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LA PLACE DE GRUYÈRE

THE COUNTS OF GRUYÈRE



BY

MRS. REGINALD DE KOVEN

ILLUSTRATED

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**BIS SEPTEM SEACULA CURRENT
MOENIA FUNDAVIT BELLO FORTISSIMUS
HAEROS VANDALUS ATQUE SUO SIGNAVIT
NOMINE MUROS GRUS VIXIT AGNOMEN
COMITE DEDIT ADVENA PRIMO
RUBEA GRUEM VEXILLA AC SCUTI PILOSI SUSTENTENT
QUORUM EUTIS PARRIDA RUGIS AC ARMATA MANUS
VULSIS RADICIBUS ARAE EST
HUIC CELEBRIS SERVES ET LONGA PROPAGO NEPOTUM
DIVES OPUM OLIVES PIETA
VESTIS AURIS EXTITIT ET NOSTRIS
PER PLURIMA SAECULA TERRAS PRAEFUIT
GRUERIUS SEXTAE LEGIONIS VANDALORUM DUX**

ANNO 436

Behold now twice seven centuries.—That a Vandal hero bravest among warriors.—Founded this fortress.—This fortified city has since preserved the name of the Grue.—The stranger became the first count.—His descendants carried the Grue on their scarlet banners.—And on their hairy shields.—To the Vandal hero succeeded a long line of illustrious descendants.—Rich in fortune, rich in their piety.—These Counts won the order of the golden vest.—And for many centuries the posterity of Gruerius.—Chief of the sixteenth Vandal legion who lived in the year 436 governed our country.



PROLOGUE



n the edge of a green plain around which rise the first steps of the immense amphitheatre of the Alps, a little castled city enthroned on a solitary hill watches since a thousand years the eternal and surpassing spectacle.

Around its feet a river runs, a silver girdle bending northward between pastures green, while eastward over the towering azure heights the sunrise waves its flags of rose and gold.

In the dim hours of twilight or by a cloudy moonlight, the city pitched amid the drifting aerial heights seems built itself of air and cloud, evanescent and unreal.

By the fair light of noonday, sharp and clear upon its eminence, it is like a Dürer drawing, massed lines of crenelated bastions, sharp-pointed belfreys, and towered gateways completing a mediæval vignette ideal in composition. Strange as the distant vision seems to the traveler fresh from the rude and time-stained chalets of the mountains, still more surprising is the scene which greets his arrival by the precipitous road, past the double towered gateway, within the city walls. Expressly set it seems for a theatrical *décor* in its smiling gayety, its faultlessly pictorial effect. Every window in the blazoned houses is blossoming with brightest flowers, as for a perpetual fête. The voices of the people are soft with a strange Italianate patois, and the women at the fountain, the children at their play, the old men sunning themselves beside the deep carved doorways are seemingly living the happy holiday life which belongs to the picture. The one street in the city, opening widely in a long oval *place*, is bounded by stone houses fortified without and bearing suspended galleries for observation and defence, forming thus a continuous rampart along the whole extent of the hillside.

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At the eastern extremity of this enclosure beyond the slender belfrey of the Hotel de Ville and the ancient shrine where a great crucifix looks down upon the scene, a flagged pathway rises sharply under a tall clock tower within the enceinte of the castle set at the steep extremity of the ridge. There behind strong walls a terrace looks from a crenelated parapet over the descending sunset plains, a prospect as fair as any in all Italy. Within a second rampart, semi-circular in form, the castle with its interior court looks eastward and southward over the encircling valley with its winding river, up to the surrounding nether heights of the Bernese Oberland. Walls twelve feet in thickness tell the history of its ancient construction, and chambers cut in the massive stone foundations recall the rude life of the early knights and vassals who defended this *château-fort* from the Saracen invasion. Noble halls, later superimposed upon the earlier foundations, with stone benches flanking the walls and recessed windows overlooking the jousting court, evoke the glittering days of chivalry and the vision of the sovereign race of counts who here held their court.

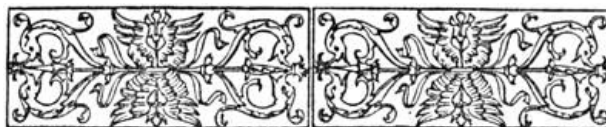
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Ten centuries have passed over this castle on the hill; six told the story of its sovereignty over the surrounding country, but unlike most of the châteaux of Switzerland it has been carefully restored and maintains its feudal character. The caparisoned steeds no longer gallop along the ancient road, the crested knights no longer break their lances in the jousting court; but in the wide street of the little city is heard a speech, and in the valleys and from the hillsides echo herdsmen's songs, which contain Latin and French words, Greek, Saracen and German, a patois holding in solution the long story of the past.

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THE COUNTS OF GRUYÈRE



CHAPTER I

ORIGIN OF THE PEOPLE



riply woven of the French, German and Italian races, the Swiss nation discovers in its Romand or French strain another triple weave of Celtic-Romand-Burgundian descent.

While the high mountainous regions of eastern Switzerland were early scaled and settled by the Germanic tribes, the western were still earlier inhabited by the ancient

Celtic-Helvetians and then civilized and cultivated by the most luxurious of Roman colonies. Resisting first and then happily mingling with their Roman conquerors, the Celtic people were transformed into a Romand race, similar in speech and origin to the French. In the heart of this Romand country was an ancient principality where the essential qualities of the beauty loving and imaginative races, Roman and Celtic, expressed themselves uniquely. A fountain of Celtic song and legend, a centre of chivalry and warlike power, this principality is known only to the outer world by the pastoral product which bears its name "Gruyère."

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Remarkable in the interest of the unbroken line of its valorous and lovable princes, and in the precious and enchanting race mixture of its brave, laughter-loving people, its supreme historical interest lies in its little recorded and astonishing political significance among the independent feudal principalities of Europe.

When the Teuton barbarians came to devastate the enchanting loveliness of the templed Roman garden which was Switzerland for three idyllic centuries, they stopped at last at the penultimate peaks of the Occidental Alps, at a certain region called *aux fenils (ad fines)*, where a glacial stream rushes across the narrow valley of the Griesbach, among the southern mountains of the Bernese Oberland. Thus western or Romand Switzerland preserves a character definitely apart from the eastern, and this barrier across the Bernese valley, unpassed for a thousand years, still divides the German from the Romand speaking peasantry. To the north and west lies Gruyère, greenest of pastoral countries, uniquely set in a ring of azure heights, where like a lost Provence, the Romand spirit has preserved its eternal youthfulness and charm. Greatly loved by all the Swiss, its annals piously preserved by ancient chroniclers, this country is German only in its eastern rocky portion; but where the castle stands and in all the wide valleys which open towards the setting sun, it is of purest Romand speech and character. Here ruled for six hundred years a sovereign line of counts whose history, a pastoral epic, is melodious with song and legend, and glowing with all the pageantry and chivalry of the middle ages. Although skirted by the great Roman roads, and flanked by outpost towers, Gruyère was never romanized, being settled only in its outlying plains by occasional Gallo-Roman villas, while the interior country, ringed by a barrier of almost inaccessible mountains, was left to the early Helvetian adventurers who had first penetrated its wild forests and its mountain fastnesses. Here, unaffected alike by Roman domination or Teuton destruction, they had set up the altars of their Druid faith and here preserved their ancient customs and their speech.

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Here also traveled the adventurous Greek merchants from old Massilia (Marseilles), leaving in their buried coins and in the Greek words of the Gruyère dialect the impress of their ancient visitation.

A country fit for mysterious rites, for the habitation of the nature deities of the Druid mythology, was Gruyère in those early days. The deep caverns, the "black" lakes, and the terrifying depths of the precipitous defiles through which the mountain streams rushed into marshy valleys, were frequented by wild beasts and birds, and haunted in the imagination of the people by fairies and evil spirits holding unholy commerce for the souls of men. Here until the Teuton invasion the early Celts lived unmolested, when some fugitives from the once smiling cities and the cultivated plains came to join them in the refuge of their mountain homes. Strange to their half-savage brothers were these softened and romanized Celts who had tended the olives and the vines on sunny lake sides, and who in earlier days had mingled in Dionysian revels with Roman maidens with curled locks and painted cheeks. Strange their tales of the white pagan temples, and all the glories of the imperial cities left smouldering in ashes after the Teuton hordes had worked their will. The arduous pioneer life of their predecessors and the task of clearing and cultivating their wild asylum among the mountains and the marshes was now their lot. Adopting slowly the altered speech of these later romanized inhabitants and converted to the Christian faith by Gallo-Roman priests, the indigenous inhabitants finally lost all memory of the teachings of their Druid bards and the firm belief in reincarnation which sent the Celtic warrior laughing to his death; but in the traditions of the peasantry, abounding with nature myths, sorcerers still haunt their mountain caves, fairies and May maidens still flutter about their crystal streams.

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THE CHÂTEAU

One more strain, that of the heroes of the Nibelungen, the blond Burgundian giants who had forced the Romans to share with them a portion of their conquered territories, was destined to add height and virile force to the Celto-Roman people of this country. Strangely differing from their ancient enemies the merciless Teutons, these mighty Burgundians, most human of all the vandal hords, in an epic of tragic grandeur rivaling the classic tales of mythology, for a century maintained an autonomous and mighty kingdom. Gentle as gigantic, indomitable in war, invading but not destroying, their greatest monarch, Gondebaud, who could exterminate his rival brothers, and enact a beneficent code of laws which forms the basis of the Gallic jurisprudence, was their protagonist and prototype. Beside his figure, looming in the mists of history, is Clothilde, his niece, the proselyting Christian queen, who fled in her ox cart from Geneva to the arms of Clovis the Merovingian, first king of France. Enthroned at Lyons, Gondebaud issued the laws which regulated the establishment of his people in their new domains, which spread over what was later the great French Duchy of Burgundy, the whole extent of occidental Switzerland and Savoy. "Like brothers," it is related by the Latin chroniclers, they mingled with the resident inhabitants, dividing lands and serfs by lot, marrying their daughters, and quickly adopting their language and their Christian faith.

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Thus the whole of Romand Switzerland was deeply impregnated with the Burgundian influence, assimilating its vigorous race type and ruled by its laws. Although the country later passed under the universal domination of Charlemagne, the character of the people was little affected by the distant rule of the great monarch, and when the Carolingian Empire fell apart and Rodolph I, of the second Burgundian line, crowned himself king in the monastery of St. Maurice, his subjects were of the same race and customs as those of his predecessors. Differing in blood from the early Burgundian rulers, these Rodolphian kings, allied to the Carolingian emperors and long governors of lower or Swiss Burgundy, ruled pacifically and under the beloved Rodolph II and his still better loved Queen Berthe, and their son Conrad, resisted the Saracen invasion and preserved for a hundred and fifty years the autonomy of their kingdom. Nobles with their serfs and freemen already divided the land, their prerogatives and vassalage long since established by the laws of Gondebaud. The Oberland, or Pays-d'en-Haut, Hoch Gau, or D'Ogo, in the German tongue, a country no longer wild but rich in fertile valleys and wooded mountain sides, was given to a Burgundian lord, under the title of King's Forester or Grand Gruyer; Count he was or Comes D'Ogo, first lord of the country afterwards called Gruyère. Although Burgundian, the subjects of Count Turimbert were of different races. In the country of Ogo, called Haute Gruyère, they were German, while in the lower northern plains, called Basse Gruyère, they were Celtic or Celto-Roman. Between these two divisions the mountain torrent of the Sarine rushes through a deep gorge called the Pas de la Tine. For many years the Gallo-Roman peasants feared to penetrate this terrifying barrier between the rising valleys and the frowning heights, until, according to a legend, a young adventurer broke his way through the primeval woods and the rocky depths of the gorge to find out-spread before him the fertile upper plateaux of the Pays-d'en-Haut.

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"It happened," so runs another legend, "that the Roman peasants who had passed the Pas de la Tine and led their herds along the course of the Sarine, wished to cut their way through the thick



CHAPTER II

INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH



Twenty lords of Gruyère made up the line which maintained a singularly kindly and paternal rule over the differing people of their pastoral kingdom; all of one race, and all but the three last in the direct descent from father to son. Six centuries they ruled, distinguished first for their inexhaustible love of life, their knightly valor and their fidelity to the Catholic faith. The first Count Turimbert, with his wife Avana, lived in the first castle belonging to the domain at Castrum in Ogo or Château d'Oex.

His was the time of good Queen Berthe, who, for defence against the Saracen invasion, built a long series of towers on height after height from Neuchatel to the borders of Lake Lemman, many of which, situated in the county of Gruyère, became the property of its ruling family. That Turimbert was of importance among the secular landholders of the tenth century is attested by his participation in the Plaid of St. Gervais, a tribunal famous as being one of the earliest on record, and held by the Seigneur de la Justice of Geneva. His exchange of lands with Bishop Bosen of Lausanne is also recorded in the first of a series of yellow parchments, which in monastic Latin narrate the succeeding incidents of the Gruyère sovereignty and tell the story of the long predominance of the church in Switzerland. Seven centuries before Turimbert, in the period of the Roman domination, a cloister had been founded at St. Maurice D'Agaune, near the great Rhone gateway of the Alps, in memory of the Theban legion who had preferred death to the abjuration of their Christian faith. Here, three centuries later, the converted Burgundian king, Sigismund, took refuge after the murder of his son, enlarging it into a vast monastery where five hundred monks, singing in relays from dawn to dawn in never ceasing psalmodies, implored heaven for pardon of his crime. In the seventh century came the missionary monks from Ireland, St. Columban and his successor, St. Gall, who built his hermitage on the site of the great mediæval centre of arts and learning which still bears his name. At the same time, St. Donat, son of the governor of lower Burgundy, and disciple of Columban, mounted the archiepiscopal throne at Besançon. In his honor the earliest church of the county of Gruyère was erected near the castle of Count Turimbert in the Pays-d'en-Haut. Under the influence of these powerful religious institutions, the country was cultivated and the people instructed, but under Rodolph III the second Burgundian kingdom rapidly approached its dissolution. Weakly subservient to the church, and dispossessing himself of his revenues to such an extent that he was forced to beg a small pittance for his daily necessities from his churchly despoilers, it was said of him that "*Onc ne fut roi comme ce roi.*" Ceding the whole of the province of Vaud, including part of the possessions of Count Turimbert, to the bishop of Lausanne, the already practically dispossessed monarch named the Emperor Henry II of Germany, as heir to his throne. And although Henry the II was unable to enter into this inheritance during the lifetime of Rodolph, the latter's nephew, the Emperor Conrad the Salique, assumed control of the kingdom which then was incorporated into the German Empire. Not without devastating wars and desperate opposition on the part of the heirs of the Rodolphian line was the country preserved to the German sovereign, and under his distant rule it became a prey to continuous dissensions between the bishops and the feudal lords.

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"Oh, King," appealed the prelates, "rise and hasten to our succour—Burgundia calls thee. These countries lately added to thy dominions are troubled by the absence of their lord. Thy people cry to thee, as the source of peace, desiring to refresh their sad eyes with the sight of their King."

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The answer to this appeal was the establishment of the Rectorate of Burgundy under the Count Rudolph of Rheinfelden and his successors, the Dukes of Zearingen, who founded in the borders of ancient Gruyère the two cities of Berne and Fribourg. Between these centres of the rising power of the bourgeoisie arose mutual dissensions and quarrels with the already hostile lords and bishops, and the country was more than ever the scene of wars innumerable.

Still holding the supreme power, the Church alone could bring the peace for which the country longed. At Romont, near the borders of Gruyère, Hughes, Bishop of Lausanne, invoking a great assembly of prelates, proclaimed the *Trêve de Dieu* before a throng of people carrying palm branches and crying "*Pax, Pax Domini.*" Thus in this corner of the world was adopted the law originating in Aquitaine, which prevailed over all Europe and which alone controlled in those strange times the violence and the pillage which was the permitted privilege of the robber bishops and the robber lords. Gruyère and its rulers reflected the influence of the all-powerful hierarchy, and Turimbert and his successors took their part in the great religious society

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extending over all Europe, where the conservation of faith was of supreme importance, and when men belonged more to the church than to their country.

The possession of the great monasteries surpassed those of the largest landholders, and Rome with its mighty prelates for the second time became the capital of the world. When Hildebrand the monk, mounting the papal throne as Gregory VII, excommunicated the German Emperor, Henry IV, he placed the imperial crown upon the head of none other than Rudolph of Rheinfelden, the governor of Transjurane Burgundy and of the province of Gruyère. After Henry, forced to submission, had scaled the icy heights of the Alps to prostrate himself before Hildebrand at Canossa, after Rudolph had been killed in battle by Henry's supporter Godfrey de Bouillon, Hildebrand's pupil and successor Urban II, journeying to Clermont in Cisjurane Burgundy, summoned all Europe in torrents of fiery eloquence to rise and deliver the Holy Land from the power of the Saracens. Unmarked in the churchly parchments which alone record the history of these times, were the successors of Turimbert; but in the period of the first Crusade, Guillaume I, of the succeeding and unbroken line of Gruyère counts, appears as the head of a numerous and powerful family preëminent for their loyalty to the church. Among the shining names of chivalry immortalized in the annals of the Holy wars are those of Guillaume, of his son Ulric, chanoine of the Church at Lausanne, and of his nephews Hughes and Turin.

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Not with Peter the Hermit, the hallucinated dwarf whose sobbing eloquence had led an innumerable motley host of unnamed peasants to certain disaster in the deserts of the East, went the hundred Gruyèrian soldiers led by Guillaume, but with the knights and priests of Romand Switzerland, the Burgundian French and Lombard nobles who swelled the fabled hosts of Godfrey de Bouillon. With gifts of lands to churches and to priories and with the blessing of the lord bishop of their county the Gruyère pilgrims, eager to battle for the holy cause, obeyed with ardor the cry of *Dieu le veut, Diex le volt*, and leaving their country, faced without faltering, dangers and distant lands and carried their scarlet banner with its silver crane, bravely among the bravest.

"The young bergères of Gruyère," so runs the chronicle, "barred the gates of the city to prevent their departure, by force the gates were burst, and the poor maidens wept as they listened to the standard-bearers cry, a hundred times repeated, *En Avant la Grue, S'agit d'aller, reviendra qui pourra.*" How wide is the ocean we must cross," they asked as they galloped down the valleys, "as wide as the lake we must pass when we go to pray to our Lady of Lausanne?"

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Tasso, the poet of the Crusades, so well appreciated the valor of the Swiss soldiers that he chose their leader for the honor of first scaling the walls of Jerusalem.

"Over the moat, on a sudden filled to the brim
With a thousand thrown faggots, and with rolled trees stout and slim,
Before all he ventured.
On helmet and buckler poured floods of sulphurous fire.
Yet scatheless he passed through the furnace of flame,
And with powerful hand throwing the ladder high over the wall, mounted with
pride."

Again when the Christians were in want of wood for the catapults and rolling towers with which to scale and batter down resisting walls, Tasso leads this same undaunted servant of de Bouillon into the forest enchanted by the Satanic ally of the Musselmans.

"Like all soldiers I must challenge fate—
Surprises, fears and phantoms know I not.
Floods and roaring monsters, the terrors
Of the common herd affright not me!
The last realm of hell I would invade,
Descending fearless, sword in hand."

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Such, according to Tasso, was the spirit of the Swiss Crusaders. Did the banner of Gruyère float with those of Tancred, of Robert of Normandy and of all the flower of the French noblesse over the walls of Jerusalem delivered? No record tells of it. Many of the hundred "beaux Gruèriens" doubtless perished on the holy soil. A fraction only of the host which in multitudes like the stars and desert sands invaded the east, assembled for the assault upon the Holy City. Famine, thirst and pestilence decimated the great armies upon which fell the united cohorts of the oriental powers. Blasphemy and prostitution, the refuge of despair, alternated in the camp of the Crusaders with fanatic visions of visiting archangels, of armed and shining knights descending the slopes of heaven in their defence. From such a phantasmagoria, surpassing in the historical records all the poetic imaginations of its famous chroniclers, only a few returned to tell the tale. Among these fortunate pilgrims was Guillaume of Gruyère, who, once more safe among his home mountains, ended his life with lavish gifts to the holy church of which he was so preëminent a servant. The priory of Rougemont founded by him upon his return, the church of St. Nicholas in the same region, near the borders of the Griesbach, still exist in testimony of his devotion and preserve the memory of his name and reign. Exemplifying by his deeds the dominating religious exaltation of his time he was allied by marriage with a family equally illustrious for its loyalty to the church. His wife, Agathe de Glane, was sister to Pierre and Philippe de Glane, protectors and tutors of the young count of Upper Burgundy, who through his mother's marriage to the duke of Zearingen shared with the latter the rule of the united provinces under the sovereignty of the German Empire. Son of a father done traitorously to death by his own vassals, the young count of

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Burgundy was himself as basely murdered while at prayer in the church of Payerne by these same vassals, and with him the brothers-in-law of Guillaume de Gruyère, Pierre and Philippe de Glane. Guillaume de Glane, son and nephew of the murdered protectors of their young suzerain, profoundly moved by the tragedy which had befallen his house, determined to renounce the world and commanding that not one stone should remain of his great castle of Glane dedicated these same stones to the enlargement of the monastery of Hauterive, where, taking the garb of a monk, he finished the remainder of his days. Such was the origin of the power of the great Cistercian monastery which still stands at the junction of the rivers Glane and Sarine in the county of Fribourg. Not content with this unequalled act of piety and renunciation, the insatiable Bishop of Lausanne exacted the cession of every château and every rood of land belonging to the family of de Glane, part of which—through the marriage of Agnes to Count Rodolphe I, and of Juliane to Guillaume of the cadet branch of Gruyère—had extended the domain of the latter house. Undeterred by the greed of the bishop, Rodolphe piously preserved the traditions of his predecessors Raimond and Guillaume II, who had founded the monasteries of Humilimont and Hautcret, by continued gifts to the latter as well as to Hauterive. Yet the robber bishop implacably demanded another act of renunciation from Count Rodolphe, one of serious significance to the future of his house, by which he authorized the transference of the market of the county from Gruyère to the neighboring city of Bulle which belonged to the bishop. The city of Bulle thereafter became the centre of exchange of the county, while Gruyère, although now the *chef-lieu* of the reigning counts, was permanently deprived of all possibility of progress or enlargement. Thus the city of Bulle, busy and flourishing even to this day, has kept its place in the growing commercial importance of the county, while Gruyère is still the little feudal city of the middle ages, precious historically as it is picturesque, but crystalized in a permanent immobility. Forty marks, scarcely more than the worth of the mess of pottage for which Esau sold his heritage, was the price accepted by Count Rodolphe for the commercial existence of Gruyère.

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GATEWAY

Rodolphe's far more virile successors, Pierre I and Rodolphe II and III, attempted with the support of the people to defy the power of the bishop, and in disregard of the act of their predecessor, to keep up the marché at Gruyère. But the power which could excommunicate an emperor did not hesitate to launch the same formidable curse upon the princes of Gruyère and they were forced to yield. The foundation of the church of St. Théodule at Gruyère and of the rich and venerated convent of the Part Dieu by his daughter-in-law, Guillemette de Grandson (widow of his eldest son Pierre) attested the unabated devotion of the Gruyère house to the Catholic religion.

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CHAPTER III

SOVEREIGNTY OF THE HOUSE OF SAVOY



In the middle of the thirteenth century the counts of Gruyère—who had so long been oppressed by the grasping prelates of the Church—came within the orbit of another power, that of the rising house of Savoy.

Fortifying their influence by alliances with the kingdoms of Europe, extending its domains over occidental Switzerland and far into Italy, the counts of Savoy were

already in a position to dispute the power of the bishops, when Count Pierre took his place at the head of his house. Although he had occupied for two years the bishopric of Lausanne, which had so long been inimical to the counts of Gruyère, the spiritual overlordship of the country of Vaud did not satisfy the genius or the ambition of the ablest personage in a family which numbered five reigning queens, and who, himself was marquis in Italy, earl of Richmond in England and uncle and adviser to King Henry III of England and of his brother the Emperor Richard. Although he lived by preference in England where his lightest word could control the tumults of the populace, the wisdom of Count Pierre's choice of delegates greatly extended his Savoyard domain. "Proud, firm and terrible as a lion," "the little Charlemagne" as his contemporaries called him, was wise also and affable with his subjects. Brilliant in intellect, master of happy and courteous speech, he fascinated where he controlled. The princely air of pride and power, seen in the portraits of Pierre de Savoy, the blazing dark eyes and mobile mouth of his Gallo-Roman ancestors, present the truly majestic semblance of the founder of a dynasty and the eminently sympathetic overlord of the Gallo-Roman counts of Gruyère. Such was the great ruler and law-giver who easily supplanting his niece as head of the house of Savoy, reduced to a loyal vassalage all the nobles of Roman Switzerland. Not without opposition from the bishops and feudal lords nor without jealousy from the German emperor did Count Pierre arrive at a height where he saw only heaven above and his mountainous domain! "From Italy through the Valais," so a chronicler of his house relates, "at the rumor that a rival German governor of Vaud was besieging his castle of Chillon, he reached the heights above Lake Lemman. There he surveyed the banners of the noble army, and the luxurious tents in which they took their ease before his castle. Hiding his soldiers at Villeneuve, alone and unobserved he rowed to Chillon, where from the great tower he watched the young nobles as they danced and reveled in jeweled velvets and shining armor, with the maidens of the lake-side. Then at a given signal, he emerged to lead his waiting army to the complete rout of the surprised besiegers."

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Among these holiday warriors was Rodolphe III of Gruyère, who with his comrades—eighty-four barons, seigneurs, chevaliers, ecuyers and nobles of the country—were taken to the castle of Chillon where, according to the chronical: "*Comté Pierre ne les traita pas comme prisonniers mais les festoya honorablement. Moul fut grande la despoilie et moul grande le butin.*"

After a year's imprisonment Count Rodolphe was ransomed by his people, and first among all the Romand knights swore fealty to his new overlord at the château of Yverdun. Growing in favor with Pierre de Savoy and his successors, the counts of Gruyère became their trusted courtiers and counselors, and through many vicissitudes and many wars merited the encomium of Switzerland's first historian, that the "Age of chivalry produced no braver soldiers than these counts, their suzerain had no more devoted vassals."

The submission of Rodolphe of Gruyère having been confirmed in formal treaty, his grandson and successor Count Pierre the Third, loyally supported during a long and brilliant reign the banners of his overlord against the rising power of Rudolph of Hapsburg. When Berne, allied with Savoy, was besieged by the Hapsburg army, Count Pierre generously supplied money to the beleaguered city and in the final battle when the city fell, it was a Jean de Gruyère who snatched the torn and bloodstained Bernese banner from the hands of the enemy. When asked the name of the hero who had saved the flag, his comrades answered "*c'est le preux de Gruyère,*" and to this day the Bernese family of Gruyère bear the title thus bravely won by their progenitor.

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The role of mediator, filled with distinction by his successors, was first assigned to Count Pierre III, who as avoyer of Fribourg at that time allied with Austria, was empowered to arbitrate the differences which arose between the houses of Savoy and Hapsburg.

Always loyal to his suzerain, Count Pierre served under the Savoy banner in the war with Hughes de Faucigny, dauphin of the Viennois, and only after the marriage of Catherine (daughter of Amédée V of Savoy) to the redoubtable Leopold of Austria had sealed a truce between the rival powers which divided and devastated the country, did he consent to join the Austrian army in Italy under Duke Leopold himself.

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In the brilliant cortège which followed Duke Leopold to Italy, Count Pierre, accompanied by a number of his relatives, was notable by the command of a hundred horsemen and a force of archers. Mounted on horses, armored like their riders and covered with emblazoned velvets, such a force of cavalry was the strongest as well as the most imposing instrument of warfare in this time, when the knights, willing only to conquer by personal bravery, despised all arms except their lances and their swords. Contested by the warring Guelphs and Ghibellines, the city of Milan and the palace of the newly crowned German emperor himself was with difficulty protected by the imperial guard. The soldiers of Duke Leopold, arriving without the city walls, under a hail of stones and arrows, broke through the outer barricades and burst the city gates, and then Gruyère again, at the head of his horsemen dashed through, bringing release to the imprisoned emperor and victory to the Austrian arms.

Not long was the alliance between the houses of Hapsburg and Savoy to endure. The rising powers of the cities, still more the prowess of the mountaineers, the Waldstetten, who soon after Duke Leopold's Italian campaign had vanquished him and his shining warriors at the famous battle of Morgarten, resisted with growing success the Savoyard and the Hapsburg sovereignty, and divided in ever changing alliances the fermenting elements of the tottering feudal society. The horn of the Alps, sounding the tocsin over the rocky defile of the Swiss Thermopylae, announced the approaching end of the feudal rule of the middle ages and the dawn of liberty in Switzerland.

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Although at first a willing ally of Pierre de Savoy, the city of Berne, greatly enlarging its possessions by conquests and alliances and growing rapidly in independence and republican enlightenment, warred incessantly with the nobles of the surrounding country and with particular virulence attacked the counts of Gruyère. So serious a menace did the proud city become to all the knights of Romand Switzerland, that they were driven to attempt its humiliation. All the great lords of Helvetia west and east joined the brave alliance. The banners of Hapsburg and Savoy were united in the determined onslaught upon the powerful city, and a large force from Fribourg, eager to aid in bringing her rival low, swelled the forces of the nobles in a glittering army of three thousand knights, who with their attendant vassals gayly and confidently practised feats of arms before the little fortified city of Laupen while awaiting the arrival of the Bernois.

Among them, Count Pierre de Gruyère, refusing an enormous indemnity for losses at the hands of the Bernois and as ever faithful to his order and to Savoy, took his place with other nobles of his house. Warriors each one by training and tradition, not yet had any fear of defeat chilled their ardor or their courage, nor had they learned the wisdom of concealing their threatened attack upon the growing republic. The citizens of Berne were given ample time to send a messenger to the victorious mountaineers of Morgarten, and this was their reply: "Not like the birds are we who fly from a storm-stricken tree. In trouble best is friendship known. Tell the Bernois we are friendly and will send them aid."

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The June sun was setting over the plateau when the nobles desisting from their sports drew up their cavalry, supported by a chosen band of infantry from Fribourg. Retreating before the advance of the latter, the Waldstetten, in the forefront of the Bernese army, sought, as was their custom, an advantageous position for attack. From the heights above the city, with their terrifying war cries, and with the same furious onslaught which had overwhelmed Duke Leopold's glorious horsemen at Morgarten, they fell upon the nobles in a bloody *melée* in which horses, men and valets perished in a hopeless confusion. Three Gruyère knights were left lifeless on the battlefield and eighty-four others, who thus paid the price of their temerity in thinking to stem the already formidable confederation of citizens and free people in Switzerland. Undeterred by this defeat and continually menaced by the incursions of the Bernois, Count Pierre de Gruyère successfully held them in check, and, no less wise as ruler than he was valorous in war, enlarged the power and extent of his domain by political and matrimonial alliances with the great Romand families of Blonay, Grandson and Oron, as well as with the warlike La Tour Chatillons of the Valais, and with the powerful Wissenbourgs and the semi-royal Hapsburg-Kibourgs of eastern Switzerland. Leaving to his nephews, "Perrod" and "Jeannod," the seigneuries of Vanel and Montsalvens which they had inherited from their father, he shared with them the rule of the people.

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The "three of Gruyère" whose acts are recorded in the dry and unpoetic parchments of the time, were united in a paternal and pacific rule under which people and country reached a legendary height of arcadian prosperity.

First to deserve the name so cherished in the legends of Gruyère of "pastoral king," Count Pierre III saw his herds increase and valleys and mountain sides blossom into fabulous fertility. His was the golden age of the herdsmen the "Armaillis," of whom it was related in symbolic legend that, "their cows were so gigantic and milk so abundant that it overflowed the borders of the ponds into which they poured it." By boat they skimmed the cream in these vast basins, and one day a "*beau berger*," busy with the skimming, was upset in his skiff by a sudden squall and drowned. The young lads and maidens sought long and vainly for his body and wore mourning for his tragic fate. Discovered only several days later, when amid floods of boiling cream they whipped the butter into a mound high as a tower, his body was buried in a great cavern in the golden butter, filled full by the bees with honey rays wide as a city's gates. "Where," asks a living Romand writer, "is the eclogue of Virgil or Theocritus to surpass the beauty of this legend?"

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Dying full of years and honors, Count Pierre left the care of his beloved people and his happy country to his nephews the cherished Perrod and Jeannod, who even in the churchly parchments are known by the nicknames affectionately given them by their uncle. Together they ruled, although Pierre IV, the eldest and ablest, bore the title of Lord of Gruyère. Always by the side of his uncle in all his wars and on the bloody plain of Laupen, Perrod had already won his title of Chevalier, and did not lack occasion to further prove his courage in a new war with the Bernois who in one of their many incursions had advanced far among the upper Gruyère mountains, near the twin châteaux of Laubeck and Mannenburg, lately acquired by the Gruyère house. Accustomed to success and confident of an easy victory, the Bernois scattered about the valleys, leaving the flag to their leader with a few men-at-arms. But the Gruyèriens, wary and prepared, were already massed upon the heights over the defile of Laubeck-Stalden, whence they fell suddenly upon the Banneret of Berne, who, thinking only to save the flag, cast it far behind him among his few followers, and meeting alone the attack of the enemy, died faithful to his duty and his honor. Bitterly lamenting, the Bernois retreated with their flag, while Count Perrod and his victorious band, returning to the castle, celebrated famously with songs and jests, in a brave company of knights and ladies, their triumph over their redoubtable enemies. Not so gayly did the banners of Gruyère return homeward in the next contest with Berne, for, now allied with Fribourg and determined to avenge their late defeat, they advanced in great numbers and with fire and sword ravaged the country of the count of Gruyère and attacked the châteaux of his allies, the lords of Everdes and Corbières. Already the château of Everdes was burning, the Ogo bridge was lost, and while Corbières was hotly besieged by the men of Fribourg, the Bernois advancing within sight of the castle of Gruyère to attack the outpost Tour de Trême, encountered

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at the Pré de Chénes a small band of Gruyériens. Here, until the arrival of the main force of Count Pierre, two heroes, justly celebrated and sung in all the annals of Gruyère, alone behind a barrier of corpses withstood the onslaught of the Bernois. Two men of Villars sous Mont were they: Ulric Bras le Fer, and the brave Clarimboz. So strong the arms with which they wielded the great halberds of the time, that the handles, clotted with the blood of their foes were glued to their clenched fists, so that it was necessary to bathe them long in warm water to detach them. Although the Bernois burnt the Tour de Trême and captured sixty of the defendants, Count Pierre and his soldiers forced them to retire, and the castle and city of Gruyère were saved. Strong men were these knights and vassals of Gruyère to withstand and gayly to forget the bloody assaults of their determined foes, for in the intervals of war alarms they passed a holiday life of jest and song. Within the circle of their starlit heights, they nightly watched the brandon lights on peak and hilltop; and while the sentinels in every tower scanned the wide country for a sign of the approaching foe, within they made merry in the banqueting hall. In the long summer afternoons, tourneys in the jousting court, or tribunals held in the same green enclosure alternated with generous feasts out-spread on the castle terrace for the enjoyment of the people. Often Count Pierre would mount his horse and ride among the mountains where he administered justice before the doors of the chalets, adopting the orphans who were brought to him, giving dots to the daughters of the poor, and sometimes taking part in the wrestling contests of the herdsmen—their brother in sport—their father in misfortune. During all the years of the fourteenth century the feudal society of Switzerland, although so fiercely attacked by the rising bourgeoisie power, blazed like the leaves in autumn in a passing October glory with the snows of winter seemingly still afar. At Chambéry, the court of Amédée VII of Savoy, called Le Comté Vert from the emerald color of the velvet in which he and his courtiers were clad, the brother rulers of Gruyère took part in all the fêtes and tourneys. Present when the great order of the Annonciata was instituted, and again, when the emperor of Germany was received at banquets served by knights on horseback, they sat at tables where fountains of wine sprinkled their rubies over gilded viands in vessels of wrought gold.

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But at Gruyère the young brother rulers held a little court which for intimate gayety and charm surpassed all others. Gallic in its love of beauty, loving life and all its loveliest expressions, it was a court of dance and song—the heart of hearts of Gruyère, itself the centre and the very definition of Romand Switzerland. Often intermarried, the Burgundian counts preserved in its perfection the blond beauty of their ancient race, surpassing in athletic skill the strongest of their subjects, and with the same bonhomie with which their conquering ancestors had mingled with their vassals, they exemplified in their kindly rule the Burgundian device: "*Tout par l'amour, rien par la force.*" The people doubly Celt in origin, added to the Celtic ardor the quick imagination, the gift of playing lightly with life, and a high and passionate idealism expressing itself in an unequalled and valorous devotion to their rulers, together with an arcadian union of simplicity and finesse, the individual mark of their sunny pastoral life.

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The château on its green hill was a fit centre of the closely mingled life of the rulers and their people. Rebuilt on its ancient rude foundations under the reign of Pierre de Savoy, it possessed the great towers and sentinel tourelles, the moat, drawbridge, courtyards, terrace and arsenal of the time, but in its enchanting situation, its intimate, inviting charm, it quite uniquely expressed the sense and love of beauty of its unknown artist architect.

Within were the high hooded fireplaces of the time, blazoned with the silver crane on scarlet of the Gruyère arms, armorial windows and walls brilliantly painted with lozenges or squares of blue and scarlet. In the great Hall of the Chevaliers, Count Pierre and his brother Jeannod held their revels among a familiar company of their cousins of Blonay, Oron, Montsalvens and Vanel, *preux chevaliers* all, assembled at Gruyère after long days at the chase. There, also, were the daughters of the house, brave in jewels and brocades, and answering to the names of Agnelette and Margot, Luquette and Elinode, who took their part in the fair company dancing and singing through the long summer nights. Or Chalamala, last and most famous of the Gruyère jesters, would preside over a *Conseil de folie*, with his jingling bells and nodding peacock plumes, recounting with jest and rhyme the legends of the ancient heroes of Gruyère. Only Count Perrod was forbidden to wear his spurs, having one day torn the pied stockings of the fool. "Shall I marry the great lady of La Tour Chatillon?" he had asked his merry counselor. "If I were lord of Gruyère," was the reply, "I would not give up my fair mistress for that ill-featured dame."

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Devoted Catholics as were the Gruyère people, their religion was a source of comfort and protection, but even more a reason for rejoicing and for the innumerable fêtes in honor of their favorite saints, for which the little city was almost continually decorated. Passion plays and mysteries culminated at Easter in a wild carnival week in which priests and people sang and danced together in masks and parti-color from dawn to starlight. In the fête called *Jeu des Rois*, a parade in costume was led by a crowned king in scarlet robes, accompanied by his fool, by his knights and his minstrels. Music and dancing and feats of arms were followed by a religious ceremony, and at night-fall after the play, the king's banquet, where white-bearded magi offered him gifts of gold and silver goblets, of frankincense and myrrh, finished the revel.



LACE-MAKERS

Or again on the first Sunday in May all would assemble for the sport called *Château d'Amour* of ancient Celtic origin. In the midst of a green field or in the square before the *Hotel de Ville*, a wooden fortress was erected, surrounded by a little moat and with high towers and a donjon. Maidens and more maidens, smiling and flower-crowned and with white arms outstretched, poured down a rain of arrows and wooden lances from the battlements, or oftener pelted their lovers the assailants with showers of roses. Then at a given signal, in a sudden escalade, the besiegers broke over the walls, each to receive a kiss and a rose as prize of victory. Then besiegers and besieged together burned the fortress, and the day ended with bacchic libations and with dances. Meeting by moonlight nights to sing their love songs and rhymed legends in the city square, the Gruyère people better loved their dances, the long Celtic Korols (or Coraules), when, singing in chorus in wild winding farandoles, they went dancing over vales and hills, day in and day out until human strength could bear no more. Such was the famous dance quaintly recounted in ancient French by a Gruyère chronicler. [Pg 39]

"It happened one day that the Count de Gruyère returning to his castle, found thereby a great merry-making of young lads and maidens dancing in Koraule. The same Count, greatly loving of such sport, forthwith took the hand of the loveliest of the maidens and joined the company. Whereupon, no one tiring, they proceeded, dancing always, through the hard-by village of Enney up to Château D'Oex in the Pays-d'en-Haut, and wonderful was it to see the people in all the villages they passed joining in that joyous band. Seven hundred were they when they finished, having danced continuously for three days over the mountain leagues between Gruyère and Château D'Oex, and great was the fame of Count Perrod and his dancing in this *Grande Coquille*." [Pg 40]

Such was life in this idyllic country, the beloved *Gréville* of the melodious Romand speech, where "the houses are high with roofs leaning far towards the ground, where the plums are so ripe they fall with the breeze, where there are oats and tressed wheat, cows black and white and rich cheese, black goats, too, and horned oxen—and beautiful maids who would wed."

Nourished on rich milk smelling of the aromatic grasses of their pastures, white and pink as the apples of their orchards; light-footed and vigorous from their mountain life, their dancing and their athletic sports, the Gruyère people developed a beauty celebrated even in the grave pages of the historians. From their hearts warm with the sun, their fancy fed by the beauty of their ravishing country, issued songs witty and sad, and always melodious with their soft Italian vocables, a literature in Romand patois. Thus the golden age of chivalry, rhyming harmoniously with the golden age of the herdsmen, in the blue circle of the Gruyère heights, grew to its noon day. [Pg 41]

Then, suddenly as a tempest gathering across the sun pours quick destruction over a parterre of flowers, black horror swallowed up Gruyère. The plague called the Black Death, born in the Levant and rushing like a destroying flood with terrifying rapidity over the borders of Switzerland, penetrated even into the mountain-encircled country of Count Pierre. The devils and evil spirits of the caverns and the forests seemed now in the imagination of the Celtic people to be the sinister authors of this mysterious and devastating curse. The youths and maidens, no longer dancing to rhymed choruses of love and joy, swung wildly in dances of death among the abandoned corpses.

Sprung from the carnival dances, where the masked Death forcing the terrified maidens to his embrace led them to the cemeteries to celebrate the memory of the dead, the priest countenanced these masks as religious rites and taught the superstitious people that their gifts would ease the souls of those sent suddenly unshrived to hell. With solemn phrase and syncopated notes, the *danse macabre* wound through the darkened street around the shadowed crucifix up to the chapel door, where in hideous masks, and dancing still, the hallucinated people, cast their gold before the altar. "And as the coins, tin, tin, fell in the basins, so, ha, ha, hi, hi! the poor souls laugh in purgatory." So, taught by the priests and prelates ignorant as themselves, the sadly altered Gruyère people incessantly danced and prayed, sometimes giving themselves to the [Pg 42]

strange lascivious customs to which the whole country was abandoned, and sometimes joining in the cruel persecution of the Jews, accused of poisoning their fountains and their streams. Nothing was lacking in the reign of terror which overwhelmed Gruyère in the last years of Count Pierre's reign. Fires and earthquakes succeeded to the plague, and in the midst of their terrors their implacable enemies, the Bernois, attacked them.

"O! Misfortune, and three times misfortune, beware how you touch Berne!" the refrain of an old song too often forgotten by Count Pierre, was once more exemplified in the revenge which the Bernois wreaked upon the Gruyère châteaux of Laubeck and Mannenburg, for the thefts of their herds.

On St. Etienne's day, in the dark December of 1349, the avenging Bernois took the field, and a thousand strong assembled before the walls of the twin fortresses. Reeling and shouting to the sound of fifes and drums, in a gross satire of the dance of the fanatic flagellants, they whipped themselves into a furious rage and then attacked the walls. Both donjons, although strongly fortified, fell and were destroyed. Unappeased, the Bernois were advancing towards Gruyère when their cupidity was tempted by offers of rich indemnities by Count Pierre's messengers, with whom, together with a crowd of prisoners, they returned to Berne. Rage and despair as black as this the darkest winter of his reign, possessed Count Pierre, but milder counsels spoken by the gentle voices of his countess and the two sainted Dames de Vaud, Isabelle de Savoie-Chalons and her daughter prevailed. Like a trio of angels singing over the deathlike darkness and terror of the time, they brought peace where there was no peace; and with the august assistance of the reigning prince of Savoy and the bishop of Lausanne established another Trêve de Dieu between the warring cities of Berne and Fribourg, and truce between Berne and the country of Gruyère. At last, where fire and sword, where the power of rival cities and proud knights allied, had failed, the love and high influence of these noble ladies of the middle age most wonderfully succeeded. Memorable for its beneficent and permanent effects, the treaty was unique for its high and unselfish spirit of conciliation, and the final words of exhortation which stilled the waters tossed by two centuries of storm have the sacred accent of heavenly inspiration.

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"The parties in this present treaty shall in all sincerity forget all bitterness, all offence and all resentment. Secret hate shall give place to the old love, which, God helping, shall endure forever."

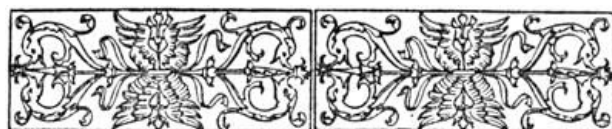
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Although by this pact Count Pierre's private wars were ended, the old warrior, unaffrighted by the anathema of excommunication, launched by Pope Clement VI against the foes of the archbishop of Sion, joined the barons who invaded the Valais at the instance of his father-in-law the lord of La Tour Chatillon. But this was his last war and during the remaining twenty years of his reign he and his people lived together, happily free at last from danger of invasion or attack. Dying at eighty, Count Pierre ended a reign, shared peacefully with his uncle and brother, of over sixty years. Strong and tenacious of character, hospitable and courageous as all his acts declare, he was the exemplar of all the traits which have united to express the typical Gruyère prince, and under him his pastoral domain blossomed into its climax of idyllic prosperity. Loyal knight and brilliant comrade of his suzerain, compassionate and kindly master, by his high unflagging gayety, his frank and affectionate dealings with his adoring subjects, he was the very soul and leader of the astonishing *épopée* of revel and of song which has made his reign celebrated in the history of Gruyère.

His brother-ruler Jeannod, as the years rolled by, became water to his wine, as gravely sad as Pierre was gay. Three wives preceded him to the grave, all childless, and after a fourth barren marriage he bestowed the greater part of his inheritance upon the church, and when a few years after his brother's death he was carried sumptuously in gold and silken sheets to his prepared resting place in the cathedral of Lausanne, a multitude of sacred lamps burning perpetually in shrines and monasteries over all the land celebrated his pious memory and his disappointments.

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CHAPTER IV

FOREIGN WARS



Rodolphe IV, eldest son of Count Pierre, although sole inheritor of the title and authority of count, had two younger brothers Pierre and Jean, who perpetuated the strongly contrasted traits of the elder Pierre and Jean. But in the second generation the rôles were changed. Pierre was the religious brother, and became prior of Rougemont, while Jean, even more eager for martial glory than his father, went far from home to join the English armies of Edward III and the Black Prince in their wars with Charles V of France. Count Rodolphe, surpassing his predecessors in the brilliancy of his alliances, married two grand-daughters of Savoy, and through his second countess, Marguerite

de Grandson, was related to the distinguished family whose soldiers following Pierre de Savoy to England there established a noble line of Grandisson. These Grandissons were intimately related with the kings of England through the Savoyard Queen Eleanor. The glorious progress of the English armies, the fame of Crécy, the capture of the King of France resounding through all Europe, inflamed with chivalric ardor, young Othon de Grandson, and in his company Jean de Gruyère, to set out in the spring of 1372 for England. Warmly received at Windsor, they were present at the fête of St. George, and assigned a place in the naval forces of Lord Pembroke, sailing shortly after with his fleet for the western shores of France. Bravely and confidently enough the English set out for the scene of their earlier and easy conquests, but the Black Prince, stricken with mortal disease, no longer led their armies; Spain under Pedro the Cruel was allied with the already disaffected English possessions in Brittany, and when Pembroke sailed up to the harbor of La Rochelle he was attacked by an overwhelmingly superior Spanish fleet.

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Recounted immortally in the glowing pages of Froissart, is the story of Pembroke's hopeless battle with the Spanish fleet. Confiding in the skill and valor of his soldiers and bestowing the title of chevalier on every man among them in the last hour before the combat, he gave the signal to advance. It was dawn and the tide flowed full, when, with a favoring wind, the forty great Spanish vessels, bearing the floating pennons of Castille, advanced to the sound of fife and drum in battle line upon the English fleet. Arrived at close quarters, and grappling Pembroke's ships with chains and iron hooks, they poured down from their tall towers a rain of stones and lead upon the lower and exposed decks of the English, who with swords and spears sustained the fierce attack all day until darkness fell. With the twenty-two newly-made knights who valiantly defended Pembroke's ship was Jean de Gruyère, and when at last, grappled by four great galleons, they were boarded and every resisting arm subdued, he was taken prisoner with Pembroke. On another vessel, fighting as bravely, Othon de Grandson was also taken prisoner and with Jean de Gruyère was transported in captivity to Spain. Dearly paying for their ambition and their new titles, they were furnished in recompense for their valor with lands in Spain by a Burgundian noble, and by industrious commercial enterprise paying their ransom and their debts, after two years regained their liberty and their homes.

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Rodolphe IV, reigning count of Gruyère, displayed in his long career no quality worthy of his generous and high spirited father, no trace of the conciliatory wisdom or devoted piety of his mother. Calculating in his marriages, he was unjust and even dishonest with his people, whom he forced to pay twice over for their exemptions and their privileges. Still dishonestly withholding the signed and purchased acknowledgement of their new privileges from his subjects, he was surprised alone at night in the castle by a doughty peasant, who forced the paper from his unwilling hands and threw it out of the window to a waiting confederate. Left in charge of the Savoyard troops who had driven the invading Viscounti from the Valais, and entrusted with the guardianship of the châteaux and prisoners won by the Savoyard arms, he exacted and obtained large sums for his services, although those services consisted in a complete surprise and defeat at the hands of the sturdy inhabitants of the Valais, wherein, except for the heroic defence of the very subjects he had so oppressed, he would himself have perished. From the benefits of the peace which was ultimately established in the Valais, these same loyal subjects were excluded.

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How greatly Count Rodolphe was lacking in the noble and humanitarian qualities which had so generally characterized the counts of Gruyère, was shown in his dealings with his young relative Othon de Grandson. The comrade of his brother, Jean de Gruyère, in his French campaigns and in his long captivity in Spain, Othon de Grandson was later doubly related to Count Rodolphe, as brother-in-law of his first wife Marguerite d'Alamandi, and as nephew of his second countess, Marguerite de Grandson. The tragic hero of an unjust drama of prosecution which divided in opposing camps the nobles of Romand Switzerland, Othon de Grandson was falsely accused of complicity in the poisoning of Count Amédée VII of Savoy, and although declared innocent by a royal French tribunal, was again implacably accused by his rival in love, Count Estavayer, on his return to his estates. Calling God to witness that his accuser lied, he consented to defend and prove his innocence in a trial of arms, where, in the presence of his suzerain and of his council and knights assembled, he fell mortally wounded at the feet of his opponent. No effort was made by Count Rodolphe to defend his relative, while Rodolphe le Jeune was not only an unprotesting witness of his undeserved and tragic fate, but the purchaser with his father's assistance of the confiscated Grandson estates. Again, although selling the newly acquired châteaux of Oron and Palézieux to increase their revenues, the two Rodolphes, in total disregard of the rights of the new owners, attempted to retake them by force of arms, and except for the immediate intervention of the count of Savoy, would have plunged the newly pacified country into a general war.

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An enchanting legend regarding the first wife of Count Rodolphe illuminates the dismal story of his inglorious reign. Marguerite d'Alamandi has been confused in the tradition with Marguerite de Grandson, the second wife of Rodolphe. It is Marguerite d'Alamandi, and not the other Marguerite who is the heroine of the tale which has been elaborated into a moving little drama by a poet pastor of the eighteenth century, and which beautifully preserves the customs and the atmosphere of that distant time.

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Countess Marguerite of Gruyère, so runs the story, was so sadly afflicted that she had borne no heir, that she had no longer any joy in her fair castle, no comfort with her beloved lord. Vainly journeying to distant shrines, as vainly invoking the aid of sorcerers and magicians, she went one day, clad as one of her poor subjects, to pray in the chapel at the foot of the Gruyère hill. There, as the November day was closing, poor Jean the cripple, well known through the country, came

also to tell his beads. Very simple and kindly was poor Jean, with always the same blessing for those who gave him food or mocked him with cruel jeers. Perceiving in the shadow a poor woman sadly weeping, he gave her all his day's begging, a piece of black bread with a morsel of coarse cheese, repeating his usual blessing, "May God and our Lady grant thee all thy noble heart desires." That evening, again clad in her jewels and brocades, the Countess Marguerite, at the close of a feast laid for her husband's comrades after a day at the chase, offered each knight a bit of this bread and cheese, with a moving story of poor Jean and a prayer that all should wish what her heart so long and vainly had desired. Nine months later, so concludes the tale, a fair son and heir was born to the happy dame. On the walls of the Hall of the Chevaliers, among the painted legends of the house, poor Jean and Countess Marguerite live in pictured memory; and a room next the great kitchen of the château, called by the cripple's name, has been pointed out for many generations as the spot where, fed on the fat of the land, he enjoyed the bounty of the countess during the remainder of his days.

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Rodolphe le Jeune, the long awaited heir of this story, did not live to inherit the rule of the domain whose fame his father had so sadly stained. Brilliantly educated at the court of Savoy, and later the councilor of the countess regent, he emulated his uncle's heroic example and joined the English armies under Buckingham in France, there winning praise and the offer of the chevalier's accolade. But he failed to fulfil the promise of his youth and died prematurely, leaving his young son Antoine, the last hope of the family, to succeed to his grandfather. Count Antoine's overlord, the youthful count of Savoy, confided the education of his vassal and protégé to a venerable prelate of Lausanne; but heeding nothing of his pious instructions the young ruler wasted his revenues in extravagant hospitality, lived gaily with his mistresses, and celebrated the weddings of his two sisters with famous feasting and generous marriage gifts. Unlike his predecessors, who shared the rule of Gruyère with brothers or sons, he reigned alone, and gave himself wholly to the ambition of maintaining the pleasure-loving reputation of his house. More than ever under Count Antoine was Gruyère a court of love. The numerous and beautiful children of his mistresses filled the castle with their youthful gayety and charm, and his two splendid sons, François and Jean, proudly acknowledged by their father and legitimized with the sanction of the pope, took their place among the young nobles of the country as heirs of the Gruyère possessions. Again the gay Coraules of flower-crowned shepherds and maids wound over the valleys and hills. Again minstrels and chroniclers recorded and sang the lovely traditions of their pastoral life.

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"Gruyère, sweet country, fresh and verdant Gruyère
Did thy children imagine how happy they were?
Did thy shepherds know they lived an idyll?
Had they read Theocrite, had they heard of Virgil?
No, no! as in gardens the lilac and rose
Grow in innocent beauty, their days drew to a
close."

So in a fond ecstasy of recollection, sings a Romand poet, and thus in the famous lines of Uhland is related the Coraule of Count Antoine.

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The Count of Gruyère

Before his high manor, the Count of Gruyère,
One morning in Maytime looked over the land.
Rocky peaks, rose and gold, with the dawning were fair,
In the valleys night still held command.

"Oh! Mountains! you call to your pastures so green,
Where the shepherds and maids wander free,
And while often, unmoved, your smiles I have seen,
Ah! to-day 'tis with you I would be."

Then afloat on the breeze, there came to his ear,
Sweet pipes faintly blowing—still distant the sounds—
As across the deep valley, each with his dear,
Came the shepherds, dancing their rounds.

And now on the green sward they danced and they sang,
In their holiday gowns, a pretty parterre,
With oft sounding echoes the castle walls rang,
To the joy of the Count of Gruyère.

Then slim as a lily, a beauteous maid,
Took the Count by the hand to join the gay throng.
"And now you're our captive, sweet master," she said,
"And our leader in dancing and song."

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Then, the Count at the head, away they all went,
A-singing and dancing, through forest and dell.
O'er valleys and hillsides, with force all unspent,
Till the sun set and starry night fell.

The first day fled fast, and the second dawned fair,
The third was declining, when over the hills
Quick lightning flashed whitely—the Count was not there!
"Has he vanished?" they asked of the rills.

The black storm clouds have burst, the streams are like blood
By the red lightning's glare, and dark night is rent,
Oh, look! where our lost one fights hard with the flood,
Until a branch saves him, pale and spent.

"The mountains which drew me with smiles to their heights,
With thunders have kept me, their lover, at bay.
Their streams have engulfed me, not these the delights
I dreamed of, dancing the hours away.

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"Farewell, ye green Alps! youths and maidens so gay,
Farewell! happy days when a shepherd was I,
Stern fates I have questioned have answered me nay,
So I leave ye, with smiles and a sigh.

"My poor heart's still burning, the dance tempts me yet,
So ask me no longer, my lily, my belle!
For you, love and frolic, but I must forget,
Take me back, then, my frowning castel."

No attacks from feudal lords or from rival cities threatened Gruyère during the reign of Count Antoine, which came to its end in undisturbed tranquility. The kindly and *complaisant* father, brother and lover essayed as he grew in years to correct some of the follies of his youth, and according to the opinion of Gruyère's principal historian married the mother of the children he had already legitimized. A pious and lamenting widower, he instituted many masses and anniversaries for the repose of the soul of his wife, the Countess Jeanne de Noyer of blessed memory; and erecting a chapel to his patron St. Antoine in the parochial church of Gruyère caused to be painted therein the kneeling portraits of himself and his countess, in perpetual testimony of his devotion to the rites of matrimony and religion.



FORTIFIED HOUSES—NORTH WALL

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CHAPTER V

THE BURGUNDIAN WARS (Count François I)



he inheritance of the estates Count Antoine had so diminished by his improvident generosity was bitterly contested by the husbands of his two sisters, but the duke of Savoy did not hesitate to recognize the rights of his legitimized descendants, and François I of Gruyère and his brother Jean of Montsalvens entered without difficulty into the enjoyment of their inheritances. Count François, flower of the race of

pastoral kings, presents one more historical example of the brilliant intellect, of the abounding vitality and extraordinary beauty with which nature—unheeding law—seems unwisely to sanction the overwhelming preference and inclination of unmarried lovers. A celebrated chronicler of Zurich who had seen the famous personage whom the historians describe as "the handsomest noble in Romand Switzerland," records in Latin how greatly he exceeded in his noble proportions and mighty stature the majority of mankind, and spoke also of his armor, fit for giants, which was long preserved in the château of Gruyère.

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Becoming in his youth the favorite companion and support of Amédeé IX, during his early years in Italy, he was entrusted by that gentle ruler, when he acceded to the ducal throne of Savoy, with every important office in his domain. Governor and Bailli of Vaud, "conseiller" and "chambellan" of the court, he was chatelain of Moudon and Faucigny, military governor of the great fortress of Montbéliard; and finally, as maréchal of Savoy, became the general-in-chief of all his forces. When Amédeé, resigning his flute playing and his many charities, returned to Italy and abandoned his throne to the Duchess Yolande—worthy sister of Louis the XI of France—François de Gruyère was still the principal support of the throne. The virtual governor by reason of his judicial and military administration of the whole duchy of Savoy, Count François of Gruyère did not neglect to continue and to strengthen the amicable relations of his house with Fribourg. Winning prizes in its tournaments, taking part in all its fêtes and often dwelling in the imposing château which he had erected within its gates, he became a personage of the utmost importance and influence with the city authorities, and persuaded them to renounce their alliance with the dukes of Austria and swear allegiance to Savoy. In the triumphal entry which he made therein, on the occasion of the formal signing of its vassalage to its new suzerain, his splendid appearance as he advanced mounted and in armor, followed by the bishop of Lausanne, the court of justice and all the authorities of Fribourg, is recorded in the annals of the city. Equally respected at Berne, he indefatigably labored with the proud and stiffnecked council of its citizens until they also consented to form an alliance with Savoy. But although frequently residing at Fribourg or at the ducal court of Chambéry, and absent for the most part in the administration of his multifarious offices, he did not forget Gruyère, where he wisely and economically regulated the finances, increased and improved the herds, and effectually restrained the people in their habitual depredations upon the possessions of Berne and Fribourg.

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But Switzerland, the battlefield of so many warring powers, was now to become the scene of a European drama, of rival principalities and potentates avid of world control—a family tragedy of the related rulers of France, Germany, Burgundy and Savoy. By his delegated rule of the latter country, François de Gruyère, although playing his part only in the prologue, took his place beside the great figures of the Emperor Ferdinand of Germany, Louis XI of France, the Duchess Yolande and their magnificent cousin Charles the Bold of Burgundy. Sent by his father, Charles VII of France, at the head of the redoubtable Armagnacs, to help the German emperor to subdue the Confederated Cantons, the dauphin Louis XI had such a taste of the quality of the Swiss soldier as he was never afterwards to forget, when, at the battle of St. Jacques, fighting as heroes never fought before, snatching the arrows from their bleeding wounds, battling to the last, fourteen hundred Swiss despatched eight thousand French and Austrians with eleven hundred of their horses. Such soldiers Louis XI preferred as allies rather than antagonists and, when he succeeded to the throne made haste to attach them to his cause. He was wiser in this than his sister Yolande, who assured of the precious alliance with the leading cities of the Swiss Confederates, lately so ably negotiated by the count of Gruyère, paid less attention to preserving their friendship, than to her ambitious designs upon the vast territories and untold wealth of Burgundy. These territories she dreamed of annexing to Savoy through a marriage with Marie, daughter and heiress of Duke Charles and her young son Philibert, and for this reason took sides with the duke against France and her treacherous brother. Taking Hannibal and Alexander as his models, the duke of Burgundy, already ruler of the Flemish provinces and the richest potentate in Europe, dreamed of a kingdom which should extend from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean and as far as the borders of the Rhine. With the alliance of the German emperor, he saw the possibility of a still further extension of his power, and for this reason promised his daughter to the heir of the empire, Maximilian. With the passing of her hopes for this coveted marriage alliance, the Duchess Yolande was content to maintain her alliance with Duke Charles, and to preserve her regency under his protection and support, little dreaming of the swift and terrible destruction which awaited him in the shadow of the Alps.

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That destruction stealthily prepared by all the arts at the command of the most malevolently skilful monarch who ever wore a crown, was not at the outset so lightly defied by the great duke of Burgundy, who had no mind to alienate the country of Romand Switzerland, which had originally formed a part of his own domain, and was still allied to its divided half by a common language and centuries of amicable commercial relations. Supported by the Duchess Yolande, he was still more closely allied with his brother-in-law, the able Jacques de Savoy, who was count of Romont and ruler of the whole Savoyard country of Vaud. An early comrade of Duke Charles, he had been appointed maréchal of his Flemish provinces, and by this office maintained the close relations between Romand Switzerland and Burgundy. But Louis devilishly and implacably planning his rival cousin's ruin, sowed dissension between the confederated cities and their lately acknowledged suzerain the duchess of Savoy. Determined to attach to himself the indomitable Swiss soldiers, he bought with pensions and unlimited promises the alliance of Berne and Fribourg and the associated cantons of German Switzerland.

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Divided between French and German-speaking inhabitants, the French citizens in the two cities who were loyal to Savoy and sympathetic with their Burgundian cousins, were outwitted by

Louis' agent, his former page Nicholas de Diesbach. In October of the year 1474, the adherents of Louis in Berne had so prevailed that war was formally declared against Burgundy by the confederates, and in November before the fortress of Héricourt, Louis' brother-in-law the Archduke Sigismund of Austria, with the assistance of the Bernois, inflicted the first bloody defeat upon Duke Charles. Messengers were then sent by Charles to Berne to treat for peace but with no result, and two months later the Bernois, who had already seized a Savoy fortress in the Jura, took possession of three châteaux in the Pays de Vaud belonging to Count Romont. Justly indignant at this invasion of the Savoy territory, the duchess sent the Count de Gruyère to Berne to remonstrate against the infraction of the still existing alliance with her house. A strange reception was accorded him. No penitence for the unwarranted attack upon the Savoy fortresses, but an insolent ultimatum, declaring instant war unless she immediately recalled Count Romont from his command in the Flemish provinces, and herself declared war upon Duke Charles. No more Lombard soldiers of Duke Charles were to be permitted to pass through the Bernese territories, but Swiss soldiers unarmed or armed should pass at their discretion. Equally unsuccessful with Fribourg, the duchess, wondering "whence came the evil wind which had blown upon the two cities," heeded no one of the commands which had been issued by Berne, and, as double-faced though far less skilful than her brother, still continued to negotiate with the two cities, still permitted the Lombard troops to pass. The result was that the Bernois addressed themselves directly to the count of Gruyère, whom they had already forbidden to take sides with Burgundy, holding him personally responsible for the passage of the Lombards and threatening instant invasion of his estates. Count François now addressed his friends of Fribourg, asserting that he had forbidden the passage of the troops and so far influenced the city authorities that they sent their advocate to their allies of Berne, asking to be released from bearing arms against Duke Charles.

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But this was the utmost that he could accomplish for his hesitating and untrustworthy mistress, and with the refusal of Berne to release Fribourg from assisting them in their war against Duke Charles, he permitted his subjects to form new treaties with the cities by which, though refusing to bear arms against Savoy, they were bound to join in the war against Burgundy.

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That the Duchess Yolande could not fail to suffer in the defeat of her allies was no less plain to her than to her general, and threatened with reprisals, seeing the storm gather about his head, Count François, sick of heart and of body, retired to his château. There, fortunate in that he was spared the necessity of openly bearing arms against the duchy he had so long and ably governed, he died in the very moment of the outbreak of the impending conflict.

The most illustrious of the sovereigns who presided over the destinies of Gruyère, François I has left an imperishable memory and bore a unique role in the history of the fifteenth century in Switzerland. By a personal force and ability surpassing any of the nobles of his time, he justified the confidence of the suzerains he successively served. Everything possible was accomplished under his administration for the duchy of Savoy, torn between such powers as Burgundy and France. Gloved in velvet, the hand of François was of iron, but a rare judgment and discretion characterized him, so that whether as supreme judge, presiding as his suzerain's delegate over the tribunals of Fribourg, or as general holding the Savoy fortresses and the Savoy armies in readiness for defence, he supported the reign of law and justice in the land, and so long as he lived succeeded in keeping the Savoy rulers on their ducal throne. Never had Gruyère enjoyed such a rule, and greatly did it redound to his credit that his little pastoral domain was preserved in growing prosperity and independence between the threatening and ambitious republics of Berne and Fribourg. Even in the days of his brilliant youth when he brought his Italian bride, the noble Bonne da Costa, from among the ladies of the Piemontaise court of Savoy, to share with him the pleasures of his charming little domain, he showed how strong a defender he could be of its liberties and possessions. For when threatened by the Fribourgeois he sent them such a message, declaring that war if they wished it should be waged with "sword and fire," as sufficed effectually to calm the turbulent disturbers of the peace, and induce the city authorities to the pacific relations which thereafter were established. Again when the succession of a prince of Savoy was contested for the bishopric of Lausanne, he superbly cut short the deliberations of the council of prelates, saying, "Why bargain thus? Whether they wish it or not, he shall be bishop."

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The Savoy possessions suffered no curtailment during his administration, and no flower fell from the Gruyère crown while he so splendidly wore it, but many liberties harmonious with the growing republicanism of Switzerland were voluntarily granted to his beloved subjects, who inconsolably lamented their loss when the noble features and towering form of their incomparable ruler were shut forever from mortal sight in the church under the Gruyère hill.

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CHAPTER VI

THE BURGUNDIAN WARS (Count Louis)



among the many benefits with which Count François' ability and sagacity had enriched his inherited estates were the acquisition of the seigneuries of Grandcour and Aigremont, and the repurchase of the beautiful castles of Oron and Aubonne. The two latter residences were assigned during his life to his two sons Louis and François, Louis being early established at Aubonne, and François becoming seigneur of Oron.

Louis, worthy successor of his father, passed at Aubonne by the shores of lake Lemane a youth of peace and happiness. Writing from thence to his young wife Claude de Seyssel, a daughter of an illustrious knight of Savoy, Louis showed in the following intimate little letter, the charming nature he had inherited from his parents.

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Ma Mie,

I recommend myself to thee. I have thy letter sent by Gachet, and I think that my wish to see thee is as great as thine to see me, but I must still delay a little. Ma Mie, I recommend to thee the little one, my horse and all the household. Recommend me to our good Aunt Aigremont, to her sister and to M. Aigremont and the nurse, to the maid and Perrisont. Ma Mie, please God, to give thee a good and long life and all thy heart desires.

Written at Aubonne, the morrow of St. Catherine's day.

Louis de Gruyère,
All thine.

A Ma Mie.

The joy of this happy household, of kind relatives and devoted servants, was soon broken by the early death of the child, their first-born son, Georges, who was taken from his parents six years before their accession to the rule and responsibilities of their estates. The birth of two other children, François and a daughter Helène, had consoled them, and it was a truly "*joyeuse entrée*" which they made on a beautiful July Sunday in the year 1475 to the square before the Gruyère church, formally to take possession of their domain according to the ancient custom of their predecessors. The herald crying out the summons of the count, his subjects, who had collected from towns and villages and valleys, raised their hands and swore fidelity. Count Louis, with his hand on the holy book, promised to protect them; and the standard-bearer, waving the silver crane, declared that their flag should lead them against all their foes. Three months only were to pass before this banner took the field, for the storm clouds approaching from the neighboring kingdoms of Burgundy and France were thundering now over Switzerland, and the bitter rivalries of Duke Charles and his cousin of France had now reached the moment of collision on Helvetian soil. Fortified by a renewal of his alliance with the German emperor, the duke of Burgundy, eager to chastise the Confederates who had dared to defy his imperial ally and who had humiliated him at Héricourt, prepared to invade Switzerland. But Louis, the *diabolus ex machina*, who had secretly fostered the discord between Burgundy and the Confederates, hastily signed a nine-years' truce with Charles, and remarking with his usual sardonic smile that his "fair cousin did not know his foes," left him and his sister to the tender mercies of the enemies he had arrayed against them. A clause in the treaty which preserved Louis from all participation in the impending conflict, stipulated that Savoy and the Confederates should be included in the peace, provided that they committed no single act of depredation or hostility for a period of three months. Secretly subsidized by Louis with ample funds to prosecute the war, the Confederates immediately sought a pretext for the attack upon the possessions of Savoy, and found one ready to their hand in the confiscation by Count Romont of the celebrated contraband load of German sheepskins carried illegally through his country by some Bernese carters. Calling to their aid the inhabitants of the Valais, who had long resented the suzerainty of Savoy, they prepared to march against the duchess and Count Romont. The frightened duchess now again attempted to negotiate with this strong combination, when the news of Duke Charles' advance with a splendid army dissipated her fears, and she openly declared for Burgundy and sent her forces to join those of Charles. Another cause involving the count of Gruyère precipitated the internal quarrels of Savoy and the Confederates. Count Romont, incited by the jealousy of the family of de Vergy, which (through their alliance with the sisters of Count Antoine de Gruyère, had disputed the inheritance of his legitimized successor François) pillaged and captured the Gruyère châteaux of Oron, Aubonne and Palézieux, and Duke Charles sent a force of Burgundian and Savoyard soldiers to invade Gruyère itself. Calling his friends the Fribourgeois to his side, Count Louis met and conquered this army, capturing a banner which is still preserved in the church at Lessoc. No further hesitation was thereafter possible for the ruler of Gruyère, who was thus compelled to take sides against the duchess if he wished to preserve his country from dismemberment and the cruel and ferocious devastation which the Confederates were now inflicting upon the beautiful country of Romand Switzerland, and particularly upon the country of Vaud, the apanage of Duke Charles' maréchal, Count Romont. For, fully supplied with funds by Louis, nothing could arrest the German inhabitants of Fribourg and Berne, who, in a three-weeks' campaign of murder, violence and pillage, utterly devastated and conquered the above provinces, burning the châteaux, decapitating their defenders and soiling the reputation of the Swiss soldier by inexcusable acts of cupidity and ferocity. Never was so venal and brutal a war waged at the will of a foreign and detestably traitorous king, and the coming of the great Duke Charles was awaited by all the inhabitants of the Romand country as a welcome deliverance from the hated Bernois. Postponing his Italian campaign, Duke Charles, deaf to his advisers and eager to chastise the cruel depredations of the "insolent cowherds" he so despised, started from Nancy

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with his magnificent army in midwinter of the year 1476 as for a brief pleasure excursion, and laid siege to Grandson which had been captured by the Bernois. After a stubborn resistance the Bernois garrison, promised pardon by a venal German volunteer of the Burgundian cause, surrendered only to suffer the same cruel fate which they had dealt to the defenders of the Savoy fortresses. But now flocking to the aid of their confederates came the unconquerable victors of the Austrian dukes, the Waldstetten; and the horn of the Alps with the same fatal clarion led the mountaineers from the heights above Grandson to their old victory over the nobles, and to the surprising defeat of such an army of wealth and kingly power as the world had not seen since Xerxes. Massed in his jeweled tents and golden chapel were the treasures of the richest potentate in all Europe; harnesses and habiliments of gold and velvet, tapestries and gemmed crowns and orders, ropes of pearls, rubies and diamonds (which still glorify the tiaras of the pope and emperors)—all these were sold for a few sous or were trampled in the snow by the ignorant shepherds and cowherds of the Alps. After such an unimaginable tragedy, Duke Charles, like a beaten child, weeping with rage and sick with despair, at last roused himself to send with the consent of the Duchess Yolande a deputation to treat with the Confederates; and this deputation was sent to Count Louis of Gruyère. Announcing this extraordinary event to the authorities at Fribourg, he wrote: "It is true that I received last Saturday a letter from M. de Viry, with a sauf-conduit, to take me to Vauruz, to talk of peace. When asked what authority I had to act for you, Gentlemen of Fribourg, I replied that I had none whatsoever. I said, moreover, that I could not engage to approach you without the written consent of M. de Bourgogne, but that I would, with this guarantee, work body and soul in the matter. These gentlemen assured me on their honor that they would not have spoken without his consent, but I answered that trusting them in all else, I would have nothing further to do with their propositions without this writing from the Duke. Whereupon, it was agreed that M. de Viry, who was to dine with Madame (the Duchess Yolande) to-day at Lausanne, would send me news by this Tuesday or Wednesday."

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THE CITY ON THE HILL

Repeating in this communication the report that Duke Charles had recovered from his illness and would be within a mile of Fribourg in a few days, Count Louis added that a trusted agent of his own had been sent to the duke's camp and had reported that he was still ill, that his artillery was in poor condition and that some of his supporters had deserted him. Ill as he was, Duke Charles, hastily collecting a new army to avenge his defeat and too proud to confide to paper his real desire for peace, refused the condition of Count Louis, sending a haughty reply that "he was not accustomed to make advances to his foes, that he was, nevertheless, disposed particularly to make terms with Fribourg but not with its confederates." Thus the pride which was the origin of all his woes caused Duke Charles to reject the mediator who would have worked with "soul and body" for his welfare, and thus vanished the fair prospect of peace between Burgundy and the Confederates. Although the latter had been victorious at Grandson, the country captured in their three-weeks' campaign had in a still shorter time been recaptured by the Savoyards, and a strong party in Romand Switzerland was opposed to them. At this juncture, the German emperor, twice foresworn, deserted their ally the Archduke Sigismund, and the Bernois, alarmed for the safety of their city, hastily invoked the promised aid of Louis XI. No answer came from their perfidious ally and the Swiss Confederates, alone at last, were left to defend their own country and their freedom. Emperor and king alike were absent, all their machinations finished, and although on the memorable day of Morat, Savoy was pitted against its own cities, and the Confederates against their Burgundian cousins in as unnatural and unnecessary a conflict as ever divided ancient friends, the Swiss soldiers then immortally testified to their patriotism and their valor.

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Three months had passed since Grandson and Duke Charles had succeeded in assembling a new army—less in numbers than that which had there been annihilated—a motley force of Savoyards and discontented Italian mercenaries ready to desert his cause, but containing three thousand English under Somerset who were eager to fight with the enemy of France. The duke, still ill and half insane with fury and the determination to avenge his defeat, was in no condition easily to accomplish that revenge. He was determined to let no further time elapse, therefore he

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assembled these forces and established his fortified camp within a mile of the little city of Morat, held by a Bernese garrison. Magnificently fighting before the great breaches in the defending walls, the Bernese held the city during ten long days, giving time for their confederates to assemble behind the hills which concealed their approach from the Burgundian camp. Six thousand more men of Berne were joined by the Waldstetten mountaineers, the German troops of Archduke Sigismund, one hundred horse and six hundred foot from Gruyère, "all men of great stature, athletic force and indomitable courage;" and, lastly, by the men of Zurich, who had marched day and night to swell this army of 24,000 which were to meet a like number of Burgundians. On the 22nd day of June, the anniversary of the death of the ten thousand martyrs who had fallen at Laupen, their descendants prepared with masses and with prayers to avenge their death. It was a day of pelting rain, and when the Burgundians, advancing to the attack, had waited six hours under the downpour for any sign of an approaching foe, they retired to their camp with soaked powder and loosened bow-strings at the very moment when the clouds dispersed and the sudden sunshine illuminated the serried pikes of the Swiss as they advanced in unexpected numbers over the crest of the hills. Duke Charles had retired to his tent and was surprised at table by a messenger announcing the imminent attack of the enemy. He was compelled to don his armor on the battlefield itself where he took command of his confused ill-arranged forces, fighting beside the English soldiers under Somerset in the thick of the battle as it raged about the green hedge and little moat which divided the two armies. Against them was Duke René, battling with the Swiss to regain his lost Lorraine, and Louis of Gruyère with his brave soldiers. Many times the Swiss halberdiers were driven back under the fire of the Burgundian artillery, as many times the Burgundian cavalry charged with brilliant success, and a hope of regaining his lost honor began to smile upon Duke Charles, when a terrible clamor arose from the very midst of his camp. Again the horn of the Alps, the loud appalling roar of the "Bull of Uri," the "Cow of Unterwalden," which had overwhelmed in panic terror the Austrian knights at Sempach and Morgarten and which the Burgundians themselves had heard at Grandson, fell upon their ears; and quickly following the crash of their own guns which had been captured and turned upon themselves by their own adversaries, the mountaineers of the Waldstetten. At the hedge, in the very centre of the conflict, Duke Charles and Somerset still desperately encouraged their men to a hopeless resistance. Here in the midst of the carnage was Duke René, leaping from his fallen horse and fighting by the side of Count Louis under the scarlet banner of Gruyère; here fell Somerset and here fell at last the great banner of Burgundy in the arms of its dying defender.

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Soon the Burgundians were completely surrounded by the rear-guard of the Swiss, and by the Morat garrison, and Duke Charles breaking his way through his beaten and disorganized army with a force of three thousand cavalry, succeeded in making his escape. Red was the water of the little lake where, in a mad retreat, the Burgundians were drowned in thousands; red was the battlefield where, after all hope was gone, a still greater number were massacred in cold blood by the implacable Swiss. "Cruel as Morat" was the saying which, passing into common speech, commemorated for centuries this unforgotten conflict.

Ill-prepared to meet the united and well-nigh unconquerable Swiss as was Duke Charles, the irremediable defeat which he suffered in this celebrated battle might have been averted. But like a predestined victim of the gods, driven mad by pride, and surrounded by rumors of the desertion of his supporters, he had most unhappily chosen the only Savoyard prince who was unalterably faithful to him, for his distrust, and had forbidden Count Romont and his strong army of nine thousand men to take part in the conflict. Thus the able general and the fresh, unbroken force which might have saved the day watched from a neighboring hill the the annihilation of the Burgundian army. Retiring at last from his post of observation when he saw the great banner fall, Count Romont offered to cover the retreat of the duke, who, still refusing his aid although deserted by all but a dozen of his guard, fled madly across country, taking refuge at last at Morges. The fleeing remnant of his army was pursued by the Lorraine and Gruyère cavalry to Avenches, Count Romont and his Savoyards alone escaping the general destruction; while Count Louis of Gruyère, still riding triumphantly at the head of his horsemen, as far as Lausanne, laid that city under contribution. The appetite of the Bernois was by no means appeased by the great spoils of the Burgundian army, and in spite of the injunction of Louis the XI, who did not intend to lose the jurisdiction of Savoy, they again took the field, capturing Payerne, burning Surpierre and Lucens; while the château of Romont, besieged by their allies of Fribourg and defended gallantly to the last by Count Romont himself, fell also. At Lausanne, the rage and cupidity of the Bernois knew no restraint, and the city and cathedral were sacked remorselessly, thus bringing to an end an utterly unwarranted campaign of wanton destruction.

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Duchess Yolande, who had hastened to the relief of Duke Charles, was also so suspected by her defeated ally that he caused her to be arrested by his maître d'hôtel and some brutal Italian soldiers and cast into the Burgundian fortress of Rouvres, whence, finally convinced that her brother was the most powerful as well as the most friendly of her foes, she appealed to him for deliverance. Brought by his agents to France after three months' imprisonment, Louis summoned her to his presence at Plessis-les-Tours: "Madame la Bourguignonne," he said with his evil smile, "you are welcome." "I am a good French woman," replied his sister, "and ready to obey the will of your Majesty."

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Whether, as has been recorded, Louis really loved his sister, who was almost as able and far more attractive than himself, he kept her in strict imprisonment until she signed a paper of perpetual fidelity to him, and then he sent her back to Savoy and reestablished her on her ducal throne. The prince bishop of Geneva was even more eager than his sister-in-law to desert Duke

Charles, and fearing that his city would suffer the fate of Lausanne, offered to assist the Bernois in invading Burgundy, there to complete the duke's destruction; whereupon the Bernois at the price of an enormous indemnity consented to spare Geneva, and to cease all further conquests in the Pays de Vaud. They also agreed, under the repeated commands of King Louis to send their deputies to a convention of the ambassadors of all the powers to meet at Fribourg in July, 1476. A great and imposing company were these ambassadors, who from France and Austria, Savoy, and the confederated cities and cantons of Switzerland met to treat of the long needed peace. Among them were Duke René of Lorraine and Count Louis of Gruyère, who together with a representative of Archduke Sigismund, were chosen as arbitrators to decide the terms of the proposed treaty. Acting for Savoy, the count of Gruyère, who only by *force majeure* had sided with its foes, now ably and happily proved his real fidelity to its interests, providing for the restoration of all its possessions in the Pays de Vaud. At a second conference at Annecy, when the alliance between the Confederates and Savoy was amicably regulated, he was also present, receiving from the Genevan delegates rich donations for his invaluable services. For Duke Charles, also Count Louis was as before willing to negotiate a peace with Fribourg, but when a second deputation of the same messengers whom the duke had before despatched to him, was again unable to furnish the written authority he required, he was once more unable to mediate on the duke's behalf. But when his friend and co-arbitrator, Duke René of Lorraine, appealed for assistance to the Swiss to repel Duke Charles' final attack upon his duchy, no answer was forthcoming from Gruyère, and among the German-Swiss confederates at whose hands Duke Charles suffered his cruel death before the walls of Nancy, Count Louis' soldiers had no part. Small benefit was destined to accrue, as the history of Europe unrolled through the succeeding years, from the fall of the house of Burgundy. For while Louis XI by his evil plotting had enlarged his kingdom, by obliterating the barrier of Burgundy between France and Austria he had at the same time made way for centuries of wars. "Here," said the 15th Louis before the tomb of the last duke of Burgundy, "is the cradle of all our wars." As for Switzerland, the system of mercenary service inaugurated by Louis debased its honor and divided its sons, who, fighting in the opposing armies of Europe, delayed for many years the development and the independence of their country. For a few years only, Savoy and Romand Switzerland enjoyed peace. Duchess Yolande, although still threatened by the Savoy princes, was sustained upon the throne by her brother who in this one instance was faithful to his promises. She reëstablished the customs of the ducal court and organized plays and festivities; and surrounding herself with a train of musicians, with the soothing sounds of flutes and harps, attempted to forget the fierce trials and tumults of her reign. But her spirit and her strength were broken, and, succumbing to an early death, she left her young son Philibert to succeed to the duchy under the governorship of the Count de la Chambre, who had been chosen by King Louis. The influence of this agent, however, became too great for the designing king who intended to preserve his jurisdiction over Savoy. He, therefore, instigated a revolt in the Piemontaise provinces of the duchy with the connivance of its ruler the Savoyard prince, Count Philippe de la Bresse. Realizing the necessity at once to control this revolt, which favored the never slumbering desires of the Count de la Bresse to grasp the control of Savoy, the Count de la Chambre, accompanied by the Count de Gruyère and his brother, journeyed to Piémont. The Count de la Bresse, on the arrival of these representatives of his nephew, caused the Count de la Chambre to be arrested in his bed and by acts of dangerous violence imperiled the lives of the Count of Gruyère and his brother. The lately renewed alliance with the powerful cities of Berne and of Fribourg now proved of invaluable assistance to the threatened duchy of Savoy, for at the appeal of the count de la Chambre they exacted an indemnification for these injuries, and reduced the Count de la Bresse to submission.

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After the death of Duke Philibert, his brother and successor Duke Charles III renewed the useful alliance with the confederated cities, and confirmed the appointment of Count Louis de Gruyère as "conseiller" and "chambellan" of his court with the grant of additional pensions.

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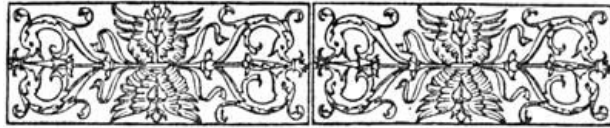
It was not long before Count Louis had a fresh opportunity of proving his loyalty to Savoy, an opportunity doubtless welcomed by him to obliterate the memory of his former and enforced opposition; for when the warlike margrave of Saluzzo revolted from his allegiance to Savoy, Count Louis practically organized an army of Bernois and Savoyards to reduce him to submission, supplying a far greater number of Gruyèriens than was required of him, and financing the expedition with loans from Fribourg for which he was personally liable. Before the walls of Saluzzo, it was he who led the assaults, preserved the assailants from destruction when the garrison made an unexpected sortie, dispersed a relieving army, and at last made a triumphant entry into the city behind the allied banners of Berne and Gruyère. Engaged thus in the mutual support of Savoy, Count Louis, always working heart and soul for peace if he could, for war if compelled, so merited the approbation of the Bernois that their captain wrote that "Count Louis de Gruyère and his brother had conducted themselves as faithful and valorous friends of their allies." Count Louis was also enthusiastic over this new alliance of the Confederates with his beloved Savoy, and declared that "he was resolved to live and die with his allies and that with God's help their united strength would prevail against all foes."

Count Louis' new allies warmly appreciated the chivalry, generosity and independence for which he was justly renowned, and in the various differences which arose among the restless subjects of Gruyère, advised them to trust to the justice of their ruler. Preserving to his last day the enthusiasm and the frank amenity of a singularly charming and well-balanced character, Count Louis was wise in the management of his estates, encouraged printing at Rougemont, and sharing the love of pomp and beauty of the Savoy court, was an amateur in architecture and as enthusiastic in his religion as he was in all things else. When a tornado followed by a disastrous fire destroyed a part of the city and the château of Gruyère, he planned and partially executed an

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extensive enlargement of his ancestral manor, rebuilding it in the later style of the fifteenth century. He also rebuilt the adjoining chapel of St. Jean, asking and receiving from the pope a grant of indulgence for the faithful who should communicate therein on the anniversary of its second foundation and on the fête of its patron saint. The chapel richly furnished with sacred books, chalices, luminaries, and ecclesiastical ornaments still preserves with its commemorative inscription the name and fame of Count Louis.

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CHAPTER VII

STRUGGLE FOR SUCCESSION



In view of the tender age and delicate health of his only son, Count Louis, having long enjoyed a formal alliance with Fribourg, thought it wise to make a like treaty with Berne; and foreseeing that his son's life would probably not be a long one, he drew up a will in which he appointed his successors. In this will, he decreed that his brother François should be the next heir, after him his daughter Hélène, and next, in default of male heirs of the direct line, the son of his brother, Jean de Montsalvens.

The signing of the treaty with Berne was the last political act of his reign of twenty-three years, in which, from beginning to end, he had well seconded the constructive administration of his father. Inheriting Count François' brilliant qualities, with less extended powers over Savoy, his opportunities for the display of his soldierly abilities were greater; and although wars and disasters had reduced his revenues and lessened the growth of the estates, he was able to pay a debt to Fribourg incurred by his father, and besides rebuilding the chapel and château made various important acquisitions of property. Through his wife he was connected with one of the oldest and most powerful families of Savoy whose representatives were distinguished like those of Gruyère for honorable offices at the ducal court, and whose vast possessions extended over a large part of Savoy, including the city of Aix-les-Bains. The Countess Claude, left to the charge of a young and delicate son, who after a brilliant début in the tournaments and festivities at Chambéry died at the early age of seventeen, was surrounded by a multitude of annoyances and demands from the powerful republic of Berne, which she met with more courage than discretion. Although during her popular husband's reign, the people of Gruyère voluntarily assisted in the assemblage of the materials for the restoration of the château, they revolted when the countess imposed taxes upon them for the continuation of the work, and a most unusual bitterness of feeling arose, which was only pacified by the arbitration of the Council of Fribourg. Little understanding her people—who, as always, could be ruled by love and not by force—she was not only compelled to yield in this matter, but conceded to the Bernois the fortress of Mannenburg, to keep the peace with her formidable neighbor. The countess, grief-stricken at the death of her only son, was for a brief period relieved from her onerous responsibilities by her brother-in-law, François III, who, according to Count Louis' will, followed his nephew in the rule of Gruyère. Although succeeding at an advanced age to the throne of his ancestors and occupying it for less than a year, Count François III had shared the offices of "conseiller" and "chambellan" at the court of Savoy with his brother Louis, and was held in equal honor by the cities of Fribourg and Berne. Like Louis, he was admitted to the diplomatic councils of the European powers, and allying himself with the prince of Orange, who, with the Orleans league, disputed the control of France with Louis XII, prevented the threatened intervention of the Swiss Confederates. Astonishing as was the influence of so small a principality as that of Gruyère, containing at no time more than twenty thousand inhabitants, it was due not only to its intermediate situation between the republics of Berne and Fribourg and the possessions of Savoy but to the great personal importance of its rulers—particularly of Count François and his two sons Louis and François, who were not only supreme in their control of the duchy of Savoy, but were unquestionably the greatest nobles in Romand Switzerland. Holding its sovereignty directly from the emperor, Gruyère had long been an independent state, and by the grant of Wenceslas its rulers were not only empowered to issue money but had always possessed unqualified rights of justice and administration over their subjects. An interregnum of discord was unfortunately destined to lessen the power and diminish the prosperity of Gruyère, for Count François III, who had accompanied the prince of Orange in his unfortunate invasion of Italy, succumbed to the fatigue of the campaign, leaving the countess and her daughter to a long and bitter struggle for the latter's rights to the succession.

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Although by the old Burgundian law, the right of female succession was not without precedent, the general inclination of popular sentiment was definitely against it; and while Hélène by her father's will was authorized during her life to claim the rule of Gruyère, that will directed that his nephew Jean of the cadet branch of the family should succeed her. But the wills of Count Antoine as well as of his son François provided for the immediate and direct succession of the next in line of that cadet branch, Jean de Montsalvens, the brother of Count Louis, and not the young son designated by the latter. Fully foreseeing the impending difficulties which would beset his wife

and daughter when they should attempt to carry out his designs, Count Louis could never have imagined that the Countess Claude would assist the family which had already disputed the right of his own line to the throne by consenting to a marriage of her daughter with Claude de Vergy. Legitimized by the pope, sustained by Savoy, Count François had by his incomparable ability brought Gruyère to such a height of power and prosperity that, after the first attempt to dispossess him, he had been left undisturbed. Count Louis, however, had been violently attacked by Count Guillaume de Vergy, who had instigated during the Burgundian wars, the seizure of Aubonne and the invasion of Gruyère, while during the short reign of his son François raids of undisciplined marauders sent out by the same family only too plainly announced their hostile intentions. With the rapidly succeeding deaths of the young François II and his uncle François III, the astute Guillaume de Vergy—a very great noble, head of his family and maréchal of Burgundy—saw an opportunity of grasping the long coveted succession for his son Claude by means of a marriage with Hélène of Gruyère. But he reckoned without the well founded claims and stout opposition of Jean de Montsalvens, between whom and his son on one side and Hélène and her mother on the other side such a contest arose as nearly plunged Switzerland into civil war. While Berne was on Hélène's side, Fribourg supported Jean de Montsalvens. The duke of Savoy supported the two ladies, but could find no better solution of their difficulties than to ask them to receive the rival pretendant as a guest in the château. When finally their friends the Bernois and their enemies of Fribourg proposed to install Jean provisionally at Gruyère under the protection of an armed force, the countess thought prudent to retire, leaving the château to the management of her chatelain. But while the duke of Savoy and the two cities were temporizing and hesitating between the rival claimants, the mountaineers of Gessenay, leaders of the German-Swiss people of Gruyère, and who were violently opposed to the marriage of Mdlle. de Gruyère with the detested family of de Vergy, formally acknowledged Jean de Montsalvens as their ruler. In spite of the popular opposition, Hélène's marriage was duly celebrated and her rival soon after installed himself at the château. Whereupon, the duke of Savoy indignant at the disregard of his futile propositions, sent a messenger to Berne commanding their intervention in favor of Hélène, and another to Jean himself with a mandate immediately to evacuate the château. Berne informed the men of Gessenay of its intention to support Hélène, and commanded them to keep the peace. The prospect of a general war seemed so imminent that the king of France sent his ambassador, the Cardinal d'Amboise, to investigate the matter, and the maréchal of Burgundy so influenced the emperor that he issued an imperial mandate recognizing Claude de Vergy as ruler of the disputed province. But Jean de Montsalvens, supported by his mountaineers, with an enrolled force of four thousand men, dismissed with calm politeness the messenger of Savoy, ignored the threats of the two cities as well as the mandate of the emperor, and preserved so bold a front against all his foes that he gained the assistance of Berne and the unanimous support of all his people, and was formally recognized as count of Gruyère. The duke of Savoy and the two cities now proposed a council of all the parties concerned by which the rival claims should be decided, but refusing at first to submit his rights to arbitration, Count Jean delayed until he was assured by popular consent of the success of his cause, and then appearing before the council at Geneva, was formally confirmed in his already established succession.

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TERRACE OF THE CHÂTEAU

The Countess Claude, although supported by such friends as the maréchal of Burgundy, the duke of Savoy, the king of France, and the emperor of Germany, had been reduced to sad straits. From her retreat at the château of Aubonne, without heat, without food, she had appealed to the guard which Berne and Fribourg had established at Gruyère for a little of her home butter and cheese to keep her from actual starvation. The council at Geneva provided for her necessities by requiring the restoration of the amount of her dot, and to her and her daughter possession of the châteaux of Aubonne and Molière for their lives, with a purchasable reversion in favor of Count Jean. But when, dying early, Hélène, in defiance of this provision, left these properties to her husband and his family, there were more quarrels about their possession, and again the European powers were invoked by Guillaume de Vergy, who procured from Louis XII of France a protest as unheeded as the mandate of the emperor, against their diversion to Count Jean. But

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the maréchal at last succeeded in his long considered plan of amicably uniting the rival claims, for in a family council it was finally agreed that his daughter Marguerite should marry Count Jean's son and successor, and that the purchase money of the two châteaux, supplied by Count Jean, should constitute her dowry. So was concluded a quarrel of more than sixty years, begun and ended by a marriage.

The estates so manfully won by Count Jean were not destined to bring him unmixed satisfaction. The men of Gessenay demanded pay for their support in the form of costly enfranchisements from contributions or taxes; the revenues of Gruyère had already been decreased by the long legal processes of the succession, the maintenance of the army of defence, and the payment of Countess Claude's dot and her daughter's pension, as well as by the heavy purchase money of the châteaux of Aubonne and Molière. While still preserving its appearance of luxury the court of Gruyère was now supplied and maintained by loans from Berne and Fribourg, while Count Jean, who had prevailed against so powerful an array of foes, was like his predecessors, despoiled by the bishop of Lausanne, who demanded the cession of his rights over a rich part of his possessions. Thus the reign which had begun by an astonishing display of courage and firmness was so embarrassed by the expenditure incident to its establishment, that it ran thereafter a very inglorious course unmarked by the happy prosperity of former years. When Maximilian I prepared to proceed to Italy to be crowned emperor of the Romans, the Bernois consented to enroll Count Jean's son, his son-in-law, the seigneur of Châtelard, and Claude de Vergy, under the Gruyère banner in the army of confederates which was to swell the imperial forces. But with the refusal of Venice to permit the passage of Maximilian this dream of worldly experience and adventure was necessarily abandoned. Except for the service of the Count's illegitimate son Jean, who fought with a force of Gruyèriens in the battle of Novara, when the Swiss preserved Milan to its dukes against the invading army of Louis XII, no military honor accrued to Gruyère during his reign.

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CHAPTER VIII

RELIGIOUS REFORM



he death of Count Jean in the beginning of the 16th century left to his son Jean II the task of upholding the old ideals of the Gruyère house against the continually growing democracy in Switzerland, as well as against the advance of religious reform. Endowed with all his father's firmness, he possessed the chivalric ardor of his predecessors and a full share of their personal charm. The long and intimate relation of Gruyère and Savoy which had been interrupted by his father's maintenance of his rights of succession against the will of Duke Philibert II, were renewed by Count Jean II, who soon merited the title so worthily won by his predecessors of the "greatest noble in Romand Switzerland."

When Count Philippe de Bresse, after a lifetime spent in envious agitations against the ruling dukes at last succeeded to the throne of Savoy, he splendidly atoned for his ill-treatment of Count Louis de Gruyère and his brother by immediately investing Count Jean II with the offices held by his predecessors; and when he magnificently celebrated his reconstitution of the Order of the Annonciata in the chapel of Chambéry, he invested Count Jean with the order, and at the ensuing fêtes gave him a seat at his side. The gift of this order, bestowing upon its possessor the privilege of diplomatic negotiations with the thrones of Europe, brilliantly recognized the position already held by the counts of Gruyère of arbitrators for Savoy and Romand Switzerland in the continual differences which arose between them and the monarchs of France and Austria. Although still only a duchy, Savoy had long been related by marriage with all the kingdoms of Europe. It was triply related to France through the wife and the sister of Louis XI and through Louise de Savoie, mother of François I; it was doubly related to the latter's great rival, the emperor Charles V, through Philibert's wife, the able Marguerite d'Autriche, and again through the emperor's sister-in-law, the Duchess Beatrix of Portugal, wife of Philibert's successor, Charles III. Fortified and elated by this imperial alliance, Duke Charles III began his unfortunate reign with a magnificent progress through Piémont and Savoy, where, particularly in the Pays de Vaud, he was cordially welcomed. At Geneva "the youth of the city were gayly decked out in damask, velvet and cloth of gold, while a corps of the most beautiful women, superbly dressed as amazons carrying lances and shields, were led by a fair Spaniard in honor of the Duchesse." At Vevey, bells rang, and a great procession of soldiers in parti-color followed by others in pure white, with a hundred pages also in white, carrying the white cross of Savoy, came out from the gates to meet him.

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Presenting his suzerain with the donations of the Pays de Vaud at Lausanne, Count Jean was also present with the bishops of Tarentaise, Lausanne and de Bellay at the general assembly of the Savoy estates at Morges, and at the château of Oron received the duke and his suite at a splendid

banquet.

The Swiss, divided by religious wars, and since the battles of Grandson, Morat and Nancy the actual arbiters of Europe, were constantly solicited for their alliance, and yielding to their cupidity and a widespread spirit of adventure, continually divided their forces into mercenary bands, fighting for Italy and then France in the long series of disastrous Italian campaigns undertaken by Charles VIII and his successors, Louis XII and François I. "*Point d'argent, point de Suisse*," a saying only too well merited by the conduct of these mercenary armies, originated from these French-Italian campaigns. In 1499 the Swiss, fighting with France, betrayed the duke of Milan to Louis XII. At Novara, fifteen years later, they fought for the duke, and took for themselves a large part of Piémont. At Marignan, the young François I at the head of a brilliant army of the French noblesse, furnished with all the accoutrements and artillery of modern warfare, received his baptism of fire, and Bayard won his shining immortality. There also the Swiss in a second battle of giants, although defeated, won as they had at St. Jacques the admiration of their conqueror; and just as Louis XI had tempted them by unlimited pay to join his cause, again François I induced them by promises of permanent pensions to a perpetual alliance, and to the peace called "perpetual" which afterward was maintained between Switzerland and France.

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With the strictest historical justice this alliance, based on cupidity, was by the same ignoble motive made void of result. When the great Emperor Charles V, allied with the pope and England, threatened the French possessions in Italy, the Swiss soldiers compelled the French general to engage the imperial forces under the most unfavorable conditions, and in the disastrous battle of the Bicoque brought about the defeat of their allies, the loss of Milan and the evacuation of Italy. Among the 16,000 Swiss who here demonstrated the worst of their national qualities, was a force of 400 men from Gruyère under the command of Count Jean, who fought with his natural son Jean, his brother Jacques and his cousin of Blonay in the thick of the battle. The French were hopelessly outnumbered by the combined imperial and Italian armies and suffered a crushing defeat, and the Swiss soldiers whose pay had been stolen by the mother of François I returned to their own country after the battle. Confessing in truth that they were "*mal payés, mal dotés*," Count Jean also declared that the Milanese duchy would never be recovered by the French king unless he came himself to Italy to conduct the campaign. He, therefore, returned to his estates after this disheartening experience where he found the long smouldering resentment against the predatory bishop of Lausanne at the point of explosion. By threat of arms, he exacted payment for his despoiled rights from the bishop, and before a great assemblage of his nobles, communes and people solemnly enacted the cessation of all trade with the bishop's market at Bulle in favor of Fribourg, with whose authorities he also established new commercial relations. But Count Jean, who had great reason to pursue these wise measures for the rehabilitation of his already impoverished and mortgaged estates, was soon drawn into the contest which arose between the democratic and Savoyard parties of Geneva, when the former, making an alliance with the republics of Berne and Fribourg, essayed to shake off the control of Savoy. The severance of the alliance of those cities with Savoy, announced a formidable alignment of the adherents of liberty in Romand Switzerland against the ruling duchy. But before this new combination had become sufficiently consolidated to accomplish its end, there were many efforts at pacification and compromise, and the count of Gruyère most reluctantly was forced to accept the office of arbiter between Savoy and the free cities.

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Again as so often had happened before, the ruler of Gruyère was faced with a choice between his suzerain and the republics of Switzerland. Count Jean unhesitatingly chose the former, and announced in his capacity of arbitrator the dissolution of the alliance of the free cities with Geneva. The result of this exceedingly courageous action was his own arraignment by Fribourg for conduct which they announced as unjustifiable and actionable. But the duke of Savoy was determined to reward Count Jean for his fidelity, and prevailed upon Berne and Soleure to renew their alliances but released Fribourg from all relations with his house, thus delivering Count Jean from its threatened revenge. This treaty, regulating the relations of Savoy with the cities of Berne and Soleure, did not, however, finish the contest between the Genevan democrats and the duke of Savoy, for the duke within a month sent an army within sight of the city to reduce it to submission. The feudal powers in Switzerland were now arrayed with Savoy against the rebels of Geneva in a league of young nobles, who assembled in force at Coppet to attack the city of Geneva. But now, although the heir of Gruyère was among the nobles, the people joined the army of Berne and Fribourg which marched to the aid of the rebellious city. Resorting to their old pastime of devastation, the army of liberty burned château after château in their march to Geneva, and uniting their forces with the rebels they summoned the duke of Savoy to account for his responsibility in the threatened attack. In an assemblage of the ambassadors of the ten confederated cantons, the duke of Savoy secured his continued control of Geneva, but paid dearly for it in the hypothecation to the greedy cities of Berne and Fribourg of the whole of the Pays de Vaud. Following this important concession, the victorious cities solemnly ratified their treaties with Geneva, and with the establishment of religious reform, which had developed simultaneously with the struggle for political independence, Geneva finally succeeded in freeing itself from the rule of Savoy. Catholic among the Catholics, Count Jean vigorously supported the duke in the defence of their religion, and converted his château of Oron into a refuge for the fugitives from the Lutheran persecution. While the Bernois were breaking the sacred images and wrecking the churches and chapels, Count Jean regularly maintained the celebration of mass at Oron, and threatened to wreak vengeance upon the Lutheran heretics who fell into his hands. Therefore, the Bernois, with evangelical pronouncements, commanded him to desist, and under threat of depriving him of the château and seigneurie of Oron, forced the adoption in this

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Catholic stronghold of the Lutheran faith. At Gruyère all the people were faithful, and in large numbers journeyed to Fribourg, declaring they would die rather than abandon their religion. At the warning that a band of Bernese Lutherans was preparing to invade Gruyère, the Fribourgeois summoned the people to be ready at the sound of the tocsin to take arms to repel them. Epidemics succeeded to these alarms, the restless people continually demanded new concessions, and finally the Bernois, openly declaring war upon Savoy, rapidly conquered the long coveted Pays de Vaud and summoned the count of Gruyère to acknowledge their sovereignty. When Count Jean stoutly rejected the demands of the Bernois, they immediately threatened the invasion of his estates; but their watchful rivals of Fribourg energetically protested, and when an ambassador of Charles V arrived on the scene to lend the Imperial support to the threatened principality, the Bernois consented to recognize the independence of Gruyère but exacted and at last obtained Count Jean's acceptance of their sovereignty over his possessions in the Pays de Vaud. Berne's demands were no sooner satisfied than Fribourg with an army prepared to take Corbières, but at this Count Jean's loyal subjects rose in a body, and the Fribourgeois, threatened by the people of Berne, consented to arbitrate their claims at the very moment when the valiant Count Jean was seized with sudden illness and ended his greatly tormented existence.

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"Towards the end of the month of November," a contemporary chronicler relates, "died at Gruyère, the noble and powerful lord Jean, Count of the said Gruyère, who before his death had suffered great troubles and pains, as much from the change in the overlordship and government of his country as from that of religion."

The change of overlordship had been a desolating disaster to the loyal vassal of the good Duke Charles of Savoy, who, when François I despoiled him of all but a remnant of his duchy, was sent into a poverty-stricken exile. A less firm resistance on the part of Count Jean against the encroaching powers of the confederated cities would have brought a like fate on Gruyère. In an epoch of transition, when the old feudal order was giving place to the increasingly triumphant democracy in Switzerland, in a period embittered by cruel religious persecutions, involved in the wars and events which altered the political and moral aspect of Europe, he preserved to the last the integrity of his domain and its fidelity to its ancient faith. Personifying all the virtues of the old order of chivalry, greatly honored by his suzerain, loved and respected at home, it cannot be denied that he was at the same time the exemplar of its faults, and of these a great and practically licensed immorality was the chief. From the earliest period in the history of Gruyère, many of the illegitimate sons of its rulers were dedicated to the church, and often rising to high places among its prelates shared in the prevailing laxity and were naturally forced to condone and finally to recognize the continuance of this state of affairs. With even less attempt at concealment than had been observed by his ancestors in the pursuance of these irregular relations Count Jean openly installed his mistress the famous Luce d'Alberguex, at the château. An ideal Gruyère beauty was la Belle Luce, with the vigorous perfection of her race and a smile of such naïve sweetness and charm as still lingers in the popular tradition. Count Jean gave her his fairest mountain as a gage of his affection and villages and rich pasture lands to her brave son, his namesake, who had fought by his side at the Bicoque. The gallant count was, according to tradition, very prodigal in his favors, and a certain road, leading to the neighboring village of Charmey where the unhappy Countess Marguerite could watch her faithless lord as he rode away on his various adventures, is still known as the "*Charrière de Crêve-Cœur*."

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Married for reasons of family policy to the daughter of the de Vergys, who resided for the most part in the château of Oron, Count Jean passed his happiest days with la Belle Luce at Gruyère. After the death of his countess, and the passing of his youthful loves, he married Catherine de Monteynard, with whom he honorably passed the last decade of his life.

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CHAPTER IX

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF GRUYÈRE



he three sons of Count Jean II not strangely reflected the conditions of their birth and the widely differing characters of their mothers. François, only son of his second marriage, which was founded on a real preference and esteem, possessed the kindly and charitable nature of his mother and the firm character of his distinguished Gruyère ancestors. Jean, the illegitimate son of Luce d'Alberguex, was lovable and valorous, but lacking in firmness or dignity of character. Michel, the heir of Gruyère, and the child of Count Jean's loveless marriage with Marguerite de Vergy, while personifying in their perfection the physical beauty and charm of his line, was like the fair fruit of a decaying tree hollow at heart, and was only too well fitted by his fantastic pretensions and his frivolous weakness of character for the tragic rôle which was assigned to him in the fall of his house.

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a couplet describing the romantic figure of the last count of Gruyère, is still rhymed by the people and still finds its place among their records. Imposing in height as his great forerunner François de Gruyère, his features were of a beautiful regularity and nobility, his manner had that princely pride and simplicity which was the greatest charm of François I of France. At the French court, as in all Switzerland, he was renowned as "the handsomest knight of his day." With the extinction of the court at Chambéry, where his predecessors had received their education in chivalry and where they had so faithfully and honorably served the dukes of Savoy, the young Michel was sent to the still more brilliant court of France. Blazing with the beauty of the great ladies who ruled the adored and adorable young king, the resort of painters and poets, the rendezvous of all the noblesse of France, this court at its highest pitch of pageantry and pride was a dazzling school for the young *damosel* of Gruyère. Here in the white and gold dress of the "*Enfants du Roi*," and next as king's *Pannétier*, he passed eight years of his youth, patterning his ideals only too faithfully upon the young sovereign he served. On his return to Switzerland fresh from this experience in France, he joined the league of young nobles called "*de la cuiller*," from their vow to make a sweet morsel of the rebel republicans of Geneva. In highwaymen raids in company with his mad cousin de Beaufort of Coppet and Rolle, he defied the formidable seigneurs of Berne, and was only saved from their chastisement by their regard for his father. After these escapades, he departed for Italy to the court of the emperor Charles the Fifth, who at first treated him with extraordinary confidence, but when he demanded to be appointed prince of the empire and gentleman of the bed-chamber, the emperor refused. Passing only enough time at Gruyère to receive the vows of fidelity from his subjects and to make a tour of his estates, he proceeded by way of France to carry out a mission of the emperor in Flanders. At Paris where the emperor halted on his way to deal with his rebellious Flemish subjects, Count Michel was so pleasantly entertained in the round of fêtes and *divertissements* which celebrated the imperial visit, that he postponed again and again the adjustment of the important differences with Fribourg which had been left in abeyance at the death of his father. His mission to Flanders was so carelessly executed that he soon lost the confidence of the emperor who, openly declaring that "he thought little of him," sent him away from Turin. On his return to Paris after another brief visit to his country Count Michel received a better welcome from François I, who invested him with the Order of the King and with the Collar of St. Michæl. No better example of the personal charm of François I is to be found in history than his influence over his Swiss allies. Assuring the ambassadors of Berne, when they visited Paris with the hope of being released from their military service, that the disastrous results of his Italian campaigns were due only to the derangement of his finances, he promised personally to lead them in his approaching invasion, beguiled them with fair words and promises, even engaging to place the crown diamonds in their custody as gage of their pay, and professing that he was "*l'ami de cœur*" of the Confederates bound them for weal or woe to his cause. At the battle of Sésia when Bayard fell before the armies of the emperor and the traitorous Constable of France, it was the Swiss who saved the existence of the French forces. At the disastrous defeat of Pavia, losing half of their soldiers, they fought with a desperate courage for the lost cause of the still beloved king, who at the moment of surrender could salute the Swiss guard and say to his captor: "If all my soldiers had fought like these, I would not be your prisoner but you would be mine."

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In the complications which arose from Berne's renewed demands for the recognition of their authority over Gruyère, Count Michel became a figure of international importance. When his domain was threatened with invasion, he declared that he had received it from God and his fathers, and would not submit. The Fribourgeois, in the interests of the Catholic party, were against Berne, and declared they would support him to the full extent of their power. Six other Catholic cities also ranged themselves with Fribourg, and war seemed so imminent that the matter was taken before the Diet, when, with the aid of the French ambassadors and a summons from the emperor Charles V to respect the independence of his imperial fief, Count Michel was able to retain the freedom of Gruyère, but compelled like his father to admit Berne's authority over his possessions in the Pays de Vaud. In the support which François I gave to Count Michel, he followed not so much his predilection for a courtier whom he had invested with the Order of St. Michel as his habitual policy of conciliating the Swiss, whose support was indispensable to him in the war he had again declared against the emperor. In December of the year 1543, Count Michel at the invitation of the king joined the French army before Landrécies, where with a small force of cavalry armed and equipped at his own expense he was fortunate enough to assist his old master in relieving the siege of the city.

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But this was the only fortune which fell to the Gruyère banner during the various campaigns in which he was engaged. "Fanfarront" and proud, the new and richly embroidered flag he commanded represented the symbolic and hitherto honorable "Grue," in a guise as "fanfarront" as Count Michel himself. Assuming the title of prince, and for his poverty-stricken little domain the powers and independence of a royal principality, he was not content to furnish the two thousand men required by the king, but rashly undertook to double the number. Still more rashly he left the levée of these troops to a delegate, who hastily assembled a motley and disreputable collection of untrained men from all parts of the country, with a few ignorant peasants from Gruyère itself who were in no way fitted to sustain the valorous reputation of their country. Detained by the quarrels which against all advice he continually pursued with Geneva and Berne, he delegated his command of these troops to the same untrustworthy agent who had collected them, a certain Sire de Cugy of Vaud. At a critical moment in the battle of Cérisolles this helpless

band of peasants not surprisingly took to their heels and seriously endangered the victory of the French. The other Swiss soldiers sustained their old reputation with prodigies of valor, but upon the Gruyèriens were lavished every epithet of contempt. The pitiful episode was the object of many royal witticisms. To the king who "supposed that they were of the same stuff as the Confederates," his chronicler du Bellay replied that "it was folly to disguise an ass as a charger"—"Why pay these cowards," asked the king in return, "who fled like *Grues hier?*"

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How important the little Swiss province was considered among the great kingdoms of Europe, was again shown in the multitude and variety of observations in the contemporary memoirs upon the conduct of the men who untruthfully called themselves Gruyèriens. A comment of Rabelais in his *Pantagruel*, adds to the general reproach. "It has always been the custom in war, to double pay for the day when the battle is won. With victory there is profit and somewhat for payment; with defeat, it is shame to demand reward, as did the runaways of Gruyère after the battle of Serizolles." Thus Rabelais mocked the last Gruyère soldiers as Tasso praised the first, and an undeserved stigma was set on the banner which had been carried unstained through six centuries of warfare at home and abroad.



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CHURCH OF ST. THEODATE

With a persistency which deserved a better reward, Count Michel now determined to redeem his disgrace, and joined the French armies in the prolonged attempt to relieve the city of St. Dizier, besieged by the imperial forces. But fortune on this occasion was unfavorable to the French and no glory was gained and no rehabilitation of the unfortunate Gruyèriens. In a third campaign under the command of the Duc de Guise, Count Michel was again with the French before Boulogne, and a witness of the peace of Crépy which was signed at the moment when that city fell into the hands of the English. Thus although putting forth every effort to restore the ancient reputation of his house, the unlucky Count Michel was forced to return without laurels to Gruyère where, during the last peaceful years of the reign of François I, no further military service was required of him. But the Bernois still tormented him for recognition of their sovereignty over the disputed seigneuries of Palézieux, and continued to lend him money, thus gradually and surely laying their hands on his long coveted possessions. With a like calculating generosity, Fribourg accepted mortgages on such portions of his property as were not already mortgaged to Berne, while Count Michel, like a butterfly caught in the closing net of its captors, lived gayly in the lingering sunshine of this false prosperity. A romantic imbroglio in which his cousin de Beaufort was involved afforded him congenial distraction, and again served to attract the attention of the king of France and the emperor to the affairs of Gruyère. Passing their brilliant youth together at the court of François I, where the young sire de Beaufort was also "*Enfant du Roi*," the comrades were also associated in the mad escapades of the "*Lique de la Cuiller*," against the Geneva republicans, and when de Beaufort carried off the beautiful Marie de la Palud, it was to Gruyère that he fled, riding madly across country to ask Count Michel's protection. The mother of the runaway beauty—a certain Countess de la Varax, was determined to recover her daughter and as a bourgeoisie of Berne, denounced the ravisher to the city authorities, but when informed by the countess of Beaufort that she had been married by bell and by book, and had Count Michel's promise to intercede in her favor, they declined to prosecute her or her husband. Fribourg also took the side of the lovers, and sent a letter in their behalf to the king of France. But the Countess de la Varax had already secured the support of both emperor and king, who, thinking the matter of high political importance, sent pressing letters by their ambassadors to Berne and Fribourg and, later, to the Diet of the Confederation, commanding that de Beaufort should give up his bride. Informed of these royal and imperial commands, the Sire de Beaufort declared he would die rather than give up his wife or emerge from his Gruyère asylum, and prayed the seigneurs of Berne to write to the king in his favor. Before the grave assemblage of the Confederation of the Diet at Baden, Count Michel magnificently declared that as for him he would protect the refugees at all costs, and left the matter to the justice of the delegates. The Diet as stoutly declining to dissolve a legalized marriage, defied the summons of the king and the emperor and ordered the pursuit of the lovers

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to cease. The two counts of Gruyère and of Beaufort were so gratified by this support that when the emperor prepared to invade Switzerland they offered to join the Confederate army in the defence of their country. With the passing of this threat of invasion Count Michel lost his last opportunity of military distinction. The remainder of his reign was one long struggle with the net of financial embarrassment which now encompassed him. The youthful impression of magnificence gained at the French court, the vanity of his extraordinary beauty, the favor of the dazzling François I, the actual independence of his imperial principality exalted his imagination to a pitch of pretension utterly beyond his capacity of either leadership or organization. He was fertile in imagination, persistent and indefatigable, but he had unfortunately inherited no trace of the firmness or judgment displayed by the long line of his ancestors, while from the intriguing de Vergy strain, he derived a treacherous and feeble duplicity, which lost him the confidence of the sovereigns he served and the cities with which he was allied. Although maintaining an apparent friendship with Berne and Fribourg, whose monetary assistance he constantly demanded, he succeeded by a complicated system of loans and partial payments of interest in possessing himself of a long line of châteaux-forts extending from Gruyère to the Pays de Gex. As he was the acknowledged head of the still existing league "de la Cuiller," his acquisition of this formidable line of fortresses only too clearly indicated his design of restoring the supremacy of the nobles in Switzerland, and by a brilliant dash for liberty at once to obliterate the power and the embarrassing financial claims of Berne and Fribourg. His friends had already begun to collect ammunition, and apparitions of armed bands were reported to Berne, when a warning from the French ambassador that a project was on foot to threaten their liberties and to reestablish the exiled duke of Savoy, caused the authorities to send word to the baillis in the several departments to watch Count Michel and find out the secret of his intentions. When he was summoned to appear at Berne to account for these suspicious occurrences, Count Michel forthwith abandoned his far-reaching and unpracticable scheme, and sent a request to the council asking for time to prepare the documents to establish his innocence. Vanished now were his splendid hopes of reestablishing the noblesse under his leadership, and crushed under the enormous debts which he had incurred in the acquisition of the now useless fortresses, he was forced to make a supreme effort to preserve himself and his domain from utter and imminent ruin. His long attachment to François I, although rewarded by the very considerable dignity of the royal Order of St. Michæl, had been far less profitable in substantial results, for his old master, according to his custom, had failed to pay either the salaries of his positions at court or the pensions allotted to Gruyère according to the terms of the Perpetual Peace. To the arrears of these pensions and salaries, Count Michel added the expenses of his various expeditions with the French armies and the pay of the soldiers who had so disgraced him at Cérisolles. The sum of these claims, drawn up in an interminable document and presented to François I's son and successor Henri II, amounted to no less than 1,700,000 francs. King Henri, who had by no means forgotten the sort of service rendered by these soldiers, was irritated at the fantastic sum of Count Michel's claims, and after a long delay offered half of the arrears of the pay of his soldiers but rejected the other demands, declaring that as a knight of the Order of St. Michæl the count was a French subject and had no right as a Confederate to the pensions granted by the terms of the Perpetual Peace. This offer Count Michel indignantly refused, threatening to send back the Order of St. Michæl, and appealing to the Diet to confirm his undoubted status as a Confederate. Berne and Fribourg and at length the Diet ratified this claim and sent messengers to the king recommending its recognition, but assigned the greatly reduced sum of 60,000 francs as the amount of the pensions due. The king replying that he would in no case alter his decision, the Berne authorities, with a singular consideration for their unfortunate debtor procured the additional recommendations of all the cantons; but the king still insisted that as Chevalier of St. Michæl, the count was bound to come to Paris to present his claims before the tribunal of the order. The count, however, as persistently refused to go to Paris "to be mocked by the King," and defiantly proposed that the latter should be summoned to personally appear before the Diet. A less extravagant demand, a less obstinate refusal, would have surely obtained a better recognition from the monarch who "never broke his word," but failing to persuade either the king or his claimant, the Confederates were forced to abandon their intervention and Count Michæl got nothing at all. Ill and despairing, he now abandoned the administration of his hopelessly involved estates to his brother François, who with the aid of an appointed council vainly essayed to bring order out of confusion. In an open assembly the people were asked to guarantee a new loan on the promise of the cession of all the Gruyère revenues at a fixed date. Irritated but still faithful to their ruler they consented, but the delay thus obtained only postponed the inevitable disaster. Berne and Fribourg now announced their intention of assuming the debts of the entirely mortgaged domain and dividing it between them. The unhappy people of Gruyère prepared to witness the dispossession of their ruler and the dismemberment of their beloved country when Count Michel played his last card, marrying through the good offices of his uncle Claude de Vergy, (who had now succeeded his father as maréchal of Burgundy) the widow of the Baron d'Alègre, Madeleine de Miolans, a daughter of a once illustrious Savoyard family. To her devotion and that of his de Vergy's relatives, who spared nothing but the necessary funds to avert his impending ruin, Michel owed a short reprieve from the execution of his creditors. Four months' delay was granted his wife in which to raise the interest due on the loans; but although journeying to Paris and soliciting every influence to procure the required sum, the countess of Gruyère failed in her efforts. The poor lady now saw the end of her dream of rehabilitating the fallen fortunes of the man she had so unwisely married. How potent was the charm of the bankrupt hero who could still inspire her unlimited devotion was still better proved by the affection of his half brother François. Modest, dignified and charitable, as his brilliant senior was wasteful and rash, François' loyalty was unaltered by any disgrace of misfortune. But in the very climax of his ills Count Michel lost this invaluable brother and friend. In a letter to his implacable

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"Sirs, this letter is to inform you that in addition to all the misfortunes and adversities, illnesses and otherwise, which it has pleased God to send me, it has been His good pleasure to take from me my brother François d'Aubonne who died yesterday morning at eleven o'clock at Gruyère. The sorrow and grief which I suffer, dear Sirs, you cannot imagine, at thus losing my second self and the brother who has rendered me constant loyalty and service. Therefore, to you who are my chief masters, fathers and friends, I confide my sorrow, praying you as good fathers, friends, lords and ancient protectors of my house to console and assist me as has hitherto been your good pleasure."

"Fanfarront" no longer, but helpless as a child in the face of the ills he had wrought, Count Michel sent his courageous wife on her many futile errands in his behalf, while he waited alone at the château for the inevitable end. Writing again and again to Fribourg and Berne, declaring that his illness gave him no peace and that the slightest effort to think redoubled his pains, he found no better occupation for one of his solitary days than to re-read his treaty with Fribourg.

"Magnifique Monsieur l'Avoyer, and honored lords, to your good graces I affectionately commend myself.

"While I was sitting the other day, overwhelmed by the sufferings of my poor body, I began to re-read my treaty of Combourgeoisie with your city, to distract the ennui of my malady, when the countess' little dog who had been gamboling about me dragged off, while I was not looking, the ribbon and seal, which greatly annoyed me. I send you back the paper, therefore, asking you to be as good as to affix another seal, by which you will greatly oblige him who in heart and affection, Magnifique Monsieur l'Avoyer, is entirely your good citizen and servant."

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The four months' respite had now passed, and the countess with her devoted sister presented herself before the Diet to make a last effort to procure a postponement of the sentence of dispossession. In silence the deputies listened to her tearful appeal, when realizing that no answer was possible and unwilling to listen to the fatal decree, the countess and her sister requested permission to retire. Respectfully conducting the weeping women from the chamber, the delegates then formally authorized the transference of Gruyère to the cities of Berne and Fribourg. At ten o'clock in the evening of this same fatal day, Count Michel, followed by a single faithful domestic, mounted his horse and rode away from Gruyère. The shadows of a November night, the sighing winds, the falling leaves, were the fitting accompaniment of this tragic departure. Significant also was it that with the fall of the house of Gruyère, the last remaining feudal sovereignty, the old chivalric order forever passed from Switzerland. With the extinction of the power of Savoy, and the establishment of the inclusive league of cantons and cities representing the new and united nation, the little principality of Gruyère was in any case doomed to the acceptance of the prevailing form of government. But although hastening by his extravagance the fall of his house, Count Michel had various difficulties for which he was not personally responsible. With the repeated enfranchisement of his people from their feudal contributions and taxes, his revenues had already been seriously reduced, and the long legal process and armed resistance necessitated by his grandfather's struggle with the rival de Vergys, had exhausted a large part of the accumulated capital. Thus only a rigid system of retrenchment would have sufficed to preserve the financial integrity of Gruyère. For such an administration Count Michel was utterly unfitted both by character and training, and he precipitated his own inevitable ruin, when, yielding to his unbounded and unrealizable ambitions, he essayed to reverse the course of events and restore the power of feudality in Switzerland, at the very moment of its disorganization. His refusal to accept any portion of his claims on the French crown, his rejection of the proposition to sell, while it was yet time, any part of his estates, were examples of his immoderate and unreasoning pride. But another cause, the machinations of the powerful and envious de Vergys, singularly conspired to hasten the final dismemberment of the coveted province. Causing first the exhaustion of the Gruyère revenues, through the forced and loveless alliance with the ruling and legitimate line, the de Vergy strain produced in Michel a changeling heir, who was empty of heart as he was bankrupt in purse. Thus as the old order of feudalism, yielding to the progress of free thought, free speech and free faith, in the whole extent of Europe crumbled and fell, then was fulfilled in the already democratic Switzerland the old prophecy of the fool Chalamala, that "the Berne Bear would some day eat the Grue in the caldron of Fribourg." To Berne in the final division was allotted the mountainous regions of Gessenay and

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château d'Oex, while Fribourg took possession of the lower pasture lands, the city and the château, and the château itself they converted into the seat of government. In the deserted castle where for six centuries Count Michel's vigorous forbears had pacifically ruled with their vigorous sons, the last pitiful illegitimate child of the line was discovered by the Bailli of Fribourg. Sent with her mother, an old domestic of the château, the little Guillauma was brought up in the *hospice* and supported, like her mother, at the expense of the city. Thus finished in utter disgrace the illustrious line of pastoral kings. At the château of Oron, where the countess of Gruyère had fled after the decree of dispossession, her despairing husband joined her. In the cold of the November weather, the empty château, without servants, heat or supplies, was only a temporary refuge, although the council of Berne mercifully sent the countess a small sum of money for her immediate necessities. The paternal patience of the calculating Berne authorities was solicited by their equally hypocritical victim, in the following humble appeal sent by Count Michel upon his arrival at Oron.

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"Since it has pleased God so to chastise and afflict me that I am compelled to depart from your Excellencies and to follow the path He has pointed out to me, I praise Him in that His punishment

is meted out to me in mercy and not according to my sins; my absence and inability to serve you as I have all my life desired being of equal affliction with my loss. I have always had such confidence in your great kindness and humanity, that I am assured that your magnificences will have compassion on me and my wife, who is departing to solicit you as humbly as possible to pardon my not appearing before you, as my heart is so desolate that I can say or do naught to help in these circumstances. Therefore, may it please you to listen to her proposition and to grant as great a degree of honor and welfare as is possible to your child."

Although Berne had permitted the temporary residence of the deposed count at Oron, and had granted to the countess the revenues of a small piece of land, the refugees soon left the "logis" which they found "*si froid et si mal fourni de vivres,*" and repaired to Burgundy and the protection of their powerful de Vergy relatives. For many years the dispossessed princeling was destined to pursue his adventurous career in the various kingdoms of Europe. With his immediate necessities supplied by his wife's income, in the accustomed luxury of the châteaux of his relatives he quickly recovered his old pose of an independent and only temporarily deposed potentate, and proceeding to Paris in his character as Chevalier du Roi, was able to obtain a surprising degree of recognition. Welcomed by Catherine de Medici as a Catholic among the Catholics, he was present as a councilor of the King's Order at the private and preliminary trial conducted by the queen mother of the assassin of his old general and commander the Duc de Guise. King Charles IX may possibly have granted a part of Count Michel's claims upon the French crown, and was in any case so much influenced by his representations that he wrote to Berne and Fribourg recommending his reestablishment in his estates. When informed by the council of the respective cities of the conditions of his dispossession, King Charles made no further effort on his behalf. The still undiscouraged adventurer then repaired to Flanders to the palace and protection of his powerful aunt the Sénéchale of Hainault. From Hainault as a base of supplies, he journeyed about Flanders and Belgium, finding temporary sympathizers and supporters in various notabilities with whom he consulted as to the best method of recovering his estates, or at least wresting them from the hands of Berne and Fribourg. The Cardinal de Granvelle, who was intimately known to the king of Spain, and the Belgian ambassador to the Spanish court were solicited to represent his claims for recognition as a good Catholic to his Spanish majesty. To his suggestions that Gruyère would be a valuable addition to the Spanish territories, no more attention was paid than to his desire to be decorated with the Order of the Toison d'Or and to be received as a colonel in the Spanish army. For Philip II, enlightened by the cardinal as to the character of the pretendant for his favor, had no wish to tempt him from the service of France, and still less to embroil himself with the Swiss Confederation by intriguing with a dispossessed bankrupt for the recovery of his lost estates. Deserted by the kings of France and Spain, the count, since the death of his faithful wife, old and alone, proceeded to the court of the emperor. A new friend, the Alsatian Count Bollwiler, was solicited to arrange for him another advantageous matrimonial alliance, while the Emperor Maximilian II was so moved by the recital of his woes that he sent a letter to Berne and Fribourg requesting that in view of the count's advanced age and many adversities, he should be permitted to repurchase and enjoy his lost principality for the brief remainder of his days. A long memorial from the count accompanied the emperor's letter and announced that with the aid of his new and powerful friends, he would soon be in a position to buy back Gruyère. He ended with an appeal for compassion on his bald head and his white beard.

With respectful attention to the august request of of the emperor, Berne and Fribourg replied that no provision had been made for the repurchase of Gruyère, and detailed the conditions by which they had acquired the property. The emperor thereupon declined to renew his recommendations, and after this final defeat, Count Michel, deprived of his last hope of royal or imperial assistance, the neediest and loneliest of adventurers, lived a hand-to-mouth existence with the faithful domestic who had followed him since the day he had departed from Gruyère. Nursing always the same chimera of some day returning triumphant to his lost province, he pursued his peregrinations, finding a final refuge in the Burgundian château of Thalémy, belonging to his cousin François de Vergy, where he died at last in March of the year 1576. On a day in May a messenger from Burgundy announced his decease to his uncle the protonataire Dom Pierre de Gruyère. With tolling of bells the news was proclaimed, and a month later, before a great throng of people from all parts of the country, a memorial service was held in the church at Gruyère. "*Desolatione magna desolata est Grueria, ploratus et ulleratus auditi sunt in Grueria, et in omnibus finibus eius.*" With such a text the last Gruyère prelate celebrated the honors due to the last count of his line. "Desolate with a great desolation," in truth were the people who, bitterly weeping, lamented the loss of their happy independence, preserved through so many long centuries under the kindly rule of their beloved counts. A halo of melancholy romance had gathered through the popular traditions about the figure of Count Michel, so that he has strangely become the typical representative of the beauty, strength and valor of his far worthier predecessors. Conflicting reports about the place of his death and entombment, strange tales of his reappearance, have made him a second Boabdil, unburied, always returning to the beloved home of his youth. An hallucinated exile in life, his ghost, hallucinated, ever returning, haunts his lost and lovely Gruyère.

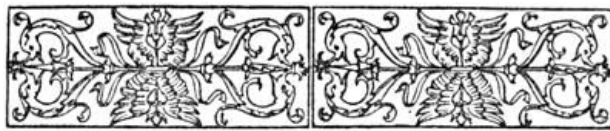
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CHAPTER X

GRUYÈRE WITHOUT ITS COUNTS



early four hundred years have passed since the fall of its counts, but the merciless march of democracy, although changing the government of Gruyère has left the people strangely unaltered. In spite of the injunctions of the Lutheran Bernois, they still danced and sang, and until the dawn of the present century still spoke their musical patois. The château, long used as the residence of a préfet of Fribourg, was offered for sale when in the middle of the 19th century the prefecture was transferred to Bulle. For a long time left to decay, it was finally doomed to demolition, when for the same sum offered by a housebreaker of Vevey, it was happily purchased by M. Bovy of Geneva. His brother, a painter and pupil of Ingres, devoted the remaining strength left to him after a disabling paralysis, to the restoration of the château, and in this enthusiastic service exhausted the family fortune. His friends and companions in Paris gathered about him, and to the beautiful frescoes with which he adorned the walls of the Hall of the Chevaliers were added the landscape vignettes of the salon. Thus several Corot canvases are strangely found in this out of the way corner in the Swiss mountains, a lovely tribute of the great modern master to the long past glories of Gruyère. In the jousting court flowers bloom bravely through the passing seasons, the old well with its moss covered roof jewels the terrace with its emerald green; through the chapel windows the painted light streams over walls where in silver on scarlet still flies the Grue. On the clock tower, still circling, the hands mark the passing of time and the bells in the church still ring out their summons to prayer. At Easter the "Bénichons" bring the people together for their old dances and songs, and in the long "Veillées" the lads and the maids through the summer nights or in winter beside their bright fires, watch the dawning of love. The maidens, like Juliet, lean from low vine-covered windows, and with beckoning candles invite their lovers to climb. The spring pastures still blossom with marjolaine and narcissus, with cowslips and rue, the orchards still redden in autumn with ripe fruit which falls with the breeze, with tressed wheat, goats, and cows black and white; the green fertile country abounds, and as in Provence a Mireille is the poet's dream of its maids, so is "*Marie la Tresseuse*" in poems and tales the wheat weaving girl of Gruyère. The "Armaillis" still drive their herds to the mountains, still singing "*Le ranz des vaches*," the song which among all others best reveals the soul of their race. "Lioba," "Lioba," one should hear the refrain as it echoes from the valleys and hills, the same cry, musical, lingering, melancholy, which through century after century has been sung by generations of Gruyère herdsmen.

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"Le Ranz des Vaches."

The herdsmen of the Colombettes,
To milk the cows arose.
Ha! Ha! Lioba.

Come! Come! Large and small,
The black, the white, the short, the tall,
Starry forehead, red and gold,
All the young and all the old.
Under the oak tree come!
Ha! Ha! Lioba.

Bells came first,
Jet black came last,
But at the stream they stopped aghast.
Ha! Ha! Lioba.

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Alas, poor Pierre! what will you do?
Trouble enough you have, 'tis true.
Ha! Ha! Lioba.

At the Curé's door
You now must tap,
He'll tell you how to cross the gap.
Ha! Ha! Lioba.

And what should I to the Curé say?
A mass shall I beg, or will he pray
To help my cows go over?
Ha! Ha! Lioba.

The Curé he, of a cheese was fain,

"A creamy cheese, or your cows remain
On the other side, 'tis very plain."

Ha! Ha! Lioba.

"Send us your pretty maid," said Pierre,
"To carry the cheese,
I speak you fair."

Ha! Ha! Lioba.

"Too pretty by far is my rosy maid,
She might not return," the Curé said.

Ha! Ha! Lioba.

"What belongs to the Church
We may not take,
Confession humble we then should make."

Ha! Ha! Lioba.

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"Go to friend Pierre,
The mass shall be said,
Good luck be yours, rich cheese and bread."

Ha! Ha! Lioba.

Gayly Pierre went to his waiting herd,
And freely they passed at the Curé's word.

Ha! Ha! Lioba.

The soft terminations of the romanized French are never more musical than in this famous song which, during their foreign campaigns, reduced the Swiss soldiers to such weeping longing for home that it was forbidden by their generals. Melancholy as is the repeated refrain, the couplets reveal a ravishing picture of the customs and the observing satirical spirit of the Gruyèrien. Is not the quip of the Curé worthy of any son of the Emerald Isle?



JOUSTING COURT

In truth this "*verte Gruyère*" shut away from the world by its mountains as Ireland is by the sea, is like a lost island, fabled, remote, its speech Provençal, its soul purely Celt. Laughter loving, warlike and brave in the idyllic years of their prime, the Gruyèriens of to-day are still gay, caustic of wit as they are kindly at heart; and, in a changed world, as tenacious of their new republican rights as they were erstwhile valiant vassals to their pastoral kings. The source of innumerable songs and legends in the rich and melodious Gruyère speech, still pastoral, this country has been celebrated in its exquisite, unchanging beauty by many poets; its romances and its national song have been the themes of dramatic and musical inspirations. Not yet has the cruel light of modern day chased the fairies, the may-maidens, the "servans" and the evil spirits from the forests and the caves. The place where the devil, joining in a coraule, drew the dancing people over a precipice is still shunned by young and old; with pride also will they point out the slope of the Gruyère hill where when the men were fighting at the *Pré de Chênes* the women drove their goats, each bearing a lighted candle, through the darkness upon an invading horde of Bernois, who, thinking they were devils, fled in affright. For the refreshment of the good spirits who guard the herds, basins of fresh milk are still set in every mountain chalet. The origin of the Gruyère customs, like the coraules and the still observed habit of hanging wreaths on their door posts or in the oak groves, have a derivation of the most distant antiquity, in the Chaldean cradle of the race, in the myths of India and the Orient. The personified forces of Nature, the cloud wraiths of the mountains, the lisping voices of the streams, for many centuries haunting the imaginations of the people, still live in their legends, as they do in Celtic Ireland. The idyllic loveliness of the country is deliciously completed by the vines which are trained over the houses, by the flowers

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which grow in their windows, so that from spring to November Gruyère is a garden, ringed by blue mountains under a sky of pure blue. In the Romand country are many exquisite towns such as Romont and Rue, Estavayer, Oron and Morat—happily preserved in their unaltered mediæval perfection. But the heart of this country is Gruyère, impregnated with the romance of the departed days of chivalry, its people affectionately faithful to the memory of their noble and beloved rulers.

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As for the Celtic wit, ever present in their sayings and legends, it is characteristically shown in the following little story of the "Fountain of Lessoc."

THE FOUNTAIN OF LESSOC

It happened one day that good father Colin went to the fair at château d'Oex, where he successfully transacted his business, particularly at the tavern. On his return journey he stopped at the inn at Montbovon, not so much for the pleasure of drinking as to chat with his old cronies, with the result that it was midnight before he was on his way to Lessoc. A cold welcome awaited him at home. "Thou art a selfish and a drunken wight, and the donkey is dying of thirst," said Fanchon with many reproaches for his evil conduct. Greatly ashamed was Colin, and to quickly repair his error untied la Cocotte and led her to the fountain. The night was superb, and in the water was reflected the shining disk of the moon. Precisely in this silver spot, the poor Cocotte began to ease her thirst when, "Behold," said her master, "she is drinking the moon." Then suddenly the moon went under a cloud, and at the same moment Cocotte, quite satisfied, lifted her head, "Heavens!" cried Colin, "the moon has gone and my donkey has drunk her."

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Not a word did he say to his wife, but all night watched over Cocotte in the stable. In the morning, up and down the village street, he drove her to help her digestion. "It matters little to me," he said to himself, "what becomes of the moon, for there is a new one each month, but I intend to take care of my good donkey." And soon all Lessoc marveled to see Colin and Cocotte, Cocotte and Colin, passing and repassing continually over the same road, one apparently frightened, the other sadly bored by the exercise. "Is your donkey ill?" asked the good mayor at last. "Woe is me, she is ruined," replied Colin, "for she has swallowed the moon and will not give her up." Whereupon the mayor, after grave reflection remarked, "If la Cocotte has not yet gotten rid of the moon, poor Colin already is rid of his senses."

At the communal council, the mayor presented at length the strange case. "If a new moon appears," he declared, "we may be reassured, but to avoid the possibility of further accident, we will place a spacious roof over the fountain." This wise decision was adopted to the general satisfaction, and such was the authentic origin of the elegant fountain of Lessoc.

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In ancient chronicles and modern publications many similar stories are repeated, while a multitude of ballads, of legends taken from the lips of the old peasants, constitute a precious and abounding document of the ancient Gruyère customs.

But uniquely characteristic as are these Gruyère people, the history of their country is still more extraordinary. Almost negligible in wealth or population, the little mountain province, lying midway between France, Austria, and Savoy, held in the days of its prosperity an almost unexplainably important position beside the great monarchies of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Midway also between the Berne and Fribourg republics, the Gruyère counts held something very nearly approaching a balance of power between Savoy and the Confederates. Feudal by race and by the independence of their little principality, they were so trusted by the Confederates and so powerful with Savoy, that they repeatedly acted as arbitrators in their mutual quarrels, and by this high influence were sharers and at times framers of the treaties with the neighboring kingdoms, and admitted to the diplomatic councils of Europe. They were not only valorous in the defence of their country but by the Latin charm of their race were adored by their subjects, and held in great favor by the dukes of Savoy, themselves allied by many inter-marriages with all the crowns of Europe. So important was the little Gruyère to the French kings and the emperors of Germany that, as has been related, they occupied themselves with its internal affairs, attempting to intervene in such matters as runaway marriages and the rival claims for succession. But the attitude of its rulers towards royal and imperial mandates was so independent, their maintenance of their feudal sovereignty was so tenacious that they preserved the high and happy ideals of their house, and were the last of the Swiss nobles to yield to the march of democracy.

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Their long rule, extending through six centuries of internal wars, during times when oppression was the prerogative of their order, was stained by no single act of cruelty. In the peculiar charm of their race, in the unique influence of their position in Europe, as in the unbroken length of their rule, the counts of Gruyère were the most important of all the noble Swiss families. Titles and aristocratic privileges have long since vanished from republican Switzerland, where liberty triumphant, the age-wrought jewel of a thousand years, shines clearly among the tumults of the warring nations. But remote among its mountains, a cherished place of pilgrimage and refreshment, the little feudal city still crowns its green hill, and in the Gruyère people the Celtic soul, undying fresh and free, still sings in their love songs and war songs, still speaks in their legends and tales of its birth in the morning of time.

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APPENDIX

The traditions of Romand Helvetia have preserved the memory of the establishment of Vandal or Burgundian hordes in that part of Gaul.

Thus has arisen the belief that the once wild region traversed by the river Sarine came into the possession of some chief of these tribes who there settled with his followers. The unavowed author (Bonsetten) of a history of the Counts of Gruyère is of the opinion that it is possible that, in accordance with the customs of the Germanic tribes, that Gruerius, the hero of the popular legend, or his warriors, might have carried a Grue (crane) as a symbol of a migratory race on their helmets or shields, and that the leader himself might have adopted the name Gruerius from the emblem. [Pg 140]

The theory, however, disagrees entirely with the tradition that the Burgundians were so fond of liberty that they bore the figure of a cat upon their banners. It is well known that the arms of Gruyère are a Grue on a scarlet field, and this circumstance alone has evidently given rise to the anonymous author's conjecture. His opinion not only has no positive proof to support it, but has no color of probability in its favor.

J. J. Hisely, author of "Le Comté de Gruyère."

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