

"If such be their final end," said Achilles, "never did thine, I will freely suppose, find a richer apology for the somewhat overbold license which thou tookest in thy gaze upon the Princess this evening."

"Good leader, or Follower, whichever is your favorite title," said the Anglo-Briton, "drive not to extremity a plain man, who desires to hold his duty in all honor to the imperial family. The Princess, wife of the Cæsar, and born, you tell me, of a purple color, has now inherited, notwithstanding, the features of a most lovely woman. She hath composed a history, of which I presume not to form a judgment, since I cannot understand it; she sings like an angel; and to conclude, after the fashion of the knights of this day—though I deal not ordinarily with their language—I would say cheerfully, that I am ready to place myself in lists against any one whomsoever, who dares detract from the beauty of the imperial Anna Comnena's person, or from the virtues of her mind. Having said this, my noble captain, we have said all that it is competent for you to inquire into, or for me to answer. That there are handsomer women than the Princess, is unquestionable; and I question it the less, that I have myself seen a person whom I think far her superior; and with that let us close the dialogue."

"Thy beauty, thou unparalleled fool," said Achilles, "must, I ween, be the daughter of the large-bodied northern boor, living next door to him upon whose farm was brought up the person of an ass, cursed with such intolerable want of judgment."

"You may say your pleasure, captain," replied Hereward; "because it is the safer for us both that thou canst not on such a topic either offend me who hold thy judgment as light as thou canst esteem mine, or speak any derogation of a person whom you never saw, but whom, if you had seen, perchance I might not so patiently have brooked any reflections upon, even at the hands of a military superior."

Achilles Tatius had a good deal of the penetration necessary for one in his situation. He never provoked to extremity the daring spirits whom he commanded, and never used any freedom with them beyond the extent that he knew their patience could bear. Hereward was a favorite soldier, and had, in that respect at least, a sincere liking and regard for his commander; when, therefore, the Follower, instead of resenting his petulance, good-humoredly apologized for having hurt his feelings, the momentary displeasure between them was at an end; the officer at once reassumed his superiority, and the soldier sunk back with a deep sigh, given to some period which was long past, into his wonted silence and reserve. Indeed, the Follower had another and further design upon Hereward, of which he was as yet unwilling to do more than give a distant hint.

After a long pause, during which they ap-

proached the barracks, a gloomy fortified building constructed for the residence of their corps, the captain motioned his soldier to draw close up to his side, and proceeded to ask him in a confidential tone—"Hereward, my friend, although it is scarce to be supposed that in the presence of the imperial family thou shouldst mark any one who did not partake of their blood, or rather, as Homer has it, who did not participate of the divine *ichor*, which, in their sacred persons, supplies the place of that vulgar fluid; yet, during so long an audience, thou mightst possibly, from his uncourtly person and attire, have distinguished Agelastes, whom we courtiers call the Elephant, from his strict observation of the rule which forbids any one to sit down or rest in the Imperial presence?"

"I think," replied the soldier, "I marked the man you mean; his age was some seventy and upwards,—a big burly person;—and the baldness which reached to the top of his head was well atoned for by a white beard of prodigious size, which descended in waving curls over his breast, and reached to the towel with which his loins were girded, instead of the silken sash used by other persons of rank."

"Most accurately marked, my Varangian," said the officer. "What else didst thou note about this person?"

"His cloak was in its texture as coarse as that of the meanest of the people, but it was strictly clean, as if it had been the intention of the wearer to exhibit poverty, or carelessness and contempt of dress, avoiding, at the same time, every particular which implied any thing negligent, sordid, or disgusting."

"By St. Sophia!" said the officer, "thou astonishest me! The Prophet Balaam was not more surprised when his ass turned round her head and spoke to him!—And what else didst thou note concerning this man? I see those who meet thee must beware of thy observation, as well as of thy battle-axe."

"If it please your valor," answered the soldier, "we English have eyes as well as hands; but it is only when discharging our duty that we permit our tongues to dwell on what we have observed. I noted but little of this man's conversation, but from what I heard, it seemed he was not unwilling to play what we call the jester, or jack-pudding, in the conversation, a character, which, considering the man's age and physiognomy, is not, I should be tempted to say, natural, but assumed for some purpose of deeper import."

"Hereward," answered his officer, "thou hast spoken like an angel sent down to examine men's bosoms; that man, Agelastes, is a contradiction, such as earth has seldom witnessed. Possessing all that wisdom which in former times united the sages of this nation with the gods themselves, Agelastes has the same cunning as the elder Brutus, who disguised his talents under the semblance of an idle jester. He ap-

pears to seek no office—he desires no consideration—he pays suit at court only when positively required to do so; yet what shall I say, my soldier, concerning the cause of an influence gained without apparent effort, and extending almost into the very thoughts of men, who appear to act as he would desire, without his soliciting them for that purpose? Men say strange things concerning the extent of his communications with other beings, whom our fathers worshipped with prayer and sacrifice. I am determined, however, to know the road by which he climbs so high and so easily towards the point to which all men aspire at court, and it will go hard but he shall either share his ladder with me, or I will strike its support from under him. Thee, Hereward, I have chosen to assist me in this matter, as the knights among these Frankish infidels select, when going upon an adventure, a sturdy squire, or inferior attendant, to share the dangers and the recompense; and this I am moved to, as much by the shrewdness thou hast this night manifested as by the courage thou mayst boast, in common with, or rather beyond, thy companions."

"I am obliged, and thank your valor," replied the Varangian, more coldly perhaps than his officer expected; "I am ready, as is my duty, to serve you in any thing consistent with God and the Emperor's claims upon my service. I would only say, that, as a sworn inferior soldier, I will do nothing contrary to the laws of the empire, and, as a sincere though ignorant Christian, I will have nothing to do with the gods of the heathens, save to defy them in the name and strength of the holy saints."

"Idiot!" said Achilles Tatius, "dost thou think that I, already possessed of one of the first dignities of the empire, could meditate any thing contrary to the interests of Alexius Comnenus? or, what would be scarce more atrocious, that I, the chosen friend and ally of the reverend Patriarch Zosimus, should meddle with any thing bearing a relation, however remote, to heresy or idolatry?"

"Truly," answered the Varangian, "no one would be more surprised or grieved than I should; but when we walk in a labyrinth, we must assume and announce that we have a steady and forward purpose, which is one mode at least of keeping a straight path. The people of this country have so many ways of saying the same thing, that one can hardly know at last what is their real meaning. We English, on the other hand, can only express ourselves in one set of words, but it is one out of which all the ingenuity of the world could not extract a double meaning."

"Tis well," said his officer, "to-morrow we will talk more of this, for which purpose thou wilt come to my quarters a little after sunset. And, hark thee, to-morrow, while the sun is in heaven, shall be thine own, either to sport thyself or to repose. Employ thy time in the latter,

by my advice, since to-morrow night, like the present, may find us both watchers."

So saying, they entered the barracks, where they parted company—the commander of the life-guards taking his way to a splendid set of apartments which belonged to him in that capacity, and the Anglo-Saxon seeking his more humble accommodations as a subaltern officer of the same corps.

#### CHAPTER VII.

Such forces met not, nor so vast a camp,  
When Agrican, with all his Northern powers,  
Besieged Albracca, as romances tell,  
The city of Gallaphron, from thence to win  
The fairest of her sex, Angelica,  
His daughter, sought by many prowess'd knights,  
Both Paynin, and the Peers of Charlemagne.

PARADISE REGAINED.

EARLY on the morning of the day following that which we have commemorated, the Imperial Council was assembled, where the number of general officers with sounding titles, disguised under a thin veil the real weakness of the Grecian empire. The commanders were numerous, and the distinctions of their rank minute, but the soldiers were very few in comparison.

The offices formerly filled by prefects, prætors, and questors, were now held by persons who had gradually risen into the authority of those officers, and who, though designated from their domestic duties about the Emperor, yet, from that very circumstance, possessed what, in that despotic court, was the most effectual source of power. A long train of officers entered the great hall of the Castle of Blacquerual, and proceeded so far together as their different grades admitted, while in each chamber through which they passed in succession, a certain number of the train, whose rank permitted them to advance no farther, remained behind the others. Thus, when the interior cabinet of audience was gained, which was not until their passage through ten anterooms, five persons only found themselves in the presence of the Emperor in this innermost and most sacred recess of royalty, decorated by all the splendor of the period.

The Emperor Alexius sat upon a stately throne, rich with barbaric gems and gold, and flanked on either hand, in imitation probably of Solomon's magnificence, with the form of a couchant lion in the same precious metal. Not to dwell upon other marks of splendor, a tree, whose trunk seemed also of gold, shot up behind the throne, which it overcanopied with its branches.—Amid the boughs were birds of various kinds curiously wrought and enamelled, and fruit composed of precious stones seemed to glisten among the leaves. Five officers alone, the highest in the state, had the privilege of entering this sacred recess when the Emperor held council. These were—the Grand Domestic, who might be termed of rank with a modern prime

minister—the Logothete, or chancellor—the Protospathaire, or commander of the guards, already mentioned—the Acolyte, or Follower, and leader of the Varangians—and the Patriarch.

The doors of this secret apartment, and the adjacent antechamber, were guarded by six deformed Nubian slaves, whose writhen and withered countenances formed a hideous contrast with their snow-white dresses and splendid equipment. They were mutes, a species of wretches borrowed from the despotism of the East, that they might be unable to proclaim the deeds of tyranny of which they were the unscrupulous agents. They were generally held in a kind of horror, rather than compassion, for men considered that slaves of this sort had a malignant pleasure in avenging upon others the irreparable wrongs which had severed themselves from humanity.

It was a general custom, though, like many other usages of the Greeks, it would be held childish in modern times, that by means of machinery easily conceived, the lions, at the entrance of a stranger, were made, as it were, to rouse themselves and roar, after which a wind seemed to rustle the foliage of the tree, the birds hopped from branch to branch, pecked the fruit, and appeared to fill the chamber with their carolling. This display had alarmed many an ignorant foreign ambassador, and even the Grecian counsellors themselves were expected to display the same sensations of fear, succeeded by surprise, when they heard the roar of the lions, followed by the concert of the birds, although perhaps it was for the fiftieth time. On this occasion, as a proof of the urgency of the present meeting of the council, these ceremonies were entirely omitted.

The speech of the Emperor himself seemed to supply by its commencement the bellowing of the lions, while it ended in a strain more resembling the warbling of the birds.

In his first sentences, he treated of the audacity and unheard-of boldness of the millions of Franks, who, under the pretence of wresting Palestine from the infidels, had ventured to invade the sacred territories of the empire. He threatened them with such chastisement as his innumerable forces and officers would, he affirmed, find it easy to inflict. To all this the audience, and especially the military officers, gave symptoms of ready assent.

Alexius, however, did not long persist in the warlike intentions which he at first avowed. The Franks, he at length seemed to reflect, were, in profession, Christians. They might possibly be serious in their pretext of the crusade, in which case their motives claimed a degree of indulgence and, although erring, a certain portion of respect. Their numbers also were great, and their valor could not be despised by those who had seen them fight at Durazzo,\* and elsewhere. They might

also, by the permission of Supreme Providence be, in the long run, the instruments of advantage to the most sacred empire, though they approached it with so little ceremony. He had, therefore, mingling the virtues of prudence, humanity, and generosity, with that valor which must always burn in the heart of an Emperor, formed a plan, which he was about to submit to their consideration, for present execution; and, in the first place, he requested of the Grand Domestic, to let him know what forces he might count upon on the western side of the Bosphorus.

"Innumerable are the forces of the empire as the stars in heaven, or the sand on the sea-shore," answered the Grand Domestic.

"That is a goodly answer," said the Emperor, "provided there were strangers present at this conference; but since we hold consultation in private, it is necessary that I know precisely to what number that army amounts which I have to rely upon. Reserve your eloquence till some fitter time, and let me know what you, at this present moment, mean by the word *innumerable*?"

The Grand Domestic paused, and hesitated for a short space; but as he became aware that the moment was one in which the Emperor could not be trifled with (for Alexius Comnenus was at times dangerous), he answered thus, but not without hesitation.—"Imperial master and lord, none better knows that such an answer cannot be hastily made, if it is at the same time to be correct in its results. The number of the imperial host betwixt this city and the western frontier of the empire, deducting those absent upon furlough, cannot be counted upon as amounting to more than twenty-five thousand men, or thirty thousand at most."

Alexius struck his forehead with his hand; and the counsellors, seeing him give way to such violent expressions of grief and surprise, began to enter into discussions, which they would otherwise have reserved for a fitter place and time.

"By the trust your Highness reposes in me," said the Logothete, "there has been drawn from your Highness's coffers during the last year, gold enough to pay double the number of the armed warriors whom the Grand Domestic now mentions."

"Your Imperial Highness," retorted the impeached minister, with no small animation, "will at once remember the stationary garrisons, in addition to the movable troops, for which this figure-caster makes no allowance."

"Peace, both of you!" said Alexius, composing himself hastily; "our actual numbers are in truth less than we counted on—but let us not by wrangling augment the difficulties of the time. Let those troops be dispersed in valleys, in passes, behind ridges of hills, and in difficult ground, where a little art being used in the position, can make few men supply the appearance of numbers,

defeated with great slaughter by Robert Guiscard, and escaped only by the swiftness of his horse, see Gibbon; ch. 56.

between this city and the western frontier of the empire. While this disposal is made, we will continue to adjust with these crusaders, as they call themselves, the terms on which we will consent to let them pass through our dominions; nor are we without hope of negotiating with them, so as to gain great advantage to our kingdom. We will insist that they pass through our country only by armies of perhaps fifty thousand at once, whom we will successively transport into Asia, so that no greater number shall, by assembling beneath our walls, ever endanger the safety of the metropolis of the world.

"On their way towards the banks of the Bosphorus, we will supply them with provisions, if they march peaceably, and in order; and if any straggle from their standards, or insult the country by marauding, we suppose our valiant peasants will not hesitate to repress their excesses, and that without our giving positive orders, since we would not willingly be charged with anything like a breach of engagement. We suppose, also, that the Scythians, Arabs, Syrians, and other mercenaries in our service, will not suffer our subjects to be overpowered in their own just defence; as, besides that there is no justice in stripping our own country of provisions, in order to feed strangers, we will not be surprised nor unreasonably displeased to learn, that of the ostensible quantity of flour, some sacks should be found filled with chalk, or lime, or some such substance. It is, indeed, truly wonderful, what the stomach of a Frank will digest comfortably. Their guides, also, whom you shall choose with reference to such duty, will take care to conduct the crusaders by difficult and circuitous routes; which will be doing them a real service, by inuring them to the hardships of the country and climate, which they would otherwise have to face without seasoning.

"In the meantime, in your intercourse with their chiefs, whom they call counts, each of whom thinks himself as great as an Emperor, you will take care to give no offence to their natural presumption, and omit no opportunity of informing them of the wealth and bounty of our government. Sums of money may be even given to persons of note, and largesses of less avail to those under them. You, our Logothete, will take good order for this, and you, our Grand Domestic, will take care that such soldiers as may cut off detached parties of the Franks shall be presented, if possible, in savage dress, and under the show of infidels. In commending these injunctions to your care, I purpose that, the crusaders having found the value of our friendship, and also in some sort the danger of our enmity, those whom we shall safely transport to Asia, shall be, however unwieldy, still a smaller and more compact body, whom we may deal with in all Christian prudence. Thus, by using fair words to one, threats to another, gold to the avaricious, power to the ambitious, and reasons to those that are capable of listening to them, we doubt not but to

prevail upon those Franks, met as they are from a thousand points, and enemies of each other, to acknowledge us as their common superior, rather than choose a leader among themselves, when they are made aware of the great fact, that every village in Palestine, from Dan to Beersheba, is the original property of the sacred Roman empire, and that whatever Christian goes to war for their recovery, must go as our subject, and hold any conquest which he may make, as our vassal. Vice and virtue, sense and folly, ambition and disinterested devotion, will alike recommend to the survivors of these singular-minded men, to become the feudatories of the empire, not its foe, and the shield, not the enemy, of your paternal Emperor."

There was a general inclination of the head among the courtiers, with the Eastern exclamation of—"Long live the Emperor!"

When the murmur of this applause exclamation had subsided, Alexius proceeded: "Once more, I say, that my faithful Grand Domestic, and those who act under him, will take care to commit the execution of such part of these orders as may seem aggressive, to troops of foreign appearance and language, which, I grieve to say, are more numerous in our imperial army than our natural-born and orthodox subjects."

The Patriarch here interposed his opinion.—"There is a consolation," he said, "in the thought, that the genuine Romans in the imperial army are but few, since a trade so bloody as war, is most fitly prosecuted by those whose doctrines, as well as their doings, on earth, merit eternal condemnation in the next world."

"Reverend Patriarch," said the Emperor, "we would not willingly hold with the wild infidels, that Paradise is to be gained by the sabre; nevertheless, we would hope that a Roman, dying in battle for his religion and his Emperor, may find as good hope of acceptance, after the mortal pang is over, as a man who dies in peace, and with unblooded hand."

"It is enough for me to say," resumed the Patriarch, "that the Church's doctrine is not so indulgent, she is herself peaceful, and her promises of favor are for those who have been men of peace. Yet think not I bar the gates of Heaven against a soldier, as such, if believing all the doctrines of our Church, and complying with all our observances; far less would I condemn your imperial Majesty's wise precautions, both for diminishing the power and thinning the ranks of those Latin heretics, who come hither to despoil us, and plunder perhaps both church and temple, under the vain pretext that Heaven would permit them, stained with so many heresies, to reconquer that Holy Land, which true orthodox Christians, your Majesty's sacred predecessors, have not been enabled to retain from the infidel. And well I trust that no settlement made under the Latins will be permitted by your Majesty to establish itself, in which the Cross shall not be elevated with limbs of the same length, instead

\* For the battle of Durazzo, Oct., 1081, in which Alexius was

of that irregular and most damnable error which prolongs, in western churches, the nether limb of that most holy emblem."

"Reverend Patriarch," answered the Emperor, "do not deem that we think lightly of your weighty scruples; but the question is now, not in what manner we may convert these Latin heretics to the true faith, but how we may avoid being overrun by their myriads, which resemble those of the locusts by which their approach was preceded and intimidated."

"Your Majesty," said the Patriarch, "will act with your usual wisdom; for my part, I have only stated my doubts, that I may save my own soul alive."

"Our construction," said the Emperor, "does your sentiments no wrong, most reverend Patriarch; and you," addressing himself to the other counsellors, "will attend to these separate charges given out for directing the execution of the commands which have been generally intimidated to you. They are written out in the sacred ink, and our sacred subscription is duly marked with the fitting tinge of green and purple. Let them, therefore, be strictly obeyed. Ourselves will assume the command of such of the Immortal Bands as remain in the city, and join to them the cohorts of our faithful Varangians. At the head of these troops, we will await the arrival of these strangers under the walls of the city, and, avoiding combat while our policy can postpone it, we will be ready, in case of the worst, to take whatsoever chance it shall please the Almighty to send us."

Here the council broke up, and the different chiefs began to exert themselves in the execution of their various instructions, civil and military, secret or public, favorable or hostile to the crusaders. The peculiar genius of the Grecian people was seen upon this occasion. Their loud and boastful talking corresponded with the ideas which the Emperor wished to enforce upon the crusaders concerning the extent of his power and resources. Nor is it to be disguised, that the wily selfishness of most of those in the service of Alexius, endeavored to find some indirect way of applying the imperial instruction, so as might best suit their own private ends.

Meantime, the news had gone abroad in Constantinople of the arrival of the huge miscellaneous army of the west upon the limits of the Grecian empire, and of their purpose to pass to Palestine. A thousand reports magnified, if that was possible, an event so wonderful. Some said that their ultimate view was the conquest of Arabia, the destruction of the Prophet's tomb, and the conversion of his green banner into a horse-cloth for the King of France's brother. Others supposed that the ruin and sack of Constantinople was the real object of the war. A third class thought it was in order to compel the Patriarch to submit himself to the Pope, adopt the Latin form of the cross, and put an end to the schism.

The Varangians enjoyed an addition to this wonderful news, seasoned as it everywhere was with something peculiarly suited to the prejudices of the hearers. It was gathered originally from what our friend Hereward, who was one of their inferior officers, called sergeants or constables, had suffered to transpire of what he had heard the preceding evening. Considering that the fact must be soon matter of notoriety, he had no hesitation to give his comrades to understand that a Norman army was coming hither under Duke Robert, the son of the far-famed William the Conqueror, and with hostile intentions, he concluded, against them in particular. Like all other men in peculiar circumstances, the Varangians adopted an explanation applicable to their own condition. These Normans, who hated the Saxon nation, and had done so much to dishonor and oppress them, were now following them, they supposed, to the foreign capital where they had found refuge, with the purpose of making war on the bountiful prince who protected their sad remnant. Under this belief, many a deep oath was sworn in Norse and Anglo-Saxon, that their keen battle-axes should avenge the slaughter of Hastings, and many a pledge, both in wine and ale, was quaffed who should most deeply resent, and most effectually revenge, the wrongs which the Anglo-Saxons of England had received at the hand of their oppressors.

Hereward, the author of this intelligence, began soon to be sorry that he had ever suffered it to escape him, so closely was he cross-examined concerning its precise import, by the inquiries of his comrades, from whom he thought himself obliged to keep concealed the adventures of the preceding evening, and the place in which he had gained his information.

About noon, when he was effectually tired with returning the same answer to the same questions, and evading similar others which were repeatedly put to him, the sound of trumpets announced the presence of the Acolyte, Achilles Tatius, who came immediately, it was industriously whispered, from the sacred Interior, with news of the immediate approach of war.

The Varangians, and the Roman bands called Immortal, it was said, were to form a camp under the city, in order to be prompt to defend it at the shortest notice. This put the whole barracks into commotion, each man making the necessary provision for the approaching campaign. The noise was chiefly that of joyful bustle and acclamation; and it was so general that Hereward, whose rank permitted him to commit to a page or esquire the task of preparing his equipments, took the opportunity to leave the barracks, in order to seek some distant place apart from his comrades, and enjoy his solitary reflections upon the singular connexion into which he had been drawn, and his direct communication with the Imperial family.

Passing through the narrow streets, then deserted on account of the heat of the sun, he

reached at length one of those broad terraces, which, descending as it were by steps, upon the margin of the Bosphorus, formed one of the most splendid walks in the universe, and still, it is believed, preserved as a public promenade for the pleasure of the Turks, as formerly for that of the Christians. These graduated terraces were planted with many trees, among which the cypress, as usual, was most generally cultivated. Here bands of the inhabitants were to be seen; some passing to and fro, with business and anxiety in their faces; some standing still in groups, as if discussing the strange and weighty tidings of the day, and some, with the indolent carelessness of an eastern climate, eating their noontide refreshment in the shade, and spending their time as if their sole object was to make much of the day as it passed, and let the cares of to-morrow answer for themselves.

While the Varangian, afraid of meeting some acquaintance in this concourse, which would have been inconsistent with the desire of seclusion which had brought him thither, descended or passed from one terrace to another, all marked him with looks of curiosity and inquiry, considering him to be one, who, from his arms and connexion with the court, must necessarily know more than others concerning the singular invasion by numerous enemies, and from various quarters, which was the news of the day.

None, however, had the hardihood to address the soldier of the guard, though all looked at him with uncommon interest. He walked from the lighter to the darker alleys, from the more closed to the more open terraces, without interruption from any one, yet not without a feeling that he must not consider himself as alone.

The desire that he felt to be solitary rendered him at last somewhat watchful, so that he became sensible that he was dogged by a black slave, a personage not so unfrequent in the streets of Constantinople as to excite any particular notice. His attention, however, being at length fixed on this individual, he began to be desirous to escape his observation; and the change of place which he had at first adopted to avoid society in general, he had now recourse to, in order to rid himself of this distant, though apparently watchful attendant. Still, however, though he by change of place had lost sight of the negro for a few minutes, it was not long ere he again discovered him at a distance too far for a companion, but near enough to serve all the purposes of a spy. Displeased at this, the Varangian turned short in his walk, and choosing a spot where none was in sight but the object of his resentment, walked suddenly up to him, and demanded wherefore, and by whose orders, he presumed to dog his footsteps. The negro answered in a jargon as bad as that in which he was addressed, though of a different kind, "that he had orders to remark whither he went."

"Orders from whom?" said the Varangian.

"From my master and yours," answered the negro, boldly.

"Thou infidel villain!" exclaimed the angry soldier, "when was it that we became fellow-servants, and who is it that thou darest to call my master?"

"One who is master of the world," said the slave, "since he commands his own passions."

"I shall scarce command mine," said the Varangian, "if thou repliest to my earnest questions with thine affected quirks of philosophy. Once more, what dost thou want with me? and why hast thou the boldness to watch me?"

"I have told thee already," said the slave, "that I do my master's commands."

"But I must know who thy master is," said Hereward.

"He must tell thee that himself," replied the negro; "he trusts not a poor slave like me with the purpose of the errands on which he sends me."

"He has left thee a tongue, however," said the Varangian, "which some of thy countrymen would, I think, be glad to possess. Do not provoke me to abridge it by refusing me the information which I have a right to demand."

The black meditated, as it seemed from the grin on his face, further evasions, when Hereward cut them short by raising the staff of his battle-axe. "Put me not," he said, "to dishonor myself by striking thee with this weapon, calculated for a use so much more noble."

"I may not do so, valiant sir," said the negro, laying aside an impudent, half-gibing tone which he had hitherto made use of, and betraying personal fear in his manner. "If you beat the poor slave to death, you cannot learn what his master hath forbid him to tell. A short walk will save your honor the stain, and yourself the trouble, of beating what cannot resist, and me the pain of enduring what I can neither retaliate nor avoid."

"Lead on then," said the Varangian. "Be assured thou shalt not fool me by thy fair words, and I will know the person who is impudent enough to assume the right of watching my motions."

The black walked on with a species of leer peculiar to his physiognomy, which might be construed as expressive either of malice or of mere humor. The Varangian followed him with some suspicion, for it happened that he had had little intercourse with the unhappy race of Africa, and had not totally overcome the feeling of surprise with which he had at first regarded them, when he arrived a stranger from the north. So often did this man look back upon him during their walk, and with so penetrating and observing a cast of countenance, that Hereward felt irresistibly renewed in his mind the English prejudices, which assigned to the demons the sable color and distorted cast of visage of his conductor. The scene into which he was guided strengthened an association which was not of

itself unlikely to occur to the ignorant and martial islander.

The negro led the way from the splendid terraced walks which we have described, to a path descending to the sea-shore, when a place appeared, which, far from being trimmed, like other parts of the coast, into walks of embankments, seemed, on the contrary, abandoned to neglect, and was covered with the mouldering ruins of antiquity, where these had not been overgrown by luxuriant vegetation of the climate. These fragments of building, occupying a sort of recess of the bay, were hidden by steep banks on each side, and although in fact they formed part of the city, yet they were not seen from any part of it, and, embosomed in the manner we have described, did not in turn command any view of the churches, palaces, towers, and fortifications, amongst which they lay. The sight of this solitary, and apparently deserted spot, encumbered with ruins, and overgrown with cypress and other trees, situated as it was in the midst of a populous city, had something in it impressive and awful to the imagination. The ruins were of an ancient date, and in the style of a foreign people. The gigantic remains of a portico, the mutilated fragments of statues of great size, but executed in a taste and attitude so narrow and barbaric as to seem perfectly the reverse of the Grecian, and the half-defaced hieroglyphics which could be traced on some part of the decayed sculpture, corroborated the popular account of their origin, which we shall briefly detail.

According to tradition, this had been a temple dedicated to the Egyptian goddess Cybele, built while the Roman Empire was yet heathen, and while Constantinople was still called by the name of Byzantium. It is well known that the superstition of the Egyptians—vulgarly gross in its literal meaning as well as in its mystical interpretation, and peculiarly the foundation of many wild doctrines,—was disowned by the principles of general toleration, and the system of polytheism received by Rome, and was excluded by repeated laws from the respect paid by the empire to almost every other religion, however extravagant or absurd. Nevertheless, these Egyptian rites had charms for the curious and the superstitious, and had, after long opposition, obtained a footing in the empire.

Still, although tolerated, the Egyptian priests were rather considered as sorcerers than as pontiffs, and their whole ritual had a nearer relation to magic in popular estimation, than to any regular system of devotion.

Stained with these accusations, even among the heathen themselves, the worship of Egypt was held in more mortal abhorrence by the Christians, than the other and more rational kinds of heathen devotion: that is, if any at all had a right to be termed so. The brutal worship of Apis and Cybele was regarded, not only as a pretext for obscene and profligate pleasures, but

as having a direct tendency to open and encourage a dangerous commerce with evil spirits, who were supposed to take upon themselves, at these unhallowed altars, the names and characters of these foul deities. Not only, therefore, the temple of Cybele, with its gigantic portico, its huge and inelegant statues, and its fantastic hieroglyphics, was thrown down and defaced when the Empire was converted to the Christian faith, but the very ground on which it stood was considered as polluted and unhalloved; and no Emperor having yet occupied the site with a Christian church, the place still remained neglected and deserted as we have described it.

The Varangian Hereward was perfectly acquainted with the evil reputation of the place; and when the negro seemed disposed to advance into the interior of the ruins, he hesitated, and addressed his guide thus: "Hark thee, my black friend, these huge fantastic images, some having dogs' heads, some cows' heads, and some no heads at all, are not held reverently in popular estimation. Your own color, also, my comrade, is greatly too like that of Satan himself, to render you an unsuspecting companion amid ruins, in which the false spirit, it is said, daily walks his rounds. Midnight and noon are the times, it is rumored, of his appearance. I will go no farther with thee, unless you assign me a fit reason for so doing."

"In making so childish a proposal," said the negro, "you take from me, in effect, all desire to guide you to my master. I thought I spoke to a man of invincible courage, and of that good sense upon which courage is best founded. But your valor only emboldens you to beat a black slave, who has neither strength nor title to resist you; and your courage is not enough to enable you to look without trembling on the dark side of a wall, even when the sun is in the heavens."

"Thou art insolent," said Hereward, raising his axe.

"And thou art foolish," said the negro, "to attempt to prove thy manhood and thy wisdom by the very mode which gives reason for calling them both in question. I have already said there can be little valor in beating a wretch like me; and no man, surely, who wishes to discover his way, would begin by chasing away his guide."

"I follow thee"—said Hereward, stung with the insinuation of cowardice; "but if thou leadest me into a snare, thy free talk shall not save thy bones, if a thousand of thy complexion, from earth or hell, were standing ready to back thee."

"Thou objectest sorely to my complexion," said the negro; "how knowest thou that it is, in fact, a thing to be counted and acted upon as matter of reality? Thine own eyes daily apprise thee, that the color of the sky nightly changes from bright to black, yet thou knowest that this is by no means owing to any habitual color of the heavens themselves. The same change that takes place in the hue of the heavens, has existence in the tinge of the deep sea.—How canst

thou tell, but what the difference of my color from thine own may be owing to some deceptive change of a similar nature—not real in itself, but only creating an apparent reality?"

"Thou mayst have painted thyself, no doubt," answered the Varangian, upon reflection, "and thy blackness, therefore, may be only apparent; but I think thy old friend himself could hardly have presented these grinning lips, with the white teeth and flattered nose, so much to the life, unless that peculiarity of Nubian physiognomy, as they call it, had accurately and really an existence; and, to save thee some trouble, my dark friend, I will tell thee, that though thou speakest to an uneducated Varangian, I am not entirely unskilled in the Grecian art of making subtle words pass upon the hearers instead of reason."

"Ay?" said the negro, doubtfully, and somewhat surprised; "and may the slave Diogenes—for so my master has christened me—inquire into the means by which you reached knowledge so unusual?"

"It is soon told," replied Hereward. "My countryman, Witikind, being a constable of our bands, retired from active service, and spent the end of a long life in this city of Constantinople. Being past all toils of battle, either those of reality, as you word it, or the pomp and fatigue of the exercising ground, the poor old man, in despair of something to pass his time, attended the lectures of the philosophers."

"And what did he learn there?" said the negro; "for a barbarian, grown gray under the helmet, was not, as I think, a very hopeful student in our schools."

"As much though, I should think, as a menial slave, which I understand to be thy condition," replied the soldier. "But I have understood from him, that the masters of this idle science make it their business to substitute in their argumentations, mere words instead of ideas; and as they never agree upon the precise meaning of the former, their disputes can never arrive at a fair or settled conclusion, since they do not agree in the language in which they express them. Their theories, as they call them, are built on the sand, and the wind and tide shall prevail against them."

"Say so to my master," answered the black, in a serious tone.

"I will," said the Varangian; "and he shall know me as an ignorant soldier, having but few ideas, and those only concerning my religion and my military duty. But out of these opinions I will neither be beaten by a battery of sophisms, nor cheated by the arts or the terrors of the friends of heathenism, either in this world or the next."

"You must speak your mind to him then yourself," said Diogenes. He stepped to a side as if to make way for the Varangian, to whom he motioned to go forward.

Hereward advanced accordingly, by a half-

worn and almost imperceptible path leading through the long rough grass, and, turning round a half-demolished shrine, which exhibited the remains of Apis, the bovine deity, he came immediately in front of the philosopher, Agelastes, who, sitting among the ruins, reposed his limbs on the grass.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

Through the vain webs which puzzle sophist's skill,  
Plain sense and honest meaning work their way;  
So sink the varying clouds upon the hill,  
When the clear dawning brightens into day.

DR. WATTS.

The old man rose from the ground with alacrity, as Hereward approached. "My bold Varangian," he said, "thou who valuest men and things not according to the false estimate ascribed to them in this world, but to their real importance and actual value, thou art welcome, whatever has brought thee hither—thou art welcome to a place, where it is held the best business of philosophy to strip man of his borrowed ornaments, and reduce him to the just value of his own attributes of body and mind, singly considered."

"You are a courtier, sir," said the Saxon, "and as a permitted companion of the Emperor's Highness, you must be aware, that there are twenty times more ceremonies than such a man as I can be acquainted with, for regulating the different ranks in society; while a plain man like myself may be well excused from pushing himself into the company of those above him, where he does not exactly know how he should comport himself."

"True," said the philosopher; "but a man like yourself, noble Hereward, merits more consideration in the eyes of a real philosopher, than a thousand of those mere insects, whom the smiles of a court call into life, and whom its frowns reduce to annihilation."

"You are yourself, grave sir, a follower of the court," said Hereward.

"And a most punctilious one," said Agelastes. "There is not, I trust, a subject in the empire who knows better the ten thousand punctilios exigible from those of different ranks, and due to different authorities. The man is yet to be born who has seen me take advantage of any more commodious posture than that of standing in presence of the royal family. But though I use those false scales in society, and so far conform to its errors, my real judgment is of a more grave character, and more worthy of man, as said to be formed in the image of his Creator."

"There can be small occasion," said the Varangian, "to exercise your judgment in any respect upon me, nor am I desirous that any one should think of me otherwise than I am;—a poor exile, namely, who endeavors to fix his faith upon Heaven, and to perform his duty to the world he lives in, and to the prince in whose service he is

engaged.—And now, grave sir, permit me to ask, whether this meeting is by your desire, and for what is its purpose? An African slave, whom I met in the public walks, and who calls himself Diogenes, tells me that you desire to speak with me; he hath somewhat the humor of the old scoffer, and so he may have lied. If so, I will even forgive him the beating which I owe his assurance, and make my excuse at the same time for having broken in upon your retirement, which I am totally unfit to share."

"Diogenes has not played you false," answered Agelastes; "he has his humors, as you remarked even now, and with these some qualities also that put him upon a level with those of fairer complexion and better features."

"And for what," said the Varangian, "have you so employed him? Can your wisdom possibly entertain a wish to converse with me?"

"I am an observer of nature and of humanity," answered the philosopher; "is it not natural that I should tire of those beings who are formed entirely upon artifice, and long to see something more fresh from the hand of Nature?"

"You see not that in me," said the Varangian; "the rigor of military discipline, the camp—the centurion—the armor—frame a man's sentiments and limbs to them, as the sea-crab is framed to its shell. See one of us, and you see us all."

"Permit me to doubt that," said Agelastes; "and to suppose that in Hereward, the son of Waltheoff, I see an extraordinary man, although he himself may be ignorant, owing to his modesty, of the rarity of his own good qualities."

"The son of Waltheoff!" answered the Varangian, somewhat startled.—"Do you know my father's name?"

"Be not surprised," answered the philosopher, "at my possessing so simple a piece of information. It has cost me but little trouble to attain it, yet I would gladly hope that the labor I have taken in that matter may convince you of my real desire to call you friend."

"It was indeed an unusual compliment," said Hereward, "that a man of your knowledge and station should be at the trouble to inquire, among the Varangian cohorts, concerning the descent of one of their constables. I scarcely think that my commander, the Acolyte himself, would think such knowledge worthy of being collected or preserved."

"Greater men than he," said Agelastes, "certainly would not.—You know one in high office, who thinks the names of his most faithful soldiers of less moment than those of his hunting-dogs or his hawks, and would willingly save himself the trouble of calling them otherwise than by a whistle."

"I may not hear this," answered the Varangian.

"I would not offend you," said the philosopher, "I would not even shake your good opinion of the person I allude to; yet it surprises me

that such should be entertained by one of your great qualities."

"A truce with this, grave sir, which is in fact trifling in a person of your character and appearance," answered the Anglo-Saxon. "I am like the rocks of my country; the fierce winds cannot shake me, the soft rains cannot melt me; flattery and loud words are alike lost upon me."

"And it is even for that inflexibility of mind," replied Agelastes, "that steady contempt of every thing that approaches thee, save in the light of a duty, that I demand, almost like a beggar, that personal acquaintance, which thou refusest like a churl."

"Pardon me," said Hereward, "if I doubt this. Whatever stories you may have picked up concerning me, not unexaggerated probably—since the Greeks do not keep the privilege of boasting so entirely to themselves but the Varangians have learned a little of it—you can have heard nothing of me which can authorize your using your present language, excepting in jest."

"You mistake, my son," said Agelastes; "believe me not a person to mix in the idle talk respecting you, with your comrades at the ale-cup. Such as I am, I can strike on this broken image of Anubis"—(here he touched a gigantic fragment of a statue by his side)—"and bid the spirit who long prompted the oracle, descend, and once more reanimate the trembling mass. We that are initiated enjoy high privileges—we stamp upon those ruined vaults, and the echo which dwells there answers to our demand. Do not think, that although I crave thy friendship, I need therefore supplicate thee for information either respecting thyself or others."

"Your words are wonderful," said the Anglo-Saxon; "but by such promising words I have heard that many souls have been seduced from the path of heaven. My grandsire, Kenelm, was wont to say, that the fair words of the heathen philosophy were more hurtful to the Christian faith than the menaces of the heathen tyrants."

"I knew him," said Agelastes. "What avails it whether it was in the body or in the spirit?—He was converted from the faith of Woden by a noble monk, and died a priest at the shrine of Saint Augustin."\*

"True," said Hereward; "all this is certain—and I am the rather bound to remember his words now that he is dead and gone. When I hardly knew his meaning, he bade me beware of the doctrine which cansteth to err, which is taught by false prophets, who attest their doctrine by unreal miracles."

"This," said Agelastes, "is mere superstition. Thy grandsire was a good and excellent man, but narrow-minded, like other priests; and, deceived by their example, he wished but to open a small wicket in the gate of truth, and admit the world only on that limited scale. Seest thou, Hereward, thy grandsire and most men o

\* At Canterbury.

religion would fain narrow our intellect to the consideration of such parts of the immaterial world as are essential to our moral guidance here, and our final salvation hereafter; but it is not the less true, that man has liberty, provided he has wisdom and courage, to form intimacies with beings more powerful than himself, who can defy the bounds of space by which he is circumscribed, and overcome, by their metaphysical powers, difficulties which, to the timid and unlearned, may appear wild and impossible."

"You talk of a folly," answered Hereward, "at which childhood gapes and manhood smiles."

"On the contrary," said the sage, "I talk of a longing wish which every man feels at the bottom of his heart, to hold communication with beings more powerful than himself, and who are not naturally accessible to our organs. Believe me, Hereward, so ardent and so universal an aspiration had not existed in our bosoms, had there not also been means, if steadily and wisely sought, of attaining its accomplishment. I will appeal to thine own heart, and prove to thee, even by a single word, that what I say is truth. Thy thoughts are even now upon a being long absent or dead, and with the name of BERTHA, a thousand emotions rush to thy heart, which in thy ignorance thou hadst esteemed furl'd up for ever, like spoils of the dead hung above a tombstone!—Thou startest and changest thy color—I joy to see by these signs, that the firmness and indomitable courage which men ascribe to thee, have left the avenues of the heart as free as ever to kindly and to generous affections, while they have barred them against those of fear, uncertainty, and all the catiff tribe of meaner sensations. I have proffered to esteem thee, and I have no hesitation in proving it. I will tell thee, if thou desirest to know it, the fate of that very Bertha, whose memory thou hast cherished in thy breast in spite of thee, amidst the toil of the day and the repose of the night, in the battle and in the truce when sporting with thy companions in fields of exercise, or attempting to prosecute the study of Greek learning, in which if thou wouldst advance, I can teach it by a short road."

While Agelastes thus spoke, the Varangian in some degree recovered his composure, and made answer, though his voice was somewhat tremulous,—

"Who thou art, I know not—what thou wouldst with me, I cannot tell—by what means thou hast gathered intelligence of such consequence to me, and of so little to another, I have no conception—But this I know, that by intention or accident, thou hast pronounced a name which agitates my heart to its deepest recesses; yet am I a Christian and Varangian, and neither to my God nor to my adopted prince will I willingly stagger in my faith. What is to be wrought by idols or by false deities, must be a treason to the real divinity. Nor is it less certain that thou hast let glance some arrows,

though the rules of thy allegiance strictly forbid it, at the Emperor himself. Henceforward, therefore, I refuse to communicate with thee, be it for weal or woe. I am the Emperor's waged soldier, and although I affect not the nice precisions of respect and obedience, which are exacted in so many various cases, and by so many various rules, yet I am his defence, and my battle-axe is his body-guard."

"No one doubts it," said the philosopher. "But art not thou also bound to a nearer dependence upon the great Acolyte, Achilles Tatius?"

"No. He is my general, according to the rules of our service," answered the Varangian; "to me he has always shown himself a kind and good-natured man, and, his dues of rank apart, I may say has departed himself as a friend rather than a commander. He is, however, my master's servant as well as I am; nor do I hold the difference of great amount, which the word of a man can give or take away at pleasure."

"It is nobly spoken," said Agelastes; "and you yourself are surely entitled to stand erect before one whom you supersede in courage and in the art of war."

"Pardon me," returned the Briton, "if I decline the attributed compliment, as what in no respect belongs to me. The Emperor chooses his own officers, in respect of their power of serving him as he desires to be served. In this it is likely I might fail; I have said already, I owe my Emperor my obedience, my duty, and my service, nor does it seem to me necessary to carry our explanation farther."

"Singular man!" said Agelastes; "is there nothing that can move thee, but things that are foreign to thyself? The name of thy Emperor and thy commander are no spell upon thee, and even that of the object thou hast loved—"

Here the Varangian interrupted him.

"I have thought," he said, "upon the words thou hast spoken—thou hast found the means to shake my heart-strings, but not to unsettle my principles. I will hold no converse with thee on a matter in which thou canst not have interest.—Necromancers, it is said, perform their spells by means of the epithets of the holiest; no marvel, then, should they use the names of the purest of his creation to serve their unhallowed purposes. I will none of such truckling, disgraceful to the dead perhaps as to the living. Whatever has been thy purpose, old man—for, think not thy strange words have passed unnoticed—be thou assured I bear that in my heart which defies alike the seduction of men, and of fiends."

With this the soldier turned, and left the ruined temple, after a slight inclination of his head to the philosopher.

Agelastes, after the departure of the soldier, remained alone, apparently absorbed in meditation, until he was suddenly disturbed by the entrance, into the ruins, of Achilles Tatius. The leader of the Varangians spoke not until he had

time to form some result from the philosopher's features. He then said, "Thou remainest, sage Agelastes, confident in the purpose of which we have lately spoken together?"

"I do," said Agelastes, with gravity and firmness.

"But," replied Achilles Tatius, "thou hast not gained to our side that proselyte, whose coolness and courage would serve us better in our hour of need than the service of a thousand cold-hearted slaves?"

"I have not succeeded," answered the philosopher.

"And thou dost not blush to own it?" said the imperial officer in reply. "Thou, the wisest of those who yet pretend to Grecian wisdom, the most powerful of those who still assert the skill by words, signs, names, periapts, and spells, to exceed the sphere to which thy faculties belong, hast been foiled in thy trade of persuasion, like an infant worsted in debate with its domestic tutor? Out upon thee, that thou canst not sustain in argument the character which thou wouldst so fain assume to thyself!"

"Peace!" said the Grecian. "I have as yet gained nothing, it is true, over this obstinate and inflexible man; but, Achilles Tatius, neither have I lost. We both stand where yesterday we did, with this advantage on my side, that I have suggested to him such an object of interest as he shall never be able to expel from his mind, until he hath had recourse to me to obtain farther knowledge concerning it.—And now let this singular person remain for a time unmentioned; yet, trust me, though flattery, avarice, and ambition, may fail to gain him, a bait nevertheless remains, that shall make him as completely our own as any that is bound within our mystic and inviolable contract. Tell me then, how go on the affairs of the empire? Does this tide of Latin warriors, so strangely set aflowing, still rush on to the banks of the Bosphorus? and does Alexius still entertain hopes to diminish and divide the strength of numbers, which he could in vain hope to defy?"

"Something further of intelligence has been gained, even within a very few hours," answered Achilles Tatius. "Bohemond came to the city with some six or eight light horse, and in a species of disguise. Considering how often he had been the Emperor's enemy, his project was a perilous one. But when is it that these Franks draw back on account of danger? The Emperor perceived at once that the Count was come to see what he might obtain, by presenting himself as the very first object of his liberality, and by offering his assistance as mediator with Godfrey of Bouillon and the other princes of the crusade."

"It is a species of policy," answered the sage, "for which he would receive full credit from the Emperor."

Achilles Tatius proceeded: "Count Bohemond was discovered to the imperial court as if it

were by mere accident, and he was welcomed with marks of favor and splendor which had never been even mentioned as being fit for any one of the Frankish race. There was no word of ancient enmity or of former wars, no mention of Bohemond as the ancient usurper of Antioch, and the encroacher upon the empire. But thanks to Heaven were returned on all sides, which had sent a faithful ally to the imperial assistance at a moment of such imminent peril."

"And what said Bohemond?" inquired the philosopher.

"Little or nothing," said the captain of the Varangians, "until, as I learned from the domestic slave Narses, a large sum of gold had been abandoned to him. Considerable districts were afterwards agreed to be ceded to him, and other advantages granted, on condition he should stand on this occasion the steady friend of the empire and its master. Such was the emperor's munificence towards the greedy barbarian, that a chamber in the palace was, by chance, as it were, left exposed to his view, containing large quantities of manufactured silks, of jewellers' work, of gold and silver, and other articles of great value. When the rapacious Frank could not forbear some expressions of admiration, he was assured, that the contents of the treasure-chamber were his own, provided he valued them as showing forth the warmth and sincerity of his imperial ally towards his friends; and these precious articles were accordingly conveyed to the tent of the Norman leader. By such measures, the Emperor must make himself master of Bohemond, both body and soul, for the Franks themselves say it is strange to see a man of undaunted bravery, and towering ambition, so infected, nevertheless, with avarice, which they term a mean and unnatural vice."

"Bohemond," said Agelastes, "is then the Emperor's for life and death—always, that is, till the recollection of the royal munificence be effaced by a greater gratuity. Alexius, proud as he naturally is of his management with this important chieftain, will no doubt expect to prevail by his counsels, on most of the other crusaders, and even on Godfrey of Bouillon himself, to take an oath of submission and fidelity to the Emperor, which, were it not for the sacred nature of their warfare, the meanest gentleman among them would not submit to, were it to be lord of a province. There, then, we rest. A few days must determine what we have to do. An earlier discovery would be destruction."

"We meet not then to-night?" said the Acolyte.

"No," replied the sage; "unless we are summoned to that foolish stage-play or recitation; and then we meet as playthings in the hand of a silly woman, the spoiled child of a weak-minded parent."

Tatius then took his leave of the philosopher, and, as if fearful of being seen in each other's company, they left their solitary place of meeting

## CHAPTER IX.

Between the foaming jaws of the white torrent,  
The skillful artist draws a sudden mound;  
By level long he subdivides their strength;  
Sealing the waters from their rocky bed,  
First to diminish what he means to conquer;  
Then, for the residue he forms a road,  
Easy to keep, and painful to desert,  
And guiding to the end the planner aim'd at.

THE ENGINEER.

It would have been easy for Alexius, by a course of avowed suspicion, or any false step in the manner of receiving this tumultuary invasion of the European nations, to have blown into a flame the numerous but smothered grievances under which they labored; and a similar catastrophe would have been less certain, had he at once abandoned all thoughts of resistance, and placed his hope of safety in surrendering to the multitudes of the west whatsoever they accounted worth taking. The Emperor chose a middle course; and, unquestionably, in the weakness of the Greek empire, it was the only one which would have given him at once safety, and a great degree of consequence in the eyes of the Frank invaders and those of his own subjects. The means with which he acted were of various kinds, and, rather from policy than inclination, were often stained with falsehood or meanness; therefore it follows, that the measures of the Emperor resembled those of the snake, who twines himself through the grass, with the purpose of stinging insidiously those whom he fears to approach with the step of the bold and generous lion. We are not, however, writing the History of the Crusades, and what we have already said of the Emperor's precautions on the first appearance of Godfrey of Bouillon, and his associates, may suffice for the elucidation of our story.

About four weeks had now passed over, marked by quarrels and reconciliements between the crusaders and the Grecians of the empire. The former were, as Alexius's policy dictated, occasionally and individually received with extreme honor, and their leaders loaded with respect and favor; while, from time to time, such bodies of them as sought distant or circuitous routes to the capital, were intercepted and cut to pieces by light-armed troops, who easily passed upon their ignorant opponents for Turks, Scythians, or other infidels, and sometimes were actually such, but in the service of the Grecian monarch. Often, too, it happened, that while the more powerful chiefs of the crusade were feasted by the Emperor and his ministers with the richest delicacies, and their thirst slaked with iced wines, their followers were left at a distance, where, intentionally supplied with adulterated flour, tainted provisions, and bad water, they contracted diseases, and died in great numbers, without having once seen a foot of the Holy Land, for the recovery of which they had abandoned their peace, their competence,

by different routes. The Varangian, Hereward, received, shortly after, a summons from his superior, who acquainted him, that he should not, as formally intimated, require his attendance that evening.

Achilles then paused, and added—"Thou hast something on thy lips thou wouldst say to me, which, nevertheless, hesitates to break forth."

"It is only this," answered the soldier; "I have had an interview with the man called Agelastes, and he seems something so different from what he appeared when we last spoke of him, that I cannot forbear mentioning to you what I have seen. He is not an insignificant trifler, whose object it is to raise a laugh at his own expense, or that of any other. He is a deep-thinking and far-reaching man, who, for some reason or other, is desirous of forming friends, and drawing a party to himself. Your own wisdom will teach you to beware of him."

"Thou art an honest fellow, my poor Hereward," said Achilles Tatius, with an affectation of good-natured contempt. "Such men as Agelastes do often frame their severest jests in the shape of formal gravity—they will pretend to possess the most unbounded power over elements and elemental spirits—they will make themselves masters of the names and anecdotes best known to those whom they make their sport; and any one who shall listen to them, shall, in the words of the divine Homer, only expose himself to a flood of inextinguishable laughter. I have often known him select one of the rawest and most ignorant persons in presence, and to him, for the amusement of the rest, he has pretended to cause the absent to appear, the distant to draw near, and the dead themselves to burst the ceremonies of the grave. Take care, Hereward, that his arts make not a stain on the credit of one of my bravest Varangians."

"There is no danger," answered Hereward. "I shall not be fond of being often with this man. If he jests upon one subject which he hath mentioned to me, I shall be but too likely to teach him seriousness after a rough manner. And if he is serious in his pretensions in such mystical matters, we should, according to the faith of my grandfather, Kenelm, do insult to the deceased, whose name is taken in the mouth of a soothsayer, or impious enchanter. I will not, therefore, again go near this Agelastes, be he wizard, or be he impostor."

"You apprehend me not," said the Acolyte, nastily; "you mistake my meaning. He is a man from whom, if he pleases to converse with such as you, you may derive much knowledge; keeping out of the reach of those pretended secret arts, which he will only use to turn thee into ridicule." With these words, which he himself would perhaps have felt it difficult to reconcile, the leader and his follower parted.