

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, periphrases, 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 vainly 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.

and their native country. These aggressions did not pass without complaint. Many of the crusading chiefs impugned the fidelity of their allies, exposed the losses sustained by their armies as evils voluntarily inflicted on them by the Greeks, and on more than one occasion, the two nations stood opposed to each other on such terms that a general war seemed to be inevitable.

Alexius, however, though obliged to have recourse to every finesse, still kept his ground, and made peace with the most powerful chiefs, under one pretence or other. The actual losses of the crusaders by the sword, he imputed to their own aggressions—their misguidance, to accident and to wilfulness—the effects produced on them by the adulterated provisions, to the vehemence of their own appetite for raw fruits and unripened wines. In short, there was no disaster of any kind whatsoever which could possibly befall the unhappy pilgrims, but the Emperor stood prepared to prove that it was the natural consequence of their own violence, wilfulness of conduct, or hostile precipitancy.

The chiefs, who were not ignorant of their strength, would not, it was likely, have tamely suffered injuries from a power so inferior to their own, were it not that they had formed extravagant ideas of the wealth of the Eastern empire, which Alexius seemed willing to share with them with an excess of bounty as new to the leaders as the rich productions of the East were tempting to their followers.

The French nobles would perhaps have been the most difficult to be brought into order when differences arose; but an accident, which the Emperor might have termed providential, reduced the high-spirited Count of Vermandois to the situation of a suppliant, when he expected to hold that of a dictator. A fierce tempest surprised his fleet after he set sail from Italy, and he was finally driven on the coast of Greece. Many ships were destroyed, and those troops who got ashore were so much distressed, that they were obliged to surrender themselves to the lieutenants of Alexius. So that the Count of Vermandois, so haughty in his bearing when he first embarked, was sent to the court of Constantinople, not as a prince, but as a prisoner. In this case, the Emperor instantly set the soldiers at liberty, and loaded them with presents.\*

Grateful, therefore, for attentions in which Alexius was unremitting, Count Hugh was by gratitude as well as interest, inclined to join the opinion of those who, for other reasons, desired the subsistence of peace betwixt the crusaders and the empire of Greece. A better principle determined the celebrated Godfrey, Raymond of Thoulouse, and some others, in whom devotion was something more than a mere burst of fanaticism. These princes considered with what scandal their whole journey must be stained, if

\* See Mills's History of the Crusades, vol. . . , p. 96.

the first of their exploits should be a war upon the Grecian empire, which might justly be called the barrier of Christendom. It was weak, and at the same time rich—if at the same time it invited rapine, and was unable to protect itself against it—it was the more their interest and duty, as Christian soldiers, to protect a Christian state, whose existence was of so much consequence to the common cause, even when it could not defend itself. It was the wish of these frank-hearted men to receive the Emperor's professions of friendship with such sincere returns of amity—to return his kindness with so much usury, as to convince him that their purpose towards him was in every respect fair and honorable, and that it would be his interest to abstain from every injurious treatment which might induce or compel them to alter their measures towards him.

It was with this accommodating spirit towards Alexius, which, for many different and complicated reasons, had now animated most of the crusaders, that the chiefs consented to a measure which, in other circumstances, they would probably have refused, as undue to the Greeks, and dishonorable to themselves. This was the famous resolution, that, before crossing the Bosphorus to go in quest of that Palestine, which they had vowed to regain, each chief of crusaders would acknowledge individually the Grecian Emperor, originally lord paramount of all these regions, as their liege lord and suzerain.

The Emperor Alexius, with trembling joy, beheld the crusaders approach a conclusion to which he had hoped to bribe them rather by interested means than by reasoning, although much might be said why provinces, reconquered from the Turks or Saracens should, if recovered from the infidel, become again a part of the Grecian empire, from which they had been rent without any pretence save that of violence.

Though fearful and almost despairing of being able to manage the rude and discordant army of haughty chiefs, who were wholly independent of each other, Alexius failed not, with eagerness and dexterity, to seize upon the admission of Godfrey and his compeers, that the Emperor was entitled to the allegiance of all who should war on Palestine, and natural lord paramount of all the conquests which should be made in the course of the expedition. He was resolved to make this ceremony so public, and to interest men's minds in it by such a display of the imperial pomp and munificence, that it should not either pass unknown, or be readily forgotten.

An extensive terrace, one of the numerous spaces which extend along the coast of the Propontis, was chosen for the site of the magnificent ceremony. Here was placed an elevated and august throne, calculated for the use of the Emperor alone. On this occasion, by suffering no other seats within view of the pageant, the

Greeks endeavored to secure a point of ceremony peculiarly dear to their vanity, namely, that none of that presence, save the Emperor himself, should be seated. Around the throne of Alexius Comnenus were placed in order, but standing, the various dignitaries of his splendid court, in their different ranks, from the Protosebastos and the Cæsar, to the Patriarch, splendid in his ecclesiastical robes, and to Agelastes, who, in his simple habit, gave also the necessary attendance. Behind and around the splendid display of the Emperor's court, were drawn many dark circles of the exiled Anglo-Saxons. These, by their own desire, were not, on that memorable day, accoutred in the silver corselets which were the fashion of an idle court, but sheathed in mail and plate. They desired, they said, to be known as warriors to warriors. This was the more readily granted, as there was no knowing what trifle might infringe a truce between parties so inflammable as were now assembled.

Beyond the Varangians, in much greater numbers, were drawn up the bands of Grecians, or Romans, then known by the title of Immortals, which had been borrowed by the Romans originally from the empire of Persia. The stately forms, lofty crests, and splendid apparel of these guards, would have given the foreign princes present a higher idea of their military prowess, had there not occurred in their ranks a frequent indication of loquacity and of motion forming a strong contrast to the steady composure and death-like silence with which the well-trained Varangians stood in the parade, like statues made of iron.

The reader must then conceive this throne in all the pomp of Oriental greatness, surrounded by the foreign and Roman troops of the empire, and closed on the rear by clouds of light-horse, who shifted their places repeatedly, so as to convey an idea of their multitude, without affording the exact means of estimating it. Through the dust which they raised by these evolutions, might be seen banners and standards, among which could be discovered by glances the celebrated LABARUM,\* the pledge of conquest to the imperial banners, but whose sacred efficacy had somewhat failed of late days. The rude soldiers

\* Ducange fills half a column of his huge page with the mere names of the authors who have written at length on the *Labarum*, or principal standard of the empire for the time of Constantine. It consisted of a spear of silver, or plated with that metal, having suspended from a cross-beam below the spoke a small square silken banner, adorned with portraits of the reigning family, and over these the famous Monogram which expresses at once the figure of the cross and the initial letters of the name of Christ. The bearer of the *Labarum* was an officer of high rank down to the last days of the Byzantine government. See Gibbon, chap. 50.

Ducange seems to have proved, from the evidence of coins and triumphal monuments, that a standard of the form of the *Labarum* was used by various barbarous nations long before it was adopted by their Roman conquerors, and he is of opinion that its name also was borrowed from either Teutonic Germany, or Celtic Gaul, or Slavonic Illyria. It is certain that either the German language or the Welsh may afford at this day a perfect

of the West, who viewed the Grecian army, maintained that the standards, which were exhibited in front of their line, were at least sufficient for the array of ten times the number of soldiers.

Far on the right, the appearance of a very large body of European cavalry drawn up on the sea-shore, intimated the presence of the crusaders. So great was the desire to follow the example of the chief Princes, Dukes, and Counts, in making the proposed fealty, that the number of independent knights and nobles who were to perform this service, seemed very great when collected together for that purpose; for every crusader who possessed a tower, and led six lances, would have thought himself abridged of his dignity if he had not been called to acknowledge the Grecian Emperor, and hold the lands he should conquer of his throne, as well as Godfrey of Bouillon, or Hugh the Great, Count of Vermandois. And yet, with strange inconsistency, though they pressed to fulfil the homage, as that which was paid by greater persons themselves, they seemed, at the very same time, desirous to find some mode of intimating, that the homage which they rendered they felt as an idle degradation, and in fact held the whole show as a mere piece of mockery.

The order of the procession had been thus settled:—The Crusaders, or, as the Grecians called them, the *Counts*,—that being the most common title among them,—were to advance from the left of their body, and passing the Emperor one by one, were apprized, that, in passing, each was to render to him, in as few words as possible, the homage which had been previously agreed on. Godfrey of Bouillon, his brother Baldwin, Bohemond of Antioch, and several other crusaders of eminence, were the first to perform the ceremony, alighting when their own part was performed, and remaining in attendance by the Emperor's chair, to prevent, by the awe of their presence, any of their numerous associates from being guilty of petulance or presumption during the solemnity. Other crusaders of less degree retained their station near the Emperor, when they had once gained it, out of mere curiosity, or to show that they were as much at liberty to do so as the great commanders who assumed that privilege.

Thus two great bodies of troops, Grecian and European, paused at some distance from each other on the banks of the Bosphorus canal, differing in language, arms, and appearance. The small troops of horse which from time to time issued forth from these bodies, resembled the flashes of lightning passing from one thundercloud to another, which communicate to each

ly satisfactory etymon: *Lap-beer* in the former and *Lab-hair* in the latter, having precisely the same meaning—the cloth of the host.

The form of the *Labarum* may still be recognized in the banners carried in ecclesiastical processions in all Roman Catholic countries.

other by such emissaries their overcharged contents. After some halt on the margin of the Bosphorus, the Franks, who had performed homage, straggled irregularly forward to a quay on the shore, where innumerable galleys and smaller vessels, provided for the purpose, lay with sails and oars prepared to waft the warlike pilgrims across the passage, and place them on that Asia which they longed so passionately to visit, and from which but few of them were likely to return. The gay appearance of the vessels which were to receive them, the readiness with which they were supplied with refreshments, the narrowness of the strait they had to cross, the near approach of that active service which they had vowed and longed to discharge, put the warriors into gay spirits, and songs and music bore chorus to the departing oars.

While such was the temper of the crusaders, the Grecian Emperor did his best through the whole ceremony to impress on the armed multitude the highest ideas of his own grandeur, and the importance of the occasion which had brought them together. This was readily admitted by the higher chiefs; some because their vanity had been propitiated, — some because their avarice had been gratified, — some because their ambition had been inflamed, — and a few, a very few, because to remain friends with Alexius was the most probable means of advancing the purposes of their expedition. Accordingly the great lords, from these various motives, practised a humility which perhaps they were far from feeling, and carefully abstained from all which might seem like irreverence at the solemn festival of the Grecians. But there were very many of a different temper.

Of the great number of counts, lords, and knights, under whose variety of banners the crusaders were led to the walls of Constantinople, many were too insignificant to be bribed to this distasteful measure of homage; and these, though they felt it dangerous to oppose resistance, yet mixed their submission with taunts, ridicule, and such contraventions of decorum, as plainly intimated that they entertained resentment and scorn at the step they were about to take, and esteemed it as proclaiming themselves vassals to a prince, heretic in his faith, limited in the exercise of his boasted power, their enemy when he dared show himself such, and the friend of those only among their number who were able to compel him to be so; and who, though to them an obsequious ally, was to the others, when occasion offered, an insidious and murderous enemy.

The nobles of Frankish origin and descent were chiefly remarkable for their presumptuous contempt of every other nation engaged in the crusade, as well as for their dauntless bravery, and for the scorn with which they regarded the power and authority of the Greek empire. It was a common saying among them, that if the skies should fall, the French crusaders alone were able to hold them up with their lances.

The same bold and arrogant disposition showed itself in occasional quarrels with their unwilling hosts, in which the Greeks, notwithstanding all their art, were often worsted; so that Alexius was determined, at all events, to get rid of these intractable and fiery allies, by ferrying them over the Bosphorus, with all manner of diligence. To do this with safety, he availed himself of the presence of the Count of Vermandois, Godfrey of Bouillon, and other chiefs of great influence, to keep in order the lesser Frankish knights, who were so numerous and unruly.\*

Struggling with his feelings of offended pride, tempered by a prudent degree of apprehension, the Emperor endeavored to receive with complacency a homage tendered in mockery. An incident shortly took place of a character highly descriptive of the nations brought together in so extraordinary a manner, and with such different feelings and sentiments. Several bands of French had passed, in a sort of procession, the throne of the Emperor, and rendered, with some appearance of gravity, the usual homage. On this occasion they bent their knees to Alexius, placed their hands within his, and in that posture paid the ceremonies of feudal fealty. But when it came to the turn of Bohemond of Antioch, already mentioned, to render this fealty, the Emperor, desirous to show every species of honor to this wily person, his former enemy, and now apparently his ally, advanced two or three paces towards the sea-side, where the boats lay as if in readiness for his use.

The distance to which the Emperor moved was very small, and it was assumed as a piece of deference to Bohemond; but it became the means of exposing Alexius himself to a cutting affront, which his guards and subjects felt deeply, as an intentional humiliation. A half score of horsemen, attendants of the Frankish Count who was next to perform the homage, with their lord at their head, set off at full gallop from the right flank of the French squadrons, and arriving before the throne, which was yet empty, they at once halted. The rider at the head of the band was a strong Herculean figure, with a decided and stern countenance, though extremely handsome, looking out from thick black curls. His head was surmounted with a barret cap, while his hands, limbs, and feet were covered with garments of chamois-leather, over which he in general wore the ponderous and complete armor of his country. This, however, he had laid aside for personal convenience, though in doing so he evinced a total neglect of the ceremonial which marked so important a meeting. He waited not a moment for the Emperor's return, nor regarded the impropriety of obliging Alexius to hurry his steps back to his throne, but sprung from his gigantic horse, and threw the reins loose, which were instantly seized by one of the attendant pages. Without a moment's hesitation the

\* See Mills, vol. 1, chap. 3.

Frank seated himself in the vacant throne of the Emperor, and extending his half-armed and robust figure on the golden cushions which were destined for Alexius, he indolently began to caress a large wolf-hound which had followed him, and which, feeling itself as much at ease as its master, reposed its grim form on the carpets of silk and gold damask, which tapestried the imperial footstool. The very hound stretched itself with a bold, ferocious insolence, and seemed to regard no one with respect, save the stern knight whom it called master.

The Emperor, turning back from the short space which, as a special mark of favor, he had accompanied Bohemond, beheld with astonishment his seat occupied by this insolent Frank. The bands of the half-savage Varangians who were stationed around, would not have hesitated an instant in avenging the insult, by prostrating the violator of their master's throne even in this act of his contempt, had they not been restrained by Achilles Tatius and other officers, who were uncertain what the Emperor would do, and somewhat timorous of taking a resolution for themselves.

Meanwhile, the unceremonious knight spoke aloud, in a speech which, though provincial, might be understood by all to whom the French language was known, while even those who understood it not, gathered its interpretation from his tone and manner. "What churl is this," he said, "who has remained sitting stationary like a block of wood, or the fragment of a rock, when so many noble knights, the flower of chivalry and muster of gallantry, stand uncovered around, among the thrice-conquered Varangians?"

A deep, clear accent replied, as if from the bottom of the earth, so like it was to the accents of some being from the other world, — "If the Normans desire battle of the Varangians, they will meet them in the lists man to man, without the poor boast of insulting the Emperor of Greece, who is well known to fight only by the battle-axes of his guard."

The astonishment was so great when this answer was heard, as to affect even the knight, whose insult upon the Emperor had occasioned it; and amid the efforts of Achilles to retain his soldiers within the bounds of subordination and silence, a loud murmur seemed to intimate that they would not long remain so. Bohemond returned through the press with a celerity which did not so well suit the dignity of Alexius, and catching the crusader by the arm, he, something between fair means and a gentle degree of force, obliged him to leave the chair of the Emperor, in which he had placed himself so boldly.

"How is it," said Bohemond, "noble Count of Paris? Is there one of this great assembly who can see with patience, that your name, so widely renowned for valor, is now to be quoted in an idle brawl with hirelings, whose utmost boast it is to bear a mercenary battle-axe in the ranks of the Emperor's guards? For shame—for

shame—do not, for the discredit of Norman chivalry, let it be so!"

"I know not," said the crusader, rising reluctantly—"I am not nice in choosing the degree of my adversary, when he bears himself like one who is willing and forward in battle. I am good-natured, I tell thee, Count Bohemond; and Turk or Tartar, or wandering Anglo-Saxon, who only escapes from the chain of the Normans to become the slave of the Greek, is equally welcome to whet his blade clean against my armor, if he desires to achieve such an honorable office."

The Emperor had heard what passed—had heard it with indignation, mixed with fear; for he imagined the whole scheme of his policy was about to be overturned at once by a premeditated plan of personal affront, and probably an assault upon his person. He was about to call to arms, when casting his eyes on the right flank of the crusaders, he saw that all remained quiet after the Frank Baron had transferred himself from thence. He therefore instantly resolved to let the insult pass, as one of the rough pleasantries of the Franks, since the advance of more troops did not give any symptom of an actual onset.

Resolving on his line of conduct with the quickness of thought, he glided back to his canopy, and stood beside his throne, of which, however, he chose not instantly to take possession, lest he should give the insolent stranger some ground for renewing and persisting in a competition for it.

"What bold Vavasour is this," said he to Count Baldwin, "whom, as is apparent from his dignity, I ought to have received seated upon my throne, and who thinks proper thus to vindicate his rank?"

"He is reckoned one of the bravest men in our host," answered Baldwin, "though the brave are as numerous there as the sands of the sea. He will himself tell you his name and rank."

Alexius looked at the Vavasour. He saw nothing in his large, well-formed features, lighted by a wild touch of enthusiasm which spoke in his quick eye, that intimated premeditated insult, and was induced to suppose that what had occurred, so contrary to the form and ceremonial of the Grecian court, was neither an intentional affront, nor designed as the means of introducing a quarrel. He therefore spoke with comparative ease, when he addressed the stranger thus: "We know not by what dignified name to salute you; but we are aware, from Count Baldwin's information, that we are honored in having in our presence one of the bravest knights whom a sense of the wrongs done to the Holy Land has brought thus far on his way to Palestine, to free it from its bondage."

"If you mean to ask my name," answered the European knight, "any one of these pilgrims can readily satisfy you, and more gracefully than I can myself; since we use to say in our country that many a fierce quarrel is prevented from be-

ing fought out by an untimely disclosure of names, when men, who might have fought with the fear of God before their eyes, must, when their names are manifested, recognise each other as spiritual allies, by baptism, gossipred, or some such irresistible bond of friendship; whereas, had they fought first and told their names afterwards, they could have had some assurance of each other's valor, and have been able to view their relationship as an honor to both."

"Still," said the Emperor, "methinks I would know if you, who in this extraordinary press of knights, seem to assert a precedence to yourself, claim the dignity due to a king or prince?"

"How speak you that?" said the Frank, with a brow somewhat overclouded; "do you feel that I have not left you unjustly by my advance to these squadrons of yours?"

Alexius hastened to answer, that he felt no particular desire to connect the Count with an affront or offence; observing, that in the extreme necessity of the Empire, it was no time for him, who was at the helm, to engage in idle or unnecessary quarrels.

The Frankish knight heard him, and answered dryly—"Since such are your sentiments, I wonder that you have ever resided long enough within the hearing of the French language to learn to speak it as you do. I would have thought some of the sentiments of the chivalry of the nation, since you are neither a monk nor a woman, would, at the same time with the words of the dialect, have found their way into your heart."

"Hush, Sir Count," said Bohemond, who remained by the Emperor to avert the threatening quarrel. "It is surely requisite to answer the Emperor with civility; and those who are impatient for warfare, will have infidels enough to wage it with. He only demanded your name and lineage, which you of all men can have least objection to disclose."

"I know not if it will interest this prince, or Emperor as you term him," answered the Frank Count; "but all the account I can give of myself is this:—In the midst of one of the vast forests which occupy the centre of France, my native country, there stands a chapel, sunk so low into the ground, that it seems as if it were become decrepit by its own great age. The image of the Holy Virgin who presides over its altar, is called by all men Our Lady of the Broken Lances, and is accounted through the whole kingdom the most celebrated for military adventures. Four beaten roads, each leading from an opposite point in the compass, meet before the principal door of the chapel; and ever and anon, as a good knight arrives at this place, he passes in to the performance of his devotions in the chapel, having first sounded his horn three times, till ash and oak tree quiver and ring. Having then kneeled down to his devotions, he seldom arises from the mass of Her of the Broken Lances, but there is attending on his leisure some adventurous knight ready to satisfy the new comer's de-

sire of battle. This station have I held for a month and more against all comers, and all gave me fair thanks for the knightly manner of quitting myself towards them, except one, who had the evil hap to fall from his horse, and did break his neck; and another, who was struck through the body, so that the lance came out behind his back about a cloth-yard, all dripping with blood. Allowing for such accidents, which cannot easily be avoided, my opponents parted with me with fair acknowledgment of the grace I had done them."

"I conceive, Sir Knight," said the Emperor, "that a form like yours, animated by the courage you display, is likely to find few equals even among your adventurous countrymen; far less among men who are taught that to cast away their lives in a senseless quarrel among themselves, is to throw away, like a boy, the gift of Providence."

"You are welcome to your opinion," said the Frank, somewhat contemptuously; "yet I assure you, if you doubt that our gallant strife was unmixed with sullenness and anger, and that we hunt not the hart or the boar with merrier hearts in the evening, than we discharge our task of chivalry by the morn had arisen, before the portal of the old chapel, you do us foul injustice."

"With the Turks you will not enjoy this amiable exchange of courtesies," answered Alexius. "Wherefore I would advise you neither to stray far into the van nor into the rear, but to abide by the standard where the best infidels make their efforts, and the best knights are required to repel them."

"By Our Lady of the Broken Lances," said the Crusader, "I would not that the Turks were more courteous than they are Christian, and am well pleased that unbeliever and heathen bound are a proper description for the best of them, as being traitor alike to their God and to the laws of chivalry; and devoutly do I trust that I shall meet with them in the front rank of our army, beside our standard, or elsewhere, and have an open field to do my *devoir* against them, both as the enemies of Our Lady and the holy saints, and as, by their evil customs, more expressly my own. Meanwhile you have time to seat yourself and receive my homage, and I will be bound to you for dispatching this foolish ceremony with as little waste and delay of time as the occasion will permit."

The Emperor hastily seated himself, and received into his the sinewy hands of the Crusader, who made the acknowledgment of his homage, and was then guided off by Count Baldwin, and walked with the stranger to the ships, and then, apparently well pleased at seeing him in the course of going on board, returned back to the side of the Emperor.

"What is the name," said the Emperor, "of that singular and assuming man?"

"It is Robert, Count of Paris," answered

Baldwin, "accounted one of the bravest peers who stand around the throne of France."

After a moment's recollection, Alexius Comnenus issued orders, that the ceremonial of the day should be discontinued, afraid, perhaps, lest the rough and careless humor of the strangers should produce some new quarrel. The crusaders were led, nothing loth, back to palaces in which they had already been hospitably received, and readily resumed the interrupted feast, from which they had been called to pay their homage. The trumpets of the various leaders blew the recall of the few troops of an ordinary character who were attendant, together with the host of knights and leaders, who, pleased with the indulgences provided for them, and obscurely foreseeing that the passage of the Bosphorus would be the commencement of their actual suffering, rejoiced in being called to the hither side.

It was not probably intended; but the hero, as he might be styled, of the tumultuous day, Count Robert of Paris, who was already on his road to embarkation on the strait, was disturbed in his purpose by the sound of recall which was echoed around; nor could Bohemond, Godfrey, or any who took upon him to explain the signal, alter his resolution of returning to Constantinople. He laughed to scorn the threatened displeasure of the Emperor, and seemed to think there would be a peculiar pleasure in braving Alexius at his own board, or, at least, that nothing could be more indifferent than whether he gave offence or not.

To Godfrey of Bouillon, to whom he showed some respect, he was still far from paying deference; and that sagacious prince, having used every argument which might shake his purpose of returning to the imperial city, to the very point of making it a quarrel with him in person, at length abandoned him to his own discretion, and pointed him out to the Count of Thoulouse, as he passed, as a wild knight-errant, incapable of being influenced by any thing save his own wayward fancy. "He brings not five hundred men to the crusade," said Godfrey; "and I dare be sworn, that even in this, the very outset of the undertaking, he knows not where these five hundred men are, and how their wants are provided for. There is an eternal trumpet in his ear sounding to assault, nor has he room or time to hear a milder or more rational signal. See how he strolls along yonder, the very emblem of an idle schoolboy, broke out of the school-bounds upon a holiday, half animated by curiosity and half by love of mischief."

"And," said Raymond, Count of Thoulouse, "with resolution sufficient to support the desperate purpose of the whole army of devoted crusaders. And yet so passionate a Rodomont is Count Robert, that he would rather risk the success of the whole expedition, than omit an opportunity of meeting a worthy antagonist *en champ-clos*, or lose, as he terms it, a chance of worshipping Our Lady of the Broken Lances.

Who are you with whom he has now met, and who are apparently walking, or rather strolling, in the same way with him, back to Constantinople?"

"An armed knight, brilliantly equipped—yet of something less than knightly stature," answered Godfrey. "It is, I suppose, the celebrated lady who won Robert's heart in the lists of battle, by bravery and valor equal to his own; and the pilgrim form in the long vestments may be their daughter or niece."

"A singular spectacle, worthy Knight," said the Count of Thoulouse, "do our days present to us, to which we have had nothing similar, since Gaita,\* wife of Robert Guiscard, first took upon her to distinguish herself by manly deeds of enterprise, and rival her husband, as well in the front of battle as at the dancing-room or banquet."

"Such is the custom of this pair, most noble knight," answered another Crusader, who had joined them, "and Heaven pity the poor man who has no power to keep domestic peace by an appeal to the stronger hand!"

"Well!" replied Raymond, "if it be rather a mortifying reflection, that the lady of our love is far past the bloom of youth, it is a consolation that she is too old-fashioned to beat us, when we return back with no more of youth or manhood than a long crusade has left. But come, follow on the road to Constantinople, and in the rear of this most doughty knight."

#### CHAPTER X.

Those were wild times—the antipodes of ours;  
Ladies were there, who often saw themselves  
In the broad lustre of a foeman's shield  
Than in a mirror, and who rather sought  
To match themselves in battle, than in dalliance  
To meet a lover's onset.—But though Nature  
Was outraged thus, she was not overcome.

FEUDAL TIMES

BRENHILDA, Countess of Paris, was one of those stalwart dames who willingly hazarded themselves in the front of battle, which, during the first crusade, was as common as it was possible for a very unnatural custom to be, and, in fact,

\* This Amazon makes a conspicuous figure in Anne Comnena's account of her father's campaigns against Robert Guiscard. On one occasion (Alexiad, lib. iv., p. 93) she represents her as thus recalling the fugitive soldiery of her husband to their duty.—*Ἡ δὲ γὰρ Γαῖτα, Παλλὰς ἄλλη, κὰν μὴ Ἀθήνη, κατ' αὐτῶν μεγίστην ἀφέισα φωνήν, μονοῦ τοῦ Ὀμηρικῶν ἔπος, τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ λέγειν ἔφκει. Μέχρι πόσου φεύξεσθε; στήτε, ἀνέρες ἔστε. Ὅς δὲ ἐτι φεύγοντας τοῦτους ἔώρα, δόρυ μακρὸν ἐναγκαλισμένη ὄλους ῥυτίδας ἐνδούσα κατὰ τῶν φεγόντων ἔταται.*—That is, exhorting them, in all Homeric language, at the top of her voice; and when this failed, brandishing a long spear, and rushing upon the fugitives at the utmost speed of her horse.

This heroic lady, according to the *Chronique Scandaleuse* of those days, was afterwards deluded by some cunning overture of the Greek Emperor, and poisoned her husband in expectation of gaining a place on the throne of Constantinople. Ducange however, rejects the story, and so does Gibbon.

gave the real instances of the Marphisas and Bradamantes, whom the writers of romance delighted to paint, assigning them sometimes the advantage of invulnerable armor, or a spear whose thrust did not admit of being resisted, in order to soften the improbability of the weaker sex being frequently victorious over the male part of the creation.

But the spell of Brenhilda was of a more simple nature, and rested chiefly in her great beauty.

From a girl she despised the pursuits of her sex; and they who ventured to become suitors for the hand of the young Lady of Aspramonte, to which warlike fief she had succeeded, and which perhaps encouraged her in her fancy, received for answer, that they must first merit it by their good behavior in the lists. The father of Brenhilda was dead; her mother was of a gentle temper, and easily kept under management by the young lady herself.

Brenhilda's numerous suitors readily agreed to terms which were too much according to the manners of the age to be disputed. A tournament was held at the Castle of Aspramonte, in which one half of the gallant assembly rolled headlong before their successful rivals, and withdrew from the lists mortified and disappointed. The successful party among the suitors were expected to be summoned to joust among themselves. But they were surprised at being made acquainted with the lady's further will. She aspired to wear armor herself, to wield a lance, and back a steed, and prayed the knights that they would permit a lady, whom they professed to honor so highly, to mingle in their games of chivalry. The young knights courteously received their young mistress in the lists, and smiled at the idea of her holding them triumphantly against so many gallant champions of the other sex. But the vassals and old servants of the Count, her father, smiled to each other, and intimated a different result than the gallants anticipated. The knights who encountered the fair Brenhilda were one by one stretched on the sand; nor was it to be denied, that the situation of tilting with one of the handsomest women of the time was an extremely embarrassing one. Each youth was bent to withhold his charge in full volley, to cause his steed to swerve at the full shock, or in some other way to flinch from doing the utmost which was necessary to gain the victory, lest, in so gaining it, he might cause irreparable injury to the beautiful opponent he tilted with. But the Lady of Aspramonte was not one who could be conquered by less than the exertion of the whole strength and talents of the victor. The defeated suitors departed from the lists the more mortified at their discomfiture, because Robert of Paris arrived at sunset, and, understanding what was going forward, sent his name to the barriers, as that of a knight who would willingly forego the reward of the tournament, in case he had the fortune to gain it, declaring, that neither lands nor ladies' charms were what he came thither to seek. Brenhilda,

piqued and mortified, chose a new lance, mounted her best steed, and advanced into the lists as one determined to avenge upon the new assailant's brow the slight of her charms which he seemed to express. But whether her displeasure had somewhat interfered with her usual skill, or whether she had, like others of her sex, felt a partiality towards one whose heart was not particularly set upon gaining hers—or whether, as is often said on such occasions, her fated hour was come, so it was that Count Robert tilted with his usual address and good fortune. Brenhilda of Aspramonte was unhorsed and unhelmed, and stretched on the earth, and the beautiful face which faded from very red to deadly pale before the eyes of the victor, produced its natural effect in raising the value of his conquest. He would, in conformity with his resolution, have left the castle after having mortified the vanity of the lady; but her mother opportunely interposed; and when she had satisfied herself that no serious injury had been sustained by the young heiress, she returned her thanks to the stranger knight who had taught her daughter a lesson, which, she trusted, she would not easily forget. Thus tempted to do what he secretly wished, Count Robert gave ear to those sentiments, which naturally whispered to him to be in no hurry to withdraw.

He was of the blood of Charlemagne, and, what was still of more consequence in the young lady's eyes, one of the most renowned of Norman knights in that jousting day. After a residence of ten days in the castle of Aspramonte, the bride and bridegroom set out, for such was Count Robert's will, with a competent train, to Our Lady of the Broken Lances, where it pleased him to be wedded. Two knights, who were waiting to do battle, as was the custom of the place, were rather disappointed at the nature of the cavalcade, which seemed to interrupt their purpose. But greatly were they surprised when they received a cartel from the betrothed couple, offering to substitute their own persons in the room of other antagonists, and congratulating themselves in commencing their married life in a manner so consistent with that which they had hitherto led. They were victorious as usual; and the only persons having occasion to rue the complaisance of the Count and his bride, were the two strangers, one of whom broke an arm in the rencontre, and the other dislocated a collar-bone.

Count Robert's course of knight-errantry did not seem to be in the least intermitted by his marriage; on the contrary, when he was called upon to support his renown, his wife was often known also in military exploits, nor was she inferior to him in thirst after fame. They both assumed the cross at the same time, that being then the predominant folly in Europe.

The Countess Brenhilda was now above six-and-twenty years old, with as much beauty as can well fall to the share of an Amazon. A figure of the largest feminine size, was surmounted by a

noble countenance, to which even repeated warlike toils had not given more than a sunny hue, relieved by the dazzling whiteness of such parts of her face as were not usually displayed.

As Alexius gave orders that his retinue should return to Constantinople, he spoke in private to the Follower, Achilles Tatius. The Satrap answered with a submissive bend of the head, and separated with a few attendants from the main body of the Emperor's train. The principal road to the city was, of course, filled with the troops, and with the numerous crowds of spectators, all of whom were inconvenienced in some degree by the dust and heat of the weather.

Count Robert of Paris had embarked his horses on board of ship, and all his retinue, except an old squire or valet of his own, and an attendant of his wife. He felt himself more incommoded in this crowd than he desired, especially as his wife shared it with him, and began to look among the scattered trees which fringed the shores, down almost to the tide-mark, to see if he could discern any by-path which might carry them more circuitously, but more pleasantly, to the city, and afford them at the same time what was their principal object in the East, strange sights, or adventures of chivalry. A broad and beaten path seemed to promise them all the enjoyment which shade could give in a warm climate. The ground through which it wound its way was beautifully broken by the appearance of temples, churches, and kiosks, and here and there a fountain distributed its silver produce, like a benevolent individual, who, self-denying to himself, is liberal to all others who are in necessity. The distant sound of the martial music still regulated their way; and, at the same time, as it detained the populace on the high-road, prevented the strangers from becoming incommoded with fellow-travellers.

Rejoicing in the abated heat of the day—wondering, at the same time, at the various kinds of architecture, the strange features of the landscape, or accidental touches of manners, exhibited by those who met or passed them upon their journey, they strolled easily onwards. One figure particularly caught the attention of the Countess Brenhilda. This was an old man of great stature, engaged, apparently, so deeply with the roll of parchment which he held in his hand, that he paid no attention to the objects which were passing around him. Deep thought appeared to reign on his brow, and his eye was of that piercing kind which seems designed to search and winnow the frivolous from the edifying part of human discussion, and limit its inquiry to the last. Raising his eyes slowly from the parchment on which he had been gazing, the look of Agelastes—for it was the sage himself—encountered those of Count Robert and his lady, and addressing them with the kindly epithet of “my children,” he asked if they had missed their

road, or whether there was any thing in which he could do them any pleasure.

“We are strangers, father,” was the answer “from a distant country, and belonging to the army which has passed hither upon pilgrimage; one object brings us here in common, we hope, with all that host. We desire to pay our devotions where the great ransom was paid for us, and to free, by our good swords, enslaved Palestine, from the usurpation and tyranny of the infidel. When we have said this, we have announced our highest human motive. Yet Robert of Paris and his Countess would not willingly set their foot on a land save what should resound its echo. They have not been accustomed to move in silence upon the face of the earth, and they would purchase an eternal life of fame, though it were at the price of mortal existence.”

“You seek, then, to barter safety for fame,” said Agelastes, “though you may, perchance, throw death into the scale by which you hope to gain it?”

“Assuredly,” said Count Robert; “nor is there one wearing such a belt as this, to whom such a thought is stranger.”

“And as I understand,” said Agelastes, “your lady shares with your honorable self in these valorous resolutions?—Can this be?”

“You may undervalue my female courage, father, if such is your will,” said the Countess; “but I speak in presence of a witness who can attest the truth, when I say, that a man of half your years had not doubted the truth with impunity.”

“Nay, Heaven protect me from the lightning of your eyes,” said Agelastes, “whether in anger or in scorn. I bear an ægis about myself against what I should else have feared. But age, with its incapacities, brings also its apologies. Perhaps, indeed, it is one like me whom you seek to find, and in that case I should be happy to render to you such services as it is my duty to offer to all worthy knights.”

“I have already said,” replied Count Robert, “that after the accomplishment of my vow,”—he looked upwards, and crossed himself,—“there is nothing on earth to which I am more bound than to celebrate my name in arms as becomes a valiant cavalier. When men die obscurely they die for ever. Had my ancestor Charles never left the paltry banks of the Saale, he had not now been much better known than any vine-dresser who wielded his pruning-hook in the same territories. But he bore him like a brave man, and his name is deathless in the memory of the worthy.”

“Young man,” said the old Grecian, “although it is but seldom that such as you, whom I was made to serve and to value, visit this country, it is not the less true that I am well qualified to serve you in the matter which you have so much at heart. My acquaintance with Nature has been so perfect and so long that, during its continuance, she has disappeared, and another world has been spread before me, in

which she has but little to do. Thus the curious stores which I have assembled are beyond the researches of other men, and not to be laid before those whose deeds of valor are to be bounded by the ordinary probabilities of every-day nature. No romancer of your romantic country ever devised such extraordinary adventures out of his own imagination, and to feed the idle wonder of those who sat listening around, as those which I know, not of idle invention, but of real positive existence, with the means of achieving and accomplishing the conditions of each adventure."

"If such be your real profession," said the French Count, "you have met one of those whom you chiefly search for; nor will my Countess and I stir farther upon our road until you have pointed out to us some one of those adventures which it is the business of errant-knights to be industrious in seeking out."

So saying, he sat down by the side of the old man; and his lady, with a degree of reverence which had something in it almost diverting, followed his example.

"We have fallen right, Brenhilda," said Count Robert; "our guardian angel has watched his charge carefully. Here have we come among an ignorant set of pedants, chattering their absurd language, and holding more important the least look that a cowardly Emperor can give, than the best blow that a good knight can deal. Believe me, I was well-nigh thinking that we had done ill to take the cross—God forgive such an impious doubt! Yet here, when we were even despairing to find the road to fame, we have met with one of those excellent men whom the knights of yore were wont to find sitting by springs, by crosses, and by altars, ready to direct the wandering knight where fame was to be found. Disturb him not, my Brenhilda," said the Count, "but let him recall to himself his stories of the ancient time, and thou shalt see he will enrich us with the treasures of his information."

"If," replied Agelastes, after some pause, "I have waited for a longer term than human life is granted to most men, I shall be overpaid by dedicating what remains of existence to the service of a pair so devoted to chivalry. What first occurs to me is a story of our Greek country, so famous in adventures, and which I shall briefly detail to you:

"Afar hence, in our renowned Grecian Archipelago, amid storms and whirlpools, rocks which, changing their character, appear to precipitate themselves against each other, and billows that are never in a pacific state, lies the rich island of Zulichium, inhabited, notwithstanding its wealth, by a very few natives, who live only upon the sea-coast. The inland part of the island is one immense mountain, or pile of mountains, amongst which, those who dare approach near enough, may, we are assured, discern the moss-grown and antiquated towers and pinnacles of a stately, but ruinous castle, the habitation of the

sovereign of the island, in which she has been enchanted for a great many years.

"A bold knight, who came upon a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, made a vow to deliver this unhappy victim of pain and sorcery; feeling, with justice, vehemently offended, that the fiends of darkness should exercise any authority near the Holy Land, which might be termed the very fountain of light. Two of the oldest inhabitants of the island undertook to guide him as near to the main gate as they durst, nor did they approach it more closely than the length of a bow-shot. Here then, abandoned to himself, the brave Frank set forth upon his enterprise, with a stout heart and Heaven alone to friend. The fabric which he approached showed, by its gigantic size, and splendor of outline, the power and wealth of the potentate who had erected it. The brazen gates unfolded themselves as if with hope and pleasure; and aerial voices swept around the spires and turrets, congratulating the genius of the place, it might be, upon the expected approach of its deliverer.

"The knight passed on, not unmoved with wonder, though untaunted by fear; and the Gothic splendors which he saw were of a kind highly to exalt his idea of the beauty of the mistress for whom a prison-house had been so richly decorated. Guards there were in Eastern dress and arms, upon bulwark and buttress, in readiness, it appeared, to bend their bows; but the warriors were motionless and silent, and took no more notice of the armed step of the knight than if a monk or hermit had approached their guarded post. They were living, and yet, as to all power and sense, they might be considered among the dead. If there was truth in the old tradition, the sun had shone and the rain had fallen upon them for more than four hundred changing seasons, without their being sensible of the genial warmth of the one or the coldness of the other. Like the Israelites in the desert, their shoes had not decayed, nor their vestments waxed old. As Time left them, so and without alteration was he again to find them." The philosopher began now to recall what he had heard of the cause of their enchantment.

"The sage, to whom this potent charm is imputed, was one of the Magi who followed the tenets of Zoroaster. He had come to the court of this youthful Princess, who received him with every attention which gratified vanity could dictate, so that in a short time her awe of this grave personage was lost in the sense of ascendancy which her beauty gave her over him. It was no difficult matter—in fact it happens every day—for the beautiful woman to lull the wise man into what is not unaptly called a fool's paradise. The sage was induced to attempt feats of youth which his years rendered ridiculous; he could command the elements, but the common course of nature was beyond his power. When, therefore, he exerted his magic strength, the mountains bent and the seas receded; but when

the philosopher attempted to lead forth the Princess of Zulichium, in the youthful dance, youths and maidens turned their heads aside lest they should make too manifest the ludicrous ideas with which they were impressed.

"Unhappily, as the aged, even the wisest of them, will forget themselves, so the young naturally enter into an alliance to spy out, ridicule, and enjoy their foibles. Many were the glances which the Princess sent among her retinue, intimating the nature of the amusement which she received from the attentions of her formidable lover. In process of time she lost her caution, and a glance was detected, expressing to the old man the ridicule and contempt in which he had been all along held by the object of his affections. Earth has no passion so bitter as love converted to hatred; and while the sage bitterly regretted what he had done, he did not the less resent the light-hearted folly of the princess by whom he had been duped.

"If, however, he was angry, he possessed the art to conceal it. Not a word, not a look expressed the bitter disappointment which he had received. A shade of melancholy, or rather gloom, upon his brow, alone intimated the coming storm. The Princess became somewhat alarmed; she was besides extremely good-natured, nor had her intentions of leading the old man into what would render him ridiculous, been so accurately planned with malice prepense, as they were the effect of accident and chance. She saw the pain which he suffered, and thought to end it by going up to him, when about to retire, and kindly wishing him good-night.

"You say well, daughter," said the sage, 'good-night—but who, of the numbers who hear me, shall say good-morning?'

"The speech drew little attention, although two or three persons to whom the character of the sage was known, fled from the island that very night, and by their report made known the circumstances attending the first infliction of this extraordinary spell on those who remained within the Castle. A sleep like that of death fell upon them, and was not removed. Most of the inhabitants left the island; the few who remained were cautious how they approached the Castle, and watched until some bold adventurer should bring that happy awakening which the speech of the sorcerer seemed in some degree to intimate.

"Never seemed there a fairer opportunity for that awakening to take place than when the proud step of Artavan de Hautlieu was placed upon those enchanted courts. On the left, lay the palace and donjon-keep; but the right, more attractive, seemed to invite to the apartment of the women. At a side door, reclined on a couch, two guards of the harem, with their naked swords grasped in their hands, and features fiendishly contorted between sleep and dissolution, seemed to menace death to any who should venture to approach. This threat deterred not

Artavan de Hautlieu. He approached the entrance, when the doors, like those of the great entrance to the Castle, made themselves instantly accessible to him. A guard-room of the same effeminate soldiers received him, nor could the strictest examination have discovered to him whether it was sleep or death which arrested the eyes that seemed to look upon and prohibit his advance. Unheeding the presence of these ghastly sentinels, Artavan pressed forward into an inner apartment, where female slaves of the most distinguished beauty were visible in the attitude of those who had already assumed their dress for the night. There was much in this scene which might have arrested so young a pilgrim as Artavan of Hautlieu; but his heart was fixed on achieving the freedom of the beautiful Princess, nor did he suffer himself to be withdrawn from that object by any inferior consideration. He passed on, therefore, to a little ivory door, which, after a moment's pause, as if in maidenly hesitation, gave way like the rest, and yielded access to the sleeping apartment of the Princess herself. A soft light, resembling that of evening, penetrated into a chamber where every thing seemed contrived to exalt the luxury of slumber. The heaps of cushions, which formed a stately bed, seemed rather to be touched than impressed by the form of a nymph of fifteen, the renowned Princess of Zulichium."

"Without interrupting you, good father," said the Countess Brenhilda, "it seems to me that we can comprehend the picture of a woman asleep without much dilating upon it, and that such a subject is little recommended either by our age or by yours."

"Pardon me, noble lady," answered Agelastes, "the most approved part of my story has ever been this passage, and while I now suppress it in obedience to your command, bear notice, I pray you, that I sacrifice the most beautiful part of the tale."

"Brenhilda," added the Count, "I am surprised you think of interrupting a story which has hitherto proceeded with so much fire; the telling of a few words more or less will surely have a much greater influence upon the sense of the narrative, than such an addition can possibly possess over our sentiments of action."

"As you will," said his lady, throwing herself carelessly back upon the seat; "but methinks the worthy father protracts this discourse, till it becomes of a nature more trifling than interesting."

"Brenhilda," said the Count, "this is the first time I have remarked in you a woman's weakness."

"I may as well say, Count Robert, that it is the first time," answered Brenhilda, "that you have shown to me the inconstancy of your sex."

"Gods and goddesses," said the philosopher, "was ever known a quarrel more absurdly founded! The Countess is jealous of one whom her husband probably never will see, nor is there

any prospect that the Princess of Zulichium will be hereafter better known to the modern world, than if the curtain hung before her tomb."

"Proceed," said Count Robert of Paris; "if Sir Artavan de Hautlien has not accomplished the enfranchisement of the Princess of Zulichium, I make a vow to Our Lady of the Broken Lances—"

"Remember," said his lady, interfering, "that you are already under a vow to free the Sepulchre of God; and to that, methinks, all lighter engagements might give place."

"Well, lady—well," said Count Robert, but half satisfied with this interference, "I will not engage myself, you may be assured, on any adventure which may claim precedence of the enterprise of the Holy Sepulchre, to which we are all bound."

"Alas!" said Agelastes, "the distance of Zulichium from the speediest route to the sepulchre is so small that—"

"Worthy father," said the Countess, "we will, if it pleases you, hear your tale to an end, and then determine what we will do. We Norman ladies, descendants of the old Germans, claim a voice with our lords in the council which precedes the battle; nor has our assistance in the conflict been deemed altogether useless."

The tone in which this was spoken conveyed an awkward innuendo to the philosopher, who began to foresee that the guidance of the Norman knight would be more difficult than he had foreseen, while his consort remained by his side. He took up, therefore, his oratory on somewhat a lower key than before, and avoided those warm descriptions which had given such offence to the Countess Brenhilda.

"Sir Artavan de Hautlien, says the story, considered in what way he should accost the sleeping damsel, when it occurred to him in what manner the charm would be most likely to be reversed. I am in your judgment, fair lady, if he judged wrong in resolving that the method of his address should be a kiss upon the lips." The color of Brenhilda was somewhat heightened, but she did not deem the observation worthy of notice.

"Never had so innocent an action," continued the philosopher, "an effect more horrible. The delightful light of a summer evening was instantly changed into a strange lurid hue, which, infected with sulphur, seemed to breathe suffocation through the apartment. The rich hangings, and splendid furniture of the chamber, the very walls themselves, were changed into huge stones tossed together at random, like the inside of a wild beast's den, nor was the den without an inhabitant. The beautiful and innocent lips to which Artavan de Hautlien had approached his own, were now changed into the hideous and bizarre form, and bestial aspect of a fiery dragon. A moment she hovered, upon the wing, and it is said, had Sir Artavan found courage to repeat his salute three times, he would then have remained

master of all the wealth, and of the disunited princess. But the opportunity was lost, and the dragon, or the creature who seemed such, sailed out at a side window upon its broad pennons, uttering loud wails of disappointment."

Here ended the story of Agelastes. "The Princess," he said, "is still supposed to abide her doom in the Island of Zulichium, and several knights have undertaken the adventure; but I know not whether it was the fear of saluting the sleeping maiden, or that of approaching the dragon into which she was transformed, but so it is, the spell remains unachieved. I know the way and if you say the word, you may be to-morrow on the road to the castle of enchantment."

The Countess heard this proposal with the deepest anxiety, for she knew that she might, by opposition, determine her husband irrevocably upon following out the enterprise. She stood therefore with a timid and bashful look, strange in a person whose bearing was generally so dauntless, and prudently left it to the unflinching mind of Count Robert to form the resolution which should best please him.

"Brenhilda," he said, taking her hand, "fame and honor are dear to thy husband as ever they were to knight who buckled a brand upon his side. Thou hast done, perhaps, I may say, for me, what I might in vain have looked for from ladies of thy condition; and therefore thou mayst well expect a casting voice in such points of deliberation.—Why dost thou wander by the side of a foreign and unhealthy shore, instead of the banks of the lovely Seine?—Why dost thou wear a dress unusual to thy sex?—Why dost thou seek death, and think it little in comparison of shame?—Why? but that the Count of Paris may have a bride worthy of him.—Dost thou think that this affection is thrown away? No, by the saints! Thy knight repays it as he best ought, and sacrifices to thee every thought which thy affection may less than entirely approve!"

Poor Brenhilda, confused as she was by the various emotions with which she was agitated, now in vain endeavored to maintain the heroic deportment which her character as an Amazon required from her. She attempted to assume the proud and lofty look which was properly her own, but failing in the effort, she threw herself into the Count's arms, hung round his neck, and wept like a village maiden, whose true love is pressed for the wars. Her husband, a little ashamed, while he was much moved by this burst of affection in one to whose character it seemed an unusual attribute, was, at the same time, pleased and proud that he could have awakened an affection so genuine and so gentle in a soul so high-spirited and so unbending.

"Not thus," he said, "my Brenhilda! I would not have it thus, either for thine own sake or for mine. Do not let this wise old man suppose that thy heart is made of the malleable stuff which forms that of other maidens; and apologize to him, as may well become thee, for having

prevented my undertaking the adventure of Zulichium, which he recommends."

It was not easy for Brenhilda to recover herself, after having afforded so notable an instance how Nature can vindicate her rights, with whatever rigor she may have been disciplined and tyrannized over. With a look of ineffable affection, she disjoined herself from her husband, still keeping hold of his hand, and turning to the old man with a countenance in which the half-effaced tears were succeeded by smiles of pleasure and of modesty, she spoke to Agelastes as she would to a person whom she respected, and towards whom she had some offence to atone.—"Father," she said, respectfully, "be not angry with me that I should have been an obstacle to one of the best knights that ever spurred steed, undertaking the enterprise of thine enchanted Princess; but the truth is, that in our land, where knighthood and religion agree in permitting only one lady love, and one lady wife, we do not quite so willingly see our husbands run into danger—especially of that kind where lonely ladies are the parties relieved—and kisses are the ransom paid. I have as much confidence in my Robert's fidelity, as a lady can have in a loving knight, but still—"

"Lovely lady," said Agelastes, who, notwithstanding his highly artificial character, could not help being moved by the simple and sincere affection of the handsome young pair, "you have done no evil. The state of the Princess is no worse than it was, and there cannot be a doubt that the knight fated to relieve her, will appear at the destined period."

The Countess smiled sadly, and shook her head. "You do not know," she said, "how powerful is the aid of which I have unhappily deprived this unfortunate lady, by a jealousy which I now feel to have been alike paltry and unworthy; and, such is my regret, that I could find in my heart to retract my opposition to Count Robert's undertaking this adventure." She looked at her husband with some anxiety, as one that had made an offer she would not willingly see accepted, and did not recover her courage until he said, decidedly, "Brenhilda, that may not be."

"And why, then, may not Brenhilda herself take the adventure," continued the Countess, "since she can neither fear the charms of the Princess nor the terrors of the dragon?"

"Lady," said Agelastes, "the Princess must be awakened by the kiss of love, and not by that of friendship."

"A sufficient reason," said the Countess, smiling, "why a lady may not wish her lord to go forth upon an adventure of which the conditions are so regulated."

"Noble minstrel, or herald, or by whatever name this country calls you," said Count Robert, "accept a small remuneration for an hour pleasantly spent, though spent, unhappily, in vain. I should make some apology for the meanness of

my offering, but French knights, you may have occasion to know, are more full of fame than of wealth."

"Not for that, noble sir," replied Agelastes, "would I refuse your munificence; a besant from your worthy hand, or that of your noble minded lady, were centupled in its value, by the eminence of the persons from whom it came. I would hang it round my neck by a string of pearls, and when I came into the presence of knights and of ladies, I would proclaim that this addition to my achievement of armorial distinction, was bestowed by the renowned Count Robert of Paris, and his unequalled lady." The Knight and the Countess looked on each other, and the lady, taking from her finger a ring of pure gold, prayed the old man to accept of it, as a mark of her esteem and her husband's. "With one other condition," said the philosopher, "which I trust you will not find altogether unsatisfactory. I have, on the way to the city by the most pleasant road, a small kiosk, or hermitage, where I sometimes receive my friends, who, I venture to say, are among the most respectable personages of this empire. Two or three of these will probably honor my residence to-day, and partake of the provision it affords. Could I add to these the company of the noble Count and Countess of Paris, I should deem my poor habitation honored for ever."

"How say you, my noble wife?" said the Count. "The company of a minstrel befits the highest birth, honors the highest rank, and adds to the greatest achievements; and the invitation does us too much credit to be rejected."

"It grows somewhat late," said the Countess; "but we came not here to shun a sinking sun or a darkening sky, and I feel it my duty as well as my satisfaction, to place at the command of the good father every pleasure which it is in my power to offer to him, for having been the means of your neglecting his advice."

"The path is so short," said Agelastes, "that we had better keep our present mode of travelling, if the lady should not want the assistance of horses."

"No horses on my account," said the Lady Brenhilda. "My waiting-woman, Agatha, has what necessaries I may require; and, for the rest, no knight ever travelled so little embarrassed with baggage as my husband."

Agelastes, therefore, led the way through the deepening wood, which was freshened by the cooler breath of evening, and his guests accompanied him.