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Title: The Silver Cross; Or, The Carpenter of Nazareth

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Translator: Daniel De Leon

Release Date: June 8, 2010 [EBook #32743]

Language: English

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OF NAZARETH ***

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THE SILVER CROSS

OR

The Carpenter of Nazareth

—————
A Translation from the French

OF

EUGENE SUE



NEW YORK:
Published by the **INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING Co.**,
23 Duane Street.

1899.

CHAPTER I, II, III, IV, V.

PREFACE.

Eugene Sue wrote in French a monumental work: "The Mysteries of the People," or "History of a Proletarian Family." It is a "work of fiction;" yet it is the best universal history extant: better than any work, avowedly on history, it graphically traces the special features of the several systems of class-rule as they have succeeded each other from epoch to epoch, together with the nature of the struggle between the contending classes. The "Law," "Order," "Patriotism," "Religion," etc., etc., that each successive tyrant class, despite its change of form, hysterically sought refuge in to justify its criminal existence whenever threatened; the varying economic causes of the oppression of the toilers; the mistakes incurred by these in their struggles for redress; the varying fortunes of the conflict;—all these social dramas are therein reproduced in a majestic series of "historic novels," covering leading and successive episodes in the history of the race.

The work here published in English garb is one of these historic novels. It is chosen because of its singular fitness to modern times in one important respect:—the unity of action of the oppressors, despite hostile politico-material interests and clashing religious views; the hypocrisy that typifies them all; the oneness of fundamental purpose that animates pulpit, professorial chair or public office in possession of a plundering class; and, last not least, the identity of the methods pursued and the pretences seized by the plundering and ruling class, at that long ago critical period in the history of the human race, when the pre-feudal colossus of the Roman Empire was, by force of its own power, beginning to strangle itself, and, at the present or third critical period, when the grand-child of that ROMAN SYSTEM and child of FEUDALISM,—CAPITALISM—, is now in turn, likewise by virtue of its own ripened colossal power, throttling itself to death, and, with its death throes, heralding the advent of a new civilization—the SOCIALIST SOCIAL SYSTEM.

"The Silver Cross," or "The Carpenter of Nazareth," is a pathetic page from history that holds the mirror up to the Capitalist Class—its orators, pulpiteers, politicians, lawyers, together with all its other menials of high and low degree—, and, by the reflexion cast, enlightens and warns.

D. D. L.

NEW YORK, Oct. 5, 1898.

THE SILVER CROSS

—OR:—

THE CARPENTER OF NAZARETH.

CHAPTER I.

It was about the fifteenth year of the reign of the Emperor Tiberius that I, Genevieve, a slave of Aurelia, the wife of a Roman named Gremion and located in Marseilles, departed from Marseilles with my mistress and her husband for Judea.

The dominion of the Romans, at that period, extended from one end of the world to the other. Judea had submitted to them, as a dependence of the province of Syria, governed by a magistrate from Rome. Several vessels departed from Marseilles for the country of the Israelites. My master, Gremion, a relative of the Roman Procurator in Judea named Pontius Pilate, was chosen to replace in that country the treasury-tribune, appointed to collect the taxes; for wherever the Roman dominion established itself, the exaction of taxes was established at the same time.

One evening there was, at Jerusalem, a grand supper at Pontius Pilate's, Procurator in the country of the Israelites, for the Emperor Tiberius.

Towards the decline of the day, the most brilliant society of the city repaired to the house of the Roman seigneur. His mansion, like that of all the rich persons of the country, was built of hewn stone, plastered over with chalk, and painted a red color.

This sumptuous residence was entered by a square court, surrounded by marble columns, forming a gallery. In the middle of this court there was a fountain, which spread a delicious freshness beneath the scorching sun of Arabia. An immense palm tree, planted near the fountain, covered it with its shade during the heat of day. Next came a vestibule filled with servants, and thence followed the dining hall, wainscotted with sandal wood, inlaid with ivory.

Around the table were ranged beds of cedar-wood, hung with rich draperies, on which the guests seated themselves during the repast. In accordance with the custom of the country, the women who partook of the dinner had each brought one of their slaves, who stood behind them during the feast. It was thus that I, Genevieve, witnessed the scenes I am about to narrate, having accompanied my mistress, Aurelia, to the house of Pontius Pilate.

The society was select. Amongst the most distinguished guests were remarked the Seigneur Baruch, a senator and doctor of law; the Seigneur Chusa, steward of the household of Herod, tetrarch or prince of Judea, under the protection of Rome; the Seigneur Gremion, newly arrived from Roman Gaul, as clerk of the treasury in Judea; the Seigneur Jonas, one of the richest bankers in Jerusalem; and lastly, the Seigneur Caiphus, one of the princes of the Hebrew church.

Amongst the number of women who were present at the feast were Lucretia, the wife of Pontius Pilate; Aurelia, the wife of Gremion; and Jane, the wife of Chusa. The two prettiest women of the assembly, who on this night supped with Pontius Pilate, were Jane and Aurelia. Jane had that beauty peculiar to the orientals; large black eyes, soft and piercing, and teeth of a snowy whiteness, which her dark complexion rendered still more dazzling. Her turban, of rich Tyrian cloth, and of a purple color, encircled by a heavy gold chain, the two ends fell one on each shoulder, encased her countenance half concealed by large tresses of black hair. She was dressed in a long white robe, leaving bare her arms loaded with gold bracelets. Over this robe, confined round her waist by a scarf of purple cloth, similar to the turban, she wore a sort of spencer of orange silk, without sleeves. The handsome features of Jane had an expression full of gentleness, and her smile expressed an engaging sweetness.

Aurelia, Gremion's wife, born of Roman parents, in southern Gaul, was also beautiful, and wore, according to the fashion of her country, two tunics, one a long one and red, the other short and clear blue; a gold band confined her chestnut hair; her complexion was as fair as that of Jane was dark; her large blue eyes beamed with delight, and her cheerful smile announced an unalterable good humor.

The senator Baruch, one of the most learned doctors of the law, occupied at this supper the place of honor. He appeared to be a perfect gourmand, for his green turban was almost constantly close to his plate; two or three times even he was obliged to loosen the belt that confined his flowing violet robe, adorned with long silver fringe. The gluttony of this fat seigneur made Jane and Aurelia often smile and whisper, new friends as they were, and seated next each other, and behind whom stood I, Genevieve, not losing one of their words, and equally attentive to all that was said by the guests.

The Seigneur Jonas, one of the richest bankers of Jerusalem, wearing a little yellow turban, and brown robe, and having a pointed grey beard, resembled a bird of prey; he conversed from time to time, in a suppressed tone, with doctor Baruch, who replied to him but rarely, and without interrupting himself in his eating, whilst the high priest Caiphus, Gremion, Pontius Pilate, and the other guests, also pursued their conversation.

Towards the conclusion of the supper, the doctor of law, beginning to be satisfied, wiped his greasy beard with the back of his hand, and said to the treasury-receiver, newly arrived in Judea:

'Seigneur Gremion, are you getting accustomed to our poor country? Ah! 'tis a great change for you, who arrive from Roman Gaul. What a long voyage you had!'

'I like to visit new countries,' replied Gremion, 'and I shall frequently have occasion to travel through this in order to overlook the bill-collectors.'

'Unfortunately for the Seigneur Gremion,' said the banker Jonas, 'he arrives in Judea at a most unhappy time.'

'Why so, seigneur?' inquired Gremion.

'Are not civil troubles always bad times?' replied the banker.

'No doubt, seigneur Jonas; but what troubles do you refer to?'

'My friend Jonas,' observed Baruch, the learned doctor, 'alludes to the deplorable disorders which that vagabond of Nazareth everywhere draws after him, and which increase every day.'

'Ah! yes,' said Gremion, 'that ancient journeyman carpenter of Galilee, born in a stable, and son of a plough maker? He is running about the country, they say, and you call him....'

'If we give him the name he deserves,' exclaimed the learned doctor in an angry tone, 'he would be called the vagabond, the impious, the seditious; but he bears the name of Jesus.'

'Right. A boaster,' said Pontius Pilate, shrugging his shoulders after emptying his cup, 'a fool, who talks to geese: nothing more.'

'Seigneur Pontius Pilate!' exclaimed the doctor of law in a tone of reproach: 'I do not comprehend you! What! You who represent here the august Emperor Tiberius, our protector, among us honest and peaceable people, for without your troops, the populace would long ago have risen against Herod; but prince, you pretend to be indifferent to the words and acts of this Nazarene; you treat him as a madman. Ah! Seigneur Pontius Pilate, to-day is not the first time I have told you this; madmen like this one are public pests!'

'And I repeat to you, seigneurs,' replied Pontius Pilate, extending his empty cup to his slave standing behind him, 'I repeat that you are wrong to alarm yourselves; let the Nazarene speak, and his words will pass like the wind.'

'Seigneur Baruch, you wish much harm to this young man of Nazareth, then!' said Jane in her gentle voice; 'you cannot hear his name pronounced without getting in a rage.'

'Certainly, I wish him harm,' replied the learned doctor; 'and it is but justice, for this Nazarene, who respects nothing, has not only insulted me, personally, but he has also insulted all my brethren of the senate in my person. For do you know what he dared to say in the Temple on seeing me pass?'

'Let us hear the terrible words, Seigneur Baruch,' said Jane, smiling; 'for they must indeed be frightful!'

'Frightful is not enough; 'tis abominable, monstrous, you must say!' replied the doctor of law; 'I was passing the Temple, then, the other day; I had just been dining with my neighbor, Samuel; at a distance I saw a group of beggars in rags, workmen, camel-drivers, men who let out asses, disreputable women, tattered children, and other individuals of the most dangerous sort; they were listening to a young man mounted on a stone. He was holding forth with all his power. Suddenly he pointed at me; all the vagabonds turn round towards me, and I hear the Nazarene, for it was he, I could have divined him simply from the circle round him, I heard the Nazarene say to these good-for-nothings, 'Beware of these doctors of the law, who love to parade in their long robes, to be saluted on the public place, to have the highest seats in the synagogues, and the best places at the feasts.'

'You will admit, Seigneur Pontius Pilate,' said Jonas the banker, 'that it is impossible for audacity and personality to go further.'

'But it seems to me,' said Aurelia to Jane quietly, in remarking to her that the learned doctor had precisely the seat of honor at the feast, 'it seems to me that the Seigneur Baruch has a great affection for these places.'

'That is the very reason why he is so furious against the young man of Nazareth, who has a horror of all hypocrisy,' replied Jane.

Baruch continued, more and more furious: "But here, dear seigneur, is something more abominable still: 'beware,' added the seditious vagabond, 'beware of those doctors of the law who devour the houses of the widows under pretence of making long prayers. These persons,' and the audacious fellow again pointed me out, 'these persons will be punished more rigorously than the others.' Yes, this is what I heard the Nazarene say in direct words. And now, Seigneur Pontius Pilate, I declare to you, if you do not repress at once this unbridled license, which dares attack the authority of the doctors of the law, that is, law and authority themselves, if they are thus allowed to signalize the senators with impunity to public scorn and contempt we are treading on a precipice!"

'Let him talk,' said Pontius Pilate, again emptying his cup; 'let him talk, and let us live and enjoy!'

"To live and enjoy is not possible, Seigneur Pontius Pilate, when we foresee great disasters,' replied the banker Jonas; 'I declare that the fears of my worthy friend Baruch are well-founded.— Yes, and like him I repeat, 'we are treading on a precipice;' this carpenter of Nazareth has an audacity that passes all bounds; he respects nothing, nothing; yesterday 'twas the law, authority, he attacked in their representatives; to-day 'tis the rich against whom he excites the dregs of the populace. Has he not dared to pronounce these execrable words: 'It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.'"

At this citation of the Seigneur Jonas, all the guests exclaimed, at one moment, "'Tis abominable!'

'What shall we come to?'

'To an abyss; as the Seigneur Baruch has so well demonstrated!'

'And so, all of us, who possess gold in our coffers, are thus doomed to eternal fire!'

'Compared to camels, that cannot pass through the eye of a needle!'

'And these monstrosities are said and repeated by the Nazarene to the dregs of the populace; to excite them to the pillage of the rich. Is it not basely flattering the detestable passions of these tattered vagabonds, whom Jesus of Nazareth takes such delight in, and with whom, they say, he gets drunk?'

'I cannot find fault with the fellow for being fond of wine,' said Pontius Pilate, laughing, and extending his cup to his slave. 'Drinkers are not dangerous men.'

"But this is not all," said Caiphus, the high priest: "not only does this Nazarene outrage law, authority, and the possession of riches; he attacks no less audaciously the religion of our fathers. Thus Deuteronomy explicitly says, 'You shall not lend in usury to your brother, but only to strangers'—remark well this, 'but only to strangers.' Well, despising the precepts of our holy religion, the Nazarene arrogates to himself the right of saying: 'Do good to all, and lend without expecting anything;' and he took care to add: 'You cannot serve God and Mammon.' So that religion declares formally that it is lawful to obtain a profit for one's money from strangers; whilst the Nazarene, blaspheming the holy scriptures in one of its most pre-eminent dogmas, denies what it affirms, and defends what it permits."

'My condition as a heathen,' replied Pontius Pilate, more and more good-humored, 'does not permit me to take part in such a discussion; I will inwardly invoke our god Bacchus. Some wine, slave! some wine!'

'Nevertheless, Seigneur Pontius Pilate,' said the banker, Jonas, who seemed with difficulty to restrain the rage which the indifference of the Roman caused him, 'even putting aside whatever sacrilege there may be in the proposition of the Nazarene, you will admit that it is one of the most outrageous; for, my seigneurs, I ask you, what would then become of our commerce?'

'Tis the ruin of public wealth!'

"What would they have me do with the gold in my coffers if I made no profit from it; if I lend 'without expecting anything,' as this audacious reformer says? It would make one laugh if it was not so odious."

'And it does not even concern an isolated attack, directed against our holy religion,' said Caiphus, the priest. 'With the Nazarene 'tis a settled plan to outrage and undermine at its base the faith of our fathers; here is a fresh proof: lately the sick were plunged into the pool of Bethesda.'

'Near the Gate of the Lambs?'

'Precisely; and the day was the Sabbath. Now you know, seigneurs, how sacred and solemn is the prohibition against doing anything whatsoever on the Sabbath day.'

'For a religious man, 'tis doing a terrible impiety.'

'Now judge of the Nazarene's conduct,' continued Caiphus: 'he goes to the pool, and observe, too, that by a cunning villany, and in order to ruin the physicians, he never receives a penny for cures, for he is deeply skilled in the healing art.'

'How could you imagine, Seigneur Caiphus, that a man who respects nothing would respect even the physicians?'

'The Nazarene arrives at the pool, then; he finds there, amongst others, a man whose foot was dislocated; he replaces it for him.'

'What! on the Sabbath day?'

'He dared!'

'Abomination of desolation!'

'Heal the sick on the Sabbath day!'

'What sacrilege!'

'Yes, seigneurs,' replied the high priest, in a mournful voice; 'he has committed this sacrilege.'

'Now, if the young man had not healed the sufferer,' said Aurelia to Jane, smiling, 'I could understand their rage.'

'Such an impiety deserves the worst punishment; for it is impossible to outrage religion more abominably!'

'And do not imagine,' continued Caiphus, 'that the Nazarene dissembles the sacrileges or

blushes at them; far from it; he blasphemes to that degree as to say that he laughs at the Sabbath, and that those who observe it are hypocrites.'

A general murmur of indignation acknowledged the words of the high priest, so abominable did the impiety of the Nazarene appear to the guests of Pontius Pilate; but the latter, emptying cup after cup, appeared to trouble himself no further as to what was being said around him.

'No, Seigneur Caiphus,' said the banker Jonas, with an air of amazement; 'if it were not you who affirmed such enormities, I should hesitate to believe them.'

'I speak to the purpose, for I had the happy idea, I think, of bribing some very artful fellows who feign to be the partizans of this Nazarene; they therefore make him speak; he yields without suspicion, converses frankly with our men, and then these come immediately and report all to us.'

'Twas a most excellent idea of yours, Seigneur Caiphus,' said Jonas the banker: 'honor to you!'

'It is, therefore, owing to these emissaries,' continued the high priest, 'that I was informed that the day before yesterday this Nazarene pronounced inflammatory words capable of inducing the slaves to cut the throats of their masters.'

'What a wretch!'

'But what does he want?'

'Seigneur, here are his words,' said Caiphus, 'listen well: 'The disciple is no more than the master, nor the slave more than his lord; 'tis enough for the disciple to be equal with his master, and for the slave with his lord.'''

A fresh murmur of furious indignation was heard. 'Only see the fine concession this Nazarene deigns to make to you,' exclaimed the banker Jonas.—'Really, 'tis enough for the slave to be equal to his lord! You concede us this, Jesus of Nazareth! You permit the slave not to be greater than his lord: many thanks!'

'And mark,' added the doctor of law, 'mark the consequences of these frightful doctrines, if they were ever published; and we may speak thus between ourselves, now that our servants have quitted the festive hall; for, in fact, the day on which the slave shall think himself the equal of his master, he will say to himself: if I am the equal of my master, he has no longer the right to keep me in servitude, and I have the right to rebel. Now, my lords, you know what such a revolt would be! It would be the end of society!'

'The end of the world!'

'Chaos!' exclaimed Doctor Baruch; 'for chaos must succeed to the unchaining of the most detestable popular passions, and the Nazarene only flatters them in order to unloosen them; he promises mountains and marvels to these miserables, to make proselytes of them; he flatters their hateful envy by telling them that at the day of judgment, the first shall be last, and the last shall be first.'

'Yes, in the kingdom of heaven,' said Jane, in a mild but firm voice: ''tis thus I understand the young master.'

'Ah! really?' said the Seigneur Chusa, her husband, in a sardonic tone, 'it simply alludes to the kingdom of heaven? You think so? Why then, some time ago, did one named Peter, one of his disciples, I believe, say to him in plain terms, 'Master, if we abandon all and follow thee, what shall we have in return for it?''

'This Peter was a cautious man,' said Jonas the banker, in a tone of raillery; 'this worthy didn't like working for nothing.'

'To this question of Peter's,' said Chusa, 'what did the Nazarene reply, in order to excite the cupidity of the brigands, whom sooner or later he will make his instruments?'

'He replied in these very words: 'He who abandons house, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children and fields for me and for the gospel, shall receive for the present a hundred fold more than he abandons, and in future ages, life eternal.'''

'For the present, that's quite clear,' said Doctor Baruch, 'he promises for the present to the men of his band a hundred houses in lieu of one they quit to follow him; a field a hundred times larger than that they abandon; and, in addition, for the future, in after ages, he assures these miscreants a life eternal! Now where will he obtain these hundred houses for one?' continued Jonas the banker: 'yes, where will he get them; these fields promised to the vagabonds? He will take them from us, the possessors of wealth, us, the camels, for whom the entrance to Paradise is as narrow as the eye of a needle, because we are rich.'

'I think, seigneurs,' said Jane, 'that you do not rightly interpret the words of the young master: they have a figurative sense.'

'Really!' exclaimed Jane's husband in a tone of irony: 'well, let us try this wonderful figure.'

'When Jesus of Nazareth says, that those who will follow him shall have for the present a hundred times more than what they abandon, he means by that, I think, that the consciousness of preaching good news, the love of our neighbor, the compassion for the suffering and the feeble,

will compensate fourfold for the renunciation we have imposed on ourselves.'

These wise and gentle words of Jane were but ill received by the guests of Pontius Pilate; and the high priest exclaimed:

'I pity your wife, Seigneur Chusa, for being like so many others, blinded by the Nazarene. He simply requires good materials; for here is something a little stronger. He has the audacity to send the vagabonds, whom he calls his disciples, to establish themselves, to eat and drink as they like in houses, without paying anything, under pretence of preaching in them his abominable doctrines.'

'How, seigneurs,' said Gremion, 'in your country such violences are possible, and remain unpunished? People come to your house and establish themselves by force, and eat and drink there under the pretence of holding forth?'

'Those who receive the disciples of the young man of Nazareth,' replied Jane, 'receive them voluntarily.'

'Yes,' said Jonas, 'some of them; but the majority of those who harbor these vagabonds yield to fear, to threats; or, according to the orders of the Nazarene, those who refuse to lodge these idle vagabonds are doomed by him to eternal fire.'

Fresh clamors arose at the narration of the further misdeeds of the Nazarene.

'Tis an intolerable tyranny!'

'There must be an end put to such indignities, however.'

'Tis an organized pillage!'

'Consequently,' said the banker Jonas, 'the Seigneur Baruch was perfectly right in saying, it is straight to chaos that this Nazarene is leading us, to whom nothing is sacred; for I repeat, not content with endeavoring to destroy the law, authority, property, and religion, he would, to crown his infernal work, destroy all family ties!'

'Why, he is your Beelzebub in person!' exclaimed Gremion.

'What! my lords, this Nazarene would annihilate all family ties!'

'Yes, annihilate them by dividing them,' said Caiphus: 'annihilate them by sowing discord and hatred in the domestic hearth! by arming the son against the father! and servants against their masters!'

'Seigneurs,' continued Gremion, with an air of doubt, 'can a project so abominable enter the head of a man?'

"Of a man, no," replied the high priest; "but of a Beelzebub like this Nazarene; here's the proof from the undoubted report of the emissaries, whom I spoke of; this cursed fellow pronounced the other day, the horrible words following, speaking to the bands of beggars who never quit him: 'Believe not that I have come to bring peace on earth, I have brought the sword: I am come to bring fire on the earth, and all my desire is that it may rise to a flame: it is disunion, I repeat, and not peace, that I bring you; I am come to sow division between the father and the son, the daughter and the mother, the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law: a man's own servants shall declare themselves his enemies; in every house of five persons, two of them shall be against the other three.'"

'Why, 'tis frightful!' exclaimed at once the banker Jonas, and the intendant Chusa.

'Tis preaching the dissolution of family by hatred.'

'Tis preaching civil war!' exclaimed Gremion, the Roman: 'social war, like that stirred up by Spartacus, the rebellious slave.'

"What! he has the hardihood to say, 'I am come to bring fire on the earth, and all I desire is that it may rise to a flame; a man's own servants shall declare themselves his enemies: in every house of five persons, there shall be two against the others!' it is, as he had the infernal audacity to say, 'bringing fire on the earth.'"

Jane had listened with painful impatience to all the accusations made against the Nazarene; she therefore cried with a firm and animated voice:

'Ah! my seigneurs, I am tired of listening to your calumnies; you do not comprehend the sense of the words of the young man of Nazareth to his disciples. When he speaks of the divisions that will spring up in families, it signifies that in one house, some sharing his doctrine of love and tenderness to one's neighbor, which he preaches from his heart and lips, and the others persisting in their hardness of heart, they shall be divided; he means that servants shall declare themselves the enemies of their masters, if the master has been wicked and unjust; he means, lastly, that in every family some shall be for and some against him.

'Can it be otherwise? He recommends the renunciation of riches; he proclaims the slave the equal of his master; he consoles, he pardons those who have sinned more in consequence of their misery and their ignorance than from a wicked nature. All men therefore cannot at once share his generous doctrines. What new truth did not at first cause division amongst them?'

'Thus the young man of Nazareth says, in his figurative language, that he is come to bring fire on earth, and that his desire is that it may kindle! Oh, yes, I believe so; for the fire of which he speaks is the ardent love of humanity with which his heart is fired.'

Jane, in thus expressing herself, in a calm and vibrating voice, looked still more handsome; Aurelia, her new friend, contemplated her with as much surprise as admiration. The guests of the Seigneur Pontius Pilate, on the contrary, raised murmurs of astonishment and indignation, and Chusa, Jane's husband, said to her harshly:

'You are mad, and I am ashamed of your words. It is incredible that a woman who respects herself can dare, without dying of confusion, defend such abominable doctrines, preached in the market-place, or in ignoble taverns, in the midst of vagabonds, thieves and prostitutes, the usual body-guard of the Nazarene.'

"The young man, replying to those who reproached him with this wicked congregation, did he not say," continued Jane in a voice still firm and sonorous: "It is not those who are well but those who are sick, who have need of the physician?" meaning by this parable that it is the people whose life is wicked who have especial need of being enlightened, supported, guided, loved; yes, I repeat, loved and consoled, to return to good; for mercy and gentleness do more than violence and punishment; and this tender and pious task, Jesus imposes on himself every day!"

'And for my part, I repeat to you,' exclaimed Chusa in a rage: 'that the Nazarene only thus flatters the detestable passions of the vile populace amidst which he passes his life, in order to make rebels of them, at a fitting opportunity, to declare himself their chief, and to deliver up all in Jerusalem and Judea to fire, sword, and pillage! since he has the audacity to say that he does not bring peace on earth, but the sword, but fire...'

These words of Herod's steward were greatly approved of by the guests of Pontius Pilate, who seemed more and more astonished at the silence of the Roman Procurator; for the latter, frequently emptying his large cup, smiled more and more good-humoredly at each enormity with which the young Nazarene was reproached. Aurelia had attentively listened to the wife of Herod's intendant so courageously defending the young preacher, so that she said to her quietly: 'Dear Jane, you cannot tell how desirous I am of seeing this young Nazarene of whom they speak so much evil, and of whom you speak so much good; he must be an extraordinary man!'

'Oh, yes; extraordinary for his beauty,' replied Jane softly: 'if you knew how gentle his voice is when speaking to the feeble, to the suffering, and to children, oh, especially to little children! He loves them to adoration; when he sees them his features assume a celestial expression.'

'Jane,' resumed Aurelia, smiling; 'he is very handsome, then?'

'Oh, yes, yes; handsome, handsome as an archangel!'

'How anxious I am to see him, to hear him!' continued Aurelia, in a manner more and more interested. 'But alas! how is it to be done, if he has always such an assemblage round him? A woman cannot risk herself in the taverns in which he preaches, as they say?'

Jane remained thoughtful for a moment, she then resumed: 'Who knows, dear Aurelia, perhaps we may find means to see and hear the young man of Nazareth.'

'Oh! speak,' exclaimed Aurelia, eagerly: 'speak at once, dear Jane; what means?'

'Silence, we are observed,' replied Jane, 'by and bye we will talk over it.'

In fact the Seigneur Chusa, very indignant at the obstinacy of his wife in defending the young Nazarene, occasionally threw upon her angry looks while conversing with Caiphus.

Pontius Pilate had once more emptied his large goblet, and with his cheeks inflamed, his eyes fixed and sparkling, and a complete stranger to all that was passing around him, he seemed to be enjoying an extreme inward beatitude. The Seigneur Baruch, after consulting in a low tone with Caiphus and the banker, said to the Roman: 'Seigneur Pontius Pilate!' But the Seigneur Pontius Pilate, smiling more and more to himself, made no reply; the doctor of law was obliged to touch him on the arm. The Procurator, now appearing to awake suddenly, said: 'Excuse me, my seigneurs, I was thinking, I was thinking of ..., but what is it all?'

'It is, Seigneur Pontius Pilate,' replied Doctor Baruch, 'that if, after all that my friends and myself have narrated to you of the abominable projects of this Nazarene, you do not proceed against him with the greatest rigour, you, the representative of the august Emperor Tiberius, the natural protector of Herod, our prince, it will happen that...'

'Well! what will happen, my seigneurs?'

'It will happen that before next Easter, Jerusalem, the whole of Judea, will be given up to pillage by the act of this Nazarene, whom the populace already calls the King of the Jews.'

Pontius Pilate replied, maintaining that tranquil and careless manner that characterized him: 'Come, my seigneurs, don't take bushes for forests, or molehills for mountains! Is it for me to remind you of your history? Is this boy of Nazareth the first who has bethought him of playing the part of a Messiah? Have you not had Judas the Galilean, who pretended that the Israelites were to acknowledge no master but God, and who endeavored to stir up the population against the power of us Romans? What happened? This Judas was put to death; and it shall be the same with

this young Nazarene if he thinks of exciting rebellion.'

'No doubt, seigneur,' replied Caiphus, the high priest.

'The Nazarene is not the first impostor who has proclaimed himself the Messiah which our holy scriptures have announced for so many ages. For fifty years past, not to speak of recent facts, Jonathan, and after him, Simon, the magician, surnamed the Great Virtue of God; then Barkokebah, the Son of the Star, and many other pretended Messiahs or Saviors, and regenerators of the country of Israel! But none of these cheats had the influence of this Nazarene, and especially his infernal audacity; they did not, like him, furiously attack the rich, the doctors of law, the priests, family, and religion; in fact, all that should be respected, under pain of seeing Israel fall into chaos.

'Those other impostors did not address themselves specially and constantly, like the Nazarene, to the dregs of the populace, of which he disposes in a fearful manner; for indeed, only lately the Seigneur Baruch, weary of the public outrages with which the Nazarene pursued the Pharisees, that is, the most respectable persons of Jerusalem, who profess the pharisaical opinions, so honest, so moderate in all things, the Seigneur Baruch, I say, wished to imprison the Nazarene; but the attitude of the populace became so menacing that my noble friend Baruch dared not give the order to arrest this wicked man.

'Thus, then, Seigneur Pontius Pilate, you have at your disposal a considerable armed force: if you do not come to our aid, who have at our disposition only a feeble militia, a portion of which is no less infected than the populace with the detestable doctrines of the Nazarene, we will not answer for the public peace; and a popular rising against your own troops is possible.'

'Oh! as to that, my seigneur,' replied Pontius Pilate, smiling, 'you will find me the first prepared, helmet on head, cuirass on back, and sword in hand, if the Nazarene dare revolt the populace against my troops; as for the rest, by Jupiter, unravel your skein yourselves if 'tis in a mess, my seigneurs: these interior affairs concern you alone, you senators of the city. Arrest the young man, imprison him, crucify him if he deserves it, 'tis your right, make use of it; as for me, I represent here the emperor, my master; as long as his power is not attacked, I shall not budge.'

"And besides, Seigneur Procurator," said Jane, "has not the young man of Nazareth said: 'Render unto God that which is God's, and unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's?'"

'Tis true, noble Jane,' replied Pontius Pilate; 'and there is a wide difference between that and a wish to stir up the people against the Roman.'

'But do you not see, then, seigneur,' exclaimed Doctor Baruch, 'that this cheat acts in this way from hypocrisy, that he might not arouse your suspicions, and that, the hour arrived, he will call the populace to arms?'

'In that event, my seigneurs,' replied Pontius Pilate, again emptying his cup, 'the Nazarene will find me prepared to receive him at the head of my cohorts; but until then I have nothing to do with your broils.'

At this moment a Roman officer entered in a state of bewilderment, and said to Pontius Pilate: 'Seigneur Procurator, strange news has just arrived here.'

'What is it?'

'A great popular emotion is caused by Jesus of Nazareth.'

'Poor young man!' said Aurelia, addressing Jane: 'he is the sport of misfortune; every one is against him!'

'Let us listen,' said Jane anxiously: 'let us listen!'

'You see, Seigneur Pontius Pilate,' exclaimed at the same time the high priest, the doctor, and the banker, 'not a day passes on which this Nazarene does not disturb the public peace.'

'Answer me,' said the governor to the officer:—'what does it concern?'

"Some people arrived from Bethany pretend that three days ago, Jesus of Nazareth brought the dead to life: all the people in the town are in extraordinary commotion; bands of ragged fellows are at the present moment running about the streets of Jerusalem, with torches crying: 'Glory to Jesus of Nazareth, who brings the dead to life!'"

'The audacious knave!' exclaimed Caiphus: 'to try to imitate our holy prophets! to imitate Elias, who resuscitated the son of the widow: of Elisha, who resuscitated Joreb! Profanation, profanation!'

'He is an impostor!' exclaimed Jonas: ''tis impious, sacrilegious deception! Our holy scriptures announce that the Messiah shall bring the dead to life. The Nazarene would play his character to the end.'

'They go so far as to give the name of the dead man resuscitated,' observed the officer: 'he is named Lazarus!'

'I demand from the Seigneur Pontius Pilate,' exclaimed Caiphus, 'that they discover and arrest this Lazarus on the instant!'

'There must be an example,' exclaimed the doctor of law: 'this Lazarus must be hung! this will teach him to come to life!'

'Do you hear them? they will put this poor man to death,' said Aurelia, addressing Jane, and shrugging her shoulders: 'to lose one's life, because we have regained it despite ourself! for they will not accuse him, I suppose, of soliciting to be resuscitated: decidedly they are mad.'

'Alas! dear Aurelia,' said Chusa's wife mournfully, 'there are wicked madmen.'

'I repeat,' exclaimed Doctor Baruch, 'that this Lazarus must be hung.'

'Stuff! my seigneurs: why, look you, here is an honest corpse sleeping tranquilly in its sepulchre, not thinking of any harm; he is brought to life; he cannot help it, and you would have me hang him for this?'

'Yes, seigneur,' exclaimed Caiphus; 'we must extirpate the disease at the root; for if this Nazarene now takes to resuscitating the dead...'

'It is impossible to foresee where it will end,' cried Doctor Baruch: 'I therefore formally demand of the Seigneur Pontius Pilate, that this audacious Lazarus be put to death!'

'But, seigneur,' said Aurelia, 'suppose you hang him, and the young Nazarene resuscitates him again?'

'We will hang him again! Dame Aurelia!' exclaimed Jonas, the banker: 'We will hang him again! By Joshua! it would be a joke to yield to these vagabonds!'

'My seigneurs!' said Pontius Pilate: 'you have your militia, arrest and hang this Lazarus, if you like; but you will be more unmerciful than we heathens, whether Greeks or Romans, who, like you, have had our resuscitated. But, by Jupiter! we do not hang them; for I have heard it said that quite recently Apollonius of Tyana resuscitated a young girl, whose funeral he met, followed by her betrothed in great trouble. Apollonius spoke a few magic words, the young girl issued from her coffin, more fresh, more charming than ever. The marriage took place, and the pair lived very happy.'

'Would you then have the poor girl die a second time, my seigneurs?' inquired Aurelia.

'Yes, certainly,' replied Caiphus, 'if she was the accomplice of an impostor; and since the seigneur Procurator leaves us abandoned to our own forces, I and my worthy friend Baruch will quit you, that we may give instant orders relative to the arrest of this Lazarus.'

'Do so, my seigneurs,' replied Pontius Pilate, rising, 'you are senators of your city.'

'Seigneur Gremion,' said Chusa, the steward of Herod's household, 'I must depart the day after to-morrow for Bethlehem: if you would like that we should travel in company, I will anticipate my departure by a day, and will start to-morrow morning, we shall return in two or three days; I shall take advantage of your escort, for in these troubled times it is right to be well accompanied.'

'I accept your offer, Seigneur Chusa,' replied the treasury-receiver; 'I shall be delighted to journey with some one who, like yourself, knows the country.'

'Dear Aurelia,' said Jane to her friend softly, 'you wish to see the young man of Nazareth?'

'Oh! more than ever, dear Jane; all that I hear redoubles my curiosity.'

'Come to my house to-morrow, after the departure of my husband,' resumed Jane in a low tone, 'and perhaps we may find means of satisfying you.'

'But how?'

'I will tell you, dear Aurelia.'

'To-morrow then, dear Jane.'

And the two young women quitted, in company with their husbands and me, the slave Genevieve, the house of Pontius Pilate.

CHAPTER II.

The tavern of the Wild Ass was the usual resort of the conductors of camels, of the men who let out donkeys, of porters, pedlars, vendors of water melons, pomegranates, of fresh dates, when in season, and later of preserved olives and dry dates. In this tavern were also to be found men of no profession, prostitutes of the lowest class, beggars, vagabonds, and those worthy fellows whose armed protection was purchased by travellers when they repaired from one town to another, in order to be defended against the highwayman by this escort often very much suspected. There might also be seen those Roman slaves brought by their masters into the country of the Hebrews.

This tavern had a bad reputation; disputes and quarrels were frequent there, and at the approach of night none were seen to venture in the neighborhood of the *Lamb's-gate*, not far from which this den was situated, but men of suspicious figure or women of a low class; then, night having completely set in, from this dreaded place issued cries, bursts of laughter, bacchanalian songs; frequently painful groans succeeded to the disputes; from time to time some men of the Jerusalem militia entered the tavern under pretence of establishing peace and quietness, and left it, either more drunk and disorderly than the drinkers, or driven out with sticks and stones.

On the day following that on which the supper at Pontius Pilate's had taken place, towards the evening about dusk, two young men, plainly dressed in white tunics and turbans of blue cloth, were walking through a narrow winding street, at the end of which was perceived the door of the dreaded tavern; they conversed as they advanced, and frequently turned their heads towards one of the extremities of the street, as if they expected the appearance of some one.

'Genevieve,' said one to his companion stopping (these two pretended young men were Aurelia and her slave, disguised under masculine garments), 'Genevieve, my new friend Jane is late in coming, this alarms me; and besides, if I must confess it, I am afraid of committing some folly.'

'In that case, my dear mistress, let us return home.'

'I have a great mind to; but then shall I ever meet with such an opportunity again?'

'It is true that the absence of the Seigneur Gremion, your husband, who departed this morning with the Seigneur Chusa, steward of Herod the prince, leaves you completely free, and that perhaps for some time you may not enjoy quite so much liberty.'

'Confess, Genevieve, that you are still more curious than I am to see this extraordinary man, this young Nazarene?'

'Were it so, my dear mistress, there would be nothing astonishing in my desire; I am a slave, and the Nazarene says that there ought to be no longer slaves.'

'I render your slavery very hard, then, Genevieve?'

'No, oh! no! But sincerely, do you know many mistresses who resemble you?'

'It is not for me to reply to that, flatterer!—'

'It is for me to say so. If by chance we meet with one good mistress like you, there are a hundred who, for a word, or the slightest negligence, mutilate their slaves with the lash, or torture them with a cruel joy. Is this true?'

'I do not deny it.'

'You render my servitude as mild as possible, my dear mistress; but still I do not belong to myself. I have been obliged to separate from my poor Fergan, my husband, who wept so on quitting me. What assures me that on your return I shall find him at Marseilles, that he has not been sold and carried I know not where? What assures me that the Seigneur Gremion will not sell me, or separate me from you?'

'I have promised you that you shall not quit me.'

'But if your husband wishes to sell me, you could not prevent him.'

'Alas! no.'

'And a hundred years ago, the fathers and mothers of us Gauls were free; however Fergan's ancestors were the most valiant chiefs of their tribe!'

'Oh!' said Aurelia, smiling, 'the daughters of a Cæsar would not be more proud of having an emperor as a father than you are, of what you call the father of your husband.'

'Pride is not permitted to slaves,' replied Genevieve mournfully; 'all that I regret, is our liberty. What have we done, then, to lose it? Ah! if the prayers of this young man of Nazareth are answered! if there are to be no more slaves!'

'No more slaves? Why, Genevieve, you are mad; is it possible! No more slaves? That their life be rendered as sweet as possible, be it so; but no more slaves would be the end of the world.—Look you, Genevieve, it is these exaggerations that do so much harm to this young Nazarene.'

'He is not believed by the rich and powerful.—Yesterday, at the supper with Pontius Pilate, standing behind you, I did not lose a word. What bitterness against this young man!'

'What would you, Genevieve?' replied Aurelia smiling; 'tis a little his own fault.'

'You, too, accuse him?'

'No, but still he attacks the bankers, the doctors of law, the physicians, the priests, all those hypocrites in fact, who, Jane tells me, belong to pharisaical opinions. It requires no more to ruin him forever.'

'It is courageous at least, to speak these truths to wicked men, and this young man of Nazareth is as good as he is courageous, according to Jane, your friend. She is rich, and held in

consideration; she is not a slave like me; he does not preach in her favor therefore, and yet see how she admires him!

'This admiration of a sweet and charming woman testifies, it is true, in favor of this young man; for Jane, with her noble heart, would be incapable of admiring the wicked. What an amiable friend chance has given me in her! I know nothing more tender than her look, or more penetrating than her voice. She says that when this Nazarene speaks to those who are suffering, to the poor and to the little children, his face becomes divine. I don't know, but what is certain is, that the face of Jane becomes celestial when she speaks of him.'

'Is it not she who is approaching on this side, my dear mistress?'

'I hear a gentle step in the shade.'

'It must be her.'

In fact, Jane, also dressed as a young man, had soon joined Aurelia and her slave. 'You have been waiting for me some time, perhaps, Aurelia?' said the young woman; 'but I could not secretly leave my house before this hour.'

'Jane, I do not feel myself quite easy; I am perhaps still more timid than curious. Only think, women of our condition in this horrible tavern, where, as they say, the dregs of the populace assemble.'

'Be not afraid; these people are more turbulent and frightful to look at than really wicked. I have already been among them twice under this disguise with one of my relations to hear the young master. The tavern is but feebly lighted; round the court runs a dark gallery where we shall not be seen.—We will order a jug of beer, and they will not trouble themselves about us; they are only occupied with the young man of Nazareth, or in his absence, with his disciples, who come to preach good news. Come, Aurelia, it is late, come.'

'Listen! listen!' said the young woman to Jane, turning her ear toward the tavern with some uneasiness; 'hear you those cries? They are disputing in that horrible place!'

'That proves that the young master is not yet arrived,' replied Jane; 'for in his presence every voice is silent, and the most violent become as gentle as lambs.'

'And besides, Jane, just look at that group of men and women of evil mien, collected before the door by the light of that lantern. Pray, let us wait till they have passed on or entered the tavern.'

'Come, there is nothing to fear, I tell you.'

'No, I entreat you, Jane: another moment.—Really, I admire your bravery!'

'Oh! 'tis because Jesus of Nazareth inspires courage as he inspires gentleness towards the guilty, tenderness for him who suffers. And then, if you knew how natural his language is! what touching and ingenuous parables he finds to bring his ideas within reach of simple men, of the poor in mind as he calls them, and whom he loves so! Thus, all, even the little children, for whom he has so great a liking, understand his words and lose not a syllable. Undoubtedly, before him, other Messiahs have prophesied the deliverance of our country oppressed by the stranger, have explained our holy scriptures, and have by the magical means of medicine treated diseases thought incurable; but none of these Messiahs have hitherto shown that patient sweetness with which the young master teaches the humble and the young, all in fact; for with him there are no infidels, no heathens; every good and simple heart for the very reason that it is good is worthy of the kingdom of heaven. Don't you know his parable of the heathen? Nothing is more simple and more touching.'

'No, Jane, I do not know it.'

''Tis the last I heard him preach. It is called the Good Samaritan.'

'What is a Samaritan?'

'The Samaritans are an idolatrous people, beyond the farthest mountains of Judea; the high priests regard these people as excluded from the kingdom of God. Here is the parable:

'A man who was going to Jerusalem fell into the hands of robbers; they pillaged him, covered him with wounds, and went on their way leaving him half dead.

'It so happened afterwards that a Priest went the same road, who having perceived the wounded man, passed on.

'A Levite, who approached the same place, having noticed the wounded man, also passed on.

'But a Samaritan, who was travelling, came to the spot where the man was, and seeing him, he was moved with compassion, approached him, poured oil and wine upon his wounds, bandaged them, and having placed him on his horse, he led him to an hostelry and took care of him.

'The next morning the Samaritan drew two penny pieces from his pocket, gave them to the host, and said to him: 'Pay attention to this man; all that you expend beyond this, I will repay you.'

'Now,' inquired Jesus of his disciples, 'which of these three men, think you, was the neighbor of

him who had fallen into the hands of the robbers?'

'It is he,' they replied to Jesus, 'who was merciful to the wounded man.'

'Go in peace, then, and do likewise,' replied Jesus, with a heavenly smile.

Genevieve the slave, on hearing this recital, could not restrain her tears, for Jane had accented with ineffable sweetness the last words of Jesus: 'Go, then, in peace, and do likewise.'

'You are right, Jane,' said Aurelia, musing; 'a child would comprehend the meaning of these words, and I feel myself moved.'

'And yet, this parable,' continued Jane, 'is one of those which have the most irritated the high priests and the doctors of law against the young man of Nazareth.'

'And why?'

'Because in this narrative he shows a Samaritan, a heathen, more humane than the Levite, than the Priest, since this idolator, seeing a brother in the wounded man, succored him, and thus renders himself more worthy of heaven than the two holy men of hard hearts. This, you see, is just what the enemies of Jesus call blasphemies, sacrileges!'

'Jane, let us go to the tavern. I have no longer any fear of entering this place. People for whom such narratives are invented, and who listen to them with avidity, cannot be wicked.'

'You see, my dear Aurelia, the words of the Nazarene already act upon you; they give you confidence and courage. Come, come.'

The young woman took the arm of her friend; both, followed by the slave Genevieve, turned their steps towards the tavern of the 'Wild Ass,' where they soon arrived.

This tavern, a square built house, like most in the East, was composed of an interior court surrounded with stout pillars, supporting a terrace and forming four galleries, beneath which the drinkers could retire in case of rain; but the night being mild and serene, the majority of the customers were at tables in the court, lighted by a large iron lamp in the middle of the court. This unique luminary, but feebly lighting the galleries, in which were also some drinkers, they remained completely obscured.

It was to one of these gloomy retreats that Jane, Aurelia and the slave Genevieve, directed their steps; they saw in passing through the crowd, then somewhat noisy, many persons in rags or poorly clad, women of immoral life, miserably attired, had as a turban, a scrap of white sackcloth; some others, on the contrary, wore robes and turbans of precious stuff, but faded; bracelets, earrings and necklaces in copper, ornamented with false stones; their cheeks were covered with a brilliant paint; their haggard and sorrowful countenance, and a stamp of bitterness, which revealed itself even in their noisy and intemperate joy, told quite enough of the miseries, the anguish, and the shame of their sad life as courtezans.

Amongst the men, some appeared dispirited by poverty, others had a bold and audacious air; several wore rusty weapons at their girdle, or leant upon their long sticks terminated by a ball of iron; elsewhere might be recognized by their iron collar and shaven head, the domestic slaves belonging to Roman officers; further on, the infirm, in rags, were seated on the ground in crutches.

Mothers held in their arms their infant children, pale and thin, whom they hugged with a regard tenderly anxious, no doubt also awaiting the arrival of the young Nazarene, so skilled in the healing art.

Genevieve, from some words exchanged between two men well dressed, but of harsh and disagreeable features, guessed that they were the secret emissaries whom the high priests and doctors of the law made use of to note the words of the Nazarene, and draw him into a snare of an imprudent confidence.

Jane, more bold than her friend, had made a passage for her through the crowd; seeing a table unoccupied, placed in the shade and behind one of the pillars of the galleries, the wife of the Seigneur Chusa seated herself at it with Aurelia, and demanded a jug of beer from one of the girls of the tavern, whilst Genevieve, standing by the side of her mistress, did not lose sight of the two emissaries of the pharisees, and greedily listened to all that was said round about her.

'The night advances,' said a young and handsome woman mournfully to one of her companions seated at a table before her, and whose cheeks were like her own, covered with paint, as was customary with courtezans.'

'Jesus of Nazareth will not come here to-night.'

'Twas scarcely worth while to come here; we could have taken a walk in the neighborhood of the Pool: and there some Roman officer, half drunk, or some doctor of law, hugging the walls, his nose in his cloak, would have given us a supper. You must not complain, Oliba, if we go to our couch supperless: 'twas your wish.'

'That sort of bread seems to me now so bitter, that I do not regret it.'

'Bitter or not, it was bread, and when we are hungry, we must eat.'

'In listening to the words of Jesus,' replied the other courtesan, mildly, 'I should have forgotten hunger.'

'Oliba, you will become mad. To feed upon words!'

'The words of Jesus always say: pardon, mercy, love; and hitherto for us there was nothing but words of scorn and contempt!' And the courtesan remained pensive, her forehead resting upon her hand.

'You are a strange girl, Oliba,' continued the other, 'but however, empty as it is, we shall not have even this supper of words; for the Nazarene will not come now: it is too late.'

'On the contrary, I trust the all powerful God may direct him here!' said a poor woman seated on the ground near the two courtesans, and holding in her arms a sickly child:—

'I am come from Bethlehem on foot to pray our good Jesus to cure my poor little babe; he is unparalleled for the cure of diseases of children, and far from being paid for his advices, he often gives you something wherewith to purchase the balsams he prescribes.'

'By the body of Solomon! I, too, hope that our friend Jesus will come here to-night,' observed a tall man, with a ferocious face, and a long stiff beard, dressed in a red rag of a turban, and a short robe of camel's hair, almost in rags, confined at the waist by a cord supporting a large rusty cutlass without a sheath. This man also held in his hand a long stick with an iron knob at the point.

'If our worthy friend of Nazareth does not come to-night, I shall have lost my time for nothing, for I had engaged to escort a traveller who feared going alone from Jerusalem to Bethlehem lest he should meet with unpleasant encounters.'

'Just look at that bandit, with his hang-dog face and his grand cutlass! Does he not look like a very safe escort?' quietly said to his companion one of the two emissaries, seated not very far from Genevieve.

'What a daring villain!'

'He would have murdered and robbed the too confident traveller in the first bye way!' said the other emissary.

'As true as my name is Banaias!' continued the man with the cutlass, 'I should have lost without regret this little godsend of escorting a traveller if our friend of Nazareth had come, I like the man. I must say! he consoles you not a little for wearing rags, by showing that since they can no more enter into paradise than a camel can pass through the eye of a needle, all the wicked rich will one day be roasted like capons in Beelzebub's kitchen. This neither fills our belly or our purse, it's true, but it is a consolation; so I shall pass whole days and nights listening to his overhauling the priests, the doctors of law and the other pharisees! And our friend does well, for we must hear these pharisees. If you are brought before their tribunal for some trifle, they can only say, 'Quick to gaol or to the lash! thief! villain! firebrand of hell! son of Satan!' and other paternal remonstrances. By the nose of Ezekiel! do they think thus to ruin men? The cursed fools don't know, then, that many a horse, restive to the whip, will obey the voice. But our friend of Nazareth knows it well, when he said to us the other day, 'If your brother has sinned against you, take him back; if he repents, pardon him.' That's talking; for, by the ear of Melchisedeck! I am not as tender and benign as the pascal lamb. No, no: I have had time to harden my heart, my head and my skin.—Twenty years ago, my father drove me from his house for a youthful folly. Since then I have lived at loggerheads with the devil. I am just as difficult to bridle as a wild ass. And yet, on the faith of Banaias! by a single word of his gentle voice, our friend of Nazareth could make me go to the end of the world.'

'If Jesus cannot come,' said another drinker, 'he will send one of his disciples to inform us, and to preach to us good news in the name of his master.'

'For want of a cake of fine wheaten flour kneaded with honey, we eat barley bread,' said an old mendicant bent with age.

'The words of the disciples are good: that of the master is better.'

'Oh, yes!' observed another old mendicant; 'to us who have despaired since our birth, he gives eternal hope.'

'Jesus teaches us that we are not below our masters,' said a slave of gloomy appearance.

'Now, since we are as good as our masters, by what right do they keep us in slavery?'

'Is it because if there are a hundred masters on one side, we are ten thousand slaves on the other?' observed a second.

'Patience, patience! a day will come when we shall reckon our masters, and reckon ourselves afterwards; after which will be accomplished the words of Jesus, 'The first shall be last, and the last shall be first.' He has said to us artizans, who, by the burden of taxes and the avarice of sellers, are often in want of bread and garments, as also our wives and children, 'Be not disquieted; God, our father, provides apparel for the lilies of the valley, and food for the young sparrows: a day will come in which you shall want nothing.' Yes, for Jesus has also said this, 'Put neither gold, nor silver, nor money in your purse, nor sack for your journey, nor two coats, nor

shoes, for he who works deserves to be maintained.'

'Here's the master! here's the master!' said several persons, placed near the door of the tavern; 'there's our friend!'

At these words there was a great movement in the tavern. Aurelia, not less curious than her slave Genevieve, mounted on a stool, the better to see the young man. Their expectation was disappointed; it was not yet him; it was Peter, one of his disciples.

'And Jesus!' they all demanded of him in one voice: 'where is he?'

'Will not the Nazarene come then?'

'Shall we not see our friend, the friend of the afflicted!'

'I, Judas and Simon, were accompanying him,' replied Peter, 'when at the door of the town, a poor woman seeing us pass, entreated the master to enter to see her sick daughter. He did so. He has kept Judas and Simon with him, and has sent me to you. Those who have need of him have only to wait here; he will soon come.'

The words of the disciple calmed the impatience of the crowd, and Banaias, the man with the long cutlass, said to Peter, 'Whilst talking of the master, talk to us of him: tell us the good news. Does the time approach when the gluttons, whose bellies grow fat in proportion as ours grow lean, will have nothing but the coals and brimstone of hell to fatten upon?'

'Yes, the time approaches!' said Peter mounting on a bench, 'yes, the time is coming, as comes the night of storm charged with the thunder and the lightning! Has not the Lord said, by the voice of his prophets, 'I will send my angel, who shall prepare the way before me?'

'Yes, yes,' cried several voices: 'yes, the prophets have announced it!'

'Who is this angel?' said Peter: 'who is this angel, unless Jesus our master, the Messiah, the only true Messiah.'

'Yes, 'tis he!'

'He is the promised angel! he is the true Messiah!'

'And this angel having prepared the way, what says the Lord through his prophets?' continued Peter. 'And I will come near to you to judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against false swearers, and against those who oppress the workman in his wages, against those who oppress the widow, the orphan, and the stranger, without having fear of me.' Has not the Lord again said, 'There is a race whose teeth are thorns, and who use them as knives to devour those who have nothing on the earth, and who are poor amongst men?'

'If this race has knives for teeth,' said Banaias, placing his hand on his cutlass, 'we will bite with ours!'

'Oh, may the day come when those shall be judged who oppress the workman in his wages, and I will denounce to the vengeance of the Lord the banker Jonas!' said a workman.

'He made me work secretly on the panels of the Chamber of Festivals on the Sabbath days, and he withheld my wages on those days. I determined to complain. He threatened to denounce me to the high priest as a profaner of the holy days, and to have me thrown into prison!'

'And why did the banker Jonas unjustly withhold your salary?' continued Peter; 'because, as the prophet again says, 'Avarice is like the horse-leech; it hath two daughters, crying, 'give! give!'

'And these great bloodsuckers,' exclaimed Banaias, 'shall they not one day disgorge all the blood they have sucked from the poor workmen, widows and orphans?'

'Yes, yes,' replied the disciple, 'our prophets and Jesus have announced, 'For them shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; but when once the tares, which stifle the grain, is separated, the wicked kings, the avaricious, and the usurers extirpated from the earth, all the juices of which they suck out, then shall come the day of happiness for all, justice for all; and this day arrived,' say the prophets, 'people shall no longer arm themselves against each other; their swords shall be turned into reaping hooks, their lances into spades; one nation shall no longer declare war against another nation; they shall no longer make war, but each shall sit beneath his own fig-tree or his vine, without fear of any one; the work of justice shall be the security, the peace and the happiness of every one. At that time, lastly, the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the lion and the sheep shall rest together, and a little child shall lead them all.'

This charming picture of universal peace and happiness appeared to make a deep impression on Peter's auditory. Many voices exclaimed:

'Oh! may these times come! for where is the use of people murdering people?'

'What bloodshed!'

'And who profits by it? The conquering Pharaohs! Men of blood, of battle, and of rapine.'

'Oh! may the time of happiness, justice and gentleness come; and, as the prophets say, 'a little

child shall lead us all.'

'Yes, a little child will suffice; for we shall be gentle because we shall be happy,' said Banaias; 'whereas now we are so unhappy, so enraged, that a hundred giants would not be sufficient to restrain us.'

'And these times come,' continued Peter; 'all having a share in the good of the earth, fertilized by the labor of each, all being sure of living in peace and contentment, we shall no longer see the idle living on the fruits of another's labor. Has not the Lord said through the son of David, one of his elected:

"I hated all my labor which I have taken under the sun, because I should leave it to the man that should come after me.

"For there is a man who labors with wisdom, with science, and with industry, and he shall leave all he has acquired to a man who has given to it no labor: and who knows not if he will be prudent or foolish?

"Now, this is vanity and great affliction."

'You know,' added the apostle, 'the voice of the son of David is as sacred as justice. No, he who has not labored ought not to profit by the labor of another!'

'But suppose I have a child,' said a voice; 'suppose, by depriving myself of sleep, and a portion of my daily bread, I continue to spare something for him, that he might not know the miseries I have suffered, is it unjust, then?'

'Eh! who speaks to you of the present?' exclaimed Peter; 'who speaks to you of these times, in which the strong oppress the weak, the rich the poor, the unjust the just, the master the slave? In times of storm and tempest, each builds up as he can a shelter for him and his: this is but right.— But when the time promised by our prophets shall come, a divine time, when a benificent sun shall always blaze, when there shall be no more storms, when the birth of every child shall be welcomed by joyous songs, as a blessing from the Lord, instead of being lamented as an affliction, as at present; because, conceived in tears, man, in our time, lives and dies in tears; when, on the contrary, the child conceived in joy, shall live in joy; when labor, now crushing, shall be itself a joy, so shall the fruits of the promised land be abundant; each tranquil as to the prosperity of his children, shall no longer have to think for them, to lay up treasures for them, by depriving himself, and wasting away by over-fatigue. No, no: when Israel shall at length enjoy the kingdom of God, each shall labor for all, and all shall enjoy the labor of each.'

'Whereas now,' said the artizan, who had complained of the injustice of the banker Jonas, 'all labor for a few, these few labor for no one, and benefit from the labor of all.'

'But for those,' replied Peter, 'our master of Nazareth hath said: 'The son of man shall send his angels, who shall gather together and carry out of his kingdom all who are scandalous, and who commit iniquity; these shall be thrown into a fiery furnace, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

'And it will be justice,' said Oliba the courtezan; 'is it not they who force us to sell our bodies to escape the gnashing of teeth caused by hunger?'

'Is it not they who force mothers to make a traffic of their daughters rather than see them die of misery?' said another courtezan.

'Oh! when will the day of justice come?'

'It comes, it approaches,' replied Peter in a loud voice; 'for evil, and iniquity and violence are everywhere; not only here in Juda, but throughout the whole world, which is the Roman world. Oh! the woes of Israel are nothing; no, nothing in comparison to the woes that afflict the nations, her sisters! The whole universe groans and bleeds beneath the triple yoke of Roman ferocity, debauchery, and cupidity! From one end of the earth to the other, from Syria to oppressed Gaul, we hear nothing but the clank of chains and the groans of the slaves crushed with labor; unhappy amongst the unhappy! they sweat blood from every pore! More to be pitied than the wild beast dying in his den, or the beast of burthen dying on his litter; these slaves are tortured, are killed, or given at pleasure to the teeth of wild beasts! Do valiant peoples like the Gauls seek to break their chains, they are drowned in their own blood; and I, I speak the truth to you, in the name of Jesus, our master; yes, I tell you the truth, this cannot last.'

'No, no!' exclaimed several voices; 'no, this cannot endure!'

'Our master is grieved,' continued the disciple; 'oh! grieved to the death in thinking of the horrible miseries, the vengeance, and fearful reprisals which so many ages of oppression and iniquity will let loose upon the earth. The day before yesterday, at Bethlehem, our master said to us:

"When you hear of sedition and wars, be not alarmed; these things must arrive first, but their end will not come so soon."

'Listen,' said several voices, 'listen.'

"We shall see," added Jesus, "people rise against people, kingdom against kingdom; so shall men pine away with fear in the expectation of all that is to happen in the universe, for the virtues

of heaven shall be shaken."

A sullen murmur of fear circulated through the crowd at these prophecies of Jesus of Nazareth recounted by Peter, and several voices exclaimed:—

'Mighty storms, then, will burst forth in heaven.'

'So much the better; these clouds of iniquity must burst, that the heavens may be cleared and the eternal sun be resplendent.'

'And if they gnash their teeth on earth before grinding them in eternal fire, these rich, these high priests, these crowned king Pharaoh's, they have brought it on themselves,' exclaimed Banaias; 'they have brought it on themselves.'

'Yes, yes, it's true.'

'Oh!' continued Banaias, 'this is not the first time the prophets have shouted in their ears!'

'Amend your lives! be good! be just! be merciful! Look down at your feet instead of admiring yourselves in your pride! What! reptiles that you are, you reject from your plates the most delicate meats!'

'You fall down gorged with wine; next your cups filled to the very brims; you ask yourselves, shall I put on to-day my furred robe with the gold embroidery, or my robe of plush, embroidered with silver? And your neighbor, shivering with cold beneath his rags, cannot simply taste from your cup, or lick up the crumbs of your feasts? By the entrails of Jeremiah, can it endure for any length of time?'

'Yes, yes,' cried several voices, 'this has lasted long enough—the most patient weary toward the end!'

'The quietest bullock finishes by turning against the spur!'

'And what spur is there like hunger?'

'Yes,' continued Peter, 'yes, this has endured long enough; yes, it has endured too long; therefore, Jesus, our master, hath said:

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor—he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day when he shall avenge himself on his enemies."

These words of the Nazarene, quoted by Peter, excited a fresh enthusiasm, and Genevieve heard one of the two secret emissaries of the law and the high-priests say to his companion:

'This time the Nazarene shall not escape us, such words are really too seditious and outrageous!'

But a new and loud rumor was soon heard outside the tavern of the 'Wild Ass,' and there was but one cry repeated by all:

'Tis he, 'tis he!'

'Tis our friend!'

'Here is Jesus, here he is!'

CHAPTER III.

The crowd that filled the tavern, now learning the arrival of Jesus of Nazareth, urged and pressed each other to go and meet the young master; mothers, who held their little infants in their arms, endeavored to arrive the first near Jesus, the infirm, resuming their crutches, begged their neighbors to open a passage for them. Such was already the penetrating and charitable influence of the words of the son of Mary, that the strong moved aside to allow the mothers and the suffering to approach him.

Jane, Aurelia and her slave shared the general emotion; Genevieve especially, daughter, wife, and, perhaps, one day a mother of slaves, experienced an unusual beating of the heart at the sight of him who came, he said, to announce to the captives their deliverance, and set at liberty those who were crushed beneath their chains. At length Genevieve perceived him.

The son of Mary, the friend of little children, of poor mothers, of the suffering and of slaves, was habited like the other Israelites, his countrymen; he wore a robe of white cloth, secured round his waist by a leathern belt from which hung his purse or money-bag; a square mantle of blue depended from his shoulders.

His long chestnut hair, bright as new-coined gold, fell on each side of his pale face of an angelic sweetness; his lips and chin were half shaded by a slight beard, with golden reflections like his hair. His manner was cordial and familiar; he affectionately shook the hands of all that were tendered him.

He frequently stooped down to kiss some ragged little children who held the lappets of his robe, and, smiling ineffably, he said to those who surrounded him:

'Let the little children approach me.'

Judas, a man with a sinister and deceptive countenance, and Simon, other disciples of Jesus, accompanied him and carried each of them a box, in which the son of Mary, after questioning each patient and attentively listening to his reply, took several medicaments which he gave to the infirm and to the women who came to consult his science, either for themselves or for their children.

Frequently, to the balsams and advice he distributed, Jesus added a gift of money, which he drew from the bag at his girdle; he so often dipped into this purse, that having a last time plunged in his hand, he smiled mournfully on finding the little pocket empty. So, after turning all manner of ways, he made a sign of touching regret, as if to show that he had nothing to give. Then, those whom he had assisted with his counsels, his balms, and his money, thanked him warmly; he said to them in his gentle voice:

'Tis Almighty God, the Father of us all, who is in Heaven, that you must thank, and not me—peace be with you.'

'If your treasury of money is empty, friend, you have still an inexhaustible treasure, that of good words,' said Banaias; for he had contrived to approach quite close to Jesus of Nazareth, and he contemplated him with a mixture of respect and emotion that made his ferocious traits forgotten.

'Yes,' replied another; 'tell us, Jesus, of things which we poor and humble can comprehend, the language of our holy and divine prophet, but often obscure to us poor people.'

'Oh, yes; our good Jesus,' added a pretty child, who had glided into the front rank, and held one flap of the robe of the young man of Nazareth, 'recount to us one of those parables that delight us so much, and which we repeat to our mothers and brothers.'

'No, no,' said other voices; 'before the parable, make one of your noble discourses against the wicked rich, the powerful and the proud.'

But Mary's son pointed with a smile to the little child who had first demanded a parable, and took him on his knees, after seating himself near a table; thus showing his love for infancy. Mary's son seemed to say that this dear little one should be first satisfied in his desire. All, then, grouped round Jesus; the children who loved him so sat down at his feet; Oliba and other courtizans also seated themselves on the ground in the Eastern fashion, embracing their knees with their hands, and their eyes fixed on the young man of Nazareth, in anxious expectation. Banaias, and several of his like, crowding behind the young man, recommended silence to the eager multitude. Others, lastly, more distant, such as Jane, Aurelia, and her slave Genevieve, formed a second rank by mounting on the benches. Jesus, still holding on his knee the little child, who with one of his tiny arms resting on the shoulder of the son of Mary, seemed suspended from his lips, commenced the following parable: 'A man had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father: 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.' And the father divided his goods. A short time after, the youngest of the sons gathered together all he had and went into a distant country and dissipated his portion. And after he had spent all, a great famine arose in the land, and he began to be in want. He therefore went into service with an inhabitant of the country, who sent him into the fields to feed swine. There he would willingly have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat, but no man gave unto him.'

At these words of the parable the child which Mary's son held upon his knees uttered a deep sigh, joining his little hands in a pitying manner. Jesus continued:

'At length returning to himself, the prodigal son said, "How many servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish of hunger? I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him: father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." And he arose and went to his father; but when he was yet a great way off, his father perceived him, and moved with compassion, he ran to him and fell on his neck and kissed him.

'And his son said to him: "My father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, I am no more worthy to be called thy son."

'But the father said to his servants:

"Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; and put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it; and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

'Oh! the kind father!' said the child on the knees of Jesus. 'Oh! the good and tender father, who pardons and embraces instead of scolding!'

Jesus smiled, kissed the child's forehead, and continued:

'And they began to be merry. But the elder brother, who was in the field returned, and when he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. He therefore called one of the servants, and asked what all this meant. The servant replied to him:

"Thy brother is come, and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath found him safe and sound;" which made the elder brother angry, and he would not go in; therefore his father came out and entreated him. But his son replied to him: "These many years have I served thee, neither have I at any time transgressed thy command; and yet thou never gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this, thy son, who has squandered his living with harlots, is returned, thou hast had the fatted calf killed for him."

'Oh! how wicked is the eldest son!' said the child; 'he is jealous of his poor brother, who returns, however, very unhappy to the house. God will not love this jealous son; will he, my good Jesus?'

Mary's son shook his head, as if to reply to the child that the Lord did not indeed love the jealous: he then continued,—

'But the father said to the son: "My son, thou art always with me, and all that I have is thine; it was fit that we should make merry and be glad; for this, thy brother, was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found."'

All who were present seemed moved to tears at this recital. Mary's son having stopped to drink a glass of wine, which Judas, his disciple, poured out for him, Banaias, who had listened to him with profound attention, exclaimed: 'Friend, do you know that this is very much my own history, and that of many others. For if, after my own first folly of youth, my father had imitated the father in your parable, and had tendered me his hand as a sign of pardon, instead of driving me from the house with his stick, I should be at this hour, perhaps, seated at my honest fireside, in the midst of my family; whereas, now my home is in the highway, misery my wife, and my children evil projects, sons of misery, that mother with the ferocious eye. Ah! why had I not for a father the man in the parable?'

'This indulgent father pardoned,' replied Oliba the courtesan, 'because he knew that God, having given youth to his creatures, sometimes abuse it; but those who, reviled, miserable and repentant, return humbly to demand the smallest place in the paternal mansion, these, far from being repulsed, ought they not to be received with pity?'

'I,' said another, 'would not give a grapestone for this elder brother, this man of wealth, so harsh, so coarse, and so jealous, to whom virtue costs nothing.'

Genevieve heard one of the two emissaries of the Pharisees say to his companion, 'The Nazarene pretty well flatters the bad passions of these vagabonds. Henceforth, every debauched idler who may quit the paternal mansion will think himself entitled to send his father to Beelzebub, if the father, wrongly advised, instead of killing the fatted calf, drives from him, as he ought, this villainous son, whom hunger alone brings back to the fold.'

'Yes; and all the honest and prudent will pass for men of hard heart and jealous.'

And the man resumed aloud, thinking that no one would know who it was that thus spoke: 'Glory to thee, Jesus of Nazareth, glory to thee, the protector, the defender of us dissipaters and prostitutes! It is folly to be wise and virtuous, since the fatted calf is to be killed for the most debauched.'

Loud murmurs acknowledged these words of the emissary of the Pharisees; all turned round whence they had been pronounced; threats were heard:

'Hence! away with these men of inexorable heart!'

'Oh! these men are without pity, without mercy, repentance does not touch them,' said the courtesan Oliba; 'these frozen bodies who cannot comprehend that with others the blood boils!'

'Let him who has thus spoken show himself,' exclaimed Banaias, striking the table with his heavy, knotted stick in a threatening manner, 'yes, let him show his virtuous face, the scrupulous! more severe than our friend of Nazareth, the brother of the poor, the afflicted, and the suffering, whom he supports, heals and consoles! By the eye of Jerobabel! I should like to look him in the face, this white lamb without spot, who comes here to bleat his virtues. Where is he, then, this immaculate lily of the valley of men? He must smell of good, like a real balm,' added Banaias, opening his wide nostrils; 'and by the nose of Malachi! I don't smell at all this aroma of wisdom, this perfume of honesty, which ought to betray the choice odoriferous vase hidden amongst us poor sinners.'

This pleasantry of Banaias made the auditory laugh excessively; and the one of the two emissaries who had thus attacked the words of Jesus, seemed in no hurry to gratify the desire of the redoubtable friend of the Nazarene; he feigned, on the contrary, as well as his companion, to search, like the rest of the audience, from whence the words had proceeded. The tumult was increasing, when the young Nazarene made a sign that he wished to speak; the tempest was appeased as if by enchantment; and replying to the reproach of being too indulgent to sinners, Jesus said with an accent of severe mildness: 'Who amongst you possessing a hundred sheep, and losing one, would not leave in the plain the ninety-and-nine others, to go and seek that which is lost, until he had found it? When he has found it he brings it back with joy on his shoulders; and

having returned to his house, he assembles his friends and neighbors, and says to them, "Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost."

'And I say unto you,' added Mary's son in a voice filled with grave and tender authority, 'and I say unto you there shall be more joy in heaven for one sinner that repenteth, than for the ninety-and-nine just men, who need no repentance.'—These touching words of Jesus made a lively impression on the crowd; it applauded in words and gestures.—'Reply to that, my white lamb! my lilly without a stain!' said Banaias, addressing the invisible interpreter of the Nazarene.

'If you are not of the same opinion as my friend, approach and maintain your words.'

'A grand merit, as Jesus says,' observed another; 'a grand merit for him who has neither hunger nor thirst, to be neither a glutton nor a drunkard!'

'Virtue is easy to her who has every thing,' said the courtesan Oliba, 'hunger and privation ruin more women than dissipation.'

Suddenly there was a tumult amongst the crowd that filled the tavern, and the name of Magdalen was heard pronounced.

'She is one of the creatures who make a traffic of their bodies,' said Jane to Aurelia; 'it is not misery that has thrown her, like so many others, into this degradation; but a first fault, followed by the desertion of him who seduced her, and whom she adored. Since then, despite the disorders of her life and the venality of her amours, Magdalen has proved that her heart is not entirely corrupted. The poor never beseech her in vain, and she has passionately loved some men with a love as devoted as it was disinterested, sacrificing to them high priests, doctors of the law and rich seigneurs, who rivalled each other in their gifts; my husband, with others, was amongst the number of these magnificent lovers.'

'He has expended upon Magdalen a great deal of money; she is so handsome,' continued the young woman, with an indulgent smile. 'He is one of those who have enriched her. They tell wonders about her house, or rather the palace she inhabits; her coffers are filled with the rarest stuffs and the most dazzling jewels. Vases of gold and silver, brought at great expense from Rome, Asia, and Greece, encumber her sideboards; the purple and silk from Tyre adorn the walls of her dwelling, and her attendants are as numerous as those of a princess.'

'We, too, have in Italy and Roman Gaul, some of these creatures, whose insolent luxury insults the moderate fortune of many honest women,' replied Aurelia. 'But what can this Magdalen want with the young Nazarene?'

'No doubt she comes, like many of the same sort whom you see here, less rich than her, but not less degraded, to hear the words of Jesus; those gentle and tender words that penetrate the heart by the mercy they breathe, softens it, and makes it bring forth repentance.'

'Here!' said several voices: 'room for Magdalen, the handsomest amongst the handsomest!'

'The queen of us all!' said Oliba's companion to her with a lofty air: 'for indeed Magdalen is the queen of us all!'

'A sad royalty!' replied Oliba, sighing: 'her shame is seen from the highest to the most distant!'

'But she is so rich! so rich!'

'To sell oneself for a penny, or a mountain of gold,' replied the poor courtesan, 'where is the difference? the ignominy is the same!'

'Oliba, you are getting completely mad!'

The young woman made no reply, but sighed. Genevieve, mounted, like her mistress, on a stool, raised herself on the points of her toes, and soon saw the celebrated courtesan enter the tavern.

Magdalen was possessed of a rare beauty; the chin-piece of her turban of white silk edged with gold, encased her pale and swarthy face of an admirable perfection; her long eye-brows, as black as ebony, like the bands of her hair, appeared as a dark line along the brow hitherto superb and brazen; but now, mournful and depressed, for she seemed completely heart-broken. The ends of her eye-lashes, stained with a blue color according to the oriental fashion, gave to her eyes, drowned in tears, something strange, and seemed to double the grandeur of her orbs, sparkling through her tears like two diamonds.

A long robe of Tyrian silk of shaded blue, edged with gold and embroidered with pearls, fell in a long train behind her, and round her waist she had a flowing scarf of cloth of gold covered with stones of many colors, like those of the double necklaces, ear-rings and bracelets, with which her bare and well-shaped arms were covered; and thus attired, holding in her hands an urn of pink alabaster from Chaldea, more precious than gold, she advanced quite slowly towards the young man of Nazareth.

'What a change in Magdalen's traits,' said Jane to Aurelia. 'I have seen her pass a hundred times in her litter, carried by her attendants, dressed in rich liveries; the triumph of beauty, and the intoxication and joy of youth could be read in her countenance. And she is timidly approaching Jesus, humble, oppressed, weeping, and more sorrowful than the saddest of the poor women who hold in their arms their ill-clad infants.'

'But what is she about?' inquired Aurelia, more and more attentive; 'she stands before the young man of Nazareth; in one hand she holds her alabaster urn pressed against her agitated bosom, whilst with the other she detaches her rich turban. She throws it far from her. Her thick and glossy tresses fall over her breast and shoulders, unroll themselves like a velvet mantle and even trail on the ground.'

'Oh! look! look! her tears redouble,' said Jane; 'her face is drowned in them.'

'She kneels at the feet of Jesus,' continued Aurelia, 'and covers them with tears and kisses.'

'What heart-rending sobs!'

'And the tears she sheds on the feet of Mary's son she wipes away with her long hair.'

'And now, still melting in tears, she takes her alabaster urn and empties over the feet of Jesus a delicious perfume, the scent of which reaches here.'

'The young master endeavors to raise her; she resists; she cannot speak; her sobs break her voice; she bends down her lovely head to the very ground.'

Then Jesus, who could scarcely restrain his emotion, turned towards Simon, one of his disciples, and addressing him: 'Simon, I have something to say to you.'

'Speak, master.'

'A creditor had two debtors; the one owed him five hundred pence, the other fifty. As they had not wherewith to pay him, he remitted to both their debt; tell me, then, which of these two should love him most?' Simon replied: 'Master, I think it should be he to whom he forgave the most.'

'Thou hast judged rightly, Simon.' And, turning to the rich courtesan still kneeling, Jesus said to those present: 'Do you see this woman? I declare to you that her many sins are forgiven her, because she loved much!' He then said to Magdalen, in a voice full of tenderness and pardon: 'Thy sins are forgiven thee—thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.'

'Abomination of desolation!' said the emissary of the pharisees half aloud to his companion: 'can audacity and demoralization go further? Why, the Nazarene pardons all that is blameable, relieves all that is vile; after reinstating dissipation and prodigality, behold him now reinstating the most notorious courtesans.'

'And why?' said the other emissary, 'that he may still flatter the vices and detestable passions of the wretches he draws round him, whom he will one day make his instruments.'

'But patience,' observed the first, 'patience, Nazarene, thy hour approaches; thy still increasing audacity will soon draw down upon thee a terrible punishment!'

Whilst Genevieve listened to the two wicked men thus conversing, she saw Magdalen, after the affectionate words of Jesus, rise up radiant; the tears chased each other down her handsome face, but these tears no longer seemed bitter. She distributed to all the poor women who surrounded her, her precious stones and jewels, unfastened even to the magnificent robe she wore over her tunic of fine cloth from Sidonia, and put on the mantel of coarse brown wool of a young woman to whom she gave in exchange a rich robe embroidered with pearls of great value. She then said to Simon, that she would not again quit these humble garments, and that on the morrow all her wealth should be distributed to poor families, and to the courtesans whom misery alone prevented returning to a better life.

At these words Oliba, joining her hands in a burst of gratitude, threw herself at the feet of Magdalen, took her hands, kissed them whilst sobbing and said to her—

'Blessed be thou, Magdalen! oh, blessed be thou! Thy bounty hath saved me, me and so many of my poor companions of shame; but we repented at the voice of the son of Mary; that voice penetrated our hearts; we hoped for pardon. But, alas! the necessity of living retained us in wickedness and contempt. Blessed be thou, Magdalen, thou who renderest possible our return to good.'

'Sister, it is not I you must bless,' replied Magdalen; 'tis Jesus of Nazareth; his words inspired me.'

And Magdalen mingled amongst the crowd to listen to the words of the young master.

Some of his disciples having said in speaking to him of Magdalen, that she had been seduced and then abandoned by a young doctor of the law, the figure of Jesus became grave, severe, and almost menacing, and he exclaimed—

'Woe to you, doctors of the law! Woe to you, hypocrites! You are like unto whitened sepulchres; the outside appears gay, but within all is bones and putridity. Thus, outwardly you appear just in the eyes of men, but inwardly you are full of iniquity and hypocrisy. Woe to you blind leaders who take great care as to what you drink, lest you should swallow a camel.'

This familiar satire made several of the auditory smile, and Banaias exclaimed—

'Oh, but you are right, my friend. How many of these swallows of camels we know. But such is the sharpness of their conscience that they digest these camels as the ostrich digests a stone, and nothing appears of it.'

Fresh bursts of applause replied to the pleasantry of Banaias, and Jesus resumed:

'Woe to you, Pharisees! woe to you who cleanse the outside of the cup while within it is all rapine and impurity.'

'It is true,' replied several voices; 'these hypocrites clean the outside because the outside alone is seen.'

The son of Mary continued:

'Woe to you, Pharisees! who preach what you ought to do, but do it not! Woe to you who make heavy and insupportable burthens, place them on the shoulders of men, but will not touch them with your finger.'

This new comparison struck the mind of the auditors of the young master, and several voices again exclaimed:

'Yes, yes, these idle hypocrites say to the humble, "Work is holy; work, work, but we will not work. Yes, bear alone the burthen of the labor, but we rich will not touch it with the end of our finger."'

Jesus continued:—

'Woe to you who do all your actions that you might be seen of men. It is for this that you carry long bands of parchment, on which are written the words of the law, which you do not practice. Woe to you who say, "If a man swears by the temple it is nothing, but if he swears by the gold of the Temple, he is bound by his oath."'

'Because for these rich wicked ones,' said a voice, 'nothing is sound but gold. They swear by their gold as others swear by their soul or by their honor.'

'So that if a man swears by the altar it is nothing,' pursued Jesus; 'but whoever swears by the offering that is on the altar, he is bound by his oath. Woe to you, hypocrites! who pay scrupulously the tenth, but who deny that which is more important in the law, justice, mercy, and good faith. These were the things you should practice, without omitting the others.'

'By the two thumbs of Methusalem!' exclaimed Banaias, laughing, 'you appear at ease, friend. As these hypocrites have in their coffers enough to pay the tithe without inconveniencing themselves, and they pay it; but where would you have them find this money of justice, of good faith, and of mercy, which you demand from these whitened sepulchres, from these swallowers of camels of iniquity, as you will so call them?'

'Alas! the young master says true,' observed another; 'for him who has no money justice is deaf. The doctors of the law do not say to you at their court, "What good grounds have you? but, how much money will you promise me?"'

'I had confided a few savings to Jonas, a high priest,' said a poor old woman; 'he told me he had expended the money in offerings for my salvation. What could I do, a poor woman against so powerful a seigneur? resign myself and beg for bread, which I do not find every day.'

At this complaint, Jesus exclaimed with increased indignation, 'Oh! woe to you hypocrites: because, under pretence of your long prayers you rob the widow of her mite. Woe to you, serpents, race of vipers! how will you escape being condemned to the fire of hell? It is for this I will send to you prophets and sages to save you.'

'But, alas!' added the son of Mary with an accent of much sorrow, 'you will kill the former; you would crucify the latter; you would persecute them from town to town, that all the innocent blood that has been shed upon the earth may return upon you—from the blood of Abel the just to the blood of Zachariah, whom you killed between the Temple and the altar!'

'Oh! fear nothing, friend! if these swallowers of camels wish to shed your blood,' exclaimed Banaias, striking the hilt of his large rusty cutlass, 'they must first shed ours, and we await them.'

'Yes, yes,' replied the crowd, in one voice, 'fear nothing, Jesus of Nazareth, we will defend thee!'

'We will die for thee if necessary!'

'You shall be our chief!'

'Our king!'

But the son of Mary, as if he mistrusted these transports, shook his head with a sadness more and more profound; tears streamed down his cheek, and he exclaimed, in a disconsolate voice:

'Oh! Jerusalem! Jerusalem! thou who killed the prophets! thou who stone the wise men that are sent to thee! how often have I striven to assemble thy children, as a hen gathers together her little ones beneath her wings, and thou would'st not; no, thou would'st not!'

And the accent of Jesus, at first cutting, severe, or indignant, in speaking of the hypocritical pharisees, was impressed with a regret so bitter, in pronouncing these last words, that nearly all shed tears like the young man of Nazareth; presently there was a complete silence, for he was seen to lean upon the table and bury his face in his hands. Genevieve could no longer restrain her

tears; she heard one of the two emissaries say to his companion, in a tone of cruel triumph: 'The Nazarene called the doctors of law and the high-priest serpents and a race of vipers! During the whole night he has blasphemed all that is most sacred amongst men; we have him.'

'Oh, you speak of the crucified, Jesus of Nazareth,' said the other; 'we will take care that you shall not be far wrong, prophet of woe!'

Simon, seeing him still leaning on the table, weeping in silence, stooped towards him and said: 'Master, the sun will soon rise; the people of the fields, who bring their fruits to the market of Jerusalem, pass by the valley of Cedron; like us, they are eager to hear your words: they await you on the road: shall we not go and meet them?'

Jesus rose; his sad and pensive features cleared up on kissing the children, who seeing him preparing to leave, extended their little hands to him.—He then fraternally shook hands with all who offered them, and leaving the tavern of the 'Wild Ass' situated near one of the gates of the town leading into the country, he directed his steps towards the valley of Cedron, which the countrymen and women traversed to repair to Jerusalem, where they brought their provisions. Such was the attraction of the words of the young man of Nazareth, that most of the persons who came to pass the night in listening to him, still followed him. Magdalen, Oliba and Banaias were amongst these individuals.

'Jane, will you also go out of the town?' said Aurelia to Chusa's wife: 'it is now daylight; let us return home; it will be imprudent to prolong our absence.'

'I shall not return yet; I will follow Jesus to the end of the world,' replied Jane with exultation, and descending from her bench, she drew from her pocket a heavy purse filled with gold, which she placed in Simon's hand, at the moment he was about to quit the tavern after Mary's son.

'The young man has emptied his purse to-night,' said Jane to Simon, 'here is something to re-fill it.'

'You, lady, again!' replied Simon with thankfulness, at the sight of Jane: 'your charity does not flag.'

''Tis the tenderness of your master that does not flag in succoring people, consoling the poor, the repentant, and the oppressed,' replied the wife of Chusa.

Genevieve, who had anxiously listened to every word that had fallen from the emissaries of the pharisees, heard one of the two men say to the other:

'Follow and watch the Nazarene; I will run to the Seigneurs Caiphus and Baruch to render them an account of the abominable blasphemies and impieties he has uttered to-night in company with these vagabonds. The Nazarene must not this time escape the fate that awaits him;' and the two men separated. Aurelia, who seemed to have been reflecting, said to her companion: 'Jane, I cannot express to you what I experience from the words of this young man. At one time so simple, tender and elevated, at another satirical and threatening, they penetrate my heart. They are, to my mind, like a new world that is opening; for to us, poor heathens, the word charity is new. Far from being appeased, my curiosity, my interest, increase, and whatever may happen, I will follow you; what matter, after all, if we do return to our dwellings after daybreak?'

Hearing her mistress thus speak, Genevieve was very happy, for thinking of her brother slaves of Gaul, she, too, felt a great desire to hear more of the words of the young Nazarene, the friend and liberator of captives. At the moment of quitting the tavern with her mistress and the charitable wife of the seigneur Chusa, Genevieve was the witness of a scene that proved to her how speedily the word of Jesus had borne its fruit. Magdalen, the handsome, repentant courtesan, habited in the old woollen mantle of a poor woman, exchanged for such rich attire, Magdalen, following the anxious crowd behind Jesus, struck her foot against a stone in the street, tottered, and would have fallen to the ground but for the assistance of Jane and Aurelia, who, fortunately, being close to her, hastened to support her.

'What! you, Jane, the wife of the Seigneur Chusa?' said the courtesan, reddening with confusion, thinking, no doubt, of the rich presents she had received from Chusa: 'you, Jane, you have no fear in tendering me a helping hand; I, a poor creature justly despised by all honest women?'

'Magdalen,' replied Jane with charming kindness: 'did not our young master tell you to go in peace, and that all your sins would be remitted you, because you have loved much? By what right should I be more severe than Jesus of Nazareth? Your hand, Magdalen, your hand; 'tis a sister who asks it of you as a sign of pardon and oblivion of the past!'

Magdalen took the hand that Jane offered her, but it was to kiss it with respect, and cover it with tears of repentance.

'Ah! Jane,' said quietly to her friend Genevieve's mistress; 'the young man of Nazareth would be gratified to see you practice his precepts so generously.'

Jane, Aurelia and Magdalen, following the crowd, were soon outside of the gates of Jerusalem.

The sun, now rising in its splendor, illumined to a great distance the country of the valley of Cedron, whose oriental aspect, so new to Genevieve, always struck her with surprise and admiration. It being the season of spring, early this year, the plains which extended to the gates

of Jerusalem were as verdant and as florid as those of Saron, which Genevieve had traversed when coming from Jaffa (the place where she had landed) to reach Jerusalem with her mistress. The white and red roses, the narcissus, the anemone, the yellow gilly-flowers, and the odiferous immortelles (or everlasting flowers) embalmed the air and enamelled the fields with their beautiful colors, still moist with the dew.

On the road-side, a cluster of palm trees shaded the dome of a fountain, where already came to drink the large fat buffaloes, coupled to their yoke, and conducted by laborers habited in a robe of camel skin.

Shepherds also brought to the fountain their flocks of goats with long ears, and sheep with immense tails, whilst young women of swarthy complexion, dressed in white, arrived no doubt from a village seen at a short distance, half hidden by a wood of olive trees, drew water from the fountain and returned to the village, carrying on their head, half enveloped in their white veils, large flasks of spring water. Farther on, along the dusky road which serpented in a descent from the highest peaks of the mountains, whose summits were slowly disengaging themselves from the gray blue vapors of the morning, was seen advancing, at a snail's pace, a long caravan, which rose above the elongated necks of the camels loaded with bales.

All along the road, followed by Genevieve, blue pigeons, larks and wagtails, nesting in the groves of nopal and fir, made a chorus of sweet songs, whilst a white stork, with red legs, rose in the air holding a snake in his beak.

Several herdsmen and laborers, learning from the persons who followed the Nazarene, that he was repairing to the little hill of Cedron to preach good news, changed their route, and driving their flocks on one side, augmented the crowd attached to the steps of Jesus of Nazareth. Jane, Aurelia and Genevieve thus approached the village, half hidden in the wood of olive trees through which they had to pass to arrive at the hill. On a sudden from this wood, they saw issue in a tumult a great number of men and women, uttering cries and horrid imprecations.

At the head of this troop marched the doctors of the law and the high priests; two of the latter were leading a handsome young girl, with naked arms and feet, barely attired in a tunic. Shame and terror were painted on her countenance bathed in tears; her scattered hair covered her naked shoulders.

From time to time, demanding grace through her sobs, she threw herself, in her despair, on her knees upon the stones in the road, despite the efforts of the two priests, who, each holding her by an arm and thus dragging her through the dust, soon forced her to rise and walk with them. The crowd overwhelmed with hootings, imprecations and insults this unfortunate girl, as terrified as a woman being led to execution.

At sight of this tumult the son of Mary, surprised, stopped; those who accompanied him also stopped, and ranged themselves in a circle behind him.

The priests and the doctors of the law, no doubt recognizing the young man of Nazareth, made a sign to the people of the village, from whom the cries and fury redoubled every moment, to stop a few paces distant. Then those wrathful people, men and women, picked up large stones, with which they remained armed, from time to time insulting and threatening the weeping prisoner.

The priests and doctors of the law, to whom the emissaries of the pharisees had gone to speak in secret, dragged the unfortunate creature to the feet of Jesus, whom she also began to implore in her terror, raising towards him her face bathed in tears, and her maimed hands covered with blood and dust. One of the priests then said to Jesus, to prove him, and in the hope of destroying him if he did not pronounce with them.

'This woman has just been taken in the act of adultery. Now, Moses has ordered us in the law to stone the adulteress. What is your opinion thereon?'

Jesus, instead of replying, stooped down and began to write on the sand with the end of his finger. And as the pharisees, astonished, continued to question him, he rose up and said to them as also to those of the crowd, who had armed themselves with stones,

'Let him amongst you who is without sin, throw the first stone at this woman.'

Then, again stooping, he once more commenced writing on the sand without noticing those around him.

At the words of Mary's son, immense applause burst from the crowd that followed him, and Banaïas exclaimed with loud laughter:

'Well spoken, friend. I am no prophet; but if pure hands are alone to stone this poor sinner, I swear by the head of Gideon that we shall see all these paragons of virtue, all these pearls of chastity, all these angels of modesty, beginning with the seigneurs priests, and the seigneurs doctors in law, throw away their sandals and tuck up their robes that they may run the quicker. Oh! what was I saying?' added Banaïas, laughing still more loudly, like many others, 'there they are, dispersing like a herd of swine pursued by a wolf.'

'And swine they are!' said another.

'As to the wolf following them, 'tis their own conscience.'

And as Banaias said, at these words of Jesus, 'Let him amongst you who is without sin throw the first stone at this woman,' the doctors of the law and the priests, no doubt accused by their conscience, as well as those who at first would have stoned the adulterous woman, all in fact fearing, perhaps, the crowd that followed the young man of Nazareth, made their escape so swiftly and so quickly, that when the son of Mary rose (for he had continued to write on the sand), the crowd lately so menacing were fleeing toward the village. Jesus now saw none but the accused, still kneeling, still a supplicant, and weeping at his feet. Smiling sweetly, showing to her the space left around her by the dispersion of those who would have lately stoned her, Jesus said to her:

'Woman, where, then, are thy accusers? Has no one accused thee?'

'No, lord,' she replied, weeping bitterly.

'Neither will I condemn thee,' said Jesus. 'Go, and sin no more.'

And leaving the adulterous woman on her knees, and still under the shock of having been thus saved from death and pardoned, the son of Mary soon arrived, followed by his disciples and the crowd, to the foot of a mount, where already were assembled a good number of country people impatiently awaiting his coming, some having their provisions on donkeys or zebras, others in carts drawn by bullocks, others in wicker baskets, which they carried on their heads.

The shepherds who, at the passage of the Nazarene, watered their flocks at the fountain, also arrived; and when all this crowd, silent and attentive, was thus assembled at the foot of the mount, Jesus of Nazareth ascended the little hill, that he might be better heard by all.

The rising sun, shedding its lustrous beams on the figure of the son of Mary, attired in his white tunic and his blue mantle, made his celestial visage to appear resplendent, and casting its rays on his long chestnut hair, seemed to encircle it in a golden aureole. Then addressing these simple in heart, whom he loved equally with the little children, Jesus said to them, in his tender and sonorous voice:

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs!

'Blessed are those who are gentle, because they possess the earth!

'Blessed are those who weep, for they are consoled!

'Blessed are those who show mercy, for they will obtain mercy for themselves!

'Blessed are those who are pure in heart, for they will see God!

'Blessed are the peaceful, for they shall be called peaceful!

'Blessed are they who suffer persecution for justice's sake, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs!

'But woe to you, rich, for you would take away your consolation!

'Woe to you who are satisfied, for you shall be hungry!

'Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall weep hereafter!

'Woe to you when men shall speak well of you, for their fathers spoke well of the false prophets!

'Love your neighbor as yourself!

'Beware how you make your gifts before men, to attract their notice!

'When, therefore, thou dost give thy charity, sound not the trumpet before you, as do the hypocrites in the temples and in the streets, to be honored by men; for I tell you the truth, they have already had their reward.

'Thus, I was seated the other day in the synagogue, opposite the poor box, observing in what manner the people threw in their money; many rich people dropped in a great deal; there came a poor woman, she placed simply in the box two small pieces, which made the quarter of a penny. Calling my disciples, I said to them: "Really this poor woman has given more than all those who dropped into the box, for all the others have given of their abundance; but this one has given of her indigence, all that she had, and all that remained to her to live upon." When you bestow charity, let not your left hand know what your right hand does. The same when you pray, resemble not those hypocrites who affect to pray in the synagogues, and in the corner of public places, that they might be seen of men. For you, when you would pray, enter your own chamber, close the door, and pray to your father in secret. When you fast, do it not with a saddened air like the hypocrites, for they appear with a pale and haggard face, that men may know that they fast. You, when you fast, perfume your head that it may not appear to men that you fast, but simply to your father, who is always present in all that is most secret. Above all, do not act like the two men in the parable:

'Two men went into the temple to pray, the one was a publican, the other a pharisee. The pharisee, standing up, thus prayed to himself: "My God, I thank thee for that I am not as other men, who are thieves, unjust, adulterers, who indeed are like the publican I see there. I fast twice a week, and I give the tenth of all I possess."

'The publican, on the contrary, keeping himself afar off, dared not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but struck his breast, saying:

"My God, have pity on me, who am a sinner!"

'I declare to you this man returneth home justified, and not the other. For he who exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he who humbleth himself shall be exalted. Heap not up treasures on earth, for the worm and the rust shall consume them, and thieves shall break in and steal them; but make to yourselves treasures in heaven, for where your treasure is there also will be your heart! Do unto men as you would they should do unto you: this is the law and the prophets.

'Love your enemies, do good to those that hate you.

'If any one takes from you your mantle, let him also take your coat.

'Give to all who ask of you.

'Claim not your goods of him who takes them away.

'Let him who has two garments give one to him who has none.

'Let him who has enough to eat do the same.

'For when the day of judgment comes, God will say to those who are on his left:

"Far from me, cursed! go into the fire eternal! for I was hungry and ye gave me not to eat! I was thirsty, and ye gave me not to drink! I was in want of lodging, and you did not lodge me! I was without garments, and you did not clothe me! I was sick and in prison, and you did not visit me!" And then the wicked will reply to the Almighty:

"Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty? or without garments? or without lodging? or in prison?"

But the Almighty will reply to them:

"I say unto you that as often as you have failed to render these services to one of the poorest among men, you have failed to render them to myself, your Lord God."

To the great chagrin of the crowd, much affected by the divine words of the son of Mary, who could comprehend the poorest in mind, as the young Nazarene said, his discourse was interrupted in consequence of a violent tumult that arose. The cause was this; a troop of men on horseback, coming from the mountains, travelling rapidly towards Jerusalem, was obliged to stop before the vast assemblage grouped at the base of the mount where Christ was preaching. These cavaliers, in their impatience, brutally desired the crowd to disperse, and to make room for the Seigneur Chusa, the steward of Prince Herod's household, and for the Seigneur Gremion, an agent of the Roman treasury.

On hearing these words Aurelia, wife of Gremion, turned pale and said to Jane:

'Our husbands! already returned! they have turned back; they will find us absent from our homes; they will know that we have left them since yesterday; we are lost.'

'Have we, then, anything to reproach ourselves with?' replied Jane: 'Have we not been listening to teachings, and assisting at examples which renders good hearts still better?'

'Dear mistress,' said Genevieve to Aurelia, 'I think that the Seigneur Gremion has recognized you from his horse, for he is speaking quietly to the Seigneur Chusa, and is pointing his finger this way.'

'Ah! I tremble!' replied Aurelia, 'what's to be done? What will become of me? Oh! cursed be my curiosity!'

'Blessed, on the contrary,' said Jane to her; 'for you carry away treasures in your heart. Let us go boldly and meet our husbands; 'tis the wicked who hide themselves and bow their heads. Come, Aurelia, come, and let us walk home with a firm front.'

At this moment, Magdalen the repentant, approached the two young women, and said to Jane, with tears in her eyes:

'Adieu, you who tendered me a hand when I had fallen into contempt; your remembrance will be always present to Magdalen in her future solitude.'

'Of what solitude do you speak?' said Jane, surprised: 'where are you going, then, Mary Magdalen?'

'To the desert!' replied the penitent, stretching her arms towards the summit of the arid mountains beyond which extend the desolate solitudes of the dead sea:

'I go to the desert to weep for my sins, bearing in my heart a treasure of hope! Blessed be the son of Mary, to whom I am indebted for this divine treasure!'

The crowd, opening respectfully before this great repentant, she slowly retired towards the mountains. Scarcely had Magdalen disappeared, when Jane, leading her friend almost in spite of herself, advanced towards the cavaliers through the people, irritated at the coarse words of the

escort.

They abhorred Herod, the prince of Judea, who would have been driven from the throne but for the protection of the Romans. He was cruel, dissolute, and crushed the Jewish people with taxes; thus, when they learnt that one of the cavaliers was the Seigneur Chusa, steward of this execrated prince, the hatred they felt for the master was visited on the steward as also on his companion, the Seigneur Gremion, who in the name of the Roman tax-gatherer, gleaned where Herod had reaped. Thus, whilst Jane, Aurelia, and the slave Genevieve painfully traversed the crowd to reach the two cavaliers, hootings burst from all sides against Chusa and Gremion, and they listened, trembling with rage, to words such as the following, the faint echo of the anathemas of the young master against the wicked:

'Woe to you, Herod's steward! who crush us with taxes, and eat up the house of the widow and the orphan!

'Woe to you, too, Roman! who also come to take a part in robbing us!'

Banaias, with one hand waiving his cutlass in a threatening and ferocious manner, approached the two seigneurs, and, showing his fist to them, exclaimed:

'The fox is cowardly and cruel! but he has called to his aid the wolf, whose teeth are longer, and whose strength is greater! The fox, cowardly and cruel, is your master Herod, Seigneur Chusa! and the ferocious wolf, is Tiberius, your own master, Roman! who helps the fox in hunting the game!'

And as the Seigneur Chusa, pale with rage, was about to draw his sword to strike Banaias, the latter raised his cutlass, and exclaimed:

'By the belly of Goliath! I will cut you in two like a water melon, if you put a hand on your sword!'

The two seigneurs, having only five or six men as an escort, restrained themselves, from a fear of being stoned by the enraged people, and endeavored to sneak out of the crowd, which, more and more enraged, exclaimed:

'Yes, woe to you! tax-gatherers of Herod and Tiberius! Woe to you! for we are hungry; and the bread moistened with our sweat, which we carry to our lips, you snatch it from our hands in the name of taxes!

'Woe to you! for instead of pardoning misery you overwhelm with miseries people without defence! Woe to you, but happiness to us, for the day of justice approaches, the young man of Nazareth has said so. Yes, yes, for you wicked and oppressors, there will soon be weeping and gnashing of teeth, and then the last shall be first, and the first shall be last.'

Chusa and Gremion, more and more alarmed, consulted each other by a look, not knowing how to escape this menacing crowd. The most threatening already began to pick up large stones at the voice of Banaias, who had exclaimed on replacing his cutlass at his belt, and arming himself with a large stone:

'Our master said this morning, speaking of the poor girl whom these hypocritical pharisees would have stoned, 'Let him who is without sin throw the first stone.' And I, my friends, say this to you—

'Let him who has been flayed by the tax-gatherer throw the first stone at these flayers! and may it be followed by many another!'

'Yes, yes!' cried the crowd, 'Let them disappear under a mountain of stones.'

'Let us stone them!'

'To the stones! to the stones!'

'Our husbands are exposed to danger, 'tis another reason why we should approach them,' said Jane to Aurelia, redoubling her efforts in order to reach the cavaliers, more and more surrounded.

Suddenly was heard the gentle and penetrating voice of the Nazarene dominating the tumult and pronouncing these words—

'In verity, I say unto you, if these men have sinned, can they not repent between this and the day of judgment? Let them sin no more but go in peace.'

At these words of Mary's son, the popular tempest was appeased as if by enchantment. The crowd was calmed, became silent, and by a spontaneous movement, turned aside to make room for the cavaliers and their escort. Then Jane and Aurelia contrived to reach their husbands. At the sight of his wife, Seigneur Gremion said to Chusa in an angry manner:

'I was sure of it! I had recognized my wife!'

'And mine also accompanies her!' said Chusa, not less enraged.

'And like her, under a disguise. 'Tis the abomination of desolation.'

'Nothing is wanting to the fete,' added Gremion, 'for here is my wife's slave.'

Jane, always gentle and calm, said to her husband:

'Seigneur, give me a place; I will mount on behind on your horse to reach my house.'

'Yes,' replied Chusa, grinding his teeth with rage: 'you shall reach home with me. But, by the columns of the temple! you shall not again quit it without me.'

Jane made no reply, but tendered her hand to her husband for him to assist her to get up behind; with a light bound she seated herself on the horse.

'Mount behind me also,' said Gremion to his wife, in an angry tone.

'Your slave Genevieve; and by Jupiter she shall pay dear for her complicity in this indignity! your slave, Genevieve, shall mount behind one of the cavaliers of the escort.'

It was thus arranged, and they then pursued their way to Jerusalem. The horseman, who carried Genevieve behind, following close upon Gremion and Chusa, the slave heard the latter harshly scolding their wives.

'No, by Hercules!' exclaimed the Roman; 'to find my wife disguised as a man in the midst of this band of ragged beggars and seditious wretches!—'Tis incredible; no, by Hercules! till I came to Judea I never heard of such an enormity.'

'And I, who am of Judea, seigneur,' observed Chusa, 'I am no more than yourself, accustomed to these enormities. I knew well that beggars, thieves, and abandoned women followed this cursed Nazarene. But may the wrath of God strike me on the instant, if I have ever heard of the indignity to mix themselves with the vile populace that this man drags after him in every country; a vile populace that would just now have stoned us, but for the valor of our attitude,' added Chusa with a victorious air.

'Yes, luckily, we imposed on these wretches by our courage,' replied Gremion, 'otherwise there would have been an end of us. Ah! you said true, this is another proof of the hatred and resentments produced by the incendiary predictions of the Nazarene; he dreams of nothing but exciting the poor against the rich.'

'Did not the young master, on the contrary, appease the fury of the crowd?' said the gentle but firm voice of Jane. 'Did he not say: 'Let these men go in peace, and let them sin no more.'

'What think you of such audacity?' exclaimed Chusa, addressing Gremion. 'You heard my wife? Will it not be now said that we cannot go along the roads but with the permission of the Nazarene, of that son of Beelzebub! and that if we escaped the fury of those wretches, 'twas owing to the promise he made them that we should sin no more. By the pillars of the temple! is this impudence enough?'

'The young man of Nazareth,' resumed Jane, 'cannot answer for what is said and done in his name. The crowd was unjustly excited against you, when by a word he appeased it. What more could he do?'

'There again!' exclaimed Chusa. 'And by what right does this Nazarene calm or excite the popular will as he chooses? Do you know why we are returning to Jerusalem? It is because we are assured that in consequence of the abominable predictions of this man, the mountaineers of Judea and the laborers of the plain of Saron, would stone us if we presented ourselves to collect the taxes.'

'The young man has said: "Render unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's, and unto God that which is God's!"' continued Jane. 'Is it then his fault, if the population, crushed by the taxes, are unable to pay more?'

'And, by Hercules! they must pay, and will, too!' exclaimed Gremion, 'we are returning to Jerusalem to obtain an escort of troops sufficient to put down rebellion; and woe to those who resist us!'

'And above all, woe to this Nazarene!' said Chusa; 'he alone is the cause of all the evil. So I am going to inform Prince Herod, and the Seigneurs Pontius Pilate and Caiaphus, of the increasing audacity of this vagabond, and to demand, if necessary, his death.'

'Kill him!' said Jane, 'he will pardon you, and pray to God for you.' It was thus that Jane, Aurelia, and Genevieve were brought back to Jerusalem.

CHAPTER IV.

When Genevieve, with her mistress, was brought back to the house of Seigneur Chusa, the latter said to his wife, in an angry tone: 'Seek your chamber.'

Aurelia bent down her head, sighing, obeyed, and threw on her slave a sad look of adieu. Gremion then took Genevieve by the arm, and led her to a low room, a kind of cellar, destined for holding the leather sacks filled with oil, wine, and other provisions. This place was reached by descending a few steps. Genevieve's master pushed her so rudely that she slipped, and fell, from step to step, to the ground, whilst Gremion closed the massive door of this low chamber. The young woman raised herself in pain, seated herself on the stone, and at first wept bitterly. Her tears then became almost sweet, when she thought that she suffered for having gone to listen to the words of the young man of Nazareth, so kind to the poor and the slaves, so merciful to the repentant, so severe to the wicked and the hypocritical.

Brought up in the druidical faith, which her mother had transmitted to her, as we may say, with her life, Genevieve had not the less confidence in the precepts of Mary's son, though he professed another religion than that of the druids, always prescribed, and venerated in Gaul, besides, Jesus believed, it was said, with the druids, that on leaving this world we should live again in the spirit and in the body; since, according to his religion, he spoke of the resurrection of the dead. Lastly, despite the sublimity of the druidical faith, which relieves man from the fear of death, by teaching him that there is no death, Genevieve could not find in the precepts of the Gallic religion that tender, paternal, and merciful sentiment, with which the words of Jesus were so often impressed. The slave was giving way to these reflections, when she saw the door of the cellar open where she was confined. Gremion, her master, returned, accompanied by two men; one held a bundle of cords, the other a leather scourge. Genevieve had never seen these men; they wore foreign garments.—Seigneur Gremion descended the first steps of the staircase, and said to Genevieve: 'Undress yourself!' The slave looked at her master with as much surprise as fear, scarcely believing what she had heard. He continued: 'Undress yourself, otherwise these men, the assistants of the town executioner, shall tear off your clothes, to flog you as you deserve!'

This cruel punishment, so often suffered by female slaves, Genevieve, thanks to the kindness of the gods and of her mistress, had not yet undergone; thus, in her terror, she could only join her hands, stretch them towards her master, and supplicating, fall upon her knees. But Gremion, standing aside to make way for the two men who had remained on the top step of the staircase, said to them, 'Undress her! flog her well till the blood comes. She shall remember assisting at the predictions of this cursed Nazarene.'

Genevieve was at that time scarcely twenty-three, and her husband, Fergan, had told her sometimes that she was pretty. She was, despite her tears, her prayers, and powerless resistance, stripped of her garments, bound to one of the pillars of the room, and presently her body was wealed with the lashes of the whip. She had at first hoped that shame and horror would deprive her of all consciousness. It was not so; but she forgot the pain of the lashes, on finding herself a prey to the curiosity of her tormentors, and on hearing the infamous jests they exchanged whilst flogging her. Gremion, standing up with his arms crossed, said, laughing diabolically: 'Did the Nazarene, the famous Messiah, who dabbles in prophesying, predict to you what would happen, Genevieve? Think you he was right in proclaiming the slave to be equal with his master? By Jupiter! I now regret I did not have you flogged in the middle of the public place. 'Twould have been a good lesson given on your back to these brigands who believe in the seditious insolences of their chief and friend, Jesus.'

When the two executioners were weary of flogging, one of them unbound Genevieve, and her master said to her:

'You shall not leave this place for a week; during that time my wife shall do without you; she shall wait upon herself, this shall be her punishment.'

And Gremion, retiring with the two men, left Genevieve alone. It was now no longer the tender and merciful words of Jesus that came to the mind of the slave, as they had come to her before her punishment. It was the words of vengeance and of curses which he had also pronounced the same morning against the wicked and the oppressors.

During the long hours she passed alone, with the remembrance of her shame, she made to herself an oath, that if ever the gods willed that she should be a mother, and that she could keep her child with her, she would strive to inspire in him a horror of slavery, and a hatred to the Romans, instead of allowing to degenerate in his young mind these proud resentments, as they had degenerated in her husband, Fergan, whom she loved so, despite the weakness of his character, he who had descended, nevertheless, from the powerful and untameable race of Joel, the brenn of the haughty tribe of Karnak.

Genevieve had been for three days confined in the underground room of the house, where Gremion, her master, had brought her every morning a little food, when one night very late, the door of the slave's prison opened; she saw her mistress, Aurelia, enter, holding a lamp in one hand, and with the other a packet, which she deposited on the steps of the staircase.

'Poor woman! you have greatly suffered on my account,' said Aurelia, whose eyes were moistened with tears, on approaching Genevieve. The latter, despite the kindness of her mistress, could not help saying to her with bitterness:

'If you had a daughter, and men had stripped her of her clothes to beat her with a whip, by order of a master, what would you then say of slavery?'

'Genevieve, you accuse me, and I am not the cause of these cruelties!'

'It is not you I accuse; it is slavery; you are kind to me. But still, look how I have been treated.'

'In vain, for the last three days, have I sought your pardon from my husband,' said Aurelia, her voice full of compassion.

'He has refused me: I have entreated him to allow me to see you; he was deaf to my prayers; besides, he always carries the keys of the prison about him.'

'And how have you obtained possession of it to-night?'

'He had placed it under his pillow; I profited by his sleep, and I am come.'

'I have suffered much more of shame than of pain,' continued Genevieve, overcome by the grief of her mistress; 'but your kind words console me!'

'Listen, Genevieve, I am not here simply to console you; you can fly from this house and render a great service to the young man of Nazareth, perhaps even save his life.'

'What say you, my dear mistress?' exclaimed Genevieve; thinking less of her liberty than of the service she might render to the Nazarene.

'Oh! speak; my life, if necessary, for him who said that "one day the chains of the slave shall be broken!"'

'Since the night we passed listening to the predictions of Jesus, Jane and I have not met; the Seigneur Chusa had prevented her from leaving her house to come here; to-night, however, yielding to her prayer, he brought her here, and whilst he was conversing with my husband, do you know what Jane told me?'

'About the young man of Nazareth?'

'Yes.'

'Alas! some new persecution!'

'He is betrayed! They will arrest him this very night, and kill him!'

'Betrayed! he! and by whom?'

'By one of his disciples.'

'Ah! the infamous wretch!'

'Then Chusa, already triumphing in the death of this poor Nazarene, has revealed every thing this evening to Jane, to enjoy maliciously the affliction this sad news will cause her; this then is what passed; the pharisees, doctors of law, senators, and high priests, all exasperated by the last (those we heard), assembled at the house of the high priest Caiphus, and sought for means to surprise the Nazarene; but fearing a popular rising if they arrested him yesterday, a holiday in Jerusalem, they have deferred till to-night the execution of their wicked designs.'

'What! to-night? This very night?'

'Yes, a traitor, one of his disciples, named Judas, is to betray him into their hands.'

'One of those who, the other night, accompanied him to the tavern of the "Wild Ass."'

'The one whose gloomy and treacherous figure you remarked. Judas then went to the high priests and the doctors of law, and said to them: "Give me money, and I will deliver the Nazarene to you."'

'The wretch!'

'He has agreed for thirty pieces of silver from the pharisees; and at the present moment perhaps the poor young man, who suspects nothing, is a victim of the treason.'

'Alas! if such is the case, what service can I render him?'

'Listen again, this is what Jane said to me to-night: "It was whilst repairing to your house, dear Aurelia, that my husband informed me, with a cruel joy, of the evil with which Jesus is threatened. Knowing that, watched as I am, I have no means of warning him, for our servants so much fear the Seigneur Chusa, that despite my prayers and offers of gold, none dared leave the house to find Jesus and apprise him of the danger; besides, the night advances, an idea struck me; your slave Genevieve appears to have as much courage as devotedness. Could she not serve us on this occasion?"'

'I immediately informed Jane of the cruel vengeance that my husband had exercised towards you; but Jane, far from renouncing her project, asked me where Gremion placed the key of the prison: "Under his pillow," I answered her.'

'Endeavor to take it whilst he sleeps,' said Jane to me. 'If you succeed in getting possession of it, go and release Genevieve; it will be easy for you afterwards to get her out of the house; she will soon arrive at the tavern of the 'Wild Ass,' and there, perhaps, they will tell her where the young man may be found.'

'Oh! dear mistress!' exclaimed Genevieve, 'I shall never forget the confidence you and your

friend place in me; try at once to open the door of the prison.'

'Wait a moment, for before deciding we must think of the rage of my husband. It is not for myself I fear, but for you. When you return here, poor Genevieve, judge from what you have suffered what you will still have to suffer!'

'Think not of me!'

'We have thought of it, on the contrary. Listen again: the nurse of my friend lives near the Judicial gate; she sells woolen cloths and her name is Veronica, the wife of Samuel: shall you remember these names?'

'Yes, yes, Veronica, wife of Samuel, cloth vendor, near the Judicial gate. But, dear mistress, let us haste, the hour advances; every hour lost might be fatal to the young man. Oh! I entreat you, try to open the street door.'

'No, not at least until I have told you where you may find refuge; it will be impossible for you to return here, for I tremble at the treatment to which my husband would subject you.'

'What! quit you forever?'

'Would you rather submit to an infamous punishment again, and perhaps worse tortures?'

'I would much rather prefer death to such disgrace!'

'My husband will not kill you because you are worth money. This separation is therefore indispensable; it costs me dear, because never, perhaps, shall I find a slave in whom I have such confidence as you; but what would you? Since I have listened to the words of this young man, I share the enthusiasm he has inspired in Jane; and will try to save him....'

'Can you doubt it, dear mistress?'

'No, I know your devotedness and your courage. This, then, is what you must do; if you succeed in finding the young man of Nazareth, you will apprise him that he is betrayed by Judas, one of his disciples, and that he has only to fly from Jerusalem to escape the pharisees; they have sworn his death! Jane thinks that by retiring to Galilee, his native country, Mary's son will be saved, for his cowardly enemies would not dare to follow him there.'

'But, dear mistress, even here, at Jerusalem, he has only to-night to call the people to his defence, his disciples, by whom he is adored, will put themselves at the head of the revolt, and all the pharisees in the world would not be able to arrest him!'

'Jane had also thought of this plan; but that he might raise the people in his favor, either Jesus or his disciples must be apprised of the danger which menaces him.'

'Consequently, dear mistress, we have not a moment to lose.'

'Listen once more, poor Genevieve: you forget the perils that surround you! When, therefore, you have warned the young man, or one of his disciples, you will repair to Veronica's, Samuel's wife; you will tell her that you came from Jane, and as a proof of the truth you will give her this ring, which my friend drew from her finger; you will beg Veronica to conceal you in her house, and go immediately to Jane's, who will instruct her as to what she and I intend doing for you.'

'Veronica,' said my friend to me, 'is kind and obliging; to the young Nazarene she and her husband owe a debt of gratitude, because he cured one of their children; you will therefore be safely concealed in their house until Jane and I have decided upon something respecting you. This is not all, in this packet I have brought your disguise as a young man, which I have just taken from the room in which you sleep; it will be more prudent to put on these garments of a man. It will be safer whilst running about the streets of Jerusalem at night and entering the tavern of the Wild Ass.'

'Dear, dear mistress, always kind, you think of all.'

'Hasten to dress yourself. In the mean time, I will go and see if it is possible to open the street door.'

CHAPTER V.

Aurelia, having quitted the low room, returned in a few minutes and found Genevieve dressed as a young man and buckling the leather belt of her tunic.

'It is impossible to open the door!' said Aurelia in despair to her slave; 'the key is not within the lock where it is usually left.'

'Dear mistress, come,' said Genevieve, 'let us try again. Come, quick.'

And the two, after crossing the court, arrived at the street door. The efforts of Genevieve were

as vain as those of her mistress had been to open it. She had surmounted one of the half arches, but without a ladder it was impossible to reach the opening. Suddenly Genevieve remarked to Aurelia:

'I have read in the family narratives left by Fergan, that one of his ancestresses, named Meroe, the wife of a sailor, had, by the help of her husband, been enabled to mount a high tree.'

'By what means?'

'Just lean your back against this door, dear mistress; now, enlace your two hands in such a way that I can place my foot in their hollow; I will next place the other on your shoulder, and perhaps thus I shall be enabled to reach the arch, and from thence I will endeavor to descend into the street.'

Suddenly the slave heard at a distance the voice of Seigneur Gremion from the upper story, call out in an angry tone:

'Aurelia! Aurelia!'

'My husband,' exclaimed the young wife trembling.

'Oh! Genevieve, you are lost!'

'Your hands! your hands! dear mistress; if I can only reach to this opening, I am saved.'

Aurelia obeyed almost mechanically, for the menacing voice of the Seigneur Gremion drew nearer and nearer.

The slave, after having placed one of her feet in the hollow of the two hands of her mistress, rested her other foot lightly on her shoulder, thus reached the opening, contrived to place herself on the thickness of the wall, and rested for a few moments kneeling under the half arch.

'But in jumping into the street,' suddenly exclaimed Aurelia in fear, 'you will hurt yourself, poor Genevieve.'

At this moment arrived the Seigneur Gremion, pale, enraged, and holding a lamp in his hand.

'What are you doing there?' he cried, addressing his wife; 'reply! reply!'

Then perceiving the slave kneeling above the door, he added:

'Ah! wretch! you would escape, and 'tis my wife who favors your flight?'

'Yes,' replied Aurelia courageously, 'yes; and should you kill me on the spot, she shall escape your ill treatment.'

Genevieve, after looking down into the street from the elevation where she had crept, saw that she would have to jump twice her own length; she hesitated a moment, but hearing the Seigneur Gremion say to his wife, whom he had brutally shook by the arm to make her abandon the chain of the door to which she had clung:

'By Hercules! will you let me pass? oh! I will get outside and wait for your miserable slave, and if she does not break her limbs in jumping into the street, I will break her bones!'

'Try to get down and save yourself, Genevieve,' cried Aurelia; 'fear nothing, they shall trample me under foot before I open the door—'

Genevieve raised her eyes to heaven to invoke the gods, jumped from the arch above the door and was lucky enough to reach the ground without hurting herself. She remained however for a moment, stunned by the fall; she then rose up hastily and took to flight, her heart beating at the cries she heard proceeding from her mistress, who was being ill treated by her husband.

The slave, after running some way to get beyond her master's house, stopped, breathless, to consider in what direction was situated the tavern of the Wild Ass, where she hoped to hear of the young man of Nazareth, whom she wished to warn of the danger that menaced him. At this tavern she learnt that some hours before he had gone, with several of his disciples, towards the river Cedron, to a garden planted with olive trees, where he often repaired at night to meditate and pray.

Genevieve ran hastily to this place. The moment she had passed the gate of the city, she saw in the distance the light of several torches reflected on the helmets and armor of a great number of soldiers; they marched in disorder and uttered confused clamors.

The slave, fearing that they were sent by the pharisees to seize the Nazarene, commenced running in the hope of getting before them, perhaps, and in time to give the alarm to Jesus, or to his disciples. She was but a short distance from these armed men, whom she recognized as the Jerusalem militia, but little renowned for their courage, when by the glare of the torches they carried she noticed, away from the road but following the same direction, a narrow path bordered with firs. She took this road that she might not be seen by the soldiers, at the head of whom she observed Judas, the disciple of the young man whom she had seen at the tavern of the Wild Ass one of the preceding nights. He was then saying to the officer of the men, who commanded the escort:

'Seigneur, he whom you see me embrace will be the Nazarene.'

'Oh! this time,' replied the officer, 'he shall not escape us; and to-morrow, before sunset, the rebel will have suffered the punishment due to his crimes. Let us hasten, let us hasten; some of his disciples might have given him notice of our arrival. Let us also be very prudent, for fear of falling into an ambush, and let us also be very prudent when we are on the point of seizing the Nazarene: he might employ against us magical and diabolical ways. If I recommend prudence to you,' added the officer to his men, in a valorous tone, 'tis not that I fear danger, but 'tis to secure the success of our enterprise.'

The soldiers did not appear greatly reassured by these words of their officer and slackened their march, from a fear, no doubt, of some ambush.—Genevieve profited by this circumstance and, still running, she arrived at the borders of the river of Cedron. Not far from thence she perceived a small hill, planted with olives; this wood, buried in the shade, was scarcely distinguishable from the darkness of the night. She listened, all was silent; nothing was heard but the measured tread of the soldiers as they slowly approached. Genevieve had a momentary hope, thinking that, perhaps, the young man of Nazareth, warned in time, had quitted this place. She advanced cautiously in the obscurity, when she stumbled against the body of a man stretched beneath an olive tree. She could not restrain a cry of fear, whilst the man against whom she had stumbled suddenly awoke and said: 'Master, pardon me but this time again; I could not overcome the sleep that invaded me.'

'A disciple of Jesus!' exclaimed the slave, once more alarmed. 'He is here, then?'

Then addressing the man: 'Since you are a disciple of Jesus, save him: there is still time. See those torches in the distance; listen to the confused murmurs! They approach; they will take him, they will kill him. Save him, save him, oh, save him!'

'Who,' inquired the disciple, still half unconscious with sleep; 'who is it they would kill? Who are you?'

'No matter to you who I am; but save your master, I tell you: they are coming to seize him. The soldiers advance. See you those torches yonder?'

'Yes,' replied the disciple in a surprised and alarmed tone and now completely waking up: 'I see in the distance some helmets, sparkling from the light of the torches. But,' he added, looking round, 'where are my companions, then?'

'Asleep, like yourself, perhaps,' replied Genevieve. 'And you have not strength enough to resist sleep?'

'No, I and my companions struggled in vain; our master came twice to awake us, mildly reproaching us for thus sleeping. He then went once more to meditate and pray under the trees.'

'The militia men!' exclaimed Genevieve on seeing the light of the torches approaching nearer and nearer. 'They are here! He is lost, unless he remains concealed in the wood, or that you all die to defend him. Are you armed?'

'We have no arms!' replied the disciple, beginning to tremble; 'and besides, to try to resist soldiers, 'tis madness!'

'No arms!' exclaimed Genevieve, very indignant. 'Is there any need of arms? Are not the stones in the road? Is not courage sufficient to crush these men?'

'We are not men of the sword,' said the disciple, looking round him with uneasiness, for the soldiers were already near enough for their torches to throw a light on Genevieve, the disciple and several of his companions, whom she then perceived, here and there, still asleep under the trees. They suddenly awoke at the voice of their comrade, who called them, going from one to the other.

The soldiers hastened in a tumult, seeing, from the light of the torches, several men; some still reclining, others rising, others again on their feet, rushed upon them, menacing them with their swords and sticks, for some were only armed with sticks, and all cried out:

'Where is the Nazarene? Tell us, Judas, where is he?'

The traitor, and infamous disciple, after having examined by the light of the torches his ancient companions, detained prisoners, said to the officer:

'The young master is not amongst these.'

'Will he escape us this time?' exclaimed the officer.

'By the pillars of the temple! you promised to deliver him to us, Judas: you have received the price of his blood; you must deliver him to us, Judas!'

Genevieve had kept aloof; suddenly she saw a few paces off, towards the olive wood, a white form, which issuing from the darkness, approached slowly towards the soldiers. The heart of Genevieve almost broke; it was no doubt the young Nazarene, attracted by the noise of the tumult.—She was not deceived. Presently she recognized Jesus; on his sad and gentle features she read neither fear nor surprise.

Judas made a sign of intelligence to the officer, ran to meet the young man of Nazareth, and said, whilst embracing him,

'Master, I kiss you.'

At these words one of the soldiers who were not occupied in detaining as prisoners the disciples, who in vain endeavored to fly, remembering the recommendations of their officer respecting the infernal sorceries that Jesus might employ against them, regarded him with fear, hesitating to approach in order to seize him; the officer himself kept behind the soldiers in order to excite them to seize Jesus, but did not approach him himself. Jesus, calm and thoughtful, made a few steps towards the armed men and said to them in his gentle voice:

'Whom seek you?'

'We seek Jesus,' replied the officer, still keeping behind his soldiers:

'We seek Jesus of Nazareth.'

'I am he!' said the Nazarene, making a step towards the soldiers. But the latter drew back frightened.

Jesus resumed: 'Once more, whom is it you seek?'

'Jesus of Nazareth!' they all cried with one voice; 'we wish to take Jesus of Nazareth!' and they again drew back.

'I have already told you that I am he,' replied the young man, going to them; 'and since you seek me, take me, but allow these to go,' he added, pointing to his disciples still retained as prisoners.

The officer made a sign to the soldiers who did not seem as yet completely reassured; they approached Jesus, however, to bind him, whilst he said to them mildly: 'You came here armed with swords and sticks to take me, as if I were a malefactor, and yet, I sat amidst you every day in the temple, praying, and you did not arrest me.'

Then, of himself, he tendered his hands to the cords with which they bound him. The cowardly disciples of the young man had not had the courage to defend him; they dared not even accompany him to his prison; and the moment they were released by the soldiers, they fled on all sides. A mournful smile crossed the lips of Jesus, when he found himself thus betrayed and abandoned by those he had so loved, and whom he believed his friends.

Genevieve, hidden by the shade of an olive tree, could not restrain tears of grief and indignation on seeing these men so miserably abandon Jesus; she comprehended why the doctors of the law and the high priests, instead of arresting him in open day, had arrested him during the night; they feared the rage of the people and of the resolute men like Banaïas; these would not have allowed him to be carried off without resistance, the friend of the poor and the afflicted.

The soldiers quitted the olive wood, having their prisoner in the midst of them; they directed their steps towards the town.

After some time Genevieve perceived that a man, whose features she could not distinguish in the darkness, was walking behind her, and she frequently heard the man sigh and sob.

After entering Jerusalem through the deserted and silent streets, as they are at that hour of the night, the soldiers repaired to the house of Caïphus, the high priest, where they conducted Jesus. The slave, remarking at the door of this house a great many servants, glided among them as the soldiers entered, and remained at first beneath the vestibule lighted by torches. By this light she recognized the man who, like herself, had followed the friend of the oppressed since he left the wood; it was Peter, one of his disciples. He appeared as much grieved as alarmed, the tears streaming down his face; Genevieve thought at first that one at least of his disciples would be faithful to him and he would show his devotedness by accompanying Jesus before the tribunal of Caïphus. Alas! the slave was deceived. Scarcely had Peter crossed the threshold of the door, when, instead of joining Mary's son, he sat down on one of the benches of the vestibule, amongst the servants of Caïphus, burying his face in his hands.

Genevieve then seeing, at the extremity of the court, a strong light escaping from a door beyond which pressed the soldiers of the escort, approached them. The door was that of a hall in the middle of which was erected a tribunal lighted by a number of flambeaux. Seated behind this tribunal, she recognized several of the persons she had seen at the supper given by Pontius Pilate; the Seigneurs Caïphus, the high priest; Baruch, doctor of law; Jonas, the banker, were among the judges of the young man of Nazareth. He was conducted before them; his hands bound, his features still calm, gentle and sad; a short distance from him were the officers of the court, and behind these, mixed with the soldiers and the servants of Caïphus, the two mysterious emissaries whom Genevieve had remarked at the tavern of the Wild Ass. Inasmuch as the countenance of the friend of the afflicted was serene and dignified, so did those of his judges appear violently irritated; they expressed the joy of a disgraceful triumph; they spoke in a low tone and from time to time they pointed with a menacing gesture to Mary's son, who patiently awaited his interrogatory.

Genevieve, confounded among those who filled the hall, heard them say to one another:

'He is at last taken, then, this Nazarene, who preached revolt!'

'Oh! he is less haughty now than when he was at the head of his troop of vagabonds and abandoned women!'

'He preaches against the rich,' said a servant of the high priest; 'he commands the renunciation of riches; but if our masters were to keep poor cheer, we servants should be reduced to the lot of hungry beggars, instead of fattening on the many feasts given by our masters.'

'And this is not all,' said another; 'if we listened to this cursed Nazarene, our masters, voluntarily impoverished, would denounce all pleasures; they would not throw away every day superb robes or tunics because the embroidery or color of these garments did not please them. Now, who profits by these caprices of our ostentatious masters, unless ourselves, since tunics and robes all fall to our share?'

'And if our masters renounced pleasures, to live on fasting and prayer, they would have no more gay mistresses, they would no longer charge us with those amorous commissions, recompensed magnificently in case of success!'

'Yes, yes,' they all cried together; 'death to the Nazarene who would make of us, who live in idleness, abundance and gaiety, beggars or beasts of burthen!'

Genevieve heard many other remarks, spoken half aloud and menacing for the life of Jesus; one of the two mysterious emissaries, behind whom she stood, said to his companion: 'Our evidence will now suffice to condemn this cursed fellow; I have come to an understanding with Caiphus.'

At this moment one of the officers of the high priest, placed by the side of the Nazarene and charged to watch him, struck with his mace on the floor of the hall; immediately there was a dead silence. Then Caiphus, after a few words exchanged in a low voice with the other pharisees composing the tribunal, said to those assembled: 'Who are they who can depose here against the man called Jesus of Nazareth?'

One of the two emissaries advanced to the foot of the tribunal and said in a solemn voice:

'I swear having heard this man affirm that the high priests and doctors of the law were all hypocrites, and that he treated them as a race of serpents and vipers!'

A murmur of indignation rose from the soldiers and servants of the priests, the judges looked at one another, appearing to ask each other if it were possible that such words could have been pronounced. The other emissary approached near his companion and added in a voice not less solemn:

'I swear having heard this man affirm that they must revolt against Prince Herod and against the Emperor Tiberius, the august protector of Israel, in order to proclaim Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews.'

While a smile of pity crossed the lips of Mary's son at these false accusations, since he had said: 'Render unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's, and unto God that which is God's!' the pharisees of the tribunal lifted up their hands to heaven as if to invoke it as a witness of such enormities. One of the high priest's servants, advancing in his turn, said to the judges:

'I swear having heard this man say, that they must massacre all the pharisees, pillage their houses and violate their wives and daughters!'

A fresh movement of horror manifested itself amongst the judges and those of the auditory who were devoted to them.

'Pillage! massacre! and violation!' exclaimed some.

'Such is the object of the Nazarene! 'Tis for this he drags after him this band of wretches.'

'He would some day, at their head, give up Jerusalem to fire, pillage and blood!'

The high priest Caiphus, president of the tribunal, signed to one of the officers to demand silence; the officer again struck the floor with his mace, all were silent. Caiphus, addressing the young Nazarene in a menacing voice, said to him:

'Why do you not reply to what these persons depose against you?'

Jesus said to him in an accent full of gentleness and dignity:

'I have spoken publicly to every one; I have always taught in the temple and in the synagogue in which all the Jews were assembled; I have said nothing in secret, why, then, do you question me? Question those who have heard me, to ascertain what I have said to them: these know what I have taught.'

Scarce had he spoken these words when Genevieve saw one of the officers, furious at this reply, so just and so calm, raise his hand against Jesus and strike him in the face, exclaiming:

'Is it thus you reply to the high priest?'

At this infamous outrage, to strike a man bound, Genevieve felt her heart leap, her tears stream, whilst on the contrary, loud bursts of laughter rose from amidst the soldiers and servants

of the high priest.

Jesus still remained placid, but he turned to the officer and said to him mildly:

'If I have spoken evil show me the evil I have done; but if I have spoken well, why strikest thou me?'

These words and his angelic sweetness did not disarm the persecutors of the young man; coarse laughter again burst from the hall and the insults recommenced on all sides.

'Oh! the Nazarene, the man of peace, the enemy of war, does not belie himself; he is a coward and allows himself to be struck in the face.'

'Call your disciples, then; let them come and avenge you if you have not the courage.'

'His disciples,' said one of the soldiers who had arrested Jesus. 'His disciples! ah! if you had but seen them! At sight of our lances and our torches the vagabonds fled like a flight of owls!'

'They were glad enough to escape the tyranny of the Nazarene, who kept them near him by magic!'

'As a proof that they hate and despise him, not one dared accompany him hither.'

'Oh!' thought Genevieve, 'how Jesus must suffer from this base ingratitude of his friends! It must be more cruel than the outrages of which he is the object.' And turning her head towards the street door, she saw at a distance Peter, still seated on a bench, his face hidden in his hands and not having even the courage to assist and defend his kind master before this tribunal of blood. The tumult produced by the violence of the officer being somewhat appeased, one of the emissaries continued in a loud voice:

'I swear, lastly, that this man has horribly blasphemed by saying that he is Christ, the son of God!'

Then Caiphus, addressing Jesus, said to him in a tone still more menacing: 'You reply nothing to what these persons say of you?'

But the young man only shrugged his shoulders and still continued silent. This irritated Caiphus, he rose from his seat and exclaimed, pointing with his finger to the son of Mary: 'On the part of the living God, I order you to tell us if you are the Christ, the son of God.'

'You have said it, I am,' replied the young man smiling.

Genevieve had heard Jesus say, that like all men, his brothers, he was a son of God; just as the Druids teach that all men are sons of the same God. What then was the surprise of the slave, when she saw the high priest, when Jesus had replied that he was the son of God, rise up and tear his robe with all the appearance of horror and alarm, exclaiming, addressing the members of the tribunal:

'He has blasphemed; what need have we of more witnesses? You, yourselves, have heard him blaspheme, how do you judge him?'

'He deserves death!'

Such was the reply of all the judges of this court of inquiry. But the voices of Doctor Baruch and of the banker Jonas rose above every other; they cried out, striking with their fist the marble table of the tribunal:

'Death for the Nazarene! He has deserved death!'

'Yes! yes!' cried all the soldiers and the servants of the high priest, 'he has deserved death!'

'To death with the cursed blasphemer!'

'Conduct this criminal instantly before the Seigneur Pontius Pilate, Governor of Judea, for the Emperor Tiberius,' said Caiphus to the soldiers; 'he alone can give orders to put the condemned to death.'

At these words of the high priest they dragged Jesus from the house of Caiphus to take him before Pontius Pilate. Genevieve, confounded with the servants, followed the soldiers. On passing the door she saw Peter, the cowardly disciple of Jesus (the least cowardly of all, however, she thought, since alone, he had at least followed him there), she saw Peter turn away his eyes, when Jesus seeking for a look from his disciple, passed before him, conducted by the soldiers. One of the female servants recognising Peter said to him:

'You, too, were with Jesus the Galilean?'

But Peter, reddening and casting down his eyes, replied:

'I know not what you say.'

Another servant, hearing Peter's reply, said, pointing him out to the bystanders:

'I tell you that this one was also with Jesus of Nazareth!'

'I swear,' exclaimed Peter, 'I swear that I know not Jesus of Nazareth!'

Genevieve's heart heaved with indignation and disgust. This Peter, by a base weakness, or for fear of sharing the fate of his master, denying him twice and perjuring himself, for this indignity was in her eyes the worst of men: more than ever she pitied Mary's son for having been betrayed, given up, abandoned, and denied by those whom he so much loved.

She thus explained to herself the painful sadness she had remarked on his features. A great mind like this could not fear death, but despair at the ingratitude of those whom he thought his dearest friends.

The slave quitted the house of the high priest, where Peter the renegade remained, and soon rejoined the soldiers who were leading away Jesus. The day began to break, several mendicants and vagabonds who had slept on the benches placed on each side of the door of the houses, awoke at the noise of the soldiers who were leading away Jesus. Genevieve hoped for a moment that these poor people who followed him everywhere, would call him their friend, whose misfortunes he so kindly pitied, would apprise their companions and assemble them to release Jesus; consequently she said to one of these men:

'Know you not that these soldiers are leading away the young man of Nazareth, the friend of the poor and afflicted? They would kill him; hasten to defend him; release him; raise the people. These soldiers of Jerusalem will fly perhaps, but the soldiers of Pontius Pilate are tougher; they have good lances, thick cuirasses, and well tempered swords.'

'What could we attempt?'

'Why you can rise in a mass; you can arm yourselves with stones, with sticks!' exclaimed Genevieve, 'and at least you can die to avenge him who has consecrated his life to your cause!'

The beggar shook his head and replied whilst one of his companions approached him:

'Wretched as life may be, we cling to it, and 'tis running to meet death if we stake our rags against the cuirasses of the Roman soldiers.'

'And then,' said another vagabond, 'if Jesus of Nazareth is a Messiah, as so many others have been before him, and so many others will be after him, 'tis a misfortune if they kill him; but Messiahs are never wanting in Israel.'

'And if they put him to death!' said Genevieve, 'it is because he has loved you; it is because he pitied your wretchedness; it is because he has shamed the rich for their hypocrisy and their hardness of heart towards those who suffer!'

'It is true; he constantly predicted for us the kingdom of God on earth,' replied the vagabond again, reclining on his bench, as also his companion, to warm themselves by the rays of the morning sun; 'yet these fine days he promised us do not arrive, and we are just as poor to-day as we were yesterday.'

'Eh! and what tells you that these fine days, promised by him, will not arrive to-morrow?' continued Genevieve; 'does not the harvest require time to take root, to grow, and to ripen? Poor, blind and impatient that you are, recollect that to leave him to die, whom you call your friend, before he has fertilized the good seeds he has sown in so many hearts, is to trample under foot, is to destroy whilst yet only grass, a harvest perhaps magnificent.'

The two vagabonds remained silent, shaking their heads, and Genevieve left them, saying to herself with profound grief:

'Shall I encounter, then, everywhere nothing but ingratitude, forgetfulness, treason and cowardice? Oh! it is not the body of Jesus that will be crucified, it will be his heart.'

The slave hastened to join the soldiers who were approaching the house of Pontius Pilate.—At the moment she doubled her pace, she remarked a sort of tumult amongst the Jerusalem militia, which suddenly stopped. She mounted on a bench and saw Banaïas alone at the entrance of a narrow arcade which the soldiers had to cross to reach the governor's house, audaciously barring the passage, brandishing his long stick terminated by a knob of iron.

'Ah! this one at least does not abandon him he calls his friend!' thought Genevieve.

'By the shoulders of Samson!' cried Banaïas in his loud voice, 'if you do not instantly set our friend at liberty, militia of Beelzebub! I'll beat you as dry as the flail beats the wheat on the barn floor! Ah! if I had but time to collect a band of companions as resolute as myself to defend our friend of Nazareth, 'tis an order I would give you instead of a simple prayer, and this simple prayer I repeat: set our friend at liberty, or else by the jawbone used by Samson, I will destroy you all like he destroyed the Philistines!'

'Do you hear the wretch! he calls this audacious menace a prayer!' exclaimed the officer commanding the militia, who prudently kept himself in the middle of his troop; 'run your lances through the miserable; strike him with your swords if he does not make way for you!'

The Jerusalem militia was not a very valiant troop, for they had hesitated before arresting Jesus, who advanced towards them, alone and disarmed: so that, despite the orders of their chief, they remained a moment undecided before the menacing attitude of Banaïas.

In vain did Jesus, whose firm and gentle voice was heard by Genevieve, endeavor to appease his defender, and entreat him to retire. Banaïas resumed in a threatening tone, thus replying to

the supplications of the young Nazarene:

'Do not trouble yourself about me, friend; you are a man of peace and quietness. I am a man of violence and battle, when the feeble are to be protected. Let me alone. I will stop these wicked soldiers here, until the noise of the tumult has apprised and brought my companions; and then, by the five hundred concubines of Solomon, who danced before him, you shall see these devils of the militia dance to the tune of our knobbed sticks, keeping time on their helmets and cuirasses.'

'How much longer will you suffer yourselves to be insulted by a single man, you cowardly dogs?' exclaimed the officer to his men.

'Oh! if I had not orders not to quit the Nazarene more than his shadow, I would set you an example, and my long sword should already have cut the throat of this brigand!'

'By Abraham's nose! 'tis I who will rip open your belly, you who talk so big, and release my friend!' exclaimed Banaias. 'I am only one; but a falcon is worth much more than a hundred blackbirds.'

And Banaias fell on the soldiers of the militia, swaying about his redoubtable stick, despite the prayers of Jesus.

At first, surprised and shaken by so much audacity, some soldiers of the front rank of the escort gave way; but presently, ashamed at not resisting one man, they rallied, attacked Banaias in their turn, who, overcome by numbers, despite his heroic courage, fell dead, covered with wounds. Genevieve then saw the soldiers, in their rage, throw to the bottom of a well, near the arcade, the bleeding body of the only defender of Jesus. After this exploit, the officer, brandishing his long sword, placed himself at the head of his troop, and they arrived at the house of Pontius Pilate, where Genevieve had accompanied her mistress, Aurelia, a few days previous.

The sun was already high. Attracted by the noise of the struggle of Banaias with the soldiers, several inhabitants of Jerusalem, issuing from their houses, had followed the militia. The house of the Roman governor was in the richest quarters of the town. The persons who, from curiosity, accompanied Jesus, far from pitying him, loaded him with insults and hootings.

'At last, then,' cried some, 'the Nazarene, who brought so much trouble and confusion on our town, is taken!'

'The demagogue who set the beggars against princes! The impious! who blasphemed our holy religion! The audacious! who brought trouble into our families, praising the prodigal and debauched sons,' said one of the emissaries, who had followed the troop.

'The infamous! who would pervert our wives,' said the other emissary, 'by encouraging adultery, since he snatched one of these sinners from the punishment she deserved!'

'Thanks be to God!' added a money-changer, 'if this Nazarene is put to death, which will only be justice, we can then re-open our counters under the colonnade of the temple, whence this profaner and his band had driven us, and where we dared not return.'

'What fools we were to fear his assemblage of beggars!' added a dealer in merchandise.

'See if one of them has simply dared rebel to defend this Nazarene, by whose name they were always swearing, he whom they called their friend!'

'Let them finish with the brawler! Let him be crucified, and we shall hear no more of him!'

'Yes, yes, death to the Nazarene!' cried the people, amongst whom was Genevieve. And this assemblage still increasing, repeated, with greater fury, those fatal cries:

'Death to the Nazarene!'

'Alas!' said the slave to herself, 'is there a more horrible fate than that of this young man; abandoned by the poor, whom he befriended; hated by the rich, to whom he preached humility and charity! How deep must be the bitterness of his heart!'

The soldiers, followed by the crowd, had arrived opposite the house of Pilate.

Several high priests, doctors of law, senators, and other pharisees, among whom were Caiphus, Doctor Baruch, and the banker Jonas, had joined the troop and walked at its head. One of these pharisees having cried:

'Seigneurs, let us enter Pontius Pilate's that he may instantly condemn the cursed Nazarene to death!'

Caiphus replied with a pious air:

'My seigneurs, we cannot enter the house of a heathen: this stain would prevent our eating the passover to-day.'

'No!' added Doctor Baruch, 'we cannot commit this abominable impiety.'

'Only hear them!' said to the crowd one of the emissaries, with an accent of admiration.

'Do you hear the holy men? What respect they profess for the commandment of our holy religion! Ah! these are not like that impious Nazarene, who rails and blasphemes at the most

sacred things, when he dares to declare that we need not observe the Sabbath!'

'Oh! the infamous hypocrites!' said Genevieve to herself: 'how well Jesus knew them; how much reason he had to unmask them. They now hesitate to enter the house of a heathen, for fear of soiling their sandals; but they do not fear to soil their soul by demanding from this heathen to shed the blood of the righteous, one of their compatriots. Ah! poor youth of Nazareth! they will make you pay with your life for the courage you have shown in attacking these rich swindlers.'

The officer of the militia having entered the palace of Pontius Pilate, whilst the escort remained outside guarding the prisoner, Genevieve mounted behind a cart stopped by the crowd, and endeavored to keep in sight the young man of Nazareth. She saw him standing in the midst of the soldiers, his long chestnut hair falling over his shoulders, his looks still calm and gentle, and a smile of resignation on his lips. He contemplated the tumultuous and threatening crowd with a sort of painful commiseration, as if he had pitied these men for their blindness and iniquity.

Insults were offered him on all sides. The soldiers themselves treated him with so much brutality that the blue mantle he wore over his white tunic was already almost torn from his back. Jesus, to so many outrages and ill treatment, opposed an unalterable placidity, and on his pale and handsome features Genevieve did not see the least impatience or the least anger betray itself. Suddenly these words were heard circulating through the crowd:

'Ah! here he comes, the Seigneur Pontius Pilate!'

'He will at length pronounce sentence of death against this cursed Nazarene.'

'Luckily 'tis not far from hence to Golgotha, where they execute criminals; we can go and see him crucified!'

In fact, Genevieve soon saw the Governor, Pontius Pilate, appear at the door of his house; no doubt he had been just aroused from sleep, for he was enveloped in a long morning robe; his hair and beard were in disorder; his eyes, red and swollen, appeared dazzled at the rays of the rising sun; he could scarcely conceal several yawns, and seemed greatly annoyed at having been awakened so early, having, perhaps, as usual prolonged his supper until daybreak. So, addressing Doctor Baruch in a tone of harshness and ill-humor, like a person anxious to abridge an interview that was unpleasant, said to him:

'What is the crime of which you accuse this young man?'

'If he were not a malefactor, we should not have brought him to you.'

Pontius Pilate, annoyed at the short reply of Doctor Baruch, continued impatiently, and stifling another yawn:

'Well, since you say he has sinned against the law, take him; judge him according to your law.'

And the governor turned his back upon the Doctor, shrugging his shoulders, and re-entered his house.

For a moment Genevieve thought the young man saved, but the reply of Pontius Pilate produced much indignation amongst the crowd.

'Such are the Romans, then,' said some; 'they only seek to keep up agitation in our poor country, that they might rule it more easily.'

'This Pontius Pilate evidently appears to protect this cursed Nazarene!'

'As for me, I am certain the Nazarene is a secret agent of the Romans,' added one of the emissaries: 'they make use of this seditious vagabond for their dark projects.'

'There is no doubt of it,' added the other emissary; 'the Nazarene has sold himself to the Romans.'

At this last outrage, which seemed painful to Jesus, Genevieve saw him again lift up his eyes to heaven in a heart-rending manner, whilst the crowd repeated:

'Yes, yes, he is a traitor.'

'He is an agent of the Romans!'

'To death with the traitor! to death!'

Doctor Baruch was unwilling to lose his prey; he and several of the high priests, seeing Pontius Pilate entering his house, ran after him, and having supplicated him to return, they brought him outside, to the great applause of the crowd. Pontius Pilate appeared to continue, almost in spite of himself, the interrogatory; he said with impatience to Doctor Baruch, pointing to Jesus:

'Of what do you accuse this man?'

The doctor of law replied, in a loud voice:

'This man excites the people to revolt by the doctrines he teaches throughout Judea, from Galilee, where he commenced, unto here.'

At this accusation Genevieve heard one of the emissaries say quietly to his companion:

'Doctor Baruch is a cunning fox; by this accusation of sedition, he will force the governor to condemn the Nazarene.'

Pontius Pilate, having signed to Jesus to draw near him, they exchanged a few words between themselves; at each reply of the young man of Nazareth, still calm and dignified, Pontius Pilate seemed more and more convinced of his innocence; he resumed in a loud voice, addressing the high priests and doctors of the law:

'You have presented this man to me as exciting the people to revolt; nevertheless, having questioned him in your presence, I do not find him guilty of any of the crimes of which you accuse him. I do not judge him deserving of death: I shall therefore discharge him after he has been chastised.'

And Pontius Pilate, stifling a yawn, made a sign to one of his servants, who hastily departed. The crowd, not satisfied with the sentence of Pontius Pilate, at first murmured, then complained aloud:

'It was not to have the Nazarene chastised that we brought him here,' said some; 'but that he should be condemned to death!'

'Yes, yes!' exclaimed several voices; 'death! death!'

Pontius Pilate replied not to these murmurs and cries but by shrugging his shoulders and re-entering his house.

'If the governor is convinced of the innocence of the young man,' said Genevieve to herself, 'why does he have him chastised? 'Tis both cowardly and cruel. He hopes, perhaps, to calm, by this concession, the rage of the enemies of Jesus. Alas! he deceives himself; he will only appease them by the death of this just man!'

Scarcely had Pontius Pilate given orders for Jesus to be chastised, than the soldiers seized him, tore off the last remnants of his mantle, stripped him of his tunic of linen, and his tunic of wool, which they turned down over his leather belt, and thus laid bare the upper portion of his body; they then bound him to one of the pillars that adorned the entrance door of the house of the Roman Governor. Jesus opposed no resistance, offered no complaint, turned his celestial face towards the crowd, and regarded it sorrowfully, but without appearing to hear the hootings and insults showered upon him. They had sent for the executioner of the city to flog him with rods, so, whilst awaiting the coming of the executioner of the law, the vociferations continued, still excited by the emissaries of the pharisees.

'Pontius Pilate hopes to satisfy us by the chastisement of this vagabond; but he is deceived,' said some.

'The culpable indulgence of the Roman governor,' added one of the emissaries, 'only proves too well that there is a secret understanding between him and the Nazarene.'

'Eh! my friends, of what do you complain?' inquired another: 'Pontius Pilate gives us more than we ask of him; we only wanted the death of the Nazarene, and he will be chastised before he is put to death. Glory to the generous Pontius Pilate.'

'Yes, yes! for he must certainly condemn him; we will force him to do it.'

'Ah! here's the executioner!' cried several voices: 'here's the executioner and his assistant.'

Genevieve recognized the same two men, who, three days before, had flogged her with a whip at the house of her master; she could not restrain her tears at the thought that this youth, who was all love and tenderness, was about to suffer an ignominious punishment reserved for slaves. The two executioners carried under their arm a package of hazel twigs, long, flexible, and as thick as a thumb. Each of the executioners took one, and on a sign from Caiphus, the blows began to fall violently and rapidly on the shoulders of the young man of Nazareth. When one twig broke, the executioners took another. At first Genevieve turned away her eyes from this cruel spectacle; but she was forced to hear the savage jests of the crowd, which, to the son of Mary, must have been a more horrible torture than the punishment itself. 'You who said, "Love one another," you cursed Nazarene!' cried one; 'see now how you are loved!'

'You who said, "Share your bread and your cloak with him who has neither bread nor cloak," the worthy executioners follow their precepts; they share paternally their rods to break them across your back.'

'You who said, "That it was more easy for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven," don't you think it will be easier for you to pass through the eye of a needle than to escape the rod with which they warm your back?'

'You who glorified vagabonds, thieves, prostitutes, and such like game; no doubt you loved the wretches, because you knew you should one day be flogged like them, great prophet!'

Genevieve, despite her repugnance to see the punishment of Jesus, not hearing him utter a cry of complaint, feared that he had swooned from the pain, and looked at him with eyes full of anguish! Alas! to her it was a horrible spectacle.

The back of the young man was one large bleeding wound, interrupted simply by some blue and swollen furrows; at these places only the skin had not been broken. Jesus turned his face to

heaven, and closed his eyes, to escape, no doubt, the sight of this implacable crowd. His face, livid and bathed in sweat, betrayed a horrible suffering at each fresh stroke cutting into his living flesh. And yet, at times, he still attempted to smile with angelic resignation. The high priest, the doctors of the law, the senators, and all the wicked pharisees, followed with a triumphant and greedy regard the execution of the punishment.

Amongst the most rancorous in feasting on this torture, Genevieve remarked Doctor Baruch, Caiphus, and Jonas, the banker.

The executioners began to tire of flogging; they had broken on the back of Jesus, nearly all their rods; they questioned, by a look, Doctor Baruch, as if to ask him if it were not time to put an end to the torture; but the doctor of law exclaimed: 'No, no; use up, even to the very last of your rods.'

The order of the pharisee was obeyed; the last rods were broken on the shoulders of the young Nazarene, and splashed with blood the faces of the executioners; it was no longer the skin they flagellated, but a bloody wound. The martyrdom now became so atrocious that Jesus, despite his courage, gave way, and dropped his head on his left shoulder; his knees trembled, and he would have fallen to the ground, but for the cords that bound him to the pillar by the middle of his body. Pontius Pilate, after having ordered this punishment, had re-entered his own house; he now again came out, and signed to the executioners to release the condemned.

They unbound and supported him; one of them threw over his shoulders his woollen tunic. The contact of this rough cloth on the quivering flesh caused a new and so cruel an agony, that Jesus trembled in every limb. The very excess of pain brought him to himself; he raised his head, endeavored to stand so firm on his legs as to do without the assistance of his executioners, opened his eyes, and threw on the multitude a look of tenderness.

Pontius Pilate, thinking he had satisfied the hatred of the pharisees, said to the Crowd, after having had Jesus unbound:

'There is the man;' and he signed to his officers to enter his house; he was preparing to follow them, when Caiphus, the high priest, after consulting in a low voice with Doctor Baruch, and Jonas the banker, exclaimed, stopping the governor by taking hold of his robe:

'Seigneur Pilate, if you deliver up Jesus you are not a friend of the Emperor; for the Nazarene calls himself king, declares himself against the Emperor.'

'Pontius Pilate will fear passing for a traitor with his master, the Emperor Tiberius,' said to his companions one of the emissaries placed behind Genevieve.

'He will be compelled to give up the Nazarene.'

Then the wicked man cried out, in a very loud voice:

'Death to the Nazarene! the enemy of the Emperor Tiberius, the protector of Judea!'

'Yes, yes!' exclaimed several, 'the Nazarene called himself King of the Jews!'

'He would overthrow the dominion of the Emperor Tiberius!'

'He would declare himself king, by exciting the populace against the Romans, our friends and allies.'

'Reply to that, Pontius Pilate!' cried, from the middle of the crowd, one of the two emissaries.

'How is it that we, Jews, are more devoted than you to the power of the Emperor Tiberius, your master? How is it that 'tis we, Jews, who demand the death of the seditious who would destroy the Roman authority; and that 'tis you, governor for Tiberius, who would pardon this rebel?'

This apostrophe appeared the more to trouble Pontius Pilate, as from all sides they cried:

'Yes, yes, it would be to betray the Emperor to deliver up the Nazarene!'

'Or prove, perhaps, that they have been accomplices!'

Pontius Pilate, despite the desire he had, perhaps, to save the young man, appeared more and more annoyed at these reproaches coming from the crowd, reproaches which placed in doubt his fidelity to the Emperor Tiberius. He went towards the pharisees, and conversed with them in an undertone, whilst the soldiers guarded Jesus, bound, in the midst of them. Then Caiphus, the high priest, said aloud, addressing Pilate, that he might be heard by the crowd, and pointing to Jesus:

'We have found that this man perverts our nation; that he prevents tribute being paid to Cæsar, and that he calls himself King of the Jews, as being the son of God.'

Then Pontius Pilate, turning towards the young man of Nazareth, said to him,

'Are you King of the Jews?'

'Do you say this of yourself?' inquired Jesus, in a voice weakened by suffering; 'or do you ask it of me because others have said it to you before me?'

'The high priests and senators have delivered you up to me,' said Pilate. 'What have you done? Do you pretend to be King of the Jews?'

Jesus gently shook his head, and said:

'My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom had been of this world, my friends would have combated to prevent my being delivered to you; but I repeat, my kingdom is not of this world.'

Pontius Pilate again turned to the pharisees, as if to take them as witnesses of Jesus' reply, which would absolve him, since he proclaimed that his kingdom was not of this world.

'His kingdom,' thought Genevieve, 'is no doubt, in unknown worlds, where, according to our druidical faith, we shall rejoin those we have loved here. How will they dare condemn Jesus as a rebel against the Emperor? He who has so often repeated:

"Render unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's, and unto God that which is God's!"

But, alas! Genevieve forgot that the hatred of the pharisees was implacable.

The Seigneurs Baruch, Jonas, and Caiphus, having again spoken in an under tone with Pilate, the latter said to Jesus:

'Are you, yes or no, the son of God?'

'Yes,' replied Jesus, in his mild but firm voice; 'yes, I am.'

At these words, the priests, doctors and senators uttered exclamations which were repeated by the crowd.

'He has blasphemed! he has said he is the son of God!'

'And he who says he is the son of God also calls himself King of the Jews!'

'He is an enemy of the Emperor!'

'To death; to death with the Nazarene; crucify him!'

Pontius Pilate, a strange compound of cowardly weakness and equity, wishing no doubt to make a last effort to save Jesus, whom he did not think guilty, said to the crowd that it was customary on this feast day to set at liberty a criminal, and that the people had to choose for this act of clemency between a prisoner named Barabbas and Jesus, who had already been beaten with rods, he then added:

'Which of the two would you that I should release to you, Jesus or Barabbas?'

Genevieve saw the emissaries of the pharisees run from group to group, saying:

'Demand the release of Barabbas, let them give up Barabbas.'

And presently the crowd cried from all parts:

'Deliver Barabbas! and guard Jesus!'

'But,' said Pontius Pilate, 'what shall I do with Jesus?'

'Crucify him!' replied a thousand voices.

'Crucify him!'

'But,' again inquired Pilate, 'what harm has he done?'

'Crucify him!' replied the crowd, more furious than ever.

'Crucify him!'

'Death to the Nazarene!'

Pontius Pilate, not having the courage to defend Jesus, whom he found innocent, made a sign to one of his servants, the latter entered the governor's house, whilst the crowd shouted with increased fury:

'Crucify the Nazarene! crucify him!'

Jesus, still calm, mournful and pensive, seemed a perfect stranger to what was passing around him.

'No doubt,' said Genevieve to herself, 'his thoughts are already in that mysterious world where we are born and live again after quitting this one.'

The servant of Pontius Pilate returned, carrying a silver jug in one hand, and a basin in the other; a second servant took the basin whilst the first poured the water into it. Pontius Pilate dipped his hands in the water, saying in a loud voice: 'I am innocent of the death of this righteous man; 'tis for you to look to it. As for me, I wash my hands of it.'

'Let the blood of the Nazarene be upon us and our children.'

'Take Jesus then, and crucify him yourselves,' replied Pontius.

'As you demand it, Barabbas shall be released to you.'

And Pilate re-entered his house to the acclamation of the crowd, whilst Caiphus, Doctor Baruch, Jonas the banker, and the other pharisees, triumphantly raised their fists in Jesus' face.

The officer who had commanded the escort of militia charged to arrest Mary's son in the garden of Olives, approaching Caiphus, said to him: 'Seigneur, to conduct the Nazarene to Golgotha, the place of execution for criminals, we shall have to traverse the populous quarter of the Judicial gate; the calmness of the partizans of this rebel may be only apparent, and once arrived in the quarter of this vile populace, they may rise to release Jesus. I can answer for the courage of my brave soldiers; they have, already, this morning, after a deadly combat, put to flight an immense troop of determined vagabonds, commanded by a bandit named Banaias, who would have forced us to deliver up Jesus. Not one of those wretches escaped, despite their furious resistance.'

'The base liar!' said Genevieve to herself on hearing this bragging officer of militia, who continued:

'Still, Seigneur Caiphus, despite the proved courage of our militia, it would be prudent, perhaps, to confide the escort of the Nazarene to the place of execution, to the Roman guard.'

'I am of your opinion,' replied the high priest: 'I will go and ask one of the officers of Pilate to keep the Nazarene a prisoner in the guard room of the Roman cohorts until the hour of execution.'

Genevieve then saw, whilst the high priest went to converse with Pilate's officer, the chief of the militia approach Jesus; presently she heard this officer, replying probably to some words of the young man, say to him in a cruel and jesting tone: 'You are in a great hurry to stretch yourself on the cross. They must first make it, and it is not made in the twinkling of an eye. You ought to know this better than any one, in your quality of a former journeyman carpenter.'

One of the officers of Pontius Pilate, to whom the high priest had spoken, then came to Jesus and said to him: 'I am come to conduct you to the guard-room of our soldiers: when the cross is ready, they will bring it, and under our escort you shall start for Calvary! follow us!'

And Jesus, still bound, was conducted to a short distance off, by the militia, to the court where the Roman soldiers lodged; the door, before which paced a sentinel, being open, several persons who had, like Genevieve, followed the Nazarene remained outside to see what was about to happen.

When the young man was brought to the court of the guard-house (or *prætorium*), the Roman soldiers were scattered in different groups: some were cleaning their arms; others were playing at different games; some were practising with the lance under the inspection of an officer; others, extended on benches in the sun, were singing or conversing amongst themselves. She recognized, from their faces bronzed by the sun, from their martial and ferocious air, and the military order of their arms and clothes, those courageous, warlike, and merciless soldiers who had conquered the world, leaving behind them, as in Gaul, massacre, spoliation and slavery. The moment the soldiers heard the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and saw him brought in by one of their officers, they all left their occupations and hastened round him. Genevieve anticipated, on remarking the coarse and brutal manner of these soldiers, that Mary's son was about to suffer fresh outrages.

The slave remembered having read in the narratives left by the ancestors of her husband, Fergan, of the horrors committed by Cæsar's soldiers, the scourge of the Gauls, she did not doubt that these by whom the young man was surrounded, were equally as cruel as those of the past times. There was, in the middle of the court of the *prætorium*, a stone bench, on which the soldiers made Jesus sit down, still bound; then approaching him, they commenced insulting and railing at him.

'This, then, is the famous prophet!' said one.

'This, then, is he who announced that the time will come when the sword will be exchanged for a reaping hook, and when there will be no more war! no more battles!'

'No more wars! By the valiant gold god Mars! no more war!' exclaimed other soldiers with indignation.

'Ah! these are your prophecies, thou prophet of evil!'

'No more war! That is, no more clarions, no more floating standards, no more brilliant cuirasses, no more plumed helmets, which attract the eyes of the women!'

'No more war! that is, no more conquests.'

'What! no more try our iron boots on the heads of the conquered people!'

'No longer drink their wine while courting their daughters, as here, as in Gaul, as in the whole world, in fact!'

'No more war! By Hercules! And what then will become of the strong and the valiant, cursed Nazarene? According to you, they will, from daybreak till night, labor in the field or weave cloths like base slaves, instead of dividing their time between battle, idleness, the tavern, and the passion of love!'

'You, who call yourself the son of God,' said one of these Romans, raising his fist against the young man; 'you are, then, the son of the God Fear, coward that you are!'

'You, who call yourself the King of the Jews, would be acknowledged, then, as king of all the poltroons of the universe!'

'Comrades!' exclaimed one of the soldiers, bursting into a laugh, 'since he is king of the poltroons, let us crown him!'

This proposition was received with insulting joy; several voices immediately cried out:

'Yes, since he is king, we must invest him with the imperial purple.'

'We must put a sceptre in his hand; we will then proclaim him, and honor him like our august Emperor Tiberius.'

And whilst their companions continued to surround and insult the young Nazarene, indifferent to these outrages, several of the soldiers went out.—One took the red cloak of a horse soldier; another the cane of a centurion; a third remembering a heap of fagots intended to be burnt, lying in a corner, chose a few sprigs of a thorny plant, and began weaving a crown. Several voices then exclaimed:

'We must now proceed to crown the King of the Jews.'

'Yes, let us crown the king of the cowards!'

'The son of God!'

'The son of the god Fear!'

'Companions, this coronation must be performed with pomp, as if it concerned a real Cæsar.'

'As for me, I am crown bearer.'

'And I, sceptre-bearer.'

'And I, bearer of the imperial mantle.'

And amidst shouts and obscene jests, these Romans formed a sort of mock procession. The crown-bearer advanced the first, holding the crown of thorns with a solemn air; and followed by a certain number of soldiers; next came the sceptre-bearer, then other soldiers; lastly, the one who carried the mantle; and all sang in chorus:

'Hail to the King of the Jews!

'Hail to the Messiah!

'Hail to the Son of God!

'Hail to the Cæsar of poltroons, hail!'

Jesus, seated on his bench, regarded the preparations for this insulting ceremony with unalterable placidity. The crown-bearer having approached first, raised the thorny emblem above the head of the young man, and said to him: 'I crown thee, O king!'

And the Roman placed the crown so brutally on the head of Jesus, that the thorns pierced the flesh; large drops of blood ran, like tears of blood, down the pale face of the victim; but, except the first involuntary shudder caused by the agony, the features of the meek and lowly sufferer maintained their usual placidity, and betrayed neither resentment nor rage.

'And I invest you with the imperial mantle, O king!' added another Roman, whilst one of his companions drew off the tunic that had been thrown over the shoulders of Jesus. No doubt the wool of this garment had already adhered to the living flesh, for at the moment it was violently snatched from the shoulders of Jesus, he uttered a loud exclamation of pain, but this was all: he allowed himself to be patiently invested with the red cloak.

'Now, take thy sceptre, O great king!' added another soldier, kneeling before the young man, and placing in his hand the centurion's walking-stick; then all, with loud bursts of laughter, repeated, 'Hail to the King of the Jews, hail!'

A great many of them kneeled before him out of mockery, repeating:

'Hail, O great King!'

Jesus retained in his hand this mock sceptre, but pronounced not a word; this unalterable resignation, this angelic sweetness, so struck his tormentors, that, at first they were stupified; then, their rage increasing in proportion to the patience of the young Nazarene, they emulated each other in irritation, exclaiming: 'This is not a man, it is a statue!'

'All the blood he had in his veins has left him with the rods of the executioner. The coward, he does not even complain!'

'Coward!' said a veteran in a thoughtful air, after having long contemplated Jesus, although at first he had been one of his most cruel tormentors: 'No, he is no coward! no, to endure patiently all that we have made him suffer, requires more courage than to throw oneself sword in hand on

the enemy. No!' he repeated, drawing aside, 'no, this man is no coward!'

And Genevieve fancied she saw a tear drop on the grey moustache of the old soldier.

The other soldiers laughed at the compassion of their companion, and exclaimed:

'He does not see that the Nazarene feigns resignation that we may pity him.'

'It's true! within he is all rage and hatred, tho' outside he is so serene and compassionating.'

'He is a bashful tiger invested with a lamb's skin.'

At these insulting words Jesus contented himself with smiling mournfully and shaking his head; this movement made the blood fall in a spray around him, for the wounds made on his forehead by the thorns still bled.

At sight of this blood, Genevieve could not help murmuring to herself the chorus of the children of the mistletoe, mentioned in the recitals of her husband's ancestors:

'Flow, flow, blood of the captive! Fall, fall, incarnate dew! Germinate and grow, avenging harvest!'

'Oh,' said Genevieve to herself, 'the blood of this innocent, of this martyr, so basely abandoned by his friends, by this people, poor and oppressed, whom he cherished, this blood will return on them and their children. But may it also fertilize the bloody harvest of vengeance.'

The Romans, exasperated by the heavenly patience of Jesus, knew not what to think of to conquer him. Neither insults nor threats could move him, so one of the soldiers snatched from his hand the stick he continued to hold mechanically and broke it on his head, exclaiming,

'You will, perhaps, give some signs of life, statue of flesh and bones!' but Jesus, having at first bowed his head beneath the blow, raised it, casting a look of pardon on the one who had struck him. No doubt this ineffable sweetness intimidated or embarrassed the barbarians, for one of them, detaching his scarf, bandaged the eyes of the young man of Nazareth, saying to him:

'O great king! thy respectful subjects are not worthy to support thy glance!'

When Jesus had his eyes thus bandaged, the idea of a ferocious baseness struck the mind of the Romans; one of them approached the victim, gave him a slap in the face and said to him, bursting into a laugh:

'O great prophet! guess the name of him who has struck you.'

Then a horrible sport commenced. These robust and armed men, each struck in turn the fettered victim, broken by so many tortures, saying to him every time they struck him on the face:

'Can you guess this time who struck you?'

Jesus (and these were the only words that Genevieve heard him pronounce during the whole martyrdom), Jesus said in a voice of compassion, lifting to heaven his eyes still covered with the bandage:

'May God forgive them, they know not what they do.'

Such was the only plaint uttered, by the sufferer, and it was not even a plaint; it was a prayer he addressed to God, imploring pardon for his tormentors. The Romans, far from being appeased by this divine forbearance, redoubled their violences and outrages. Some wretches were base enough to spit in Jesus' face. Genevieve could no longer have supported the spectacle of these enormities, even if the gods had not put an end to it; she heard in the street a great tumult, and saw arrive Doctor Baruch, Jonas the banker, and Caiphus the high priest. Two men in their suite carried a heavy wooden cross, a little longer than the height of a man. At sight of this instrument of torture, the persons waiting outside the gate of the guard-house, and amongst whom was Genevieve, cried in a triumphant voice:

'Here's the cross at last! here's the cross!'

'A cross quite new and worthy of a king!'

'And as a king, the Nazarene will not say he is treated as a beggar!'

When the Romans heard it announced that the cross was brought, they seemed very vexed that their victim was about to escape them. Jesus, however, at the words 'Here's the cross! here's the cross!' rose up with a sort of relief, hoping, no doubt, soon to bid adieu to this world. The soldiers uncovered his eyes, drew off the red cloak, only leaving the crown of thorns upon his head, so that he remained half naked; he was thus conducted to the door of the guard-room, where he was met by the men who were carrying the cross. Doctor Baruch, Jonas the banker, and Caiphus, in their still unsatisfied hatred, exchanged triumphant looks—pointing to the young man of Nazareth, pale, bleeding, and whose strength seemed exhausted.—These merciless pharisees could not resist the cruel pleasure of once more outraging the victim. The banker Jonas said to him:

'You see, audacious insolent! the consequences of insulting the rich; you do not now rail at them? You no longer compare them to camels incapable of passing through the eye of a needle! It

is a great pity that your inclination for jesting is now passed.'

'Are you satisfied now,' added Doctor Baruch, 'with having treated the doctors of law as swindlers and hypocrites, seeking to obtain the best places at feasts? At any rate they will not dispute with you your place on the cross.'

'And the priests,' added Caiphus, 'they were also swindlers and leeches who devoured the widow's mite, under the pretence of long prayers, hard-hearted men, less merciful than heathen Samaritans; dolts with minds just narrow enough to observe the Sabbath piously, but so proud that they had the trumpets sounded to announce their charities! You thought yourself strong, you played the audacious, at the head of your band of beggars, vagabonds, and prostitutes, which you picked up in taverns, where you passed your days and nights! Where are your partizans now? Call them, then, let them come and deliver you!'

The hatred of the crowd was not so patient as that of the pharisees, who delighted in slowly torturing their victim; and furious cries were soon heard of:

'Death to the Nazarene, death!'

'Let us make haste!'

'Do they mean to pardon him by thus retarding his execution?'

'He will not expire in a moment; they will have plenty of time to converse with him when he is nailed to the cross.'

'Yes, let us hasten; his band of wretches, frightened for a moment, might attempt to carry him off!'

'And besides, where is the use of speaking to him? You can see plainly he will not reply.'

'To death! to death!'

'And he must himself carry his cross to his place of punishment.'

The proposition of this fresh barbarity was received with applause by all. They led Jesus out of the guard-room, and placed the cross on one of his bleeding shoulders. The pain was so dreadful, the weight of the cross so heavy, that the wretched son of Mary felt his knees tremble, and he nearly fell to the ground; but finding fresh strength in his courage and resignation, he seemed to bear up against suffering; and, bending beneath his burthen, he slowly commenced his march. The crowd and escort of soldiers cried, in following him:

'Room, room, for the triumph of the King of the Jews!'

The mournful cortege put itself in motion for the place of execution, situated beyond the Judicial Gate; quitted the rich quarter of the temple, and pursued its way through a part of the town much less rich and very populous; thus, as by degrees the escort penetrated the quarter of the poor, Jesus received at least some marks of interest on their part. Genevieve saw a great many women, standing at their doors lamenting the fate of the young man of Nazareth; they remembered that he was the friend of poor mothers and their children; many of those innocents therefore sent, with their tears, kisses to the good Jesus, whose simple and touching parables they knew by heart. But, alas! almost at every step, vanquished by pain, crushed under the weight he carried, Mary's son stumbled; at length his strength entirely failed him; he fell on his knees, then on his hands, and his forehead struck the ground.

Genevieve thought him dead or expiring; she could not restrain a cry of grief and alarm; but he was not dead. His martyrdom and agony was still to endure. The Roman soldiers who followed him, as well as the pharisees, cried out:

'Up, up, lazy one! you pretend to fall that you may not carry your cross to the end?'

'You, who reproached the high priests for binding on the backs of men burthens insupportable, but which the priests would not touch with a finger,' said Doctor Baruch, 'you are now doing precisely as they do in refusing to bear your cross!'

Jesus, still on his knees, and his face bent toward the ground, helped himself to rise with his two hands, which he did with great difficulty; then, still scarcely able to stand, he waited for them to place the cross on his shoulders; but scarcely was he again loaded with his burthen, when, despite his courage and goodwill, he tottered and fell a second time, crushed beneath the weight.

'Come,' said one of the emissaries, who, like the pharisees, had not quitted his victim, 'see you that man in the brown mantle, who passes so quickly, turning away his head as if he desired not to be recognized? I have often seen him at the sermons of the Nazarene; suppose we force him to carry the cross?'

'Yes,' said Baruch, 'call him.'

'Here! Simon!' cried the emissary; 'here! Simon the Cyrenean! you who took part in the predictions of the Nazarene, come now, and take part in the burthen he carries.'

Scarcely had the man Simon been recognized, than several amongst the crowd cried like him, 'Here, Simon! Simon!'

The latter, at the first appeal of the emissary, had quickened his march, as if he had heard nothing; but when a great number of voices cried out his name, he turned back, advanced to where Jesus was, and approached him with a troubled air.

'They are about to crucify Jesus of Nazareth, whose words you were so delighted to hear,' said the banker Jonas to him in a jesting manner; 'he is your friend, will you not help him to carry his cross?'

'I will carry it myself,' replied Simon, having the courage to look with an eye of pity on his young master, who, still kneeling, seemed ready to fall.

Simon, having taken up the cross, walked before Jesus, and the cortege pursued its route.

About a hundred paces further on, at the commencement of the street that leads to the Judicial Gate, in passing before the shop of a vendor of woolen cloths, Genevieve saw a woman of a venerable figure leave the shop. This woman, at the sight of Jesus, pale, exhausted and bleeding, could not restrain her tears; then, for the first time, the slave, who until now, had forgotten that she might be sought after by order of her master the Seigneur Gremion, remembered the address which her mistress Aurelia had given her on the part of Jane, telling her that Veronica, her nurse, keeping a shop near the Judicial Gate, could give her an asylum. But Genevieve at this moment did not think of profiting by this chance of safety. An unconquerable force attached her to the steps of the young man of Nazareth, whom she resolved to follow to the end. She then saw Veronica in tears approach Jesus, whose face was bathed in a bloody sweat, and wipe with a linen towel the face of the poor martyr, who thanked Veronica by a smile of celestial sweetness. A little farther on, and whilst in the street which led to the Judicial Gate, Jesus passed before several women who were weeping; he stopped a moment, and said to these women, with an accent of profound melancholy:

'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me! but weep for yourselves, weep for your children; for there will come a time when it shall be said, "Blessed are the barren! Blessed are they who have no children! Blessed are they who have not given suck!"'

Then Jesus, though broken with suffering, drawing himself up with an air of inspiration, his features impressed with a heart-rending grief, as if he had a consciousness of the frightful miseries he foresaw, exclaimed, in a prophetic tone which made the pharisees themselves tremble:

'Yes, the time approaches in which men, in their fear, will say to the mountains, "fall upon us!" and to the hills, "cover us!"'

And Jesus, bowing his head on his bosom, painfully pursued his march amidst the silence of stupor and alarm which had succeeded his prophetic words. The cortege continued to climb the steep street that leads to the Judicial Gate, under which you pass to ascend to Golgotha, a little hill situated outside the city, and at the summit of which are erected the crosses of the condemned.

Genevieve remarked that the crowd, at first so basely hostile to Jesus, began, as the hour of execution approached, to be moved, and to lament the fate of the victim. These unfortunate people comprehended, no doubt, but, alas, too late, that in allowing the friend of the poor and afflicted to be put to death, they not only deprived themselves of a defender, but that by their shameful ingratitude they froze up, for the future, the generous hearts that would have devoted themselves to their cause. When the Judicial Gate was passed, they commenced ascending Mount Calvary. This ascent was so steep, that frequently Simon the Cyrenean, still carrying Jesus' cross, was obliged to stop, as well as the young man himself. The latter seemed to have preserved scarcely sufficient strength to enable him to reach the summit of this barren hill, covered with rolling stones, and where a few blades of sickly verdure alone grew. The sky was covered with thick clouds; the day being gloomy and funereal, threw a veil of sadness over all things. Genevieve, to her great surprise, observed, towards the summit of Calvary, two other crosses erected besides the one intended to be erected for Jesus. In her astonishment, she inquired of a person in the crowd, who replied to her:

'These crosses are intended for two thieves, who are to be crucified at the same time as the Nazarene.'

'And why do they execute these thieves at the same moment as the Nazarene?' inquired the slave.

'Because the pharisees, men of justice, wisdom, and piety, have resolved that the Nazarene shall be accompanied even in death, by the miserable wretches whose company he frequented during his life.'

Genevieve turned round to ascertain who had made her this reply; she recognized one of the two emissaries. 'Oh! the merciless wretches!' thought she; 'they find means of outraging Jesus even in his death.'

When the Roman soldiers who had escorted the young man arrived, followed by the crowd, more and more silent and mournful, at the summit of Calvary, as also Doctor Baruch, Jonas the banker, and Caiphus the high priest, all three, anxious to assist at the agony and death of their victim, Genevieve perceived the two thieves destined to be crucified, bound and surrounded with guards; they were livid, and awaited their fate with a terror mingled with an impotent rage. At a

sign from the Roman officer, chief of the escort, the executioners drew the two crosses from the holes in which they had been erected, and threw them on the ground; then seized the condemned, despite their cries, their blasphemies and desperate resistance, they stripped them of their garments and extended them on the crosses; then, whilst the soldiers held them there, the executioners, armed with long nails and heavy hammers, nailed to the crosses, by the feet and hands, these poor wretches who howled with pain. By this refinement of cruelty they made the young man of Nazareth a witness of the torture he was himself about to suffer; consequently, at sight of the sufferings of these two companions of punishment, Jesus could not restrain his tears; he then buried his face in his hands to shut out the painful vision.

The two thieves crucified, the executioners again erected their crosses, on which they writhed and groaned, thrust them some way into the ground, and strengthened them by means of stones and piles.

'Come, Nazarene,' said one of the executioners to Jesus, approaching him, holding in one hand his heavy hammer, and in the other several long nails. 'Come, are you ready? Must we use violence to you, as to your two companions?'

'What can they complain of?' replied the other executioner; 'we are so much at our ease on a cross, with our arms extended, for all the world like a man stretching himself after a long nap!'

Jesus made no reply; he stripped off his garments, placed himself on the instrument of death, extended his arms on the cross, and turned toward heaven his eyes drowned in tears.

Genevieve then saw the two executioners kneel on each side of the young man of Nazareth, and seize their long nails and heavy hammers. The slave closed her eyes, but she heard the dull sounds of the hammers, as they drove the nails into the living flesh, whilst the two crucified thieves continued their cries. The blows of the hammer ceased—Genevieve opened her eyes: the cross to which they had attached the Nazarene had just been erected between those of the two crucified thieves. Jesus, his head crowned with thorns, his long chestnut hair glued to his temples by a mixture of blood and sweat, his face livid and impressed with fearful agony, his lips blue; seemed about to expire; the whole weight of his body resting on his two hands nailed to the cross, as also his feet, from whence the blood trickled; his arms stiffened by violent convulsive movements, whilst his knees, half bent, occasionally knocked against each other. Genevieve then heard the almost dying voice of the two thieves who, addressing Jesus, said to him: 'Cursed be thou, Nazarene! cursed be thou, who told us that the first should be last, and the last first? Behold us crucified, what can'st thou do for us?'

'Cursed be thou, who told us that they alone who were sick had need of the physician: behold us ill; where is the physician?'

'Cursed be thou who told us that the good shepherd abandons his flock to find a single sheep that has strayed! we have strayed, and thou, the good shepherd, leave us in the hands of butchers.'

And these wretched men were not the only ones to insult the agony of Jesus; for, horrible as it is, and which Genevieve whilst writing this can hardly believe, Doctor Baruch, Jonas the banker, and Caiaphus the high priest, joined the two thieves in assailing and outraging Jesus, at the moment he was about to render up his soul.

'Oh! Jesus of Nazareth! Jesus the Messiah! Jesus the prophet? Jesus, the Savior of the world!' said Caiaphus: 'how was it you did not prophesy your own fate? Why did you not commence by saving yourself, you who were to save the world?'

'You call yourself the son of God, O Nazarene the divine!' added the banker Jonas: 'we will believe in your celestial power if you descend from your cross. We only ask of you this little prodigy! Come, son of God, descend! descend then! Ah! you prefer resting nailed on that beam, like a bird of night at a barn-door? Free thyself: you might be called Jesus the crucified, but never Jesus the son of God!'

'You appear to have much confidence in the Almighty!' added Doctor Baruch: 'call on him then to assist you! If he protects you, if you are really his son, why does he not thunder against us, your murderers? Why does he not change this cross into a bed of roses, from whence you could fly in a glory to heaven?'

The shouts and jests of the soldiers accompanied these disgraceful outrages of the pharisees; suddenly Genevieve saw Jesus stiffen in all his limbs, make a last effort to lift up his bleeding and wearied head to heaven: a last ray seemed to illumine his celestial expression; a heart-rending smile contracted his lips, and he murmured in a faint voice: 'My God! my God! take pity on me!'

His head then fell on his bosom, the friend of the poor and afflicted had ceased to live!

Genevieve knelt down and burst into tears. At this moment she heard a voice exclaim behind her:

'Ah! here is the fugitive slave! Ah! I was certain of finding her in the traces of this cursed Nazarene, on whom they have at length done justice. Seize her! bind her hands behind her back. Oh! this time my vengeance shall be terrible!'

Genevieve turned round and saw her master, the Seigneur Gremion.

'Now,' said Genevieve, 'I can die; since he, alas, who promised slaves to break their chains is dead.'

* * *

Although I had to endure the most cruel torments on the part of my master, I did not die, since I wrote this narrative for my husband Fergan.

After having thus recounted what I knew and what I had seen of the life and death of the young man of Nazareth, I would think it impious to speak of what has happened to myself from the sad day when I saw the friend of the poor and the afflicted expire on the cross. I will only say, taking as an example the resignation of Jesus on the cross, I will endure patiently the cruelties of Seigneur Gremion, from attachment to my mistress Aurelia; suffering all in order not to quit her; so that I remained the slave of Gremion's wife during the two years she was in Judea. Thanks to human ingratitude, six months after the death of the young man of Nazareth, his remembrance was effaced from the memory of man. A few of his disciples only preserved a pious recollection of him.

When after two years passed in Judea with my mistress Aurelia, I returned amongst the Gauls, I found them still in slavery, as frightful, perhaps more so, than in times past.

I have added to this narrative, which I have written for my husband Fergan, a small silver cross, which was given me by Jane, wife of the Seigneur Chusa, a short time after the death of the young man of Nazareth. Some persons (and Jane amongst them), who preserved a pious respect for the memory of the friend of the afflicted, had some small crosses made in remembrance of the instrument of Jesus's death, and wore them or distributed them, after having deposited them on Mount Calvary, on the ground whereon the blood of Jesus had streamed.

I know not if I am to be one day a mother; if I have this happiness (is it a happiness for a slave to bring into the world other slaves?) I will add this little silver cross to the family relics which ought to transmit from generation to generation the history of the family of Joel, the brenn of the tribe of Karnak. May this little cross be the symbol of the enfranchising of the old and heroic Gallic race! May those words of Jesus be one day realized for the children of our children: 'The chains of the slave shall be broken!'

[The End.]

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE SILVER CROSS; OR, THE CARPENTER OF NAZARETH ***

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