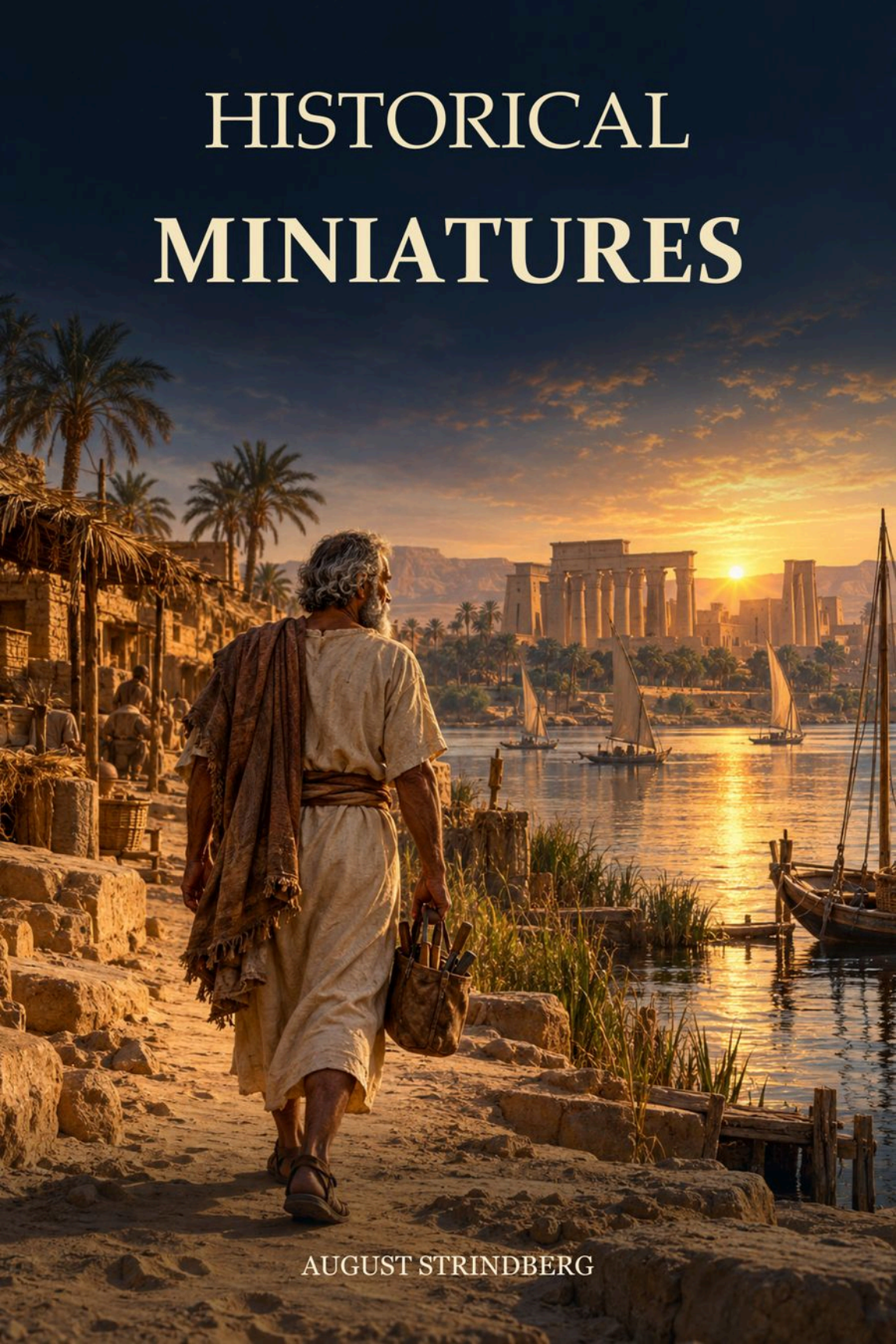
HISTORICAL MINIATURES



AUGUST STRINDBERG

Historical Miniatures

August Strindberg

Translation: Claud Field

THE AUTHOR



August Strindberg

1849 - 1912

AI-created interpretation after historical photograph, circa 1900; photographer unconfirmed.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

August Strindberg

August Strindberg was a Swedish playwright, novelist and artist, born in Stockholm in 1849. His restless career encompassed fiction, drama, poetry, essays, painting and photography. He spent extended periods outside Sweden, but Stockholm remained an important setting and point of reference in his work.

Books such as *The Red Room* and plays including *The Father* and *Miss Julie* challenged established ideas about society and personal relationships. His dramatic writing explored how power can shift within an intimate conversation, making private encounters reveal larger conflicts of class, authority and gender.

Strindberg also experimented with forms that departed from everyday realism. His personal experiences entered his writing repeatedly, although his autobiographical works actively shape a public persona rather than provide a neutral record. In his final years he lived in the Stockholm apartment now associated with the Strindberg Museum. He died in 1912.

Readers can watch for changes in who appears to control a scene. A statement that sounds certain may expose an anxiety, and a familiar setting can become strange through the pressure of a character's perceptions. It helps to distinguish an individual speaker's conviction from the work's wider arrangement of voices. Contradiction is often part of the dramatic method, inviting the reader to reassess an earlier judgement.

Biographical references: Strindberg Society, Strindberg Museum and British Museum. Portrait source: historical photograph, circa 1900; photographer unconfirmed. Full source records retained in the edition archive.

PREFACE

Maximilian Harden, the well-known critic, writes in the *Zukunft* (7th September 1907) of the *Historical Miniatures*:

"A very interesting book, as might be expected, for it is Strindberg's. And I am bold enough to say a book which should and must be successful with the public. The writer is not here concerned with Sweden, nor with Natural History. A philosopher and poet here describes the visions which a study of the history of mankind has called up before his inner eye. Julian the Apostate and Peter the Hermit appear on the stage, together with Attila and Luther, Alcibiades and Eginhard. We see the empires of the Pharaohs and the Czars, the Athens of Socrates and the 'Merry England' of Henry VIII. There are twenty brief episodes, and each of them is alive. So powerful is the writer's faculty of vision, that it compels belief in his descriptions of countries and men."

"The question whether these cultured circles really were as described, hardly occurs to us. Never has the remarkable writer shown a more comprehensive grasp. Since the days of the *Confession of a Fool*, Strindberg has become a writer of world-wide significance."

[Footnote: one collection of Maximilian Harden's essays is published by Messrs. Blackwood, and another by Mr. Eveleigh Nash.]

THE EGYPTIAN BONDAGE

The old worker in ebony and cabinet-maker, Amram, dwelt by the river-side in a clay-hut which was covered with palm-leaves. There he lived with his wife and three children. He was yellow in complexion and wore a long beard. Skilled in his trade of carving ebony and hard wood, he attended at Pharaoh's court, and accordingly also worked in the temples. One morning in midsummer, just before sunrise, he got out of bed, placed his implements in a bag, and stepped out of his hut. He remained standing on the threshold for a moment, and, turning to the east, uttered a low prayer. Then he began to walk between fishermen's huts, following the black broken bank of the river, where herons and doves were resting after their morning meal.

His neighbour, the fisherman, Nepht, was overhauling his nets, and placing carp, grayling, and sheat-fish in the different partitions of his boat.

Amram greeted him, and wished to say some words in token of friendliness.

"Has the Nile ceased to rise?" he asked.

"It remains standing at ten yards' height. That means starvation!"

"Do you know why it cannot rise higher than fifteen yards, Nepht?"

"Because otherwise we should drown," answered the fisherman simply.

"Yes, certainly, and that we cannot. The Nile, then, has a Lord who controls the water-level; and He who has measured out the starry vault, and laid the foundations of the earth, has set up a wall for the waters, and this wall, which we cannot see, is fifteen yards high. For during the great flood in the land of our fathers, Ur of the Chaldees, the water rose fifteen yards—no more, no less. Yes, Nepht, I say 'we,' for you are of our people, though you speak another tongue, and honour strange gods. I wish you a good morning, Nepht, a very good morning."

He left the abashed fisherman, went on, and entered the outskirts of the city, where began the rows of citizens' houses built of

Nile-bricks and wood. He saw the merchant and money-changer Eleazar taking down his window-shutters while his assistant sprinkled water on the ground before the shop. Amram greeted him, "A fine morning, cousin Eleazar."

"I cannot say," answered the tradesman sulkily. "The Nile has remained stationary, and begins to sink. The times are bad."

"Bad times are followed by good times, as our father Abraham knew; and when Joseph, Jacob's son, foresaw the seven lean years he counselled Pharaoh to store up corn in the granaries...."

"May be, but that is a forgotten tale now."

"Yes, and have you also forgotten the promise which the Lord gave to his friend Abraham?"

"That about the land of Canaan? We have waited four hundred years for its fulfilment, and now, instead of receiving it, Abraham's children have become bond-servants."

"Abraham believed through good and through evil days, through joy and through sorrow, and that was counted to him for righteousness."

"I don't believe at all," Eleazar broke in, "or rather, I believe that things go backwards, and that I will have to put up my shutters, if there is a failure in the crops."

Amram went on with a sad face, and came to the market, where he bought a millet loaf, a piece of an eel, and some onions.

When the market-woman took the piece of money, she spat on it, and when Amram received his change, he did the same.

"Do you spit on the money, Hebrew?" she hissed.

"One adopts the customs of the country," answered Amram.

"Do you answer, unclean dog?"

"I answer speech, but not abuse."

The Hebrew went on, for a crowd began to gather. He met the barber, Enoch, and they greeted each other with a sign which the Hebrews had devised, and which signified, "We believe in the promise to Abraham, and wait, patient in hope."

Amram reached at last the temple square, passed through the avenue of Sphinxes, and stood before a little door in the left pylon. He knocked seven times with his hand; a servant appeared, took

Amram by the arm and led him in. A young priest tied a bandage round his eyes, and, after they had searched his bag, they took the cabinet-maker by the hand, and led him into the temple. Sometimes they went up steps, sometimes down them, sometimes straight-forward. Now and then they avoided pillars, and the murmur of water was heard; at one time there was a smell of dampness, at another of incense.

At last they halted, and the bandage was taken off Amram's eyes. He found himself in a small room with painted walls, some seats, and a cupboard. A richly-carved ebony door divided this room from a larger one which on one side opened on to a broad staircase leading down to a terrace facing eastward.

The priest left Amram alone after he had shown him that the door required repair, and had, with an unmistakable gesture, enjoined on him silence and secrecy.

When Amram was left alone, and found himself for the first time within the sacred walls which could not overawe a Hebrew's mind, he yet felt a certain alarm at all the mysteriousness, of which he had heard since his youth. In order to shake off his fear of the unknown, he resolved to satisfy his curiosity, though at the risk of being turned out, if he met anyone. As a pretext he took a fine plane in his hand, and entered the great hall.

It was very spacious. In the midst was a fountain of red granite, with an obelisk set upright in the basin. The walls were adorned with figures painted in simple colours, most of them in red ochre, but also in yellow and black. He drew off his sandals, and went on into a gallery where stood mummy-coffins leaning against the wall.

Then he entered a domed room, on the vault of which were painted the great constellations of the northern hemisphere. In the middle of the room stood a table, on which lay a half-globe covered with designs resembling the outlines of a map. By the window stood another table, with a model of the largest pyramid set upon a land-surveyor's board, with a scale of measurements. Close by stood an alidade, an instrument for measuring angles.

There was no visible outlet to this room, but after some search the uninitiated Hebrew found some stairs of acacia-wood leading up through a wooden tower. He climbed and climbed, but when he

looked through the loopholes, he found himself always on a level with the roof of the domed room. But he continued to ascend, and after he had again counted a hundred steps and, looked through a loop hole, he found himself on a level with the floor of the domed room. Then a wooden door opened, and an elderly man in half-priestly garb received him with a greeting as though he were a well-known and expected superior. But when he saw a stranger, he started, and the two men gazed at each other long, before they could speak. Amram, who felt unpleasantly surprised, began the verbal encounter: "Reuben? Don't you know me, the friend of your youth, and your kinsman in the Promise?"

"Amram, the husband of Jochebed, the son of Kohath! Yes, I know you!"

"And you here! After you have vanished from my sight for thirty years!"

"And you?"

"I was sent for to repair a door; that is all; and when I was left alone, I wanted to look round.

"I am a scribe in the chief school...."

"And sacrificest to strange gods...."

"No, I do not sacrifice, and I have kept my faith in the promise, Amram. I have entered this temple in order to learn the secrets of the wise, and to open from within the fortress which holds Israel captive."

"Secrets? Why should the Highest be secret?"

"Because the common people only understand what is low."

"You do not yourself believe in these animals which you call sacred?"

"No, they are only symbols—visible signs to body forth the invisible. We priests and scribes revere the Only One, the Hidden, under His visible shape, the Sun, giver and sustainer of life. You remember, when we were young, how Pharaoh Amenophis the Fourth forcibly did away with the ancient gods and the worship of the sacred animals. He passed down the river from Thebes proclaiming the doctrine of the Unity of God. Do you know whence he derived that doctrine? From the Israelites, who, after Joseph's marriage to Asenath, daughter of the High Priest of On, increased in

numbers, and even married daughters of the house of Pharaoh. But after the death of Amenophis the old order was restored, the King again resided at Thebes, and the ancient gods were brought out again, all to please the people."

"And you continue to honour the Only One, the Hidden, the Eternal.

"Yes, we do."

"Is, then, your God not the same as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?"

"Probably, since there is only One."

"It is strange. Why, then, do you persecute the Hebrews?"

"Foreigners are not generally loved. You know that our Pharaoh has lately conquered the Syrian race of Hittites."

"In the land of Canaan and the region round about, in the land of our fathers, and of the promise. Do you see, the Lord of Zebaoth, our God, sends him to prepare the way for our people?"

"Do you still believe in the promise?"

"As surely as the Lord liveth! And I am told that the time will be soon fulfilled when we shall leave our bondage, and go to the promised land."

The scribe did not answer, but his face expressed simultaneously doubt in Amram's declaration, and the certainty of something quite different which would soon happen. Amram, who did not wish to have his faith shaken by any kind of explanations, let the subject drop, and spoke of something indifferent.

"That is a strange staircase."

"It is an elevator, and not a staircase."

Amram glanced up at the domed roof, and found a new pretext for continuing the conversation, which he did not wish to drop.

"Does that represent the sky?" he asked.

"Yes."

"And its secrets?"

"Ah, the secrets? They are accessible to all who can understand them."

"Tell them in a few words."

"Astronomy is not my province, and I know little of it, but still I will tell you in a few words. The vault up there represents the sky, the board lying on the table, the earth. Now the wise speak thus: In the beginning Earth (Sibu) and Heaven (Nuit) lay near each other. But the god of air and of sunlight (Shu) raised the sky, and set it as a vault over the earth. The fixed constellations which we know form as it were an impression, like that of a seal on wax, of the earth, and when the learned study the stars, they can find out the unknown parts of our earth. Look at the constellations which you know. In the north the Great Bear; in the south, at a certain season of the year, the Hunter (Orion), with four stars at the corners and three stars in the middle. These three we Hebrews call Jacob's Staff, and through the uppermost of them passes the sky-gauge or equator, which corresponds to the earth-gauge where the sources of our Nile are said to be.

"You know also the constellation which we specially love—the River (Nile). Look, how it flees from the Hunter (Orion), and makes as many windings as the Nile here on earth. Therefore he who wishes to learn the hidden secrets of earth must learn them from the sky. Our wise men know only the lands which lie towards the east; but those which lie in the north under the Great Bear are unknown to us, as also are the lands towards the west. But it looks as though the lands of the Bear had great destinies assigned to them. Their numbers are four and three, like those of the Hunter. Three represents the Divine with its attributes, four denotes the most perfect possible: three and four together form the mysterious number seven. To gods sacrifices are offered with the unequal number, three; to men, with the equal number four.

"This is about all that I have cursorily understood of the secrets of the sky. If you now wish to understand some of the secrets of the earth, let us consider the tombs of the Pharaohs. These, apart from their ostensible purposes of being tombs, have also a hidden one—*i.e.* to conceal in their numbers and proportions the discoveries of the learned regarding the mutual relations of Sibus and Nuits. In the first place, the sepulchre of the Pharaohs, or the Pyramid, operates with the numbers four and three; the base with four, the sides with three. That was indeed one of the secrets of the sky. But the base of the Great Pyramid is 365 ells broad. There you have the

365 days of the year. Now the triple side of the Pyramid is 186 great ells, or a stadium long. There you see where our road-measures come from.

"If you multiply the breadth of the base with the number 500, which is about double the breadth measured in great ells, you obtain a length which is equivalent to 1/360 of the whole orbital path of the sun in a year, since the number of days in a lunar year is 360. This length represents four minutes, and those who live a degree west of us see the sun rise four minutes later than we do.

"This is all I remember about numbers and proportions. If you wish to learn more—for example, why the sides of the pyramid are inclined at an angle of 51°—you must ask the astronomers. The steps to the funereal chamber, on the other hand, are inclined at an angle of 27°. This corresponds to the difference between the axis of the universe and the axis of the earth."

Amram had listened with special attention to the learned scribe's explanation of the tombs of the Pharaohs, and when Reuben mentioned numbers he concentrated his attention still more, as though he wished to fix something in his mind. Finally he interrupted him, and began to speak: "You just now mentioned 27°. Good! That is not the inclination of the axis of the universe, but of the Milky Way, which probably is the real axis and lies 27° north of the heavenly equator, while the inclination of the earth's axis to the orbit of the sun is 23°. But you have forgotten the third Pyramid, that of Menkheres, the base of which is 107 great ells broad. This number 107 we find again three or five times in the universe; there are 107 smaller suns between the earth and the sun; 107 is the distance of the planet Venus, and also of Jupiter from the sun."

Reuben started. "What? Where did you get all that? Here you let me stand, and make a fool of me! Where have you learnt that?"

"From our oldest and wisest, who have preserved the memories of their home at Ur in Chaldaea. You despise Assur, you men of Egypt, for you believe the Nile is the centre of the earth. But there are many centres in the infinite. Behind Assur, on the Tigris and Euphrates, there lies another land with another river. It is called the Land of the Seven Rivers, because its river debouches into seven mouths as the Nile does."

“The Nile has seven arms, as you say, like the seven-branched candlestick!

“That betokens the Light of the world, which shall shine from every land where a river divides itself in order to flow into the sea. The rivers, you see, are the blood-vessels of the earth, and as these carry blue and red blood alternately, so our land has its Blue Nile and its Red Nile. The Blue Nile is poisonous like dark blood, and the Red is fertilising, life-giving, like red blood. So everything created has its counterpart above in heaven and below on earth, for all is one, and the Lord of all is One—One and the Same.”

Reuben kept silence and listened. “Speak on!” he said at last.

Amram therefore continued: “The tombs of the Pharaohs have also grown out of the earth on which they rest. The first or Great Pyramid is built after the pattern of sea-salt when it crystallises in the warmth of the sun. If you could look through a dewdrop into a salt-crystal, you would find it built up of an infinite number of squares just like the Great Pyramid. But if you let alum crystallise, you will see a whole field of pyramids. Alum is the salt deposited in clay. There you have the salt of the earth and of the sea.

“But there is another kind of pyramid with blunted corners. That is the original form of sulphur when found in chalk. Now we have water, earth, and chalk with its fire-stone. There is still a third kind of pyramid with blunted edges; these resemble crystallised flint or rock crystal. There you have the foundation of the mountains. A closer examination of the Nile-mud will discover all these primary forms and substances—clay, salt, sulphur, and flint. Therefore the Nile is the blood of the earth. And the mountains are the flesh, not the bones.”

Reuben, whose Egyptian name was Phater, had regarded Amram while he spoke with alarm and amazement. When the latter had ceased to speak, he began, “You are not Amram the worker in ebony and cabinet-maker.”

“I am certainly a worker in ebony and cabinetmaker, but I am also of Israel’s priestly line. I am the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham. I am a Levite and the husband of Jochebed. Miriam, and Aaron are the children

hitherto born to me; one unborn I still await. Now I go back to my work; show me the way!"

Phater went in front, but led Amram by another way than that by which he had come. As they passed by an open door, which led into a large hall lined with bookcases, Amram stopped, full of curiosity, and wished to enter, in order to look at the numerous books. But Phater held him back by his garment, "Don't go in," he said; "the place is full of traps and snares. The guardian of the library sits concealed in the middle of the hall, and guards his treasures jealously. He has had the floor made of dried willow-withes, which creak when they are trodden upon. He hears anyone stealing in, and he hears if a scribe touches the forbidden books. He has heard us, and he is feeling after us! Don't you feel as if cold snake-tongues were touching your cheeks, your forehead, your eyelids?"

"Yes, I do."

"It is he, stretching out the fingers of his soul, as we stretch out an arm. But now I cut off the feeler which wants to examine us."

He took out a knife, and made a cut through the air in front of them.

Amram felt a sudden glow, and at the same moment saw a great adder writhing on the ground in its death-struggle.

"You practise magic arts here?" he said.

"Did you not know that?"

"I did not expect it."

At the same instant the wall seemed to open, and they saw a mass of Nile mud in which crocodiles and snakes twined round each other, while a hippopotamus trampled threateningly with its forefeet.

Amram was alarmed, but Phater took out an amulet in the shape of a scarabaeus, and, holding it as a shield in front of him, he passed through the terrible shapes, which dissolved like smoke, while Amram followed him.

"The magician only cheats our eyes," said Phater, and as he waved his hand the whole appearance vanished.

Now they stood again in the first hall, and, pointing to the Nilometer, Amram said, "Famine!"

"There is no doubt of that. Therefore all superfluous mouths should be stopped."

"What!"

Phater saw that he had made a slip of the tongue.

"I mean," he said, "Pharaoh must consider how to get corn."

"He would find a Joseph useful just now."

"Why?" broke in Phater more vehemently than he intended. "Don't you know that Joseph the son of Jacob brought the Egyptians to be Pharaoh's bond-slaves. Your chronicles and ours relate that he made the peasants mortgage their land in return for help during the seven lean years, and that, by his doing so, Pharaoh became sole possessor of all the land of Egypt."

"You are not Reuben; you are Phater the Egyptian, for if you were an Israelite, you would not have spoken thus. Our ways part. I go to my work."

Amram laid his hand on the door, and Phater glided into the shadow of the columns and vanished. But Amram saw by his bent back that he had evil designs.

When Amram came home in the evening, he found that his wife had borne a son. He was like other healthy children, but did not cry; after the bath he was wrapped in linen and laid in the darkest corner of the cottage.

The next day before sunrise Amram went again to his work in the Temple of the Sun, and was again led into the chamber with his eyes bandaged. There he was left alone without receiving any counsel or advice regarding what he was to do. This carelessness seemed to him like indifference, and indicated a general laxness in the temple servants. Therefore he again entered the columned hall. He looked uneasily at the Nilometer, in which the water had sunk. There was no hope of the fifteen ells of water which the earth needed for the harvest of the year.

He stepped out on the terrace, which looked towards the east, and entered an open colonnade. But before he went farther, he took the precaution of dropping small pieces of papyrus to show him the way back. He went through narrow courtyards, but took care not to climb steps; his experience of yesterday had warned him. At last he found himself in a forest of pillars whose tops were crowned with

lotus-buds, and, as he listened, he heard what seemed a faint song of children's voices from the roof. He laid his ear to a pillar, and heard it more clearly, like the ringing music of zither and harp. He knew that this was caused by the sun, which had already warmed the stones of the roof, and was about to ascend the sky.

He went forward, and suddenly saw a terrace upon which stood a sacrificial altar. From the terrace, a flight of stairs flanked with sphinxes descended to the river. Thence there sloped a valley, bounded on the east by the mountains of the Red Sea. At the altar there stood a priest in a white linen robe with a purple border. He had raised his arms towards heaven, and stood motionless. His hands were quite white, since the blood had sunk into his arms, and the face of the old man seemed astrain with the strength he had invoked from above. Sometimes his body shuddered as though streams of fire ran through it. He was silent, and gazed towards the East. Then the shining edge of the sun's disk rose above the mountain-ridge, and the white hands of the priest became transparently crimson like his face. And he opened his mouth and said: "Sun-god: Lord of the splendour of rays, be Thou extolled in the morning when Thou risest, and in the evening when Thou descendest. I cry to Thee, Lord of Eternity, Thou Sun of both horizons, Thou Creator who hast created Thyself. All the gods shout aloud when they behold Thee, O King of heaven; my youth is renewed when I see thy beauty. Hail to Thee, as Thou passest from land to land, Thou Father of the gods!"

He stopped speaking and remained standing, his arms outstretched towards the sun, as though he absorbed warmth from it.

Then in the forest of pillars a rattle of arms was heard, which ceased immediately, and forthwith a stately beardless man appeared, clothed in purple and gold. His walk was as noiseless as that of a panther's, and he seemed to glide over the floor which reflected his image, a bright shadow which followed him as he went. When he came out on the terrace the sun cast behind him a gigantic dark shadow which lay there like a carpet.

"Already at prayer, thou wisest of the wise!" was Pharaoh's greeting to the Chief Priest.

“My lord has called me, thy servant has obeyed. My lord has returned to his land after long and victorious campaigns in far and foreign countries. Thy servant greets Pharaoh to his face.”

Pharaoh sat down on a chair of state, his face turned towards the rising sun, and began to speak like one who wishes to set his thoughts in order. “My chariots have rolled over the red soil of Syria, my horses have trampled the highways of Babylon and Nineveh; I have crossed the Euphrates and Tigris, and marched through the region between the two rivers; I have come to the land of the Five Rivers, and seen the Seven in the distance, where the Land of Silk begins, that stretches towards the sunrise. I have returned on my traces and gone northward towards Scythia and Colchis. Wherever I went I heard murmurs and saw movements. The people have awaked; in the temples they prophesied the return of the gods; for men had been left alone to manage their affairs and to guide their destinies, but had done both badly. Justice had become injustice, and truth, falsehood; the whole earth groaned for deliverance. At last their prayers reached the throne of the All-merciful. And now the wise, the gentle, the saintly proclaim in all tongues the joyful message, ‘The gods return again. They return in order to put right what the children of men have thrown in confusion, to give laws and to protect justice.’ This message I bring home as a spoil of victory, and thou, wisest of the wise, shalt receive it first from thy lord.”

“Thou hearest, my Lord Pharaoh, what is spoken over the whole circle of the earth; thine eyes see farther than the stars of heaven and the eye of the sun!”

“And yet only my ear has heard, but my intelligence has not grasped what the gods have revealed to me in a dream. Interpret it for me.”

“Tell it, my lord.”

“I saw nothing, but I heard a voice, when sleep had quenched the light of my eyes. The voice spoke in the darkness, and said, ‘The red earth will spread over all lands, but the black shall be dispersed like the sand.’”

“The dream, my lord is not hard to interpret, but it forebodes nothing good.”

“Interpret it.”

“Very well; the red earth is Syria, as thou knowest, my lord, where live the wretched Hittites, that is the hereditary land of the Hebrew, Canaan. The black earth is that of the Nile, thy land, my lord.”

“Again the Hebrews, always the Hebrews! Centuries have passed since this people wandered into our land. They have increased without disturbing us. I neither love nor hate them; but now I fear them. They have had to toil, of late more severely than ever, but they do not murmur; they are patient as though they expected something to happen.”

“Let them go, my lord.”

“No! for then they will go, and found a new kingdom.”

“Let them go.”

“No, I will destroy them.”

“Let them go.”

“Certainly I will destroy them.”

“But thy dream, my lord.”

“I interpret that as a warning and exhortation.”

“Touch not that people, my lord, for their God is stronger than ours.”

“Their God is that of the Chaldaeans. Let our gods fight. I have spoken; thou hast heard; I add nothing and retract nothing.”

“My Lord, thou seest one sun in the sky, and believest that it shines over all nations: do you not believe that there is one Lord of the heaven who rules the destinies of all nations?”

“It should be so, but the Lord of heaven has made me ruler over this land, and now I rule it.”

“Thou rulest it, my lord, but thou rulest not wind and weather; thou canst not raise the water of the Nile by one inch, and thou canst not prevent the crops failing again this year.”

“Failing? What does the Nilometer say?”

“My lord, the sun has entered the sign of the Balance, and the water is sinking already. It means famine.”

“Then I will destroy all superfluous and strange mouths which take the bread from the children of the country. I will annihilate the Hebrews.”

“Let them go free, my lord.”

“I will summon the midwives, and have every boy that is born of a Hebrew woman destroyed. I have spoken; now I act.” Pharaoh rose from his chair, and departed more quickly than he had come. Amram sought to find his way back, but could only discover one piece of papyrus. Then he remained standing and feared much, for he could not find his way.

The sun had risen, and there was no more music in the forest of pillars, but silence. But as Amram listened he began to be aware of that compressed stillness which emanates from a listener, or from children who do something forbidden and do not wish to be discovered. He felt that someone was near who wished to be concealed, but who still kept his thoughts directed towards him. In order to satisfy himself Amram went in the direction where the silence seemed to be densest. And lo! behind a pillar stood Phater. He did not show a sign of embarrassment, but only held out his open hand, in which lay all the pieces of papyrus, which Amram had strewed as he went.

“You must not strew pieces of papyrus on the ground,” said Phater with an inscrutable smile. “Yes—I am not angry, I only wish you well. For now you will follow me, and not return to your work, which was only a trap set for your life. You must return to your house, and take care that your new-born child is not killed. You see that Reuben-Phater is a true Israelite, although you would not believe him.”

Amram followed him out of the temple, and went home.

Jochebed went about in Pharaoh’s garden watering cucumbers; she went to and fro with her watering pot between the Watergate that opened on the river and the cucumber-bed. But sometimes she went through the gate and remained for a while outside.

Miriam, her daughter, pruned the vines which grew against the garden-wall, but seemed to direct her attention more towards the broad walk which led up to the summer palace of the princesses. Her head moved like the leaf of the palm-tree when the wind blows through it, looking sometimes towards the Watergate, sometimes towards the great walk, while her hands carried on her work. As her mother delayed her return, she went from the wall down to the gate, and out to the low river shore where the bulrushes swayed in the gentle south wind. A stonechat of the desert sat on a rock by the

river, wagged its tail, and flapped its wings, as though it wished to show something which it saw; and chattered at the sight of something strange among the bulrushes. High up in the air a hawk hovered in spiral circles, eyeing the ground below. Miriam broke off some lotus-buds and threw them at the stonechat, which flew away, but kept its beak still pointing towards the rushes. The girl girt up her dress, waded into the water, and now saw her mother standing, hidden up to her waist in a forest of papyrus-reeds, bending over a reed-basket with a baby at her breast.

"Mother," whispered Miriam, "Pharaoh's daughter is approaching; she comes to bathe in the river."

"Lord God of Israel, have mercy on my child!"

"If you have given the child enough to drink, hasten and come."

The mother bowed herself like an arch over the child; her hair hung down like an insect-net, and two tears fell from her eyes on the little one's outstretched hands. Then she rose, placed a sweet date in its mouth, softly closed the cover, murmured a blessing, and came out of the water.

A gentle breeze from the land swayed the rushes and crisped the surface of the river.

"The basket swims," she said, "but the river flows on; it is red with blood and thick as cream. Lord God of Israel, have mercy!"

"Yes, He will," answered Miriam, "as He had mercy on our father Abraham, who obtained the promise, because he obeyed and believed, 'Through thy seed shall all the families on the earth be blessed.'"

"And now Pharaoh slays all the first-born."

"But not thy son."

"Not yet."

"Pray and hope."

"What? That the monsters of the river do not swallow him, that the waves of the river do not drown him, that Pharaoh's executioners do not kill him! Is that the hope?"

"The promise is greater, and it lives: 'Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies.'"

"And then Amram thy father has fled."

"To Raamses and Pithom, where our people toil in the buildings; he has gone there to warn and advise them. He has done well. Hush! Pharaoh's daughter comes."

"But she cannot bathe in the blood of our child."

"She comes, however. But she is the friend of the poor Hebrews; fear not."

"She is her father's daughter."

"The Egyptians are our cousins; they are Ham's descendants, and we are Shem's. Shem and Ham were brothers."

"But Ham was cursed by his father Noah, and Kanaan was Ham's son."

"But Noah said, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Shem, and let Kanaan be his servant.' Have you heard? Shem received the promise, and we belong to him."

"Lord of Hosts, help us; the basket drifts with the wind! It drifts towards the bathing-house,—and the vulture up there in the air."

"That is a hawk, mother!" Jochebed ran up and down the bank, like a dog whom its master has deserted; she beat her breast, and wept great tears.

Steps and voices were audible. "Here is Pharaoh's daughter!"

"But the Lord God of Israel is watching over us."

The two women hid themselves in the reeds, and Pharaoh's daughter appeared with her attendants at the watergate. She stepped on the bridge leading to the bath-house, which was a hut of coloured camel's skin, supported by pillars which stood in the bed of the river. But the basket drifted against the bridge and excited the curiosity of the princess. She remained standing and waited. Jochebed and Miriam could not hear what she said on account of the wind, but by her quiet movements they saw that she expected some amusement from the strange gift brought by the river. Now she sent a slave to the bank. The latter ran and broke off a long reed, which she handed to her mistress, who fished for the basket and brought it within reach. Then she knelt down and opened it. Jochebed saw two little arms outstretched. The princess laughed aloud, and turned to the women. She uttered an expression of joy, and then lifted the infant, which nestled in her maiden bosom and felt about in her white robe. Then

the princess kissed it, pressed it to her breast, and turned back to the shore.

Miriam, who had now lost all fear, stepped forward and fell on her face. “See, Miriam,” said the princess, whose name was Temma, “I have found a baby. I have received it from the Nile, and therefore it is a child of the gods. But now you must find a nurse for it.”

“Where shall I find one, noble princess?”

“Search! But you must find one before evening. Do not forget, however, that it is my child, since I drew it out of the water. I have given him his name, and he shall be called Moses. And I will have him educated so that he becomes a man after our mind. Go in peace, and find me a nurse!”

Pharaoh’s daughter went with her child up to the palace, and Miriam looked for her mother among the reeds, where she had waited and heard what Pharaoh’s daughter had said and resolved.

“Mother, Pharaoh’s daughter will bring up Amram and Jochebed’s son. Ham’s children will serve Shem’s. Praised be the Lord, the God of Shem! Now you believe in the promise, mother!”

“Now I believe, and God be praised for His great mercy!”

THE HEMICYCLE OF ATHENS

After a hot day the sun began to sink, and the market-place lay already in shadow. The shadow rose and climbed up the Acropolis, on which the shield of Pallas still gleamed as the aegis of the city.

Before the vari-coloured colonnade stood a group of men who had assembled before the semi-circular marble seat called the Hemicyklion; they appeared to be awaiting someone's arrival before they sat down. Among them were stately and handsome men, but there was also an extraordinarily ugly one, round whom, however, the others seemed to press. His face resembled that of a slave or satyr, and there were Athenians who thought they could trace in it the marks of all kinds of wickedness and crime. On hearing of such suspicions, Socrates is said to have remarked, "Think how much Socrates must have had to contend against, for he is neither wicked nor a criminal!"

This was the man known to the whole population of Athens as an eccentric character who carried on philosophical discussions in streets and market-places, in drinking-houses and brothels. He shunned no society, and was on equally intimate terms with Pericles, the head of the state, and with the licentious Alcibiades. He sat down to table with tradesmen and artisans, drank with sailors in the Piraeus, and lived himself with his family in the suburb Ceramicus. When it was asked why Socrates was always out of doors, his friends answered, "because he was not comfortable at home." And when his more intimate friends asked how he could be on intimate terms with seamen and tax-gatherers, Socrates himself answered, "They are also men!"

At the philosopher's side, and when he sat, standing behind him, was always to be seen a youth, whose broad brow attracted attention. This was his best disciple, whose real name was Aristokles, but who, on account of his forehead, had the nickname Plato.

Vying with him in an almost jealous rivalry to appear by the Master's side, stood the beautiful Alcibiades.

The third after them was the stately austere Euripides, the tragic dramatist. Turning his back to the company, absorbed in thought and tracing designs on the ground, as though he were always at

work, stood Phidias, the man "who made gods for Athens." On the edge of the fountain sat a man with his legs dangling and his mouth perpetually moving, as though he were sharpening his tongue for thrust and counter-thrust; his brow was furrowed and worn as though with fruitless thought, his eyes glowered like those of a serpent watching for its prey. That was the Sophist, Protagoras, the reasoner for hire, who for a few figs or a pair of obols, could make black seem white, but was tolerated in this brilliant society, because he could carry on a dialogue. They used him to enliven their meetings, and pitted him in argument against Socrates, who, however, always entangled him in the meshes of his dialectic. At last came the one they expected. It was the head of the State, who would have been king had not the kingship been abolished. His appearance was majestic, but his entrance without a body-guard was like that of a simple citizen. He ruled also only by force of his personal qualities—wisdom, strength of will, moderation, forethought.

After exchanging greetings which showed that they had already met that day, for they had been celebrating the deliverance from Persia at the Salamis festival, the company sat down on the long semicircular marble seat, called the Hemicyklion. When all had taken their seats, which were reserved for each according to prescription, a silence followed which was unusual in this circle, for they were accustomed to assemble as if for an intellectual feast at every sunset. It was a symposium of minds, at which the excesses, according to Alcibiades, were only spiritual.

Alcibiades, the second youngest, but spoilt and aggressive, was the first to break the silence. "We have been celebrating the battle of Salamis, the day of our deliverance from the barbarians and the King of Persia, and I see we are tired."

"Not too tired," answered Pericles, "to forget the birthday of our friend Euripides, for, as we all know, he first saw the daylight when the sun shone on the battle of Salamis."

"He shall have a libation," answered Alcibiades, "when we sit at table with our cups in front of us."

The Sophist, sitting by the fountain, had now collected enough yarn to commence spinning with.

“How do you know,” he began, “that our deliverance from the King of Persia was really a piece of good fortune? How do you know that Salamis was a happy day for Hellas? Has not our great Aeschylus lamented and sympathetically described the defeat of the Persians?

“‘Hateful to me is thy name, Salamis,
And with a sigh I think of thee, Athens!’”

“For shame, Sophist!” Alcibiades broke in.

But Protagoras whetted his beak and continued, “It is not I who say that the name of Salamis is hateful, but Aeschylus, and I, as everyone knows, am not Aeschylus. Neither have I maintained that it was a good thing to serve the Persian King. I have only questioned, and a questioner asserts nothing. Is it not so, Socrates?”

The master drew his fingers through his long beard, and answered.

“There are direct and indirect assertions; a question can be an indirect and mischievous assertion. Protagoras has made such a one by his question.”

“Good! Socrates!” exclaimed Alcibiades, who wished to kindle a flame.

Pericles spoke: “Protagoras, then, has asserted that you would be happier under the Persian King. What should be done with such a man?”

“Throw him backwards in the fountain,” cried Alcibiades.

“I appeal!” protested the Sophist.

“To the mob! They will always justify you,” Alcibiades interrupted.

“One does not say ‘mob’ if one is a democrat, Alcibiades. And one does not quote Aeschylus when Euripides is present. When Phidias sits here one would rather speak of his Parthenon and his Athene, whose robe even now glitters in the sinking sun. Courtesy is the salt of social life.”

Thus Pericles sought to direct the conversation into a new channel, but the Sophist thwarted him.

“If Phidias’ statue of Athene must borrow its gold from the sun, that may prove that the gold granted by the State did not suffice, and that therefore there is a deficiency. Is it not so, Socrates?”

The master silenced with his outstretched hand the murmur of disapproval which arose, and said:

"It must first be proved that Phidias' statue must borrow gold from the sun, but since that is unproved, it is absurd to talk of a deficit. Moreover, gold cannot be borrowed from the sun. Therefore what Protagoras says is mere babble, and deserves no answer. On the other hand, will Phidias answer this question? 'When you have made Athene up there on the Parthenon, have you made Athene?'"

"I have made her image," answered Phidias.

"Right! You have made her image. But after what pattern?"

"After the pattern in my mind."

"Not after an external one, then? Have you seen the goddess with your eyes?"

"Not with my outward eyes."

"Does she then exist outside you, or inside you?"

"If no one were listening to us, I would answer 'She is not outside of me, therefore she is not anywhere at all.'"

Pericles interrupted him: "You are talking of the gods of the State: friends, take care!"

"Help, Protagoras! Socrates is throttling me!" cried Phidias.

"In my opinion it is not Zeus but Prometheus who has created men," answered the Sophist. "But Zeus gave unfinished man two imperishable gifts—the sense of shame and conscience."

"Then Protagoras was not made by Zeus, for he lacks both." This thrust came from Alcibiades. But now the taciturn tragedian Euripides began to speak: "Allow me to say something both about Zeus and about Prometheus; and don't think me discourteous if I cite my great teacher Aeschylus when I speak about the gods."

But Pericles broke in: "Unless my eyes deceive me, I saw just now a pair of ears projecting from behind the pillar of Hermes, and these ass's ears can only belong to the notorious tanner."

"Cleon!" exclaimed Alcibiades.

But Euripides continued: "What do I care about the tanner, since I do not fear the gods of the State? These gods, whose decline Aeschylus foretold long ago! Does not his *Prometheus* say that the

Olympian Zeus will be overthrown by his own descendant—the son that will be born of a virgin? Is it not so, Socrates?"

"Certainly: 'she will bear a son who is stronger than his father.' But who it will be, and when he will be born, he does not say. Now I believe that Zeus already lies *in extremis*."

Again the warning voice of Pericles was heard. "The gods of the State! Hush, friends! Cleon is listening!"

"I, on the other hand," broke in Alcibiades, "believe that Athens is near her end. While we have been celebrating the victory of Salamis, the Spartans have risen and devastated the north. Megaris, Locris, Boeotia, and Phocis are already on her side."

"What you say is well known," answered Pericles deprecatingly, "but at present there is a truce, and we have three hundred ships at sea. Do you think, Socrates, that there is danger?"

"I cannot mix in the affairs of State; but if Athens is in danger, I will take up shield and lance as before."

"When you saved my life at Potidaea," added Alcibiades.

"No, the danger is not there," interrupted Euripides—"not in Sparta, but here at home. The demagogues have stirred up the marsh, and therefore we have the pestilence in the Agora, and the pestilence in the Piraeus."

"That in Piraeus is the worse of the two," said Protagoras; "don't you think so, Alcibiades?"

"Yes, for there are my best girls. My flute-players, who are to perform at supper this evening, live by the harbour. But, by Hercules, no one here fears death, I suppose?"

"No one fears, and no one wishes it," answered Socrates; "but if you have other girls, that would increase our pleasure."

"Euripides does not like girls," interrupted Protagoras.

"That is not true," answered Euripides; "I like girls, but not women."

Pericles rose: "Let us go to supper, and have walls round our conversation—walls without ears! Support me, Phidias, I am tired."

Plato approached Socrates: "Master, let me carry your mantle?" he asked.

"That is my function, boy," said Alcibiades, intercepting him.

"It was once," objected Socrates; "now it belongs to Plato of the broad head. Notice his name! He descends from Codrus, the last king, who gave his life to save his people. Plato is of royal birth."

"And Alcibiades is of the race of heroes, the Alcmaeonidae, like his uncle Pericles; a noble company."

"But Phidias is of the race of the gods; that is more."

"I am probably descended from the Titans," broke in Protagoras. "I say 'probably,' for one knows nothing at all, and hardly that. Don't you think so, Socrates?"

"*You* know nothing at all, and least of all what you talk about." The company passed through the Sacred Street, and went together to the theatre of Dionysus, near which Alcibiades lived.

The demagogue Cleon had really been lurking out of sight, and listening to the conversation. And so had another man with a yellow complexion and a full black beard, who seemed to belong to the artisan class. When the brilliant company had departed, Cleon stepped forward, laid his hand on the stranger's shoulder, and said:

"You have heard their conversation?"

"Certainly I have," he answered.

"Then you can give evidence."

"I cannot give evidence, because I am a foreigner."

"Still you have heard how they spoke against the gods of the State."

"I am a Syrian, and only know one true God. Your gods are not mine."

"You are a Hebrew, then! What is your name?"

"I am an Israelite, of the family of Levi, and call myself now Cartophilus."

"A Phoenician, then?"

"No, a Hebrew. My forefathers came out of Ur of the Chaldees, then fell into bondage in Egypt, but were brought by Moses and Joshua to the land of Canaan, where we became powerful under our own kings, David and Solomon."

"I don't know them."

"Two hundred years ago our city Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, and our people were carried

captive to Babylon. But when Babylon was overthrown by the King of Persia, we fell under the power of the Persians, and have groaned under the successors of your Xerxes of Salamis, whom we called Ahasuerus."

"Your enemies, our enemies! Very well, friend; how did you come here."

"When the Assyrian was about to carry us for the first time into captivity, those who could flee, fled to Rhodes, Crete, and the islands of Greece. But of those who were carried away some were sent northwards to Media. My ancestors came hither from Media, and I am a new-comer."

"Your speech is dark to me, but I have heard your nation praised because they are faithful to the gods of the State."

"God! There is only One, the Single and True, who has created heaven and earth, and given the promise to our people."

"What promise?"

"That our nation shall possess the earth."

"By Heracles! But the commencement is not very promising."

"That is our belief, and it has supported us during our wanderings in the wilderness, and during the Captivity."

"Will you give evidence against these blasphemers of the gods?"

"No, Cleon, for you are idolaters. Socrates and his friends do not believe in your gods, and that will be counted to them for righteousness. Yes, Socrates appeared to me rather to worship the Eternal and Invisible, whom we dare not name. Therefore I do not give evidence against him."

"Is *that* the side you are on? Then go in peace, but beware! Go!"

"The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will protect me, so long as I and my house keep His laws."

Cleon had espied his friend and fellow-artisan in the colonnade, and therefore let the inflexible Hebrew go. The latter hastened towards the sycamore avenue of the oil-market, and disappeared there.

Anytos the tanner and politician approached, rehearsing a written speech which he was intending to deliver: "Athens or Sparta,—that is the whole question at issue...."

Cleon, full of curiosity, interrupted him: “What are you rehearsing, Anytos?”

“A speech.”

“So I heard! Athens or Sparta! Government by the people, or government by donkeys. The people, the weightiest element in the State, the cultivators of the land, the producers of wealth, lie at the bottom like gold. The worthless, the drones, the rich, the aristocratic, the most frivolous, swim on the surface like chips and corks. Athens has always represented government by the people, and will always do so; Sparta represents the donkey-government.

“The oligarchy, you mean, Cleon.”

“No; donkeys. Therefore, Anytos, Athens is badly governed, for Pericles the rich man, who boasts of royal ancestors, has come to power. How can he sympathise with these people, since he has never been down there below? How can he see them rightly from above? He sits on the gable-roof of the Parthenon, and views the Athenians as ants, while they are lions, with their claws pared and their teeth drawn. We, Anytos, born down there amid the skins of the tanyard and dog’s-dung, we understand our perspiring brothers—we know them by the smell, so to speak. But like readily associates with like; therefore Sparta feels attracted to Athens, to Pericles and his followers. Pericles draws Sparta to himself, and we sink....”

Anytos, himself an orator, did not like to hear eloquence from others, therefore he cut abruptly through Cleon’s speech.

“Pericles is ill.”

“Is he ill?”

“Yes, he has fever!”

“Really? Perhaps the plague.”

“Perhaps.”

This interjected remark of Anytos had crossed Cleon’s prolix discourse, and a new hope glimmered before him.

“And after Pericles?” he said. “Cleon, of course.”

“Why not? The man of the people for the people, but no philosophers nor actors. So, Pericles is sick, is he? Listen, Anytos? Who is Nicias?”

“He is a grandee who believes in oracles.”

“Don’t attack the oracles. I certainly do not believe in them, but a State requires for its stability a certain uniformity in everything—laws, customs, and religion. Therefore I support the gods of the State—and what belongs to them.”

“I also support the gods of the State, so long as the people do.”

The two orators began to be mutually weary, and Cleon wished for solitude in order to hatch the eggs which Anytos had laid for him. Therefore he remarked, “You say that Nicias....”

“I am going to bathe,” broke in Anytos; “otherwise I will get no sleep to-night.”

“But Alcibiades, who is he?”

“He is the traitor Ephialtes, who will lead the Persian King to Thermopylae.”

“The Persian King in the east, Sparta in the south.”

“Macedonia in the north.”

“And in the west, new Rome.”

“Enemies in all four quarters! Woe to Athens!”

“Woe to Hellas!”

The guests had assembled at the house of Alcibiades, who on his arrival had immediately gone off, with the laudable object of procuring flute-players. Since the evening was warm, supper was served in the Aula, or inner court, which was surrounded by Corinthian colonnades, and lighted by many lamps which hung between the pillars.

After they had taken a light meal, ivy wreaths were distributed and cups were set before the guests.

Aspasia, the only woman present, had the place of honour next to Pericles. She had come at the beginning, accompanied by her slaves, and was waiting impatiently for the verbal contests to begin. But Pericles was depressed and tired. Socrates lay on his back, silent, and looked up at the stars, Euripides chewed a wood-splinter and was morose; Phidias kneaded balls of bread, which in his hand took the shapes of animals; Protagoras whispered to Plato, who, with becoming youthful modesty, kept in the background.

Quite at the bottom of the table sat the skeleton, with a wreath of roses round its white forehead. In order to counteract the uncanny

feeling likely to be aroused by this unbidden guest, Alcibiades had placed an onion between its front teeth, and in one of its hands an asphodel lily, which the skeleton appeared to smell at.

When the silence at last became oppressive, Pericles roused himself from his lethargy, and opened the conversation.

"I should like," he said, "without raising any bitterness or strife, to suggest as a subject for discussion the often-raised question of Euripides' supposed misogyny. What do you say, Protagoras?"

"Our friend Euripides has been married three times, and each time has had children. He can therefore not be a woman-hater. Is it not so, Socrates?"

"Euripides," answered Socrates, "loves Aspasia, as we all do, and can therefore not be a woman-hater. He loves, with Pericles' consent, the beauty of Aspasia's mind, and is therefore no misogynist. Not much that is complimentary can be said about Aspasia's person, and we have nothing to do with it. Is Aspasia beautiful, Phidias?"

"Aspasia is not beautiful, but her soul is beautiful and good. Is it not, Pericles?"

"Aspasia is my friend, and the mother of our child; Aspasia is a wise woman, for she possesses modesty and conscientiousness, self-knowledge and foresight; Aspasia is prudent, for she is silent when wise men speak. But Aspasia can also cause wise men to speak wisely by listening to them; for she helps them to produce thoughts, not like Socrates' midwife, who only brings corporeal births to pass, but she incarnates their souls."

Protagoras continued: "Aspasia is like the Mother Cybele of us all; she bears us in her bosom."

"Aspasia is the scale of the zither, without whom our strings would not sound."

"Aspasia is the mother of us all," recommenced Socrates, "but she is also the midwife who washes our new-born thoughts and wraps them in beautiful swaddling-clothes. Aspasia receives our children dirty, and gives them back to us purified. She gives nothing of herself, but by receiving gives the giver the opportunity to give."

Euripides resumed the topic which they had dropped: "I was accused, and am acquitted—am I not, Aspasia?"

"If you can acquit yourself of the accusation, you are acquitted, Euripides."

"Accuse me, dear Accuser; I will answer."

"I will bring the accusation in your own words. Hippolytus says in one passage in your tragedy of that name: 'O Zeus, why, in the name of heaven, didst thou place in the light of the sun that specious evil to men—women? For if thou didst will to propagate the race of mortals, there was no necessity for this to be done by women, but men might, having placed an equivalent in thy temples, either in brass or iron, or weighty gold, buy a race of children each according to the value paid, and thus might dwell in unmolested houses, without females.'"

"But now first of all, when we prepare to bring this evil to our homes, we squander away the wealth of our houses."

"How evil woman is, is evident from this also, that the father who begat her and brought her up, having given her a dowry, sends her away in order to be rid of her."

"Now defend yourself, Euripides."

"If I were a Sophist like Protagoras, I should answer, 'It was Hippolytus who said that; not I.' But I am a poet, and speak through my characters. Very well; I said it, I meant it when I wrote it, and I mean it still. And yet I almost always love any given woman, though I hate her sex. I cannot explain it, for I was never perverse like Alcibiades. Can you explain it, Socrates?"

"Yes, a man can hate and love a woman simultaneously. Everything is produced by its opposite—love by hate, and hate by love. In my wife I love the good motherly element, but I hate the original sin in her; therefore I can hate and love her at the same time. Is it not so, Protagoras?"

"Now it is Socrates who is the Sophist. Black cannot be white."

"Now it is Protagoras who is simple. This salt in the salt-cellar is white, but put out the lamps, and it is black. The salt therefore is not absolutely white, but its whiteness depends on the light. I should be inclined rather to believe that salt is absolutely black, for darkness is merely the absence of light, and is nothing in itself, communicates no quality of its own to the salt, which in the darkness is something independent, consequently its real nature is black.

"But in the light a thing can be both black and white. This sea-sole, for instance, is black above, but white below. In the same way something can be good and bad at the same time. Therefore Euripides is right when he says that he loves and hates woman simultaneously. The misogynist is he who only hates woman, but Euripides loves her also. Therefore he is not a misogynist. What do you think, Aspasia?"

"Wise Socrates! You confess that Euripides hates women, therefore he is a woman-hater."

"No, my dear child, I admitted that Euripides *both* loves and hates women,—*both*, mark you. I love Alcibiades, but I abhor and hate his want of character; now I ask the friends here, am I a hater of Alcibiades?"

"No, certainly not," they answered simultaneously. But Aspasia was roused, and wished to rouse him. "Wise Socrates, how do matters stand between you and your wife?"

"The wise man does not willingly speak of his wife," Protagoras struck in: "nor of his weakness."

"You have said it. One sacrifices to the earth, but unwillingly; one binds oneself, but without pleasure; one endures, but loves not; one does one's duty to the State, but with difficulty. There is only one Aspasia, and she belongs to Pericles—the greatest woman to the greatest man. Pericles is the greatest in the State, as Euripides is the greatest on the stage."

This was an opportunity for Protagoras, without his needing to seek it. "Is Euripides greater than Aeschylus and Sophocles?" he asked.

"Certainly, Protagoras! He is nearer to us; he speaks *our* thoughts, not those of our fathers; he does not cringe before the gods and fate; he fights with them; he loves men, knows them, and laments them; his art is more elaborate, his feelings warmer, his pictures more life-like than those of the ancients. But now I should like to speak of Pericles."

"Stop, Socrates! In the Pnyx or the Agora, but not here! Though I should be glad of a word of encouragement since false accusations rain on me. We have come here to forget and not to remember ourselves, and Socrates delights us most when he speaks of the

highest things, among which I do not count the State of Athens. Here comes Alcibiades with his following. Kindle more lights, boys, and put more ice in the wine."

There was a noise at the entrance; the dog barked, the doorkeeper shouted, and Alcibiades entered with his companions. These consisted of girls and of two strangers whom he had found in a wine-house.

"Papaia!" he cried. "Here is the host! And here is Aristophanes, a future dramatist. Here is the Roman Lucillus, formerly a Decemvir, who has been banished. There is one of the many Laises who have sat to Phidias. Aspasia must not take it ill. And here are flute-players from Piraeus. Whether they have the pestilence, I know not! What can they do to me? I am twenty years old, and yet have done nothing? Why, then, should I live? Now Lais will dance. Papaia!"

Euripides rose and made a sign for silence. "Let the dance wait; Pericles is not pleased, and looks serious." A pause followed. The heat was oppressive. It was not thunder-weather, but something like it, and a sense of uneasy expectation seemed to weigh upon all their spirits.

Then, as if by accident, the arm of the skeleton fell on its knee with a slight snap. The flower, which it had held under its nose, lay on the earth.

All started, even Alcibiades, but, angry with himself for this weakness, he took a cup and stepped forward.

"The skeleton is thirsty! I drink to it! Who pledges me?"

"Socrates can do so the best. He can drink half a jar of wine in one pull, without winking."

As a matter of fact, Socrates was notorious for his drinking powers, but now he was not in the mood. "Not to-day! Wine is bitter to my taste," he said.

And turning to Pericles, he whispered: "Evil eyes have come here. This Aristophanes is not our friend! Do you know him?"

"Very little, but he looks as though he would like to murder us."

Alcibiades continued to address the skeleton: "Thus looks Athens at this moment! Sparta and the Persian King have gnawed off its flesh; Cleon has tanned its skin; the allies have gouged out its eyes; the citizens have drawn out its teeth,—those citizens whom

Aristophanes knows and whom he will soon describe. Here's to you, skeleton! '[Greek: *Polla metaxu pelei kulikos kai cheileos akrou*]!'"

There was a sudden change in the scene. The skeleton sank backwards like a drunken man; the lamps began to sway on their chains, the salt-cellar was spilt on the table.

"Ohioh!" cried Alcibiades, "Tralall! Ha! Ha! Ha! The table wobbles, the sofa rocks; am I drunk, or is the room drunk?"

All were alarmed, but Socrates commanded quiet. "A god is near! The earth shakes, and I hear ... does it thunder? No! That is an earthquake."

All jumped up, but Socrates continued, "Be quiet! It is already past."

After they had all taken their places again, he continued: "I was five years old when Sparta was visited by an earthquake; twenty thousand men perished, and only six houses remained standing. Then it was Sparta. Now it is Athens. Yes, friends, a voice says to me, 'Before a babe can become a man, we shall have been dispersed and destroyed like a bevy of birds.'"

Again the dog barked, and the door-keeper shouted. There entered an uninvited guest in a state of excitement.

Alcibiades greeted him. "It is Nicias," he said. "Now I will be sober; the thoughtful Nicias comes to our feast. What is the matter?"

"Allow an uninvited guest."

"Speak, Nicias!"

"Pericles!" began the new-comer hesitatingly, "your friend, our friend, the glory of Athens and Hellas,—Phidias is accused...."

"Stop! Silence!"

"Accused! O shame and disgrace! I cannot say it without weeping: Phidias is accused of having purloined gold from the statue of Athene."

The silence which followed was first broken by Pericles: "Phidias hides his face in his mantle; he is ashamed for Athens. But by the gods and the nether world, let us swear to his innocence."

"We swear!" exclaimed all like one man.

"I swear also," said Nicias.

“Athens is dishonoured, if one has to swear that Phidias has not stolen.”

Nicias had approached Pericles, and, bowing to Aspasia, he whispered, “Pericles, your son Paralos is ill.”

“Of the pestilence! Follow me, Aspasia.”

“He is not my son, but yours; therefore I follow you.”

“The house collapses, friends depart, all beauty passes away, the ugly remains.”

“And the gods sleep.”

“Or have emigrated.”

“Or are dead! Let us make new ones.”

Another shock of earthquake extinguished the lamps, and all went out into the street, except Socrates and Alcibiades.

“Phidias accused of theft! Let the walls of the world fall in!” said Socrates, and sank, as was his custom, into a fit of absent-mindedness that resembled sleep.

Alcibiades took one of the largest double-goblets, veiled it, and improvised the following dithyramb:

“May everything break up from Pindus to the Caucasus!
Then will Prometheus be unbound and bestow fire again
on frozen mortals!
And Zeus descends to Hades, Pallas sells herself;
Apollo breaks his lyre in two, and cobbles shoes;
Ares lets his war-horse go, and minds sheep;
And on the ruins of all earthly glory, stands Alcibiades
alone,
In the full consciousness of his almightiness,
And laughs!”

The pestilence had broken out in Athens accompanied by shocks of earthquake.

When Pericles, accompanied by Aspasia, reached his house, his son by his divorced wife was dead.

According to the prevailing custom, and to show that he had not been murdered, the corpse was placed in the doorway. A small coffin of cedar-wood, painted red and black, stood on a bier, and showed

the dead child dressed in a white shroud. He had a garland on his head, woven of the plant of death, the strong-scented Apium or celery. In his mouth he had an obol as Charon's fee.

Pericles uttered a prayer in an undertone, without showing especially deep sorrow, for he had gone through much, and learnt to suffer.

"Two sons the gods have taken from me. Are they enough to atone?"

"What have you to atone for?" asked Aspasia.

"One must suffer for another; the individual for the State. Pericles has suffered for Athens."

"Pardon me that my tears dry sooner than yours. The thought that *our* son lives, gives me comfort."

"It comforts me also, but not so much."

"Shall I go, before your wife comes?"

"You must not leave me, for I am ill."

"You have spoken of it for a long time now. Is it serious?"

"My soul is sick. When the State suffers, I am ill.... There comes the mother of the dead."

A black-robed woman appeared in the doorway; she wore a veil in order to hide the fact that her hair was cut off; she had a garland in her hand, and a slave followed her with a torch.

She did not immediately notice Aspasia's presence, greeted her former husband with a glance, and laid the garland at the dead boy's feet. "I only bring a funeral garland for my son," she said, "but instead of the obol, he shall take a kiss from the lips of his mother."

She threw herself on the dead child, and kissed him.

"Beware of the dead!" said Pericles, and seized her arm; "he died of the pestilence."

"My life has been a lingering death; a quick one is preferable to me."

Then she noticed Aspasia, and, rising, said with quiet dignity, "Tell your friend to go."

"She goes, and I follow her."

"That is right! For now, my Pericles, the last tie between us is dissolved! Farewell!"

“Farewell, my wife!”

And, turning to Aspasia, he said, “Give me your hand, my spouse.”

“Here it is.”

The mourning mother lingered: “We shall all meet again some day, shall we not? And then as friends—you, she, and he who is gone before to prepare a dwelling for the hearts which are separated by the narrow laws of life.”

Pericles and Socrates wandered in the avenue of plane-trees below the Hemicyklion, and conversed together.

“Phidias has been acquitted of theft, but re-arrested on the charge of blaspheming the gods of the State.”

“Arrested? Phidias!”

“They say that he has represented me and himself in Athene’s shield.”

“That is the mob’s doing, which hates all greatness! Anaxagoras banished because he was too wise; Aristides banished because he was too just; Themistocles, Pausanias.... What did you do, Pericles, when you gave the people power?”

“What was lawful and right. I fall certainly by my own sword, but honourably. I go about and am dying piecemeal, like Athens. Did we know that we adorned our statues for a funeral procession? that we were weaving our own shrouds? that the choruses of our tragedies were dirges?”

“Athens is dying—yes! But of what?”

“Of Sparta.”

“What is Sparta?”

“Sparta is Heracles; the club, the lion-skin, brute-strength. We Athenians are the sons of Theseus, ranged against the Heraclidae, Dorians, and Ionians. Athens dies by Sparta’s hand, but Hellas dies by her own.”

“I believe the gods have forsaken us.”

“I believe so too, but the Divine lives.”

“There comes Nicias, the messenger of misfortune.” It was Nicias; and when he read the question in the faces and glances of the two, he answered, without waiting to be asked: “From the Agora!”

“What is the news from the Agora?”

"The Assembly seeks help from the Macedonians."

"Why not from the Persians? Good! then the end is near. Do they seek help from the enemy? From the barbarian, the Macedonian, who lies above us like a lion on a hill. Go, Nicias, and say, 'Pericles is dying.' And ask them to choose the worthiest as his successor! Not the most unworthy! Go, Nicias, but go quickly."

"I go," said Nicias, "but for a physician."

And he went.

"No physician can cure me!" answered Pericles; but in a weak voice, as though he spoke to himself. He took his old seat in the Hemicyklion. When he had rested a while, he made Socrates a sign to come near, for he did not wish to raise his voice.

"Socrates, my friend," he began, "this is the farewell of a dying man. You were the wisest, but take it not ill if I say, 'Be not too wise'; seek not the unattainable, and confuse not men's minds with subtleties; do not make the simple complicated. You wish to see things with both eyes, but he who shoots with the bow, must close one eye; otherwise he sees his mark doubled. You are not a Sophist, but may easily appear so; you are not a libertine, but you go about with such; you hate your city and your country, and rightly; but you should love them to the death, for that is your duty; you despise the people, but you should be sorry for them. I have not admired the people, but I have given them laws and justice; therefore I die!

"Good-night, Socrates! Now it is dark before my eyes. You shall close them, and give me the garland. Now I go to sleep. When I awake, *if* I awake, then I am on the other side, and then I will send you a greeting, if the gods allow it. Good-night."

"Pericles is dead. Hear it, Athenians, and weep as I do!"

The people streamed thither, but they did not weep. They only wondered what would now happen, and felt almost glad of a change.

Cleon the tanner stood in the orator's pulpit in the Pnyx. Among his most attentive hearers were Alcibiades, Anytos, and Nicias. Cleon said: "Pericles is dead, and Pericles is buried; now you know it. Let him rest in peace with his merits and faults, for the enemy is in Sphacteria, and we must have a commander; Pericles' shadow will not serve for that. Here below sit two adventurers, fine gentlemen both; one is called Nicias, because he never has conquered; the other

Alcibiades, and we know his conquests—goblets and girls. On the other hand, we do not know his character, but you will some day know him, Athenians, and he will show his incisors himself. Such and such and such a one have been proposed for commander—oddly enough all fine gentlemen, and all grandees, of course. Athens, which has abjured all kings and their like, must now fight with royal Sparta, and must, faithful to its traditions, appear in the field under a man of the people on whom you can rely. We need no Pericles who commissions statues and builds temples to Fame and Glory; Athens has enough of such gewgaws. But now we must have a man who understands the art of war, who has a heart in his breast and a head on his shoulders. Whom do you wish for, men of Athens?"

Alcibiades sprang up like a young lion, and went straight to the point. "Men of Athens, I propose Cleon the tanner, not because he is a tanner, for that is something different. At any rate the army may be compared to an ox-skin, and Cleon to a knife; but Cleon has other qualities, especially those of a commander. His last campaign against Pericles and Phidias closed with a triumph for him. He has displayed a courage which never failed, and an intelligence which passed all mortal comprehension. His strategy was certainly not that of a lion, but he conquered, and that is the chief point. I propose Cleon as leader of the campaign."

Now it so fell out that this patent irony was still too subtle for the mob, who took it seriously. Alcibiades also had a certain influence with them because of his relationship to Pericles, and they listened to him readily. Accordingly the whole assembly called out for Cleon, and he was elected.

But Cleon had never dreamt of the honour of being commander, and he was prudent enough not to endeavour to climb beyond his capacity. Therefore he protested against the election, shouting and swearing by all the gods.

Alcibiades, however, seized the opportunity by the forelock, and, perceiving that the election of Cleon meant his death, he mounted an empty rostrum and spoke with emphasis: "Cleon jests, and Cleon is modest; he does not himself know what sort of a commander he is, for he has not proved himself; but I know who he is; I insist upon his election; I demand that he fulfil his duty as a citizen; and I summon

him before the Areopagus if he shirks it when the fatherland is in danger." "Cleon is elected!" cried the people.

But Cleon continued to protest, "I do not know the difference between a hoplite and a peltast; [Footnote: a heavy-armed and a light-armed soldier.] I can neither carry a lance nor sit upon a horse."

But Alcibiades shouted him down. "He can do everything; guide the State and criticise art; carry on law-suits and watch Sophists; he can discuss the highest subjects with Socrates; in a word, he possesses all the public virtues and all the private vices."

Now the people laughed, but Cleon did not budge.

"Athenians!" said Alcibiades in conclusion, "the people have spoken, and there is no appeal. Cleon is elected, and Sparta is done for!"

The assembly broke up. Only Cleon remained behind with his friend Anytos. "Anytos!" he said. "I am lost!"

"Very probable!" answered Anytos.

But Alcibiades went off with Nicias: "Now Cleon is as dead as a dog. Then comes my turn," he said.

Socrates walked, deep in thought, up and down the courtyard of his house, which was very simple and had no colonnades. His wife was carding wool, and did it as if she were pulling someone's hair.

The wise man kept silence, but the woman spoke—that was her nature. "What are you doing?" she asked.

"For the sake of old acquaintance, I will answer you, though I am not obliged to do so. I am thinking."

"Is that a proper business for a man?"

"Certainly; a very manly business."

"At any rate no one can see what you are doing."

"When you were with child, it was also invisible; but when, it was born, it was visible, and especially audible. Thus occupations which are at first invisible, become visible later on. They are therefore not to be despised, least of all by those who only believe in the visible."

"Is your business with Aspasia something of that sort?"

"Something of that, and of another sort too."

"You drink also a good deal."

"Yes, those who speak become thirsty, and the thirsty must drink."

"What is it in Aspasia that attracts men?"

"Certain qualities which give zest to social intercourse—thoughtfulness, tact, moderation."

"You mean that for me?"

"I mean it for Aspasia."

"Is she beautiful?"

"No."

"Anytos declares that she is."

"He tells an untruth. Do you see Anytos, Cleon's friend and my enemy?"

"He is not my enemy."

"But mine. You always love my enemies and hate my friends; that is a bad sign."

"Your friends are bad men."

"No, on the contrary. Pericles was the greatest of the Athenians, Phidias the best, Euripides the noblest, Plato the wisest, Alcibiades the most gifted, Protagoras the most acute."

"And Aristophanes?"

"He is my enemy, though I do not know why. I suppose you have heard of the comedy which he has written about me."

"Anytos told me. Have you seen it?"

"I saw the *Clouds* yesterday."

"Was it amusing—was it clever?"

"What did Anytos think?"

"He made me laugh when he described some scenes."

"Then it must be amusing, or you would not have laughed."

"Did you not laugh, my Socrates?"

"Yes, of course; otherwise they would have thought me a blockhead. You know that he has depicted me as a rogue and fool. Since I am neither, it was not serious; therefore it was in jest."

"Do you think so? I think it was serious."

"And you laugh at the serious? Do you weep, then, at jesting? Then you would be mad."

"Do you think I am mad?"

"Yes, if you think me a rogue."

"You know that Cleon is with the army."

"I was astonished to hear it."

"Astonished! You think, then, that he is not fit to command."

"No, I know nothing about his fitness as commander, for I have never seen him in the field. But I am astonished at his election, as he himself was, because it was unexpected."

"You therefore expect him to be defeated."

"No, I wait for the result, in order to see whether he wins or loses."

"You would be glad if he lost?"

"I do not love Cleon, but as an Athenian I would mourn if he were defeated; therefore I would not rejoice at his overthrow."

"You hate Cleon, but you do not wish his overthrow."

"On account of Athens—no."

"But except for that?"

"Except for that, Cleon's overthrow would be a blessing for the State, for he has been unjust to Pericles, to Phidias, to all who have done anything great."

"Here comes a visitor."

"It is Alcibiades."

"The wretch! Are you not ashamed to be on intimate terms with him?"

"He is a man; he has great faults and great merits, and he is my friend. I do not wish to be on intimate terms with my enemies." Alcibiades knocked at the door, and rushed in. "Papaia! The pair are philosophising together, and talking of yesterday's comedy! This Aristophanes is an ass! If one wishes to kill an enemy, one must hit him; but Aristophanes aims at the clouds. Hit, yes! Do you know that Cleon is defeated?"

"What a pity!" exclaimed Socrates.

"Is it a pity that the dog is unmasked?"

"I think Alcibiades is misinformed," broke in Xantippe.

"No, by Zeus, but I wish I was!"

"Hush! here is Anytos coming," said Socrates.

“The second tanner! It is strange that the destiny of Athens is guided by tanners.”

“The destiny of Athens! Who knows it?”

“I, Alcibiades, am the destiny of Athens.”

“[Greek: *Hubris*]! Beware of the gods!”

“I come after Cleon; Cleon is no more; therefore it is my turn.”

“Here is Anytos!”

Anytos entered: “I seek Alcibiades.”

“Here I am.”

“Must I prepare you....’

“No, I know.”

“Prepare you for the honour....”

“Have I waited long enough.”

“To go at the head....”

“That is what I was born for.”

“To take the lead....”

“That is my place.”

“And conduct the triumphal procession?”

“What procession?”

“Ah! you did not know. Cleon’s triumphal procession from the harbour.”

Alcibiades passed his hand downwards over his face, as though he wished to changed his mask, and it was done in a moment.

“Yes, certainly, certainly, certainly. I have in fact just come here to—announce his victory.”

“He lies,” broke in Xantippe.

“I jested with the pair. There will be a triumphal procession, then, for Cleon! How fine!”

“Socrates,” continued Anytos, “are you not glad?”

“I am glad that the enemy is beaten.”

“But not that Cleon has won a victory?”

“Yes, it is nearly the same thing.”

Xantippe seized the opportunity and struck in: “He is not glad, and he does not believe in Cleon.”

“I know you,” concluded Anytos. “I know you philosophers and quibblers! But take care!—And now, Alcibiades, come and receive the despised Cleon, who has saved the fatherland!”

Alcibiades took Socrates by the hand, and whispered in his ear. “What a cursed mischance! Well, not yet!—but the next time!”

ALCIBIADES

Kartaphalos, the shoemaker, sat in his shop by the Acarnanian Gate, and repaired cothurns for the Dionysian theatre, which was about to make a last attempt to revive the tragic drama, which had been eclipsed by the farces of Aristophanes. The Roman Lucillus lounged at the window-sill, and, since philosophy had been brought into fashion by Socrates and the Sophists, the shoemaker and the exiled Decemvir philosophised as well as they could.

"Roman!" said Kartaphalos, "you are a stranger in the city, as I am: what do think of the state and the Government?"

"They are exactly like the Roman. One may sum up the whole past history of Rome in two words—Patricians and Plebeians."

"Just as it is here."

"With the difference that Rome has a future. Hellas only a past."

"What is known of Rome's future?"

"The Cumaean Sibyl has prophesied that Rome will possess the earth."

"What do you say? Rome? No, Israel will possess it; Israel has the promise."

"I do not venture to deny that, but Rome has also the promise."

"There is only one promise, and one God."

"Perhaps it is the same promise, and the same God."

"Perhaps Israel will conquer through Rome."

"Israel will conquer through the promised Messiah."

"When will Messiah come, then?"

"When the time is fulfilled, when Zeus is dead."

"May we live to see it. I wait, for Zeus has gone to Rome, and is called there Jupiter Capitolinus."

Aristophanes, who was easily recognised by his crane-like neck and open mouth, looked in through the window.

"Have you a pair of low shoes, Kartaphalos? A pair of 'socks'? [Footnote: a low-heeled shoe worn by comic actors.] You have plenty of cothurns, I see, but the 'sock' has won the day."

"At your service, sir."

"We want them for the theatre, you understand.... Ah! there is Lucillus! ... and of raw leather, not tanned."

"What are you going to play in the theatre, then?"

"We are going to bring on Cleon, and make him dance, and fancy! since no one dares to represent the low-born tanner, I must do it. I will play Cleon."

"Where is the great general, Cleon, now?"

"In a new campaign against Brasidas. When the commander Demosthenes won the battle of Sphacteria, Cleon claimed the honour of the victory and received a triumph. Then, since he regarded himself as a great warrior, he marched against Brasidas. The pitcher goes so often to the well...."

"Till it is broken," interrupted a new arrival. It was Alcibiades. "Papaia!" he exclaimed, "Cleon is beaten! Cleon has fled! Now it is my turn! Come to the Pnyx." And he went on.

"Very well—to the Pnyx," said Aristophanes, "and I will obtain matter for a new comedy, to be called *Alcibiades*."

"You are right, perhaps," answered Lucillus. "The whole matter is not worth weeping for. Therefore let us laugh!"

Alcibiades stood again on the orator's platform in the Pnyx. He felt at home there, and he always had the ear of the people, for he was not tedious. They all spoilt him, and his grotesque impudence had an enlivening effect upon them.

Before the orator's platform, among others, was to be seen the wise, rich, and aristocratic Nicias, who had always sought to mediate between Sparta and Athens, but through his over-deliberation had done more harm than good.

Alcibiades, who knew Nicias and his political views, and feared his opposition, resolved on a master-stroke. He would not speak of Sparta and Athens as Nicias expected, but determined to make a diversion, and speak of something quite different. The people loved novelties, and to-day they should have something quite new.

"Athenians!" he began, "Cleon is defeated and dead, and I place my undoubted talents at the service of the State. You know my small failings, but now you will know my great merits. Listen, Athenians. There was a time when Hellas possessed Asia Minor and extended its wings eastward. The Persian King took these settlements from us

one after the other, and he is now in Thrace. Since we cannot go farther eastward, we must go westward, towards the sunset. You have heard more or less vaguely of the Roman Republic, which is growing and growing. Our countrymen have long ago taken possession of that part of the Italian peninsula which is called Tarentum, and we have thereby become close neighbours of Rome. And the finest of the islands, opulent Sicily, became ours. But the Romans have gradually surrounded our colonies, and threaten their independence. The Romans are pressing on us, but they are also pushing northward towards Gaul and Germany, and southward towards Africa. The Persian King, who was formerly our enemy, has now nearly become our friend, and our danger is not now Persia, but Rome. Therefore, with the future in view, I say to you Athenians, 'Let us go to Italy and Sicily. With Sicily as our base, we can dispute with the Romans the possession of Spain and the Pillars of Hercules. In Sicily we have the Key to Egypt; by means of Sicily we protect the threatened Tarentum, and can, in case of need, save sinking Hellas. The world is wide; why should we sit here and moulder in the wilderness? Hellas is an exhausted country; let us break up new ground. Hellas is an outworn ship; let us build a new one, and undertake a new Argonautic enterprise to a new Colchis to win another Golden Fleece, following the path of the sun westward. Athenians! let us go to Sicily!'"

These new prospects which the speaker opened to them pleased the people, who were tired of the everlasting Sparta and the Persian King; and stimulated by fear of Rome, the growing wolf's-cub, they received the ill-considered proposal with applause, and raised their hands in token of assent.

Nicias sought an opportunity to speak, and warned them, but no one listened to him. The Scythian police who kept order in the Pnyx could procure him no audience. And when Nicias saw that he could not prevent the enterprise, he placed his services at Alcibiades' disposal, and began to equip the fleet.

Aspasia was now the widow of Pericles, and had mourned him for a long time. The "Hemicyklion" was no more, but her few remaining friends visited her from time to time. Socrates was the most faithful among them. One evening he sat with her in the little brick-roofed villa on the bank of the Cephisos.

"No, Aspasia," he said, "I advised against the Sicilian expedition, so did Nicias, so did the astronomer Meton, but it was to be. Alcibiades had managed to procure a favourable response from the oracle in the Temple of Ammon."

"Do you believe in oracles, Socrates?"

"Yes—and no! I have my own 'demon,' as you know, who warns but never urges—who advises, but never commands. This inner Voice has said to me, 'Hellas will not conquer the world.'"

"Will Rome do it?"

"Yes, but for another!"

"You know that Pericles' great thought was a single Hellas—a union of all the Grecian States."

"That was Pericles' wish, but the will of the gods was otherwise. Alcibiades' dream of Hellas governing the world is also great, but the dreams of the gods are greater."

"What gain do you think comes to Athens from Cleon's death?"

"None! After Cleon comes Anytos. Cleon is everlasting, for Cleon is the name of an idea."

Protagoras, grown old and somewhat dull, appeared in the inner courtyard.

"There is Protagoras!"

"The Sophist! I do not like him," said Aspasia. "He is a file who frets all will away; his endless hair-splitting robs one of all resolution."

"You speak truly and rationally, Aspasia, and in an earlier age you would have sat upon the Pythoness's tripod and prophesied. Like the priestess, you know not perhaps what you say, but a god speaks through you."

"No, Socrates; I only utter your thoughts; that is all!"

Protagoras came forward. "Mourning in Athens! Mourning in Hellas! Alas!" was his greeting.

"What is the matter, Protagoras?"

"Phidias of immortal memory lies dead in prison."

"Alas! then they have killed him."

"So it is rumoured in the city."

"Phidias is dead!"

"Probably poisoned, they say; but that need not be true."

"All die here in Athens before their proper time. When will our turn come?"

"When it does."

"Are we falling by the arrows of the Python-slayer? We are shot like birds."

"We are the children of Apollo. Would our father kill us?"

"Saturn has returned to devour his children."

Socrates sank in meditation, and remained standing.

"We have angered the gods."

Lucillus the Roman entered. "See the Roman!" said Socrates, "the lord of the future and of the world. What has he to tell us?"

"I come to warn Protagoras. He is to be banished."

"I?"

"You are banished."

"On what grounds?"

"As a blasphemer. You have repudiated the gods of the State."

"Who is the informer?"

"The sycophant, the invisible, who is present everywhere."

"All is probable; nothing is certain," exclaimed Protagoras.

"Yes, this is certain."

"Well, my fabric of thought is shattered against this certainty as everything else is shattered."

"[Greek: *Pànta reî*]. Everything flows away; nothing endures; all comes to birth, grows, and dies."

"Farewell, then, Aspasia, Socrates, friends, fatherland!

"Farewell!"

Protagoras departed with his mantle drawn over his head.

"Will Athens miss Protagoras?" asked Aspasia.

"He has taught the Athenians to think and to doubt; and doubt is the beginning of wisdom."

"Aristophanes has murdered Protagoras, and he will murder you some day, Socrates."

"He has done that already; my wife rejoices at it, but still I live."

"Here comes young Plato with an ominous look. More bad news I expect."

"Expect? I am certain! Sing your dirge, Plato."

"Dirges, you mean. Alcibiades has been accused and recalled."

"What has he done?"

"Before his departure he has mutilated all the images of Hermes in the city."

"That is too much for one man; he could not do that."

"The accusation is definite; injury to the gods of the State."

"And now the gods avenge themselves."

"The gods of Greece have gone to Rome."

"There you have spoken truth."

"Now comes number two: The Athenians have been defeated in Sicily. And number three: Nicias is beheaded."

"Then we can buy sepulchres for ourselves in the Ceramicus."

Near the Temple of Nemesis in the Agora stood the tanner Anytos chatting with Thrasybulos, a hitherto obscure but rising patriot.

Anytos rattled away: "Alcibiades is in Sparta; Sparta seeks the help of the Persian King; only one thing remains for us—to do the same."

"To go over to the enemy? That is treachery."

"There is nothing else to be done."

"There were once Thermopylae and Salamis."

"But now there is Sparta, and the Spartans are in Deceleia. Our envoys have already sailed to the Persian King."

"Then we may as well remove Athene's image from the Parthenon! Anytos! look at my back; for I shall be ashamed to show my face now when I walk."

Anytos remained alone, and walked for some time up and down in front of the temple portico. Then he stopped and entered the vestibule.

The priestess Theano seemed to have been waiting for him. Anytos began: "Have you obeyed the order of the Council?"

"What order?"

"To pronounce a curse on Alcibiades, the enemy of his country."

"No, I am only ordered to bless."

"Have the avenging goddesses, then, ceased to execute justice?"

"They have never lent themselves to carry out human vengeance."

"Has Alcibiades not betrayed his country?"

"Alcibiades' country is Hellas, not Athens; Sparta is in Hellas."

"Have the gods also become Sophists?"

"The gods have become dumb."

"Then you can shut the temple—the sooner, the better."

The incorrigible Alcibiades had really fled from Sicily to the enemy at Sparta, and now sat at table with King Aegis; for Sparta had retained the monarchy, while Athens at an early date had abjured it.

"My friend," said the King, "I do not like your dining at the common public table, after being accustomed to Aspasia's brilliant feasts in Athens."

"I! Oh no! My rule was always the simplest food: I went to sleep with the sun, and rose with the sun. You do not know what a severe ascetic I have been."

"If you say so, I must believe it. Rumour, then, has slandered you?"

"Slandered? Yes, certainly. You remember the scandal about the statues of Hermes. I did not mutilate them, but they have become my destruction."

"Is that also a lie?"

"It is a lie."

"But tell me something else. Do you think that it is now the will of the gods that Sparta should conquer Athens?"

"Certainly, as certainly as virtue will conquer vice. Sparta is the home of all the virtues, and Athens of all the vices."

"Now I understand that you are not the man I took you for, and I will give you the command of the army. Shall we now march against Athens?"

"I am ready!"

"Have you no scruple in marching against your own city?"

“I am a Hellene, not an Athenian, Sparta is the chief city of Hellas.”

“Alcibiades is great! Now I go to the general, and this evening we march.”

“Go, King! Alcibiades follows.”

The King went, but Alcibiades did not follow, for behind the curtains of the women’s apartment stood the Queen, and waited. When the King had gone, she rushed in.

“Hail! Alcibiades, my king!”

“Queen, why do you call your servant ‘king’?”

“Because Sparta has done homage to you, because I love you, and because you are a descendant of heroes.”

“King Aegis the Second lives.”

“Not too long! Win your first battle, and Aegis is dead.”

“Now life begins to smile on the hardly-tried exile. If you knew my childhood with its sorrows, my youth with its privations! The vine had not grown for me, woman had not been made for me; Bacchus knew me not; Aphrodite was not my goddess. The chaste Artemis and the wise Pallas guided me past the devious ways of youth to the goal of knowledge, wisdom, and glory. But when I first saw you, Timia, my queen....”

“Hush!”

“Then I thought that beauty was more than wisdom.”

“Hush! some one is listening.”

“Who?”

“I, Lysander, the General,” answered a sharp voice, and the speaker stood in the middle of the room.

“Now I know you, Alcibiades, and I have your head under my arm, but I have the honour of Sparta under the other. Fly before I strangle you!”

“Your ears have deceived you, Lysander!”

“Fly! do us the kindness to fly! Fifty hoplites stand without, waiting for your head.”

“How many do you say? Fifty? Then I will fly, for I cannot overcome more than thirty. My queen! farewell! I have thought better of Sparta. This would never have happened in Athens. Now I

go to the Persian King; there they understand better what is fitting, and there I shall not be obliged to eat black broth!"

Alcibiades sat with the Persian satrap Tissaphernes, and Alcibiades the eloquent spoke. "Yes, my teacher Protagoras taught me once, that everything is born from its opposite; therefore you see my heart can embrace all opposites. Sparta and Athens are both dear to me; that is to say, both hateful—the state—gods of the one, and the virtues of the other."

"You have a great heart, stranger! Is there room in it for Persia?"

"For the whole world."

"What do you think of our chief city?"

"I love all large cities!"

"But at the present moment, you ought to love ours the most."

"Yes, I do."

"You must also love our allies."

"Pardon me, who is your present ally?"

"At present, it is Sparta."

"Very well, then, I love Sparta."

"And suppose it is Athens to-morrow?"

"Then I will love Athens to-morrow."

"Thank you. Now I understand that it is all over with Hellas. Old Greece is so corrupt, that it is hardly worth conquering."

"Protagoras taught that man is the measure of all things; therefore I measure the value of all things by myself; what has value for me, that I prize."

"Is that the teaching of your prophets? Then we have better ones; do you know Zarathrustra?"

"If it would do you a pleasure, I wish I had known him from childhood."

"Then you might have been able to distinguish good and evil, light and darkness, Ormuzd and Ahriman. And you would have lived in the hope that light will eventually conquer; and that all discordances will be reconciled through suffering."

"I can at any rate try. Is it a large book?"

"What are the names of your sacred books?"

"Sacred! What is that?"

"From whence do you get your religion, the knowledge of your gods?"

"From Homer, I believe."

"You do not believe that Zeus is the supreme ruler of the world?"

"Yes, I do certainly."

"But he was a false swearer and a lecher."

"Yes! But how can that be helped?"

Tissaphernes rose. "Listen, my guest; we cannot share any common undertaking, for we do not serve the same gods. You call us barbarians. I, on my part, know no term of reproach strong enough for people who honour such gods. But the Athenians are as rotten as you, for they have pardoned you. Outside there stands an envoy from Athens come to beg you to return. Go to Athens; that is your place."

"To Athens? Never! I do not trust them."

"Nor they, you! That is appropriate. Go to Athens, and tell your countrymen—the Persian does not want them. The vine tendrils seek the sound elm, but turn away from the rotten cabbage-top."

Alcibiades had begun to walk up and down the room. That meant that he was irresolute.

"Is the Athenian really outside?" he asked.

"He kneels outside in order to beg the traitor Alcibiades to be their lord. But listen, you are a democrat, are you not?"

"Yes, of course."

"Then you must change your point of view, for now an oligarchy governs Athens."

"Yes, ah! yes, yes—but I am an aristocrat, the most aristocratic in the State."

"Spinning-top! Seek for a whip!"

Alcibiades stood still. "I think, I must speak with the Athenian after all."

"Do that! Speak the Athenian language to him! He does not understand Persian."

Alcibiades returned to Athens; the death-sentence against him was annulled; and as a commander who had won a battle, he was able to have a triumphal procession from Piraeus to the city. But

popular favour was fickle, and, becoming suspected of aspiring to be king, he fled again, this time to the Persian satrap Pharnabazes. Since he could not live without intrigues, he was soon entangled in one, unmasked, and condemned, without his knowing it, to death.

One day he was sitting with his paramour, and chatting quietly at his ease: "You think, then, Timandra, that Cyrus marches against his brother Artaxerxes, in order to seize the throne of Persia."

"I am sure of it, and equally sure that he has ten thousand Athenians under Xenophon with him."

"Do you know whether Artaxerxes has been warned?"

"Yes, I know it."

"Who could have warned him?"

"You did."

"Does Cyrus know that?"

"Yes, he does."

"Who has betrayed me?"

"I did."

"Then I am lost."

"Yes, you are."

"To think that I must fall through a woman!"

"Did you expect anything else, Alcibiades?"

"No, not really! Can I not fly?"

"You cannot, but I can."

"I see smoke! Is the house on fire?"

"Yes, it is. And there are archers posted outside!"

"The comedy is over! We return to tragedy…."

"And the satyr-play begins."

"My feet are hot; generally cold is a precursor of death."

"Everything is born from its opposite, Alcibiades."

"Give me a kiss."

She kissed him, the handsomest man of Athens.

"Thank you!"

"Go to the window; there you will see!"

Alcibiades stepped to the window. "Now I see."

At that moment he was struck by an arrow. “But now I see nothing! It grows dark, and I thought it would grow light.”

Timandra fled, as the corpse began to burn.

SOCRATES

Sparta had conquered Athens, and Athens lay in ruins. The government by the people was over, and the rule of the Thirty Tyrants had succeeded it. Socrates and Euripides walked with sad faces among the ruins on the Agora.

Socrates spoke: “We are on the ruins of Athens’ walls! We have become Spartans. We would have no tyrants, and now thirty rule over us.”

“I go to the North,” said Euripides, “to Macedonia, whither I am invited.”

“In that you are right, for the Tyrants have forbidden the acting of your tragedies.”

“That is true.”

“And they have forbidden me to teach.”

“Have they forbidden Socrates to speak? No! Then he can teach, for he cannot speak without teaching. But they must have forbidden the oracles to speak, for they have ceased to prophesy. Everything has ceased! Hellas has ceased to be! And why?”

“You may well ask. Has Zeus begotten the son who is to overthrow him, as Aeschylus foretold?”

“Who knows? The people have introduced a new God called Adonai or Adonis. He is from the East, and his name signifies the Lord.”

“Who is the new god?”

“He teaches readiness for death, and the resurrection. And they have also got a new goddess. Have you heard of Cybele, the mother of the gods, a virgin, who is worshipped in Rome like Vesta by vestal priests.”

“There is so much that is new and obscure, like wine in fermentation. There comes Aristophanes. Farewell, my friend, for the last time here in life.”

“Wait! Aristophanes beckons! No, see! he weeps! Aristophanes weeps!”

Aristophanes approached. “Euripides,” he said, “don’t go till I have spoken to you.”

“Can you speak?” answered Euripides.

“I weep.”

“Do not quit your role. Shall that represent tears?”

“Sympathise with a companion in distress, Euripides; the Tyrants have closed my theatre.”

“Socrates, shall I sympathise with my executioner?”

“I believe that the Temple of Nemesis has been opened again,” answered Socrates. “Aristophanes has never been ingenuous hitherto; now he is so with a vengeance. Very well, Aristophanes, I sympathise with you that you can no more scoff at me. I pardon you, but I cannot help you to stage your comedies. That is asking too much. Now I follow Euripides home.”

Socrates sat by Aspasia, who had grown elderly. “Euripides has gone to Macedonia,” he said.

“From his wives.”

“You have become bitter.”

“I am tired of seeing ruins and all the rest. The Tyrants are murdering the citizens.”

“That is the occupation of tyrants.”

“Shall we soon have rest?”

“In the Ceramicus, in a cedar coffin.”

“I will not die; I will live, but quietly.”

“Life is not quiet.”

“Yes, if one is well off.”

“One never is.”

“No, not if one is unhappily married, like you, Socrates.”

“My wife is certainly the worst possible; if she had not had me for a husband, she would long ago have been murdered.”

“Xantippe betrays you with her gossiping; and when she does not understand what you say, she gives others distorted ideas of your opinions and your person.”

“Yes, I know that, but I cannot alter it.”

“Why do you continue in such a state of humiliation?”

“Why should I fly? One is only justified in flying from superior force, and Xantippe is not a superior force to me.”

"You are forbidden, on pain of death, to give instruction; that is her work and that of Anytos."

"She may bring about my death, if she likes, for then she has only brought about my freedom.... Aspasia, I hear that our friendship is on the decline; you have found new friends, you have become another person. Let me say farewell before Lysicles comes."

"Do you know him?"

"Yes, and the whole town speaks of your coming marriage."

"With the cattle-dealer, Lysicles?"

"Yes, that is your affair; I don't talk about it."

"But you think I should have cherished Pericles' memory better?"

"I would fain have seen Aspasia's memory better preserved; but since I have seen Athenians adorn themselves with garlands to celebrate Athens' overthrow; since I have seen Phidias...."

"How, then, will Socrates end?"

"Certainly not like Aspasia."

"The gods jest with us. Beware! O Socrates!"

Socrates was at last in prison, accused of having seduced the youth, and blasphemed or repudiated the gods of the State. Among the accusers were a young poetaster, Melitos, the tanner Anytos, and the orator Lykon.

Socrates made his Apology, and declared that he had always believed on God, and the voice of his conscience, which he called his "demon." He was condemned to drink hemlock, and kept in prison, where, however, he was allowed to see his wife and his few remaining friends.

Just now his wife was with him, and wept.

"Weep not," said Socrates; "it is not your fault."

"Will you see the children?"

"Why should I lacerate their little souls with a useless leave-taking? Go to them and comfort them; divert their minds with an expedition to the woods."

"Shall we rejoice while you are dying?"

"Rejoice that my sufferings come to an end! Rejoice that I die with honour."

"Have you no last wish?"

“I wish for nothing, except peace and freedom from your foolish tears and sighs, and your disturbing lamentations. Go, woman, and say to yourself that Socrates wants to sleep for he is tired and out of humour; say to yourself that he will wake again, refreshed, rejuvenated, happy and amiable.”

“I wish you had taught me all this before.”

“you had nothing to learn from me.”

“Yes! I have learnt from you patience and self-control.”

“Do you forgive me?”

“I cannot, for I have done it already. Say farewell now, as though I were going on a journey. Say ‘We meet again,’ as though I were soon returning!”

“Farewell, then, Socrates, and be not angry with me.”

“No, I am always well-disposed towards you.”

“Farewell, my husband, for ever.”

“Not for ever. You wish to see me again, don’t you? Put on a cheerful face, and say, ‘We meet again.’”

“We meet again.”

“Good! and when we meet again, we will go with the children together into the woods.”

“Socrates was not what I thought he was.”

“Go! I want to sleep.”

She went, but met in the doorway Plato and Crito.

“The hour approaches, friends,” said Socrates wearily, and with feverish eyes.

“Are you calm, Master?”

“To say the truth, I am quite calm. I will not assert that I am joyful, but my conscience does not trouble me.”

“When, Socrates, when—will it happen?”

“You mean, When is it to happen,—the last thing? Plato, my friend, my dearest... it hastens.... I have just now enjoyed a sleep. I have been over the river on the other side; I have seen for a moment the original forms of imperishable Beauty, of which things on earth are only dim copies.... I have seen the future, the destinies of the human race; I have spoken to the mighty, the lofty, and the pure; I have learnt the wise Order which guides the apparent great disorder;

I trembled at the unfathomable secret of the Universe of which I had a glimmering perception, and I felt the immensity of my ignorance. Plato, you shall write what I have seen. You shall teach the children of men to estimate things at their proper value, to look up to the Invisible with awe, to revere Beauty, to cultivate virtue, and to hope for final deliverance, as they work, through faithful performance of duty and self-renunciation."

He went to the bed, and lay down.

Plato followed him, "Are you ill, Master?"

"No, I have been; but now I am getting well."

"Have you already...."

"I have already emptied the cup!"

"Our Wisest leaves us."

"No mortal is wise! But I thank the gods who gave me modesty and conscience."

There was silence in the room.

"Socrates is dead!"

FLACCUS AND MARO

After the death of Socrates, the greatness of Athens was no more. Sparta ruled for a time, and then came the turn of Thebes. Subsequently the Macedonians invaded the country, and governed it till the year 196 B.C., when the Romans conquered both Macedonia and Greece, and completely destroyed Corinth, but spared Athens, which was deprived of its fortifications under Sulla, on account of the great memories which gathered round it.

Now, in Julius Caesar's time, it had become the fashion to send youths to Athens to study Grammar, Rhetoric, and Philosophy there. There was no great philosopher there, but they studied the history of philosophy. There was also no religion, for no one believed on the gods of the State, although, from old habit, they celebrated the sacrificial feasts.

Athens was dead, and so was the whole of the ancient world—Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor. In Rome they lived on the memories of the past of Greece, and the greatest Roman, Cicero, when he wished to discuss some philosophic theme, always commenced by citing the opinions of the ancient Greeks on the subject; he also closed in the same way, for he had no original opinion of his own on any subject, such as the nature of the gods, &c.

One early spring day, during the last years of Julius Caesar, two students sat in an arbour below Lykabettos, opposite the college of Kynosarges. Wine was on the table, but they did not seem very devoted to their yellow "Chios." They sat there with an air of indifference, as though they were waiting for something. The same atmosphere of lethargy seemed to pervade their surroundings. The innkeeper sat and dozed; the youths in the college opposite lounged at the door; pedestrians on the high road went by without greeting anyone; the peasant in the field sat on his plough, and wiped the sweat from his forehead.

The elder of the two students fingered his glass, and at last opened his mouth.

"Say something!"

"I have nothing to say, for I know nothing."

“Have you already learnt everything?”

“Yes.”

“I came yesterday from Rome with great hopes of being able to learn something new and of hearing something remarkable, but I hear only silence.”

“My dear Maro, I have been here for years, and I have listened, but heard nothing new. I have heard in the Poikile that Thales maintained that there were no gods, but that everything had been produced from moisture. I have further heard Anaximines’ doctrine that air was the source of all things; Pherecydes’ doctrine of ether as the original principle; Heraclitus’ doctrine of fire. Anaximander has taught me that the universe came from some primitive substance; Leucippus and Democritus spoke to me of empty space with primitive corpuscles or atoms. Anaxagoras made believe that the atom had reason. Xenophanes wished to persuade me that God and the Universe were one. Empedocles, the wisest of the whole company, despaired at the imperfection of reason, and went in despair and flung himself head foremost into Etna’s burning mountain.”

“Do you believe that?”

“No! it may well be a lie like everything else. Then I learnt a number of interesting doctrines from Plato which were subsequently all confuted by Aristotle. At last I took up my position with the wisest of the wise—Socrates, who openly declared, as you know, that he knew nothing.”

“That is the same as the Sophists said,—that one knew nothing, and hardly so much.”

“You are right, and our good Socrates was a Sophist, without wishing to be one. But there is one, a single one, who.... Yes, I mean Pythagoras. He has proclaimed this and that doctrine in the East and the West, but I have found one anchor in his philosophy, and I have gripped firm ground with it. I certainly swing in the wind, but I do not drift away from it.”

“Tell me.”

“Do what you think right at the risk of being banished from your country; the mob cannot judge what is right. Therefore you should think little of their praise, and despise their blame. Cultivate the

friendship of kindred spirits, but regard the rest of mankind as a worthless mass. Always be at war with 'the beans' (he means the democrats). 'Odi profanum vulgus et arceo!'"

"You ought to live at home in Rome, Flaccus, where...."

"Yes, what are you doing now in Rome?"

"Caesar is Caesar; he conquers the world, and unites all the highest functions, even the priestly, in his own person. I have nothing against it, but they say he is aiming at his own deification."

"Why not? All gods have first been heroes, and many gods have not been so great as Caesar. Romulus was certainly no giant, though he had the luck to come first, as someone must. Now he is a god, has a temple, and they sacrifice to him."

"It is probably a lie, like everything else."

"Probably."

"Yes, I have heard another legend of the founding of Rome by Aeneas' son Ascanius, who fled from Troy; and I intend to take it as the starting-point of my great poem...."

"You mean the *Aeneid*, of which I have heard mention."

"Yes, the *Aeneid*."

"Is it difficult to write poetry?"

"No; one follows good patterns. Hitherto Theocritus has been mine, but now I shall go to Father Homer himself."

"By Heracles! Now there you will be undisturbed—so long, that is, as Maecenas sends you the sesterces regularly."

"Yes, he does! But how do you get along?"

"My father, a freedman, toils as quaestor, and will find me a place."

"Have you no interests, no passions, no ambitions?"

"No; what should I do with them? 'Nihil admirari.' That is my motto. If there are gods who guide the destinies of men and nations, why should I interfere and wear myself out in a useless struggle? Think of Demosthenes, who for thirty years delivered speeches against the Macedonian, and warned his countrymen, who would not listen to him! The gods were with the Macedonian, and condemned Hellas to be overthrown. Demosthenes was imprisoned. Comically enough, he was accused of having been bribed by the same

Macedonian. That was, of course, a lie. This patriot who sacrificed himself for the salvation of his fatherland, who believed he was fighting on the gods' side, had to take poison, and fell, fighting against the gods! Vestigia terrent!"

During their conversation, the sun had gone down, and now in the twilight beacons were visible flaming on Aegina, on Salamis, by Phaleros, in the Piraeus, and finally on the Acropolis. The murmurs from the city became louder till they rose to one immense paean of joy. Men came down the streets, and brought their wives and children with them, some on foot, others riding and driving. The worthy innkeeper Agathon was aroused, and went out into the highway to learn the cause of the confusion. The two students had gone on the inn roof to look out. But they surmised danger for foreigners like themselves, and, alarmed by the ever louder shouting, descended again, and concealed themselves in the wine-press. At last Agathon's voice was heard: "Caesar is assassinated! Death to the Romans! Freedom for Hellas!"

Such was the news. The garden of the inn filled with people, wine flowed, and shouts of joy resounded, varied by sarcastic remarks on the passing Romans who were fleeing northwards from the town in order to reach the Macedonian frontier.

Maro and Flaccus underwent great anxiety, hidden as they were in the vat of the wine-press, from which hiding-place they heard the whole news, with its accompanying details. Caesar had been assassinated by Cassius and Brutus in the Capitol.

"Brutus?" whispered Maro. "Then it is certainly over with the Caesars, just as the old Brutus made an end of the Kings!"

And Brutus was flying to Hellas to rouse the Greeks against the Romans. "Long live Brutus!" they cried in the garden.

"Then we shall live also!" said the pliant Flaccus. "Caesar is dead; let us do homage to Brutus for the present."

Many years had passed when the former student of Athens, Quintus Horatius Flaccus, was walking one day in the garden of his villa on the Sabine Hills. This villa he had received as a gift from his friend Maecenas, who possessed a splendid country-house close by in Tibur itself.

Horace was now a very famous poet, but still essentially the same as he had been when a student in Athens. Destiny or the gods had played with him, but the poet had taken it as a good joke on the part of the Higher Powers, and answered it with a satire. After the murder of Caesar, Brutus had fled to Greece, and been so well received there, that the Athenians had erected a statue to him, and raised troops for him against Antonius and the other generals, among whom was the invalid Octavianus (afterwards Augustus).

Horace was compelled to serve as a soldier, and actually commanded a legion at Philippi, where Brutus fell. The poet, who was no warrior, fled from the superior force of the enemy, and came to Rome, where, after the amnesty had been proclaimed, he became a clerk in a public office. At the same time he had begun to write verses, was discovered by Maecenas, and received his reward in the form of an estate.

The Emperor Augustus admired him, and offered him a position as secretary, but Horace refused, partly because he could never see anything else but an usurper in this Emperor, partly because he loved freedom and independence above all things.

Just now he was walking in his garden, whose fruit-trees he had himself cultivated. He plucked roses and hyacinths, for he awaited the visit of a favourite guest, his old friend and fellow-student of Athens, Publius Virgilius Maro, as well known as Horace himself, although he had not yet allowed his *Aeneid* to appear in manuscript.

A table was laid in a vine-arbour; flagons of old Massisian and Falernian lay already on ice, oysters and eels were there; a kid and some quails were roasting on the spit in the kitchen; fruit had been plucked in the garden; and the only thing wanting on the table, which had been laid for two persons, were flowers.

A little slave, who was able to write, ran to and fro between the garden-gate and the dove-tower, in order to look out for the expected guest. The poet was standing at the water-barrel and washing his hands, after he had finished plucking flowers, when someone clapped him on the shoulder.

“Virgil! Which way have you come, then?”

“Over the hills of Tibur from Maecenas.”

“Welcome, wanderer, whichever way you have come! Sit down—you must be tired—in my hemicyklion, under the olives I planted myself, while the spits turn, and they ply the chopping-knife. Here you see my plot of land which represents the world to me.”

Their first greetings and questions were over, and the two friends sat down to the table. The host was certainly an Epicurean or votary of pleasure; but in order to be able to enjoy, one must be moderate, and the meal, judging by Roman customs, was quite a frugal one, but simple and brilliant. Then the cups were passed round, and the wine awoke memories in spite of its supposed lethal capacity of quenching them.

“Well, you were in the war, friend?” began Virgil.

“Yes, and I fled disgracefully, as you know.”

“I have read so in one of your poems, but it is said not to be true, and you have slandered yourself.”

“Have I? Perhaps! One talks nonsense when one writes.”

“You poet, do you remember how you asked me in Athens whether it were difficult? How did you come to write?”

“I needed money!”

“Now you slander yourself again! If all clients who needed money could write, the world would be full of poets.”

“Well, perhaps it was not so. But speak of yourself—of your *Aeneid*.”

Virgil looked gloomy: “Of that I will not speak.”

“Is it finished?”

“More than that! It is done with!”

“Done with?”

“Yes! When I read it, I found it a failure! It was not Homer; it was nothing. It was a punishment, because I wished to outshine my father.”

“Have you destroyed it?”

“Not yet; but it is sealed up, in order to be destroyed after my death.”

“Now *you* are slandering yourself, and you are depressed, Maro, not by years, not by work, but by something else.”

“Yes, by something else. The future disturbs me!”

Horace shook his cup and recited: [Footnote: Hor. Od. I. ii.] “Do not go to the astrologers, Leuconoe. Better bear life as it comes. Be wise, clear your wine! While we speak, envious life is flying. Enjoy the present, and think as little as possible about the future.”

“That I cannot!” broke in Virgil. “I cannot drown myself in my cups, when I see my fatherland perishing.”

“Has Rome ever been so powerful as it is now? Do we not possess the whole known world—Egypt, Syria, Greece, Italy, Spain, Germany, Gaul, Britain? And yet we live in a time of peace: the Temple of Janus is closed; the earth rejoices; the arts flourish; and commerce was never so active as at present.”

“Yes, the peace that precedes a war. For all these conquered nations are awake, and have an eye on Rome. Not on Greece as before, for Greece is barren and laid waste, and passes into the great silence. Do you know that Sulla and Mithridates have gone slaying and pillaging over Hellas, so that science and art have fled to the Egyptian Alexandria or the growing Byzantium? Do you know that pirates, whose origin is unknown, from the East, have recently plundered every temple in Hellas, so that hardly any religious service can be held there? The oracles are dumb, the poets are silent like song-birds in a storm, the great tragedies are no longer performed; people rather go to see farces and gladiatorial shows. Hellas is a ruin, and Rome will soon be one.”

“Times are bad, I grant, but every time has been one of decay, and has, however, prepared the way for a new epoch. The fallen leaves of autumn form a forcing-bed for the coming spring; Nature, life, and history ever renew themselves through death. Therefore death is to me only a renewal, a change, and whenever I meet a funeral, I always say to myself, ‘O how pleasant it is to live!’”

“My dear Flaccus, you live with your dreams in the Golden Age, while we others only drag ourselves through this life of the Iron Age. Do you remember how Hesiod complains already of his own time?”

“No, I have forgotten that, but in order to oblige you I will listen.”

“‘The people of to-day are an iron race, and never rest from the burden of work, neither by day nor by night. They are a sinful folk, and the gods send them heavy troubles. But even when they send joy, this turns to their misfortune. Some day Zeus will destroy them,

these many-tongued people, when they are born with grey locks on their temples. Yes, our children are born old men already, toothless, wrinkled and with bald heads. The father is not gracious to the child, nor the child to the father, nor the guest to his host, nor servant to fellow-servant, nor brother to brother. Children dishonour their old parents, revile them and speak unfriendly words—these young scoundrels who know nothing of divine vengeance, and never thank their ageing parents for their fostering care of them as children. Might is right, and one city destroys another. Honesty and faithfulness in keeping vows are never rewarded, as little as kindness or justice. Oh no, they who practise sin and break the law, demand honour. Scoundrels betray noble men, and commit perjury without scruple. Envy follows men, these unhappy ones with their harsh voices and dreadful faces, who rejoice over the evil and the mischief which they do.'"

"Yes, so Hesiod spoke a thousand years ago, and I must confess his words are well deserved, but what can one do?"

"Yes, they are. Cicero was murdered, and I feel inclined to follow the example of Cato, who died in order to escape sin. I sink, Flaccus, in lies and hypocrisy. But I will not sink ... I will mount. I have praised Augustus and his son Marcellus in my verses, but I believe no more in them, for they are not the future. Therefore the *Aeneid* shall be burnt!"

"You disquiet me, Maro. But what do you believe in?"

"I believe in the Sibyl, who has prophesied that the Iron Age will end, and the Golden Age return."

"You have sung of that in the Fourth Eclogue, I remember.... Have you fever?"

"I believe I have. Do you remember—no! our fathers remember when the Capitol was burnt, and the Sibylline books destroyed. But now new books have come from Alexandria, and in them they have read that a new era will begin; that Rome will be destroyed but built up again, and that a Golden Age...."

Here the seer was silent. Then he continued: "Pardon me, Flaccus, but I am poorly, and must ride home before the mists rise from the Campagna."

"Eheu fugaces, Postume, Postume! Labuntur anni! I will follow you, friend, on my ass, for you are sick. But 'the man of righteous heart and rock-like purpose will not be shaken nor terrified by the blind zeal of the citizens commanding evil, nor the glance of the threatening tyrant.... If the walls of the world fall in, they will bury him unterrified beneath their ruin.'"

Some days later Virgil died in Naples. His will was opened, and actually found to contain a request that his *Aeneid* should be burnt. But it was not carried out. Posterity has passed various judgments on this ignoring of a dead man's wish—some think it was a pity; others that it was a good thing.

When Christianity arrived, Virgil was enrolled among the prophets. The *Aeneid* was regarded as a Sibylline book and included in the liturgy. Pilgrimages were made to the poet's tomb. And later on he was raised to the rank of a saint by Dante.

LEONTOPOLIS

A caravan was encamped on a height eastward of the ancient Egyptian town Heliopolis. There were many people in it, but all were Hebrews. They had come on camels and asses from Palestine through the desert—the same desert which the Israelites had passed through thousands of years before.

In the evening twilight, by the faint light of the half-moon, hundreds of camp-fires were to be seen, and by them sat the women with their little children while the men carried water.

Never yet had the desert beheld so many little children, and, as they were now being put to bed for the night, the camp echoed with their cries. It was like an enormous nursery. But when the washing was over, and the little ones were laid to their mothers' breasts, the cries one after the other ceased, and there was complete silence. Under a sycamore tree sat a woman, and suckled her child; close by stood a Hebrew, feeding his ass with branches of the broom plant; when he had done that, he went higher up the hill, and looked towards the north. A foreigner—a Roman, to judge by his dress—passed, and regarded the woman with the child closely, as though he were counting them.

The Hebrew showed signs of uneasiness, and began a conversation with the Roman, in order to divert his attention from the woman.

"Say, traveller, is that the City of the Sun there in the west?"

"You see it!" answered the Roman.

"Then it is Bethshemesh."

"Heliopolis, from which both Greeks and Romans have derived their wisdom; Plato himself has been here."

"Can Leontopolis also be seen from here?"

"You see the pinnacles of its temple two miles northward."

"But that is the land of Goshen, which our father Abraham visited, and which Jacob had portioned out to him," said the Hebrew, turning to his wife, who only answered with an inclination of her head. Then, speaking to the Roman, he continued, "Israel wandered

from Egypt to Canaan. But after the Babylonish captivity a part of them returned and settled down here. You know that."

"Yes, I know that. And now the Israelites here have increased till they number many thousand souls, and have built a temple for themselves, which you see standing in the distance. Did you know that?"

"Yes, something about it. So that, then, is Roman territory?"

"Yes. Everything is Roman now—Syria, Canaan, Greece, Egypt—Germany, Gaul, Britain; the world belongs to Rome, according to the prophecy of the Cumaean Sibyl."

"Good! But the world is to be redeemed through Israel, according to God's promise to our father Abraham."

"I have heard that fable also, but for the present Rome has the fulfilment of the promise. Do you come from Jerusalem?"

"I come through the desert like the others, and I bring wife and child with me."

"Child—yes! Why do you Hebrews carry so many children with you?"

The Hebrew was silent, but since he perceived that the Roman knew the reason, and since the latter looked like a benevolent man, he resolved to tell the truth.

"Herod the King heard from the Wise Men of the East the prophecy that a King of the Jews would be born in Bethlehem in the land of Judaea. In order to escape the supposed danger, Herod had all the children recently born in that district put to death. Just as Pharaoh once had our first-born put to death here. But Moses was saved, in order to free our people from the Egyptian bondage."

"Well! but who was this King of the Jews to be?"

"The promised Messiah."

"Do you believe that he is born?"

"I cannot tell."

"I can," said the Roman. "He is born; he will rule the world, and bring all people under his sceptre."

"And who will that be?"

"The Emperor, Augustus."

“Is he of Abraham’s seed or of David’s house? No. And has he come with peace, as Isaiah prophesied, ‘His kingdom shall be great, and of peace there shall be no end’? The Emperor is certainly not a man of peace.”

“Farewell, Israelite. Now you are a Roman subject. Be content with the redemption through Rome. We know not of any other.”

The Roman departed.

The Hebrew approached his wife. “Mary!” he said.

“Joseph!” she answered. “Hush! The child sleeps.”

THE LAMB

Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch, had come to Jerusalem, because there was much unrest among the populace. He had taken up his dwelling with Pilate, the Governor. Since on the preceding evening he had witnessed a gladiatorial show in the circus and then taken part in an orgy, he slept late into the morning—so late that his host, who was waiting for his guest, had gone upon the roof.

There lay the Holy City, with Mount Moriah and the Temple, Zion and David's House. To the north-west and west there stretched the Valley of Sharon to the Mediterranean Sea, which in the clear air appeared like a blue streak at a distance of five miles.

In the east there rose the Mount of Olives, with its gardens and vineyards, olives, figs and terebinths, below ran the brook Kedron whose banks were decked in their spring apparel of flourishing laurels, tamarisks, and willows.

The Governor was restless, and often paused to stand by the parapet of the roof in order to look down into the forecourt of the Temple. Here numbers of people moved about busily, forming themselves into knots which dissolved and then formed larger groups.

At last the Tetrarch appeared. He had overslept himself, and his eyes were blood-shot. He gave the Governor a brief greeting, and settled himself as though for a conversation. But he found it hard to bring out a word; his head hung down, and he did not know how to begin, for the orgies of the preceding night had made him forget what he had come for.

Pilate came to his help: "Speak, Herod; your heart is full, and your mind uneasy."

"What do you say, my brother?"

"We were speaking yesterday of the strange man who stirs up the people."

"Quite right! I had John beheaded. Is it he who is going about?"

"No, it is another one now."

"Are there two of them?"

"Yes, this is another one."

"But they have the same history—a prophecy which foretold their birth, and the fable of a supernatural origin, just like the Perseus of mythology, and the philosopher Plato in history. Is it a confusion of persons?"

"No, not at all."

"What is his name? Josua, Jesse…?"

"His name is Jesus, and he is said to have passed his childhood in the Egyptian towns Heliopolis and Leontopolis."

"Then he must be a magician or wizard; can he not come and divert me?"

"It is difficult to find him, for he is now in one place, now in another. But we will question the High Priest; I have had him called, and he waits below."

"Why is there this commotion in the court of the Temple?"

"They are going to erect the Emperor's statue in the Holy of Holies."

"Quite right! Our gracious Emperor Tiberius lives like a madman on Capri, and is pummelled by his nephew Caligula, if the offspring of incest can be called a nephew. And now he is to become a god. Ha! Ha!"

"Antiochus Epiphanes had the statue of Zeus set up in the Holy of Holies. He, however, *was* a god. But to set up this beast, Tiberius, means a tumult."

"What are we to do? Call the Priest here."

Pilate went and fetched the High Priest Caiaphas.

Herod closed his eyes, and folded his hands over his breast. He regarded all matters of business as an interruption to his pleasures, and generally liked to cut them short. When Pilate returned with Caiaphas, the Tetrarch awoke from his doze, and did not know where he was, or what they were talking about. Pilate stepped forward, aroused him to consciousness, and directed his attention to the matter in hand.

"There is a tumult in the Temple," was his first observation, for that disturbed his sleep. "Ah! the Priest is here. What is the meaning of the uproar below?"

“It is the Galilaean, who has taken to using force, and has driven the money-changers out of the Temple.”

Herod’s curiosity was aroused: “I should like to see him.”

“He has already gone.”

“Tell us, High Priest, who is this man? Is he the Messiah?”

“That is incredible. The son of a poor carpenter, who is weak in the head!”

“Is he a prophet?”

“He stirs up the people, he breaks the law, he is a glutton and wine-bibber, and he blasphemes God. Yes, he says that he himself is God, the Son of the Highest.”

“Have you witnesses to this?”

“Yes, but they contradict each other.”

“Then procure better witnesses, who will agree. But now, Priest, we must talk of something else. You know that the Senate have decreed the apotheosis of the Emperor, and that his image is to be set up in the Temple. What do you think about it?”

“We live by the favour of the Emperor. But if this abomination is done, we will all die as the Maccabees did.”

“Then die!”

Caiaphas considered a moment before he answered. “I will summon the Sanhedrim, and tell them what the Emperor wishes.”

“Yes, do that. And before the Passover you must bring the Galilaean before me, for I wish to see him.”

“I will.”

“Then go in peace.”

Caiaphas retired.

“They are a hard people, these Israelites,” said Pilate, for want of something better to say. “I am also of Israel,” answered Herod somewhat curtly, “for I am an Edomite, of Esau’s race, and my mother was a Samaritan, belonging to the despised people.”

Pilate saw that he had made a slip, and therefore struck the ground three times with his official staff. A large trap-door opened, and a table came up covered with all kinds of delicacies according to Roman taste.

Herod’s countenance cleared.

In the Court of the Priests stood Caiaphas and Annas, and spoke with each other.

"Since we cannot avert the abomination," said Caiaphas, "and the Emperor's image is to be erected in the Holy of Holies, and the people will be destroyed if there is an insurrection, it is better for us to bring an offering to the Lord, and that one man die for the people."

"You are right. An extraordinary atoning sacrifice is necessary, and as the Passover is approaching, let us sacrifice the Galilaean."

"Good! But the offering should be pure. Is the Galilaean pure?"

"Pure as a lamb."

"May he then take Israel's sins upon him, that we may be set free through his blood. Who brings him into our hands?"

"One of his disciples, who stands outside."

"Fetch him in."

John, later known as the "Evangelist," was brought in, and Caiaphas began to examine him.

"What do you say concerning your teacher? Has he transgressed the law of Moses?"

"He has fulfilled the law."

"But what new commandment has he introduced into our holy law?"

"Love one another."

"Did he say he was the King of the Jews?"

"The Master said, 'My kingdom is not of this world.'"

"Has he not made children rebel against their parents?"

"The Master said, 'He who loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.'"

"Did he not say that one has a right to neglect one's duties as a citizen?"

"The Master said, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.'"

"Did he tell labourers to leave their work?"

"The Master said, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden.'"

“Did he say that he would conquer the world?”

“The Master said, ‘In the world ye have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.’”

Caiaphas was weary: “According to all that I have heard and perceived, this man has not answered a single question.”

“The Master answers in spirit and in truth, but you ask according to the flesh and the letter. We are not the children of one spirit.”

“I don’t understand.”

“He has sent me to preach good tidings to the poor, to heal the broken in heart, to preach deliverance to the captives, to give sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.”

“What you speak in foolishness, young man, can neither bring credit to you nor to your teacher.”

“Woe unto you when men praise you, and he who departeth from evil maketh himself a prey.”

Caiaphas turned to Annas: “This is not the man who will deliver the Galilaean up to us.”

“They have sent another one—Listen! Is your name Iscariot?”

“No; my name is John.”

“Then go in peace, but send us Iscariot instead. But wait! Give us in two words the teaching of your Master regarding the meaning of life.”

“Death is a gain for the righteous,” answered John without stopping to think.

“Is life not itself…?”

“Through death ye shall enter into life.”

“We have heard enough. Go.”

But Caiaphas repeated to himself, as though he thought he would understand those words in his own mouth better: “Death is a gain for the righteous.”

Now there arose a clamour from the market-place and the hall of justice. Annas and Caiaphas went out upon the battlemented walls to find out the cause. Levites were standing there, and looking down.

“Has he been taken?”

“He has already been seized as an inciter to insurrection, because he bade his disciples to sell their garments and buy a sword.”

“Have they found them with weapons?”

“They have found two swords.”

“Then he is already condemned.”

Then they heard a cry rise from the crowd before the Court of Justice—at first difficult to distinguish, but ever clearer. The people were crying “Crucify! Crucify!”

“Is that not too severe, regarded as a punishment?” said Caiaphas.

“No,” answered the Levite; “one of his disciples called Simon or Peter drew his sword and wounded one of the servants called Malchus.”

“Do we need any more witnesses?”

“But the Teacher said, ‘Put up thy sword into its sheath, for they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword.’”

“That is a difficult saying,” said Annas, and went down. But the people continued to cry, “Crucify! Crucify!”

THE WILD BEAST

Before the temple of Jupiter Latiaris in Rome, two men of the middle classes met each other. They both remained standing in order to contemplate the new temple, which was different from all others, and looked as if it had felt the effects of an earthquake. The basement had the shape of a roof; the columns stood reversed with their capitals below, and the roof was constructed like a basement with cellar-windows.

"So we meet here again, Hebrew," said one of the two, who resembled a Roman merchant. "Was it not in Joppa that we last met?"

"Yes," answered the Hebrew. "One meets the Roman everywhere; he is at home everywhere; one also meets the Hebrew everywhere, but he is at home nowhere. But tell me, whose temple is this?"

"This is the Temple of the Wild Beast, the Emperor Caligula, the madman, the murderer, the incestuous. He has erected it to himself; his image stands within; and the madman comes every day to worship himself."

So saying, the Roman made a sign on his forehead, moving the forefinger of his right hand first from above, below, and then from left to right.

The Hebrew looked at him in astonishment.

"Are you not a Roman?"

"Yes, I am a Roman Christian."

"Where do you live?"

"Here under Rome, in the catacombs."

He pointed to a hole in the ground, which resembled those that led down to the cloacae.

"Do you live here under the ground?"

"Yes, that is where we Christians live; there we lie like seed in the earth, and germinate."

"Those are grave-vaults down there."

"Yes, we are buried with Christ, and await the resurrection."

"Have you a temple down there?"

"We have our religious service there, and to-day we celebrate the birth of Christ."

"Someone is coming down the street," said the Hebrew. The Roman opened the trap-door in the ground in order to descend. From below the sounds of a choral hymn were heard. "The City hath no need of the moon, neither of the sun, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

"Who is the Lamb?" asked the Hebrew.

"Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the World."

"Do you think the world is redeemed, while this mad Caligula...."

"The world will be redeemed, if we continue to hope."

"You have, then, taken the promise away from Israel?"

"No, we have inherited the promise, for Christ was of the stock of Israel."

"Someone is coming."

"Then farewell. We shall always meet, for the earth is ours."

In the temple, which people called "the world turned upside down," a man slunk along the walls in a state of panic, as though he were afraid to display his back. He had the face of a youth without any hair round it. His upper lip was drawn upwards on the left side, and showed a long canine tooth, while at the same time his right eye shot a sharp glance like a poisonous arrow.

He glided along the wall to the apse, where an image was erected. It was a likeness of the timid man himself, representing him exactly even to his clothes.

"Is the priest there?" the mad Emperor whispered, for it was he.

No answer followed.

"Priest, dear priest, I am so frightened. Are you not coming?"

A sacrificial priest came forward, fell on his knee before the Emperor, and worshipped him.

"Jupiter, Optimus, Maximus, Latiaris, frighten away thy foes."

"Have I foes, then? Yes, and that is what frightens me. Do you believe that I am God?"

"Thou art."

"Let us then have thunder, to frighten my foes."

The priest beat upon a kettledrum, and the echoes rolled through the temple.

The Emperor laughed, so that all his teeth were visible.

"Priest!" he cried as he seated himself on his throne, "now you shall sacrifice to me."

The priest kindled a fire on the little altar before the madman.

The Emperor said, "The scent is good. Now I am the mightiest in heaven and on earth. I rule over living and dead; I cast into Tartarus and lift into Elysium. How mighty I am! I tame the waves of the sea, and command the storm to cease: I hold sway over the planets in their courses; I myself have created chaos, and the human race lie at my feet, from the primeval forests of Britain to the sources of the Nile, which I alone have discovered. I have made my favourite horse consul, and the people have acknowledged his consulship. Priest! Worship me! Or do you forget who I am? No, I am I, and I shall always worship myself in my own image. Caius Caesar Caligula, I honour thee, Lord of the world, how I honour myself! Jupiter Latiaris Caligula!"

He fell before the image on his knee.

"Some one is coming," said the priest warningly.

"Kill him."

"It is the tribune, Cassius Chaeraea!"

"Frighten him away."

"Chaeraea does not let himself be frightened."

The tribune came in fearlessly and without ceremony.

"Caius Caesar, your wife is dead."

"All the better," answered the Emperor.

"They have dashed your only child against a wall."

"Ah, how pleasant!" laughed the madman.

"And now you are to die."

"No, I cannot. I am immortal."

"I wait for you outside. It shall not take place here."

"Creep away, ant! My foot is too great to reach thy littleness."

Then a sound of singing rose from the basement of the temple, or from the earth; they were children's voices.

The Emperor was again alarmed, and crept under his chair.

Chaeraea, who had waited at the door, lost patience.

“Dog! are you coming? Or shall I strike you dead here?”

“Chaeraea,” whimpered the Emperor, “do not kill me! I will kiss your foot.”

“Then kiss it now when I trample you to death.”

The gigantic tribune threw the chair to one side, leapt on the madman and crushed his windpipe beneath his heel; the tongue, protruded from his jaws, seemed to be spitting abuse even in death.

The Wild Beast had three heads; the name of the second was Claudius. He played dice with his friend Caius Silius, who was famous for his wealth and his beauty.

“Follow the game,” hissed Caesar.

“I am following it,” answered his friend.

“No, you are absent-minded. Where were you last night?”

“I was in the Suburra.”

“You should not go to the Suburra; you should stay with me.”

“Follow the game.”

“I am following it; but what are the stakes we are playing for?”

“You are playing for your life.”

“And you, Caesar?”

“I am also playing for your life.”

“And if you lose?” asked Silius.

“Then you will lose your life.”

The Emperor knocked with the dice-box on the table. His secretary Narcissus came in.

“Give me writing materials, Narcissus. The antidote for snake-bites is yew-tree resin....”

“And the antidote to hemlock?”

“Against that there is no antidote.”

“Follow the game, or I shall be angry.”

“No, you cannot be angry!” answered Silius.

“Yes, that is true,—I cannot! I only said so!”

Messalina, the Emperor’s wife, had entered.

"Why is Silius sitting here and playing," she asked, "when he should accompany me to the theatre?"

"He is compelled," answered the Emperor.

"Wretch! what rights have you over him?"

"He is my slave; all are slaves of the Lord of the world. Therefore Rome is the most democratic of all States, for all its citizens are equal—equal before Men and God."

"He is your slave, but he is my husband," said Messalina.

"Your husband! Why, you are married to me."

"What does that matter?"

"Do you go and marry without asking my permission?"

"Yes, why not?"

"You are certainly droll, Messalina! And I pardon you. Go, my children, and amuse yourselves. Narcissus will play with me."

When the Emperor was left alone with Narcissus, his expression changed.

"Follow them, Narcissus!" he hissed. "Take Locusta with you, and give them the poison. Then I shall marry Agrippina."

But when Silius and the Empress had gone without, Silius asked innocently: "Have you yourself prepared the mushrooms which he will eat this evening?"

"I have not done it myself, but Locusta has, and she understands her business."

The name of the third head of the Wild Beast was Nero. He was Agrippina's worthy son, had poisoned his half-brother Britannicus, murdered his mother, kicked his wife to death, and committed unnatural crime. He falsified the coinage and plundered the temples. He made an artistic tour to Greece, where he first appeared as a public singer and brought eight hundred wreaths home, then as a charioteer, in which capacity he upset everything, but received the prize because nobody dared to refuse it to him.

To such a depth had Rome and Greece sunk. Claudius was an angel compared to this monster; but he also received apotheosis.

To-day the Emperor had returned home from his artistic tour, and found his capital in flames. Since, in his fits of intoxication, he had so often raged against his old-fashioned Rome, with its narrow

streets, and had on various occasions expressed the wish that fire might break out at all its corners, he came under the suspicion of having set it in flames.

He sat in his palace on the Esquiline in a great columned hall, and feasted his eyes on the magnificent conflagration. It was a marble hall with only a few articles of furniture, because the Emperor feared they might afford lurking-places for murderers. But in the background of the hall was a strong gilded iron grating, behind which could be caught a glimpse of two yellow-brown lions from Libya. These the Emperor called his “cats.”

At the door of the grating stood two slaves, Pallas and Alexander, and watched every change in the Emperor’s face.

“He smiles,” whispered Pallas; “then it is all over with us. Brother, we shall meet again. Pray for me and give me the kiss of peace.”

“The Lord shall deliver thee from all evil, and preserve thee for His heavenly kingdom. This mortal must put on immortality, and this corruptible, incorruption.”

The red face of the Emperor, red with wine and the light of the conflagration, began to assume a look of attention, and it could be seen from his eyes and ears that he was listening. Did he hear perhaps how the masses of people whispered their suspicions of the “incendiary”?

“Pallas!” he roared, “Rome is burning!”

The slave remained speechless from fright.

“Pallas! Are you deaf?”

No answer.

“Pallas! Are you dumb? They say down there that I have fired the town, but I have not. Run out in the streets and spread about the report that the Christians have done it.”

“No, I will not!” answered the slave.

Nero believed that his ears had deceived him.

“Do you not know,” he said, “that the Christians are magicians, and live like rats in the catacombs, and that all Rome is undermined by them? I have thought of making the Tiber flow in to drown them, or of opening the walls of the cloacas and submerging the catacombs in filth. Their Sibylline books have prophesied the fall of Rome,

though they use the name 'Babylon.' See, now the Capitol takes fire. Pallas, run out, and say the Christians have done it."

"That I will not do," answered Pallas loud and clearly, "because it is not true."

"This time my ears have not deceived me," roared the Emperor rising. "You will not go into the town; then go in through the grating-door and play with my lions."

He opened the door, and pushed Pallas into the fore-court of the lions.

"Alexander!" said Pallas, "I have prayed you to be firm and courageous!"

"I know that my Redeemer lives, and that at the latter day He shall raise me from the earth."

"What is that you are saying?" said the Emperor, and pulled a cord, which opened the second door to the lions.

"Alexander, go out into the town, and spread the report that the Christians have set Rome on fire."

"No," answered Alexander, "for I am a Christian."

"What is a Christian?"

"God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

"Will you not perish? Have I not the power to destroy you?"

"You have no power over me, except it be given from above."

"He does not fear death. Lentulus! bring fire here; I will set fire to your clothes, that we may see if you can burn, I will set your hair, your beard, your nails on fire; but we will first soak you in oil and naphtha, in pitch and sulphur. Then we will see whether you have an everlasting life. Lentulus!"

Lentulus rushed in: "Emperor! The city is in an uproar! Fly!"

"Must I fly? First bring fire!"

"Spain has revolted, and chosen Galba as Emperor."

"Galba! Eheu! fugaces, Postume ... Galba! Well, then, let us fly, but whither?"

"Through the catacombs, sire."

"No! the Christians live there, and they will kill me."

“They kill no one,” said Alexander.

“Not even their enemies?”

“They pray for their enemies.”

“Then they are mad! All the better!”

The Christians were assembled in one of the crypts of the catacombs. “The Capitol is burning; that is the heathen’s Zion,” said Alexander.

“The Lord of Hosts avenges his destroyed Jerusalem.”

“Say not ‘avenges,’ say ‘punishes.’”

“Someone is coming down the passage.”

“Is it a brother?”

“No, he makes no obeisance before the cross.”

“Then it is an executioner.”

The Emperor appeared in rags, dirty, with a handkerchief tied round his forehead. As he approached the Christians, whom in their white cloaks he took for Greeks, he became quiet and resolved to bargain with them.

“Are you Greeks?”

“Here is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but all are brothers in Christ! Welcome, brother!”

“It is the Wild Beast,” said Alexander.

The Emperor now recognised his escaped slave, and in his terror fell on his knees.

“Kill me not! I am a poor stone-cutter, who has lost his way. Show me the way out, whether right or left.”

“Do you know me?” asked Alexander.

“Alexander!” answered the Emperor.

“He whom you wished to burn. It is I!”

“Mercy! Kill me not!”

“Stand up, Caesar! Thy life is in God’s hand.”

“Do I find mercy?”

“You shall have a guide.”

“Say whether right or left; then I can help myself.”

“Keep to the left.”

“And if you lie.”

"I cannot lie! Do you see, that is the difference."

"Why do you not lie? I should have done so."

"Keep to the left."

The Emperor believed him, and went. But after going some steps, he stood still and turned round.

"Out upon you, slaves! Now I shall help myself."

It was a terribly stormy night, when Nero, accompanied by the boy Sporus, and a few slaves, reached the estate of his freedman Phaon. Phaon did not dare to receive him, but advised him to hide in a clay-pit. But the Emperor did not wish to creep into the earth, but sprang into a pond, when he heard the pursuers approaching, and remained standing in the water. From this place he heard those who were going by seeking him, say that he was condemned to be flogged to death. Then, after some hesitation, he thrust a dagger into his breast.

His nurse Acte, who had also been his paramour, buried him in a garden on Monte Pincio. The Romans loved him after his death, and brought flowers to his grave. But the Christians saw in him the Wild Beast and the Antichrist of the Apocalypse.

THE APOSTATE

At a date rather more than three hundred years after the Birth of Christ, the stage of the world's history had shifted from the Mediterranean to the East. Greece was sunk in everlasting sleep, Rome lay in ruins and had become a tributary state. Jerusalem was destroyed, Alexandria at the mouth of the Nile in a state of decay. The world's metropolis lay on the Black Sea, and was a half-oriental colony called Byzantium, or, after Constantine the Great, Constantinople. The heathen world was a waste, and Christianity had become the State religion. But the spirit of Christianity had not penetrated the empire. Doctrine indeed there was—plenty of doctrine—but those at court lived worse lives than the heathen, and the way to the throne in Byzantium was generally through a murder.

But while the centre of gravity in Europe had shifted to the East, new conquests had been made in the West and in the North. The Romans had founded fifty cities on the Rhine, and, since Julius

Caesar's time, all Gaul lay under Roman ploughs and worshipped Roman gods in Roman temples.

But now that Christianity was to be introduced into Gaul, it encountered great difficulties. The original religion of the country, Druidism, had been proscribed by the Emperor Claudius, and the Roman cult of the gods substituted. And now that a second alteration of their religion was proposed, the Gauls strongly resented it. Accordingly Gaul was in a state of disorganisation, which was likely to result in some new growth.

But under the rule of Constantius, new danger from another side threatened the newly-formed provinces of Gaul. The German races, the Franks and the Alemanni, were attracted by the charm of the fertile land, where the mountains seemed to drop with wine, and the plains were covered with yellow corn. In order to protect the best of his provinces, and perhaps for other reasons, the Emperor sent his cousin and brother-in-law, Julian, to subdue the Germans. Although Julian had been educated in a convent and at a university, he seems to have understood the art of war, for he defeated the invaders and then retired to Lutetia Parisiorum.

The legions had marched up the Mons Martis or Martyrorum, as it was called by turns. At their head went the insignificant-looking man with his beard trimmed like a philosopher's—Julian, surnamed Caesar, but not therefore Emperor. High on the summit of the hill stood a temple of Mars, but it was closed. When the army had encamped, Julian went alone to the edge of the hill, in order to view the town Lutetia, which he had never seen.

On the island between the two arms of the Seine lay the main part of the town with the temple of Jupiter; but the Imperial Palace and the Amphitheatre stood on the slope of Mount Parnassus, on the left bank of the river. For three hundred years from the time of Julius Caesar, the Emperors had stayed here at intervals. The two last occupants had been Constantine the Great and Constantius.

After thoughtfully contemplating for a while the valley with the river flowing through it, Julian exclaimed, "Urbs! Why, it is Rome! A river, a valley, and hills, seven or more, just as at Rome. Don't you see, we stand on the Capitoline? On the opposite side we have Janiculum represented by Mount Parnassus, and in the north Mons Valerian forms our Vatican. And the city on the island! The island

resembles a ship, just like the island in the Tiber, on which they have erected an obelisk as a mast, so striking was the similarity. Caesar indeed was too original to have wished to copy. They call Byzantium New Rome, but Rome is like a worm; when cut in two, a living creature is formed from each piece. What do you say, Maximus?"

"Rome was the city of the seven hills and the seven kings; how many there will be here, none can say."

"It had never occurred to me," answered Julian, "that Rome had had just as many kings as hills—a curious coincidence!"

Maximus the Mystic, who, together with the Sophist Priscus, always accompanied the Emperor, in order to give him opportunities for philosophising, immediately objected: "There are no 'coincidences,' Caesar, everything is reckoned and numbered; everything is created with a conscious purpose, and in harmonious correspondence—the firmament of heaven and the circle of the earth."

"You have learnt that in Egypt," Priscus interrupted, "for the Egyptians see the river Nile in the constellation Eridanus. I should like to know under which constellation this Lutetia lies!"

"It lies under Andromeda, like Rome," answered Maximus, "but Perseus hangs over the Holy Land, so that Algol stands over Jerusalem."

"Why do you call that cursed land 'holy'?" broke in Julian, who could not control his generally quiet temper as soon as any subject was mentioned connected with Christianity, which he hated.

"I call the land 'holy' because the Redeemer of the world was born there. And you know that He was born without a father, like Perseus; you know also that Perseus delivered Andromeda, as Jesus Christ will deliver Rome and Lutetia."

Julian was silent, for, as a Neo-platonist, he liked analogies between the heavenly and the temporal, and a poetic figure was more for him than a rhetorical ornament.

Educated in a convent by Christian priests, he had early gained an insight into the new teaching of Christianity; but he believed that his philosophic culture had shown him that the seed of Christianity had already germinated in Socrates and Plato. After he had made the acquaintance of the Neo-Platonists, he found nothing to object to in

the recently-promulgated dogmas of Christianity. But he felt a boundless hate against these Galilaeans who wished to appropriate all the wisdom of the past ages and give it their own name. He regarded them as thieves. The doctrine of Christ's Divine Sonship seemed to him quite natural, for as a Pantheist he believed that the souls of all men are born of God and have part in Him. He himself acknowledged the dogma recently promulgated at Nicaea, that the Son is of the same essence as the Father, although he interpreted, it in his own way. As to miracles, they happened every day, and could be imitated by magicians. He acknowledged the truth of the Fall of Man, for Plato also had declared that the soul is imprisoned in matter—in sinful matter, with which we must do battle. And this had been confirmed by St. Paul's saying in the Epistle to the Romans, "The good which I would, that I do not, but the evil, which I would not, that I do," and again, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members, which warreth against the law of my mind.... O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" That was the lament of the thinking sensitive man regarding the soul's imprisonment in matter; the disgust of human nature at itself.

Julian, as a sensitive and struggling spirit, had felt this pressure, and had honestly and successfully combated the lusts of the flesh. Grown up though he was, among murderers and sybarites, in the extravagant luxury of the Byzantine Court, where, for example, he had at first possessed a thousand barbers and a thousand cooks, he had abandoned luxury, lived like a Christian ascetic, acted justly, and was high-minded. He had a perfect comprehension of the soul's imprisonment in the flesh or of "sin," but understood nothing of the Redemption through Christ. Three hundred years had passed since the birth of Christ, and the world had become continually more wretched. The Christians he had seen, especially his uncle Constantine the Great, lived worse than the heathen. As a young man he had tested the new teaching in his own internal struggles; he had prayed to Christ as to God, but had not been heard. When he had lamented his plight to the devout Eusebius, the latter had answered, "Be patient in hope! Continue constant in prayer."

But the youth answered, "I cannot be patient."

Then Eusebius said, “The deliverance comes, but not in our time. A thousand years are as a day before the Lord God! Wait five days, then you will see.”

“I will not wait,” exclaimed the youth angrily.

“So say the damned souls also. But look you, impatience is one of the torments of hell, and you make a hell for yourself with your impatience.”

Julian became a hater of Christ, without exactly knowing why. The philosophers did not teach it him, for they adapted Christianity to their philosophy. Celsus’ feeble attack on Christianity had not misled Julian’s ripe and cultured intelligence. Eusebius explained his pupil’s hatred of Christ in the following way: “He has heathen blood in him, for he comes of Illyrian stock; he does not belong to this sheepfold. Or is his pride so boundless, his envy so great, that he cannot tolerate any Autocrat in the realm of the spirit? He lives himself like a Christian, and teaches the same as Christ, but at the same time is a Christ-hater.”

Meanwhile Julian, in order to hide his anger, had approached the little Temple of Mars on the hill. The building was in ruins, the doors had been carried away, and the columns were broken. As he entered it, he saw the statue of Mars, modelled after a good Greek one of Ares, standing in the apse, but the nose was broken off, the fingers were lacking, and the whole statue was streaked with dirt.

“This is the work of the Galilaeans,” said Julian, “but they shall pay for it.”

“They have already paid with their lives,” answered Maximus.

“Dionysius [Footnote: St. Denis] was beheaded on the hill, and his chapel stands there on the slope.”

“Are you also a Galilaean?”

“No; but I love justice.”

“Justice and its guardian-goddess Astrasa left the earth when the Iron Age began; now she is a star in heaven.”

“In the Zodiac,” interrupted Priscus; “I believe also, we all live in Zodiacs, and there justice has no place.”

A sudden murmur of voices was heard from the camp. Julian mounted a heap of stones to see what was the matter. The whole of the north-east side of Mars’ Hill was covered with soldiers, and

below in the valley were to be seen tents and camp-fires. These thousands belonged to all the nations of the world. They comprised Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, Negroes, Hebrews, Persians, Afghans, Scythians, Germans, Britons, and Gauls. But now they were in movement and swarming, as gnats do when they dance.

"What is the excitement about?" asked Julian.

A little bell from the chapel of St. Denis sounded the Angelus, and the Christians fell on their knees, while the heathen remained standing or continued their occupations. The Christians considered themselves disturbed, and so did the heathen.

"This religion," said Julian, "which should unite all, only divides them. If the Church Councils, instead of formulating new creeds, had done away with all forms, and proclaimed free worship with praise and adoration of the Highest, all peoples would have bent the knee before the Nameless, but look at the Christians! Since the law is on their side, they have the upper hand, and therefore compel the heathen to adore their Galilaean! But I will not help them. I can hold nations together, but not professors of creeds. Let us go into the town. I will not mix in the matter."

Some Christian tribunes approached Julian, with the evident purpose of complaining, but he waved them off.

Julian had entered Lutetia on foot, accompanied by his philosophers. He had not allowed himself to be escorted by generals or other officers, because he did not trust them.

He found the new town to be a miniature of the Rome of the Caesars. It is true that huts with straw roofs formed the nucleus of it, but there were also several temples and chapels, a prefecture, a forum, and an amphitheatre. The forum or market-place was surrounded by colonnades, in which tradesmen and money-changers' had opened their shops. One side—the shortest—of it was occupied by the prefecture, in which the Aedile and Quaestor lived.

Unnoticed and unrecognised by the people, Julian went into the prefecture. In the hall he saw Christian symbols—the cross, the fish, the good shepherd, etc. Christianity was certainly the State religion, but Julian's hatred against everything Christian was so great that he could not look at these figures. Accordingly he went out again, called

the Prefect down, and bade him show the way to the Imperial palace and the left side of the river. There he took up his abode in a simple room resembling a monk's cell. As he had been obliged to make many detours since he had left Byzantium, and the punitive expedition against the Franks and Alemanni had consumed much time, he found letters waiting his arrival. Among them was one from the Emperor which seriously discomposed Julian.

The attitude of the Emperor towards his cousin had always been somewhat dubious, almost hostile, and now, after the latter's victories, envy and fear had taken possession of the mind of the Byzantine despot. The letter contained a command for Julian to send back the legions at once, as the war was at an end. Julian saw the danger if he stripped the newly recovered land bare of defence, but his sense of duty and conscientiousness bade him obey, and without hesitation he sent the Emperor's edict to the camp. This was on the evening of the first day of his arrival.

The next morning Julian had gone out for an excursion with his learned staff. They slowly climbed Mount Parnassus, and wandered through the oak wood on the north side, avoiding the beaten paths. He and his companions philosophised and disputed eagerly, and, forgetting their surroundings, wandered ever deeper into the forest. Finally they reached an open space where grazing deer had taken refuge, and set themselves down to rest on strangely-shaped stones which lay in a circle. In the oaks over their heads were large green clumps of a different colour from the oak-leaves, and these they thought were birds' nests.

"I have never seen so many crows' nests together," said Julian.

"They are not crows' nests, your Majesty," answered the scribe Eleazar, who acted as Julian's secretary. "That is the sacred mistletoe, which grows on the oak, and through the operation of cosmic forces takes this globular form, which is also said to be that of the earth and the other heavenly bodies."

"Is that…?"

"Yes, and we seem to have entered a sacred sacrificial grove, in which the primeval deities of the land are still worshipped by the Druids, although their worship is forbidden."

“Forbidden in spite of the Emperor’s edict regarding religious freedom,” broke in the Sophist Priscus.

Julian did not like to be reminded of this edict, through which Christianity had won freedom to suppress other creeds. He rose with his companions in order to continue their excursion. After a while they reached Suresnes and its vineyards, where figtrees and peach-trees lined the walls. When they had ascended a height, they saw the whole Seine Valley lying before them, with its fields, gardens, and villas.

“Why, that is like the sacred land of Canaan!” exclaimed Julian, enchanted by the lovely landscape.

On the other side of the river rose the Hill of Mars, with its temples and chapels, and where the soil had been laid bare the white chalk gleamed in patches, as though a countless number of tents had been erected on the slopes.

The philosophers stood for a long time there, and contemplated the view, when a sound was heard like that of an approaching tempest. But no cloud was visible, and they remained listening and wondering. The noise increased till cries, shouts, and the clash of arms were heard. Now the Hill of Mars seemed to be in movement; there were swarms of men on its summit, and here and there steel could be seen flashing. Like a river, the mass began to roll down the hill to the town.

Then the spectators understood. “It is a revolt of the legions,” exclaimed Maximus.

“The edict has taken effect.”

“They seek their own Emperor.”

“Then the only thing for us to do is to turn round and go home.” They turned into the path which ran along the river, and followed it up the stream, in order to be able to see what the legions were doing. The dark mass, interspersed with flashes From swords and helmets, poured on in an ever stronger tide.

Quickening their steps, Julian and his companions reached the palace, in which there was great excitement. Julian was naturally a courageous man, but as a philosopher he was retiring, and wished to avoid public scenes. He therefore went through the bath-house and sought his lonely chamber, in order to await what would happen. He

paced restlessly up and down the room, feeling that the destiny of his whole future life was just now being decided. So there came what he half expected. Cries were audible from the courtyard of the palace,—"Ave Caesar Julianus Imperator! We choose Julian as Emperor! The crown for Julian! Death to Constantius the murderer and weakling!"

There was no longer any room for doubt. The legions had chosen Julian Emperor because they would not leave this fertile land, which they had conquered at the cost of their blood. Julian, who had not striven for power because he feared responsibility, wished to decline; but messengers from the army warned him, "If you do not accept, you will be slain." He who does not dare to rule will be enslaved. Thus Julian became Emperor of the great realm which stretched from the Black Sea to the Atlantic Ocean.

The night which followed this day was spent by the Emperor in reflection; and when in the morning, after a bath, he appeared to his friends, he was hardly recognisable as the same man. He had literally thrown off the mask, and showed a new face, with a new expression, almost new features. In spite of his upright character, Julian, like Constantine, had been compelled to live in a perpetual state of hypocrisy, by being obliged to favour and practise the Christian teaching in which he did not believe. He had even been forced to acknowledge the Trinity and Deity of Christ as promulgated by the Council of Nicaea, to attend services and observe fasts. The first thing he did after obtaining power, was to use his freedom and be what he was. His first act was to separate the sheep from the goats, i.e. to pick out the "Galilaeans," and form them into legions by themselves, under the pretext that they could thus better carry out their religious practices. But at the same time he surrounded his person exclusively with heathen of the old type,—Hebrews, Syrians, Persians, and Scythians. Simultaneously he assumed the gorgeous purple and glittering diadem of the emperors, trimmed and gilded his beard, and showed himself abroad only on horseback and with a great train. This done, he made preparations for publicly receiving the homage of the people, and determined to use the theatre for that purpose, and to put on the stage *Prometheus*, the trilogy of Aeschylus, which at that time existed in its entirety. The Emperor had brought actors with him, and the theatre stood ready. The news

of this had spread in the town, and was joyfully hailed by the heathen, while the Christians were vexed. The lower classes had, it is true, expected a gladiatorial show and wild beast fights, but a "comedy," as they called it, was always welcome.

The day arrived, and the town was in gala attire. The play was to last from morning to evening without pauses for meals; and as the spring weather was cold and uncertain, the spectators were advised to bring the garment known as "cucullus," a short white Roman mantle with a hood, which was all the more necessary as the theatre stood under the open sky.

Julian, now called Augustus, came to the theatre at the appointed time, accompanied by his philosopher friends, who had to take their seats at a little distance, for the Emperor sat in the imperial box, whither he had summoned the Prefect, Aedile and Quaestor to be in attendance on him. He was somewhat astonished not to find these city authorities there, and as the Aedile was president of the theatre, they could not begin before he came.

The people had risen as Julian entered, and many tribunes had shouted "Long live the Emperor!" but thereupon there followed an embarrassing silence, during which the Emperor was regarded with cold curiosity. When at last the latter was weary of waiting, he called his secretary, the Hebrew Eleazar, and commanded him to go to the prefecture in order to find out the reason of the defaulters' absence, and at the same time he gave the signal for the play to commence.

The actors entered, and at the altar commenced to offer the ancient kind of sacrifice which used to serve as an introduction to tragedies. Since animal sacrifices had ceased in all religions, even in the Jewish after the destruction of the Temple, under Titus in A.D. 70, this unusual proceeding aroused great curiosity. The legionaries were inured to the sight of blood, but the citizens and their wives turned away when the goat was sacrificed to Dionysus. People sought to find the reason for Julian's wish to reintroduce this custom in his laudable attempt to mingle all religions together, and to discover a deeper meaning in the ceremonies of all. The offering indeed was a gift, a sacrifice, and an expression of gratitude, but Maximus the mystic had also persuaded the Emperor that there were hidden powers in the blood itself, the source of life, which attracted spiritual forces of a lower order. Man shed his mother's

blood at his birth and the sacred institution of circumcision was intended to be a reminder of the bloody and painful operation of birth. Slaves were slaughtered on the graves of chieftains, and in the time of Julius Caesar the Romans had on one extraordinary occasion sacrificed three hundred prisoners. Captivated by this and by similar philosophical arguments, Julian was enticed into a course which was destined to lead to his destruction. After the sacrifice, at which the soldiers had laughed and the women had wept, the drama commenced in the poet's original language. Greek was indeed spoken by all people of cultivation from Palestine to Gaul, but the uneducated did not know it, and therefore the citizens sat there inattentively.

As the chorus entered for the second time, Eleazar returned with news. "This is what has happened," he said. "The Bishop of Sens, the Primate of the Church of Gaul, has entered the town, and is performing mass in the church. The high officials are present there, and they accordingly beg to be excused attending on the Emperor. They thought that he was aware that Christians never go to the theatre, and they rely upon the edict granting religious liberty."

Julian turned white with rage. "Good! They shall pay for that! Now, my Jewish friend, Eleazar, you shall sit near and talk with me. The actors are wretched, and I cannot endure their pronunciation of Greek."

Eleazar demurred, but the Emperor overruled his objections. The morning passed, and when the first part of the trilogy was at an end, part of the public seemed to wish to steal away; but the exits were closed, in order to avoid the fiasco of actors playing to an empty house, and the disrespect which would thereby be shown to the Emperor. But the discontent of the audience continually increased, for they were tired and hungry. They were also unpleasantly surprised by the presence of a Jew in the Emperor's box. It was not, however, because he was a Jew, for hatred of the Jews arose much later, after the Crusades. During the first centuries after Christ, Jews were confused with Christians because people believed that the new religion came from Palestine and was a continuation of Mosaism. The hostile glances which were cast at Eleazar were therefore more on account of his mean appearance and position than of his religion.

The favour shown him by the Emperor was especially a challenge to the Christians, in whose eyes he was an alien and a heathen.

When, in the second part of the trilogy, Prometheus was nailed to the rock, the spectators must have thought of the Crucified as the antitype, for the actor playing that part took that posture, extended his arms, and let his head sink on his breast. The common people became more attentive, and as they neither had learnt Greek nor were acquainted with mythology, they thought that the sufferings of Christ were being represented on the stage. Since this had never been done before, they were displeased, and half-audible conversations began. The Emperor was angry, but did not move a muscle. He was generally quiet, but when he was enraged his intelligence forsook him. He sat there in silence, revolving plans against these barbarians, who had forgotten the wisdom of the ancients. It was now past noon, and the impatience of the audience increased. Then the sky began to be covered with clouds and some flakes of snow fell slowly like white feathers. Those who had mantles drew them over their heads. The actors looked towards the Emperor's box, but he did not move, although it had no roof. He was a soldier, and would not be afraid of anything so trivial as bad weather.

Now Prometheus began to prophesy to Io of the Deliverer who would be born to overthrow Zeus and deliver the fire-bringer. The educated Christians and the heathen looked at each other questioningly, when Io said, "What dost thou say? Shall my son be thy deliverer?" And when Prometheus answered, "He will be the third scion after ten generations," a murmur broke out in the theatre. "Ten generations," that was in round numbers 700 years—a period nearly extending to the birth of Christ, since the Christians reckoned dates from 763 A.D., the end of the mythological era, to which the drama belonged.

Julian perceived that he had "carried wood to the fire," and helped the Christians without intending to do so. Aeschylus had prophesied Christ's birth almost to the very year, and intimated that he would overthrow Zeus. The orthodox followers of Athanasius wished for no better weapon with which to crush the Arians, who denied the Deity of Christ.

The snow fell ever more thickly, till at last it was a snowstorm. Julian was as white as though he wore a shroud, but he did not move, for he was beside himself with rage against himself, against the demons who had enticed him to choose this play, and against the heavenly powers who mocked him.

The whole audience was covered with snow, and discussed theology; the rabble laughed and quarrelled. The only ones who were protected against the inclemency of the weather were the actors under the canopy. But the damp snow was heavy, and the linen awning presently bent and broke.

Then the whole audience rose and burst into laughter; the actors crept out from under the masses of snow, the doors opened, and all fled except Julian and his philosophers.

As soon as Julian had been elected Emperor, he had sent an ambassador to the Emperor at Byzantium, and now awaited his reply. It was about the time of the winter solstice and the turn of the year. The Christians had, at this period, just begun to celebrate the birth of Christ, and had adopted certain Roman customs from the Saturnalia, the feast in honour of Saturn. Julian, irritated by the challenge of the Nazarenes, began to arm himself for resistance and attack. Now he determined to use his power to give back to heathendom what belonged to it, and to show the Christians whence they had derived their knowledge of the highest things. At the same time he wished to lend heathenism a Christian colouring, so that, at its return, it might be able to conquer everything. The old Temple of Jupiter, on the island in the river, was opened one night, and lights were seen in it. There was also a noise of hammers and saws, mattocks and trowels. This lasted for some time, and people talked about it in the town.

One night in midwinter, Julian sat with Maximus, Priscus, and Eleazar in the Opisthodomos or priests' room, behind the altar in the Temple of Jupiter. The whole temple was lit up, and the purpose of the improvements which had taken place could be seen. By the colonnade on the left hand was an ambo or pulpit, and under it a confessional; there were also a seven-branched candlestick, a baptismal font, a table with shewbread, and an incense-altar. These represented Julian's attempt to attach the new doctrine to the old, and to amalgamate heathenism, Christianity, and Judaism.

Heliogabalus had indeed attempted the same in his own rough fashion, by introducing Syrian sun-worship into Rome, but he retained all the heathen gods, even the Egyptian ones. Neither Christians, however, nor Jews would have anything to do with it.

Julian did not love the Jews, but his hatred of Christianity was so great that he preferred to help the stiff-necked race in Palestine, in order to rouse them against Christ. For that purpose he had given orders that the Temple in Jerusalem should be rebuilt, and this was the matter which he wished to discuss with his philosophers and Eleazar. "What is your opinion, then?" he asked, after finishing a long speech on the subject. "Let Maximus speak first."

"Caesar Augustus," answered Maximus the mystic, "Jerusalem has been destroyed from the face of the earth, as the prophets foretold, and the Temple cannot be rebuilt."

"Cannot? It shall be."

"It cannot! Constantine's mother, indeed, built a church over the grave of Christ, but the Temple cannot be rebuilt. Since Solomon's time the history of this city has been a history of successive destructions. Sheshach, the Philistines, Arabs, Syrians, Egyptians, and Chaldaeans, destroyed it in early times. Then came Alexander Ptolemaus, and finally Antiochus Epiphanes, who pulled down the walls and set up an image of Jupiter in the Temple. But now, mark!—sixty-three years before Christ, Jerusalem was conquered by Pompey. What happened in the same year after Christ in the Roman Empire? Pompeii, the town by Naples, named after the conqueror, was destroyed in A.D. 63 by an earthquake. That was the answer, and the Lord of Hosts conquered Jupiter,—Zeus."

"Listen!" broke in Julian, "I don't agree with your Pythagorean speculations about numbers. If both events had happened in the year 63 before Christ, then I would be nearly convinced."

"Wait, then, Caesar, and you will be. After Pompey had conquered Jerusalem, and Cassius had plundered it, Herod rebuilt the city and the Temple. But soon afterwards—*i.e.* in A.D. 70, Jerusalem was completely destroyed by Titus. Only nine years later Monte Somma began to throw up fire as it had never done before, and by it Pompeii and Herculaneum were both destroyed. Pompeii and Herculaneum were Sodom and Gomorrah, and a temple in Pompeii contained an

image of Vespasian, who had laid waste part of Jerusalem before Titus. It disappeared altogether. Do you think perhaps that the Christians set Vesuvius on fire, as Nero believed they had fired Rome in A.D. 64?"

Julian reflected: "There were nine years between," he said, "but it seems strange."

"Yes," answered Maximus, "but precisely in the same year 70, in which Titus destroyed the Temple, the Capitol was burnt."

"Then it is the gods who are warring, and we are only soldiers," exclaimed Julian.

Priscus the Sophist, who liked word-encounters, determined to stir up the embers, as they seemed to be expiring: "But Christ has said that one stone shall not remain upon another, and that the Temple shall never be built again."

"Has Christ said that?" answered Julian. "Very well; then he shall show whether he was a god, for I will build again the Temple of Solomon."

And turning to Eleazar, he continued, "Do you believe in prodigies?"

"As surely as the Lord lives, as surely as Abraham's God has brought us out of Egyptian bondage and given us Canaan, so surely will He fulfil the promise, and restore to us land, city, and Temple!"

"May it be with you according to your belief. The Temple shall be built up, even though it be not in three days as the Galilaean thought."

The winter solstice had come, and the Feast of the Saturnalia commenced in Lutetia. The heathen had always kept the feast in recollection of the legendary Golden Age, which was said to have been under the reign of the good Saturn. Then there was peace upon earth; the lion played with the lamb, the fields brought forth harvests without husbandry, weapons were not forged, for men were good and righteous. This beautiful festival, which had been discontinued by the Romans, had been revived by the Christians, who at Christ's coming expected a new Golden Age or the Millennium. But now Julian wished to restore to the heathen their privilege, and at the same time to show the Nazarenes whence they had derived their religious usages.

The heathen began to keep the festival in the old way. The shops were closed, and the city decorated, when on the morrow a procession was seen issuing from the Basilica to the market-place. At the head went King Saturn, with his horn of plenty, corn-sheaves, and doves; he was followed by the Virtues, Fortune, Wealth, Peace, Righteousness. Then followed an actor dressed like the Emperor, and by the hand he led a captive, who, in honour of the day, had been freed from his chains. He was followed by citizens who took their slaves by the arm; and these in their turn by women and children, who scattered corn from the sheaves for the sparrows in the street. The procession passed through the streets, and at first pleased the beholders.

Then they entered the temple, where there was a seated image of Jupiter in the apse. It had been cunningly modelled to resemble God the Father, or Moses, as he began to be represented about that time. Near and a little beneath this image stood Orpheus in the character of the Good Shepherd, with a lamb on his shoulders, and carved in relief on the pedestal was to be seen his descent to Hades, from which he returned bringing Diké (Justice),—a play on the name Eurydice. This was a direct hit at the Christians. Before the divine images stood the Jewish shewbread table, with the bread and the wine—a reminder of the source from which the Christians had taken the Eucharist or the Mass. As though by chance, a new-born heathen child was brought and baptized in the font. To the question of one, who had studied his part, whether heathen were baptized, it was answered by one, who also had his role assigned him, that the ancients had always washed their new-born children.

The whole affair was a comedy staged by Julian.

Then Maximus mounted the pulpit, and, in a Neo-platonic discourse, expounded all religious images, symbols, and customs. He also showed that the heathen only worshipped one God, whose many attributes found expression in various personifications. Then he ostensibly defended Christ's Deity, the Virgin birth, and miracles. "We are," he said, "all of divine origin, since God has created us, and we are His children. There is nothing remarkable in Christ being born without a father, since the philosopher Plato was also born of a virgin without a father." In the middle of his discourse he exclaimed: "Miracles! Why should we not believe in miracles, since we believe in

Almighty God? His omnipotence signifies that He can suspend the laws of nature which he has established. He who believes not in miracles is therefore an ass." The discourse was listened to by heathen and Christians. The latter thought that they had never heard anything which so clearly explained mysterious dogmas, and the heathen found that they were one with the Christians. "What, then, stands between us?" exclaimed Maximus, carried away by the sight of the harmony and mutual understanding which prevailed among his audience. "Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us? Why, then, strive one against the other? Have we not here to day celebrated the recollection of the better times which have been, and which will surely return, as the light returns with the renewal of the sun—times of reconciliation and peace on earth, when no one will be master and no one slave? Here is neither Jew nor Greek nor Barbarian, but we are all brothers and sisters in one faith. Therefore love one another; reconcile yourselves with God and each other; give each other the kiss of peace; rejoice, perfect yourselves, be of one mind, and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

The audience was delighted, and with streaming eyes fell in each other's arms, pressed each other's hands, and kissed each other's cheeks.

Then suddenly a row of lights was kindled on the altar; that was part of the ceremonial of the Saturnalia, and signified the return of the sun. This custom was adopted by the Christians in celebrating the Birth of Christ or Christmas.

After this beggars were brought forward, and those of the upper classes washed their feet. Then twelve slaves took their seats at a covered table, while their masters served them. Julian, who, hidden in the Opisthodom, had watched the whole ceremony, secretly rejoiced, because by means of these ancient heathen rites he had entirely defeated the Christians. In them, as he had intended, there was a wordless expression of philanthropy and charity, and both had existed from time immemorial.

Finally, the children were brought forward, and received as presents dolls modelled of wax and clay. The illusion was complete, and the Christians felt as though under an enchanter's spell. "The heathen are Christians after all!" they exclaimed. "Why, then, strive and quarrel, when we are one?"

There was an overflow of emotion, and the success of the experiment was complete. That was the victory of the first day. When, on the following day, the Christians wished to celebrate their Christmas festival, it necessarily appeared a mere copy of that of the heathen.

The Saturnalia lasted seven days, and Julian, intoxicated with his success, resolved to introduce the whole of the ancient ceremonies in all their terrible splendour. His philosophers warned him, but he did not listen to them any more; he must have his hecatombs; a hundred oxen adorned with garlands were to be slaughtered in the open space before the Temple of Jupiter, as a sacrifice to the ancient gods.

"He is mad!" lamented Eleazar.

"Whom the gods would destroy, they strike with blindness. Now he pulls down, what he had built up."

It is difficult to explain how the highly cultivated, clever, and aesthetic Julian could conceive the wild idea of reintroducing animal sacrifices. It was really butchery or execution, and neither butchers nor executioners enjoyed much respect in society. It looked as though his hatred of Christ had clouded his understanding, when, arrayed in the garb of a sacrificial priest, he led forth the first ox, with its horns gilded and wearing a white fillet.

After he had kindled incense on the altar, he poured the bowl of wine over the head of the ox, thrust his knife in its throat and turned it round. A shudder ran through the crowd, who remained riveted to their places.

But as the blood spirted around, and the Emperor opened the quivering body of the animal in order to take an augury from its entrails, a cry rose which ended in an uproar, and all fled. The word "Apostate!" for the first time struck his ear. That was the signal of his defeat, and, as the animals were released by those who held them, they fled away through the streets of the town.

The Emperor, in his white robe sprinkled with blood, had to return alone to his palace, while Christians and heathen alike shouted their disapprobation.

"See the butcher!" they cried; "Apostate! Renegade! Madman!"

When Julian came to his palace, he looked as though petrified; but, without changing his clothes, he sat down to the table and wrote

an edict against the Christians, in which they were forbidden to study, and to fill offices of State. That was his first step.

In the evening of the same day Julian received a letter: it was from the Emperor Constantius in Byzantium, who did not acknowledge his election to the imperial throne, and threatened to bring an army against him in Gaul. This was quite unexpected, and Julian left Lutetia in order to march against his cousin. As he went towards the East, he felt as though he were going to his death. But the first throw of the dice of destiny was a lucky one for him. Constantius died on the march, and Julian was left sole Emperor. This he took for a sign that the gods were on his side, and he proceeded on his campaign feeling that he was supported by the higher powers. But it was only the last jest of his gods.

It is related that before his last march against the Persians, he wished to ascertain his destiny, and had a woman's body cut open in order to take an augury from the entrails. But that may be untrue, as is also the case with the conflicting reports of his death, which happened soon after. One thing, however, is certain; the "Galilaean" conquered Zeus, who rose no more.

It is also a fact, confirmed by Christian, Jewish, and heathen writers, that the Temple of Jerusalem was never built again, for as the foundation was about to be laid, fire broke out of the ground accompanied by an earthquake. The same earthquake also destroyed Delphi, "the centre of the earth," and the focus of the religious and political life of Greece.

ATTILA

With the demise of Constantine the Great, Greece, Rome, and Palestine had ceased to exist. Civilisation had passed Eastward, for Constantinople was the metropolis of Europe; and from the East, Rome, Spain, Gaul, and Germany were governed by satraps with various titles. It seemed as though the vitality of Europe had been quenched, and as though Rome had been buried, but it was only apparently so. History did not proceed in a straight line, but took circuitous paths, and therefore development seemed to be in disorder and astray. But it was not really so.

Christianity, which was about to penetrate the West, had sprung from the East, and so ancient Byzantium formed a transition stage. In Rome, which had been left to itself, for its governors dwelt in Milan and Ravenna, a new spiritual world-power was springing up, which was silently forging a new imperial crown, in order to give it to the worthiest when the time was fulfilled. The advent of this heir had already been announced by Tacitus—a new race from the North, healthy, honest, good-humoured. These were the Germans, who were to hold the Empire for a thousand years from 800 to 1815. Already, at the commencement of the fifth century, the West Goths had captured Rome, but again withdrawn; other German races had overrun Spain, Gaul, and Britain, but none of them had taken firm root in Italy. Then an entirely new race appeared upon the scene, whose origin was unknown, and the promise of possessing the land which had been given to the Germans seemed to have been revoked, for the Huns finally settled in Hungary, and exacted tribute from all the nations in the world. Round a wooden castle and a few barracks on the river Theiss, there collected a crowd of Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, and Germans of all kinds to do homage before a throne on which sat a savage who resembled a lump of flesh.

In the year 453 A.D. this King, after many adventures, wished to celebrate one of his numerous marriages. He had summoned the chief men of all Europe—summoned—for a King does not invite. So they came riding from North, South, East, and West.

From the west, along the bank of the Danube, just below the place where the river makes a curve at the modern Gran, came two men

riding at the head of a caravan. For several days they had followed the picturesque banks of the green river, with its bulrushes and willows, and its swarms of wild duck and herons. Now they were about to leave the cool shades of the forest region, and turn eastward towards the salt desert, which stretched to the banks of the yellow Theiss.

One leader of the caravan was a well-known Roman, called Orestes; the other was Rugier, also called Edeko. He was a chief from the shores of the Baltic Sea, and had been compelled to follow Attila.

The two leaders had hitherto spoken little together, for they mistrusted each other. But as they emerged on the wide plain, which opened out as clear and bright as the surface of the sea, they seemed themselves to grow cheerful, and to lay aside all mistrust.

"Why are you going to the marriage?" asked Orestes.

"Because I cannot remain away," answered Edeko.

"Just like myself."

"And the Bride—the Burgundian did not dare to say 'no' either?"

"She? Yes, she would have dared to."

"Then she loved this savage?"

"I did not say that."

"Perhaps she hates him, then? A new Judith for this Holofernes?"

"Who knows? The Burgundians do not love the Huns since they pillaged Worms in their last raid."

"Still it is incomprehensible how he recovered from his defeat on the Catalaunian Plain."

"Everything is incomprehensible that has to do with this man, if he is a man at all."

"You are right. He is said to have succeeded his father's brother, Rua, of whom we know nothing; he has murdered his brother Bleda. For twenty years we have had him held over us like an iron rod, and yet lately, when he was before Rome, he turned back."

"But he has promised his soldiers to give them Rome some day."

"Why did he spare Rome?"

"No one knows. No one knows anything about this man, and he himself seems to be ignorant about himself. He comes from the East, he says; that is all. People say the Huns are the offspring of witches

and demons in the wilderness. If anyone asks Attila what he wants, and who he is, he answers, 'The Scourge of God.' He founds no kingdom, builds no city, but rules over all kingdoms and destroys all cities."

"To return to his bride: she is called Ildico; is she then a Christian?"

"What does Attila care? He has no religion."

"He must have one if he calls himself 'the Scourge of God,' and declares that he has found the War-God's sword."

"But he is indifferent as regards forms of religion. His chief minister, Onegesius, is a Greek and a Christian."

"What an extraordinary man he is to settle down here in a salt-plain instead of taking up his abode in Byzantium or in Rome."

"That is because it resembles his far Eastern plains—the same soil, the same plants and birds; he feels at home here."

They became silent, as the sun rose and the heat increased. The low-growing tamarisk, wormwood, and soda-bushes afforded no shade. Wild fowl and larks were the only creatures that inhabited the waste. The herds of cattle, goats, and swine had disappeared, for Attila's army of half a million had eaten them up, and his horses had not left a single edible blade of grass.

At noon the caravan came suddenly to a halt, for on the eastern horizon there was visible a town with towers and pinnacles, on the other side of a blue lake. "Are we there?" asked Edeko. "Impossible; it is still twenty miles, or three days' journey."

But the city was in sight, and the caravan quickened its pace. After half an hour the town appeared no nearer, but seemed, on the contrary, to grow more distant, to dwindle in size, and to sink out of sight. After another half hour, it had disappeared, and the blue lake also.

"They can practise enchantment," said the Roman, "but that goes beyond everything."

"It is the Fata Morgana, or the mirage," explained the guide.

As the evening came on, the caravan halted in order to rest for the night.

On the stretch of land between Bodrog and Theiss, Attila had his standing camp, for it could not be called a town. The palace was of wood, painted in glaring colours, and resembled an enormous tent, whose style was probably borrowed from China, the land of silk. The women's house, which was set up near it, had a somewhat different form, which might have been brought by the Goths from the North, or even from Byzantium, for the house was ornamented with round wooden arches. The fittings seemed to have been stolen from all nations and lands; there were quantities of gold and silver, silk and satin curtains, Roman furniture and Grecian vessels, weapons from Gaul, and Gothic textile fabrics. It resembled a robber's abode, and such in fact it was.

Behind the palace enclosure began the camp, with its smoke-grimed tents. A vast number of horse-dealers and horse-thieves swarmed in the streets, and there were as many horses as men there. Without the camp there grazed herds of swine, sheep, goats, and cattle—living provision for this enormous horde of men, who could only devour and destroy, but could not produce anything.

Now, on the morning of Attila's wedding day, there were moving about in this camp thousands of little men with crooked legs and broad shoulders, clothed in rat-skins and with rags tied round their calves. They looked out of their tents with curiosity, when strangers who had been invited to the marriage feast came riding up from the plain.

In the first street of tents, Attila's son and successor, Ellak, met the principal guests; he bade them welcome through an interpreter, and led them into the guest-house.

"Is that a prince, and are those men?" said Orestes to Edeko.

"That is a horse-dealer, and the rest are rats," answered Edeko. "They are monsters and demons, vampires, created from dreams of intoxication. They have no faces; their eyes are holes; their voice is a rattle; their nose is that of a death's-head; and their ears are pot-handles."

"You speak truly, and it is from these half-naked savages, who have no armour and no shield, that the Roman legions have fled. They are goblins, who have been able to 'materialise' themselves."

"They will not conquer the world."

"At any rate not in this year."

Then they followed Prince Ellak, who had heard and understood every word, although he pretended not to know their language.

In the women's house sat Attila's favourite, Cercas, and sewed the bridal veil. Ildico, the beautiful Burgundian, stood at the window lost in thought and absent-minded. She had seen in Worms the hero before whom the world trembled, and she had really been captivated by the little man's majestic bearing. Herself fond of power, and self-willed, she had been enticed by the prospect of sharing power with the man before whom all and everything bowed; therefore she had given him her hand.

But she had had no correct comprehension of the manners and customs of the Huns, and had therefore imagined that her position as wife and Queen would be quite otherwise than it proved to be. Only this morning she had learnt that she could not appear at all at the marriage feast, nor share the throne, but would simply remain shut up with the other women in the women's house.

Cercas, the favourite, had explained all this with malicious joy to her rival, and the haughty Ildico was on the point of forming a resolution. She had no friends in the palace, and could not approach the foreign princes.

Cercas was sewing, and accompanied her work with a melancholy song from her home in the far East. Ildico seemed to have collected her thoughts: "Can you lend me a needle?" she said, "I want to sew."

Cercas gave her a needle, but it was too small; she asked for a larger one, and chose the largest of all. She hid it in her bosom, and did not sew.

At that moment there appeared in the doorway a creature so abominably ugly and of such a malicious aspect, that Ildico thought he was a demon. He was as jet-black as a negro from tropical Africa, and his head seemed to rest on his stomach, for he had no chest. He was a dwarf and humpback; his name was Hamilcar, and he was Attila's court-fool.

In those days the court-fool was generally not a wit, but a naive blockhead, who believed all that was said, and was therefore a butt for jests. He only placed a letter in Cercas' hand, and disappeared. When Cercas had read the letter, she changed colour and seemed to

become a different being. Overcome with rage, she could not speak, but sang,

"The tiger follows the lion's trail."

"Ildico, you have found a friend," she said at last. "You have a friend here in the room, here at the window, here on your breast." And she threw herself on the Burgundian maiden's breast, weeping and laughing alternately. "Give me your needle—your fine beautiful needle; I will thread it. No! I will sharpen it on steel; no, I will dip it in my perfume-flask, my own special little perfume flask, and then together we will sew up the Tiger's mouth, so that he can bite no more!"

"Let me read your letter," Ildico interrupted.

"You cannot. I will tell you what it says. He, our master, woos again for the hand of the daughter of the Emperor Valens—Honoria, and this time he has vowed to burn us all;—that he calls giving us an honourable burial."

Ildico reached out her hand as an answer, "Very well, to-night. A single needle-prick will deprive the world of its ruler!"

Edeko and Orestes had thoroughly rested from their journey in the guest-house. At noon, when they wished to go out, they found the door bolted.

"Are we prisoners? Have we fallen into a trap?" asked the Roman.

"We have not had any food either," answered Edeko.

Then two voices were heard without: "We will strangle them; that is the simplest way."

"I think we had better set the house on fire; the tall one is strong."

"And they thought we did not understand their language."

The two prisoners, whose consciences were uneasy, were alarmed, and believed that their end was near. Then a small trap-door opened in the wall, and the fool Hamilcar showed his hideous head.

"Whether you are the devil or not," exclaimed the Roman, "answer us some questions."

"Speak, sirs," said the negro.

"Are we prisoners, or why cannot we see your King?"

Prince Ellak's head appeared at the trap-door.

“You will first see the King this evening at the feast,” said the Prince, with a malicious grimace.

“Are we to fast till then?”

“We call it so, and do it always when we have a feast before us, in order to be able to eat more.”

“Cannot we at any rate go out?”

“No,” answered the Prince with the horse-dealerlike face. “One must conform to the custom of the country.” So saying, he closed the trap-door.

“Do you think we shall get away alive?” asked Edeko.

“Who knows? Attila is composed of treachery. You do not know that once he wrote two letters, one to Dieterich, King of the West Goths, asking for an alliance against the Romans as the common enemy; and on the same day he wrote a similar letter to the Romans, in which he proposed an alliance against the West Goths. The deceit was discovered, and Attila fell between two stools.”

“He seems to be immortal, otherwise he would have been killed in battle, as he always goes at the head of his army.”

Until evening the travelling companions remained incarcerated. At last the door was opened, and a master of the ceremonies led them into the hall where the great feast was to take place. Here there were countless seats and tables covered with the most costly cloths and drinking vessels of gold and silver. The guests were assembled, but the two travellers saw no faces that they knew; they looked in vain for the bridegroom and the bride. As they were conducted to their places, a low murmur broke out among the guests, who talked in an undertone, and asked where the great King would show himself.

Orestes and Edeko cast their eyes over the walls and ceiling without being able to see where the wonder would happen, for the childish and cunning Huns used to amuse their guests with surprises and practical jokes.

Suddenly the whole assembly stood up. The curtain which covered the wall in the background was drawn aside, and on a platform sat a little insignificant-looking man, with a table before him and a sofa beside him. On the table stood a wooden goblet. He sat quite motionless, without even moving his eyelids. Somewhat lower than

he stood his chief Minister, the Greek Onegesius. He kept his eyes unwaveringly fixed on his master, who seemed to be able to converse with him through his eyes.

Attila remained in the same attitude, his legs crossed, and his right hand on the table. He gave no greeting, neither did he answer any.

"He does not see us! He only shows himself!" whispered Orestes. "He sees well!"

Onegesius received a command from the despot's eye, and lifted his staff. A poet stepped forward with an instrument that resembled a harp and a drum combined. After he had struck the strings, and beaten the drum, he began to recite. It was a song celebrating all Attila's feats in terms of strong exaggeration, and it would have been endless, if the assembly had not taken up the refrain and struck with their short swords on the table. The poet represented Attila's defeat on the Catalaunian Plain as an honourable but indecisive battle. After the guests had for some time contemplated the insignificant-looking hero in his simple brown leather dress, they both felt the same irresistible reverence that all did who saw him.

There was something more than vanity in this self-conscious calm; this visible contempt for all and everything. He kept his side-face turned to the guests, and only his Minister could catch his eye.

When the panegyric was at an end, Attila raised his goblet, and, without drinking to anyone, sipped it. That was, however, the signal for a drinking orgy, and the wine was poured into gold and silver goblets, which had to be emptied at a draught, for Attila liked to see those around him intoxicated, while he remained sober.

After they had drunk for a while, the negro Hamilcar came forward and performed feats of jugglery. Then the great King rose, turned his back to the assembly, and laid down on the sofa. But in each of his movements there was majesty, and as he lay there thinking, his knees drawn up, his hands under his neck, and his eyes directed towards the ceiling, he was still imposing.

"But what about the bride and the marriage?" Orestes asked one of the Huns.

“We do not even mention our wives,” he answered, “how, then, should we show them?”

The drinking continued, but no food was placed before the guests. At intervals the whole assembly sang, and beat upon the tables.

While the noise and excitement were at their height, the hall suddenly filled with smoke, and the building was in flames. All started up, shouted and sought to flee, but Attila’s Minister struck with his staff on the table, and the assembly broke into laughter. It was a jest for the occasion, and only some waggon-loads of hay had been kindled outside. When quiet had been restored, Attila was no more to be seen, for he had left the hall by a secret door. And now began the feast, which lasted till morning.

When the sun rose, Orestes was still sitting and drinking with an Avar chief. The condition of the hall was indescribable, and most of the guests were dancing outside round the fire.

“This is a wedding-feast indeed!” said Orestes. “We shall not quickly forget it. But I would gladly have spoken with the wonderful man. Can one not do that?”

“No,” answered the Avar; “he only speaks in case of need. ‘What is the use of standing,’ he asks, ‘and deceiving one another?’ He is a wise man, and not without traces of kindness and humanity. He allows no unnecessary bloodshed, does not avenge himself on a defeated foe, and is ready to forgive.”

“Has he any religion? Does he fear death?”

“He believes on his sword and his mission, and death is for him only the door to his real home. Therefore he lives here below, as though he were a guest or traveller.”

“Quite like the Christians, then?”

“It is remarkable that in Rome he received respect from Pope Leo—What’s the matter now?”

Outside there was a shouting which at first seemed to issue from the palace, but soon spread itself over the camp. Half a million of men were howling, and it sounded like weeping.

The guests hurried out, and saw all the Huns dancing, cutting their faces with knives, and shouting unintelligible words. Edeko came up and pulled Orestes away through the crowds. “Attila is dead! May Jesus Christ be praised!”

“Dead? That is Ildico’s doing!”

“No! she sat by the corpse, veiled and weeping.”

“Yes, it is she.”

“Yes, but these savages are too proud to believe that Attila could be killed by a human being!”

“How fortunate for us!”

“Quick to Rome with the news. The fortune of the man who first brings it is made.”

Orestes and Edeko departed the same morning. They never forgot this wedding which had brought them together.

Later on they renewed their acquaintance, under other and still more striking circumstances. For the son of Edeko was Odovacer, who defeated the son of Orestes, who was no other than the last Emperor Romulus Augustus. Strangely enough his name was Romulus, as was that of Rome’s first King, and Augustus, as was that of the first Emperor. After his deposition, he closed his life with a pension of six thousand gold pieces, in a Campanian villa, which had formerly belonged to Lucullus.

THE SERVANT OF SERVANTS

Rome had become a provincial town and a dependency of Byzantium. It was governed by an Exarch in Ravenna, but often abandoned to its fate when the barbarians from the north amused themselves from time to time by raiding and pillaging it. For three hundred years no Emperor had visited Rome, and the former queen of the world lay despised in rubbish and ruin. But presently people began to collect and piece together the ruins of temples and palaces, and build churches out of them. Five hundred years after the death of Nero, an already ancient church of St. Peter stood in the middle of the tyrant's circus, where the martyrs had suffered death. There were at least seven other churches in different parts of the town, and the Bishop of Rome dwelt in the Lateran Palace, near the church of the same name. There were also convents, and on the Appian Way stood the St. Andrew's Convent, close to the Church of the Cross, which was built at the entrance to the catacombs.

About two o'clock one summer morning, all the fathers and brothers had risen, and read or sung early mass in the chancel. Afterwards the Abbot had gone into the garden in order to reflect. It was still dark, but the stars shone between the olive and orange trees, and the flowers swayed in the gentle breeze of the dawn.

The Abbot, a man of about fifty, strolled up and down in a covered arbour-walk, and every time he reached the south end he remained standing, in order to contemplate a marble tablet, erected by the side of other tablets. It stood over his future grave, which was by the side of the abbots who had already been buried. His name and the year of his birth were engraved upon the marble, while a space was left for the date of his death.

"O Lord, how long wilt Thou forget me?" he sighed, as he turned round again. After he had thus continued walking till daybreak, he sat down in an arbour, in order to write something in a book which he took out of his pocket. The noise of awaking life in the city did not disturb him—nothing disturbed the white-haired man of fifty who had already been two hours on his legs without eating anything. Church bells rang, carts rattled, and the rushing of the Tiber could be heard through all other noises. But the old man continued to write,

while his wrinkled face was faintly lit up by the red of dawn. At last steps were heard on the gravel-path; a novice entered the arbour, and placed a bowl of bread and milk by the Abbot. The latter started, as though he had been recalled from far away, and exclaimed, "Leave me in peace!" The novice remained standing, frightened and troubled. Then a little bird, which had been sitting in the arbour, struck up its song. The Abbot looked up, his countenance cleared, he cast a glance on the bowl of milk which he eagerly seized, and was in the act of raising it to his mouth, but, as he noticed the youth's troubled aspect, he stopped. "Forgive my anger," he said, "but I was far away. As a penance, I do this!"

He was about to pour the milk on the ground, but in order that it might not be wasted, he poured it on the roots of a reddish-yellow lily that stood in one of the border-beds. As the novice gave no sign of going, the Abbot asked, "You wish to speak with me? Speak!"

"Holy Father."

"I am not holy; One is holy, the Lord your God in heaven! If you have a complaint, make it."

"I was a rich youth, who went and sold all that he had."

"I also did that when I was young, and then built seven convents, but have not regretted it. What have you against it? Why do you complain?"

The youth was silent.

"Is it about the food? There is a famine round us, and we must share with the poor."

"Not only that, venerable father, but the whole way of living here does not accomplish what it is intended to do."

"Say on."

"The scanty food does not subdue the flesh, for as I go about hungry the whole day, I involuntarily think only about eating—in church, during prayer, in solitude. The small amount of sleep makes me sleepy the whole day, and I go to sleep in the chancel. Desires, which I had not known before, are aroused by suppression; when I see wine, I feel a real longing to get vital warmth into my body."

"Then go and ask a brother to scourge you till you swim in your blood, then you will feel the vital warmth return."

"I have done that, but the blows only waken new desires."

"Read St. Augustine."

"I have done that. But the worst of all is the dirt. If I could bathe.

"Are you dirty? That betokens inward defilement. I never bathe, but my body is always clean. But I have noticed, as soon as my thoughts become impure, the body becomes impure! What do you think, then, will do you good? You do not wish to marry. Tertullian says marriage and fornication are the same. And St. Jerome is of opinion that it is better to burn than to marry."

"But St. Paul."

"Let St. Paul alone! But what do you want to do?"

"I cannot remain here, for I think that desires can only be extinguished by being satisfied."

"Servant of Satan! Do you not know that desires never can be satisfied? You were once with your parents. You ate as much as you liked in the morning. Well! Were you not hungry again by noon? Certainly. So you cannot really satisfy yourself by eating! Now I will tell you one thing. You are a child of the world; you don't belong here; therefore go in peace! Eat of the swine's husks which do not satisfy; but when you are sick of them, you will be welcome here again. The father's house always stands open for the prodigal son."

The youth did not go, but burst into tears.

"No," he said, "I cannot return to the world, for I hate it and it hates me, but here I perish."

The Abbot rose and embraced him. "Poor child! Such is the world, such is life; but if it is so, and if you see that it is so, the only thing left is to live it; and count it a point of honour to live till death comes and liberates us."

"No! I want to die now," sobbed the youth.

"We may not do that, my son"; the words escaped from the old man. "If you knew ... if you knew...."

But he restrained himself: "What shall we do, then? Go to Father Martin and have some food, and a glass of wine, but only one; then go and have a good long sleep. Sleep for a day or two. Then come, that I may see you. Go now—but wait a minute—you must have a dispensation from me."

He sat down and wrote something on a page which he had torn out of the book. Armed with this permission, the youth departed, looking, however, somewhat hesitatingly and abashed.

The Abbot remained sitting, but did not begin to write again. Instead of that, he commenced crumbling the bread and strewing the crumbs on the table. Immediately a little bird came and picked one up; then there followed several, who settled on the old man's hand, arms, and shoulders. A spray of vine hung from the roof of the arbour and swayed gently in the wind. Its ring-like tendrils felt about in the air for a support. The Abbot was amused, and placed his finger jestingly into one of the rings: "Come, little thing! here is your support!"

The tendril seemed to hear him, immediately curled round his finger, and formed a ring.

"Shall I get the ring?" jested the old man. "Perhaps I shall be a bishop. God deliver me!"

The Dean appeared in the door of the arbour. "Do I disturb you, brother?"

"No, not at all! I am only sitting here and playing."

"Birds and flowers! White lilies too? I have never seen such before."

"White? Just now they were reddish-yellow! Where do you see them?"

"There!"

The Abbot looked down on the ground where he had poured his milk, and behold! there were only white lilies, without a single yellow one. He did not venture to speak about it, for one cannot speak of such things; but he smiled to himself, and saw a token of grace in it.

"Well, Dean, how goes it in the city?"

"The Tiber is sinking."

"God be praised; but the whole of Trastevere has been ruined by the flood. I really wish that a great flood would come and drown us all—the whole human race—and very likely it will come some day."

"Still as hopeless as ever!"

"No, not without hope, but for that world, not for this. Christ says it Himself in the Apocalypse: here is nothing on which one can build; for the best that we have enjoyed was but trouble and misery."

"Not so, brother."

"You can flourish in mud, but that I have never done. And it seems as though one were compelled to wade in it with both feet. Did I not begin in my youth to preserve my soul by withdrawing from the world? Then I was compelled to go out into it, thrust into the confusion by force. They made me Prefect of the city. I wished to live in the service of the Lord, and had to distribute eatables for the poor, procure beds for the hospitals, look after drains and water-pipes. The burden of the day's task hindered my thoughts from rising, and I sank in the swamp of material things—sank so deep that I believed I should never rise again."

"But the people blessed you."

"Hush! And I—I who had never worn a sword—had to collect soldiers and march to the field. When I was six years old Rome was pillaged by Totila the Goth, and so ravaged that only five hundred Romans remained. When I was seven years old, there came Belisarius—when I was twelve, Narses. Then I was sent as ambassador to Constantinople—I who hated travelling and publicity. All that I hate, I have been obliged to accept. Now I am tired, and would like to go to rest. I sit here and wait, for my grave to open."

"Do you remember what Virgil says in the *Georgics* regarding the labour of the husbandman?"

"No, I hate the heathen."

"Wait! He says these words of wisdom: 'If Zeus sends bad weather, mice and vermin, it is to stimulate the husbandman's energy, and call forth his inventive capacity.' Misfortune comes to help the world forward."

"The world goes backward towards its overthrow and its damnation. For five hundred years we have awaited the Redemption, but we have only seen one wild race come after another, to murder and pillage. Do you see any reason in all this sowing without reaping?"

"Blasphemer! Yes, I see how green harvests are ploughed up to fertilise the soil."

“Dragon’s-seed and hell’s harvest. No—now I go into my grave, and close the door behind me; I have a right to rest after a life so full of trouble and work.”

“The bell is ringing for prime.”

“Jam moesta quiesce querela.”

The Tiber had overflowed Rome, and destroyed quite a quarter of it, but spared the convent of St. Andrew. The Abbot sat again one morning in his garden and wrote, but in such a position that he could see his grave when he looked up from his work. Deep in his writing, he did not hear what was happening around him. But he saw that the flowers in the beds began to shake like reeds, frogs jumped about at his feet, and there was a smell of dampness that was at the same time mouldy and poisonous.

He continued to write, but his eye, although intent on the passage of his pen over the paper, noticed something dark that moved on the ground, spread itself like a black carpet, and came nearer. Suddenly his feet were wet, and a deathlike chill crept up his legs. Then he awoke and understood. The Tiber had risen, and he was driven out of his last refuge. “I will not go,” he cried, as the alarm-bell sounded, and the monks fled.

He went to his cell in the upper story, firmly resolved not to flee. He would not go out into the world again, but would die here. The flood which he had prayed for, had come. But he had a spiritual conflict and agony of prayer in his cell: “Lord, why dost thou punish the innocent? Why dost thou chastise Thy friends and let Thy foes flourish? For five hundred years Thou hast avenged Thyself on Thy children for the misdeeds of their fathers! If that is not enough, then destroy us all at once!”

The water rose and lapped against the walls; the garden was destroyed, and the Abbot’s grave filled with water, but he remained where he was. At one time he sang hymns of praise, then he raged; then he prayed for pardon, and raged again.

After that he set himself to write at the great work which should make him immortal,—his “Magna Moralia.” It was now noon, but he felt no hunger, for by practice he had learned to fast for three days together. During the afternoon, a noise at the window made him look up from his book. There lay a boat, and in it sat the novice

Augustinus. The extraordinary, almost comic, aspect of things, elicited a smile from him, and, remembering his conversation with the youth, he asked through the open window, “Well, did you get the wine and good food, you glutton?”

“No, venerable Father; I did not want it when I could have it, and then the temptation was over. But now I have to speak of something else. The plague has broken out, and people are dying like flies.”

“The plague too! Oh Lord, how long wilt Thou altogether forget us! The plague too!”

Then he rose. “Everyone to his post! Let us do our duty! Bless the Lord, and die!” The Abbot stepped out of his window into the boat, and left his sinking ship.

The Tiber sank to its level again, but left behind snakes, fishes, and frogs, which died and infected the air. The people had fled to the hills; on the Palatine Hill they had made a hospital out of a church. Here the Abbot of the St. Andrew’s Convent walked about, gave drink to the sick, and spoke comfort to the dying. “Why do you fear death, children?” he said. “Fear life, for that is the real death.” He seemed to be quite in his element here, showed a calm, cheerful temper, and sought to decipher on the faces of the dead, “whether they were happy on the other side.”

Death would have nothing to do with him. Often he went to the other hills, and walked about among the sick and dying, so that the people began to think that he was an immortal who had come down to comfort them. The older ones remembered him as Prefect, when he defended the city against the Goths, Vandals, and Longobards, and his fame continually grew.

The pestilence raged, and the number of the dead increased, so that the corpses could no longer be buried. All occupations ceased, and the peasants brought no more food into the city. There was a famine. The Abbot of the St. Andrew’s Convent, Gregory, lost courage, and wanted to abandon all, “I cannot fight against God, and if it be His will that Rome perish, it is godless to wish to prevent it.” In the midst of this tribulation, Pelagius II, the Bishop or Pope of Rome, as he was afterwards called, died. The people with one voice clamoured for the Abbot Gregory to succeed him. But, like King Saul and the Emperor Julian, he hid himself. He fled from the town to a

hermit's grotto in the Sabine Mountains. But the people came, brought him out, and led him back to Rome, where he was consecrated as Gregory I. For thirteen years Gregory ruled over the former queen city of the world. He was Governor, for the Exarch of Ravenna existed no more, having been driven away by the Longobards. He asked help from the Emperor in Byzantium, but obtained none. He was thrown upon his own resources, and succeeded by the power of his eloquence in disarming King Agilulf, who threatened Rome.

But he was also Bishop, and as such had to govern all the churches of the West. He succeeded in bringing them to abandon Arianism and to accept a single creed, which became the universal or "catholic" confession of faith.

To the heathen of England he sent the former novice Augustine, who had quickly overcome his initiatory difficulties. The little "glutton" ended as Archbishop of Canterbury.

The former retiring and life-weary Abbot had with great effect developed the necessary strength for his duties. The high post to which he had been summoned called out his capacities. He had time for great and small things alike. He reformed the liturgy, wrote letters, composed books, arranged church music. His manner of life, however, was as simple as before. From his cell in the Lateran Palace, he ruled over souls from the Highlands of Scotland to the Pillars of Hercules. His empire was as great as the Caesars', though his legions were only pen and ink. It was the beginning of the Kingdom of Christ, but it was a spiritual empire, and Gregory was the ruler.

ISHMAEL

After the death of Gregory the Great, Christianity seemed to have conquered all Europe which was known at the time, and also Byzantium, Palestine, Egypt, and the north coast of Africa. The conqueror was about to betake himself to rest, when a quite new and unexpected event happened which threatened Christendom with destruction and heralded the arrival of a new race upon the scene. Ishmael's descendants, Abraham's illegitimate sons, who had wandered in the deserts, seeming to continue the Israelites' wandering in the wilderness, began to collect in troops and seek a Promised Land.

Six years after Gregory's death, the Prophet Muhammed, then forty years old, was "awakened." His armies spread like a conflagration, and a hundred years later, Christian Europe thought the last day had come. The countries first conquered by Christianity—Syria, Palestine, Asia Minor, Egypt, and North Africa—had fallen away and done homage to the new Antichrist. Byzantium was threatened; Sicily and Sardinia had been taken, and Italy was in danger.

From the southernmost point of Spain one could see in clear weather the coast of Africa, where the Saracens dwelt. Spain was a country which, somewhat remote from Rome, had grown and developed into one of the richest provinces, after Phoenicians and Carthaginians had laid the foundations of her civilisation. But when Rome fell into decay, Barbarians from the Baltic sea belonging to the new German races, whose advent had been foretold by Tacitus, poured into Spain, founded a kingdom or two, and now at the beginning of the eighth century, possessed the important cities Toledo and Seville.

In Seville, on the Guadalquivir, in the beautiful province of Andalusia, the old Jew Eleazar sat in the shop where he sold weapons, and counted his day's takings.

"Many weapons are sold in these days," was the sudden remark of a stranger who had stepped up to the counter.

Eleazar looked up, liked the appearance of the well-dressed stranger, and answered cautiously, "Yes, certainly, many are sold."

“Are you expecting war?”

“There is always war here—especially verbal warfare.”

“You refer to the twenty Church Councils which have been held here. The Christians are never united.”

Eleazar did not answer.

“Excuse me,” continued the stranger, “but I forgot who you are, and that you would rather forget the last Council.”

“No, not at all! why should I?”

“It was directed against your people.”

“And my only son, who was about to marry a Christian maiden, had to give her up, since marriages with Jews were forbidden….”

“Well! and what was the end of it?”

“He could not survive it, but laid hands on himself, and, as she followed him in death, the blame was laid on us, and we lost our property and freedom.”

“Eleazar!” exclaimed the stranger. “Don’t you know me?”

“No.”

“But when I tell you my name, you will know who I am. Julius—Count Julius….”

“Are you—Count Julius?”

“I am he, whose daughter Florinda was brought up in Toledo, and fell into the hands of King Roderick, the robber and lecher. Can I see you in your chamber? We have much to say to each other!”

Eleazar hesitated, although both, as injured fathers of lost children, had much in common. He was afraid of the Christians, who had begun to persecute the Jews. The Count understood that, but did not withdraw his proposal, for he seemed to have a special object in his visit.

“Let me into your chamber, and I will tell you, in three words, a secret that concerns us both.”

Eleazar did not yield, but began to parley.

“Say one word, a single word to convince me,” he asked.

“Oppas! there is one for you.”

Eleazar opened his eyes, but asked for yet another one.

“Zijad’s son.”

"Still better!" said Eleazar, "but now the last!"

"Bar-coch-ba."

Eleazar reached him his hand. "Come under my roof, eat of my bread, and drink of the sacred wine." In a moment the shop was closed, and the two elderly men sat at supper in the room behind it. They conversed eagerly.

"There are some hundreds of thousands of us Hebrews here in Spain, for when the Emperor Hadrian had destroyed Jerusalem for the last time, he sent some fifty thousand Hebrews here. That is six hundred years ago, and we have naturally increased—yes, to such a number, that ninety thousand of us could be compulsorily baptized. I, too, have been baptized, but, though they poured water on me, I have held fast the faith of my fathers, and how could I do otherwise? The Christians have not one faith, but many. The Synod held in Toledo in 589 A.D. taught, for example, that the Holy Spirit did not only proceed from the Father, but from the Son also. But the Synod of 675 A.D. declared that the Son was not only sent by the Father but by the Holy Spirit. That is nonsense, and therefore they fall away from their own doctrine.

"But instead of falling back on the Old Testament, which is the mother of the New, they plunge into unbelief and heathenism. That is the case with Archbishop Oppas himself in Toledo, who calls himself a hater of Christ, and would rather acknowledge Islam than Catholicism."

"Do you know Oppas?"

"He is our man."

"You mentioned Islam; what do you think of its teaching?"

"It is our own holy faith; a single God, the Only and True One. And the Prophet is Abraham's seed, who has inherited the promise. It is true Ishmael was the son of a bond-woman, but still he was Abraham's seed!"

"But Muhammed expelled the Jews from Arabia."

"Yes, he did that; he was not perfect; but things have altered for the better. Muhammed received his first impressions from his cousin Waraka, who was of Jewish descent. At first he was friendly towards Israel; he told his followers to turn in prayer not towards the Kaaba, but towards Jerusalem. There is also a tradition that the prophet was

a Jew, which may mean that he was an Arab or Ishmaelite, which is the same thing."

"You would, then, rather serve under the Half-Moon than under the Cross?"

"Certainly."

"And Simon, whom you call Bar-coch-ba, is negotiating with the Archbishop Oppas in order to overthrow Roderick?"

"That is true."

"Good! Then I am one with you. But listen carefully to what I say:—Since our common aim is the overthrow of the West Gothic King, I have, as Governor of Ceuta on the African coast, inquired of Emir Mussa al Nazir and his principal officer, Tarik, the son of Zijad, whether they will perhaps help us in case of a claim for damages made by Ceuta and its neighbourhood. Do you think we can let the storm loose?"

Eleazar gnawed his beard. "Is it not already loose?" he asked drily.

"Have you gone further than I know?"

"What do you know?"

"You are so far as that, then? Well! It is all over with my beautiful Spain!"

"Nothing comes to an end; it only changes when its time is over. Spain had its time when it gave Emperors to Rome—Trajan, Hadrian, Antonius, Marcus Aurelius, Theodosius, who may just as likely have been Iberians and Phoenicians. Spain gave Rome learned men and poets, Seneca, Lucan, Martial, Quintilian, Pomponius, Mela, Columella. That is now five hundred years ago, and now we have had barbarism introduced by the Christian Norsemen from the Baltic. Now we might use something Oriental!"

"Do you believe on the future of Islam?"

"Yes, certainly. Mussa has sworn that he will march by Hannibal's route through Gaul and Germany to Rome, in order to turn the 'heathen and women-worshippers' to the one true God."

"You know that! Then there is no turning back."

"No! It is too late. On the 19th of July the half-moon rises over Spain, and it will continue to wax through its phases to the full

moon. What follows then we know not, and have nothing to do with, for One rules—the Lord Zebaoth."

On the 17th of July, 711 A.D., when it had become dark, fire was kindled on the southernmost point of Spain, Punta de Europa. On the African coast, two miles distant, this was answered by a similar signal. A west wind blew from the Atlantic, and brought across the fleet of the Saracens, with five thousand men and horses.

On the Punta de Europa, afterwards called Gibraltar, high above the precipitous cliff stood long-bearded citizens, and fanned the fire and threw fuel on it. In the morning the first troops landed at the foot of the cliff, and the conquest of Spain by the Moors began. Mussa ibn Nazir came on the following day with the chief body. The King of the West Goths assembled as rapidly as possible a hundred thousand men, and, believing himself invincible, marched thither to view the victory. Clothed in silk and gold, like a Byzantine Emperor, he lay in a chariot of ivory drawn by two white mules, and followed by his attendants and the women of his harem.

For three days all went well, but on the fourth day, something unexpected happened.

Shut in between the mountains and rivers of Andalusia, his troops could hardly move, and the King had encamped on the bank of the Guadalete.

Then he saw his people pouring down like a stream from the heights—one division under Archbishop Oppas, the other under Count Julius.

Roderick, who believed that they were fleeing from the enemy, broke up his camp. He could not, however, turn round, but was forced into the stream. He tried to reach the other side by swimming, but there he was met by archers. An Amazon came galloping along the bank on a red roan, and directed her bow against the drowning man in the middle of the stream. On the one bank he saw his troops, who had halted, signal with white flags as a sign of peace to the enemy on the opposite bank. When he saw that he was betrayed, he sank, and with him the whole kingdom of the West Goths. Mussa marched at once to Toledo, before a new king could be chosen. Thereby Islam became domiciled in Spain, and remained there till 1492. The Jews, who had especially helped the Moors, were at once

emancipated, and in every town of Spain a Jew was appointed governor.

EGINHARD TO EMMA

EASTER, A.D. 843,

The Benedictine Convent in Seligenstadt on the Main.

To my dear wife and present sister in Christ,

Emma, from Eginhard, formerly secretary to Charles the Great, now a monk in Seligenstadt on the Main:

Passion-week is at an end, and the Resurrection days are here; spring has melted the frost; mind and memory have woken, and the past rises up again.

Yesterday, on Easter Eve, I walked in the convent garden, and thought of my vanished five and seventy years. I thought of the fine things which were said in the learned circle or academy of the Great Unforgettable, when we played with words and thoughts, like chess-players with their pieces.

"What is man?" asked our teacher, our wisest, Alcuin, whom we called Flaccus.

Angilbert, the Emperor's son-in-law, the husband of the beautiful Bertha, answered, "Man is the slave of death, a flying traveller, a guest in his own dwelling."

"Yes, truly," I said to myself, "a guest; and soon I will pack my knapsack, pay my account, and journey on."

I went along the river-bank and thought, "The same river, always the same river, but always new water; the same water never runs twice past. Such is life, such is the river of time, the heroes and events of history—the panorama of time, the years and the glory of them, all pass and perish."

I then wished to pluck the first Easter lilies to send to you, who were once my wife, and went to the gardener down by the carp-pond. Whom did I meet on the path under the ivy, this plant of eternity, which only knows of death and birth, but not the changes of the seasons? I met the last survivor of the great days, of the Emperor's Round Table, Thiodolf the Goth, now Bishop of Orleans. I cannot describe to you my joy at meeting him again, nor depict my feelings when I read in the face of the old man the whole history of our life.

It was six o'clock in the evening, and after we had sung Vespers, our fast was at an end. I had a large round table placed in the refectory, only for us two, but with twelve chairs and twelve places laid. From the Bishop's guest-room I had the largest armchair brought, and decorated it with leaves and flowers; it was that of the Emperor of blessed memory, who now rests in the cathedral at Aachen, the cathedral which I had the favour and honour of building. The other chairs I assigned to absent friends, first Alcuin, then the poet Angilbert-Homerus, the Irishman Clement, the Bavarian Leidrade, and others whom you knew, but have forgotten.

What an evening, what a night, we passed by the open garden window! We spoke naturally of the Great Unforgettable, and lived his rich and varied life again in our thoughts. We followed him against the Longobards and Saracens, against the Hungarians and other Slavs. But we did not like to linger over his thirty years' war against the Saxons, chiefly out of reverence for his memory, for he ought to have used only spiritual weapons in his campaign of conversion. Remember the Frankish King who sent our friend Anschar to the wild Swedes. He had no armed men, but only God's Holy Word. Certainly he was robbed by thieves like St. Paul, but when once he had arrived he won the King and the nobles of the country by his gentle bearing and preaching.

On the other hand, we lingered gladly in our conversation over the great Christmas Day of 800 A.D. in Rome, when the Western Roman Empire was restored, and the crown was bestowed on Germany. This had been prophesied by Tacitus, and Hermann in the Teutoburger Wald had shed his martyr's blood for it. Rome and Germany! A spiritual and a worldly kingdom! Inscrutable are the ways of the Lord!

When we drank to the strong and gentle Carolus Magnus Augustus, we both rose, Thiodolf and I, and bowed before the empty chair, as though he sat there in bodily presence. Where is he now, the departed of blessed memory—where is his great kingdom, which only his powerful spirit could hold together? What he united has now been scattered by his successors! You know, after the last treaty at Verdun, the kingdom of Karl the Great has ceased to exist; in its place we now have three—Germany, France, and Italy. Perhaps it must be so, and perhaps a single man cannot rule so great an

empire. But it is sad to perceive in history that every great achievement carries within it the seeds of decay, and that the heights are always bordered by deep abysses. Brother Thiodolf brought disquieting news from France. The Saxons, who were finally overthrown with their powerful chief Widukind, have devised a terrible revenge. They have invited Danish and Swedish pirates, called Vikings, into the country. These have sailed up the Rhine, up the Seine as far as Rouen, and up the Loire. These Scandinavians are of German stock, and are therefore of kin to us Franks, but are more nearly related to the Goths, Heruli, Rugieri, and Longobards, of whom the last three are Scandinavian. Odovacer, who overthrew the Western Roman Empire, and deposed the last Emperor Romulus Augustulus, was a Rugier from the Danish island Rugen. These men from the North seem to be now about to step on the stage. Possibly they are the Gog and Magog concerning whom the Old Testament prophesied that they should come from the North. We did not end our conversation till midnight, Thiodolf and I; then we walked up and down in the garden till early mass, for we could not sleep.

Now I close this letter, dear wife, by wishing you happy days far from all the tumult of the world. I only wait for my departure, for life has lost its relish for me, since my lord and Emperor has passed into the great silence. Greet the brethren and the few who still survive from the time of the Great Emperor, and accept, dear Emma, the greeting of your dead husband, whom you will not see before the Day of Resurrection, the great Easter, when we shall all meet again. Till then, “Be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of Jove and of peace shall be with you.”

THE CLOSE OF THE FIRST MILLENNIUM

In the year 998 A.D. Rome had become a German Empire and the German Emperor had become a Roman. Otto III, brought up by his Graeco-Byzantine mother Theofano, had inherited her love of the southern lands, and therefore generally occupied his palace on the Aventine, installed himself as Emperor, and cherished a plan of converting Rome into the capital of the German Empire. He was now twenty years old, ambitious, crochety, pious, and cruel.

During one of his absences, the old Roman spirit had revived, and the high-born senator Crescentius had set up himself as Tribune of the people, freed Rome from the Germans, driven away Pope Gregory V, and installed John XVI in his place. The Emperor returned quickly to Rome, took Crescentius and his Pope prisoner, and then presented the Romans with a vivid spectacle, the like of which they had not seen, though their fathers had.

The Leonine quarter, which embraced the Vatican Hill, with the oldest St. Peter's Church and a papal palace, was connected with the town by the Pons Aelius or Bridge of Hadrian. At the head of the bridge, on the right side, was the sepulchre of Hadrian, a tower-shaped building in which the Emperors up to the time of Caracalla had been buried. When the Goths took Rome, the sepulchre became a fortress, and remained so for a long time.

When the Romans woke up on that memorable morning of the year 998 A.D., they saw twelve wooden crosses erected on Hadrian's Tower terrace. Right above them was to be seen the image of the Archangel Michael, with his drawn sword, which had been erected by Gregory the Great. Many people were assembled on the Aelian Bridge to see the spectacle, and among them were a French merchant and a Gothic pilgrim who had come from the west across the Leonine quarter. The sword of the Archangel flamed in the beams of the sun, which was now high.

"What are those crosses for?" asked the pilgrim, shading his eyes.

"There are twelve! Perhaps they are intended to represent the twelve Apostles."

"No, they have finished their sufferings, and the pious Emperor does not crucify the disciples of the Lord anew."

“Yes, the Emperor! The Saxon! Neither the Goth, nor the Longobard, nor the Frank were to have Rome, but the Saxon—one of the cursed nation whom Charles the Great thought that he had extirpated. He sent ten thousand to Gaul, in order to make a present of these savages to the enemy, and he beheaded four thousand five hundred in a single day, without its costing him a sleepless night. Wonderful are the ways of the Lord!”

“The last are often the first.”

“O Lord Jesus, Redeemer of the world! there is something moving on the crosses! Do you see?”

“Yes, by heaven! No, I cannot look! They are crucified men!”

Two Romans stood by the strangers: “Hermann, you are avenged,” said one.

“Was Hermann a Saxon?” objected the other.

“Probably, since he lived in the Harz district.”

“A thousand years ago Thusnelda passed through the streets in the triumph-train of Germanicus, and carried the unborn Thumelicus under her heart! To think that a thousand years had to pass before she was avenged!”

“A thousand years are as a day! But are not these our Roman brothers on the cross martyrs for Rome’s freedom?”

“Martyrs for our cause! But this time they were wrong, because the gods so willed it.”

Now there was a change in the scene. Under the tower a band of soldiers made a passage through the crowd of people. Pope John XVI came riding backwards on an ass. His ears and nose had been cut off, and his eyes had been dug out. It was a gruesome sight. A wine-bladder, waving over his head in the wind, made it worse. The people were silent, and shuddered simultaneously, for he was, after all, Christ’s representative and St. Peter’s successor, although no martyr.

A Sicilian stood on the bridge close to a Jew.

The Sicilian was a Muhammedan, for Sicily was then in the possession of the Saracens, and had been so for about two hundred years.

"He must be suffering for his predecessors' sins," said the Jew; "that is the Christian belief: *satisfactio vicaria*."

"Suffering is necessary," answered the Moslem; "and I do not grieve at such an end to the pornocracy. For a hundred years the Popes have lived like cannibals. You remember Sergius III, who lived with the harlot Theodora and her daughters. John X continued with Marozia, who with her own hand first killed her brother and then suffocated the Pope with a cushion. John XII was only nineteen when he became Pope. He took bribes, and consecrated a ten year-old boy as bishop in a stable. He committed incest, and turned the Lateran into a brothel. He played cards, drank and swore by Jupiter and Venus.... You know it well."

"Yes," answered the Jew, "the Christians live in hell since they have abandoned the one true God. The fools have, however, stolen from us the Messianic promise; but the promise to Abraham we still possess. Rome is a mad-house, Germany a slaughter-house, and France a brothel. It is a matter to rejoice at, to see how they destroy each other."

He placed himself by the balustrade of the bridge, in order to be able to see better what now followed.

Between the twelve patriots, who writhed on their crosses like worms on hooks, appeared five men dressed in red, who began to construct a platform.

"Those are the executioners—on the Emperor's grave!" said the Jew. "Against Crescentius I have nothing; he was a noble man who fought for the Roman State. But there is one Christian the less!"

"The Christians have always two ways of explaining a man's sufferings. If he is innocent, his suffering is a test, and if he is guilty, well! he deserved his fate. There he comes!"

Crescentius, the last Roman, was led forth. His head fell, and thereby Rome became German, or Germany Roman—till 1806! In the afternoon the nomination of the new Pope (for one could not call it an election) took place, and Gerbert of Auvergne was made Pope, with the title of Silvester II.

The Emperor sat in his palace on the Aventine, and did not venture to go out, for the Romans hated him. In the little hermitage on the slope of the hill, where his friend Adalbert of Prague, the

missionary martyr recently killed by the Saxons, used to live, the Emperor shut himself up with his teacher, the new Pope, Silvester II.

The latter—a Frenchman—had studied in Cordova, where the Caliph had built a university, where Arabian philosophy, itself derived from Greece and India, was taught. In Rheims Silvester has also studied philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, and chemistry. He had been Abbot of Bobbio, Archbishop of Rheims and Ravenna, and, after protesting in many ecclesiastical assemblies against the corruption of the Papacy, had himself become Pope.

The excitement caused by the execution of Crescentius compelled him to seek refuge on the Aventine with his pupil, the Emperor. From the cell of the little convent, near Adalbert's chapel, he guided the destinies of Europe, while at leisure moments he devoted himself to his favourite sciences. For this reason he was reported to be a wizard.

One night as he sat, sunk in thought, at his table, which was covered with letters, the Emperor entered unannounced. He was a tall young man, dressed in an extraordinary garb, a dalmatica adorned with symbols from the Book of the Apocalypse, the Wild Beast and the Harlot, the Book of Seven Seals, and so on.

"Let me talk," he said; "I cannot sleep."

"What has happened, my son?"

"Letters have come—warnings—dreams."

"Tell me."

"Yes; you listen to me, but you don't believe me, when I tell you the truth, and you are afraid of all new thoughts."

"What is new under the sun? Does not St. Augustine say regarding our holy faith, 'What is called in our days Christianity, already existed since the creation of mankind to the birth of Christ. It was then that they began to call Christianity the true religion, which had already existed before. The truths taught by Christ are the same as the ancient ones, only more developed'?"

"Heretic, beware! You do not know what is taking place in the world."

"Let me hear."

"Pilgrims from many lands have been here, and tell of prodigies, visions, and wonders. In the south of France there are pestilence and

famine, and human flesh has been sold in the butchers' shops; in Germany a fiery iron rod has been seen in the sky, and here in Italy these endless pilgrimages have recommenced. In Jerusalem the Church of the Holy Sepulchre has been plundered, and the temple of the False Prophet erected. The whole of Christendom is trembling, for in the immoral Popes of the last century they have seen the Antichrist. Christ's ambassador is murdered; yes, my friend Adalbert was the last up there in Poland: the heathen have reconquered all Christ's conquests in Asia and Africa. The followers of the False Prophet are in Spain, Sicily, and Naples, and threaten Rome. This can mean nothing less than the Last Judgment and destruction of the world, as announced in the Apocalypse."

"So it is the old story again?"

"Story! Get thee hence Satan, for thou savourest not the things which be of God, but those which be of men."

"Do you call me Satan?"

"Yes, when you deny the Word. Is it not written in John's Apocalypse, 'And when the thousand years are accomplished, Satan will be let loose from his prison. And he shall go to deceive the nations which are in the four ends of the earth, Gog and Magog'? There you have the northern peoples who are now in England, Normandy, and Sicily. Is not Theodora the great Babylonian Harlot? Is not the deceiver Muhammed the Wild Beast?"

"Wait, my son! I might quote a verse from the same chapter: 'He who hath part in the first resurrection shall reign with Christ a thousand years.' So that the Millennium is *beginning* now, and cannot end forthwith."

"The old one ends, and the new begins."

"Just so! The old dark age is past, and we await Christ's second coming on earth. If you retained the hope, you would see the new era dawn."

"I do not believe a word of what you say. The last year of the thousand years is here, and now I go out in the desert to await, with fasting, prayer, and penance, the day of the Lord, and the coming of my Redeemer. I will pray for you, my father, but here our ways part, and you will see me no more."

The Emperor departed, and Silvester remained alone.

“I wait!” he said to himself, “but meanwhile I look after our worldly affairs.” And he unfolded a map of the then known world. With a piece of red chalk he drew crosses and crowns, for the most part in the North. But above Jerusalem he drew a flag with a lance.

The year 999 approached its end, and the Christians lived in a state of deadly anxiety. In Rome and its neighbourhood, all the active business of life had ceased. The fields were not sown, but lay covered with weeds; trade was at a stand-still; the shops were closed. Those who had anything gave it away, and had difficulty in finding anyone to take it. The churches stood open day and night for three months, and each day was like Sunday. People wore their best clothes, for there was no object in keeping them, and they wished to be well dressed in order to meet the Redeemer on His arrival. Christmas had been kept with unwonted solemnity, and men lived at peace with one another. The guards of the city had nothing to do, for the fear of what was coming sufficed to maintain order. People slept with open doors, and no one dared to steal or to deceive. There was no need to do so, for everyone received what he asked for; bakers distributed bread gratis, and innkeepers allowed unlimited credit; the payment of debts was not exacted. The churches were crowded day and night; there was a ceaseless round of confessions, absolutions, masses and communions.

It was the day before New Year’s Eve. Views were divided as to the nature of the coming catastrophe—whether it would come as a flood or as an earthquake. Most of the people remained outside their houses, some on the plain, others on the hills; all with their eyes directed towards heaven.

In the morning, the Plain of Mars was full of men, and a crowd formed a circle round a pile of wood. A madman stood on the pile and spoke, with a quantity of papers and parchments in his hand. He was a rich citizen who for three months had practised fasting and penance, and now, reduced to a skeleton, wished to escape the wrath to come. He had collected a large quantity of dry wood under the pretext of giving warmth to all passing beasts of burthen. Since nobody troubled about what others did, he was allowed to do as he liked.

Near the pile of wood stood the remains of an old orator’s pulpit, and in that he took his stand after he had kindled the pile. “In the

name of the Eternal God," he said, "so surely as I burn these bonds, will God the Lord erase my sins from His Book. For all sufferings which I have caused others, I will now suffer myself. Purifying fire, burn my wretched body with all its sins! Mounting flames, let me follow you upwards! Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" He leaped from the pulpit, and fell in the midst of the flames, where he remained on his knees with folded hands till he was suffocated.

In the Forum a man was seen working with a miner's iron bar at a rubbish-heap which should cover him: "Say to the mountains, Cover us," he sang.

From the Pons Sublicius a young couple sprang into the river, locked in an embrace which death could not loosen.

At mid-day the prisons were opened, and the prisoners were received as heroes and martyrs. They were taken to the houses of the nobility, made to sit at table, and senators and their wives washed their feet.

"We are all sinners," people said, "and have nothing to boast of. These prisoners have endured their punishment while we went about free."

Never had there been such a display of philanthropy and mercy since the early days of Christianity.

The sick in the hospitals wanted to come outside, and their beds were carried into the streets and market-places. Everyone, in fact, wanted to be in the open air, and families brought their furniture into the streets. Birds were liberated from their cages, and horses from their stables. At first the latter ran about in the town, but as they scented the fresh air and reached the town gates they galloped off to the Campagna, to seek green pasture. Many, however, remained in the town, and lay about here and there, while children clambered on their backs. The children were the only ones who felt no fear. They jumped about and played as usual, rejoicing in their freedom and the unusual aspect of things. No one wanted to restrain them, and as they did not understand what was the matter, they remained free from anxiety and went on playing.

New Year's Eve had arrived, and the universal alarm rose to a great height. Masters and servants were seen embracing each other and weeping, the former lamenting their severity—the latter, their

dishonesty. Old enemies, who met each other on the street, grasped hands and led each other about like children, singing hymns of praise. It was something like the Golden Age as imagined by the Fathers of the early Church.

The air was as mild as that of a spring day, and the sky was clear till noon. Then it became overclouded. No one ate or drank, but all bathed and put on their festal attire. During the afternoon processions of priests and monks marched through the town, and sang litanies, in which the people joined. Their Kyrie Eleison, "Christ, have mercy upon us," rang all over the town. All Rome was preparing for its own judgment and execution.

There were, however, a number of unbelieving and profligate persons who expected nothing new; they had assembled themselves in the catacombs and ruins, where they celebrated Bacchanalian feasts and orgies. In the ruins of Nero's Golden House a banquet on a large scale had been arranged. In the centre on the ground there burned a fire, surrounded by tables and seats. There was abundance of victuals and wine, for which they only needed to go to the store-room and cellar. There were music, dancing, and singing, and between whiles they amused themselves by watching the bats and owls, which flitted about, scorch and singe themselves in the fire.

Their hilarity was loud, but not unforced. Here, too, philosophising and prophecy were in evidence.

"There is not going to be any Last Judgment to-day," said a young man, who looked as though he were a descendant of the Emperor Nero.

"Anyhow, if it comes, death cannot introduce us to anything worse than we have had in life."

"It has always seemed to me that we are in hell. Headaches every morning, debts and disgrace, varied by occasional imprisonments."

"The Emperor sits naked in a grotto at the foot of Soracte."

"Vides ut alta stet nive candidum, Soracte."

"As we are speaking, life the envious flits away. Enjoy the present day, nor trust the morrow!"

"And the Pope is going to hold a midnight mass—he who has no faith in it himself."

"But he must put a good face on it, and go through with it."

"I know one woman who will not go to mass to-day."

"That is the beautiful Stephania, the widow of Crescentius."

"But she watches for vengeance."

"What have these Germans to do in Rome? I wish the owner of this Golden House could rise from the dead. He was the last Roman!"

"He was a man who did not caress his enemies. He feared nothing between heaven and earth, not even the lightning. Once there was a lightning-flash in his dining-hall as he reclined at table. What do you think he said? 'To your health!' and raised his goblet."

At this moment a heated stone fell from the vaulted roof into the fire, and caused a shower of sparks. The night wind rushed through the hole thus formed, and blew the smoke into the feasters faces. At first they were amused at the occurrence, but were soon obliged to leave the vault.

"Let us go out and witness the end of the world!" cried one of the youths. They formed a procession of Bacchanals and Maenads, one in front carrying a filled wineskin. There were flute-players among them, and all carried goblets in their hands.

Below, in the old Basilica of St. Peter, stood the Pope before the altar, and performed in silence the midnight mass. The church was crowded, and everyone was on his knees. The silence was so deep that the rustle of the white sleeve of the officiant could be heard when he elevated the cup. But another sound was audible, which seemed to be measuring out the last moments of the Millennium. It beat like the pulse in the ear of a feverish man, and at the same rate. The door of the sacristy stood open, and the great clock which hung there ticked calmly and steadfastly, once in a second.

The Pope, who was outwardly just as calm, had probably left the door open in order to produce the utmost effect at the great moment, for his face was pale with emotion, but he did not move, and his hands did not tremble.

The mass was over, and a death-like silence ensued. The people expected the Lord's servant at the altar to speak a few words of comfort. But he said nothing; he seemed absorbed in prayer, and had stretched out his hands towards heaven.

The clock ticked, the people sighed, but nothing happened. Like children afraid of the dark, the congregation lay with their faces towards the ground, and dared not look up. A cold sweat of anxiety dropped from many brows, knees which had gone to sleep caused pain, or were numb, and felt as though they had been amputated.

Then the clock suddenly ceased ticking.

Had the works run down? Was it an omen? Was everything going to stand still, time to be at an end, and eternity begin? From the congregation rose some stifled cries, and, lifeless with terror, some bodies dropped on the stone pavement.

Then the clock began to strike—One, Two, Three, Four.... The twelfth stroke sounded, and the echoes died away. A fresh death-like silence ensued.

Then Silvester turned round, and, with the proud smile of a victor, he extended his hands in blessing. At the same moment all the bells in the tower rang out joyfully, and from the organ-loft a choir of voices began to sing, somewhat unsteadily at first, but soon firmly and clearly, "Te Deum Laudamus!"

The congregation joined in, but it was some time before they could straighten their stiffened backs, and recover from the spectacle of those who had died of fright. When the hymn was over, the people fell in each other's arms, weeping and laughing like lunatics, as they gave each other the kiss of peace.

So ended the first Millennium after the birth of Christ.

In the little castle Paterno on Mount Soracte, the Emperor had spent the Christmas week and New Year's Eve in the strictest fast and penance. But when New Year's Day was come, and nothing had happened, he returned to Rome to meet Silvester and take measures for the future. The Emperor's friend and teacher received him with a smile which was easy to interpret. But the monarch was still so much under the effect of his fit of alarm that he did not venture to be angry.

"Will you now return to earth, my son, and look after your mundane affairs?" said Silvester.

"I will, but I must first fulfil two vows which I made in the hour of need."

"Fulfil them certainly."

"I go to the grave of my friend Adalbert in Gnesen, and I must visit the funeral vault of Charles the Great in Aachen."

"Do so, but you must at the same time fulfil some commissions which I give you for the journey."

So they parted.

Two years had passed, when, one day in January, Pope Silvester was summoned to Paterno, the little castle on Soracte, where the Roman-German Emperor dwelt, and now lay ill.

When Silvester entered the sick-room, the Emperor sat upright, but looked troubled. "You are ill," said Silvester: "is it the soul or body?"

"I am tired."

"Already, at twenty-two years of age."

"I am despondent."

"You are despondent although you saw the world awake from its nightmare. Consider, ungrateful man, all that these two years have brought, what triumphs for Christ, who really seems to have returned. I will enumerate them: listen! Bohemia has received its Duke, who has eradicated heathenism; Austria has concentrated itself as a Danube-state the heathen Magyar has allowed himself to be baptized, and received the crown from our own hand as Stephen the First; Boleslaw in Poland has also received a crown and an archbishop; the new kingdom of Russia has accepted baptism and Vladimir the Great protects us against the Saracens, who are on the decline, and Seljuks or Turks, who are in the ascendant; Harold of Denmark and Olaf of Sweden have established Christianity in their dominions; so has Olaf Tryggveson in Norway and Iceland, in the Faroe Island, in Shetland and Greenland; and the Dane Sven Tveskägg has secured Britain for Christianity. France is under the pious Robert II, of the new race of the Capets, but also of Saxon descent like you. In Spain, the northern States Leon, Castille, Aragon, Navarre, have at last united, and protect us from the Moors in Cordova. All this in five years, and under the aegis of Rome! Is not all this the return of Christ, and do you understand now what Providence means by the Millennium? Those who are alive at the end of another thousand years will perhaps see the ripe fruits, while we have only seen the blossoms. The world is certainly not a

paradise, but it is better than when we had savages in the North and East. And all kings receive the crown and the pallium from Rome. You are a ruler over the nations, my Emperor."

"I? You rule their minds, not I, and I will not rule."

"So I have heard, for you have accepted the rule of a woman."

"Who is that?"

"They say, and you know the report as well as I do, that it is the widow of Crescentius, the beautiful Stephania. Well, that is your own affair, but Solomon says,—'Beware of your enemies, but be wary with your friends.'"

The Emperor looked as though he wished to defend himself, but could not, and so the conversation was at an end.

Some days after, Otto III was dead, poisoned, so ran the report, in some way or other, by the beautiful Stephania.

A year later Silvester II died also.

PETER THE HERMIT

Christendom had awoken to new life after the great and terrible New Year's Eve of 999. Nearly a hundred more years had passed when a ragged barefooted pilgrim wandered out of the gate of Caesarea, on the shore of the Mediterranean. This was the town from which Paul had sailed for Rome in order to spread Christianity, which had now conquered all Europe, but had not been able to maintain a hold upon its birthplace, the Land of Promise, in which Christ had lived, suffered, and been buried.

The "False Prophet" had been the last possessor of Palestine. But when his kingdom, like all others, fell to pieces, quite a new race had issued from the unknown parts of Central Asia and now the Seljuks ruled in Syria. The last Fatimide Caliphs had been very indifferent in matters of belief, and the renowned Al Asis, who had married a Christian wife and was himself a sceptic, had made his wife's brothers Patriarchs of Jerusalem and Alexandria. Everything was altered since the time when the terrible Al Hakim had persecuted Christians as well as Jews, and destroyed the Church of the Resurrection in Jerusalem. And when the Seljuk Melikscha had at last captured the town, matters looked almost hopeless for the Christians, who still made pilgrimages to the Holy Sepulchre.

The pilgrim we spoke of above pursued his journey in a south-eastern direction, and now on the first day he saw the lovely Plain of Sharon spread out before him like a carpet or rather a sea of flowers—crocuses, narcissi, ranunculi, anemones, and especially the tall white Sharon lilies.

It was the Promised Land indeed! The whole of the morning he waded in flowers; at last he reached a village at the foot of a hill. There were waving corn-crops, climbing vines, flourishing olive and fig trees; well-fed cattle were watered at the spring, cows and goats were milked. The pilgrim, who possessed nothing in the world except his rags, asked for a bowl of milk, but obtained none. He went begging from door to door, but was hunted away. Every time that he received a refusal he seemed to be surprisingly cheerful. The fact was, he had come hither from a distant land in order to be able to realise how his Saviour had suffered, and now he was graciously

allowed to experience it on the holy soil itself. He passed through the village, and found another sea of flowers outside it. He bathed his feet in a brook, and felt refreshed. But now at mid-day a wind from the sea arose, and clouds passed over the land. The violent rain beat down the fragile lilylike plants, the wind rooted them up or tore them in two, and collected them in heaps, which rolled along increasing in size as they went, and crushing other flowers in their path.

Towards evening the rain ceased, but the wind continued to blow, and the darkness came. The weary and hungry traveller prepared himself a bed with a heap of flowers which he kept in its place with some stones. After he had hollowed out the heap till it looked like an eagle's nest, he spread another pile of flowers over himself, and went to sleep, pleasantly narcotised by all the sweet scents. For several years he had tasted no wine and never been intoxicated, but this was a good substitute for it. He did not know whether he was asleep or awake; sometimes he felt as though he were rolling away like a wave; sometimes he lay still and listened to a scratching going on in his nest; there was a blowing and a roaring, a murmur in his ears and flashing before his eyes. Finally all was still; he believed he had gone to sleep, for he dreamt.

In his dream he was walking on the Mediterranean Sea; that he found quite natural, but there followed him knights on horseback, troops of armed men, whole races of people. They reached the land, they marched towards the East, and finally saw Jerusalem crowning the heights. Walls, battlements, and towers were crowded with heathen warriors, and the Christian knights halted in order to take counsel. But he, the poor pilgrim, spoke to them, and they listened to him.

"Why do you fear?" he said, "why do you fear these heathen and their walls? Look at me! I take my staff, ascend Mount Zion, strike the gate of David with my staff, and the city opens all her gates!"

He did so—in his dream, and Jerusalem was taken. It was a very simple matter; the knights and the armies honoured him, and he became governor of Jerusalem. When he awoke on the morrow, he got out of his nest, and when he looked round, he found himself before the Jaffa Gate of Jerusalem. He asked himself whether the wind had blown him all that long way, or whether he had traversed it

in sleep. But his dream had been so vivid, that he found everything natural and simple.

He knocked with his staff at the door. And behold! it really opened, but only by the space of a hand-breadth, and a soldier asked what he wanted.

He wished, he said, to visit the Holy Sepulchre.

He could do so, was the answer, if he paid thirty silver zecchines.

As he had not so much, the gate was again closed.

The pilgrim, however, not to be frightened, struck again with his staff, certain that he would get in. Get in he did, quickly enough, and, after he had been well thrashed, was thrown out again and fell on a rubbish-heap on which dogs hunted for bones. This reception was not encouraging, but for the pilgrim it was exactly what he had expected and wished. He had been beaten in the same city where his Master Christ had been beaten and tortured.

What an honour! What undeserved grace!

But the thirty silver pieces! Why was the price just thirty? Because it was the traitor's reward for betraying the Beloved. He would try to collect them by begging, even if it took him ten years to do so.

He exhorted himself to patience, and went southward into the valley of Hinnom or the valley of Hell, where all the rubbish of the city was thrown. There was filth and an evil smell there, but the pilgrim did not notice it, for he only sought to catch a glimpse of the walls of the Holy City. When he came to the south end of the valley, he really beheld Mount Zion with David's Sepulchre. Then he fell on his knees and praised God in song:

"Lauda Sion Salvatorem
Lauda Ducem et pastorem
In hymnis et canticis."

Strengthened by prayer, he went on. He knew the topography of the place well, and when he came on a piece of waste ground underneath the Hill of Evil Counsel, he knew that it was Aceldama, or the Field of the Dead, which had been purchased with the traitor's blood-money to bury strangers in. But he had no thoughts of death, for he knew that he would live till he had taken the City. On the other hand, he was hungry. How bitterly he regretted now that he had not

accustomed himself in his youth, like other famous eremites, to eat grass. Weary, but not depressed, he sat down on a rubbish heap which seemed quite fresh.

As he sat there, a dog came—a mangy famished creature—and laid his head on the pilgrim's knee.

"I have nothing to give you, poor thing," said the pilgrim, and wiped the dog's eyes with the flaps of its ears, for it looked as though it had wept. But when the dog heard what the pilgrim said, it understood, for animals understood all languages merely by the tone. It then began to rummage in the rubbish heap. And behold! there lay, between two cabbage leaves, a pomegranate and a piece of white bread. The pilgrim, who was accustomed to all kinds of miracles, praised God, and ate. And when he had eaten, he thanked God the Merciful. The dog stood by the whole time, and watched him. "Ungrateful wretch that I am to have forgotten thee!" said the pilgrim; "now I will try my fortune!" He began to dig with his staff, and see! there lay a fresh bone, which he gave to the dog, his benefactor. They became friends, and kept together. They now went round the southern end of the city, and turned northward towards the Kedron. They followed the brook, having the city wall on their left and the Mount of Olives on their right. From the bottom of the valley he saw the place where the Temple had been, but no Temple was there now—only the dome of the Muhammedan mosque. Of the Holy Sepulchre there was nothing visible, for it lay within the City and was inconspicuous. He came to Gethsemane, where Christ had suffered, and he climbed the Mount of Olives, from whence he could look over Jerusalem. He did so, and wept. After he had paid his devotions in the ruins of the Church of the Resurrection, he went on northwards round the city, and came again to the Jaffa Gate, where he sat down, firmly resolved to wait till some Christian pilgrims came, for they came hither from all countries of the world. He wanted to beg from them till he had collected the thirty zecchines. So he sat through the first night without anybody coming. Towards morning the door was opened for the peasants who brought in provisions, and the bold idea occurred to him of trying to get in with them, but he was immediately detected and thrashed again. This, however, did not frighten him; he repeated the attempt every morning, though unsuccessfully. He slept on the ground, and ate

from the rubbish heaps; he was jeered at by the children, beaten by the adults, and took everything quietly, convinced that some day his dream would be fulfilled. For thirty days he sat at the gate and received no money, but on the thirty-first he got up in order to take some exercise. He wandered down into the Valley of Hinnom, and his dog "Trusty" ran in front of him.

After he had walked for a while he noticed that his companion had vanished. When he called him, the dog answered by barking. The pilgrim followed the sound, and presently he saw the dog standing by a hole in the wall. There was an entrance, and, following his guide, he came without hindrance right into the town. The first thing he did was to visit the Holy Sepulchre, but it was closed. Then he remembered that there was a Patriarch of Jerusalem, who in some degree acted as a protector of the Christians. But where did he live? "Perhaps you know," he said to the dog.

The dog understood, pricked up his ears, and ran through a labyrinth of crooked streets till he stood at a little door, with a bell-cord hanging by it. The pilgrim pulled it, the door opened, and an old white-bearded man came out, reached the new-comer his hand, led him like a friend into the house, and bade him sit down. "I have waited long for you, Peter," he said. "Yes, I recognise you, for I have seen you for a year in my dreams, but I know not who you are, and whence you come. Tell me your history."

"My history! I am from Amiens in France. I am now called Peter; was formerly a soldier, followed William the Conqueror to Hastings, and took part in the invasion of England. I returned to my own country, and became a school teacher. I could, however, obtain no peace in my soul, but entered a convent. In the solitude of my cell, I reflected on what I heard from my brother monks in the chapter. It was the time when Henry IV began the conflict with Gregory VII. The Pope was right, for Europe ought to be governed from Rome, and Gregory, who wished to set up Christ's Kingdom in spirit and in truth, had united all Christian States together; he imposed tribute from Scandinavia to the Pillars of Hercules. The Emperor was a schismatic, and worked only in the interests of Germany. The matter ended at Canossa, as you know, when the Emperor had to kiss the Pope's foot. And that was right at that time, for the spiritual head is higher than the worldly one. But Canossa was not the end. Gregory,

the mighty champion of the Lord, fell into the same sin as David. In the first place, he summoned the Norman Guiscard from Sicily to his aid. Guiscard came with a horde of Turks and heathen, pillaged Rome, and set it on fire. That was shameful of the Pope, who now fled with Guiscard to Salerno—which was *his* Canossa. But he was also still cruel enough to stir up Henry's sons against their father. Then the great Gregory died in banishment, and Rome was extinct. Rome is no more, but Jerusalem shall be. The chief city of Christendom shall be born again, and rise from its ruins."

The Patriarch had listened, and, though he smiled at first, he was finally serious. "Your faith is great, my son," he said. "But who will take the lead? Who will collect the people?"

"I," answered the Hermit—"I will open the Holy Sepulchre; I will drive out the heathen, and I will have the first Christian King of Jerusalem crowned!"

"With two empty hands?"

"With my rock-like faith."

There was silence.

"Say something, Patriarch!" resumed Peter. "Try to damp my courage if you can; confront me with objections, and rob me of confidence. You cannot! There, I will go now to Rome and speak with Urban II. But give me a letter to confirm my statements when I describe the behaviour of the heathen in the city of Christ. I ask nothing else of you; the rest I will do myself."

"Whoever you are, you shall have the letter, but rest first for a few days."

"No! I have gone three hundred and fifty miles and rested for thirty days. Give me something to eat in the kitchen, while you write the letter, and I start before sunset. When I come again, I shall not be alone, but my name will be Legion. And you will see the accomplishment of my words and your dreams, for God wills it."

The Hermit Peter walked a hundred and fifty miles to Piacenza, and there met Pope Urban II, who was holding a council. He received no encouragement, for the idea of a crusade was no novelty. Gregory VII had collected fifty thousand men for that purpose, but could not carry out his plan. With a true Christian spirit, the Hermit took this failure as a warning to redouble his efforts.

He went to France, preached and stirred up the people, with the result that all France was aflame with crusading fervour when Urban II came to Clermont to hold another council. Then the Crusade was determined on. Peter could not wait, but, together with Walter Pexejo and Walter von Habenichts, he collected a host which finally reached forty thousand in number, including old men, women, and children. There were no soldiers however, but only adventurers who wanted to run away, slaves who sought freedom, and malcontents who wished for change.

They followed the Rhine towards its source, and then the Danube, along whose banks the great road to the East ran. As they approached the frontier of Hungary their number had increased to sixty thousand. The King of Hungary, Kolowan, was not exactly hospitable, and not a person whom it was safe to jest with. The Crusaders received a hint that they were not very welcome, and therefore sent their only mounted men,—exactly six in number—as ambassadors to the King.

Kolowan was in Pesth, with a well-equipped army, and his country was enjoying the blessings of peace, when the envoys arrived. "What do you want?" he asked.

"We seek a free passage to Constantinople."

"How many of you are there?"

"Exactly sixty thousand."

"Although I feel honoured by the visit, I cannot entertain grasshoppers. I have heard of your wild enterprise; I know that you have no provisions with you, and that you beg and steal. Return therefore to your country, or I will treat you as enemies!"

The envoys rode back with the King's answer. But Peter would not turn back.

"Forward! forward! Crusaders and Christians!" he cried, and the whole host crossed the frontier. The Hermit rode on an ass at the head of them, and knew not what went on behind him—robbery, drunkenness, and licence.

The King learned what had happened, and rode out with all his knights. When he saw this mass of ragged rascals, drunk and savage, but all wearing the red cross, he fell in a rage and attacked them. Those who did not fly were trampled underfoot and sabred down so

mercilessly, that, out of the sixty thousand, only three thousand reached Constantinople, among whom was the Hermit.

"We have sown our blood," he said; "our successors will reap."

The Emperor of Constantinople had certainly for a long time waited for help from the West against the wild Seljuks, but he had expected armed men. When he now received a rabble of three thousand beggars and vagabonds, many of them wounded, he resolved to get rid of these guests as honourably as possible. He set them in flat-bottomed boats, and shipped them across to Asia Minor. "Thence you have a straight road to Jerusalem," he said. But he did not say that the Seljuks were encamped on the opposite coast. Accordingly, the rest of them were massacred by the wild hordes near Nicasa—in the same town in which, during the early days of Christianity, so many fateful debates had taken place.

But the Hermit escaped, and returned to Constantinople, where he waited for the great army of the Crusaders. He waited a whole year, just as confident of victory and undismayed as before.

In the little town Tiberias, on the shore of the Lake of Gennesareth sat the old Jew Eleazar, with his family, prepared to celebrate the Passover, or the Exodus from Egypt. It was the tenth day of the month Nisan of the year 1098. The lake shone clear, and its banks were green; the oleanders were in blossom, the lilies had sprung up in the pleasant season when the earth rejoices.

It was evening; all members of the family were dressed as though for a journey, with shoes on their feet and staves in their hands. They stood round the covered table on which the roasted lamb smoked in a dish surrounded by bitter lettuce. The ancestral wine-cup was filled with wine, and white unleavened bread laid on a plate close by.

After the head of the family had washed his hands, he blessed the gifts of God, drank some wine, returned thanks, and invited the others to drink. Then he took some of the bitter herbs, and ate and gave to the others. Then he read from the book of Moses a passage concerning the significance of the feast. After that, the second cup of wine was served, and the youngest son of the house stepped forward and asked, according to the sacred custom, "What is the meaning of this feast?"

The father answered: “The Lord brought us with a strong hand out of the Egyptian bondage.”

As he drank from the second cup, he said, “Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.” They then all sang the 115th Psalm, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give the praise, for Thy truth and mercy’s sake. Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?”

Thereupon a blessing was pronounced on the unleavened bread and the roasted lamb, and they sat down to eat, in a state of contentment and with harmless talk. The old Eleazar spoke of past times, and contrasted them with them the present: “Man born of a woman lives but a short time, and is full of trouble; he cometh up like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth hence like a shadow, and continueth not. A stranger and a sojourner is he upon earth, and therefore he should be always ready for his journey as we are, this holy evening.”

The eldest son Jacob, who had come home in the evening after a journey, seemed to wish to say something, but did not venture to do so, till the fourth and last cup was drunk.

“But, my children,” continued Eleazar, “not only is Israel unsettled and roaming on the earth, but all nations are in a state of wandering. The difference between them and us is that their gods are mortal, while Israel’s God lives. Where is Zeus, the god of the Greeks? Where is the Romans’ Jupiter? Where are the Egyptians’ Isis, Osiris, and Ptha? Where is the Woutan of the Germans, the Teutates of the Gauls? They are all dead, but Israel’s God lives; He cannot die. We are at any rate in Canaan, in our fathers’ land, even if Zion is no longer ours, and we cannot forget the goodness which the Lord has shown us.”

The last cup was drunk, and after another psalm the festival was at an end.

“Now, Jacob,” said Eleazar, “you want to talk. You come from a journey, though somewhat late, and have something new to tell us. Hush! I hear steps in the garden!”

All hurried to the window, for they lived in troublous times; but, as no one was to be seen outside, they sat down again at the table.

“Speak, Jacob,” Eleazar said again.

"I come from Antioch, where the Crusaders are besieged by Kerboga, the Emir of Mosul. Famine has raged among them, and of three hundred thousand Goyim, [Footnote: Gentiles.] only twenty thousand remain."

"What had they to do here?"

"Now, on the roads, they are talking of a new battle which the Goyim have won, and they believe that the Crusaders will march straight on Jerusalem."

"Well, they won't come here."

"They won't find the way, unless there are traitors."

"Moslems or Christians, they are all alike, but Moslems could be our friends, because they are of Abraham's seed. 'God is One!' Had their Prophet stood by that, there would have been nothing between us, but he fell through pride and coupling his own name with that of the Highest—'Muhammed is His Prophet.' Perhaps, but he should not be named in the same breath with the Eternal. The Christians call him a 'false prophet,' but that he was not."

"The Christians could rather...."

"The Christians are misguided, and their doctrine is folly. They believe the Messiah has come, although the world is like a hell, and men resemble devils! And it ever gets worse...."

Then the door was flung open, and on the threshold appeared a little man, emaciated as a skeleton, with burning eyes. He was clothed in rags, carried a cross in his hand, and bore a red cross-shaped sign on his shoulder.

"Are you Christians?" he asked, "since you drink of the cup and eat the bread, as our Lord Jesus Christ did on the night of his betrayal?"

"No," answered Eleazar, "we are of Israel."

"Then you have eaten and drunk your own damnation, and misused the Holy Sacrament for purposes of witchcraft! Out with you!—down to the lake and be baptized, or you will die the death!"

Then Eleazar turned to the Hermit, and cried "No! I and my house will serve the Lord, as we have done this holy evening according to the law of our fathers. We suffer for our sins, that is true, but you, godless, cursed man, pride not yourself on your power, for you have not yet escaped the judgment of Almighty God. I will give my life and

shed my blood for the law of my fathers, but God's justice will punish you, as your pride has deserved."

The Hermit had gone out to his followers. Those within the house closed the window-shutters and the door.

There was a cry without: "Fire the house!"

"Let us bless God, and die!" said Eleazar, and none of them hesitated.

All fell on their knees. Eleazar spoke: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He will stand at the latter day upon the earth. And when I am free from my flesh, I shall see God. Him shall I see and not another, and for that my soul and my heart cry out."

The mother had taken the youngest son in her arms, as though she wished to protect him against the fire which now seized on the wall.

Then Eleazar began the Song of the Three Children in the fire, and when they came to the words,

"O Thank the Lord, for He is good,
And His mercy endureth for ever."

their voices were choked, and they ended their days like the Maccabees.

On 16th July 1069, Peter the Hermit entered Jerusalem through the same Jaffa Gate before which he had sat as a beggar. When Godfrey of Bouillon became King of Jerusalem, Peter was appointed Governor. After he had seen his dream fulfilled, he returned to his own country, entered the convent Neufmoustier, near Lüttich, and remained there till his death.

The Kingdom of Jerusalem soon came to an end. The Muhammedans re-occupied it, and remain there to this day.

The remarkable thing about these predatory expeditions—the Crusades—was that they were led by the Normans, and were curiously like the raids of the Vikings. The indirect results of the Crusades are still treated of in students' essays, which generally close with the moral, "there is nothing evil which does not bring some good with it." Voltaire and Hume, on the other hand, regard the Crusades as the enterprises of lunatics. It is a difficult matter to decide!

LAOCOON

On the Esquiline Hill in Rome, on a spring day in 1506, Signor de Fredis was walking in his vineyard. The day before, his workmen had been digging a pit to seek water, but found none. Signer de Fredis stood by it, and asked himself whether it was not a pity that so much earth had been thrown out, and whether it could not be utilised in the vineyard. He felt about with his stick in the upper part of the pit to ascertain how deep the soil was. The stick sank in the earth up to its handle without meeting with any resistance.

"There must be a hollow under the ground," he said to himself. He first thought of calling the workmen, but since it was better to make the discovery himself, he took a mattock and spade and set to work. By noon he had made a hole large enough to get through, but since it was pitch-black inside, he first went to fetch a lantern. Carrying this, he went down into the earth, and came into a vaulted room. He went through five rooms and found no treasures, but in the sixth he saw a sight that startled him.

Two enormous snakes had enfolded in the coils a bearded man of heroic stature and his two boys.

One snake had already bitten the man in the right side, and the other had bitten one of the boys in the left. The apparition was a statue of Pentelic marble, and might therefore possess as much value as a treasure. Signor de Fredis went at once to the Prefect of the City, who followed him in company with the Aedile and some learned antiquaries. The work of art was brought to the light, and inspected. Its subject was seen to be the Trojan priest Laocoon, against whom Apollo had sent two snakes because he had warned his countrymen against receiving the dangerous Greek gift of the Trojan horse, in which warriors lay concealed.

It was not an edifying story, nor a comforting one, since it illustrated the sad lot of a prophet in this world. The Romans, however, did not think of that, but greeted the statue as a sign of the Renaissance, a memorial of the classical period, and an omen of better times to come.

Pope Julius II bought the Laocoon for the Vatican, after Michael Angelo had declared it was the greatest work of art in the world, and

Signor de Fredis received a pension for life. The excavation and cleaning of the statue took a considerable time. But when at last it was ready, it was decorated with flowers, and carried in procession though the streets of Rome, while all the church-bells rang for a whole hour.

As the procession passed up the Via Flaminia, an Augustinian monk came down it from the northern gate of the city. In front of Hadrian's triumphal arch, he met the crowd carrying their beloved Laocoon. The monk did not immediately understand the matter. He thought, it is true, that the statue was that of a martyr, but could not think of any martyr who had died in a pit of snakes. He therefore turned to a citizen, and asked in Latin, "Which of the holy Church martyrs is it?"

The citizen laughed as at a good jest, but did not think it necessary to answer.

Now came the crowd singing about the Trojan horse, and jesting about priests. The fact that it was a priest on whom the snakes had fastened seemed to afford especial delight to the sceptical and priest-hating rabble.

The Augustinian monk thought of his Virgil, when he heard the word Troy, and, as the statue came nearer, he could read the name Laocoon, the celebrated priest of Apollo. "Are the church-bells ringing for *that*?" he asked his neighbour again.

The latter nodded.

"Are the people mad?" he asked, and this time he received an answer: "No, they are wise; but you are somewhat stupid; probably you come from Germany."

At the dawn of this day, the monk had seen the Holy City at sunrise, and had fallen on his knees in the high road to thank God for the great favour vouchsafed to him of at last treading the soil which had been hallowed by the footprints of Apostles and martyrs. But now he felt depressed, for he understood nothing of this heathenish business, and, wandering through the streets of the city, he tried to find the Scala Santa in the southern quarter, where all pilgrims first paid their devotions when they came to Rome.

Here, in the square by the Lateran, Constantine's wife, Helena, had caused the staircase of Pilate's Palace to be erected, and it was customary to ascend it kneeling, and not in an erect attitude.

The monk approached the holy spot with all the reverence with which his pious spirit inspired him. He hoped to feel the same ecstasy which he had felt before other sanctuaries and relics, for the Redeemer Himself had trodden these marble steps heavily as he went to His doom.

The monk's astonishment was therefore great when he saw street-urchins playing on them with buttons and little stones, and he could hardly contain himself when young priests came running and sprang up the eight and twenty steps in a few bounds.

He paid his devotions in the usual way, but without feeling the ecstasy which he had hoped for.

Then he went into the Church of the Lateran and heard a mass. He had imagined that he would find a cathedral in the genuine Gothic style, something like that of Cologne, but he found a Basilica or Roman hall, where in heathen times a market had been held, and it looked very worldly.

At the High Altar there stood two priests before the Epistle and the Gospel. However, they neither read nor sang; they only gossiped with each other, and pretended to turn the leaves; sometimes they laughed, and when it was over they went their way, without giving a blessing or making the sign of the cross.

"Is this the Holy City?" he asked himself, and went out into the streets again.

His business in Rome was to interview the Vicar-General of the Augustinians, about a matter which concerned his convent, but he first wished to look about him. As he went along he came to a little church on the outer wall. In the open space in front of it a pagan festival was being held: Bacchus was represented sitting on a barrel, scantily clothed nymphs rode on horses, and behind them were satyrs, fauns, Apollo, Mercury, Venus.

The monk hastened into the church to escape the sight of the abomination. But in the sacred place he came upon another scandal. Before the altar stood an ass with an open book before it; below the

ass stood a priest and read mass. Instead of answering "Amen," the congregation hee-hawed like asses, and everyone laughed.

That was the classical "Asses' Festival," which had been forbidden in the previous century, but which, during the Carnival, had been again resumed. The monk did not understand where he was, but thought he was in the hell of the heathen; but it was still worse when a priest disguised as Bacchus, his face smeared with dregs of wine, entered the pulpit, and, taking a text from Boccaccio's *Decameron*, preached an indecent discourse, presently, with a skilful turn, going on to narrate a legend about St. Peter. It began in a poetical way, like other legends, but then made Peter come to an alehouse and cheat the innkeeper about the reckoning.

The monk rushed out of the church, and through the streets till he reached the Convent of the Augustines which he sought. He rang, was admitted, and led into the refectory, where the Prior sat at a covered table surrounded by priests who were entertained in the convent in order to make their confessions, and to take the communion during the fast. Before them were pheasants, with truffles and hard-boiled eggs, salmon and oysters, eels and heads of wild boar—above all, quantities of wine in pitchers and glasses.

"Sit down, little monk!" was the Prior's greeting. "You have a letter: good! Put it under the table-cloth. Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die!"

The monk sat down, but it was Friday, and he could not bring himself to eat flesh on that day. It pained him also to see the licence which prevailed here; still they were his superiors, and the rule of his order forbade him to reprove them.

The Prior, who had just been speaking with some special guest, continued to talk volubly, although conversation was forbidden.

"Yes, worthy friend, we have come as far as this now in Rome. This is Christ's Kingdom as it was announced at the first Christmas, 'One Shepherd, One Sheepfold.' The Holy Father rules over the whole Roman Empire as it was under Caesar and Augustus. But mark well! this empire is a spiritual one, and all these earthly princes lie at the feet of Christ's representative. This is the crown of all epochs of the world's history. 'One Shepherd, One Sheepfold!' Bibamus!"

On the little platform, where formerly a reader used to read out of holy books while the meal was going on, some musicians now sat with flutes and lutes. They struck up an air, and the cups were emptied.

"Now," continued the Prior to the monk, "you have come from far; what news have you brought?"

"Anything new under the sun? Yes," answered a slightly inebriated prelate, "Christopher Columbus is dead, and buried in Valladolid. He died poor, as was to be expected."

"Pride comes before a fall. He was not content with his honours, but wished to be Viceroy and to levy taxes."

"Yes, but at any rate he got to India, to East India, after he had sailed westward. It is enough to make one crazy when one tries to understand it. Sailing west in order to go east!"

"Yes, it is all mad, but the worst is that he has brought the cursed sickness, lues"—(here he whispered). "It has already attacked Cardinal John de Medici. You know he is said to be the Pope's successor."

"As regards the Holy Father, our great Julius II, he is a valiant champion of the Lord, and now the world has seen what this basilisk-egg, France, has hatched. Fancy! they want to come now and divide our Italy among them! As if we did not have enough with the Germans."

"The French in Naples! What the deuce have we to do with them?"

The Prior now felt obliged to attend to his guest, the monk.

"Eat, little monk," he said. "He who is weak, eateth herbs, and all flesh is grass, *ergo*...."

"I never eat meat on Friday, the day on which our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died!"

"Then you are wrong! But you must not speak so loud, you understand, for if you sin, you must go in your room, and hold your mouth! Practise obedience and silence, the first virtues of our Order."

The monk turned first red, then pale, and his cheekbones could be seen through his thin cheeks. But he kept silence, after he had taken a spoonful of salt in his mouth to help him to control his tongue.

"He is a Maccabee," whispered the prelate.

"Conventual disciple is decaying," continued the Prior, jocosely; "the young monks do not obey their superiors any more, but we must have a reformation! Drink, monk, and give me an answer!"

"We must obey God rather than man," answered the monk. There was an embarrassed pause, and the prelate who had to communicate in the evening declined to drink any more. But this vexed the Prior, who felt the implied reproof.

"You are from the country, my friend," he said to the monk, "and know not the time, nor the spirit of the time. You must have a licence for me—it must be paid for of course—and then the day is not dishonoured. Besides—*panis es et esto*. Here you have wine and bread—with butter on it. More wine, boy!"

The monk rose to go; the Prior seemed to wake to recollection.

"What is your name, monk?"

"My name is Martin, Master of Philosophy, from Wittenberg."

"Yes, yes, thank you. But don't go yet! Give me your letter." The monk handed over the letter, which the Prior opened and glanced through.

"The Kurfürst of Saxony! Master Martin Luther, go if you wish to your chamber. Rest till the evening, then we will go together to the assembly at Chigi. There we shall meet elegant people like Cardinal John de Medici, great men like Raphael, and the Archangel Michael himself. Do you know Michael Angelo, who is building the new Church of St. Peter and painting the Sistine Chapel? No! then you will learn to know him. *Vale*, brother, and sleep well."

Master Martin Luther went, sorely troubled, but resolved to see more of the state of affairs before judging too hastily.

Cards were now brought out, and the Prior shuffled them.

"That is an unpleasant fellow, whom the Kurfürst had sent to us. A hypocrite, who does not drink wine and crosses himself at the sight of a pheasant!"

"There was an ill-omened look about the man."

"He looked something like the Trojan horse, and Beelzebub only knows what he has in his belly."

When Luther came into his lonely cell, he wept with a young man's boundless grief when reality contradicts his expectations, and he finds that all which he has learnt to prize is only contemptible and common.

He was not, however, allowed to be alone long, for there was a knock at the door, and there entered a young Augustinian monk, who seemed, with a confidential air, to invite his acquaintance.

"Brother Martin, you must not be solitary, but open your heart to sympathetic friends."

He took Martin's hands. "Tell me," he said, "what troubles you, and I will answer you."

Luther looked at the young monk, and saw that he was a swarthy Italian with glowing eyes. But he had been so long alone that he felt the necessity of speech.

"What do you think," he said, "our Lord Christ would say if he now arose and came into the Holy City?"

"He would rejoice that His churches, His three hundred and sixty-five churches, are built on the foundations of the heathen temples. You know that since Charles the Great dragged the great marble pillars to Aachen in order to build his cathedral, our Popes have also gone to work, and the heathen and their houses have been literally laid at the feet of Christ. That is grand and something to rejoice at! *Ecclesia Triumphans!* Would not Christ rejoice at it? How well Innocent III has expressed the 'Idea' of the conquering Church, as Plato would call it. You know Plato—the Pope has just paid five thousand ducats for a manuscript of the *Timoeus*. Pope Innocent says: 'St Peter's successors have received from God the commission not only to rule the Church but the whole world. As God has set two great lights in the sky, he has also set up two great powers on earth, the Papacy, which is the higher because the care of souls is committed to it, and the Royal power which is the lower, and to which only the charge of the bodies of men is committed.' If you have any objection to make to that, brother, speak it out."

"No, not against that, but against everything which I have seen and heard."

"For example? Do you mean eating and drinking?"

"Yes, that also."

"How petty-minded you are! I speak of the highest things, and you talk about eating and drinking. Fie! Martin! you are a meat-rejector and a wine-eschewing Turk! But I accept your challenge. Our Lord Christ allowed His disciples to pluck ears of corn on the Sabbath; that was against the law of Moses, and was disapproved of by the Pharisees.... You are a Pharisee. But now I will also remind you of what Paul writes to the Romans—the Romans among whom we count ourselves; perhaps as a German subject, you have not the right to do that. Well, Paul writes: 'You look on the outside.'"

"Pardon me, that is the Epistle to the Corinthians."

"Oh, you look on the outside too. But Paul says further, 'All things are lawful to me, but all things are not profitable. All that is sold in the market-place, that eat and ask nothing for conscience' sake; for the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof.' Those are clear words, and a Frenchman would call them liberal-minded. But you come here like a Pharisee, and wish to rebuke your superiors for trifles; and the ordinances of men are more to you than God's command. Fie! Martin! Remember your own words: 'We should obey God rather than men!' You conceited slave of the letter, you should read Paul."

Luther was not yet so familiar with the Holy Scriptures as he afterwards became, for in the convent he had chiefly studied the Corpus Juris, Aristotle, Virgil, and the comedies of Plautus, and was somewhat depressed after his severe inward conflicts. Therefore he gave no answer, but chafed internally.

"Have you any other question for me?" began the Augustinian again, with an affected air of sympathy which irritated Luther still more. "I can understand that our national customs have annoyed you as a—foreigner. Every country has its own customs, and we keep our Roman Carnival by making ridicule of the dead gods of the old heathen, if one can call them gods! I believe you do the same in Germany, though in a coarser way. You must put up with that. As regards the 'Festival of the Ass,' that had originally a beautiful significance, since the poor animal was honoured with the task of carrying our Saviour and His mother into Egypt. But, as you know, the common people drag everything that is great and beautiful into the dust. Can we help it? Can I do you any service? Do you want anything?"

"Nothing; but I thank you!" Luther was again alone, and the fiends of doubt were again let loose upon him. The man was certainly right from his own point of view, and he had strengthened his assertions by arguments and by citations from Paul. But his point of view was false;—that was the matter. How, then, was one to alter one's point of view? That was only the effect of faith through grace, and therefore not the work of man.

Then his introspective mind, which had been trained in the Aristotelian dialectic, began to examine his opponent's point of view. A merciful loving Heavenly Father might very well smile at the follies and weaknesses of His human children; why, then, should we not be able to do the same? Why should we be stricter than He? As long as we live in the flesh, we must think according to the flesh, but that does not prevent the spirit obtaining its due rights.

Did not Paul himself say, "So then we hold that man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law"?

Yes, but were these drunken and licentious ecclesiastics really believers? The Prior had blasphemed the Sacrament, and given the prelate a dispensation from hearing confession and celebrating mass in consideration of a fee. That was monstrous, heathenish, and a Satanic abomination. Certainly, but faith itself was a gift bestowed by grace, and if these men had not obtained grace they were guiltless. But they were hardened sinners! Paul again gave the answer to this: "The Lord receives whom He will, and whom He will He hardeneth." If God had hardened them, as He hardened Pharaoh's heart, then they were guiltless; and if so, why should we venture to judge and condemn them. A mill-wheel seemed to go round in his head, and he blamed Aristotle the heathen, who had seduced him in his youth, and taught him to split hairs about simple matters. He felt also that Paul could not help him, since such was his teaching. Feeling quite crushed, he knelt down again on his praying stool, and implored God to take him out of this world of lying deceit and uncertainty. In this world one was surrounded by darkness without being able to kindle a light; in this life one was driven to battle without having received weapons. So he prayed and struggled with himself till the evening.

Then the Prior came and fetched him. "My son," he said, "my dear brother, you must not make a paramour of religion; you must not

practise it as a daily task or a bad habit. You must live your life and regard it as a melody, while religion is a gentle accompaniment to it. Work is for every day, rest and festival for Sundays. But if you keep your Sabbath on the week-day you sin.... Come! now I will show you Rome!"

Martin followed him, but unwillingly. The streets were illuminated, and the people were amusing themselves with dancing, music, and jugglers' feats.

"You must know where we are going," said the Prior. "This Agostino Chigi is a banker, almost as rich as the House of Fugger in Augsburg, and he looks after the Pope's business affairs. Moreover, he is a Maecenas, who patronises the fine arts. His especial protégé is Raphael, who has just painted some beautiful large pictures in his villa, which we will now see."

They reached the Tiber, followed the right bank, went over a bridge, and stood before a garden which was enclosed by marble pillars and a—gilded iron fence. It was now dark, and the garden was illuminated by lanterns which hung on the boughs of the orange-trees, and so lit up the ripe fruits that they gleamed like gold. 'White marble statues stood among the dark-leaved trees; fountains sent up jets of perfumed spray; among the shrubberies one saw ladies with their gallants; here a singer was accompanying himself on the lute; there a poet was reading his verses.

In the midst of the park stood the villa which resembled that of Maecenas in the Sabine Hills or Cicero's Tusculum, and was adorned with statues' of heathen gods. The doors stood open, and there was a sound of music within. "People are not introduced to the host here," said the Prior, "for he does not like ceremony; therefore I leave you alone now, and you must find acquaintances for yourself; surprises are always pleasant."

Luther found himself alone, and turned irresolutely to the right, where he saw a row of illuminated rooms. They were full of guests drinking and chatting, but no one noticed the poor monk, who could listen undisturbed to their conversation. In the first room a group had formed round a man who was distributing specimens of a printed book, the leaves of which people were eagerly turning.

"Hylacompus? is that a pseudonym?" asked one of them.

"He is a—printer called Waldseemüller in Saint-Dié."

"*Cosmographies Introductio*—a description of the New World."

"We shall at last get information about these fables of Columbus."

"Columbus will not travel any more."

"Columbus has travelled to—hell! Now it is Amerigo Vespucci's turn."

"He is a Florentine and a fellow-countrymen."

"Well, Columbus was a Genoese."

"Look you! Rome rules the world, the known and the unknown alike! *Urbs est urbs!* And nowadays you can meet all the nations of the world at the house of the Roman Chigi. I have, as a matter of fact, seen Turks, Mongols, Danes, and Russians here this evening."

"I should like to see a Turk! I like the Turks especially, because they have blown that rotten Byzantium to pieces—Byzantium which dared to call itself the 'Eastern Rome.' Now there is only one Rome!"

"Do you know that our Holy Father is treating with Sultan Bajazet regarding help against Venice."

"Yes, but that is diabolical! We must at any rate act as though we were Christians."

"Act—yes; for I am not a Christian, nor are you."

"If one must have a religion, give me Islam! God is One! That is the whole of its theology; a prayer-mat is its whole liturgy."

"You have to have a washing-basin besides."

"And a harem."

"Things are certainly in a bad way with our religion. If one reads its history, it is a history of the decay of Christianity. That has been continually going on for fifteen hundred years since the days of the Apostles; soon the process of degeneration must be complete."

"And if one reads the history of the Papacy, it is the same."

"No, hush!" said a fat Cardinal, "you must let the papal throne remain till I have sat in it."

"After a Borgia, it would suit as well to have a Medici like you, and especially a son of Lorenzo the Magnificent."

"Will not the cardinals dance?" asked one, who seemed to be Chigi himself.

"Yes, after supper, in the pavilion, and behind closed doors," answered the Cardinal de Medici, "and after I have hung up the red hat."

So much was clear to Luther from the foregoing conversation,—that he had seen and heard the representatives of the highest ranks of the priesthood, and that the stout man was John de Medici, the candidate for the papal chair.

He went quickly through several other rooms where half-intoxicated women were coquetting with their paramours. At last he came into the great banqueting hall. There stood groups of ambassadors and pilgrims, representing all nations of the world. They were looking at the ceiling and admiring the paintings on it. Luther followed their example, while he listened to their remarks.

"This is like looking at the sky; one has to lie on one's back."

"I know nothing more beautiful than sunrise and the nude."

"Raphael is indeed a divine painter."

"What luck that Savonarola is burnt, else he would have burnt these paintings."

At the mention of Savonarola's name the monk awoke from the state of aesthetic intoxication into which the pictures had brought him, and rushed out into the night. Savonarola, the last of the martyrs, who had sought to save Christendom and had been burnt! All were burnt who tried to serve Christ—by way of encouraging them.

How could one expect people to believe in Christianity? What added to his trouble of mind was the fact that this painter who had the name of an angel, and looked like an angel, painted Jupiter and nude women! Nothing kept what it promised; all was dust and ashes. *Vanitas!* But this heathenism which sprang from the earth, what was its object?

Even the divine Dante had chosen a heathen Roman poet, Virgil, as his guide through Hell, and a beautiful maiden as his companion on the way to heaven. That was foolishness and blasphemy.

The end of the world must be approaching, for Antichrist was come and ruled in Rome. But an Antichrist had always sat on the Papal throne, which was itself an evil, for Paul had taught that in Christ's Church we are all priests and should form a priesthood.

So he reached his cell again, and recovered himself and his God in solitude.

The next morning he went out in order to see the Church of St. Peter and the Vatican, which had become the residence of the Popes after their return from Avignon. Since he did not know his way about the town, he happened to come into the Forum. There were several bodies of troops collected for review, and on a great black stallion sat an old man, armed from top to toe in steel. The troops passed in review before him, and he seemed to be the commander.

"He looks like a Rabbi," said a citizen, "and he must be quite five and sixty now."

"He seems to me to resemble the prophet Muhammed. And he began as a tradesman."

"Yes, and he has bought the papal chair."

"Well, let it go! But his summoning Charles VIII with the French to Naples was a betrayal of his country. Now he goes against Venice, and leads the troops himself."

"And expects help from the Turks."

"They ought not to play with the Turks, who are already in Hungary and mean to get to Vienna."

"We have forgotten the Crusades, and tolerance is a fine quality."

"Yes, the last thing they did was to undertake a crusade against the Christian Albigenses, while they tried to conciliate the Muhammedans in Sicily."

"The world is a madhouse."

This, then, was Pope Julius II, who had overcome the monster Alexander VI, and now led his army against Venice, His kingdom was quite obviously of this world, and Luther lost all desire for an audience with him.

He went now to the Leonine quarter, where the new Church of St. Peter's was to be built in place of the one which had been pulled down. This, in its turn, was a successor of Nero's Circus, in which the first Christian martyrs had suffered. He found the site enclosed by a iron fence, but at the entrance stood two Dominican monks, and a civilian who looked like a clerk. Between them was a great iron chest, and the monks called aloud the scale of prices for the forgiveness of sins. All who entered, and wished to see the building, threw money

to the clerk, who counted and entered it in his book. This functionary had been appointed by Hans Fugger, who farmed the sale of indulgences.

Luther also wished to see the building, and without thinking put down some silver pieces. As a receipt, he received a piece of paper on which was written the formula of forgiveness for some trifling sins.

When he had read the paper, he returned it to the clerk, and burst out, "I don't buy forgiveness of sins, but I gladly pay the entrance fee."

He entered the site, but now noticed the dark-eyed Augustinian monk following him.

"Are you dissatisfied, brother?" said the latter. "Do you think that the forgiveness of sins is bought? Who ever said so? Don't you know that the Civil Law exacts fines for certain trespasses? Why should not the Ecclesiastical Law do the same? Tell me any reason. What nonsense you talk? What is buying? You pay out money, and by doing so deprive yourself of certain enjoyments! Instead of buying wine and women, you give this money to the Church. Good! By doing so, you renounce the sin with which you would otherwise have polluted yourself."

"Who taught you such arguments?"

"We learn in the schools here to think, you see; we read Cicero and Aristotle."

"Do you read the Bible also?"

"Yes, certainly. The Epistle always lies beside the Gospel on the altar-desk."

"Do you understand what you read?"

"Now you are impolite, Martin, but you are also proud, and you must not be that. Look now at the new church. What we see is only the foundation, but we can go in the architect's cottage, and see the designs there."

The designs were hung up in a little pavilion, and another fee was charged for entrance.

"Now what does my critical brother say?"

"That is simply a Roman bath-house," answered Luther after a glance. "Caracalla's Thermae, I should say."

"It is a heathen building, then!"

"Yes, if you like, but everything is heathenish here, although baptized. The heathen were not so stupid.... I won't see any more."

"But look at those two great men there, before you go. The tall man with the patriarchal beard is Michael Angelo, and that slim youth with the long neck and feminine features is Raphael."

"Is that Raphael?"

"Yes; he looks like an angel, but is not so dangerous. He is a very good man; they talk of getting him married. He does not want to, however, for his eye is on a cardinal's hat, which they have promised him."

"Cardinal's hat?"

"Yes, he is spiritually-minded, although he paints worldly objects."

"I remember, but I want to forget them."

"Listen, Martin!" the monk interrupted him, with an insulting air of familiarity; "when you go away from here, and get home, don't forget to curb your tongue! Think of what I say: there are eyes and ears which follow you where you go, and when you least suspect it."

"If the Lord is with me, what can men do against me?"

"Are you sure that the Lord is with you? Do you know His ways and His will?—You only? Can you interpret His meaning when He speaks?"

"Yes, I can; for I hear his voice in my conscience. Get thee hence, Satan, or I shall pray that heaven's lightning may smite thee! I came here as a believing child, but I shall depart as a believing man, for your questions have only evoked my silent answers which you have not heard, but which some day you will hear. You have killed Savonarola, but I am young and strong, and I shall live. Mark that!"

Luther did not stay long in Rome, but he took the opportunity of learning Hebrew, and attended the lectures of the Jew Elia Levi ben Asher, surnamed Bachur or Elias Levita.

There he met Cardinal Viterbo, the patron of the Jews, and many other celebrities, for Oriental languages were then in fashion after the Turks had established themselves in Constantinople.

Luther enjoyed the friendship of the old Jew, for Elias was the only "Christian" whom he found in Rome. It was a pity, to be sure, that he lived under the Law, and was not acquainted with the Gospel, but he knew no better.

THE INSTRUMENT

In the year 1483, the same year in which Luther was born, Docter Coctier sat in his laboratory at Paris, and carried on a philosophical discussion with a chemical expert who was passing through the city.

The laboratory was in the same building as his observatory, in the Marais quarter of the town, a site occupied to-day by the Place des Vosges. Not far away is the Bastille, the magnificent Hôtel de Saint-Pol, and the brilliant Des Tournelles, the residence of the Kings before the Louvre was built. Here Louis XI had given his private physician, chancellor, and doctor of all the sciences, Coctier, a house which lay in a labyrinth-like park called the Garden of Daedalus. The doctor was speaking, and the expert listened: "Yes, Plato in his *Timaeus* calls gold one of the densest and finest substances which filters through stone. There is a metal derived from gold which is black, and that is iron. But a substance more akin to gold is copper, which is composed of shining congealed fluids, and one of whose minor constituents is green earth. Now I ask, 'Why cannot copper be freed from this last, and refined to gold?'"

"Yes," answered the expert, "it can, if one uses atramentum or the philosopher's stone."

"What is that?"

"Atramentum is copperas."

"Ventre-saint-gris! that is Plato's iron! Now I see! Who taught you that?"

"I learnt it from the greatest living magician in Wittenberg. His name is Dr. Faustus, and he has studied magic in Krakau."

"He is alive, then! Tell me! Tell me!"

"This man, according to many witnesses, has done miracles like Christ; he has undertaken to restore the lost comedies of Plautus and Terence; his mind can soar on eagle's wings and discover secrets of the heights and depths."

"Has he also found the elixir of life?"

"Yes, since gold can be resolved into its elements."

"If gold can be resolved, then it has constituents. What are they?"

“Gold can be easily dissolved in oil of vitriol, salts of ammonia, and saltpetre.”

“What do you say?”

The Doctor jumped up; the stove had heated the room and made him uncomfortable.

“Let us go for a little walk,” he said; “but I must first make a note of what you say, for, when I wish to remember something important, the devil makes confusion in my head. These, then, are means of dissolving gold—oil of vitriol, salts of ammonia, and saltpetre!”

The expert, whose name was Balthasar, now first noticed that he had given his information without obtaining a receipt or any equivalent for it, and, since he was not one of the unselfish kind, he threw out a feeler.

“How is our gracious King?”

The question revealed his secret and his wish, and put Doctor Coctier on his guard. “Ah,” he said to himself, “you have your eye on the King with your elixir of life.” And then he added aloud, “He is quite well.”

“Oh! I had heard the opposite!”

“Then they have lied.”

Then there was silence in the room, and the two men tried to read each other’s thoughts. It was so terribly still that they felt their hatred germinate, and had already begun a fight to the death. Doctor Coctier’s thoughts ran as follows: “You come with an elixir to lengthen the life of the monster who is our King; you wish thereby to make your own fortune and to bring trouble on me; and you know that he who has the King’s life in his hands, has the power.”

Quick as lightning he had taken his resolve, coolly and cruelly, as the custom of the time was. He resumed the conversation, and said, “Now you must see my ‘Daedalus’ or labyrinth. Since the time of the Minotaur, there has been none like it.”

The labyrinth was a thicket threaded by secret passages, bordered by hornbeam-hedges, four ells high, and so dense that one did not notice the thin iron balustrade which ran along them. Artistically contrived and impenetrable, the labyrinth meandered in every direction. It seemed to be endlessly long, and was so arranged that its perspectives deceived the eye. It also contained secret doors and

underground passages, and a visitor soon grew aware that it had not been constructed as a joke, but in deadly earnest. Only the King and Doctor Coctier possessed the key to this puzzle.

When the two men had walked for a good time, admired statues and watched fountains play, Balthasar wished to sit upon a bench, whether it was that he was tired or suspected some mischief.

But the Doctor prevented him: "No, not on *that* seat," he said. They continued their walk. But now the Doctor quickened his steps, and, after a while, his guest felt again weary and confused in his head from the perpetual turning round. Therefore he threw himself on the first seat which he saw, and drew a deep breath.

"You run the life out of me, Doctor," he said.

"No, you are not so short-lived," answered the Doctor; "I see a long line of life on your forehead, and the bar between your eyes shows that you were born under the planet Jupiter. Besides, you possess the elixir of life, and can prolong your existence as much as you like, can't you?"

The expert noticed a cruel smile on the Doctor's face, and, feeling himself in danger, tried to spring up, but the arms of the chair had closed around him, and he was held fast. The next moment Doctor Coctier seemed to be seeking for something in the sand with his left foot, and, when he had found it, he pressed with all his weight on the invisible object.

"Farewell, young man," he said; "loquacious, conceited young man, who wanted to lord it over Doctor Coctier. Now I will settle the King for you."

The seat disappeared in the earth with the expert. It was an oubliette—a pit with a trap-door, which drew the veil of oblivion over the man who had vanished.

When he had finished the affair, the Doctor sought to leave the labyrinth, but could not find the way at once, for he was deep in thought, and kept on repeating the formula for the elixir which he had just learnt, to impress it on his mind, in case the recipe should be lost—"oil of vitriol, salts of ammonia, saltpetre." Suddenly he found himself in a round space where many paths converged, and to his great astonishment saw a body lying on the ground. It looked like that of a large brown watchdog, but limp and lifeless.

“It is not the first who has been caught in this crab-pot,” he thought, and came nearer. But as the brown mass moved, he saw that it was a man with torn clothes and a shabby fur cap.

It was the King—Louis XI in the last year of his life.

“Sire, in the name of all the saints, what is the matter with you?” exclaimed the Doctor.

“Wretch!” answered the King, “why do you construct such traps that one cannot find the way out of them?”

Now it was Louis himself who, in his youth, had constructed the maze, but the Doctor could not venture to tell him so. Therefore he spoke soothingly.

“Sire, you are ill. Why do you not remain in Tours? How have you come here?”

“I cannot sleep, and I cannot eat. The last few days I have passed in Vincennes, in Saint-Pol, in the Louvre, but I find peace nowhere. At last I came here, in order to be safe in the place which only you and I know; I came yesterday morning, and would have stayed longer, but I was hungry, and when I wanted to get out, I could not find the way. I have been here, freezing, last night. Take me away; I am ill; feel my pulse, and see whether it is not the quartan ague.” The Doctor tried to feel his pulse, but did so with difficulty for it was hardly beating at all; but he dared not tell the King so.

“Your pulse is regular and strong, sire; let us get home!”

“I will eat at your house; you only can prepare food properly; all the rest spoil it with their everlasting condiments; they spice all my dishes, and the spices are bad. Jacob, help me to get away from here—help me. Did you see the star last night? Is there anything new in the sky? There is certain a comet approaching. I feel it before it comes.”

“No, sire; no comet is approaching....”

“Do you answer impertinently? Then you believe I am sick—perhaps incurably.”

“No, sire, you are healthier than ever; but follow me—I will make you a bed, and prepare you a meal.”

The King rose and followed the Doctor. The latter, however, wished the monarch to go before him but the King mistrusted his

only last friend, who certainly did not love him, and would have gladly seen him dead.

"Beware of the seats, sire," he cried. "Do not go too near to the hedge; keep in the middle of the path."

"Your seats themselves should.... Forgive me my sins." He crossed himself.

When they came out of the labyrinth, the King fell in a rage at the recollection of what he had suffered, and, instead of being grateful towards his rescuer, he burst into abuse: "How could you let me go astray in your garden, and let me sleep on the bare ground in the open air? You are an ass." They entered the laboratory, where it was warm, and the King, who was observant, noticed at once the recipe which the Doctor had left there.

"What are you doing behind my back? What recipe have you been writing? Is it poison or medicine? Oil of vitriol is poison, salts of ammonia are only for dysentery, saltpetre produces scurvy. For whom have you made this mixture?"

"It is for the gardener's cow, which has calved," answered the Doctor, who certainly did not wish to prolong the tyrant's life.

The King laid down on a sofa. "Jacob," he said, "you must not go away; I will not eat, but I will sleep, and you must sit here by me. I have had to sleep for eight nights. But put out the fire; it hurts my eyes. Don't let down the blinds; I want to see the sun; otherwise I cannot sleep."

He seemed to fall asleep, but it was only a momentary nap. Then he grew wide awake again, and sat up in bed.

"Why do you keep starlings in your garden, Jacob?"

"I have no starlings," answered the Doctor impatiently, "but if you have heard them whistling, sire, they must be there with your permission."

"Don't you hear them, then?"

"No! but what are they singing?"

"Yes, you know! After the shameful treaty of Peronne, when I had to yield to Charles of Burgundy, the Parisians taught their starlings to cry 'Peronne!' Do you know what they are saying now?"

The Doctor lost patience, for he had heard these old stories thousands of times: “They are not saying ‘Guienne,’ are they?” he asked.

There was an ugly reference to fratricide in the question, for the King was suspected of having murdered his brother, the Duke of Guienne. He started from the sofa in a pugnacious attitude. “What! You believe in this fable? But I have never committed murder, though I would certainly like to murder you....”

“Better leave it alone!” answered the Doctor cynically; “you know what the starshave said—eight days after my death, follows yours.”

The King had an attack of cramp, for he believed this fable, which Coctier had invented to protect his own life. But when he recovered consciousness, he continued to wander in his talk.

“They also say that I murdered my father, but that is a lie. He starved himself to death for fear of being poisoned.”

“Of being poisoned by you! You are a fine fellow! But your hour will soon come.”

“Hush!... I remember every thing now. My father was a noodle who let France be overrun by the English, and when the Maid of Orleans saved him, gave her up to the English. I hate my father who was false to my mother with Agnes Sorel, and had his legitimate children brought up by his paramour. When he left the kingdom to itself, I and the nobles took it in hand. That you call ‘revolt,’ but I have never stirred up a revolt! That is a lie.”

“Listen!” the Doctor broke in; “if you wish to confess, send for your father confessor.”

“I am not confessing to you; I am defending myself.”

“Who is accusing you, then? Your own bad conscience.”

“I have no bad conscience, but I am accused unjustly.”

“Who is accusing you? The starling?”

“My wife and children accuse me, and don’t wish to see me.”

“No; if you have sent them to Amboise, they cannot see you, and, as a matter of fact, they do not wish to.”

“To think that I, the son of King Charles VII, must hear this sort of thing from a quack doctor! I have always liked people of low rank; Olivier the barber was my friend.”

“And the executioner Tristan was your godfather.”

“He was provost-marshal, you dog!”

“The tailor became a herald.”

“And the quack doctor a chancellor! Put that to my account and praise me, ingrate! for having protected you from the nobles, and for only having regard to merit.”

“That is certainly a redeeming feature.”

Just then a man appeared in the doorway with his cap in his hand.

“Who is there?” cried the King. “Is it a murderer?”

“No, it is only the gardener,” the man answered.

“Ha! ha! gardener!—your cow has calved, hasn’t she?”

“I possess no cow, sire, nor have I ever had one.”

The King was beside himself, and flew at Coctier’s throat.

“You have lied to me, scoundrel; it is not medicine you were preparing, but poison.”

The gardener disappeared. “If I wished to do what I should,” said Coctier, “I would treat you like Charles the Bold did when you cheated him.”

“What did he do? What do people say that he did?”

“People say that he beat you with a stick.”

The King was ashamed, went to bed again, and hid his face in the pillow. The Doctor considered this a favourable moment for preferring a long-denied request.

“Will you now liberate the Milanese?” he asked.

“No.”

“But he cannot sit any more in his iron cage!”

“Then let him stand!”

“Don’t you know that when one has to die, one good deed atones for a thousand crimes?”

“I will not die!”

“Yes, sire, you will die soon.”

“After you!”

“No, before me.”

“That is also a lie of yours.”

"All have lied to you, liar. And your four thousand victims whom you have had executed...."

"They were not victims; they were criminals."

"Those four thousand slaughtered will witness it the judgment seat against you."

"Lengthen my life; then I will reform myself."

"Liberate the Milanese."

"Never!"

"Then go to perdition—and quickly. Your pulse is so feeble that your hours are numbered."

The King jumped up, fell on his knees before the physician, and prayed, "Lengthen my life."

"No! I should like to abbreviate it, were you not the anointed of the Lord. You ought to have rat-poison."

"Mercy! I confess that I have acted from bad motives; that I have only thought of myself; that I have never loved the people, but used them in order to put down the nobles; I grant that I made agreements and treaties with the deliberate purpose of breaking them; that I ... Yes, I am a poor sinful man, and my name will be forgotten; all that I have done will be obliterated...."

A stranger now appeared in the open door. It was a young man in the garb of the Minorites.

"Murderer!" screamed the King, and sprang up.

"No," answered the monk, "I am he whom you called Vincent of Paula."

"My deliverer! say a word—a single word of comfort."

"Sire," answered Vincent, "I have heard your confession, and will give you absolution in virtue of my office."

"Speak."

"Very well. Your motives were not pure, as you yourself confess, but your work will not perish, for He who guides the destinies of men and nations uses all and each for His purposes. Not long ago it was a pure virgin who saved France; now it is not quite so blameless a man. But your work, sire, was in its result of greater importance than that of the Maid, for you have completed what the Roman Caesar began. The hundred-year war with England is over, the Armagnacs

and Burgundians quarrel no more, the Jacquerie war has ceased, and the peasants have returned to their ploughs. You have united eleven provinces, France has become one land, one people, and will now take the place of Rome, which will disappear and be forgotten for centuries, perhaps some day to rise again. France will guide the destinies of Europe, and be great among the crowned heads, so long as it does not aim at empire like the Rome of the Caesars, for then it will be all over with it. Thank God that you have been able to be of service, though in ignorance of the will and purposes of your Lord, when you thought you were only going your own way!"

"Montjoie Saint Denis!" exclaimed the King. "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace."

"But not here," broke in the Doctor, who was tired of the whole business. "Travel back to Tours, take the priest with you, and leave me in peace!"

The King returned to Plessis-les-Tours, where he ended his days after severe sufferings. He did not obtain peace, but he did obtain death.

"Now the rod is thrown into the fire," said Doctor Coctier, "let it burn; the children have grown up, and can look after themselves. Executioners also have their uses, as Tristan L'Ermite and his master Louis XI know. Peace be with them."

OLD MERRY ENGLAND

Cardinal Wolsey's oared galley pushed off from the Tower Bridge, below the iron gateway. It gleamed with red and gold; flags and sails flapped lazily in a gentle breeze. The Cardinal sat on the stern-deck surrounded by his little court; most of his attendants he had left at home in York Palace, later known as Whitehall. His face was red both from the reflection of his red dress as from the wine which he had been drinking at noon with King Henry VIII in the Tower, and also from the new French sickness, which was very fashionable, as everything French was.

He was in a cheerful mood, for he had just received fresh proofs of the King's favour.

At his side stood the King's secretary, Thomas Cromwell. Both were parvenus. Wolsey was the son of a butcher, Cromwell the son of a smith, and that was probably one of the causes of their friendship, although the Cardinal was by twenty years the elder of the two.

"This is a happy day," said Wolsey joyfully, and cast a glance up at the Tower, which was still a royal residence, though it was soon to cease to be one. "I have obtained the head of Buckingham, that fool who believed he had a right of succession to the crown."

"Who has the right of succession," asked Cromwell, "since there is no male heir, and none is expected?"

"I will soon see to that! Katherine of Aragon is weak and old, but the King is young and strong."

"Remember Buckingham," said Cromwell; "it is dangerous to meddle with the succession to the throne."

"Nonsense! I have guided England's destiny hitherto, and will guide it further."

Cromwell saw that it was time to change the topic.

"It is a good thing that the King is leaving the Tower. It must be depressing for him to have only a wall between himself and the prisoners, and to see the scaffold from his windows."

"Don't talk against our Tower! It is a Biblia Pauperum, an illustrated English History comprising the Romans, King Alfred, William the Conqueror, and the Wars of the Roses. I was fourteen

years old when England found its completion at the battle of Bosworth, and the thirty years' War of the Roses came to an end with the marriage between York and Lancaster…."

"My father used to talk of the hundred years' war with France, which ended in the same year in which Constantinople was taken by the Turks—*i.e.* 1453."

"Yes, all countries are baptized in blood; that is the sacrament of circumcision, and see what fertility follows this manuring with blood! You don't know that apple-trees bear most fruit after a blood-bath."

"Yes I do; my father always used to bury offal from butchers' shops at the root of fruit-trees."

Here he stopped and coloured, for he had made a slip with his tongue. In the Cardinal's presence no one dared to speak of slaughter or the like, for he was hated by the people, and often called "The Butcher." Cromwell, however, was above suspicion, and the Cardinal did not take his remark ill, but saved the situation.

"Moreover," he continued, "my present was well received by the King; Hampton Court is also a treasure, and has the advantage of being near Richmond and Windsor, but can naturally not bear comparison with York Place."

The galley was rowed up the river, on whose banks stood the most stately edifices which existed at the time. They passed by customhouses and warehouses, fishmarkets, and fishers' landing-places; the pinnacles of the Guildhall or Council House; the Convent of Blackfriars, the old Church of St. Paul's; the Temple, formerly inhabited by the Templars, now a court of justice; the Hospital of St. James, subsequently appropriated by Henry VIII and made a palace. Finally they reached York Place (Whitehall) by Westminster, where Wolsey, the Cardinal and Papal Legate, Archbishop of York and Keeper of the Great Seal, dwelt with his court, comprising about eight hundred persons, including court ladies.

Then they disembarked after conversing on ordinary topics; for the Cardinal preferred discussing trifles when he had great schemes in hand, and that which occupied him especially just now was his candidature for the papacy.

Sir Thomas More, the King's Treasurer and Privy Councillor, sat in his garden at Chelsea above Westminster. He was correcting proofs, for he was a great scholar, and wrote on all the controversial questions of the day, religious and political, though he was essentially a man of peace, living in this suburb an idyllic life with his family.

He wore his best attire, although in the house and at work. He also showed signs of disquietude, looking now and then towards the door, for at an early hour of the day no one less than the King had sent an intimation of his intention to pay him a visit. He knew from experience how dangerous it was to be on intimate terms with the King and to share his secrets. His sovereign had the bad habit of asking for advice which he did not follow, and of imparting secrets the knowledge of which often cost his confidants their heads. The most dangerous thing of all was to undertake to act as intermediary between Henry and anyone else, for then one fell between two millstones.

With a mind prepared for the worst, More tried to quiet himself by reading his proofs, but his efforts were vain. He rose and began to walk up and down the garden path, went over in his mind all possible causes of the King's coming, rehearsed answers to objections, refutations of arguments, and ways of modifying the King's too strong views without causing offence.

Henry was certainly a learned man, who had a respect for knowledge, but he had a savage nature which he tried to tame with the scourge of religion, though without success.

The clank of armour and tramp of horses was now audible, and the Treasurer hastened, cap in hand, to the garden gate.

The King had already dismounted from his horse, and hastened towards his friend, carrying a portfolio in his hand.

"Thomas," he said without any preface, "take and read! He has answered me! Who? Luther, of course! He—the man whose mind reeks like carrion, and whose practices are damnable—has answered my book, *The Babylonish Captivity*. Take and read what he says, and tell me if you have ever seen anything like it."

He gave the Treasurer a printed pamphlet. “And then this devil of a liar says I have not written my book myself. Take and read it, and give me your advice.”

More began to read Luther’s answer to Henry’s attack. He read it to himself, and often found it hard to remain serious, although the King kept his eyes fixed on his face in order to read his thoughts.

Among other things, Luther had written: “It matters nothing to me whether King Heinz or Kunz, the Devil or Hell itself, has composed this book. He who lies is a liar—therefore I fear him not. It seems to me that King Henry has provided an ell or two of coarse stuff for this mantle, and that the poisonous fellow Leus (Leo X), who wrote against Erasmus, or someone of his sort, has cut and lined the hood. But I will help them—please God—by ironing it and attaching bells to it.”

More felt that he must say something or lose his head, so he said: “That is monstrous! That is quite monstrous!”

“Go on!” exclaimed Henry.

After saying that he postponed the discussion of the other six sacraments, Luther added: “I am busy in translating the Bible into German, and cannot stir up Heinz’s dirt any more.”

The Treasurer was nearly choking with suppressed laughter, but he felt the sword suspended over his head, and continued: “But I will give the poisonous liar and blasphemer, King Heinz, once for all, a complete answer, and stop his mouth.... Therefore he thinks to hang on to the Pope and play the hypocrite before him.... Therefore they mutually caress and tickle each other like a pair of mule’s ears....”

“No, sire,” More broke off, “I cannot go on; it is high treason to read it.”

“I will read,” said the King, and took the pamphlet from him:

“‘I conquer and defy Papists, Thomists, Henrys, Sophists, and all the swine of hell!’ He calls us swine!”

“He is a madman who ought to be beaten to death with iron bars or hunted in a forest with bloodhounds.”

“Yes, he ought! But imagine!—this scoundrel gives himself out for a prophet and servant of Christ. And he has married a nun. That is incest! But he has been punished for it. The Kurfürst of Saxony has

abandoned him, and none of his so-called friends went to the wedding...."

"What is his object? What is his new teaching? Justification through faith. If one only believes, one may live like a swine!"

"And his doctrine about the Communion. The Church says the Elements are changed by consecration, but this materialist says they actually *are* Christ's Body and Blood. Then the corn in the field and the grapes in the vineyard are already Christ's Body and Blood! He is an ass! And the world is mad."

"And the consequence,—sin with impunity! Sire, allow me to read some lines, which I have written as an answer, not to these but to his other follies—only some lines which I hope to add to."

"Read! I listen when you speak, for I have learnt to listen, and, through that, I know something."

The King sat down astride on a chair, as though he would ride against his formidable foe.

"Honourable brother," read More, "father, drinker runaway from the Augustinian Order, clumsy tipsy reveller of the worldly and spiritual kingdoms, ignorant teacher of sacred theology."

"Good, Thomas; he knows no theology!"

"And this is the way he composed his book against King Henry, the Defender of Our Faith: he collected his stable-companions, and commissioned them to collect all manner of abuse and bad language, each in his own department. One of them among carters and boatmen; another in baths and gaming-houses; a third in barbers' shops and restaurants; a fourth in mills and brothels. They wrote down in their note-books the most daring, dirtiest, and vulgarest expressions which they heard, brought home all that was coarse and nasty, and emptied it into a disgusting drain, called Luther's soul."

"Good! Very good! But what shall we do now?"

"Burn the rubbish, sire, and make an end of the matter."

"Yes, I will have his heresies burnt to-morrow at St. Paul's Cross in the City."

In the great library of the Temple sat the King and Cardinal Wolsey, examining collections of laws and precedents. Outside in the garden the Queen was walking with some of the court ladies. This garden—really a large rose-garden—had been preserved as a

promenade for the royal personages who could not sleep in the Tower, because it was haunted, and did not retain their health in the insignificant Bride-well in the City; it was also preserved as a place of historical interest, for here the adherents of Lancaster and York were said to have plucked the red and white roses as their respective badges.

Queen Katherine of Aragon, the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, the patrons of Christopher Columbus, had now, after twenty years' marriage with Henry VIII, reached a certain age. She had borne him several sons, but all had died: only one, a daughter, lived, known later on as Queen, under the title "Bloody Mary." Katherine had aged early, and sought comfort in religion; she used to rise at night and attend mass in the garb of a Franciscan nun. She knew of the King's unfaithfulness, but accepted it quietly; she had heard the name of Elizabeth Blunt, but ignored it.

Now she sat on a seat, and watched her young attendants playing, while she turned over the pages of her prayer book. One pair especially her eyes followed with pleasure—the uncommonly beautiful Anna of Norfolk and young Henry Algernon Percy of Northumberland, Hotspur's descendant. The pair were playing with roses; the youth had an armful of white and the girl an armful of red roses, which they threw at each other, singing as they lid so.

It was a beautiful sight, but the Queen became sad: "Don't play like that, children," she said; "it awakens memories which ought to sleep in the Tower, where Only the dead can sleep quietly. Besides, the King, and consequently the Cardinal, will be vexed; they sit there in the library. Play something else!"

The two young people seemed not to understand. Accordingly the Queen continued: "The Wars of the Roses, children, did not end altogether at Bosworth but—in the Tower happened much that is best forgotten. Take a book and read something."

"We have been reading all the morning," answered Anne surnamed Boleyn or Bullen.

"What are you reading then?

"Chaucer."

"*The Canterbury Tales*? Those are not for children: Chaucer was a jester. You had better take my book. It has beautiful pictures." The

young Percy took the little breviary, and, going down the path as though they sought the shade, they both quietly disappeared from the Queen's eyes.

But from the library four eyes had followed them, those of the King and the Cardinal, while they turned over the folios.

The King was uneasy, and spoke more for the sake of speaking than because he had something to say, and so did the Cardinal.

"You ought to aim at the Papacy, Cardinal, as Hadrian's successor."

"Yes, so they say."

"What about the votes?"

"They are controlled by the Emperor Charles V and King Francis I."

"How can one bring such a discordant pair into harmony?"

"That is just what requires diplomatic skill, sire."

"You cannot stand on good terms with both."

"Who knows? The Emperor has taken Rome, and placed the Pope in the Castle of St. Angelo ... that was a droll stroke! Then the soldiers in jest, under the windows of the Castle, called out for Martin Luther as Pope."

"Name not his cursed name," growled the King, but more in anger at what he saw in the rose-garden than at the mention of Luther.

The Cardinal understood him. "I do not like a union between Northumberland and Norfolk," he said.

"What do you say?" asked the King. He was angry that Wolsey had read his thoughts, but did not wish to betray himself.

"Anne is really too good for a Percy, and I find it improper of the Queen to act as a match-maker, and let them go alone in the shrubbery. No, that must have an end!"

"Sire, it is already at an end; I have written to Anne's father to call her home to Hever."

"You did well in that, by heaven! Two such families, who both aim at the succession, ought not to unite."

"Who is there that does *not* aim at the throne? Just now it was Buckingham, now it is Northumberland, and only because there is

no proper heir. Sire, you must consider the country, and your people, and name a successor."

"No! I will not have anyone waiting for my decease."

"Then we shall have the Wars of the Roses again, which cost England a million men and eighty of our noblest families."

The King smiled. "Our noblest!" Then he rose and stepped to the window: "I must now accompany the Queen home," he said. "She has gone to sleep outside, and this damp is not good for her in her weak condition."

"At her Majesty's age one must be very careful," replied the Cardinal. He emphasized the word *age*, for Katherine was forty, and gave no more hopes of an heir to the throne. Her daughter Mary might certainly be married, but one did not know to whom.

"Sire," he continued, "do not be angry, but I have just now opened the Holy Scripture.... It may be an accident—will you listen?"

"Speak."

"In the third Book of Moses, the twentieth and twenty-first chapters, I read the following—but you will not be angry with your servant?"

"Read."

"These are the Lord's solemn words: 'If any man take his brother's wife, it is evil; they shall be childless.'"

The King was excited, and approached the Cardinal.

"Is that there? Yes, truly! God has punished me by taking my sons one after the other. What a wonderful book, in which everything is written! That is the reason then! But what says Thomas Aquinas, the 'Angel' of the Schoolmen?"

"Yes, sire, if you wish the matter elucidated, we must consult the learned."

"Let us do so,—but quietly and cautiously. The Queen is blameless, and nothing evil must happen to her. Quietly and cautiously, Wolsey! But I must know the truth."

In a room near the "Bloody Tower," the Cardinal and More were carrying on a lively conversation.

"What is happening now in Germany?" asked the Cardinal.

"While Luther was in the Wartburg, his pupil Karlstadt came to Wittenberg, and turned everything upside down. Citing the prohibition of images in the Old Testament, he stirred up students and the rabble to attack the churches and throw all sacred objects outside."

"That's the result of the Bible! To give it into the hands of the unlearned means letting hell loose."

"Then...."

"What did Luther say to that?"

"He hurried down from the Wartburg and denounced Karlstadt and his followers, but I cannot say that he confuted them. A councillor quoted the book of Moses, 'Thou shalt not make to thee any image nor likeness.' And a shoemaker answered, 'I have often taken off my hat before images in a room or in the street; but that is idolatry, and robs God of the glory which belongs to Him alone.'"

"What did Luther say?"

"That then, on account of occasional misuse, one must kill all the women, and pour all the wine into the streets."

"That was a stupid saying; but that is the result of disputing with shoemakers. Besides, it is degrading to compare women to wine! He is a coarse fellow who sets his wife on the same level with a beer-barrel."

"Logic is not his strong point, and his comparisons halt on crutches. In his answer to the Pope's excommunication, he writes, among other things: 'If a hay-cart must move out of the way of a drunken man, how much more must Peter and Jesus Christ keep out of the way of the Pope?'"

"That is a pretty simile! Let us return to James Bainham."

"But let me tell you a little more about the fanatics in Germany. Besides Karlstadt and his followers, other enthusiasts, quoting the Bible and Luther, have had themselves rebaptized; their leader has taken ten wives, supporting his action by the example of David, Solomon, and even Abraham."

"The Bible again!—Call in Bainham, and then we will hear how the matter stands! He was a lawyer in the Temple, you say, and has been spreading Luther's teaching. Have we not had enough of Wycliffe

and the Lollards? Must we have the same thing again, grunted out by this German plagiariser?"

"I am not an intolerant man," said More, "but a State must be homogeneous, or it will fall to pieces. Ignoramuses and lunatics must not come forward and sniff at the State religion, be it better or worse."

"Let Bainham come, and we will hear him."

More went to a door which was guarded on the outside by soldiers, and gave an order.

"You examine him, and I will listen," said the Cardinal.

After a time Bainham was brought into the room in chains.

More sat at the end of a table, and commenced.

"James Bainham, can you declare your belief in a few words?"

"I believe in God's Word—*i.e.* the whole of Holy Scripture."

"Do you really—in the Old as well as the New Testament?"

"In both."

"In the Old also?"

"In both."

"Very well, then, you believe in the Old Testament. Now, you have had yourself baptized again, for the Bible says, 'Go, and teach all nations and baptize them.' Good. But have you had yourself circumcised, as the Bible commands?"

Bainham looked confounded, and the Cardinal had to turn his head, in order not to smile.

"I am not an Israelite," answered Bainham.

"No! but Nathanael, who sought our Saviour and believed on him, was called by John 'an Israelite indeed.' If you are not an 'Israelite indeed,' you are not a Christian."

"I cannot answer that."

"No, you cannot answer, but you can preach and talk rubbish. Are you a Lutheran?"

"Yes."

"But Luther is against the Anabaptists; therefore he is against you, and he has asked the princes to kill the Anabaptists like wild dogs. Are you still a Lutheran?"

"Yes, according to his early teaching."

"You mean justification by faith. What do you believe?"

"I believe in God the Father...."

"Who is the Father? In Luther's catechism it is written, 'Thou shalt have none other Gods but me.' But that is the Law of Moses, and it is Jehovah who is intended there. If you believe in Jehovah, then you are a Jew, are you not?"

"I believe also on Christ the Son of God."

"Then you are a Jew-Christian! So you have admitted that you are a Lutheran, Anabaptist, Jew, and Christian—all this together. You are a fool, and you don't know what you are. But that may be passed over, if you do not seduce others."

"Give him a flogging," said the Cardinal, who did not like the turn the conversation had taken, especially the challenging of the Bible, which just now he wished to use for his own purposes.

"He has already had that," answered More, "but besides his doctrine, this conceited man, who wants to make himself popular, belongs to a society which circulates a bad translation of the Bible." "You see yourself," he continued, turning to Bainham, "what Bible reading leads to, and I demand that you give up the names of your fellow-criminals."

"That I will never do! The just shall live by his faith."

"Will you call yourself just, when there is no one just? Read the Book of Job, and you will see. And your belief is really too eccentric to be counted to you for righteousness."

"Send him down in the cellar to Master Mats! Must one listen to such nonsense! Away with him!"

More pointed to the door, and Bainham went out.

"Yes," said Wolsey, "what is there in front of us? Schisms, sectarianism, struggles. If we only had an heir to the throne."

"We cannot get the King divorced."

"You yourself have spoken the word. There is no need for divorce, because his marriage is null."

"Is it? How do you prove that?"

"From the third book of Moses, the twentieth and twenty-first chapters: 'If any one taketh his brother's wife, it is evil.'"

"Yes, but in the fifth book of Moses, five and twentieth chapter, fifth verse, it is commanded."

"What, in Christ's name, are you saying?"

"Certainly it is: 'If brothers dwell together, and one die without children, his brother shall take his wife and raise up seed to his brother."

"Damnation! This cursed book."

"Moreover: Abraham married his half-sister; Jacob married two sisters: Moses' father married his aunt."

"That is the Bible, is it? Thank you! Then I prefer the Decretals and the Councils. The Pope must dissolve the marriage."

"Is it then to be dissolved?"

"Didn't you know? Yes, it is. If Julius II could grant a dispensation, Clement VII can grant an absolution."

"It is not just towards the Queen."

"The country demands it—the kingdom—the nation! The King's conscience...."

"Oh! is it the fair Anne?"

"No, not she!"

"Is it...."

"Don't ask any more."

"Then I answer, Margaret of Valois."

"I give no answer at all, but I am not responsible for your life, if you talk out of season! The Bible won't help you there."

"It would be a useful reform, if we could cancel the Old Testament as a Jewish book."

"But we cannot cancel the Psalms of David, which are our only Church canticles. Luther himself has taken his hymns from the Psalter, and 'Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott' from the Proverbs of Solomon; he has borrowed the melody from the Graduale Romanum."

"But we must relegate the law of Moses to the Apocrypha, otherwise we are Pharisees and Jewish Christians. What have we to do with circumcision, the paschal lamb, and levitical marriage? Wait till I am Pope."

"Must we really wait so long?"

"Hush! The noon-bell is ringing. Do not let us neglect our duties. The flesh must have its due, in order not to burn. Come with me to Westminster; then you can go on to Chelsea afterwards."

Henry VIII was twelve years old when he was engaged to the widow of his brother Arthur. At fourteen he protested against the marriage, which was distasteful to him, but at eighteen he married Katherine, the aunt of the Emperor Charles V. Cardinal Wolsey would have gladly brought about a divorce, for he wished for a successor to the throne in order to keep the power in his own hands. This power he had misused to such an extent that the fact that there was such a thing as Parliament had almost been forgotten. Wolsey wished to have the King married to a powerful princess, and thought for a time of Margaret of Valois, but under no circumstances did he wish to take a wife for him from the English nobility. But when he aroused the King's conscience with regard to his marriage with Katherine, he had let loose a storm which he could not control, much less guide in the desired direction, for the King's passion for Anne Boleyn was now irresistible.

Then the Cardinal had recourse to plotting, and this brought about his downfall. For six years negotiations went on, and the King was true to Anne. He wrote letters which can still be read and which display a great and honourable love. Most of them were signed "Henry Tudor, Rex, your true and constant servant," and began "My mistress and friend." Anne answered coldly, but her love to Percy was nipt in the bud by a marriage being arranged for him. After all the learned authorities had been consulted, and much controversy had taken place regarding the third and the fifth books of Moses, the Pope sent a Nuncio with secret instructions to get rid of the whole matter by postponing it. But Henry did not yield, though his feelings for Katherine, whom he respected, cost him a terrible struggle. The trial began in the chapter-house of Blackfriars in the presence of the King and Queen. But Katherine stood up, threw herself at the King's feet, and found words which touched the tyrant. She challenged the right of the court to try her, appealed to the Pope, and returned to Bridewell. It is there that we find her in Shakespeare's *Henry VIII*, singing sorrowfully a beautiful song:

"Orpheus with his lute made trees
And the mountain tops that freeze
Bow themselves when he did sing."

The divorce proceedings had gone on for some years; people had sided alternately with the King and with the Queen, and often sympathised with both, when suddenly rumour announced the outbreak of a pestilence.

It was not the Black Death or the boil-pest, but the English "sweating-sickness." This hitherto unknown disease had first broken out in the same year when the wars of the Roses ended on the field of Bosworth; but it was entirely confined to England, passing neither to Scotland nor Ireland. It was so mysteriously connected with English blood, that in Calais only Englishmen and no Frenchmen were attacked by it. Since then the sickness had twice appeared among the English. Now it returned and broke out in London.

The King, who had said that "no one but God could separate him from Anne," was alarmed, and did not know what to think—whether it was a warning or a trial. The symptoms of the sickness were perspiration and a desire to sleep; but if one yielded to the desire, one might be dead in three hours. In London the citizens died like flies: Sir Thomas More lost a daughter; the Cardinal, who had come to preside at Hampton Court, had his horses put to the carriage again, and hurried away. Finally one of Anne's ladies-in-waiting was attacked. Then the King lost all presence of mind, sent Anne home to her father, and fled himself from place to place, from Waltham to Hunsdon. He reconciled himself to Katherine, lived in a tower without a servant, prepared his will, and was ready for death.

Then there came the news that Anne herself had been seized by the sickness. The King had lost his chamberlain, and now wrote letter after letter. Then he fled again to Hatfield and Tittenhanger.

But Anne recovered, the pestilence ceased, and Henry resumed the divorce proceedings. The Cardinal and the Nuncio wavered, and in the seventh year the King lost patience. He had now found the man he sought for. Sir Thomas More would not declare Katherine's marriage null. The new man was Thomas Cranmer, who hated the Pope and the monks, and dreamt of a free England—free, that is, from Rome. The King and his new friend worked in secret at

something which Cardinal Wolsey did not know, and one day the preliminaries were settled, the papers were in order, and the mine exploded.

The King's galley pushed off from the Tower. It did not look so brilliant as the Cardinal's had once been. Cranmer sat by the King.

"I shall not sleep in the Tower any more," said the King. "I am leaving it now, Thomas; this is my removal. I move to Whitehall, for that will be the name of York Palace; because I, as a Lancastrian, hate York, and because my white rose shall dwell in my castle. Now, *you* will sit in the Tower, my hell-dog! To think that this Satan of a Cardinal has deceived me for six years. What troubles his plotting has caused me! Six years! I have always hated the man, but I needed him, for he was clever."

The King glanced at the north side of the Thames. "And I have lived in the city which has not been my own; Rome possesses a third of it. I have lived like a beggar, but now—London is mine. The Temple, St. James's, Whitehall, Westminster to begin with; then the rest."

The galley reached York Palace, and the King hastened in with his body-guard, without giving the password or answering the chamberlain's questions. He went straight to the Cardinal's room, and laid some letters before him: "Read! you snake! your lying letters behind my back."

The Cardinal's face seemed to shrink to half its size, and resembled a death's-head. He did not, however, fall on his knees, but raised his head for the last time: "I appeal to the Pope."

"There is no Pope in England! Nay, I am the Pope, and therefore you are no longer Cardinal! Accordingly, I have granted myself a dispensation, and married Anne Boleyn yesterday! In a few days I shall have her crowned. And then we will dwell here! *Here!* But you will live in the Tower. Go, or I throw you out."

Thus England became free; a third part of London, which had belonged to the monks, reverted to the Crown, and afterwards the whole country followed.

The King had obtained his beloved Anne, but after three years she was beheaded, for having dishonoured the King by adultery. After that the King married four times. Cardinal Wolsey died before he

came to the scaffold; Sir Thomas More was beheaded; and Cromwell, who at first defended Wolsey, but afterwards became a "*malleus monachorum*," was also beheaded. All this seems very confused and tragic, but from this confusion a free, independent, and powerful England emerged. When the Germans were preparing to cast off the yoke of Rome in the Thirty Years' War, England had already completed her task.

THE WHITE MOUNTAIN

While the peace negotiations were being carried on in Osnabrück and Münster, the Thirty Years' War still flamed up here and there, more perhaps to keep the troops in practice, to provide support for the soldiers, and to have booty at command, than to defend any faith or the adherents of it.

All talk of religion had ceased, and the powers now played with their cards exposed. Protestant Saxony, the first State to support Lutheranism, worked in conjunction with Catholic Austria, and Catholic France with Protestant Sweden. In the battle of Wolfenbüttel, 1641, French Catholics fought against German Catholics, the latter of whom, however, later on carried the body of Johan Baner in their ranks.

The Swedish Generals thought little of peace, but when the negotiations dragged on to the seventh year, they thought the time had come to have some regard to it. "He who takes something, has something," Wrangel wrote to his son.

Hans Christoph von Königsmarck, who continued Johan Baner's traditions, had lately been with him at Zusmarshausen, and was now sent eastward in the direction of Bohemia. Since, besides cavalry, he had only five hundred foot-soldiers, he did not know what to do, but wandered about at random, and looked for booty. But nothing was to be found, for Johan Baner had already laid the district waste.

"Then they marched farther," like Xenophon, and found the woods which bordered the highways' cut down; the fields were covered with weeds, and in the trees hung corpses; the churches had been burnt, but watch was kept in the churchyards in order that the corpses should not be eaten.

One night Königsmarck himself was leading a small detachment in search of provisions. They rode into a wood where they saw a light burning. But it was only a red glow as if from a charcoal pile or a smithy. They dismounted from their horses, and stole on foot to the place. When they reached it, they heard voices singing a "Miserere" in low tones, and they saw men, women, and children sitting round an oven, the last remains of a village.

Königsmark went forward alone, and, hidden behind a young fir-tree, he beheld a spectacle.... He had seen such sights before, but not under such circumstances. In an iron scoop on the oven some game was being roasted; it might have been an enormous hare, but was not. Like a hare, it was very spindle-shanked and lean over back and breast; only the hinder-parts seemed well developed; the head was placed, between the two fore-paws.... No! they were not fore-paws, but two five-fingered hands, and round the neck a charred rope was knotted. It was a man who had been hung, and whom they had cut down in order to eat him.

The General was not squeamish by nature, and had in his life passed through many experiences, but this went beyond all bounds. He was at first angry, and wished to interrupt the cannibals' meal, but when he saw the little children sitting on their mothers' knees with tufts of grass in their mouths, he was seized with compassion. The cannibals themselves looked like corpses or madmen, and the eyes and expectations of all were fastened on the oven. At the same time they sang "Lord, have mercy," and prayed for pardon for the grievous sin which they were obliged to commit. "What does it really matter to me?" said the General to himself; "I only wish I had not seen it." He returned to his men, and they marched on.

The wood became thinner, and they came to an open place where was something resembling a heap of stones, out of which there arose a single pillar. In the half-twilight which reigned they could not see distinctly, but on the pillar something seemed to be moving. The "something" resembled a man, but had only one arm.

"It is not a man, for he would have two arms," said one of the soldiers.

"It would be strange, if a man could not have an arm missing."

"Strange indeed! Perhaps it is a pillar-saint."

"Give him a charge of powder, and we shall soon see."

At the rattle of arms which was now heard there, rose a howl so terrible and multitudinous, that no one thought it came from the pillar-saint. At the same time the apparent heap of stones moved and became a living mass.

"They are wolves! Aim! Fire!"

A volley was fired, and the wolves fled. Königsmarck rode through the smoke, and now saw a one-armed Imperialist standing on the chimney, which was all that was left of a burnt cottage. “Come down, and let us look at you,” he said.

The maimed man clambered down with his single arm, showing incredible agility. “We ought to have him to scale the wall with a storming-party,” said the General to himself.

Then the examination commenced.

“Are you alone?”

“Alone *now*—thanks to your grace, for the wolves have been round me for six hours.”

“What is your name? Where do you come from? Whither do you wish to go?”

“My name is Odowalsky; I come from Vienna; and I shall go to hell, if I don’t get help.”

“Will you go with us?”

“Yes, as sure as I live! With anybody, if only I can live. I have lost my arm; I was given a house; they burnt it, and threw me out on the highway—with wife and child, of course!”

“Listen; do you know the way to Prague?”

“I can find the way to Prague, to the Hradschin and the Imperial treasure-house, Wallenstein’s palace, the royal castle, Wallenstein’s dancing-hall, and the Loretto Convent. There there is *multum plus Plurimum*.”

“What is your rank in the army?”

“First Lieutenant.”

“That is something different. Come with me, and you shall have a horse, Mr. First Lieutenant, and then let us see what you are good for.”

Odowalsky received a horse, and the General bade him ride beside him. He talked confidentially with him the whole night till they again rejoined the main body of the army.

Some days later Königsmarck stood with his little troop on the White Mountain left of Prague—“Golden Prague,” as it was called. It was late in the evening of the fifteenth of June. He had Odowalsky at his side, and seemed to be particularly good friends with him. But

the troop knew nothing of the General's designs, and, as they saw that he went towards Prague, his officers were astounded, for the town was well fortified, and defended by a strong body of armed citizens.

"One can at any rate look at the show," Königsmarck answered to all objections; "that costs nothing."

They halted on the White Mountain, without, however, pitching a camp. They saw nothing of the beautiful town, for it was dark, but they heard the church and convent bells.

"This, then, is the White Mountain, where the war broke out just thirty years ago," said Königsmarck to Odowalsky.

"Yes," answered the Austrian. "It was then the Bohemian revolt broke out, your King Frederick V of the Palatinate was slain here, and there was great rejoicing at his death."

"If you forget who you are, forget not who I am."

"We will not quarrel about something that happened so long ago! But, as a matter of fact, the revolt was crushed, and the Protestants had to withdraw. What did they get by their trouble—the poor Bohemians? Hussites, Taborites, Utraquists sacrificed their lives, but Bohemia is still Catholic! It was all folly!"

"Do you belong to the Roman Church, First Lieutenant?"

"I don't belong to any Church at all; I belong to the army. And now we will take Prague with a *coup de main*."

So it fell out. At midnight the foot-soldiers clambered over the wall, threw the sentinels into the moat, cut down the guards at the gates, and took that side of the town.

For three days the part of the city which lay on the left bank of the Moldau was plundered, and Königsmarck is said to have sent five waggons laden with gold and silver to the north-west through Germany, as his own share of the spoil. Odowalsky received six thousand thalers for his trouble, and later on was raised to the Swedish House of Peers with the title of "Von Streitberg."

But the right bank had not been captured. It was defended by ten thousand citizens, assisted by students, monks, and Jews. From ancient times there had been a large Jewish colony in Prague; the Jews were said to have escaped thither direct from Jerusalem during the last German crusade, and for that reason the island in the

Moldau is still called Jerusalem. On this occasion the Jews so distinguished themselves that they received as a token of honour from the Emperor Ferdinand III a great flag, which can be still seen in their synagogue. Königsmarck could not take the Old Town, but had to send for help to Wittenberg. The latter actually plundered Tabor and Budweis, but Prague, which had been plundered, did not attract him. Then the Count Palatine Karl Gustav had to come, and formally besieged the eastern portion of the town.

Königsmarck dwelt in the Castle, where he could see the old hall of the States-General, from the window of which Count Thurn had thrown the Imperial governors Martiniz and Slavata; the Protestants say that they fell on a dungheap, but the Catholics maintain that it was an elder-bush.

Meanwhile Count Karl Gustav, who was a cousin of Frederick V, had as little success before Prague as the former. He became ill, and was sure that he had been poisoned. But he recovered, and was about to be reinforced by Wrangel, when news arrived that the Peace of Westphalia had been concluded.

With that the Thirty Years' War was at an end. Sweden received two million thalers and some places of importance; these were enfeoffed to Germany, and in exchange Sweden had three votes in the German Reichstag.

But Germany's population was only a quarter of what it had been, and, while it had formerly been one State under the Emperor, it was now split up into three hundred little States. However, the liberty of faith affirmed in the Confession of Augsburg, 1555, was recovered, and extended to the reformed districts. It was dearly bought, but with it North Germany had also obtained freedom from Rome, and that could not be too dearly purchased.

Out of chaos comes creation and new creation. From the Germanic chaos emerged North Germany, the seed of which was Brandenberg, later on developing into Prussia, and finally the German Empire, which received the imperial crown at Versailles, but not from the hands of Rome.

THE GREAT CZAR

On the southern shore of the Gulf of Finland lay the little village Strelna, halfway between Petersburg and the half-completed Peterhof. At the end of the village, on the edge of the Strelka stream, stood a simple country-house under oaks and pines. It was painted green and red, and the window-shutters were still fastened, for it was only four o'clock on a summer morning.

The Gulf of Finland lay smooth under the rays of the rising sun. A Dutch trading vessel, which had wished to enter the harbour and reach the Admiralty House, now furled its sails and dropped anchor. It carried a flag at its main-top which hung down idly.

Near the red and green country-house stood an ancient lime-tree with a split trunk; in the cleft a wooden platform with a railing had been fitted, and a flight of steps led up to this arbour. In this early morning hour there sat a man in the tree at an unpainted, unsteady table, writing letters. The table was covered with papers, but there was still room for a clock without a glass, a compass, a case of drawing instruments, and a large bell of bronze.

The man sat in his shirt-sleeves; he wore darned stockings which were turned down, and large shoes; his head seemed incredibly large, but was not so in reality; his neck was like that of an ox, and his body that of a giant; the hand which was now writing was coarse, and stained with tar; he wrote carelessly, with lines somewhat slanting, but quickly. The letters were short and to the point, with no introductions and no conclusions, merely signed "Pe ter," the name divided in two, as though it had been split by the heavy hand which wrote it.

There were probably about a million men bearing that name in Russia; but this Peter was the only one of importance, and everyone recognised the signature.

The lime-tree was alive with bees, the little Strelka brook bubbled and fretted like a tea-kettle, and the sun rose gloriously; its rays fell between the leaves of the lime-tree, and threw patches of light on the strange face of one of the strangest and most incomprehensible men who have ever lived.

Just now this handsome head, with its short hair, looked like that of a wild boar; and when the writer licked his goose-quill like a school-boy, he showed teeth and a tongue like those of a memorial lion. Sometimes his features were convulsed with pain, as though he were being tortured or crucified. But then he took a new sheet, and began a new letter; his pen ran on; his mouth smiled till his eyes disappeared, and the terrible man looked roguish. Still another sheet, and a little note which was certainly directed to a lady; now the face changed to that of a satyr, melted so to speak, into harmonious lines, and finally exploded in a loud laugh which was simply cynical.

His morning correspondence was now ended. The Czar had written fifty letters. He left them unsealed. Kathia, his wife, would collect and fasten them.

The giant stretched himself, rose with difficulty, and cast a glance over the bay. With his spy-glass he saw Petersburg and his fleet, the Fort of Kronstadt, which had been commenced, and finally discovered the trading-vessel. “How did that come in without saluting?” he thought, “and dare to anchor immediately before my house!”

He rang, and a valet-de-chambre came at once, running from the row of tents which stood concealed behind the pines-trees, and where both soldiers and servants lodged.

“Take five men in a boat,” he ordered, “and hail that brig! Can you see what country it belongs to?”

“It is Dutch, your Majesty!”

“Dutch! Bring the captain here, dead or alive. At once! On the spot! But first my tea!”

“The household is asleep, most gracious lord.”

“Then wake it up, you ass! Knock at the shutters! Break the door in! Asleep in broad daylight!”

He rang again. A second servant appeared. “Tea! and brandy—plenty of brandy!”

The servants ran, the household was aroused, and the Czar occupied the interval by making notes on slate tablets. When he became impatient, he got down, and knocked at all the shutters with his stick. Then a voice was heard from within: “Wait a moment.”

“No! that I won’t; I am not born to wait. Hurry! or I will set the house on fire!”

He went into his gardens, cast a glance at his medicinal plants, plucked up some weeds, and watered here and there. He went into the cattle-sheds, and looked at some merino sheep which he himself had introduced. Here he found a trave which had been broken; he took a saw and plane, and mended it. He threw some oats in the manger of his favourite trotting-horse. He drove for the most part, when he did not go on foot; riding seemed to him unworthy of a seaman, and it was as a seaman that the Czar chiefly wished to be regarded. Then he went into the lathe-shop, sat for a while on the turning-bench, and worked. At the window stood a table with a copper-engraver’s tools; with the graving-tool he drew some lines which were wanting in the map plate. He was about to proceed to the smithy, when a woman’s voice called him under the lime-tree.

On the platform stood his wife the Czarina, in her morning dress. She had massive limbs and large feet; her face was stout and plain, her eyes were not level, but had a steady expression.

“How early you are up this morning, Little Father?” she said.

“Is it early? It is six at any rate!”

“It is only just five.”

“Five? Then it shall be six.”

He pushed the hand of the clock an hour forward. His wife smiled a little superciliously, but took care not to irritate him, for she knew how dangerous it was to do so. Then she gave him his tea.

“There is some occupation for you,” said Peter, pointing to his letters.

“But how many there are!”

“If there are too many I can get help.”

The Czarina, did not answer, but began to look through the letters. The Czar liked that, for then there would be occasion for quarrelling; and he always wished for a quarrel in order to keep his energies active.

“Pardon me, Peter,” said his wife, “but is it right that you should apply to the Swedish Government about the Dutch ships?”

“Yes, it is! All that I do is right!”

"I don't understand it. Our Russians fired by mistake at friendly Dutch vessels, and you demand indemnity from the Swedes because the mischance occurred in Swedish waters."

"Yes, according to Roman law, the injury must be made good in the land where it happened...."

"Yes, but...."

"It is all the same anyhow: he who can pay, pays; I cannot, and the Dutch will not, therefore the Swedes must! Do you understand?"

"No."

"The Swedes have incited the Turks against me; they must pay for that."

"May be! But why do you write so harshly to the Dutch Government since you like the Dutch?"

"Why! Because since the Peace of Utrecht, Holland is on the decline. It is all over with Holland; on to the rubbish-heap with it! I hold on to England, since France is also declining."

"Should one abandon one's old friends?..."

"Certainly, when they are no more good. Moreover, there is no friendship in love and in politics. Do you think I like this wretched August of Poland? No! I am sure you don't. But I must go with him through thick and thin, for my country, for Russia. He who cannot sacrifice his little humours and passions for his country is a Don Quixote, like Charles the Twelfth. This fool, with his mad hatred against August and myself, has worked for Sweden's overthrow and Russia's future. But that this Christian dog should incite the Turks against us was a crime against Europe, for Europe needs Russia as a bulwark against Asia. Did not the Mongol sit for two hundred years on our frontier and threaten us? And when our ancestors had at last driven him away, there comes a fellow like this and brings the heathen from Constantinople upon us. The Mongols were once in Silesia, and would have destroyed Western Europe if we Russians had not saved it. Charles XII is dead, but I curse his memory, and I curse everyone who seeks to hinder me in my laudable endeavour to raise Russia from a Western Asiatic power to an Eastern European one. I shall beat everyone down, whoever he may be, who interferes with my work, even though it were my own son."

There was silence for some moments. The last words referred to the Delicate topic of Alexis, Peter's son by his first marriage, who was now a prisoner awaiting his death-sentence in the Peter-Paul Fortress. He was accused of having endeavoured to hinder his father's work in the civilisation of Russia, and was suspected of having taken part in plots of rebellion. The Czar's first divorced wife Eudoxia was confined in the convent of Suzdal.

Katharina naturally did not love Alexis, since he stood in the way of her children, and she would have been glad of his death, but did not wish to incur the guilt of it. Since Peter also did not wish to take the responsibility for it, he had appointed a court of a hundred and twenty-seven persons to try his son.

The topic therefore was an unwelcome one, and, with his extraordinary facility for quick changes of thought and feeling, Peter broke the silence with the prosaic question, "Where is the brandy?"

"You will get no brandy so early, my boy."

"Kathrina!" said Peter in a peculiar tone, while his face began to twitch.

"Be quiet, Lion!" answered his wife, and stroked his black mane, which had begun to bristle. She took a bottle and a glass out of a basket.

The Lion cheered up, swallowed the strong drink, smiled, and stroked his spouse's expansive bust.

"Will you see the children?" asked Katherine, in order to bring him into a milder mood.

"No, not to-day! Yesterday I beat them, and they would think I was running after them. Keep them at a distance. Keep them under, or they will get the better of you!"

Katherine had taken the last letter, as though absent-mindedly, and began to read it. Then she coloured, and tore it in two. "You must not write to actresses. That is too great an honour for them, and can only disgrace us."

The Czar smiled, and was not angry. He had not intended to send the letter, but only scribbled it in order to excite his wife, perhaps also to show off.

There was a sound of approaching footsteps underneath.

"See! there is my friend, the scoundrel!"

"Hush!" said Katherine, "Menshikoff is your friend."

"A fine friend! Already once I have condemned him to death as a thief and deceiver; but he lives still, thanks to your friendship."

"Hush!"

Menshikoff (he was a great soldier, an able statesman, an indispensable favourite, enormously rich) came hurrying up the wooden stairs. It was in his house that the Czar had found his Katherine. He was handsome, looked like a Frenchman, dressed well, and had polished manners. He greeted the Czar ceremoniously, and kissed Katherine's hand.

"Now they are there again," he commenced.

"The Strelitzil? [Footnote: a Russian body-guard first established by Ivan the Terrible.] Have I not rooted them out?"

"They grow like the dragon's seed, and now they want to deliver Alexis."

"Have you any more exact information?"

"The conspirators meet this evening at five o'clock."

"Where?"

"Number fourteen the Strandlinje, at an apparently harmless meal."

"Strand—14," wrote the Czar on his tablets. "Any more?"

"To-night at two o'clock they fire the city."

"At two o'clock?" The Czar shook his head, and his face twitched.

"I build up, and they pull down. But now I will extirpate them root and branch. What do they say?"

"They look back to Holy Moscow, and regard the building of Petersburg as a piece of godlessness or malice. The workmen die, like flies, of marsh fever, and they regard your Majesty's building in the midst of a marsh as an act of bravado a la Louis Quatorze, who built Versailles on the site of a swamp."

"Asses! My town is to command the mouth of the river, and to be the Key to the sea, therefore it must be there. The marsh shall be drained off into canals, which will carry boats like those of Amsterdam. But so it is when monkeys judge!"

He rang; a servant appeared; "Put the horses to the cabriolet"; he called down, "and now, goodbye, Katherine; I shall not be home till

to-morrow. It will be a hot day. But don't forget the letters. Alexander can help you."

"Will you not dress, little son?" answered Katherine.

"Dress? I have my sabre."

"Put at least your coat on."

The Czar put on his coat, drew the belt which held the sabre some holes tighter, and sprang at one bound from the platform.

"Now it will come off," whispered Menshikoff to Katherine.

"You have not been lying, Alexander?"

"A few lies adorn one's speech. The chief point is gained. To-morrow, Katherine, you can sleep quietly in the nursery with the heirs to the throne."

"Can any misfortune happen to him?"

"No! he never has misfortune."

The Czar ran down to the seashore; he never walked, but always ran. "Life goes fast," he was wont to say, "and there is much to do."

When he reached the gravel bank he found a boat landing, with five men and the Dutch prisoner. The latter sat stolidly by the rudder, and smoked his pipe. But when he saw the Czar, he took off his cap, threw it in the air, and cried, "Hurrah!"

Czar Peter shaded his eyes, and, when he recognised his old teacher and friend, Jaen Scheerborck from Amsterdam, he jumped into the boat over the rowers' shoulders and knees, rushed into Jaen's arms and kissed him, so that his pipe broke and the seaman's great grey beard was full of smoke and nearly took fire. Then the Czar lifted the old man up, and carried him in his arms like a child to the shore.

"At last, you old rascal! I have you here with me! Now you shall see my city and my fleet, which I have built myself, for you have taught me. Bring the cabriolet here, boy! and a grapnel from the boat; we will go, and tack about. Quickly!"

"Dear heart alive!" said the old man, picking the tobacco-ashes out of his beard, "to think that I have seen the Carpenter-Czar before I die; that is...."

"Into the cabriolet, old fellow! Boy, hang the grapnel behind. Where are you to sit? On my knees, of course!"

The cabriolet had only room for one person, and the captain actually had to sit on the Czar's lap. Three horses were yoked to it tandem-fashion, and a fourth ran beside the leader. The whip cracked, and the Czar played being at sea. "A good wind, isn't it? Twelve knots! Furl the sheet! so!"

A toll-gate appeared, and the captain, who knew the Czar's wild tricks but also his skill, began to cry "There is a toll-gate! Stop!"

But the Czar, who had found again his youth with his old friend of former times, and with his indestructible boyishness, liked practical jokes and dangers, whipped on the horses, whistled and shouted, "Let her go! Clear for action! Jump!"

The toll-gate was burst clean open, and the old man laughed so that he swayed on the Czar's knees. And so they drove along the shore. At the town gate the sentinels presented arms and saluted; on the streets people cried "Hurrah!" and when they reached the Admiralty, cannon were fired and the yards manned. But the Czar seriously or in play, as though he were on the sea, shouted "Anchor!"

So saying, he so threw the grapnel towards the wall, that it caught in a torch-holder, which bent but did not break. But the horses, which were still running, were suddenly forced back, and sank on their knees. The first of the three rose no more; it had been fatally injured by bursting in the toll-gate.

Three hours later, when the fleet and docks had been inspected, the Czar and Jaen Scheerborck sat in a seamen's tavern. The cabriolet stood without, and was "anchored" to a thatched roof. Brandy was on the table, and their pipes had filled the room with smoke. The two friends had discussed serious matters. The Czar had paid six visits, one to his staff of generals, from which he returned in a very excited state to the waiting captain. But, with his extraordinary capacity for shaking off what was unpleasant and for changing his moods, he now beamed with hilarity.

"You ask whence I shall get the inhabitants for my new town. I first brought fifty thousand workmen here. That was the nucleus. Then I commanded all officials, priests, and great landowners to build houses—each of them, one—whether they intended to live in it or not. Now I have a hundred thousand. I know they talk and say that I build towns, but don't dwell in them myself. No! I build not for

myself, but for the Russians. I hate Moscow, which smells of the Khan of the Tartars, and would prefer to live in the country. That is no one else's affair. Drink, old man! We have the whole day before us till five o'clock. Then I must be sober."

The old man drank cautiously, and did not know exactly how to behave in this grand society, which was at the same time so nautical.

"Now you must tell me some of the stories which the people relate about me. You know lots of them, Jaen."

"I know some certainly, but it is not possible...."

"Then I will tell some," said Peter, "Do you know the story of the pair of compasses and the cheese? No? Well, it runs thus: 'The Czar is so covetous that he always carries a box of drawing instruments in his pocket. With a pair of compasses he measures his cheese, to see whether any of it has been stolen since the last meal!' That is a good story! Here is another! 'The Czar has a Tippler's Club. Once they determined to hold a festival, and the guests were shut up three days and three nights in order to drink. Each guest had a bench behind him, on which to sleep off his intoxication, besides two tubs, one for food and one for ... you understand?'"

"No, that is too absurd!"

"Such are the stories they like to tell in Petersburg. Have you not heard that I also extract teeth? In my palace, they say, there is a sack full of them. And then I am said to perform operations in hospital. Once I drew off so much water from a dropsical woman that she died."

"Do the people believe that?"

"Certainly they do. They are so stupid, you see; but I will cut off their asses' ears and singe their tongues...."

His eyes began to sparkle, and it was plain what direction his thoughts were taking. But however confidential he might be, there always seemed to be secret checks at work, so that, even when intoxicated, he always kept his great secrets though he told unimportant ones.

Just then an adjutant came in, and whispered something to the Czar.

"Exactly at five o'clock," answered the Czar in a loud voice. "Sixty grenadiers, with loaded guns and cutlasses! Adieu! Jaen," continued

the Czar, giving a sudden turn to his thoughts, “I will buy your loom, but I will not give more than fifty roubles for it.”

“Sixty, sixty.”

“You Satan of a Dutchman! You skinflint! If I offer fifty, that is an honour for you! Indeed it is!”

The Czar’s anger rose, but it was connected with the adjutant’s message, not with the loom. The pot was boiling, and the cover had to fly. “You miserable peddlers of groceries! Always fleecing people! But your time is past! Now come the English! They are another sort!”

Jaen the seaman became gloomy, and that annoyed the Czar still more. He wanted to enjoy Jaen’s company, and therefore sought to divert his thoughts. “Landlord,” he cried, “bring champagne!”

The landlord came in, fell on his knees, and begged for mercy, for he had not the luxurious drink in his store-cellar. This superfluous word “store-cellar” might sound ironical and provocative, though unintentionally. Still it was welcome as an occasion for using the stick.

“Have you a store-cellar, you rascal? Will you tell me that the keeper of a seaman’s alehouse has a cellar of spirits!” And now the stick danced. But as the Dutchman turned away with a gesture of disapproval, the Czar’s fury broke loose. From time to time his disposition necessitated such outbreaks. His sabre flew out of its sheath; like a madman, he broke all the bottles on the dresser and cut all the legs off the chairs and tables. Then he made a pile out of the fragments, and prepared to burn the landlord on it.

Then a door opened, and a woman entered with a little child on her arm. When the child saw its father prostrate with his neck stretched out, it began to scream. The Czar paused, quieted down, went to the woman, and accosted her. “Be easy, mother; no mischief is going on; we are only playing at sailors.”

Then he turned to the landlord: “Send the account to Prince Menshikoff; he will pay. But if you scratch me.... Well, I forgive you this time.... Now let us go, Jaen. Up with the anchor, and stand by the sheet!”

Then they drove into the town. The Czar ran up into various houses and came down again, until it was noon. They then halted

before Menshikoff's palace. "Is dinner ready?" asked the Czar from the cabriolet.

"Yes, your Majesty," answered a lackey.

"Serve up for two! Is the Prince at home?"

"No, your Majesty."

"Never mind. Serve up for two."

It was the Czar's habit thus to make himself a guest in his friends' houses, whether they were at home or not, and he is said once to have thus quartered himself upon somebody, with two hundred of his courtiers.

After a splendid dinner, the Czar went into an ante-room and laid down to sleep. The captain had already gone to sleep at the table. But the Czar laid a watch beside him; he could wake whenever he wished.

When he awoke, he went into the dining-room, and found Jaen Scheerborck sleeping at the table.

"Bring him out!" commanded the Czar.

"Is he not to accompany your Majesty any more?" the chamberlain, who was a favourite, ventured to ask.

"No! I have had enough of him; one should not meet people more than once in a lifetime. Carry him to the pump—that will sober him, and then take him to his ship"—and with a contemptuous glance he added, "You old beast!"

Then he felt whether his sabre was secure, and went out.

After his sleep, Peter was again the Emperor—lofty, upright, dignified. He went along the promenade, serious and sedate, as though to a battle. When he had found Number 14, he entered at once, sure of finding his fifty men there. On the right hand ground-floor towards the courtyard, all the windows stood open. There he saw the conspirators sitting at a long table and drinking wine. He stepped into the room, saw many of his friends there, and felt a stab at his heart.

"Good-day, comrades!" was his cheery greeting.

The whole company rose like one man. They exchanged looks and put on faces for the occasion.

“Let us drink a glass together, friends!” Peter threw himself on a chair; then he looked at a clock in the room, and saw it was only half-past four. He had made a mistake of half an hour. Was it his own error, or was Menshikoff’s clock wrong?

“Half an hour!” he thought to himself, but in the next second he had emptied a huge glass, and began to sing a very popular soldiers’ song, keeping time by knocking the glass against the table.

The effect of the song was magical. They had sung it as victors at Pultowa; they had marched to the accompaniment of its strains; it carried their memories to better, happier times, and they all joined in. Peter’s strong personality, the winning amiable air he could assume when he liked, had an attractive power for all. One song led to another, and singing relieved the terrible embarrassment. It was the only possible way of avoiding a conversation. Between the songs the Czar proposed a health, or drank to an old friend, reminding him of some experience which they had shared in common. He dared not look at the clock lest he should betray himself, but he found the half hour in this den of murderers intolerably long.

Several times he saw two exchanging glances, but then he threw in a jesting word and the thread was broken. He was playing for his life, and he played well, for he misled them with his cheerfulness and naivete, so that they could not tell whether he knew anything or not. He played with their irresolution.

At last he heard the rattle of arms in the courtyard, and with one bound he was out of the window.

“Massacre!” was his only word of command, and then the blood-bath began. He himself stood at the window, and when any one tried to jump out, the Czar struck off his head. “Alles tot!” he exclaimed in German, when it was all over. Then he went his way in the direction of the Peter-Paul Fortress.

He was received by the Commandant, and had himself conducted to Prince Alexis, his only surviving and eldest son, on whom he had built his hope and Russia’s destiny.

With the key in his hand, he remained standing before the cell, made the sign of the cross and prayed half-aloud:—“O Eternal God of armies, Lord of Hosts, who hath put the sword into the hands of rulers that they may guide and protect, reward and punish, enlighten

thy poor servant's understanding that he may deal righteously. Thou hast demanded from Abraham his son, and he obeyed. Thou hast crucified Thine own Son in order to redeem mankind. Take my sacrifice, O Terrible One, if Thou requirest it. Yet not my will be done, but Thine. May this cup pass if it be Thy will. Amen! in the name of Christ, Amen!"

He entered the cell, and remained there an hour. When he came out again, he looked as though he had been weeping; but he said nothing, handed the key to the Commandant, and departed. There are many varying rumours regarding what passed that evening between father and son. But one thing is certain: Alexis was condemned to death by a hundred and twenty-seven judges, and the verdict was entered on the State records. But the Crown Prince died before the execution of the sentence.

The same evening, about eight o'clock, the Czar entered his country-house and sought Katherine. "The old has passed away," he said. "Now we will begin the new—you and I and our children."

The Czarina asked no questions, for she understood. But the Czar was so tired and exhausted, that she feared lest he should have one of the attacks which she knew so well. And the only way of quieting him was the old customary one.

She sat down in the corner of the sofa; he laid down resting his head on her capacious bosom; then she stroked his hair till he fell asleep. But she had to sit for three hours without moving.

A giant child on a giant bosom, the great champion of the Lord lay there, his face looked small, his high brow was hidden by his long hair; his mouth was open, and he snored like a little child asleep. When at last he awoke, he looked up at first astonished, to find himself where he was. Then he smiled, but did not say Thank you, and did not fondle her.

"Now we will have something to eat," was the first thing he said. "Then something to drink, and then a great firework. I will light it myself down on the shore. But Jaen Scheerborck must be present."

"You have thrown him out."

"Have I? He was drunk, the fellow. Send for him at once."

"You are so strange, Peter! Never the same for two minutes together."

“I will not be the same; it would be too monotonous. Always something new! And I am always new. What! I do not weary you with everlasting sameness.”

His orders were carried out. Jaen was brought, but had to be bound first; he was angry with Peter because of his ducking at the pump, and refused to come. But when he landed, he was embraced and kissed on the mouth, and then his wrath blew over.

They ate and drank and had their firework display, which was a great pleasure for the Czar.

So ended the fateful day which secured the succession to the throne to the house of Romanoff. And such was the man who termed himself “the Great, the Self-ruler, the Emperor of All the Russias.”

The Barbarian, who civilised his Russia; who built towns and did not dwell in them himself; who beat his wife, and allowed extensive liberty to women,—his life was great, copious, and useful on the public side of it; in private, as it might chance to be. But he had a beautiful death, for he died in consequence of an illness contracted when saving a life from shipwreck—he who, with his own hand, had taken the lives of so many!

THE SEVEN GOOD YEARS

Monsieur Voltaire, gentleman-in-waiting to Frederick the Great, possessor of the much prized Order Pour Le Mérite, Academician, and many other things besides, had been for three years a guest at Sans-Souci, near Potsdam. He was sitting this beautiful evening in the wing of the castle where he lived, busy writing a letter. The air was still and warm, so that the sensitive Frenchman, who was always shivering, could leave the window open.

His letter, only half written, was directed to the Marquise, the friend of Cardinal Fleury, who carried on a sort of superior spy-service by means of correspondence with foreign countries.... "Everything is transitory," he wrote, "and it was plain that this would not last. I have to act as a tutor and correct his bad verses, though he knows neither German nor French properly. Malicious as an ape he has written satires on all the ruling heads of Europe which are certainly not fit for printing, but are quite vulgar and unjust. With a view to the future dear friend, I have caused his pamphlet to be copied, and at the moment when he strikes, I shall strike back. If you only knew what this Prussia is, and threatens to become! It is an eagle sketched in outline with the tip of one wing resting on the Rhine, and the other on the Russian frontier. There are gaps here and there in the outline, but when they are filled up the whole of North Germany will hang like a vulture over Austria's two-headed imperial eagle. France must control her hatred against the House of Hapsburg, and not compromise with the Hohenzollerns, for you know not what you do. One hears much talk of plans here, but I dare not write them all down, for he is not to be jested with."

At this point there was heard from the castle the penetrating sound of a flute, which executed trills and shakes. The old man (for he was now in his sixtieth year) first put his fingers in his ears, but then continued to write.... "And then his confounded flute! He is playing on it just now ... that means we are all to dance to his piping. But still worse than the flute is something which they call a fugue; I do not know whether one can call it music, but yesterday Sebastian Bach was here—'the great Bach' of course—and had his son Philipp Emanuel with him. The whole afternoon they played so-called

fugues, so that I had to go to bed and take medicine. As regards his plans, I will only indicate some of them. One plan is to divide Austria between France and Prussia, but he is too cunning to do so, for he needs Austria to help him against France. A second plan is, to divide Prussia between Russia and Austria, and I have heard rumours of a third to divide Poland between Russia, Prussia, and Austria. (The flute is silent, and a heavenly stillness spreads over Sans-Souci, which for the future I shall write 'Cent-Soucis,' for a hundred petty vexations threaten to shorten my life here.) Our Round Table, which hitherto only consisted of men of talent, Maupertuis, La Mettrie, Algarotti, D'Argens, and their like, is now recruited by guardsmen from Potsdam, and is in course of degenerating into a tobacco-club. Ziethen and his Dessauers wear greasy leather boots, and brag of their 'five victories.' The day before yesterday they took liberties, silenced all intelligent conversation, and finally tried to make me the butt of their jests. What annoyed me the most was that *he* could not hide his pleasure at it. Altogether, the procession of the leather boots means war—as might be expected—against the lady Maria Teresa. The other lady, the Empress Elizabeth of Russia, he denotes by another uglier name.... He has become a women's hero, the nasty woman-hater. His wife, Elizabeth Christine, is still confined in Schönhausen."

A head looked in at the window, and the King greeted him, "Good evening, Monsieur; so busy?"

Like a boy surprised in cribbing, the writer threw his papers into disorder, and drew half a sheet of Dutch vellum over them.

"Yes, sire, I have just finished a poem to the Emperor Kian-Loung, which is an answer to his 'Eloge de Mukden.'"

"To the Emperor of China! You have grander acquaintances than I."

"But you have me, sire."

This he said with a superior air of satirising himself, as though he would make game of his own notorious vanity.

The King took the jest as it was intended. "Yes, Monsieur Voltaire belongs to my most honourable acquaintances, but I would not say to the grandest."

"May I now read my poem to the Chinese Emperor? Do you allow me, sire?"

"Would it be any use, if I did not allow it, you pushing man?"

"Very well:

"'Recois mes compliments, charmant roi de la Chine.'"

"But he is an Emperor."

"Yes, but that is a politeness towards you, sire, who are only a King!"

"Only!"

"I continue:

"'Ton trône est done placé sur la double colline
On sait dans l'Occident, que malgre mes travers
J'ai toujours fort aimé les rois qui font des vers!'"

"Thank you."

"'O toi que sur le trône un feu céleste enflamme
Des moi si ce grand art don't nous sommes épris,
Est aussi difficile à Pekin qu'à Paris.

Ton peuple est-il soumis a cette loi si dure,
Qui vent qu'avec six pieds d'une égale mesure

De deux Alexandrins, côte à côte marchants
L'un serve pour la rime, et l'autre pour le sens?
Si bien que sans rien perdre, en bravant cet usage,
On pourrait retrancher la moitié d'un ouvrage.'"

"Bravo! Very good!" broke in the King, who felt the sting of the satire but could control himself.

"But do you think that the Emperor will understand that—at any rate as you intend it?"

"If he does not understand it, then he is a blockhead...."

"But if he does, you may expect a declaration of war."

"China against Voltaire!"

"What would you do then?"

"I would beat them, as you do, with my troops, of course."

"But if the Emperor has more troops than you?"

"Then I should flee, of course, like you do, sire, or I let myself be put to flight, and so save my honour as a soldier."

The King was accustomed to Voltaire's impertinences, and he pardoned them for the moment, but stored them in his memory.

"But now, don't stick poking about in your room, Monsieur. Come out for a walk with me. We will philosophise in the cool of the evening. I have so much to say, and must put my thoughts in order for the great work."

"Sire, I will come immediately."

"No, now; I am waiting."

Monsieur Voltaire became nervous, and began to tidy his desk; he pulled out drawers, and protracted the business. But the King stood as if on guard, and watched him. At last the old man had to stop tidying up and come out, but his limbs twitched, and he shook himself, as though he wished to shake off something. The King led him down the third terrace, and turned to the right into the park, where they found a long avenue which led to a small circular open space. Here there stood the Temple of Friendship.

There was an embarrassing silence between them, but Frederick, who had learnt self-control, was the first to find the thread which they had lost. But he had to introduce the conversation by commencing with their present surroundings.

"What a peaceful evening, Monsieur! Peace in nature and in human life! Have you noticed that there has been no war in the world for seven years—that is, since the Peace of Aachen?"

"Now I have not thought about it. Well, you can now expect the seven lean kine—I mean years."

"Who knows! You spoke just now of Kian Loung, the peaceful prince who philosophises and writes verses on tea-plant blossoms; who serves his people and makes them happy. His neighbour Japan has enjoyed peace for a hundred years. In India the French and English are rivalling each other in trade. That is the great East, which we shall soon have to take into account—. If we consider our portion of the world, with which I reckon Egypt, the latter lies asleep under Pashas and Mamelukes. Greece, our motherland, has entered

its last sleep. The Athens of Pericles is an appendage of the Sultan's harem, and is ruled by black eunuchs. Rome, or rather Italy, is parcelled out between Lorraine, the House of Bourbon, and Savoy. But in Rome is my friend Benedict XIV; he is also a man of peace, and the first Pope, moreover, who acknowledges the King of Prussia. He tolerates Protestants, helps forward science, and has allowed latitude and longitude to be measured...."

"And expelled the Jesuits, whom you, sire, have received. You ought not to have done that."

"What do you know of the Jesuits? In Spain we have Ferdinand VI, who encourages mining, combats the Inquisition, fosters the sciences."

"The itch for writing seems to be spreading over the earth like a pestilence."

"In England my uncle George, the pupil of Adam Smith, is working solely for the commercial prosperity of his country. The others we know. But we ought to remember the great discoveries of our century—fire-machines, thermometers, lightning-conductors, anchor-watches. In fact it is the Golden Age which has returned at this late epoch."

"Think only of the fire-machines which they now call steam-engines. And of the telegraphs! What may we not next expect!"

"War, of course."

"I have never loved war, as you know, but I have been driven to it."

"With the stick."

The King was not angry, but he was troubled that a remarkable man, who had been his friend and teacher, should commit such a *bêtise*.

"You are right; it was my father's stick, and I bless it. But although I do not believe that the Golden Age is before the door, yet I do see a brighter future in the distance."

"I see only clouds which foretell earthquakes. France is undermined; America is moving; all Europe is prepared to discard Christianity as a crab its shell; Economics are reduced to a science; nature is ransacked; we are on the verge of something novel and tremendous; I feel it already in my corns."

"I also! My leisure-time is drawing to an end, my Tusculum will be closed, and dreadful things are about to happen."

On the King's face at this moment there was such an indescribable expression of pain, as though he had foreseen the Seven Years' War which followed immediately on the seven years' of peace, and he seemed to be bowed to the earth bearing the destiny of his country and the future on his shoulders.

"Sire, at such moment, you need some religion."

"My duty is my religion. My God is the Providence which guides the destinies of the nations but leaves individuals to themselves! What are men that you should take notice of these ants?"

The conversation was interrupted by a person who appeared in the background and resembled a judicial official. Voltaire saw who it was, and became furious: "Your Majesty, how can you allow this rag-tag and bob-tail to enter the castle-park? Why do you not enclose it with iron gates and railings?"

"No," answered the King; "I am not the master of my own person, still less of this castle, but all have rights over me!"

"But this is atrocious! Can I not drive him away?"

"No, you cannot!"

The King beckoned, and the stranger approached with his hat in his hand.

"What do you want, my friend?" asked the King.

"Only to deliver a document to Monsieur Voltaire, your Majesty."

"Then do your duty."

The man handed the document to Voltaire, and retired. When the old man had opened and read it, he fell on his knees before the King and exclaimed, "Save me, sire!"

"That is your law-suit with Hirschel about the Saxon state papers. You thought to deceive each other and the public, but the Jew did not let you lead him by the nose, Monsieur, and now you are exposed as a falsifier!"

"Save me, your Majesty!"

"How can I?"

"With a word—a single good word before the court...."

“For shame, old man! Do you think I can bend the law? Do you want me to bribe the judges? No, Monsieur, there are judges in Berlin who cannot be bribed! My word counts as little as that of the meanest. Stand up, go to your room, and meet me at supper.”

“Sire, I beg to be excused coming to supper this evening.”

“Good! then we will meet to-morrow.”

When Voltaire reached his room, he began to search through his papers which he had left in disorder. He looked for a whole hour for the letter he had written to the Marquise, without being able to find it. Then he perceived that the letter had been seized, and he conceived a suspicion against the King. He stormed about in the room till it had become dark outside. He felt that it was all over with friendship and hospitality, with high position and honour, and that he must depart—perhaps by flight.

Accordingly he closed the window-shutters, and made a fire in the stove in order to burn dangerous papers. When he had finished, he went to bed, and rang for a servant: “Ask Monsieur La Mettrie to come; I am ill,” he ordered.

La Mettrie, the author of *L’Homme Machine*, a most rigorous materialist and atheist, enjoyed Frederick’s favour on account of his writings. After his death the King himself delivered a funeral oration over him in the Academy. Voltaire was jealous of him, as he was of everyone who stood in his way, but La Mettrie was a physician, and Voltaire could be amiable to anyone of whom he stood in need.

The doctor came, not out of philanthropy, but from curiosity and a certain malicious satisfaction at seeing the favourite in disgrace.

“My dear friend,” said the old man, “I am sick in body and soul.”

“You haven’t got a soul.”

“But the trouble is in the heart.”

“*Cor, cordis*, the heart; then you have eaten too much. Take a purge, Monsieur; then you will be lighter than lightmindedness itself.”

“Prescribe me some proper medicine, man; I am dying.”

“Then go to a watering-place.”

“Like a minister who is in disgrace; no, thank you.”

"Go home to your own country; you are suffering from homesickness."

"Yes, there you are right! The air here does not suit me."

"You are beginning to get stout."

"What do you mean by that?"

"And the Marquises are longing for you."

"Are they? What nonsense you talk! But I must have a watering-place."

"Well, take Plombières! There you will meet the court."

"That is an excellent idea! Plombières! But I will return, of course."

"Of course!"

"I will be back in three weeks—let us say a month. If only the King will not be vexed...."

"Let me assure you, the King will console himself."

"Yes, yes, I will consider the matter. But say—he is not angry with me?"

"Who?"

"The King!"

"He is not angry with you, otherwise he would have been so long ago! No, you are belated in thinking that."

"Give me a sleeping powder, and then you can go."

The doctor took the powder, and poured it in a glass of water.

The old man drank, but his large eyes followed the changing expressions of the doctor's face, who looked very amused. He did not altogether trust him.

"Monsieur Voltaire," said the doctor, "when you make a fire in the oven, draw up the small oven-shutters, else there is too much smoke. The Potsdam fire-engines would very likely be summoned."

"Oh! That too! Well! *La comedia è finita!* Good-night!"

"*Sic transit gloria mundi!* Sleep well!"

Voltaire slept during the night, but not well, and was awakened on the following morning by the sound of salutes fired at Potsdam; from which he concluded that the King was holding manoeuvres. Neither

did he see any sign of the King, but about noonday he received a letter bearing the royal arms which ran as follows:—

"MONSIEUR,—Doctor La Mettrie has told me of your determination to
travel to a watering-place. Although I shall miss your pleasant and instructive conversation, I will not resist your wish, since I am sure that a thorough course of treatment will benefit your nerves and the wretched state of your heart. Wishing you a good recovery, or at any rate hoping that you will not be worse than you are,

"I am

"F. R."

That was his passport for the journey. The same evening Voltaire travelled to Leipzig, where he read extracts from Frederick's collection of satires which he also thought of having printed. But in Frankfurt he was arrested and deprived of the precious manuscripts, which might have made more enemies for Frederick than he actually did make later on. Rebuked, and again liberated, Voltaire fled at first to France, where he published in the *Dictionnaire Historique* the most abominable assertions regarding Frederick's private life.

Two years later he was settled at Ferney, on the Lake of Geneva, as a multi-millionaire, patriarch, and king.

Many years passed, and still the old Voltaire reigned at his Sans-Souci called Ferney—just as energetic as ever, just as restless and vain.

His little château was a modest two-storied building in a circular enclosure, surrounded by a courtyard planted with trees. On the left of the entrance stood a small stone chapel. A tablet over the door bore the inscription, "Deo erexit Voltaire," which roused the mirth of his literary friends and the hatred of the ecclesiastical party.

Below in the garden he had an arbour-walk of hornbeam covered in, and resembling a long hall with windows cut in the side, looking towards the lake. From thence he could see Mont Blanc, which especially at sunset showed all its splendour, and the blue levels of the lake stretching towards Clarens and the Rhone Valley, where the

unfortunate Rousseau had wandered, loved, and suffered. Just now in the twilight, the old man sat in his arbour walk and played bezique with the local pastor, when the post arrived. There were many letters with shining seals.

"Excuse me, Abbé, I must read my letters!"

"Pray do so," answered the priest, and stood up in order to promenade up and down the arbour walk.

After a while the old man called his friend back: "Come, Abbé, come! You must hear something!"

The Abbé, who, for the sake of his flock, kept on good terms with Voltaire, and humoured his whims, without, however, yielding to him in theological discussions, came at the summons.

"You must hear a letter from Frederick the Great, the Unique, the Incomparable. He has pardoned me, and I am ashamed. My last evening in Sans-Souci I was irritated, and in my cruelty I was mean enough to remind him of his father's stick. The moment that the word escaped, I felt his retort in the air, but he restrained it. He had only needed to return the thrust with a reference to the stick which had played a certain part in my youth, but he kept silent, whether out of regard for my years or for some other reason. (It is remarkable that the stick has also had an influence on the development of the great Shakespeare and others.) Excuse, Abbé, this *garrulitas senilis*—he has pardoned me, and writes, 'My old friend!'

"'The years have passed; to the seven good years which you shared with me succeeded the seven lean ones—the Seven Years' War and all that it brought with it. Friends have departed, and a great loneliness enfolds the ageing man, who now, among other things, begins to be far-sighted, after being formerly short-sighted. He sees life in a perspective where the apparently shorter lines are the longest. He knows that from experience, and therefore lets himself no longer be deceived. Standing on the height which he has gained, he is glad to look back, but he can also now see in front of him.

"'What is now impending? Who can say? This century, which has seen all the sovereigns leading revolutionary movements, is the strangest of all. We despots, who forced enlightenment and freedom on the peoples—we were the demagogues and they rewarded us with ingratitude. It was a perverse world! I have suffered for my doctrines

and actions, but the fate of Joseph II is tragic. They are slowly but surely murdering him.

"'You do not love war: nor do I, but I was forced to it by Providence and solicitude for my country. What have I effected thereby? you ask. I have made a "re-distribution," as land-surveyors call it, and out of scattered patches and scraps of territory I have woven together a Prussia, so that we can now walk on our own ground, without treading on our neighbour's. Do not fear Prussia; you need it as a bulwark against Russia, which now, since the time of the Czar Peter, has a voice and vote in the Council of Europe. You disapprove of my sharing in the partition of Poland, but I was obliged to do so; otherwise Russia would have taken all. Poland had lost its significance in the geographical economy of Europe; it was Russianised, and the role it had played was taken over by the Sarmatian.... Silesia was ours, and thank God that the Swedes did not obtain it, as they at first wished. Moreover, we have sent the Goths home to their own country, and look after our own affairs ourselves.'"

"And so on! Then he says something about Rousseau."

"'You call Rousseau a swindler; that is a somewhat severe expression. Even if he did really steal a piece of ribbon, or a silver spoon, it is not worth talking about. I share his love for nature and his hatred of mankind. One evening lately, as the sun went down, I thought: "God! how beautiful are Thy natural creations, and how hideous are Thy human creatures!" We men, I mean—for I except neither myself nor you, Monsieur. This cursed race truly belongs to the Iron Age as described by Hesiod. And we are asked to believe that they are created after God's image! After the image of the Devil, I would rather say! Rousseau is right when he believes in a past Golden Age.'

"What do you say to that, Monsieur l'Abbé?"

"It is what the Church teaches regarding the lost Paradise and the Fall, and also agrees with the Greek legend of Prometheus, who ate of the tree of knowledge, and thereby brought misfortune on men."

"Good heavens! Have you too become a freethinker? Shoemaker, stick to your last! If you are a priest, then be a priest, but don't try to

make a botch of my work. And don't think you need to flatter me for an increase of wages. But let us return to Frederick:"

"'History rolls on like an avalanche; the race improves, the conditions of life become easier, but men are still the same—faithless, unthankful, criminal; and he just as well as the unjust go to hell. I do not dare to put down on paper the conclusions to be drawn from this observation, for that would be to acquit Lazarus, and to crucify Christ.... Great men have little weaknesses or rather great weaknesses. We, Monsieur, have been no angels, but Providence has used us for great objects. Is it a matter of indifference to Providence whom it takes in hand, or how we live in the flesh, provided we keep the spirit uppermost? *Sursum corda!*'"

"What do you say to that, Abbé?"

"The Law cannot be fulfilled, says St. Paul, but the Law rouses the sense of guilt, and therefore it is only imposed in order to drive us to grace."

"That was not such a stupid remark of Paul's. But I should like to add,—in the prison of the flesh grows the longing for liberation: 'Who shall deliver me, wretched man, from this body of sin?' Yes, Abbé, *Vanitas vanitatum! Vanitas!* You are young, but you must not despise the old man when he turns round and spits behind him all the unpleasantness of his past life. Might but a generation be born which knew at once the value of life, as long as a mud-bath is not part of the treatment!"

Just then a dark lean man came tortuously along the garden path.

"See! there is my Jesuit!" said Voltaire.

The old man kept on friendly terms with a Jesuit, partly because the Pope had expelled them, partly because Frederick the Great had patronised them; but his chief object was to have someone to dispute with. Perhaps also he wished to show his freedom from prejudice, for he did not like the uncongenial man.

"Now, you child of Satan!" was the old man's greeting, "what mischief have you got in your mind? You look so maliciously pleased!"

"I come from Geneva," answered the Jesuit with an evil smile.

"What are they doing there?"

"I saw the executioner burn Rousseau's *Emile*."

"They may do that, as far as I am concerned, and throw the fool himself into the fire."

"Monsieur Voltaire!"

"Yes: one cannot tolerate lunatics: there are limits!"

"Where?"

"Imposed by a sound intelligence."

"Yes, and saw them burn the new edition of Monsieur Voltaire's *Candide*."

"For shame! But it is merely a mob in Geneva."

"A Protestant mob, with your permission."

"Don't trouble yourself; I hate Protestants equally with Catholics! This terrible Calvin burnt his friend Servetus in Geneva, because he did not believe in the Trinity. And had Jean Calas in Toulouse been a Catholic, and his son a Protestant, I would still have attacked the judges, although I am nothing. I am nothing; only, what I write is something."

"Then some day we will raise a monument to Monsieur Voltaire's writings—not to Voltaire."

"You have no need; I have already raised my monument myself in the hundred volumes of my collected works. The world has nothing to do with how the old ass looked; there is nothing to see in that. We know my weaknesses; I have lied, I have stolen, I have been ungrateful; something of a scoundrel, something of a brute! That is the dirty part of me, and I bequeath it to Jesuits, pettifoggers, hair-splitters and collectors of anecdotes;—but my spirit to God who gave it, and to men an honest purpose to understand their Monsieur Voltaire."

He rose, for the sun had descended.

"Good-night, Mont Blanc; you have a white head like myself, and stand with your feet in cold water, as I do! Now I go and lie down! Tomorrow I travel to Paris, where I will die."

DAYS OF JUDGMENT

In the northern tower of the Church of Notre Dame de Paris was the tower-watchman's chamber. But it had been arranged like a bookbinder's workshop, for the watchman's day-duty was not particularly heavy, and the hours of the night passed with sleep or without sleep, no one troubling themselves to oversee this now superfluous church servant.

Nobody entered the church, which had been damaged in various ways, and no one ascended the northern tower, for the bells hung in the southern one. There the watchman's duty was regarded more seriously, for on all extraordinary occasions the alarm-bell had to sound.

The watchman kept up a sort of telegraphic communication with the bellringer in the southern tower. In calm weather they could chat with each other, but when it was windy, they had to use speaking trumpets.

The workshop had, in the course of years, developed into a very comfortable room. Its southern side was occupied by a single large bookcase. There the first edition of the *Encyclopédie* in five and thirty volumes, shone resplendent in red morocco with gilt letters. There stood Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Locke, Hume—all the authors who ought to have been present. There were also periodicals, the *Moniteur*, Père Duchesne and Marat's *L'Ami du Peuple*. This last was bound in somewhat greasy leather, which resembled pig's-skin, and had curled up at the corners.

Another wall was covered with engravings, some coloured and some plain. They hung in chronological order from left to right, from top to bottom, so that one could read the whole history of the Revolution pictorially. The Oath in the ball-room on June 20, 1789, with Mirabeau's portrait; the burning of the Bastille, and the head of the commandant; the Jacobite Club, with Marat, Saint-Just, Couthon, Robespierre; the Feast of Brotherhood on the Champ du Mars; the King's Flight to Varennes; Lafayette; the Girondists; the execution of the King and Queen; the Committee of Public Welfare, with Danton and the newly hatched Robespierre; the Reign of Terror; Charlotte Corday stabbing Marat in the bath; Robespierre

again; Feast of the Supreme Being; Voltaire's Funeral; Robespierre again, this time on the 9th Thermidor. Then came Buonaparte and the Directory, mixed with Pyramids and Alps.

In the middle of the room stood a very large table. At the one end were the bookbinder's tools; at the other, writing materials. The inkstand was a skull; the ruler was a fore-arm; the paper-weight was a guillotine, and the penholder a rib.

The bookbinder himself, a centenarian, with an apostolic beard, sat and wrote under a lantern which hung from the roof. He was the only person visible in the room. Outside it was stormy, and the roof-plates rattled from time to time; it was cool in the room, but not cold, for a stove was lit in a corner, where lay the watchman's belongings—a great wolfskin fur-coat, a speaking trumpet, some flags, and a lantern with variously coloured glass sides. The old man pushed his glasses up his forehead, looked up, and spoke, though the person with whom he talked could not be seen.

"Are you hungry?"

A voice behind the bookcase answered: "Fairly so."

"Are you cold?"

"No, not yet."

"Wait a little; I must just go outside and make an observation."

"What are you writing?"

"My reminiscences."

"Is it quiet in the town?"

"Yes, but they have gone out to Saint Cloud."

"Then it will soon come to shooting."

"It won't come to shooting, but we may expect a proclamation. Be quiet now; I must step out, and send a message. Then you will get some food and drink; perhaps a pipe of tobacco also."

There was silence behind the bookcase, and the old man put on his fur-coat, lit his many-coloured lamp, took up a speaking-trumpet, and stepped out on the balcony.

It was very dark, but the old man was familiar with his menagerie out there on the parapet; he loved his stone monsters—the owl, the griffin, the gorgon, and stroked them every time that he passed them. But the creature with a man's body, goat's feet and horns,

inspired him with a certain awe, as it stood there leaning on its hands like a priest, and bending forward as if to preach to the godless city or to hurl anathemas at it. He took his stand near it, and began to signal with the lantern. But the wind was so violent that the old man swayed, and had to put his arm round the creature's body, in order to support himself.

After he had stood for a time signalling with the lantern, and gazing out into the darkness, he suddenly raised himself upright, put down the lantern, and raised the speaking-trumpet to his mouth. Holding on to the stone balustrade, he turned to the southern tower, and cried "Hullo! Francis! Hallo!"

After a while a reply came through the darkness.

"Qui vive?"

"Mont-joie—Saint-Denis."

"Sacre!" answered the other. "Ring the great bell! Ring, for heaven's sake!"

The watchman remained standing for a while looking at the coloured lights on the church tower of St. Cloud. In order to be quite certain, he repeated his signal, and received for answer: "Right understood."

The old man sighed "Thy will be done, O Lord!" He was on the point of returning to the turret-chamber, when the wind blew so violently, that he had to seize the arm of the horned monster in order to stand fast. But the figure had got loose; it yielded, and moved a little.

"He too!" muttered the old man to himself. "Nothing stands fast, everything slips; nothing remains on which to support oneself." He crouched down in order not to be blown away, and so stooping, as he walked, reached the door of the turret-chamber, which he flung open.

"The Revolution is over," he called out to the bookcase.

"What do you say?"

"The Revolution is over! Come out, sire."

He laid hold of the bookcase, and opened it like a door on its hinges. It concealed a neat little room furnished in the style of Louis XV. Out of it stepped a man of about thirty, with pale delicate features and a melancholy aspect.

“Sire,” said the bookbinder in a humble voice, “now your time is come, and mine runs out. I do not exactly know what has happened on this eighteenth of Brumaire in Saint Cloud, but one thing I know: Buonaparte has taken the helm.”

“Jaques,” answered the nobleman, “I do not wish to hurt your feelings, but I cannot conceal my joy.”

“Don’t conceal it, sire! You have saved me from the scaffold, and I have saved you; let us thank each other, and be quits.”

“To think that this bloody drama is ended—that this madness….”

“Sire, don’t speak so.”

His eyes began to sparkle, but he quickly changed his tone. “Let us eat our last meal together, but in love like fellow-men; let us talk of the past, and then part in peace. This evening we are still brothers, but to-morrow you are the lord and I am the servant.”

“You are right. To-day I am an emigrant, tomorrow I am a count.”

The old man brought out a cold fowl, a cheese, and a bottle of wine, and both took their places at the table.

“This wine, sire, was bottled in ‘89. It has a history, and therefore….”

“Have you no white wine? I do not like red.”

“Is it the colour you dislike?”

“Yes, it looks like blood! You have lost a wife and four sons.”

“Why should I weep for them? They fell on the field of honour.”

“The scaffold!”

“I call the scaffold the field of honour! But you want white wine! Good! You shall have it. You prefer the colour of tears; I prefer that of blood!”

He opened a bottle of white wine: “*Suum cuique!* Tastes differ. We can now breathe again, and sleep quietly at night. That was the hardest thing to bear during this last decade—the loss of sleep at night. The fear of death was worse than death itself.”

“The worst for us—pardon the expression—was to see the State and society turned topsyturvy, and brutality enthroned.”

“Wait a little! Louis XIV paid two gentlemen of the chamber twenty thousand livres yearly to examine and carry away his night stool every morning. The Sansculottes could not be coarser than

that. Marie Antoinette used to go and spend the night drinking with her boon-companions, so that she returned home about eleven o'clock the next morning exhausted; that was coarse conduct for such a fine lady."

"You may draw the long bow to-night, Jaques; but to-morrow take care of your head! You ought not to speak so of these high personages who have suffered a martyr's death."

"Stop! stop! The King was what they call 'a fine fellow,' but the Queen was a wretch. But both were justly condemned to death—both! Look you! if Turgot could have remained at his post, the Revolution would not have broken out. All the reforms in the State, Church, and Society, which we—pardon the expression—have carried through could have been carried through then, if Turgot had been allowed to put his plans into operation. The Queen would not endure the Minister's retrenchment of her revenue, and plotted for his removal, and the King supported her. That was a great crime. The second was the overthrow of Necker. Then the Queen and her Court minxes ruled. Both King and Queen sought to stir up foreign countries against their own; their correspondence relating to this was discovered, and then the betrayers of their country were condemned to death. Don't talk of Martyrs, or I shall be angry. For I am angry when I hear lies, and cannot control myself."

The Count laid his hand on his sword.

"Put your sword in its sheath, young man, or otherwise...."

They sat down on opposite sides of the table, and darted angry glances at each other.

"The ultimate causes," continued the old man, "may be sought in heaven, but we have here only to do with secondary causes, and those we know. The Revolution was a Last Judgment which had to come, just as it came in England exactly a hundred years before, in 1689."

"But Cromwell's republic did not last."

"Nor does this; but it comes again! But let us rather talk of something cheerful on this last evening. I have been present at everything; I have a strong memory, and can forget nothing. But what shines most brightly through all the dark days is the recollection of the day on the Champs du Mars, the Feast of

Brotherhood of July 14, '90. Twenty thousand workmen were employed to clear it, but, as they could not finish the work by the appointed day, all Paris went out. There I saw bishops, court marshals, generals, monks, nuns, society ladies, workmen, sailors, dustmen, and street-girls levelling the ground with hoes and spades. Finally the King himself made up his mind to join in the work. That was the greatest feat of equalisation which mankind have carried out; the hills were made low, and the valleys filled. At last the great theatre of liberty was ready. At the altar of the Fatherland a fire of perfumed wood was kindled, and Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, with a retinue of four hundred white-robed priests consecrated the flags. The King in civil dress and the Queen sat on the platform, and, as the 'first citizens of the State,' took the constitutional oath. All was forgotten; all was forgiven. Half a million people, collected in one place, animated by one spirit, felt themselves that day to be brothers and sisters. We wept, we fell in each other's arms, we kissed each other. We wept to think what wretches we had been, and how good and amiable we were now. We wept perhaps, also, because we guessed how fragile all this was.

"And afterwards, in the evening, when Paris turned out in the streets and market-places. Families ate their mid-day meal on the pavement; the old and sick were carried into the open air; food and wine were distributed at the public expense. That was the Feast of Tabernacles, the recollection of the Exodus from Egyptian bondage; it was the Saturnalia, the return of the Golden Age! And then...."

"Then came Marat, Danton, and Robespierre."

"Yes! Robespierre, the most hated of all, was not worse than Louis XI and Henry VIII."

"A murderer."

"The judge is not a murderer, nor is the executioner."

"But the Golden Age passed—as it came."

"Yet it comes again."

"Not with Buonaparte!"

"No, not with him, but through him."

"Who is he?"

"A Corsican, born in the same year in which France annexed his country. He will avenge it, and, since he can never feel himself a

Frenchman, he will exploit our country only for his own purposes. But nevertheless, in spite of his unparalleled selfishness, his wickedness and crimes, he will serve humanity—for everything serves."

"And afterwards?"

"Who can say? Probably things will go on as they have done hitherto; sometimes advancing, then a halt; then again advance."

"And then the obsolete turns up again."

"Yes, like a drowning man. Three times he comes to the surface to breathe, but the fourth time he remains below. Or, like an animal chewing the cud; for some time there are small eructations, re-mastications, and then everything is ejected through the gullet, after going through the circle."

"Do you believe in the return of the Golden Age?"

"Yes I believe like Thomas, when I have seen. And I have seen. At the moment, which I now recall, on the Champs du Mars,—then I saw! We had a forefeeling of the future, we were sure that we had had a vision of some new order of things, but were uncertain when it would be established."

"How long are we to wait?"

"We should not sit still and wait, but work! That makes the time pass. The learned say that it took a million years for the Hill of Montmartre to be deposited from the water. Now history is only three thousand years old; for three thousand years more, men can reflect over their past, and perhaps in six thousand an improvement may be noticeable! We are too proud and impatient, sire. And yet things move quickly. America was discovered only three hundred years ago, and now it is an European republic. Africa, India, China, Japan are opened, and soon the whole world will belong to Europe. Do you see the promise to Abraham, 'In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,' is on the way to fulfilment—on the way, I say."

"The promise to Abraham?"

"Yes! Have not Christians, Jews, and Muhammedans a share in the promise?"

"Christians of Abraham's seed?"

“Through Christ, who was of Judah, we are spiritually Abraham’s seed. One faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all!”

“I have listened to you, and must say that your faith is great, and has delivered you.”

“As it will deliver mankind.”

The conversation now ceased, for the alarm-bell began to ring in the south tower. The sound of it overpowered the din of the storm, and filled the room with its vibrations, made the table and chairs shake, and both men tremble. The old man tried to speak, but his guest heard nothing, and only saw his lips move. Then the old man rose and pointed to one of the many engravings.

It represented Anacharsis Clootz, the philanthropist and philosopher, in a convent, with a crowd of people from all corners of the earth—black, yellow, white, copper-coloured—seeking to have them admitted as citizens into the world-republic. The Count smiled in answer half-distrustfully, half-tolerantly. The old man tried to speak, but could not be heard. The boom of the bell seemed to come from the depths of ages, ringing out the past century and ringing in the new, which would commence in a few weeks—the nineteenth century since the birth of the Redeemer, who has promised to return, and perhaps will do so in one way or another.

The Count sat there fingering the letter-weight in the shape of a guillotine. Suddenly he seized it, and looked questioningly at the old man, who nodded in the affirmative. The letter-weight was thrown into the paper-basket.

The great bell ceased ringing, the room was quiet, and the old man, his arms folded over his breast, spoke as though with a sigh of gratitude.

“The Revolution is over.”

“*This* Revolution!”

“‘Tribulation worketh patience; patience, experience; experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed!’”

STRINDBERG'S DEATH-BED

(From the *Aftonbladet*, Stockholm, May 15, 1912) The last time that Strindberg was in full possession of his senses was late on Monday afternoon (May 13th). He recognised his daughter Greta, who sat by his bed, and her husband, Dr. Philp. He was fully aware that the end was near. He made a sign that he wished to have his Bible, which lay on the table by the bed. They gave it him; he took it in his hand and said: "All that is personal is now obliterated. I have done with life and closed the account. This is the only truth."

He kissed his daughter, but only said, "Dear Greta." Then he said to Dr. Philp, "Are you still here, Henry?" After talking a little more, his last utterance was, "Now I have said my last word. Now I talk no more." He kept his Bible so closely clasped to his breast as though that were the only thing he had to hold fast before the end.

So Stromboli retreated in the gloom,
Flinging red flame and molten lava high,
A flaring portent: We, who passed it by,
Carry that lurid memory to the tomb;
Yet round its crater living flowers bloom,
The vine, fig, olive grow and fructify,
Over it laughs the blue Sicilian sky,
A paradise upon the verge of doom.
As fiery as that red volcanic blast,
Through years he wrestled with his unseen Foe,
Wailing in pain "I will not let Thee go
Unless Thou bless me who have held Thee fast,"—
And thus, like Jacob, from his overthrow,
He rose a cripple, but a prince at last.

THE END

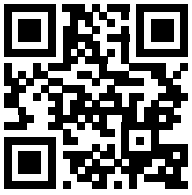
Historical Miniatures

FROM THE PUBLISHER



Discover your next classic.

Explore the Pipcub collection.



pipcub.com