was leaning against him gazed at him with disdainful lips and irritated eyes; then Phoebus uttered some words which did not reach her, and both disappeared precipitately behind the window opening upon the balcony, which closed after them.

"Phoebus!" she cried wildly, "can it be you believe it?" A monstrous thought had just presented itself to her. She remembered that she had been condemned to death for murder committed on the person of Phoebus de
Châteaupers.

She had borne up until that moment. But this last blow was too harsh. She fell lifeless on the pavement.

"Come," said Charmolue, "carry her to the cart, and make an end of it."

No one had yet observed in the gallery of the statues of the kings, carved directly above the arches of the portal, a strange spectator, who had, up to that time, observed everything with such impassiveness, with a neck so strained, a visage so hideous that, in his motley accoutrement of red and violet, he might have been taken for one of those stone monsters through whose mouths the long gutters of the cathedral have discharged their waters for six hundred years. This spectator had missed nothing that had taken place since midday in front of the portal of Notre-Dame. And at the very beginning he had securely fastened to one of the small columns a large knotted rope, one end of which trailed on the flight of steps below. This being done, he began to look on tranquilly, whistling from time to time when a blackbird flitted past. Suddenly, at the moment when the superintendent's assistants were preparing to execute Charmolue's phlegmatic order, he threw his leg over the balustrade of the gallery, seized the rope with his feet, his knees and his hands; then he was seen to glide down the façade, as a drop of rain slips down a window-pane, rush to the two executioners with the swiftness of a cat which has fallen from a roof, knock them down with two enormous fists, pick up the gypsy with one hand, as a child would her doll, and dash back into the church with a single bound, lifting the young girl above his head and crying in a formidable voice,--

"Sanctuary!"

This was done with such rapidity, that had it taken place at night,

the whole of it could have been seen in the space of a single flash of lightning.

"Sanctuary! Sanctuary!" repeated the crowd; and the clapping of ten thousand hands made Quasimodo's single eye sparkle with joy and pride.

This shock restored the condemned girl to her senses. She raised her eyelids, looked at Quasimodo, then closed them again suddenly, as though terrified by her deliverer.

Charmolue was stupefied, as well as the executioners and the entire escort. In fact, within the bounds of Notre-Dame, the condemned girl could not be touched. The cathedral was a place of refuge. All temporal jurisdiction expired upon its threshold.

Quasimodo had halted beneath the great portal, his huge feet seemed as solid on the pavement of the church as the heavy Roman pillars. His great, bushy head sat low between his shoulders, like the heads of lions, who also have a mane and no neck. He held the young girl, who was quivering all over, suspended from his horny hands like a white drapery; but he carried her with as much care as though he feared to break her or blight her. One would have said that he felt that she was a delicate, exquisite, precious thing, made for other hands than his. There were moments when he looked as if not daring to touch her, even with his breath. Then, all at once, he would press her forcibly in his arms, against his angular bosom, like his own possession, his treasure, as the mother of that child would have done. His gnome's eye, fastened upon

her, inundated her with tenderness, sadness, and pity, and was suddenly raised filled with lightnings. Then the women laughed and wept, the crowd stamped with enthusiasm, for, at that moment Quasimodo had a beauty of his own. He was handsome; he, that orphan, that foundling, that outcast, he felt himself august and strong, he gazed in the face of that society from which he was banished, and in which he had so powerfully intervened, of that human justice from which he had wrenched its prey, of all those tigers whose jaws were forced to remain empty, of those policemen, those judges, those executioners, of all that force of the king which he, the meanest of creatures, had just broken, with the force of God.

And then, it was touching to behold this protection which had fallen from a being so hideous upon a being so unhappy, a creature condemned to death saved by Quasimodo. They were two extremes of natural and social wretchedness, coming into contact and aiding each other.

Meanwhile, after several moments of triumph, Quasimodo had plunged abruptly into the church with his burden. The populace, fond of all prowess, sought him with their eyes, beneath the gloomy nave, regretting that he had so speedily disappeared from their acclamations. All at once, he was seen to re-appear at one of the extremities of the gallery of the kings of France; he traversed it, running like a madman, raising his conquest high in his arms and shouting: "Sanctuary!" The crowd broke forth into fresh applause. The gallery passed, he plunged once more into the interior of the church. A moment later, he re-appeared upon the upper platform, with the gypsy still in his arms, still running madly,

still crying, "Sanctuary!" and the throng applauded. Finally, he made his appearance for the third time upon the summit of the tower where hung the great bell; from that point he seemed to be showing to the entire city the girl whom he had saved, and his voice of thunder, that voice which was so rarely heard, and which he never heard himself, repeated thrice with frenzy, even to the clouds: "Sanctuary! Sanctuary! Sanctuary!"

"Noel! Noel!" shouted the populace in its turn; and that immense acclamation flew to astonish the crowd assembled at the Grève on the other bank, and the recluse who was still waiting with her eyes riveted on the gibbet.