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C. L. Brightwell**

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TALE ***

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At the sight of it, our artist was struck
dumb with admiration.

**PALISSY
THE
HUGUENOT POTTER.**

A TRUE TALE.

BY
C. L. BRIGHTWELL

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THE readers of this little book may ask, with great propriety, "What is meant by a true tale?" and the answer to this question shall be very explicit, as it is of great importance that there should be no misunderstanding as to the matter of truth or fiction.

What is known of the history of Palissy is gathered from his writings, which are written in the form of dialogues, and into which he has incorporated short narratives of the events of his own life, and of the occurrences which took place under his own eyes. These, and a few incidental notices of him in contemporary writers, are the sources whence the materials for his life have been gathered.

In the present narrative, I have attempted to give an account of the facts which Palissy has himself recorded, weaving them into a tale. For instance, he tells us, in one of his treatises, of his troubles, and experiments, and sorrows, during the time he was engaged in discovering the white enamel; and he gives, now and then, a peep at his domestic life, showing how his poor children drooped and died; how he became burdened with debt; that his family and friends reproached him for his long and unprofitable toil; and that his neighbors joined in their invectives against his folly; also, that when reduced to the greatest straits, he obtained help from a friendly publican.

p. 4

So with the religious events narrated: they are given from his work, "Recepte Vèritable, par laquelle tous les hommes de la France," etc. [4] All that has been done is to arrange these details in order, and give them a narrative form. There is not one event in this narrative which did not actually occur, although it was not possible to give literally a Life of Palissy.

The principal aim has been to call attention to his religious character, which has been but slightly noticed in the accounts of those who have recorded the achievements of this great genius, as an artist in earth. He was, in fact, a French Huguenot: one of the glorious band of martyrs for the faith of Jesus; and he has told us, in a touching and simple manner, what he saw and heard in those days of persecution and trial.

The plan adopted seemed not only legitimate, but the one which could best render the work attractive and pleasing to those for whose instruction it is designed. They may be assured that the sentiments and doings of Palissy are here truly recorded, and if they take his example as an incentive to earnest, patient, and unwearying application—above all, if they adopt his high standard and the motive which sanctified all his work—they will not read this "True Tale" in vain.

I cannot conclude without expressing the great obligations I am under to Mr. Morley's "Life of Palissy," which has been my guide throughout. Of his admirable translations of the various passages he has given from the original treatises, I have gladly availed myself, finding it impossible to improve upon them.

p. 5

NORWICH, *November*, 1858.



The town of Saintes.

p. 7

CHAPTER I.

p. 9

"And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability."—MATTHEW XXV. 15

IN the south-west of France is the ancient town of Saintes, the capital of Saintonge, charmingly situated on the river Charente, and once the most flourishing city of all Guienne. It is a very ancient place, and was, in the time of the Romans, one of the principal cities of Aquitaine. There

are still some slight remains of an amphitheatre, and a fine Roman bridge spans the waters of the Charente, bearing a Latin inscription (now illegible) upon its frieze. Placed at the foot of a mountain, the aspect of the town from a distance is impressive, but its streets are narrow and winding, and its houses low and ill-built. In olden times it boasted an ancient cathedral dedicated to St. Peter, and said to have been built by Charlemagne; but only the bell-tower now remains, and, indeed, most of the antiquities in which the town once abounded must be named among the things that were. A great deal of this destruction is attributed to the religious struggles which were carried on in Saintes with especial fierceness, and of which some record will be found interwoven in the story of Palissy the Potter.

p. 10

It was in the year 1538, one morning in May, that the people of the old narrow-streeted town we have described, were surprised to find a strange family had arrived among them. The newcomers were a young couple who brought with them an infant in arms, and presently established themselves in a small house on the outskirts of the city, the frontage of which looked upon one of the steep crooked streets, and presented to view a workshop, in which were displayed various objects calculated to attract the eyes of passers-by. Above all, at the entrance of the door was placed the figure of a dog, modelled and painted in such life-like fashion, that many a time was this sturdy-looking guardian of the threshold challenged to single combat by the perplexed dogs of the good town.

It was not long before the inhabitants of Saintes learned that the head of this small family was named Bernard Palissy, and that he desired to obtain occupation among them as a surveyor, a painter, or a worker in glass. In the former of these occupations they soon discovered that he possessed considerable talent. He had good knowledge of geometry, and manual skill in the employment of the rule and compass, and these enabled him to measure and plan sites for houses and gardens, and to make maps of landed property; all which might turn to account in disputes as to questions of boundaries, a source of constant litigation formerly, in most countries. But, unfortunately, land measuring came only now and then, and on the arts of painting and glass-working, he must chiefly depend for support. The neighbours learned, too, after a while, to look with favourable eyes upon the young artist, whose spirit and vivacity attracted them, and seemed always to shed a sunshine around his home; for Palissy was a man full of hope at all times; and, even in the darkest hour of evil fortune he still looked cheerfully onward. At the time when he settled in Saintes he was about thirty years old. Of his early history but few particulars are known; he was born in the diocese of Agen, of parents so poor that they were unable to give him the advantages of a liberal education. However, he learned to read and write, and from his early youth showed a turn for drawing and designing, and speedily attained a degree of skill which secured him employment in painting on glass and drawing plans.

p. 11

It was by the small funds he procured in this way that he supported himself during his travels through the principal provinces of France, which he traversed, everywhere gazing, with youthful eagerness, on the works of God and the productions of human skill.

p. 12

For nine or ten years he wandered on; sometimes pausing, and taking up his temporary residence in places where he found employment. Thus, at Tarbes, the capital of Bigorre, he dwelt some years, and in sundry other towns he sojourned awhile. It is evident that those were years of education to his young and indefatigably inquiring spirit. He was storing up knowledge which was afterwards turned to excellent account. He investigated the arts of life and studied the monuments of antiquity, observing the local customs and habits of the places he visited, acquiring dexterity of hand, while, at the same time, he enlarged his mind. But the study in which he most delighted was that of natural history. The great interest he took in the various qualities of the earths, rocks, sands, and waters, on account of the relation they bore to his calling, had made him a naturalist. Everywhere he employed his leisure hours in wandering over the woods and meadows, and thus he studied that wondrous book men call the Book of Nature.

It is time we visit the humble dwelling of the man of genius, who, his wanderings now over, has quietly settled down, and is entering on the earnest business of life, full of that spiritual sense of power which begets hopefulness, and, at the same time, simple-hearted and loving as a child. Bernard's studio was no other than a small out-house, in which he wrought at his occupation, and beyond which was a little garden, filled with the choice plants and herbs he met with in his rambles through the woods and pasture lands around Saintes. The evening hour has just set in, bringing with it rest and relaxation, and the artist has laid aside his tools and is fondling the little Nicole, his eldest born; while his eyes glance lovingly towards his young wife, who, delicate and slightly formed, looks but ill-fitted to endure the troubles of life—we must add, the troubles peculiar to the wife of a genius.

p. 13

For the present, however, the evil days have not come upon her, and she replies with looks of pleasure to his fond words. He is telling her of the glorious ramble he has had in the early morning, and of the treasures he has seen and gathered. A large earthen pot stands on his work-bench, filled with flowers and foliage, and his pencil has been diligently occupied in imitating the bright colors and elegant forms of these wild plants, with the minute accuracy of a naturalist. Lisette has opened his portfolio, and is turning over the loose sketches it contains; butterflies, lizards, beetles, and many other wild creatures are there—all drawn from nature, and true to the smallest tracery-work upon the insects' wings. To her exclamation of delight he answers, "Truly, it is a great recreation to those who will contemplate admiringly the wondrous works of nature, and methinks I could find nothing better than to employ one's-self in the art of agriculture, and to glorify God, and to admire him in his marvels. As I walked along the avenues, and under the foliage of the chestnuts, I heard the murmuring waters of a brook which passes at the foot of the

p. 14

hill; and on the other side the voices of the young birds warbling among the trees; then there came to my memory that 104th Psalm, where the prophet says, 'He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills;' also, he says, 'By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches.'"

The mother took the infant from her husband, and began undressing him for bed, while the father smiled and went on, half soliloquizing, "When I had walked through the avenue, I turned toward the side, where the woods and mountains are, and there I received a great contentment, and much joyous pleasure, for I saw the squirrels gathering the fruits and leaping from branch to branch, with many pretty looks and gestures; further on, I beheld the rooks busy at their repast; and again, under the apple trees I found certain hedgehogs, which had rolled themselves up, and having thrust their little hairs, or needles, through the said apples, went so burdened. I saw likewise many things narrated in that Psalm, as the conies, playing and bounding along the mountains, near certain holes and pits which the Sovereign Architect has made for them: and when suddenly the animals caught sight of an enemy, they knew well how to retire into the place which was ordained to be their dwelling. Then I exclaimed, 'O Lord, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all.' Such sights as these have made me so great a lover of the fields, that it seems to me there are no treasures on earth so precious, or which ought to be held in such great esteem, although they are the most despised."

p. 15

At that moment Lisette, who had risen from the bench on which they had seated themselves, looking toward the palings of their garden, perceived a tall figure leaning there. She directed the attention of her husband to this person, and then retired into the chamber with her infant. A few moments after, Bernard was in eager conversation with the stranger. They spoke in low accents, as though anxious not to be overheard. "Let us go down to the field together," said Palissy; "I must speak with thee, master Philibert, where our words may be freely uttered;" and presently the two had disappeared in the twilight.

This Master Philibert Hamelin, who was so eagerly accosted by our artist, was one of those "poor and unlearned men," whose names were chronicled in the list of "heretics," as infected with the taint of disloyalty to the Roman Catholic Church. At the time when Palissy came forth into life, the minds of men were greatly agitated by those religious struggles which convulsed Europe during the sixteenth century. From Germany the desire of spiritual emancipation had spread abroad, and before long the fire which burned with such fierceness during the terrible wars of the Huguenots, was kindled in France. Examples of religious persecution, cruel punishments of heretics, and expressions of much discontent on matters of faith, must, without fail, have often attracted the notice of Palissy during his years of travel.

p. 16

As we have already intimated, Saintes became a stronghold of the new opinions. Many "heretics," and among them Calvin himself, the great Reformer, had taken refuge in Saintonge—the very district in which the home of Palissy was afterwards fixed. He dwelt there in the house of a young man, whose friends were wealthy; and this youth persuaded Calvin, while in his retirement there, to write Christian sermons and remonstrances, which he then caused to be preached by curés in the neighbourhood. These curés were "certain Reformed monks," who, having adopted the new tenets, visited among the people, teaching them secretly, and gradually instructing them, so that by degrees the eyes of many were opened to see the errors of the Romish Church.

Among those who had eagerly embraced the instructions of Calvin was Hamelin, who, consequently, having incurred suspicion of heresy, escaped from Saintes, and journeyed to Geneva, at that time the head quarters of the French Reformers, where he acquired clearer knowledge of divine truth, and increased earnestness. Zealous to communicate to others the faith he had adopted, he wandered from place to place through the provinces of his native land, exerting himself wherever he went to incite men to have ministers, and to gather themselves into church communion. So eager was he to spread the gospel, that he took up with the trade of a printer, and printed Bibles, which he hawked about in the towns and villages. In the course of his journeyings, he passed through one of the towns in which Palissy had taken up his temporary abode. The spirit of the young artist was stirred within him as he listened to the animated exhortations of Hamelin, who, having gathered together a little flock of some seven or eight auditors, laboured to win them to God: and exhorted them to meet together for prayer and mutual instruction.

p. 17

His teaching fell like the dew upon the heart of the young man, and he eagerly sought out the preacher and took counsel with him. From that time the persecuted Huguenot commanded the love and reverence of Palissy, who never spoke of him but in terms of respect and affection.

At the period of which we are about to speak, although the persecutions had not yet reached Saintonge, the struggle had begun in many towns by the tumultuous rising of the people, and severe punishments were inflicted upon all who joined in these outbreaks. Emissaries of the ecclesiastics were keenly on the watch for suspected characters, and it was at the risk of fine, imprisonment, and death, that the proceedings of men like Hamelin were carried on. Nor was it without serious danger of compromising his own safety that Palissy cultivated the friendship of a man so attainted, and of this he was well aware. It was, however, no part of his character to flinch from trouble or peril in such a cause.

p. 18

It will be unnecessary to relate what passed between the two friends on the evening in which we have introduced Palissy to our readers. The visit of Hamelin was secret and hurried. He had come for the purpose of bringing to the poor people he had formerly taught around Saintes, three

teachers, who, having been convinced of the errors of the Romish Church, had been constrained to take flight and exile themselves. Having recommended them to the friendly notice of Bernard, and taken counsel with him as to certain precautionary measures, Hamelin hastened to quit the neighbourhood of a place in which he was too well known to venture himself openly. Some years passed away before these two met again.

Shall we follow our artist homeward, as slowly and thoughtfully he retraced his steps thither? He was pondering, in the earnestness of his heart, an idea which was indeed the mainspring of all his intellectual and moral activity. Again and again in his writings does he solemnly recur to this idea, and in all the long years of his toil and suffering to acquire the skill which was to render him immortal in the history of art; this was his incentive and spur. The parable of the talents—the duty of every man to turn to account the powers and gifts he has received from God—was the touchstone by which Bernard tried his work.

p. 19

His own words, written long after, will best close this opening chapter. "Though there be some who will at no time hear mention of the holy Scripture, yet so it is that I have found nothing better than to pursue the counsel of God; his edicts, statutes, and ordinances; and in regarding what might be his will, I have found that he has commanded his heirs that they should eat bread by the labour of their bodies, and that they should multiply the talents which he has committed to them. Considering which, I have not been willing to hide in the ground those talents it has pleased him to allot me; but to cause them to yield profit and increase to him from whom I have received them."

CHAPTER II.

p. 20

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

ECCLES. ix. 10.

FOR a considerable time after he had settled at Saintes, Palissy went on surveying, painting, and designing, working industriously, and earning a competent, though slender, income for the support of his household—an increasing one—for he had now another baby to kiss, as well as a child upon his arms. Conscious of his own strength, and dissatisfied with labour which produced only food, he naturally felt eager to accomplish something better than he had yet done.

There is often a long period, during which a man of genius is occupied in gathering together materials, unconscious what use they shall eventually serve; but the turning-point of his history comes, and suddenly, perhaps through a passing and merely accidental circumstance, he receives an impetus which directs him on to the fulfilment of his career. It was thus in the case of Palissy. Some two years after the events related in the preceding chapter, Bernard had received a little commission from one of the great seigneurs who lived in the neighbourhood of Saintes. He was a man of much taste in the fine arts, and had in his possession some choice specimens of ancient Moorish pottery. After showing these to Palissy (who had come to the château for directions), the nobleman, going to the cabinet from which they had been taken, drew out an earthen cup, turned and enamelled with so much beauty, that, at the sight of it, our artist was struck dumb with admiration. He knew nothing of pottery, he had no knowledge of clays, and he was aware of the fact that there was no man in all France who could make enamels.

p. 21

This last thought acted, perchance, as a stimulus to his ambition. However that might be, the idea instantly took possession of his mind that he would make enamels. They could be made, for here was a specimen. To be the only man in the land who could produce these beautiful vases would be not only to secure an abundant supply for the wants of his family, but it would be a triumph of art—a riddle of deep interest to solve, and an occupation after his heart.

That evening he called his wife to him, and told her what he had seen, and how his heart was set upon learning to make enamels. The poor woman saw by his beaming countenance that he was pleased; she knew that he loved her and their children, and she said not a word to discourage him, although he plainly told her, with that truthfulness which was as the very breath of his nostrils, that his first experiments must be made at great cost. "There will be the loss of my time from my wonted occupation; besides that, I must purchase drugs and make me furnaces, and all, at first, a clear outlay, without fruit. I shall have many drawbacks, and it may be a weary while before I master this art. I shall be as a man that gropes his way in the dark, for I have no knowledge of clays, nor have I ever seen earth baked, nor do I know of what materials enamels are composed." His wife urged that he had better rest content with diligence in his own calling, and on her pale face came a blush of pleasure and pride as she looked up at him, who was already, in her esteem, a perfect artist. But he heeded not her words, save that he tenderly bade her be of good cheer. Poverty and pain would have mattered little to him personally; and had he been free from household cares, he would, in all likelihood, have wandered forth among the potters, and learned all that could be gathered of their work from them. But he was bound to home and its cares and duties, and so, alone, unaided, and without sympathy, must he work. Nothing daunted, however, by these drawbacks, his resolve was taken—to complete his invention, or perish in the attempt.

p. 22



Palissy devoutly opened the sacred volume.

Before retiring to rest that night, Palissy, as his custom was, devoutly opened the sacred volume; and turning to the thirty-fifth chapter of Exodus, he read how God called by name Bezaleel, the son of Uri, and filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, and to devise curious works, in gold, in silver, in brass, and in cutting of stones, and in carving of wood, in all manner of cunning work. "Then I reflected," said he, "that God had gifted me with some knowledge of drawing, and I took courage in my heart, and besought him to give me wisdom and skill."

p. 23

Palissy lost no time in setting to work. He began by making a furnace which he thought most likely to suit his purpose, and having bought a quantity of earthen pots, and broken them into fragments, he covered these with various chemical compounds which he had pounded and ground, and which he proposed to melt at furnace heat. His hope was, that of all these mixtures, some one or other might run over the pottery in such a way as to afford him at least a hint towards the composition of white enamel, which he had been told was the basis of all others. Alas! his first experiment was but the beginning of an endless series of disappointments and losses, while, for many long months and years he wrought with fruitless labor. But we must not anticipate. Happily the ardent spirit of our artist suffered him not easily to succumb under difficulties; nay, it even seemed to gather new energy from the struggle, as, with all the fire of love and all the strength of will, he, every day, renewed his experiments, and blundered on with cheerful hope. It has well been said, "Ideas become passions in the breasts of poets and artists."

p. 24

Many months have now passed in this way; and the little family gathering around Palissy's humble hearth begin to show symptoms that all is not so flourishing as when we first saw them. Lisette looks thin and worn, and there is a shadow upon her brow. As she goes down the garden walk to call her husband to his mid-day meal, you see her garments are poor and scanty, and she has no longer the trim look of conscious comeliness about her. By her side, and clinging to her gown, is a delicate creature, whose pale face tells a sorrowful tale of childish suffering, and the infant she is carrying looks sallow and feeble. The furnace and shed where Palissy is at work are built at the end of the garden, as far as possible from the house. Close by, is the road, and beyond it the fields and waste lands; there was no sheltering wall or enclosure near, and when the storm and winds of winter blew, nothing could be more bleak and comfortless. Palissy has drawn a doleful picture of this scene of his labors. "I was every night," he says, "at the mercy of the rains and winds, without help or companionship, except from the owls that screeched on one side, and the dogs that howled upon the other; and oftentimes I had nothing dry upon me, because of the rains that fell." At the present time, however, it is looking cozy and picturesque, for the season is spring, and a bright sun is shining overhead. There is a glad sound, too, proceeding from the shed, over which its owner has trained a cluster-rose, whose tendrils have interwoven themselves among the reeds, and are putting forth their blossoms. It is the voice of Palissy, chanting in clear sonorous tones, the Psalm which Luther loved so well, and which we sing in the tuneful strains of our unequalled psalmist—

p. 25

"God is the refuge of his saints,
When storms of sharp distress invade."

And the little Nicole, who is busily occupied in mimic pottery-work at the door of the shed, chimes in with his small voice, and beats the time with his wooden spade. Lisette's face brightened as she listened, and with cheerful tones, she summoned Bernard indoors, and bade the little boy lead his sister back.

Notwithstanding Palissy's psalmody and the cheerful face he wore, matters were far from satisfactory at this peculiar juncture. In fact, he had just undergone a heavy disappointment, and was secretly making up his mind to a step which it cost him a grievous heartache to have recourse to. Seeing that all his experiments with his own furnace had proved failures, he determined to adopt a new scheme, and send the compositions to be tested in the kiln of some potter. For this purpose he bought a large stock of crockery, which according to custom, he broke into small fragments; three or four hundreds of which he covered with various mixtures,

and sent to a pottery some league and a half off, requesting the workmen to bake this strange batch with their own vessels. They consented readily to let the amateur potter try his experiments; but alas! when the operation was complete, and the trial pieces were drawn out, they proved absolutely worthless. Not the smallest appearance of the longed-for enamel was to be seen on any of them. The cause of the failure was a secret, at the time, to the grievously disappointed Bernard, and he returned home heavily discouraged, for he knew that his wife and children were deprived of many comforts they might have enjoyed, had he continued steadily at his occupation of glass-working and surveying. What was to be done? "Begin afresh." And so, again he fell to work, compounding and grinding, and sending more batches to the same potters to be baked as before. This he had continued to do time after time, "with great cost, loss of time, confusion, and sorrow."



. . the trial pieces proved absolutely useless . .

At length a more than usually trying failure had occurred, and many things combined to warn our artist that he must desist for a season and procure some remunerative work. His home resources were completely exhausted; while the home wants had greatly multiplied, and he could not be blind to the sorrowful looks of the woman he loved, nor indifferent to the necessities of his babes.

Three years had been spent about this work, and, for the present, he was no wiser than when he began, and he resolved now to try his hand at the old trades. His poor wife urged that food and medicine must be thought of, and she lowered her voice as she added that the doctor had yet to be paid for her confinement, and for physicking their lost darling, whom he said he would soon cure, notwithstanding, she pined and languished like a frost-nipped flower, that fades away and dies. Poor mother! the tears trickled down her cheeks at the thought; and for all there were still three hungry little mouths to feed, she could not be reconciled to the loss of one of her treasures. But Palissy would not let her dwell upon this sorrow; he wiped away the tears, and smilingly said, he had good news for her. Yesterday, there had arrived in the town the commissioners deputed by the king to establish the salt-tax in the district of Saintonge; and it seems they had judged no man in the diocese more competent than Bernard Palissy for the task of mapping the islands and the countries surrounding all the salt marshes in that part of the world. It was a profitable job, and would occupy him many months.

p. 27

This was, indeed, glad tidings for Lisette; and that night she slept sweetly, and dreamed of her girlhood; for when the heart is happy it suns itself in the memories of early days. Her husband's rest was broken and perturbed, for it pained him deeply to give up the struggle which had cost him so much, before he had justified his pertinacious efforts by success.

Perhaps it was in reality advantageous to him, and tended to his eventual success, that he was thus perforce constrained to taste an interval of repose. When a man has been repeatedly foiled it is well to cease from effort awhile, and to dismiss, if possible, the subject which has occupied his thoughts too long and too unremittingly.

p. 28

Revolving in his mind such considerations, Palissy determined wholly to cease from his labours in pursuit of the discovery on which his heart was set, and "to comport himself as if he were not desirous to dive any more into the secrets of enamels."

CHAPTER III.

p. 29

"Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."—REV. xiv. 12.

OF the profitable task assigned him by the commissioners of the gabelle (or tax), Palissy has left some memorial in his spirited account of the salt marshes of Saintonge. The work with which he was intrusted was to make a plan of the district adjoining the western coast line, where was the

celebrated salt-marsh, which yielded the largest supply of salt. At that time Saintonge was the chief source of salt in France, until it was obtained more abundantly from Brittany, and a large sum was gathered into the royal revenue from the tax produced by this article. But with all the skill and energy of taxation, difficulties and fraud still perplexed and threatened the tax receivers; and in the year 1543, Francis I, after trying various means for enforcing the payment of the gabelle, determined on a new and more stringent system, in consequence of which it became necessary that an accurate survey should be taken and new maps prepared.

What chiefly interests us in this matter of the surveying is the fact that the islands Oléron, Allevert, and Marepènes—called the Saintonic Isles—which adjoin and form part of this marshy district, were a favourite resort for the persecuted refugees, who brought the Reformed tenets into Saintonge. These districts being remote from the public roads, in fact being an intricate labyrinth of marshes, afforded a safe hiding-place, and there several "Reformed monks" had established themselves; some taking to a little trade, others keeping village-schools, and finding sundry means of gaining a livelihood, without being known. As it was impossible for large ships to approach the low flat coast, one of the chief difficulties in ordering the marshes was to form channels of communication by which the salt made on them might be conveyed to the open sea. An immense amount of money and labour had been expended in the construction of dykes, canals, or passages—of which there was a perfect net-work, extending many miles—to afford the means of bringing up small barques or vessels, which thus penetrated the flat country, and conveyed the salt from thence. So intricate was this labyrinthine communication, that a stranger inclosed therein without a guide, would have been wholly unable to thread his way, or extricate himself from their meshes. During the winter season, all these marshes were flooded, in order that the clay which formed the foundation of the dykes or canals, might be protected by the water from the destructive bite of the frost; and thus, for a considerable part of the year, all communication was blocked up, or wholly cut off. What an admirable place of refuge must this district have afforded to men hunted like partridges upon the mountains! Accordingly here the three refugees brought by Hamelin, together with many others similarly circumstanced, had found shelter: men these, whose guileless lives and active charity commended them to the esteem of the poor peasants among whom they had sought a home. They visited in their cottages, ministered, as best they could, to their wants, and ventured by degrees to promulgate those spiritual truths, for the sake of which they had suffered the loss of all worldly goods, and were prepared to yield life itself. At first their instructions were cautiously given. They spoke in parables, and with hidden meaning, until they were assured they should not be betrayed. Slowly, but steadily, the heaven had begun to work, and it was shortly after Palissy had completed his task (which involved no slight labour, and occupied him more than a year), that a report came to the ears of the bishop of Saintes, that the place was full of Lutherans, whom it was highly desirable to extirpate without delay.

p. 30

p. 31

The devil never wants for agents to execute his malicious purposes; and at this juncture, a man of "perverse and evil life," named Collardeau (a fiscal attorney), set busily to work to discover the lurking places of the heretics. In that day, Saintes was an extensive and lucrative bishopric, including more than 700 parishes, and its bishop was an august personage, in whose veins flowed "the blood of St. Louis," Charles, cardinal of Bourbon, brother of the king of Navarre, then twenty-three years of age. His fitting place was the court, and, accordingly, there he abode, taking small note of the heretical doings among the poor villagers of the Saintonic isles.

p. 32

With zeal worthy a good cause, Collardeau not only repeatedly wrote to this high dignitary, preferring his charges, but eventually crowned his energetic efforts by a journey to the capital, and by these means he succeeded in obtaining a commission from the bishop and the parliament of Bordeaux, with ample funds for carrying out his designs. Thus furnished, he proceeded to work upon the cupidity of certain judges, with whom he tampered so successfully that he procured the arrest of the preacher of St. Denis, a small town at the extremity of the isle of Oléron, named brother Robin, a man of such metal, that the principal anxiety had been to lay hand upon him by way of example. Shortly after, another preacher named Nicole was taken; and a few days later a similar fate overtook the schoolmaster at Gimosac, a man much beloved of the inhabitants, to whom he preached on Sundays. This last arrest keenly touched the heart of Palissy. He knew and esteemed the good brother, and had intrusted to his care his little Nicole, who had been placed at the school of Gimosac from the time Bernard had made his survey of the marshes. The poor child wept bitterly as he described to his parents the grievous parting his young eyes had witnessed; for, undaunted by the threats of their cruel enemies, the poor villagers accompanied, with prayers, tears, and lamentations, their beloved instructor to the shores of their little island. Alas! there, perforce, they parted never to meet on earth again.

p. 33

It was the eve of St. John, the twenty-third of June, 1546, when the citizens of Saintes beheld a strange and ominous scene, the commencement of the horrors subsequently perpetrated within the walls of their ancient town. The day, being a gala one, was ushered in with music of every kind, while the whole population, down to the lowest of the multitude, were decorated with flowers. Old pitch-barrels and faggots, piled up along the banks of the river, lay in readiness for the illuminations of the evening, while games, dances, and banquets were the diversions of the day. In the afternoon, there were to be many hogsheads of claret delivered out, and a universal merry-making prevailed. From an early hour crowds hastened to perform their devotions at the shrine of the patron saint of the city, carrying with them their votive offerings with which to propitiate his favour.

Among the multitude who thronged the high street at noon, were two men, one tall, and of a

vigorous form, who looked with an air of thoughtful concern around him. He was still in the prime of manhood, and about his whole bearing there was a certain air of energetic intelligence, while, ever and anon, his eyes kindled with the fire of enthusiasm; one saw at once he was a worker, and that what his hands found to do would be done with all his might. His companion was small and deformed, and would not have awakened any interest save from the intense feeling visible on his pale, sunken countenance. The two were approaching the church of St. Eutropius, where the saint was displayed to the admiring gaze of the people. On entering the sacred edifice, all kneeled down reverently before a kind of cupboard with an iron grating before it, and at an awful distance made sundry genuflections, and uttered various prayers. At last, the attendant priests opened the door of the closet where the head of the saint was deposited, and displayed the treasure to view. It would be difficult to conceive an object less calculated to awaken feelings of true devotion than that presented for adoration. It was very large, and formed entirely of solid silver; the hair and an immense pair of whiskers were gilt, and the shoulders were covered with lawn, and decorated with glittering gems. All around were placed the gifts brought by the deluded people, who ascribed the most marvellous power of healing to this graven image. The divinity was absolutely encircled with their votive offerings. Group after group, alternately advancing and retiring, filled up the church, and then emerged into the busy streets to gaze upon the crowds of gaily bedecked revellers, and gossip over the news of the day.

p. 34

Close to the gate of the church Palissy and his companion had taken their stand, and were conversing together in low tones. "Alas! I know the truth of the facts, and can assert them for such," said the former; "nay, I was myself present when the three brethren admirably disputed and maintained their religion in the presence of that false theologian, Navières, who had himself, some months ago, begun to detect errors, although now, conquered by his love of gain, he stoutly upholds the contrary. Well did brother Robin know how to reproach him with this to his face, and he flinched under his words, but for all the right is with the poor heretics, as they are called, the power is with their enemies, and they have ever since languished in prison. After a while Robin fell sick of pleurisy, and as it was feared he might die in his bed, after all, they sent both for physician and apothecary, the latter of whom is well known to me, having been but too frequent a visitor in my afflicted household. The worthy man has conveyed many a message from me to the brethren, and in more ways than one has done them good service." "And now they are to be made a show of openly, like the servants of the Lord in former times," said Bernard's comrade; "it is a hateful thing when the wicked triumph, and when the righteous are as the offscouring of all things." "Patience, my good Victor," replied the sturdy potter. "Let us see the end of these things. At present we are but in the beginning of sorrows; I am of opinion we must lay our account for trouble, and assure ourselves that we shall have enemies and be persecuted, if, by direct paths, we will follow and sustain the cause of God; for such are the promises written originally in the Old and New Testaments. Let us, then, take refuge under the shelter of our protecting Chief and Captain the Lord Christ, who, in time and place, will know how properly to avenge the wrongs his people have suffered, and our sorrows."

p. 35

p. 36

As he spoke, the sound of music was heard at a distance, and presently a noisy rabble crowded the street, running, shouting, pushing, and gesticulating. Then followed the procession, whose approach had been heralded by the sound of drums, fifes, and tabrets; horsemen gaily attired, rode, two and two, at a foot pace; then flags and banners were borne aloft, and a troop of priests, barefooted, and carrying torches, advanced at a slow pace. A strange and melancholy sight was next presented to the eyes of the by-standers; three men, caparisoned in green, and bedizened with fluttering ribbons, walked, bridled like horses, and each of them having an *apple* of iron fastened to the bridle, which filled all the inside of his mouth. Thus tortured and degraded, the three brethren, Robin, Nicole, and he of Gimosac, were driven, like beasts, by their cruel enemy, Collardeau, who triumphantly conducted them, in this wise, to a scaffold, which was erected in the market-place, that they might there be exposed to the public execration, as fools and madmen. This done, they were returned to prison, thence to be conveyed to Bordeaux to receive sentence of death.

p. 37

"A hideous sight to behold," said Palissy, drawing a deep breath, as he looked after the three sufferers, whose sole crime was that they had manfully upheld the cause of truth, "and one that makes us marvel at the wondrous patience of God. How long, O Lord, wilt thou leave thy chosen ones at the mercy of those who cease not to torment them?" This sorrowful exclamation had scarcely been uttered, when two fellows who stood near fell to quarrelling and beating each other. A ring was soon formed around them, and the bystanders looking on cried, "Give it him well; strike as though he were an heretic." "Alas!" said Palissy, "what frightful crimes will be committed when such a spirit grows rife; already terrible things are done elsewhere. I heard but yesterday, through one who shall be nameless, that many are burned and destroyed in various ways, in Paris and elsewhere. A peasant in the forest of Lyons, met four men who were on their way to execution. He asked the reason of their punishment, and having learned they were Huguenots, claimed a place upon the cart, and went to the gallows with them."

That evening there occurred what Bernard called "an admirable accident." The three heretics had been conveyed to their prison-house carefully guarded; and, above all, Robin, who was the principal object of hatred, and whom it was designed to put to death with the most cruelty. He was kept, with his companions, heavily ironed, in a prison attached to the bishop's palace, and a sentry was placed to watch outside, while a number of large village dogs were turned into the court-yard. But, for all these precautions, Robin did not despair. He had obtained a file (probably Palissy could have told how he managed this,) and having filed off the irons which were upon his legs, he gave the file to his fellow-captives, and proceeded to scrape a hole through the

p. 38

prison wall. But a strange accident here occurred. It chanced that a number of hogsheads which had been emptied during the fête, had been piled, one above another, against the wall, and these being pushed down by the prisoner, in his efforts to escape, fell with rumbling noise, and awakened the sleeping sentry, who listened for a while, but hearing nothing further, and overcome by the fumes of the liquor in which he had indulged somewhat freely, relapsed into slumber. Bernard tells, in his quaint manner, what next befell, thus: "Then the said Robin went out into the court at the mercy of the dogs; however, God had inspired him to take some bread, which he threw to the said dogs, who were quiet as the lions of Daniel. It was so ordered that he should find an open door, which led into the garden, where, finding himself again shut up between certain somewhat high walls, he perceived by the light of the moon, a tall pear tree, close enough to the outer wall, and having mounted this, he perceived, on the outer side of the wall, a chimney, to which he could leap easily enough." He was soon safe in the street, but, having never been in the town before, he was at a loss how to proceed. In this dilemma, the clever fugitive recalled to mind the names of the physician and apothecary who had attended him, and went knocking from door to door inquiring for their residence. He had contrived to fasten his fetters to his leg, and carrying his dress about his shoulders, had the adroitness to arrange it somewhat after the costume of a footman, so that the people whom he roused were deceived, and supposing it to be an urgent case of sickness, gave him the necessary directions. In this manner he succeeded in gaining the shelter of a friendly roof, and from thence was conducted safely out of the town; nor was he again taken, though, in the course of his perilous adventure, he had knocked at the door of one of his principal enemies, who, in the morning, offered a reward of fifty dollars for his recapture.

p. 39

Alas, for Nicole and the kind-hearted schoolmaster of Gimosac! Brother Robin would fain have had them accompany him and share his risk, but they chose rather to remain in their fetters. Seeing they had neither strength nor energy to follow his example, he took a sorrowful leave of them, praying with and consoling them, exhorting them to do valiantly, and to meet death with courage. Both perished in the flames a few days after; one in the city of Saintes, and the other at Libourne. The heart of Palissy was too full to suffer him to detail the particulars of this event. It was the first time the fires of persecution had blazed before his eyes; and as he gazed upon the terrific sight, his soul was kindled with a zeal unquenchable, and from that time the whole force of his energy was upon the side of the Reformers.

p. 40

CHAPTER IV.

p. 41

"Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter."—JER. xviii. 3, 4.

SHORTLY before the events recorded in the preceding chapter, there had been no small excitement among Palissy's poor neighbours and acquaintance, with reference to his proceedings. Day after day little knots of gossips might be seen, lounging about the neighbourhood of his garden and work-shed, expressing in various ways, their surprise and indignation at his conduct, and exclaiming, in no measured terms, against his obstinate and mad folly. This indignation reached its height when, one day, the report spread, far and wide, that the poor man was actually insane, and had torn up the palings of his garden, and the planks of his dwelling-house, and that his unhappy wife, half-crazed with his conduct, had herself rushed out of the house accompanied by her children, and taken refuge with a neighbour.

In order to account for all this, it is necessary to retrace our steps, and relate in what manner our artist has been spending the two years that have intervened since his marsh-surveying.

Undaunted by the failure of his early efforts, and relieved, for a time, from anxiety on the score of domestic wants, Palissy, giving the money he had received for the execution of his task into the hands of his wife, resumed his "affection for pursuing in the track of the enamels."

p. 42

Two years of unremitting and zealous labour followed, productive of no practical results, although there had once been a partial melting of some of his compounds, which gave him sufficient encouragement to persist. During those two long years, he tells us, he did nothing but come and go between his dwelling and the adjacent glass-houses, where the furnaces being much hotter than those of the potteries, were more likely to be successful in melting his materials.

Was it any marvel if poverty and sorrow invaded his household; if his wife grew moody and sad, and if the neighbours, pitying the hapless woman and innocent children, pronounced hard judgment upon a man who consumed his time in buying pots and breaking them, in grinding drugs and burning them, and in going to and fro upon his bootless errand? Death, too, had once and again entered his doors, bearing away the two sickly infants we saw clinging to their mother, while in their place, two others had been born, inheriting, alas! their malady. Of late, Lisette, full of gloomy thoughts, had taken to complaining, and remonstrating with her husband. Her temper had been soured by disappointment and trouble; and hope, so long deferred, ceased to buoy up her spirit. She could not understand the course Bernard was pursuing. She did not partake in his glowing visions of future fame and prosperity, and the instinct of power and the energy of will that nerved and inspired him were all unknown to and unshared by her. Poor suffering woman!

p. 43

She felt as any other common-sense wife and mother would have felt in her circumstances; and bemoaning his obstinate persistence in such profitless labour, she embittered his home by her lamentations and reproaches.

In this strait Palissy began to give way: he faltered, and at length made a compromise with his anxious helpmate. One more last trial he pleaded for; and then—if it failed, he would abandon the search for ever! He must have felt that the happiness as well as the fortune of his life, depended on the cast. Rather, we learn from his own touching account of what ensued, that he looked for counsel and help from above. In all his ways did this good man acknowledge his heavenly Father's hand, and seek his blessing. What befell, in this crisis, he thus tells us: "God willed that, when I had begun to lose my courage, and was gone for the last time to a glass furnace, having a man with me carrying more than 300 kinds of trial pieces, there was one among them which was melted within four hours after it had been placed in the furnace, which turned out white and polished, in a way that caused me to feel such joy as made me think I was become a new creature."

p. 44

With winged feet he flew home, bearing his treasure, which he pronounced "exceedingly beautiful," and, almost beside himself with delight, he rushed into the chamber, where his poor wife lay in her sick bed, and holding up the shining white fragment exclaimed, "I have found it!" Lisette caught the infection of his gladness, and hailed the first ray of returning prosperity. Poor woman, she little knew how long she must wait before she could warm herself in its sunshine.



Holding up the shining white fragment,
he exclaimed "I have found it!"

But Palissy was convinced that he had now discovered the full perfection of the white enamel; and his delight was in proportion to all the toil and struggle the discovery had cost him. No more any idea, now, of giving over, and returning to his old calling. Illustrious results must soon follow, he was sure, and from henceforth it was necessary he should work privately, and construct for his own use a furnace like that of the glass-workers. Already in imagination stretching out his hand to grasp the prize, he eagerly betook himself to moulding vessels of clay, shaped after his own designs, which, covered with the exquisite white enamel he had discovered, he purposed to adorn with lovely paintings. He saw them doubtless, in his mind's eye, beautiful, as those he actually produced in after years—those perfect master-pieces of porcelain in relief, and dishes ornamented with figures, beasts, reptiles, insects, beetles, and flowers: treasures of art, full of grace, beauty, and simplicity, which were eagerly purchased by the rich seigneurs of that day, to adorn their cabinets and beautify their châteaux, and which now sell for their weight in gold.

p. 45

But though his fancy saw them, as his taste, so exquisite and refined, had already designed them, still it was with the rough clay his hands were actually at work, and he had, unfortunately for his present need, "never understood earths."

Some seven or eight months more were expended in making these vessels, and then he began to erect the furnace. With incredible difficulty and labour—for he had none to assist him in the work, not even so much as to draw water, and fetch bricks from the kiln—the indefatigable man wrought till he had completed the furnace, and the preliminary baking of his vessels. And then, instead of reposing after all this toil, by the space of more than a month, he worked, night and day, grinding and compounding the materials of which he had made the white enamel. At length his task was completed, and the vessels, coated with the mixture, were arranged within the furnace.

Look at him now!—he has kindled his furnace fire, and is feeding it through its two mouths. He does not spare the fuel; he diligently throws it in, all day; he suffers it not to slacken all night. Yet the enamel does not melt. The sun rises, bright and glowing, and Nicole, now a sturdy boy of eleven or twelve years old, brings his father a basin of pottage for breakfast; a poor and scanty meal, ill-fitted to recruit his over-taxed powers, but eagerly devoured by the hungry artisan, who pauses for a few moments in order to swallow it. How pale and thin and haggard he looks! What a strained expression does his countenance wear; but all indomitable and calmly hopeful 'mid his toil!

p. 46

"God bless thee, my child," he says, as he returns the empty basin to the boy; "learn well thy lesson to-day, and to-morrow, I hope, we may make holiday, and ramble together through the fields as we once used to do." "Nay, father, and who will mind the furnace?" "I trust it will have done its work. The enamel will surely melt soon."

But the hours of that day passed on; and the dark night succeeded, and still, amid the blaze and crackle of the furnace, Palissy worked on. Another day dawns; and still he feeds his fire. Worn and weary, he occasionally drops asleep for some minutes, but his ever wakeful spirit rouses him almost instantly, and he throws in more wood, again. In vain. Six days and six nights has he spent about the glowing furnace, each day more anxious and laborious than the preceding—but the enamel has not melted. At length, convinced that something is amiss, he ceases from his task. He sits, with drooping head and lack-lustre eye, gazing on the smouldering fires, which begin slowly to slacken ready to die away. What will he do next? In few and heart-stirring words he tells us what: "Seeing it was not possible to make the said enamel melt, I was like a man in desperation; and although quite stupefied with labour, I counselled to myself that in my mixture there might be some fault. Therefore I began once more to pound and grind more materials, all the time without letting my furnace cool; in this way I had double labour, to pound, grind, and maintain the fire. I was also forced to go again, and purchase pots, in order to prove the said compound, seeing that I had lost all the vessels which I had made myself. And having covered the new pieces with the said enamel, I put them into the furnace, keeping the fire still at its height. But now occurred a new misfortune, which caused me great mortification—namely, that the wood having failed me, I was forced to burn the palings which maintained the boundaries of my garden, which being burnt also, I was forced to burn the tables and the flooring of my house, to cause the melting of the second composition. I suffered an anguish that I cannot speak, for I was quite exhausted and dried up by the heat of the furnace; it was more than a month since my shirt had been dry upon me. Further to console me, I was the object of mockery; even those from whom solace was due ran crying through the town that I was burning my floors. In this way my credit was taken from me, and I was regarded as a madman."

p. 47

How grievous those plaintive words—scarcely condemnatory—yet keenly sensitive to desertion on the part of those who should have comforted him in the time of his calamity! It was a scandal under which he pined away, and with bowed head, slipped through the streets like a man put to shame. No one gave him consolation in this extremity; on the contrary, men jested at him, saying it was right and just that he who had left off following his trade should die of hunger. Will he succumb to this new trial? Hear the brave heart's resolve—"All these things assailed my ears when I passed through the street; but for all that there remained still some hope which encouraged and sustained me. So, when I had dwelt with my regrets a little, because there was no one who had pity upon me, I said to my soul; 'Wherefore art thou saddened, since thou hast found the object of thy search? Labour now, and the defamers will live to be ashamed.'"

p. 48

For a few sad days only, Palissy "dwelt with his regrets." But "a little while" did he indulge his sorrow. Scarcely had his physical powers, exhausted by long tension, regained their spring, than he was again in pursuit of his darling object. Could he but find some friendly hand to aid him a little, all would go well; but where was the good Samaritan to be sought? Alas! he knew of none. Pondering sorrowfully over this matter, he one evening chanced to pass by a small inn on the outskirts of the town, and saw sitting on the bench, beside the door, two or three labouring men who had just come from the fields. One of these was a potter, whom Palissy knew to be a good workman. The thought immediately came into his mind, could he but engage the services of this man for a few months, it would be the very thing he wanted. At that instant the host stepped out into the porch, and, seeing Bernard, addressed a few friendly words to him. They sounded sweet to the thirsty soul that craved for sympathy, and he gladly accepted the landlord's offer of a refreshing draught, and presently entered into chat with him. As they conversed, it chanced that mention was made of the religious troubles then so thickly gathering around their father-land. A chord of sympathy was thus struck, to which their hearts responded with deep feeling. It soon appeared that Hamelin was not unknown to the worthy innkeeper; he had, indeed, found shelter of old, beneath his roof, when closely pressed by the spies of Collardeau. In short, Palissy had found one like-minded with himself; and mutual good will toward the new religion formed a bond between himself and Victor. This man was the same whom we have already seen in company with Bernard, on the eve of St. John, when they beheld that cruel sight which made their hearts burn with righteous zeal. Victor, the little deformed innkeeper, was a man of sterling worth and rare courage, and he proved a steady friend and ally to Palissy. Learning from him his present difficulties, he at once offered to give the potter all his meals, and to lodge him for six months, putting the cost down to the account of Bernard.

p. 49

p. 50

And thus was he started afresh, with new hope. He had made drawings of the vessels he wanted to produce, and these he gave to the potter, as models to work by, while he occupied himself about some medallions, which he was commissioned to execute, and in this manner he gained a little ready money on which to support himself and his family. As for the debts he owed, the payment of them must be postponed till the completion of his new batch, from which he confidently reckoned to reap nearly four hundred livres.

The six months passed slowly by, and were followed by some two or three more; during which Palissy wrought alone, at building an improved furnace, and preparing fresh chemicals for the enamel. Of this latter business, he says, "It was a labour so great as threatened to baffle all my wits, had not the desire I felt to succeed in my enterprise made me do things which I should have esteemed impossible." Some idea of the difficulties he encountered may be obtained when we

learn that, after having wearied himself several days in pounding and calcining his drugs, he had to grind them in a hand-mill, which it usually required two strong men to turn, and all this while his hand was bruised and cut in many places with the labour of the furnace.

Those were eventful months during which Palissy thus toiled in the depths of poverty and neglect. The fiery blaze that consumed the good brother of Gimosac had awakened alarm in the hearts of not a few who inhabited the ancient town of Saintes, and other and more fearful sights and sounds were swift to follow. But these must be reserved for another chapter.

p. 51

CHAPTER V.

p. 52

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money.”—ISA.
lv. 1.

IN the year 1547, Henry II. ascended the throne of France. With the intrigues of the court it is not our province to intermeddle; but from the fierce contests waged during that stormy period, our story cannot be dissevered. There were four principal factions, each pledged to the interests of a distinct chief, of whom the most influential were the celebrated constable, Anne de Montmorency, and his great rivals of the house of Guise. The constable was a personage of supreme importance, possessing enormous wealth, and raised to the pinnacle of power. As he became, in course of time, one of the chief patrons of that skill which Palissy was acquiring at the cost of so much toil and suffering, a slight sketch of this famous man, who stands out as one of the giants of the ancient monarchy, will not be misplaced here.

In early life he had gained a powerful influence over the mind of Francis I., which he long retained, and on the death of that monarch he stood high in favour with his successor, Henry II. Faithful to the interests of the throne and of his country, valiant in arms, possessed of intrepid courage, and resolute in the maintenance of what he believed right, he was, nevertheless, full of terrible blemishes and errors. He was an austere man, hard and rugged, rough and ungracious in manner, stern in his resolves, and fearful in the severity of the punishments he inflicted.

p. 53

One of the first acts of the new king was to issue an edict confirmatory of religious penalties. A blasphemer was to have his tongue pierced with a hot iron, but all heretics were to be burned alive. The spirit of this sanguinary enactment was completely in harmony with the fierce bigotry which formed one of the distinguishing traits of Montmorency's character. So great was his zeal against the heretics that he received on one occasion the nickname of “Captain Bench-burner,” because he made bonfires of the pulpits and benches taken from the churches of the Calvinists. Such was the man who now undertook the suppression of a revolt which broke out among the inhabitants of Saintonge and the surrounding districts. The occasion of this disturbance was the oppressive character of the new salt tax, which heavily burdened the poor country-people, who were consequently the first to take up arms and drive out the officers of the gabelle. In a short time the excitement spread. Pillage, fire, and massacre abounded, and the insurrection extended to Bordeaux, which became the head-quarters of the disaffected. Montmorency marched in person against the inhabitants of the disturbed districts, and wherever he went he erected gibbets and inflicted horrible punishments.

p. 54

The inhabitants of Saintes had now something to divert their thoughts from the doings of Palissy. They trembled as they heard of the tremendous scenes enacted at Bordeaux, where the stern marshal, disdainful to accept the keys of the town, marched his troops into it as a triumphant enemy, and presently put to death one hundred citizens in its great square; at the same time compelling the magnates of the town to dig up with their nails the body of the royal governor, who had been slain in one of the recent tumults. Having inflicted this summary vengeance at Bordeaux, Montmorency advanced through Saintonge, resting, on his route, at Pons, a town not far from Saintes, where resided the king's lieutenant for that department, who was also the Count of Marennes, the famous salt district. This nobleman, Sire Antoine de Pons, and his lady, Anne de Parthenay, were among the earliest and staunchest friends and patrons of Palissy. It was at their château he saw the cup of “marvellous beauty,” which had acted as a talisman to elicit his genius; and from them he had frequently received commissions for various works of art. The “Dame Pons” was, especially, a lover of gardens, and delighted in floriculture. Scarcely could she have found another so admirably suited to give her assistance in her favourite pursuit as Palissy, whose congeniality of taste in this matter caused him in after days to say, “I have found in the world no greater pleasure than to have a beautiful garden.”

p. 55



Palissy relating his failures to Lady Anne.

It chanced at the time when Montmorency came to Pons, that Bernard was engaged at the château of the Sire Antoine, in designing some panels and decorations, as well as in laying out the pleasure grounds. He had suffered another disappointment in his darling object, even more overwhelming than all previous ones, and had been again driven to a temporary renunciation of its pursuit. The narrative of his toils and struggles had been drawn from him by the gentle-hearted lady, who, as she marked with discerning eye the exquisite skill and taste of Palissy, became interested to learn somewhat of his history. He told her, in his own strong and simple language, all that had befallen him from the day when her lord had shown him the Italian cup. Alas! his latest trial, like all the others had proved a failure, and (as he declared) "his sorrows and distresses had been so abundantly augmented," that he lost all countenance.

"And yet," said the lady Anne, as she listened to his tale, "you assure me, that on this last occasion you had been right in every one of your calculations, and that the enamel was so correctly mixed, and the furnace so well ordered, that one single day was sufficient for the melting. How, then, did you fail?"

p. 56

"From this unforeseen accident," said Palissy; "the mortar of which I had erected the furnace, had been full of flints, which burst with the vehement heat, at the same time that the enamels began to liquefy; and the splinters, striking against the pottery, which was covered with the glutinous matter, became fixed there. Thus, all the vessels, which otherwise would have been beautiful, were bestrewn with little morsels of flint, so firmly attached to them that they could not possibly be removed. The distress and embarrassment I felt from this new and unforeseen disaster exceeded all I had before experienced. The more so that several of my creditors, whom I had held in hope to be paid out of the produce of these pieces, had hastened to be present at the drawing of my work, and now seeing themselves disappointed of their long delayed expectations, departed in blank dismay, finding their hopes frustrated." "Were there none of your pieces that had escaped injury?" "None, madame; it is true, though they were all more or less blemished, they would hold water, and there were some who would have bought them of me at a mean price, but because that would have been a decrying and abasing of my honour, I broke in pieces the entire batch from the said furnace, and lay down in melancholy—not without cause, for I had no longer any means to feed my family. After a while, however, reflecting that if a man should fall into a pit, it would be his duty to endeavour to get out again, I, Palissy, being in like case, resolved to exert myself in making paintings, and in various ways taking pains to recover a little money." "A wise resolve," replied the lady; "and one in which it will be in my power to assist you. But hark! there sounds a horn, which I know to be that of my lord, and it announces his approach, accompanied by Monseigneur, the duke de Montmorency. An idea strikes me; his highness has great taste for ornamental art; his patronage would secure the fortune of one who possesses your skill in designing. Bring hither to-morrow your paintings and sketches of animals, foliage, and groups, not forgetting the designs of your vases, and I will take occasion to present them to the notice of Monseigneur."

p. 57

The lady was as good as her word; and, as she had foreseen, Montmorency was struck with the marks of genius perceptible even in these early and imperfect productions of the great artist, and he immediately decided to afford Palissy an opportunity of exercising his talents in his service.

In this manner did the great constable first become acquainted with Palissy. A few years later he was intrusted with important charges in the pot decoration of the celebrated château d'Écouen, one of the most famous architectural works of France in that day.

The building of this château, distant about four leagues from Paris, had been one of the principal amusements of the wealthy marshal, during his seasons of forced leisure, when the sunshine of royal favour had deserted him. The architect employed upon it was Jean Bullant, who afterwards enjoyed the patronage of Catharine de Medici, and assisted in the building of the Tuilleries. Of the work contributed by Palissy towards the decoration of the château, nothing remains in the present day but the beautiful pavement in the chapel and galleries. Much time was employed by him in the painting and enamelling of the decorated tiles which compose this pavement. The designs were all his own, of subjects taken by him from the Scriptures, very highly finished, and

p. 58

so admirably arranged and contrived as to give to the whole a surprisingly rich effect of beautiful colouring, surpassing, it is said, that of the finest turkey carpeting.

In one part of the sacristy the passion of our Lord was represented upon pottery, in sixteen pictures, in a single frame, copied from the designs of Albert Durer, by the hand of Palissy. Of this piece, and of another painted by him on glass, representing the history of Psyche, after the designs of Raffaelle, there remain only representations upon paper. [58] Of all the windows of Écouen, Palissy is also said to have been the painter; nor must we omit to mention that in a grove of the garden there was formerly a fountain, called "*Fontaine Madame*," to which was attached a rustic grotto, of which Palissy always spoke with pride, as one of the chief triumphs of his handiwork. His skill and ingenuity were exerted in the adornment of the grotto; and the rock from whence the cascade fell was a grand specimen of his painted pottery. Figures of frogs and fishes were placed in and about the water, lizards were upon the rock, and serpents were coiled upon the grass. And, that devout thoughts might be awakened in the breasts of those who came to enjoy the sweets of this pleasant retreat, its pious artificer had contrived that on a rustic frieze, should be inscribed in a mosaic, formed with various coloured stones, the text we have chosen as the motto of this chapter.

p. 59

"HO, EVERY ONE THAT THIRSTETH, COME YE TO THE WATERS."

Probably the formation of the fountain, and the arrangements made for its supply, were suggested by Palissy, whose acute observation in the study of nature had, by that time, led him to the discovery of the true theory of springs. "I have had no other book than heaven and earth, which are open to all," he was wont to say, and upon all subjects connected with the study of that marvellous volume, Palissy was assuredly far in advance of the men of his time. He delighted in grottoes and fountains of waters, and his inquiry into the sources of natural fountains conducted him to the true solution of an enigma which baffled all the skill of Descartes. [60]

p. 60

We are, however, antedating the course of this narrative. At the time of Palissy's introduction to the constable, he was about forty years old, and his labour to discover the enamel ware had been spread over a period of some eight years. It cost him eight years more during which he endured great toil and numerous mishaps, before he attained full perfection in the moulding and enamelling of ornamental pottery. But from this time he did not lack patronage, and business was always to be obtained sufficient for the supply of household necessities. We shall presently have occasion to return with him again to the detail of his trials and struggles, and to hear of privation and distress yet to be endured in the prosecution of the object of his ambition. But first we are about to see him in a new aspect, and it will be necessary to interrupt the story of his toil in the pursuit of art, while we dwell upon some other facts in his history, by which his mind was exercised, and his character, as a man and a Christian, formed and illustrated.

p. 61

CHAPTER VI.

p. 62

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."—Job i. 21,

SOME six or seven years have passed away since we last saw Palissy; and it is now the month of February, 1557 . . .



"The Lord giveth and the Lord hath taken away;
blessed be the name of the Lord."

The short day is just drawing to a close, and our old friend, who is sitting with a book open before him, has given over the effort to continue reading, and is pensively resting, with his hand supporting his head, which now begins to show a few silvery threads among the long dark brown hair that overshadows the brow. His lips are moving, and he utters the words he has just perused on the page of that holy book with which he has formed so close and reverent an

acquaintance. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." And he sighed deeply, and rising, went slowly toward a corner of the chamber, where was placed a baby's cot. Bending down, he raised the covering that shrouded the infant form which rested there. It was that of a girl some few months old, who looked so like a marble statue, that, at first sight, you would have said, "It is the work of the sculptor." But no; the eyes were slightly open, and the lashes drooped over the violet orbs, that even in death seemed beautiful.

p. 63

The father stooped to kiss the fair delicate face, and then kneeled down beside the cot, to read more closely the innocent features by the fading twilight that still lingered.

He had remained several minutes thus absorbed in thought, and prayerfully abstracted in spirit, when suddenly a low and peculiar noise was heard close to the window. It roused him from his reverie, and he quickly lifted his eyes. Again the sound met his ear, and immediately he rose, and going to the door, looked abroad, and uttered a signal cry, responsive to the one he had heard. "It is Philebert Hamelin," he exclaimed, and the next instant his friend stood beside him. Most heartily did Palissy receive his unexpected visitor, and bade him welcome to his lowly roof, where he might be in safety, seeing its owner was then under the patronage of Sire Antoine, who had commanded that the premises of the potter should be held inviolate from all intrusion.

After discharging the duties of hospitality, and seeing the wants of his guest supplied, Bernard seated himself beside Hamelin, and the two fell into long and earnest discourse.

They spoke, as was natural, first of the domestic circumstances of Palissy, and of the bereavement that now weighed heavily upon him. It was the sixth of his children from whom he had been called to part in their tender age, and his spirit was cast down within him. Hamelin, who had a soul full of tender sensibilities, felt his eyes fill with tears as he listened to the sorrows of his friend, and lovingly sought to comfort him.

p. 64

After a time he inquired for the two boys, Nicole and Mathurin, who were the sole survivors of so numerous a family. "They are grown tall and hearty, and will soon take their part in the workshop," said Palissy. "The younger is a sharp wit. Certain monks of the Sorbonne were sent, last summer, into this town and many others of the diocese, to win over the people to allow their woods to be cut down for the king's pleasure. They made strange gestures and grimaces, and all their discourses were nothing but outcry against the new Christians. It chanced that one of them, as he was preaching, taught how it behoved men to purchase heaven by their good works; but Mathurin, who stood there listening, exclaimed, 'That's blasphemy! for the Bible tells us that Christ purchased heaven by his sufferings and death, and bestows it on us freely by his mercy.' He spoke so loud that many heard, and some disturbance ensued. Happily, Victor was near by, and he sheltered the lad, who might otherwise have paid dearly for his unadvised utterance." "In good truth," said Master Philebert, "it was a perilous deed, and these are fearful times. When a child of fifteen is not deemed too young for the stake, when young maidens have been stabbed for their singing, and fellow-tradesmen broken on the wheel for exercising liberty of conscience, then it is no marvel if our children, being taught the truths of God's word, should exchange their youthfulness of manner for a manly fortitude, and should be ready sternly to sing their hymns in the free air of heaven."

p. 65

The conversation now turned upon Geneva, from whence Hamelin had recently come. He was one of those agents who, at the instigation of Calvin, travelled through the length and breadth of France, spreading the Reformed tenets, sometimes reading the Scriptures and pious books—sometimes preaching the word and exhorting, and above all, providing for the establishment of a gospel ministry; everywhere taking occasion to search out pastors to undertake the charge of those small and despised flocks that were scattered about in the hamlets and towns.

The marvellous energy of the great Reformer was unceasingly at work in various ways. He encouraged many French refugees to become booksellers or printers; he formed numerous schools for the training of his disciples; and Geneva, under his auspices, became the metropolis of the Reformed religion; the centre of a vast propagandist system, and one of the most famous schools of learning and theology. It is almost impossible to conceive how he could support the immense labours of his latter years. He preached almost every day; gave three theological lessons in the week; assisted at all the consistorial deliberations, and all the assemblies of the clergy, and was the soul of their counsels. He carried on, besides, an immense correspondence throughout Europe, and published, every year, some work on theology or controversy. With all these labours and many others, he was, nevertheless, of a feeble constitution, and all his life long suffered under various maladies. Hamelin gave the following graphic description of his personal appearance at this period: "He resembles an old hermit, emaciated by long vigils and fasting; his cheeks are sunken, his forehead furrowed, his face colourless as that of a corpse, but his brilliant eyes glow with an unearthly fire. His figure is slightly bowed, the bones seem bursting through the skin, but his step is steady, and his tread firm."

p. 66

The two friends spoke next upon a subject of deep interest to both. By the advice, and at the instigation of Hamelin, Bernard had, for a considerable time, been in the habit of gathering together a small company of poor people on sabbath days, to read the Scriptures, and to make exhortations weekly. At first their number did not exceed nine or ten, and they were indigent and illiterate men, nevertheless they had the matter at heart, and from this small beginning was established a church which, in a few years, grew and flourished. Very simple and touching is Palissy's account of the manner in which he, "moved with an earnest desire for the advancement of the gospel," daily searched the Scriptures with Victor; and how at length the two, taking

p. 67

counsel together, one Sunday morning assembled a few neighbours, to whom Bernard read "certain passages and texts which he had put down in writing, and offered for their consideration." First, he showed them how each man, according to the gifts he had received, should distribute them to others, and that every tree which bore not fruit, must be cut down and cast into the fire. He also propounded to them *the Parable of the Talents*, and a great number of such texts; and afterwards exhorted them, to the effect that it was the duty of all people to speak of the statutes and ordinances of God, and that his doctrine must not be despised on account of his own abject estate, seeing that God little esteems those things which men account great. For, while he gives wisdom, birth, or worldly greatness, to such as shall never see his face, he calls to the inheritance of glory poor despised creatures, who are looked upon as the offscouring and refuse of the world. These, he raises from the dunghill, setting them with princes, and making them his sons and daughters. "Oh, the wonder!" He then begged his auditors to follow his example, and do as he had been doing; which he so successfully urged, that they resolved that same hour, that six of their number should make exhortations weekly; that is to say, each of them once in six weeks, on the Sunday. And it was agreed that "since they undertook a business in which they had never been instructed, they should put down in writing what they had to say, and read before the assembly." "That was," said Palissy, "the beginning of the Reformed Church of Saintes." Six poor and unlearned men were all who had the boldness, with resolute hearts, to form themselves into a worshipping assembly of Protestant Christians in that town, which had so recently beheld the burning of a heretic.

p. 68

We seek in the chronicles of earthly glory for the names of our famous heroes, patriots, and statesmen. The only annals in which the name of our potter is recorded are those of the despised Huguenot church of Saintes. In a contemporary list of preachers we find mentioned BERNARD PALISSY.

We have no other record of the manner in which his ministrations were carried on, than those few sentences just given; but we know that the doctrine of the Reformed Church of France was identical with that of Luther. The motto of that school was, "The word of God is sufficient." "To know Christ and his word, this is the only living, universal theology; he who knows this knows all," said the two men who first proclaimed the gospel in Paris. The doctrine of justification by faith overturned at one sweep the subtleties of the schoolmen, and the practices of Popery. "It is God alone," said Lefèvre, within the walls of the Sorbonne, "who by his grace, through faith, justifies unto everlasting life. There is a righteousness of works, there is a righteousness of grace; the one cometh from man, the other from God; one is earthly, and passeth away, the other is heavenly and eternal; one is the shadow and the sign, the other the light and the truth; one makes sin known to us that we may escape death, the other reveals grace that we may obtain life." "We are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God." *This* was the great cardinal truth which Palissy taught, and which his hearers received in the love of it.

p. 69

CHAPTER VII.

p. 70

"He had respect unto the recompense of the reward."—HEBREWS xi. 26.

THE morrow after Hamelin's unexpected visit to his friend was Sunday, and he gladly embraced the opportunity, so soon as the shadows of night had spread their friendly veil, to slip through the streets, and repair to the place of meeting, where he exhorted and prayed with the little congregation, bidding them be of good cheer, and encouraging them with the hope, that before long, they should have a minister to take the charge of them. The next day he departed for Allevert, where, being kindly received by many of the people, he remained some time, calling them together by the sound of a bell, to listen to his exhortations, and also baptizing a child. Tidings of these proceedings were not long in reaching Saintes, and a great stir was immediately raised by divers officials of the town, who instigated the bishop at that time in residence, to authorize proceedings against Hamelin.

So slenderly provided was the poor Huguenot, that he had taken with him no other outfit than a simple staff in his hand; neither purse nor scrip had he, nor carried any weapon of defence. Alone, and without fear, he went his way, solely intent on the errand he was about. His friend, who evidently regarded him with the utmost love and reverence, after describing his defenceless condition, his poverty, and his trustful spirit, humorously contrasts with all this the extravagant and absurd measures adopted by his enemies, who "constrained the bishop to produce money for the maintenance of a pursuit of the said Philebert, with horses, gendarmes, cooks, and cutlers." With all this fuss and ado, they speedily transferred themselves to the islands of Allevert, where they re-baptized the child—thus, as far as was in their power, repairing the mischief done by the heretic, whom, though they failed to catch him in that place, they shortly discovered in the mansion of one of the neighbouring gentry; and, laying forcible hands on him, they carried him off as a malefactor, to the criminals' prison in Saintes, where they lodged him in safe custody.

p. 71

Sore was the grief of Palissy when he learned that the friend whom he esteemed above all others, had thus been captured by wicked men; and well he knew that they had both power and will to destroy Hamelin. Indignation struggled in his breast with sorrow; and as he reflected on the blameless conversation, pure charity, and simple-heartedness of the man, he exclaimed—"I am

full of wonder that men should have dared to sit in judgment of death over him, when they had heard and well knew, that his life was holy." Not content with passively bewailing his friend's calamity, he tells that he mustered hardihood, notwithstanding that these were perilous days, "to go and remonstrate with six of the principal judges and magistrates of the town, that they had imprisoned a prophet or an angel of the Lord," assuring them that for eleven years he had known this Philebert Hamelin to be of so holy a life that it seemed to him as if other men were devils compared with him.

p. 72

Strong and impetuous language, prompted by the indignant earnestness of a loving and faithful heart, which set at nought all selfish considerations! It was, indeed, no light risk our noble-hearted Bernard was incurring. The edict of Châteaubriand had recently appeared, aggravating all former penalties, forbidding all assistance to those who were of the new religion, and all refuge of them; offering rewards to such as should denounce them, and, in short, rendering the laws against heresy so stringent, that the life of any one known to be a heretic depended wholly on the sufferance of his neighbours. In the face of such a danger, Palissy went to the very men who were officially engaged to punish his rashness, and boldly remonstrating with them, proclaimed the innocence and virtue of their prisoner. This courageous and honourable conduct was fruitless. The judges, indeed, showed sufficient humanity not to avail themselves of his boldness as a weapon against himself; they even heard him with courtesy, and tried to excuse themselves in reference to Hamelin's condemnation. To use Palissy's words—"The better to come by a wash for their hands, that would acquit their hearts, they reasoned that he had been a priest in the Roman church; therefore they sent him to Bordeaux, with good and sure guard, by a provost-marshal." Thus they set the seal to his doom; for Bordeaux was well-known to be the waiting-chamber to the scaffold.

p. 73

An effort was made, while yet Hamelin remained imprisoned at Saintes, to procure his release, which deserves to be mentioned on more than one account. The tidings of his captivity had spread abroad, among the neighbouring districts, and reached the ears of a little church founded by him in a somewhat remote region. These poor people, with overflowing hearts, when the evil tidings reached them, lost no time in considering how they might best help to procure the release of one whom they loved and honoured as their spiritual father. The result of their deliberation was apparent, when, the day previous to his removal to Bordeaux, an advocate came secretly to the prison-house in which Hamelin lay, and offered to the jail-keeper the sum of 300 livres, provided he would, that night, put the captive outside the prison door. The bribe was tempting; and the frail official hesitated, desiring first, however, to take counsel of Master Philebert in the matter. His magnanimous reply was that he chose rather to perish by the hands of the executioner than to expose another man to peril, for the purpose of securing his own safety. On hearing this, the advocate, taking back his money, returned to those who had sent him. "I ask you," said Palissy, as he recounted this worthy conduct of his friend, "which is he among us who would do the like, being at the mercy of enemies, as he was?"

p. 74

It was a sad meeting of the infant church when they assembled on the Sabbath after Hamelin's death. They looked each other in the face, and sorrowfully proceeded to the sacred exercises of the hour. After the service was concluded, Palissy introduced to them a minister, named De La Place, who had been chosen by their deceased friend to undertake the office of pastor in Allevert. The events which had since befallen rendered it, however, highly dangerous and undesirable that he should repair thither for a time; and he had received notice, warning him to abstain from proceeding on his journey.



It was a sad meeting of the infant church, on the Sabbath after Hamelin's death.

In compliance with this intimation he had stopped short at Saintes where he remained in safety with Bernard, who now made him known to the brethren, and they with one accord prayed him to stay among them and minister the word of God. Thus were they, most unexpectedly, supplied with a pastor.

Before the assembly broke up, Victor, calm in manner, though with intense feeling, narrated to them some touching incidents he had learned of the last hours of their martyred friend. He had

p. 75

not been alone; a companion in tribulation shared his sufferings and death, whom Philebert had strengthened in the hour of trial by his own quiet confidence and joyful anticipation of the future that awaited them. On the morning fixed for their execution he awoke his comrade, who was sleeping in the same cell, and pointing with his hand to the splendid sunrise just visible on the eastern horizon, he exclaimed, "Let us rejoice; for, if the aspect of nature, and the return of daylight, be so beautiful on earth, what will it be to-morrow, when we shall behold the mansions of heaven?"

His composure and piety affected even the stern jailer, who was so much impressed with what he saw and heard that he had spoken of it to one who secretly sympathized with the martyrs, and related everything to Victor. When conveyed to the gibbet, Hamelin remained self-possessed, and a divine peace was visible on his countenance. He was asked once more, if he would renounce his errors, and return to the true faith, but, unmoved, and steadfast in hope, he sang a hymn, making no other reply to the importunities of those around him than this, "I die for the name of Jesus Christ." His last words were, "Lord Jesus, have mercy on me."

When Victor had concluded his narrative, Palissy said, "You have heard, brethren, the end of this child of God, to whom we are indebted in no small degree; for if there be among us any of that Christian fellowship in love which is the blessed product of communion with the members of the body of Christ, we must assuredly trace it to his influence. All that has been done among us is the result of the good example, counsel, and doctrine of this brother, beloved in the Lord. And think you," he continued—his eye kindling, and his voice tremulous with emotion—"that they who condemned the just will be excused on the plea of ignorance? Assuredly the judges of this town knew well that his life was holy; nevertheless, they acted through fear, lest they should lose their offices: so we must understand it. And thus they delivered him up, and caused him to be hung like a thief. But, will not God avenge his elect? Will he not show that precious in his sight is the death of these, his witnesses? Truly, a rich harvest has always sprung up from the blood of the martyrs, and the ashes of the just, scattered to the four winds of heaven, have been as the seed of the kingdom."

p. 76

These words of the noble-hearted potter recall to our minds what Luther had spoken, some thirty years before this period, when tidings reached him of the persecution and death of some of his followers. "At length," he exclaimed, "Christ is gathering some fruit from our labours, and is creating new martyrs. Their bonds are our bonds; their dungeons our dungeons; and their fires our fires. We are all with them, and the Lord himself is at our head. He afterwards celebrated these first victims of the Reformation in a noble hymn, whose strains were speedily heard echoing throughout Germany, and everywhere spreading enthusiasm for the cause—

p. 77

"They ride the air—they will not down,
The ashes of the just;
Nor graves can hide, nor waters drown,
That spirit-pregnant dust.
Where'er the winds that seed have flung
Soldiers are gendered;
And Satan's foiled, and Christ is sung
By voices from the dead." [77]

The early years of the little Reformed church of Saintes were very troublesome ones. It was established, in the outset, with great difficulties and imminent perils, and those who ventured to enroll themselves among its number were blamed and vituperated with perverse and wicked calumnies. The ignorance and superstition of that age and country were called into active exercise against the adherents of the new faith, and the vilest slanders were fabricated against them, and accredited even by those who witnessed their blameless lives. Most frequently their meetings for religious worship were held during the hours of darkness, for fear of their enemies; and occasion was taken from this circumstance to insinuate that, if their doctrine were good, they would preach it openly. They were even accused of wickedness and unchaste conduct in their assemblies; nor were there wanting some "of the baser sort" who said that the heretics had dealings with the devil, whose tail they went to kiss by the light of a rosin candle. Notwithstanding all these things, however, the church continued to exist, and to grow; and after a time, it made surprising increase. The timid commencement, the rapid advance, and, finally, the successful establishment and prevalence of the Reformed tenets in Saintes, were all noted by Palissy, with loving fidelity. He scanned, with the eye of a Christian and a philosopher, the dealings of God's providence; and watchfully observed the various ways in which his purposes of wisdom and mercy were brought to pass.

p. 78

It is remarked, by a Roman Catholic historian of the day, that "the painters, clock-makers, modellers, jewellers, booksellers, printers, and others, who, although in humble trades, have still some exercise for thought, were the first to adopt these new ideas." What a pleasing and instructive fact, proving, as it does, that not only for the rich and leisurely, the learned and studious, are reserved those best and choicest gifts of God—the seeing eye, the hearing ear, and the heart wise to discern the heavenly wisdom of the cross! Nowhere could we find an instance more strikingly in point than that afforded us by the life of Palissy. While he laboured with enthusiasm and devoted earnestness at the calling of his choice (and of his necessity), his most precious, his chosen pursuit was not his art, but the knowledge and service of God his Saviour. He obeyed the sacred mandate, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and girding himself to the conflict with error, his soul became possessed with a holy enthusiasm; and

p. 79

having assumed to himself the right of free inquiry, he did not scruple to make bold confession of his faith.

CHAPTER VIII.

p. 80

“In all labour there is profit.”—PROV. xiv. 23

PROBABLY, the happiest time of Palissy’s life is that at which we are now arrived. He may be accounted to have reached the end of his great period of struggle as a potter. He was labouring prosperously in his vocation; he was yet in the vigour of his age, and he had, above all, the enjoyment of feeling that he had solved the problem and effected the object for which he had endured a long struggle with privation and contumely. We will not dwell on the remaining disappointments he had been doomed to suffer before he attained this point. They were numerous and painful in the extreme. We get a passing glimpse of them in the following incident. One day he encountered a friend whom he had not seen for many a long year. He had first met with him in the days of his youth at Tarbes, where they had worked together, and listened in company to the teachings of Hamelin. His companion had, in consequence, embraced the Reformed doctrine, and afterwards became one of the colporteurs employed in the circulation of religious books. In the course of his wanderings he had occasionally visited Saintes, but it was long since he had been there. As on former occasions, he now eagerly sought out Palissy, to whom he related much of deep interest with reference to the progress of religious truth throughout the provinces of France, while, at the same time, he drew a distressing picture of the fearful sufferings of all classes; for it has been said, and probably with little exaggeration, that in France during the sixteenth century, there scarcely lived a poor rustic, the current of whose life was not distressed and troubled by the course of state affairs; and who had not been, or was not destined at some time of his life to be, heavily bruised by a hard-fisted government. Having finished his narrative, the worthy man asked of Bernard some particulars concerning his own history, and that which had transpired in the good town of Saintes during the last few years.

p. 81

“For myself,” replied Palissy, “I may say matters are now, comparatively speaking, prosperous with me. Much have I suffered, however, since I last saw you. During the space of fifteen or sixteen years in all, I have blundered on at my business. When I had learned to guard against one danger, there came another on which I had not reckoned. I made several furnaces, which caused me great losses, before I understood how to heat them equally. At last I found means to make various vessels of different enamels, intermixed, in the manner of jasper. That fed me

p. 82

several years; and, when at length, I had discovered how to make my rustic pieces, [82] I was in greater trouble and vexation than before, for having made a certain number of them, and put them to bake, my enamels turned out, some beautiful and well melted, and others quite the reverse; because they were composed of different materials, which were fusible in different degrees. Thus, the green of the lizards was burnt long before the colour of the serpents was melted; and the colour of the serpents, lobsters, tortoises, and crabs, was melted before the white had attained any beauty. All these defects caused me such labour and heaviness of spirit, that, before I could render my enamels fusible at the same degree of heat, I verily thought I should be at the door of my sepulchre.” “Nay, my friend, you look tolerably stout, at present, and carry your fifty years as well as most men.” “It may be so,” was the reply, “but you would have thought otherwise, had you seen me some time since, for, from incessant labour and anxiety, in the space of more than ten years, I had so fallen away in my person, that there was no longer any form in my legs or roundness in my arms; insomuch that my limbs were all one thickness, and as soon as I began to walk, the strings with which I fastened the bottom of my hose dropped about my heels, together with my stockings. I frequently used to walk in the meadows of Saintes, considering my vexation and affliction, and above all, that I could meet with no comfort or approval even in my own house. But, indeed, I was despised and scorned by all. Nevertheless, I always contrived to make some ware of divers colours, which afforded me some sort of a living. The hope which supported me, meantime, gave me such manly courage for my work, that oftentimes, to entertain persons who came to see me, I would endeavour to laugh, although within me I felt very sad.” . . . “Who would believe Master Bernard was ever very sad?” said a lively voice, and at the same moment a cavalier entered the workshop, and passing through it, peeped in at the door of the studio where Palissy was seated with his friend. “You are too prosperous a man to speak after that fashion; and your coffers must be filling apace, to judge by the value set on your beautiful designs in pottery.” “The Seigneur de Burie speaks too favourably of my work,” replied Bernard, while his visitor, rapidly glancing round, noticed admiringly some charming things which were in progress of completion, and gave orders for several pieces of enamelled earthenware—specimens of that beautiful sculpture in clay, which was destined, before long, to adorn the mansions and palaces of the nobles of the land.

p. 83

p. 84

“M. the Count de la Rochefoucault is eager to visit your studio, Master Bernard,” said the seigneur, as he took his leave; “and his patronage will be valuable to you for more reasons than one. Not only will he give you commissions for your works, but his influence can protect you from the dangers you incur as one of the new religionists. It is true, indeed, that the support of Monseigneur de Montmorency is so powerful as to stand you in sufficient stead; and a man who is intrusted with an important share in his famous building-works at Écouen, will be sure to have a large circle of friends, or, at all events, admirers and employers. Nevertheless, I would say a

word of advice in your ear. It is but the other day I met his reverence, the dean of this town, in a courtly circle, where the gentry were discussing the progress of heretical doings, and I heard, with concern, that you had made yourself obnoxious to that dignitary, as well as to the chapter of this place, by your unguarded language. Indeed, excuse me, if I say, it were well to be more circumspect. Is there not a word in the Holy Book which bids us be 'wise as serpents?'"

p. 85

"I thank you heartily, monsieur, for the good will you are pleased to show towards me," said Bernard; "but I do assure you these gentry have none occasion against me, except in that I have urged upon them many times certain passages of Scripture in which it is written that he is unhappy and accursed who drinks the milk and wears the wool of the sheep without providing for their pasture. Assuredly this ought to have incited them to love me, rather than to take umbrage at the words of truth and uprightness. In the mouth of an honest man the language of remonstrance is friendly, and gives none occasion for displeasure." "By my faith, though," said the seigneur, laughing heartily, "such reproof must have stung sharply. I trow, the cap fitted too closely. It is notorious that similar language has been spoken in the ears of Majesty itself. The Advocate-General, Séguier, in the name of the parliament of Paris, recently made the king's ears tingle with his bold utterance. 'If heresy is to be suppressed,' said he, 'let pastors be compelled to labour among their flocks. Commence, sire, by giving an edict to the nation, which will not cover your kingdom with scaffolds, nor be moistened with the blood or tears of your faithful subjects. Distant from your presence—bent beneath the toil of labour in the fields, or absorbed in the exercise of arts and trades, they cannot plead for themselves. It is in their name that parliament addresses to you its humble remonstrance, and its ardent supplication.'"

p. 86

"Methinks such counsel was wise and timely. How did the king reply?" "The king? oh, he listened, smiled assent, and went on as before. However, the speech was to good purpose, for the opposition of parliament prevented a most oppressive enactment, against which the appeal was made."

As the young nobleman turned to leave the apartment, his eye was caught by a carved group, which stood somewhat apart. "Ah! what have we there? How lovely that infant form; it reminds me of my own sweet little Amélie;" and he approached it more nearly. It was a young girl who had caught up a litter of puppies, and was taking them up in the lap of her pinafore to exhibit, their little heads peeping out helplessly over the sides of the cloth, while the mother, fondly and anxiously following its young, had seized the skirt of the child's dress while she was turning with a smile to quiet its solicitude. "So simple and so natural!" said the young man, who was himself a father. "One sees, at a glance, it is modelled from the life."

Palissy sighed. "It is from a sketch of my eldest little daughter," he said, "as she came one day into my garden-house, carrying her new pets, to show me. Alas! it was almost the last time her frolicsome glee delighted my heart, for she fell sick soon after." "I almost envy you, good Master Bernard, the power thus to perpetuate your reminiscences of past joys. I had rather be a successful artist than a victorious warrior." And with these words the Seigneur de Burie at length departed.

p. 87

The two friends, being left to themselves, continued their discourse; and Palissy related at considerable length, the history of his beloved church, now a flourishing community. "The little one has become a thousand," said he. "Within comparatively a short period we have made rapid strides. When our first minister, De la Place, was with us, it was a pitiable state of affairs, for we had the goodwill, but the power to support the pastors we had not. So that, during the time we had him, he was maintained partly at the expense of the gentry, who frequently invited him. When he removed to Allevert, he was succeeded by M. de la Boissière, whom we have at the present time. For a long time there were very few rich people who joined our congregation, and hence we were often without the means of his support; frequently, therefore, did he content himself with a diet of fruit and vegetables, and water as his drink. Yet, were we not forsaken, nor without manifest tokens of God's favour and protection. Insomuch that, notwithstanding the enmity of those who sought to destroy the cause, there was no evil suffered to overcome us; but God bridled them, and preserved his church. He fulfilled in our town an admirable work, for there were sent to Toulouse two of the principal opponents, who would not have suffered our assemblies to be public, and it pleased God to detain them at that place for two years or thereabout, in order that they might not hurt his church during the time that he would have it manifested publicly." "You are then, now so prosperous, as to venture openly to avow your principles?" "Yes; the absence of these two opponents encouraged us, so that we had the hardihood to take the Market Hall in which to hold our meetings; and now that they have returned, though, indeed, their will is to molest and persecute us, as before, yet are matters so much changed that their evil designs are frustrated, and they dare not venture openly to malign a work which has so well prospered that it is changing the whole aspect of the town."

p. 88

CHAPTER IX.

p. 89

"The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein."—PSALM CXI. 2.

PALISSY had not exaggerated when he said that the influence of the Reformed church in Saintes

was changing the whole aspect of the town. Though but of short duration, its period of prosperity was bright and happy, and he was prominent among its firm and peaceable supporters. The picture he has drawn of it is a lovely one. "You would have seen in those days," he says, "fellow-tradesmen, on a Sunday, rambling through the fields, groves, and other places, singing in company psalms, canticles, and spiritual songs—reading and instructing one another. You would also have seen the daughters and maidens, seated by troops, in the gardens and other places, who, in like way, delighted themselves in singing of all holy things. The teachers had so well instructed the young, and affairs had so much prospered, that people had changed their old manners, even to their very countenances."

Nor was this merely a question of psalm-singing and prayers, he assures us. The Reformation was practical and earnest. Quarrels, dissensions, and hatreds were reconciled; unseemly conduct and debauchery suppressed; and this had been carried so far that "even the magistrates had assumed the control of many evil things which depended on their authority." Innkeepers were forbidden to have gaming in their houses, and to entertain the householders, whose duty it was to abide with their own families, not eating and drinking their substance elsewhere. Even the enemies of the church were constrained, to their very great regret, to speak well of the ministers, and especially of M. de la Boissière, who seems to have won general respect and esteem by his judicious and manly piety, as well as his pastoral instructions. Thus were the opponents of the gospel fairly silenced, and recourse was had to a system of counteraction, in the shape of a reformation on the part of the Roman Catholics. This went to such a point that Palissy says, "certain of the priests began to take part in the assemblies, and to study and take counsel about the church." In fact, it was time they should be on the alert, for the monks and ecclesiastics were blamed in common talk; that is, by those who cared nothing for religion, but who were ready enough to throw a stone at these idle shepherds. "Why do you not exhort your people, and pray, as these ministers do?" they asked; "you are paid salaries for preaching." These taunts reaching the ears of Monsieur, the theologian of the chapter, measures were taken accordingly, and the shrewdest and most subtle monks engaged for the service of the cathedral church. "Thus it happened that, in these days, there was prayer in the town of Saintes every day, from one side or the other." But the thing which worried the priests more than any other, and which seemed to them very strange, was, that several poor villagers refused to pay tithes, unless they were supplied with ministers. It was certainly a strange thing to see, as Palissy says, when certain farmers, who were no friends to the religion, finding these things so, actually went to the ministers, praying them to exhort the people of the districts they farmed, in order that they might get paid their tithes; the labourers having refused to supply them with corn and fruits on any other conditions. In short, the efforts of the little church had so well prospered, that they had constrained the wicked to become good—at all events, to seem so.

How delightful to think of Bernard now! at his ease, rejoicing in the peace and happiness around him, and in the religious aspect of his town; frequently journeying abroad, to Écouen and elsewhere, to and fro, as his business required, and coming home again, to wander, thoughtfully and tranquilly, among the rocks and fields in which he took such delight. He was now so well supplied with patronage that he might have been growing rich, had he not, with his own ardent zeal and restless energy, been ever expending time, and toil, and money, on new efforts to improve his art. Now, too, he had leisure to pursue those inquiries which, in his character of a naturalist, so deeply interested him. With surprising and marvellous sagacity he penetrated some of the problems which have puzzled the most skilful investigators, and there was always mingled with his love of nature a spirit of glowing and unaffected piety. The bright gladness of his pious soul was as a beaming light that shone upon his path and made it ever radiant.



"This dish is charming," said the lady.

How skilfully he turned to use all the modes of acquiring knowledge, and what good account he made of his own sharp wits, we see in a little incident he has recorded. It chanced one day, he received a visit from the Dame de la Pons, for whom he was executing a commission, in which the lady felt, naturally, a woman's interest. She had ordered a complete set of dishes, to be adorned with his favourite "rustic figulines;" the work was progressing favourably; there remained only a few pieces to be completed; and she had come to see and to criticise. "This dish is charming,"

said the lady; "the bottom covered with sea weeds and corals, while the fish, with open fins, seem darting across the water. Really, one can fancy the slight tremor of the tail, so like the helm of the living ship. The cray-fish, too, the spider of the waters, stretches his long claws as if to grip the rock, and shrink into its crevices." "And see this one, mamma," said her daughter, who had accompanied her, "this is for the fresh water fish. Look at the edges, fringed with the dank mosses, and the sides covered with the broad leaves of the plants. It is the subaqueous world of waters, with all the leaves, stems, and flags of the marsh, and its aquatic animals, transferred to clay, as true in form, and as brilliant in colours, as if a housemaid had dipped one of her plates in the stream, and drawn it out, filled to the brim, with the plants, shells, and animals of the brook." "It is admirable," said her mother. Palissy's eyes sparkled, for praise is sweet; and what son of Adam is there to whom it does not come doubly welcome from the lips of a woman?

p. 93

"What a curious shell is this!" exclaimed Madame, taking up one, from which Palissy was modelling. "That comes from the shores of Oléron," said the artist; "there are numbers more on yonder table," and he pointed to one, covered with a multitude of similar ones. "I engaged a score of women and children to search for them on the rocks. And now, lady, I must tell you something curious about those shells. Only a day or two after they were brought to me, I chanced to call on M. Babaret, the advocate, who, you know, is a man famous for his love of letters and the arts. We fell into some discussion upon a point in natural history, and he showed me two shells exactly similar to these—urchin shells; [93] but which were quite massive; and he maintained that the said shells had been carved by the hand of the workman, and was quite astonished when I maintained, against him, that they were natural. Since that time, I have collected a number of these shells converted into stones." "You surprise me," said his attentive hearer; "I was indeed greatly puzzled myself, some years since, when I chanced to find certain stones embedded in rock, made in the fashion of a ram's horn, though not so long nor so crooked, but commonly arched, and about half a foot long. I could not imagine, nor have I ever known how they could have been formed." "Your description, madame, much interests me; for, it so happens that I have also seen, nay, possess, a stone of the kind you describe, which was brought to me one day by Pierre Guoy, citizen and sheriff of the town of Saintes. He found, in his farm, one of these very stones, which was half-open, and had certain indentations, that fitted admirably, one into the other. Well knowing how curious I am about such things, he made me a present of it, which I was greatly rejoiced at; for I had seen, as I walked along the rocks in this neighbourhood, some similar stones, which had awakened my curiosity; and from that time I understand that these stones had formerly been the shells of a fish, which fish we see no more at the present day." He then showed his visitors the picture of a rock, in the Ardennes, near the village of Sedan, in which were paintings of all the species of shells that it contained.

p. 94

"The inhabitants of that place," said he, "daily hew the stone from that mountain to build; and in doing so, the said shells are found at the lowest, as well as at the highest part; that is, inclosed in the densest stones. I am certain that I saw one kind which was sixteen inches in diameter. From this I infer that the rock, which is full of many kinds of shells, has formerly been a marine bed, producing fishes." "You speak as if stones grew, or were made, in process of time," said the lady; "while we know that from the beginning, God made heaven and earth. He made also the stones; and from that time there have been none made, for all things have been finished from the commencement of the world." [95]

p. 95

"It is indeed, madame, written in the book of Genesis that God created all things in six days, and that he rested on the seventh. But yet, for all that, God did not make these things to leave them idle. Therefore, each performs its duty according to the commandment it received from him. The stars and planets are not idle. The sea wanders from one place to another, and labours to bring forth profitable things. The earth likewise is never idle; that which decays naturally within her, she forms over again; if not in one shape she will reproduce it in another. It is certain that if, since the creation of the world, no stones had grown within the earth, it would be difficult to find any number of them, for they are constantly being dissolved and pulverized by the effects of frosts, and an infinite number of other accidents, which daily spoil, consume, and reduce stone to earth." "You tell us startling things; very hard to be understood, Master Bernard," said the Dame de la Pons, "yet full of deep interest to one who loves to note the wonderful works of creation, and would fain learn to see them with discernment as well as admiration." Palissy paused from his work, (he had continued to sketch while he conversed,) and opening a cabinet with drawers which stood near him, he showed the ladies several specimens of fossils and minerals, which in his enthusiastic researches he had collected; for, with the acuteness of a philosophic observer, he had perceived the importance of a detailed study of fossil forms to the discovery of geological truths; and it may be truly said that the first who pursued this study (on which undoubtedly modern geology and all its grandest results are founded) was Palissy, the self-educated potter, who had taught himself in the school of nature. "I have been anxious," said he, "to represent by pictures, the shells and fishes which I have found lapidified, to distinguish between them and the sorts now in common use; but because my time would not permit me to put my design in execution, I have, for some years, sought, according to my power, for petrifications, until at length I have found more fishes and shells in that form petrified upon the earth than there are modern kinds inhabiting the ocean." He then showed them a small specimen which he begged them carefully to observe. "What can it be?" they inquired; "it resembles wood more nearly than anything else." "You will think it very strange when I assure you that it is indeed wood, converted into stone. It came into my possession through the kindness of the Seigneur de la Mothe, the secretary to the king of Navarre, a man very curious and a lover of *virtú*. He was once at court in company with the late king of Navarre, when there was brought to that prince a

p. 96

p. 97

piece of wood changed into stone. It was thought so great a curiosity that the king commanded one of his attendants to lock it up, among his other treasures.

“Taking occasion to speak with the gentleman who had received this charge, Monsieur de la Mothe begged that he would give him a little morsel of it, which he did; and some time after, passing through Saintes, he brought the treasure to me, and seeing how much pleasure and interest I took in examining it, he gave it me. I have since made inquiry, and find that it was brought from the forest of Fayau, which is a swampy place. It appears to me, indeed I am persuaded, that in the same manner as the shells are converted into stone, so is the wood also transmuted, and being petrified it preserves the form and appearance of wood, precisely like the shells. By these things you see how nature no sooner suffers destruction by one principle, than she at once resumes working with another; and this is what I have already said—to wit, that the earth and the other elements are never idle.” “Where can you have learned all this?” asked the young lady, with girlish wonder; “I would fain know to what school you have been, where you have learned all that you are telling us.” “In truth, Mademoiselle,” said Palissy smiling, “I have had no other teacher than the heavens and the earth which are given to all, to be known and read. Having read therein, I have reflected on terrestrial matters, because I have had no opportunity in studying astrology to contemplate the stars.”

p. 98

CHAPTER X.

p. 99

“The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.”—PSALM xii. 8.

THUS happily occupied with the pursuits he loved, but taking no share in the turmoils of the time, Palissy prospered and cheerfully pursued his way. He could not, indeed, be an unconcerned observer of the events that were transpiring around. Having eyes, he doubtless saw the clouds that were gathering over his country, and from time to time, heard the thunders that threatened before long to burst in a terrific storm. For a season, however, the evil day was deferred, and the hymns of the rejoicing Huguenots continued to gladden his heart. We have already had sufficient evidence that he did not spare his remonstrances against those who, while they enjoyed the revenues of the church, neglected the performance of its duties. Nor did he stop there, and as his censures extended from the highest to the lowest matters, his shafts were often pointed against those who could ill endure the test of common sense, which he unceremoniously applied to them. His criticisms on the follies and vices of his neighbours had too much the character of home-thrusts not to be felt. In his lively way he relates that, on one occasion, he remonstrated with a certain high dame upon the absurdities and improprieties of feminine attire; but “after I had made her this remonstrance,” he quietly adds, “the silly woman, instead of thanking me, called me Huguenot, seeing which—I left her.” At another time, he relates that, being on a visit to the neighbouring town of Rochelle, he earnestly remonstrated with a tradesman, of whom he inquired what he had put into his pepper which enabled him, though buying it in that place at thirty-five sols the pound, to make a great profit by selling it again, at the fair of Niord, at seventeen sols, in consequence of the adulteration of the article. In reply to the man’s excuse of poverty, Bernard replied, that, by such criminal acts he was heaping up to himself fearful punishments, “and surely,” said he, “you can better afford to be poor than be damned.” Strong, though faithful language, which was wholly ineffectual upon this “poor insensate, who declared he would not be poor, follow what might.” Plain speaking of this sort was evidently very characteristic of Palissy, who uttered his remonstrances without reckoning on the consequences. The same originality and force of intellect which procured him patrons in his art, undoubtedly, when applied in a different direction, served to multiply enemies around him, and their time was not long in coming.

p. 100

Happily and swiftly flew the years of prosperity, but (as we have already seen) the clouds were gathering in the horizon, and soon the cruel hounds of war were let slip, and most frightful were the results. Two great parties had involved in their disputes the passions of the whole French nation. One, which included all the Huguenots, was headed by the high old French nobility; while the leaders of the others, embracing all the Roman Catholics, were the Guises. These opposing factions, with their strong deep passions, rapidly precipitated themselves into a fierce and bloody contest. One of the young sons of Catherine de Medici had died, after a few months of nominal rule, and a child no more than ten years old, called Charles IX. had succeeded to the throne. The queen mother, who, as regent for her son, assumed the government of affairs, was anxious, as far as possible, to offend neither of the contending parties, but to hold them so well balanced, as to preserve the power in her own hands. For a short time, there was a cessation of disputes, and efforts at conciliation. The policy of Catherine was the maintenance of peace, and she spoke fair to the Huguenots, feigning so well and so successfully that she was even accused by those of the Roman Catholic party, of being in heart one with the new sect. The Reformers took courage, and were full of fervour and hope; the enthusiasm spreading throughout the provinces and awakening everywhere the hope that the triumph of the Reformed faith was at hand. It was but a passing gleam, presently followed by a darker gloom, which finally deepened into the thick night of the Black Bartholomew. In vain did the queen and the chancellor, De l’Hôpital, labour to secure peace by colloquies and edicts of toleration. The Guises fiercely stirred the fires of contention, and employed themselves in active preparations for a struggle. At length, the first signal for the outbreak of the civil war was given.

p. 101

p. 102

There was in Champagne, a small fortified town, called Vassy, containing about three thousand inhabitants, a third of whom, not reckoning the surrounding villages, professed the Reformed religion. It happened, on the 28th of February, 1562, that the Duke of Guise, journeying on his way to Paris, accompanied by his cousin, the cardinal of Lorraine, with an escort of gentlemen, followed by some two hundred horsemen, visited the château de Joinville, which was situated in the neighbourhood, on an estate belonging to the Lorraines.

The mistress of the castle was a very old lady, the dowager Duchess of Guise, whose bigoted attachment to the faith of her ancestors made the very name of Huguenot an offence to her. Sorely indignant was she at the audacity of the inhabitants of Vassy, who had no right, she declared, as vassals of her granddaughter, Mary Stuart, to adopt a new religion without her permission. Often had she threatened vengeance upon them, and the time was now come to inflict it. And the aged woman urged her son, the fierce Duke Francis, to make a striking example of these insolent peasants. As he listened to her angry words, he swore a deep oath, and bit his beard, which was his custom, when his wrath waxed strong.

p. 103



"Heretic dogs! Huguenot devils! Kill! Kill!"

The next morning, resuming his march, he arrived at a village not far from the obnoxious town; and the morning breeze, as it came sweeping up the hills, brought to his ears the sound of church bells. "What means that noise?" he asked of one of his attendants. "It is the morning service of the Huguenots," was the reply. It was, in fact, the sabbath day, and the Reformers, assembled to the number of some hundreds, were performing their worship in a barn, under the protection of a recent edict of toleration. Unsuspecting of danger, there was not a man among them armed, with the exception of some ten strangers, probably gentlemen, who wore swords.

Suddenly, a band of the duke's soldiers approached the place, and began shouting—"Heretic dogs! Huguenot rebels! Kill, kill!" The first person whom they laid hands on was a poor hawker of wine. "In whom do you believe?" they cried. "I believe in Jesus Christ," was the answer; and with one thrust of the pike he was laid low. Two more were killed at the door, and instantly the tumult raged. The duke, hastening up at the sound of arms, was struck by a stone, which drew blood from his cheek. Instantly the rage of his followers redoubled, and his own fury knew no bounds. A horrible butchery followed; men, women, and children were attacked indiscriminately, and sixty were slain in the barn or in the street, while more than two hundred were grievously wounded.

p. 104

The pastor, Leonard Morel, at the first sound of alarm, knelt down in the pulpit and implored the divine aid. He was fired at; and then endeavoured to escape, but, as he approached the door, he stumbled over a dead body, and received two sabre cuts on the right shoulder and on his head. Believing himself to be mortally wounded, he exclaimed, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit, O Lord; for thou hast redeemed me." He was captured, and carried, being unable to walk, into the presence of the duke. "Minister, come this way," he said, "what emboldens thee to seduce this people?" "I am no seducer," said Morel, "but I have faithfully preached the gospel of Jesus Christ." "Does the gospel teach sedition, sirrah?" said M. de Guise, with his usual blasphemous oath; "thou hast caused the death of all these people; and thou shalt thyself be hanged immediately. Here, Provôt, make ready a gallows for him on the spot!" But even among that fierce crew none seemed willing to obey the savage mandate, and no one came forward to enact the part of hangman. This delay saved the life of the captive, who was removed under good guard, but eventually escaped.

The following year, as the blood-thirsty duke lay on his death-bed, mortally wounded by the hand of an assassin, he protested that he had neither premeditated nor commanded the massacre of Vassy. This may be true; but his consent at the moment of its perpetration is beyond question.

p. 105

An extraordinary effect was produced throughout the whole kingdom, by the tidings of this cruel slaughter. Among the Reformed party it created a universal feeling of indignant horror and alarm. It was like the war-whoop of the Indians, which precedes the rush to battle. Each party flew to arms, after putting forth manifestoes, asserting the merits of their respective causes. The Prince of Condé hastened to Orleans, which he succeeded in occupying, and there the army of

the Huguenots established their headquarters. In that town the Calvinist lords assembled, on the 11th of April, 1562, and after partaking the Lord's supper together, bound themselves in an alliance, to maintain the Edicts, and to punish those who had broken them. They took a solemn oath to repress blasphemy, violence, and whatever was forbidden by the law of God, and to set up good and faithful ministers to instruct the people; and lastly, they promised, by their hope of heaven, to fulfil their duty in this cause.

And thus the fearful work began, and tumult, massacre, battle, and siege prevailed. Every town in France was filled with the riot of contending factions. "It was a grand and frightful struggle of province against province, city with city, quarter with quarter, house with house, man with man," says a recent historian. "Fanaticism had reduced France to a land of cannibals; and the gloomiest imagination would fail to conceive of all the varieties of horrors which were then practised."

p. 106

We have to do with the town of Saintes. There were few places in which the Huguenots were so numerous, and had multiplied so rapidly, as in Saintonge. Passions were nowhere stronger; no place was more trampled by combatants; it was the scene of many of the maddest contests during the days of the religious warfare. At the invitation of the Duke de La Rochefoucault, all the Protestant leaders of the district gathered themselves together at Angoulême, and betook themselves, under his guidance, to Orleans, in order to join the Prince of Condé, who was his brother-in-law. After the departure of these forces, the various towns in that neighbourhood, Angoulême, Saintes, Pons, and others, remained indeed in the possession of the Huguenots, but without defence, nearly all the Reformers of the district, capable of bearing arms, having followed the march of De La Rochefoucault, "especially" we are told, "those of Saintes." Consequently, the town, deprived of its soldiers, presented an easy prey to the enemy, and in a short time, fell into the hands of a hostile leader, named Nogeret, who treated with harsh severity all that remained in the place, in execution of a decree from Bordeaux, by which the Reformers were abandoned, without appeal, to the mercy of any royal judge.

p. 107

Among those thus given over to the power of these miscreants, was Palissy. In few but emphatic words he has recorded the terrors of that fearful time. "Deeds so wretched were then done," he said afterward, "that I have horror in the mere remembrance. To avoid those dreadful and execrable sights, I withdrew into the secret recesses of my house, and there, by the space of two months, I had warning that hell was broke loose, and that all the spirits of the devils had come into this town of Saintes. For where, a short time before, I had heard psalms, and holy songs, and all good words of edification, now mine ears were assailed only with blasphemies, blows, menaces, and tumults, all miserable words, and lewd and detestable songs. Those of the Reformed religion had all disappeared, and our enemies went from house to house, to siege, sack, gluttonize, and laugh; jesting and making merry with all dissolute deeds and blasphemous words against God and man."

Very terrible is this truth-breathing description of the miseries of a city given over to the license of an unbridled soldiery; but the most affecting picture is that which he draws when closing his short narrative of those "evil days." "I had nothing at that time but reports of those frightful crimes that, from day to day, were committed; and of all those things, that which grieved me most within myself was, that certain little children of the town, who came daily to assemble in an open space near the spot where I was hidden (always exerting myself to produce some work of my art), dividing themselves into two parties, fought and cast stones one side against another, while they swore and blasphemed in the most execrable language that ever man could utter, so that I have, as it were, horror in recalling it. Now, that lasted a long time, while neither fathers nor mothers exercised any rule over them. Often I was seized with a desire to risk my life by going out to punish them; but I said in my heart the 79th Psalm, which begins, 'O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance.'"

p. 108

CHAPTER XI.

p. 109

"A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."—PROVERBS xvii. 17.

THE Seigneur de Burie had not spoken without sufficient cause when he warned Palissy that he had made himself enemies of certain high church dignitaries in Saintes. Those admonitions he had uttered were not forgotten by the Romish ecclesiastics, who bestirred themselves so zealously, that after the city had been in the power of the Roman Catholic party for a few weeks, violent hands were laid upon the unsuspecting potter. He had believed himself secure from actual assault within his own premises, and not without cause, since he was under the protection of a safeguard, given him by the Duke de Montmorency, which expressly forbade the authorities undertaking anything against him or his house. It was also well known by both parties that the building in which he worked for the constable had been partly erected at the expense of that nobleman, and that, on occasion of an outbreak in the city which had occurred some time before, the leaders of the Roman Catholic party had expressly forbidden any interference with Palissy or his work, through respect to his employer.

p. 110

But matters had now reached a strange height, and there seemed to be a favourable season for malice and bigotry to work their will. Palissy was arrested and imprisoned; and, as soon as he

was taken into custody, his workshop was broken into, and part of it laid open to the intrusion of the public. The magistrates, at their town meeting, actually came to a resolution to pull down the building, and would infallibly have carried their purpose into effect, had not the Seigneur de Pons and his lady immediately interfered. These tried friends of Bernard lost no time in personally remonstrating with the magistrates, from whom they, with some difficulty, obtained the promise to defer carrying out their design. To deliver him from the clutches of his enemies was not so easy a matter. His prosecutors were, in fact, no other than the dean and chapter, who, he says, were his cruel foes, and would have delivered him to death for no other cause than his free speech in the matter of their neglect of duty.

The Sire de Pons, as king's lieutenant in Saintonge, had power to control the justices of Saintes; and, consequently, the hands of his judges were tied. They were all, indeed, "one body, one soul, and one single will" with the reverend prosecutors of their prisoner, and without a shadow of doubt, had they been able to work their pleasure, he would have been put to death before appeal could have been made to the constable.

p. 111

"An awkward business is this," said the dean to one of his brethren, as they discussed the matter of the interposition of the Sire de Pons. "Plainly, we cannot carry out our intentions here; but once at Bordeaux this obstinate heretic would be given up into the hands of the parliament there, and then the interference of the king alone could save him." "There will be no satisfaction till he is silenced," was the reply; "and, without doubt, he has done ample mischief. Only think of the labourers on our farms beginning to murmur at paying tithes to those who they, forsooth, say do not deserve them. This comes of his unbridled tongue. And shall we thus be defied and brow-beaten by an insolent mechanic?" "Nay, there is no need to urge me on. If he were but in our power; . . . but the question is, how to manage the affair, and get him safely out of the jurisdiction of these people, who will certainly never be brought to consent to his condemnation. There are so many wealthy men in this neighbourhood by whom the knave is employed in decorative works, besides the buildings at Écouen, and his skill in pottery-ware has made him so much thought of, that he is safe as long as he remains within this district." "To Bordeaux, then, let him go, and that without delay. Why not this very night? In the daytime the matter would get bruited abroad, and his friends might contrive to send to the rescue; but by night, and across by-roads, he can be carried off silently and safely; and once at Bordeaux—" . . . "You say well. Measures shall be taken immediately."

p. 112

Little did our captive imagine what were the devices of those that hated him. He might easily have contrived to escape beyond their reach, had he not reckoned himself so safe that his arrest came upon him wholly unawares. It had fared ill with him at this juncture but for the watchful and affectionate care of his old friend, Victor. Through the interposition of those from whom he had learned the particulars of Hamelin's last hours, he obtained admission into the prison where Palissy was confined, and ministered to him with the solicitude of a brother. By his means, communication was carried on between the prisoner and his patrons, the Seigneurs de Burie and de Jarnac, as well as the king's lieutenant. All these gentlemen took much trouble, and made interposition with the dean and chapter, to whom they repeatedly urged that no man but Palissy could complete M. de Montmorency's work, and that the displeasure of his highness would be incurred if a person under his especial patronage were injured. We have seen that their interference did but hasten on the catastrophe, and make his doom more certain.



Victor obtained permission to enter the prison . . .

Victor's heart misgave him that evil was designed against his friend. He had seen the fearful end of the two pastors of Allevert and Gimosac, and the more recent fate of Hamelin; and the most cruel forebodings oppressed him. He was incessantly on the watch, and when obliged to leave the prison, and compelled to abandon Palissy to solitude, he could not go to his own home and rest there, but remained, pacing to and fro, in the neighbourhood of the jail; and, while thus restless and agitated, he poured out his soul in earnest entreaties for help from on high. Oh, the blessing of a true friend in the hour of adversity! How sweet a thing is heavenly charity—the brotherhood of love in Christ Jesus! It was a true word, spoken by the great lawyer, Gerbellius—"There is nothing the devil hates so cordially as sincere friendship;" and what marvel, since, as

p. 113

an old divine says, "it makes men so unlike his ill-natured self." But, as long as we enjoy prosperous days, and sail before a favouring wind, there is no test by which we can prove the strength and value of this principle. The time to know who truly loves us is the season when troubles assail us. All sorts of affliction and misery test this, and show what friendship is genuine and hearty. This is one of "the uses of adversity," as friendship is one of its sweetest alleviations.

On the afternoon of the day when Palissy's abstraction from Saintes was plotted, Victor was at his customary post beside his friend, who remained quite composed and free from anxiety on his own account. "Be not so anxious," he said, endeavouring to soothe the fears he did not share; "I am, at all events, secure from further harm, since the power is not in the hands of these judges. No thanks, indeed, to them; they fear to lose some morsel of benefice which they possess, and consequently go hand in hand with my sanguinary enemies. It is certain I can but take the blame of what has befallen me to my own account. Jesus Christ has left us a counsel, written in the 7th chapter of St. Matthew, by which he forbids us to scatter pearls before the swine, lest, turning upon us, they rend us. If I had obeyed this injunction, I should not now have been suffering, and at the mercy of those who, though they want the power, have undoubtedly the will to bring me to destruction as a malefactor."

p. 114

Just at that moment the jailer entered, desiring a man who followed him to bring in a box, which they placed in a corner of the room. "You must be going soon," said he, addressing Victor; "I have some business in hand, and must lock up doors early to-night. Your friend can stay, however," he added, casting a glance at Palissy, which seemed to the ever observant Victor to have a shade of compassion in it, "for half an hour longer if you wish it." So saying he retired, turning the key, which grated heavily and with a harsh sound in the lock. Victor would have spoken of his suspicion that something was wrong, and that mischief was designed; but Bernard interrupted him with a gesture of impatience, and presently began talking on a theme which appears to have formed the solace of his prison-house, and by which he whiled away the hours, which else had seemed so tedious to his free and active nature. He had for some time had it in his intention to publish a little book containing his observations and opinions on various matters—in short, the experience of his past years. He now recurred to this subject. "I have resolved," said he, "that my book shall treat on four subjects; to wit, agriculture, natural history, the plan of a delectable garden (to which I will append a history of the troubles in Saintonge), and lastly, the plan of a fortified town, which might serve as a city of refuge in these perilous times. Of the two former I have sketched the plan in my imagination, and the matter of the garden now fills my thought. You know well the delight I have in so great a recreation, and how I have been minded to make me such a pleasant retreat, as a place of refuge, whither I might flee from the iniquity and malice of the world to serve God with pure freedom." "Would to heaven, my beloved friend, you were safe sheltered there," said Victor, "but oh! methinks, this is but a pleasant dream." "Often, in my sleep, I have seemed to be occupied about it," said Bernard, "and it happened to me only last night, that, as I lay slumbering on my bed, my garden seemed to be already made, and I already began to eat its fruits and recreate myself therein; and it came to pass, in my night vision, that, while considering the marvellous deeds which our Sovereign Lord has commanded nature to perform, I fell upon my face, to worship and adore the Living of the living, who has made such things for man's service and use. That also gave me occasion to consider our miserable ingratitude and perverse wickedness; and the more I entered into the contemplation of these things, the more was I disposed to value the art of agriculture, and I said in myself, that men were very foolish so to despise rural places and the labours of the field, which is a thing just before God, and which our ancient fathers, men of might and prophets, were content themselves to exercise, and even to watch the flocks; and being in such ravishment of spirit—"

p. 115

p. 116

The sentence was broken short by the return of the jailer, who announced that the time he had allowed was now expired. Victor reluctantly took his leave of Palissy, and, with a heavy heart, turned to go from him. No sooner had he reached the open street than, again recurring, in his own thoughts, to what had transpired, he felt convinced that something was wrong. That compassionate glance of the stern jailer intimated, as it seemed to him, the cause of the favour he had granted, in allowing the two friends a longer interval before they were parted. "Parted!" cried Victor, his heart filled with dismay as his lips unconsciously uttered the ominous word—"parted! can it be that we are parted for ever? Lord!" he exclaimed, in a burst of feeling, "be thou his guard and his defence, as a wall of fire to keep thy servant; and in this hour of trial show that thine arm is not shortened, that it cannot save." After a short interval, he repeated, in a low tone, this verse of a hymn composed by the Protestant Gondinel, and often sung by the little persecuted church of Saintes:—

p. 117

"The time is dark, we faint with woe,
Our foes are mightier far than we;
They say, 'Their God forsakes them now,
And who shall their deliverer be?'
Lord, show thy presence—prove thy power,
And save us at the latest hour."

Continuing to pace to and fro, he remained within sight of the prison until the darkness gathered around, and the bright stars, one by one, came shining in brilliant beauty overhead. The sight of them, as he raised his prayerful eyes upwards, calmed his spirit, and he whispered gently, "He calleth them all by their names." It was a thought calculated to inspire confidence in Him who has promised to his children that they shall be graven on the palms of his hands, and who has said, "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee," and the spirit of Victor was cheered

as he pleaded the exceeding great and precious promises of divine love.

At length the hour of midnight approached, and still all around remained hushed in repose. There was nothing to justify his prognostications, nor to awaken alarm, and he had just resolved to retire, when the sound of horses tramping at a distance, caught his ear. Presently, from a side street emerged a small troop of horsemen, who moved cautiously along, and kept, as much as possible, within the deep shadows of the walls. They proceeded down the street, and drew up before the gate of the prison-house. Victor, who had hastily retired beneath an archway, watched their movements with strained eyes, and dimly saw, by the starlight, the outline of their figures as they filed along. The gate was unbarred to them without summons, and the next instant a muffled form was led out between two men, and hastily lifted on to the crupper of one of the horses behind the stalwart form of a trooper. There was not a moment to lose, for the party were evidently about to resume their march, and Victor, with ready wit, emerging from his hiding-place, reeled forward, in the manner of a drunken man, and began to sing a carol. Just as the horse with its double freight passed him, he shouted the words, "Save us at the latest hour." His stratagem succeeded, for a shrill whistle was instantly heard mingling with the ringing sound of the horses' hoofs on the stones, as they passed along the street. "It is he!" cried Victor, and, with the speed of a greyhound he darted down the nearest passage.

p. 118



Victor, who had hastily retired under an archway, watched their movements.

He knew that his errand admitted not of delay. There was but one chance that Palissy might be saved. It was an intercession with the king; and possibly the Sire de Pons, on receiving immediate information of the secret Victor had thus learned, might take timely measures to frustrate the deadly designs of Barnard's enemies.

p. 119

CHAPTER XII.

p. 120

"A good man shall be satisfied from himself."—PROVERBS xiv. 14.

PALISSY was now immured within the walls of the Bordeaux prison. While he lies there, bereft of the consolation he had hitherto enjoyed in the society of Victor, we must betake ourselves to a very different scene.

In consequence of the information he received from the Sire de Pons, the constable Montmorency determined, as the only means of averting the fate which threatened his ingenious workman, to apply himself, in person, to the queen mother, through whose influence the court might be induced to protect him. In fact, Catherine was herself virtually monarch, and a word from her would suffice. The sole redeeming quality of this woman of evil renown was, an enlightened taste for literature and the fine arts, a taste which seems to have been hereditary in her family. She enriched the royal library with many precious manuscripts of Greece and Italy, and presented to it half the volumes which her great ancestor Lorenzo de Medici had purchased of the Turks, after the taking of Constantinople. Especially she excelled in her love of the fine arts, and her taste and genius were displayed in the erection of many châteaux in various provinces, remarkable for the exactness of their proportions and their style, at a period when the French had scarcely a notion of the principles of architecture. At the present time she had just conceived the purpose of constructing a new residence for herself; and Montmorency found her, in one of the apartments assigned to her use, in the palace of the Louvre, busily engaged in looking over some manuscript plans. As the constable was announced, she raised her eyes from the table on which these designs were placed, and after receiving his salutations, begged him to be seated beside her, and pointing with her hand (the most beautiful one ever beheld, according to a contemporary historian), she smilingly requested his assistance in her choice. "Allow me, monsieur," she said, "to appeal to your judgment, for in the matter now under consideration, I could not have an adviser whose opinion I should more highly value. You are aware that the

p. 121

château des Tournelles has been destined to demolition, and I have, therefore, determined to build me a new palace, the site of which I am anxious to fix upon. The plan now before his majesty—and she glanced at her son, the poor young boy king, who sat opposite her—“appears to me to present no small advantages.” The paper to which the queen referred was the plan of a plot of ground close to the trenches of the Louvre, situated, at that time, out of Paris, and which had been purchased, some half century before, by king Francis I., as a present to his mother, Marie Louise, of Savoy. It had been originally occupied by tuileries (*i.e.*, tile-kilns), and in the old drawings which Catherine was inspecting, the spots where formerly stood the wood-yards and baking-houses used in making the bricks and tiles, were marked out. “Its situation by the river, and the large space suitable for garden ground attached to it, seem much in its favour, madame,” said the constable. “And its neighbourhood to the royal dwelling also,” said the queen, at the same time she unrolled another map, which she proceeded to examine, with the assistance of Montmorency.

p. 122

Whilst they are thus engaged we will take the opportunity to say something of the two royal personages present. Charles IX. was not yet fourteen years old, tall in stature, strongly but not gracefully built, and with a countenance of energetic expression, but fierce and unrefined. The poor lad, invested at so early an age with unbounded authority, appears to have been naturally of a violent temper, with high animal spirits. His great passion was the chase, and he also showed considerable taste for letters. But, kept in subjection to the will of his mother, and tutored by her to suspect and dissimulate, his natural character was vitiated, and he suffered himself to continue, to the time of his death, the passive instrument of her ambition and cruelty. A remarkable anecdote is told of him, which seems to prove that better things might have been expected of him, had his education been in different hands. When but a youth, having perceived that after drinking wine he was no longer master of himself, he swore never to use it again; and he kept his oath. What might not have been expected from a prince gifted with such powers of self-control, had he been judiciously trained?

p. 123

At the time of which we are speaking, the queen mother was in the decline of her beauty, though she still retained some remnants of those charms which adorned her in youth. She was clad in the black robes of her widowhood, which it was her fancy to persist in wearing long after the usual period; her hair was completely hidden beneath the angular white cap we see in the pictures of that day, and her strongly marked features were softened by the shade of a grey gauze veil. Her eyebrows were dark, and her eyes, large and brilliant, had a restless severity in their expression which inspired fear and distrust. Her complexion was olive, and her figure tall and large, her movements full of grace and majesty, while an air of command was visible in every gesture.

As she spoke now, the tones of her voice were soft and musical, for it was her wish to please; but, when angry passions agitated her bosom, they became dissonant, harsh, and startling.

“I think,” she said, in answer to an observation made by Montmorency, “the balance of advantages lies much in the favour of the first design, to which I shall, therefore, give the preference, and will immediately give directions for digging the foundations of the new palace, and it shall be named, from the site on which it is built, the Palace of the Tuileries.” “Well, madam,” said the constable, “your majesty has admirably chosen, and skilfully selected, an appropriate name for the intended royal abode.” “It occurred to my recollection,” said Catherine, “that one of the finest quarters of ancient Athens was called the Ceramic, because it occupied ground once held by extra-mural potteries.” “Speaking of potteries reminds me, madam,” said Montmorency, “of the principal object I had in seeking an interview with your majesty. Among the workmen I have employed at Écouen, there is a mechanic who evinces a surprising genius in the art of painting on glass, and who has invented an enamelled earthenware of great beauty. I know of none equal to him in skill, and, in fact, I cannot supply his place should he be sacrificed.” “You should not allow so great a treasure to slip through your hands. What danger threatens him?” “He is a Huguenot, madam,” was the reply. “No matter,” said the queen, laughing, “his heresy won’t alter the hues of his glass or pottery-ware.” “Nay; but he has fallen into the hands of Nogeret, one of the royalist leaders in Saintonge, and will infallibly be hanged or burned, and serve him right, as I should say, for a heretic knave, but that my work is incomplete, and that Master Palissy is a rare workman. Such skill, too, as he shows in designing, and in the adorning of gardens! In short, he is precisely the man whom your majesty would find invaluable in the works you have now in prospect.”

p. 124

p. 125

Queen Catherine was by no means unwilling, in so trifling a matter, to oblige the great constable; besides that, she had a taste for the patronage of clever artists, and knew too well the difficulty of procuring such a one as had been described, to turn a deaf ear to the hint thrown out by Montmorency. “Let an edict be issued, in the king’s name,” she said, “appointing this Palissy ‘workman in earth to his majesty.’ He will then, as a servant of the king, be removed from the jurisdiction of Bordeaux, and his cause can come under no other cognizance than that of the grand council.” Montmorency expressed his gratitude, and rose to depart, when the Queen carelessly remarked, “That was a blundering affair of M. de Guise at Vassy; it drove the Protestants to such extreme measures that the game of moderation was at an end.” The constable made no reply, save to shrug his shoulders; but the young king tittered the following impromptu, which history has preserved:

“François premier, prédit ce point,
Que ceux de la maison de Guise
Mettraient ses enfants en pourpoint

Et son pauvre peuple en chemise." [126]

Catherine looked disconcerted at this unexpected *jeu-de-mot* of her son, and rising somewhat hastily, stepped across the room, and taking the arm of Charles, bowed gracefully to the constable and withdrew.

p. 126

The result of this colloquy was that, in as short a time as the royal post could convey the letter of M. de Montmorency to Bordeaux, Palissy was released from the power of his enemies, and being thoroughly protected from the hostilities of the belligerents on either side, returned to Saintes, and resumed his place in the dilapidated workshop, whose broken doors bore sorrowful witness to the ravages of civil strife. Alas! it was now a very different home, for the town was half depopulated; the best of the inhabitants had fled or been slaughtered in the streets, churches had been battered, and rude hands had wrought destruction everywhere. But nothing seems to have shaken the equilibrium of his spirit, and he could say, with St. Paul, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." It is evident that he had attained to that fortitude and equanimity, that happy confidence of spirit, which so substantially realizes the truth of the divine promise—"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee;" the solid reality, this, of what the ancient sages did but dream about, and of which they sweetly sang, as in the famous ode of Horace—

p. 127

"The man of strong resolve and just design
When, for bad ends, infuriate mobs combine,
Or gleams the terror of the monarch's frown
Firm in his rock-based worth, on both looks down." [127]

Bernard was now at leisure to renew the past, and he availed himself of the opportunity to complete his little book, which we have seen so busily absorbing his thoughts when he was captive within the walls of his prison. He bethought him again of the beautiful garden, and he tells how, one day (when peace was for a season restored), as he was walking through the meadows of the town, near to the river Charente, contemplating the horrible dangers from which God had delivered him in the past time of tumult and trouble, he heard once more the sounds which had so delighted him before those evil days. "It was the voice of certain maidens, who were seated under the shade of the trees, and sang together the 104th Psalm; and, because their voice was soft, and exceedingly harmonious, it caused me to forget my first thought, and having stopped to listen, I passed through the pleasure of the voices, and entered into consideration of the sense of the said psalm; and having noted the points thereof, I was filled with admiration of the wisdom of the royal prophet, and said, 'Oh divine and admirable bounty of God! I would that we all held the works of God's hands in such reverence as he teaches us in this psalm;' and then I thought I would figure in some large picture the beautiful landscapes which are therein described; but, by-and-by, considering that pictures are of short duration, I turned my thoughts to the building of a garden, according to the design, ornament, and excellent beauty, or part thereof, which the Psalmist has depicted; and having already figured in my mind the said garden, I found that I could, in accordance with my plan, build, near thereto, a palace, or amphitheatre of refuge, that might be a holy delectation and an honourable occupation for mind and body."

p. 128

CHAPTER XIII.

p. 129

"A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps."—PROVERBS xvi. 9.

VICTOR and Bernard were now more closely united to each other in bonds of loving fellowship than ever. With thankful joy they embraced the opportunity once more given them of taking sweet counsel together, without fear of those rude alarms they had so recently experienced. They could, indeed, no longer meet with their brethren in church communion, for, alas! the members of that once flourishing flock were scattered, and the voice of their honoured pastor was hushed in death; but they two met, as of old, to unite in the sacred exercises of devotion. But few evenings passed without some words of loving intercourse, generally closed with prayer and thanksgiving.

On one of these occasions, Victor, coming in, found his friend engaged in studying the formation of a shell, which he was turning round and diligently examining. "I thought better not interrupt your cogitations the other day," said he; "you were walking like a man absent in mind, having your head bowed down, and noticing nothing around you. I passed so near in the road, I could have touched the lappets of your coat, but you saw me not."

p. 130



“Nay, I saw you not, my friend, for my spirit was engrossed because of my interest regarding the matter of some town or fortress which might serve as a place of refuge for exiled Christians. Having vainly sought among the plans and figures of architects and designers for what might assist me, I have been fain to wander among the woods and mountains, to see whether I could find some industrious animal which might give me a hint for my design; and, indeed, I saw a vast number of them, which caused me astonishment at the great industry God has given them; and I have had frequent occasion to glorify him in all his marvels; and from one and another have gained some little aid to my affairs; at the least, I have been encouraged to hope I might eventually succeed. Having employed many weeks thus, during my hours of leisure, I at length bethought me of visiting the shore and rocks of the ocean, where I perceived so many diverse kinds of dwellings and fortresses, which sundry little fish had made with their own liquor or saliva, that I began to think I might discover here what I was searching for. So I contemplated all the different sorts of fish, beginning from the least to the greatest, and I found things which made me all abashed because of the amazing goodness of divine Providence, which had bestowed such care upon these creatures. I perceived, also, that the battles and stratagems of the sea, were, without comparison, greater in the said animals than in those of the earth, and saw that the luxury of the sea was greater than that of the earth, and that, without comparison, it produced more fruit.”

p. 131

“You surprise me,” said Victor, “that you still retain this desire; for I would gladly hope and believe that there will be no need of such a thing. Consider that we have now peace, and also we hope there will shortly be liberty of preaching through all France; and not only in our own land, but throughout all the world; for it is written so in St. Matthew, chapter xxiv., where the Lord God says, that ‘the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations.’ That is what causes me to say there is no longer need to seek out cities of refuge for the Christians.”

“You have not duly considered other sayings of the New Testament,” replied Palissy, “for it is written that the children and elect of God shall be persecuted to the end, hunted, mocked, banished, and exiled. It is true St. Matthew says that the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached unto all the world; but not that it shall be received of all; only, it shall be a witness unto all; that is, to justify those who believe, and to condemn righteously the unbelieving. In consequence, it is to be concluded that the perverse and iniquitous, the avaricious and all kinds of wicked people will be at all times ready to persecute those who by straight roads shall follow the statutes and ordinances of our Lord.”

p. 132

The amiable Victor, yielding to his friend’s superior judgment, did not contest his opinion; but contented himself with asking whether he had succeeded at length in the object of his search. “I seem to myself to have done so. Look at this shell; it was given me the other day when I was at Rochelle, by a citizen there, named L’Hermitte. It is that of a purple murex; and yonder larger one on the desk is a conch. They were brought from Guinea; and are both made in the manner of a snail, with spiral lines; but that of the conch is stronger and larger than the other. Now, the result of my observation of these things is, that God has bestowed more industry upon the weak creatures than on the strong; and has given them skill to know how to make each for himself a house, constructed on such a system of geometry and architecture that never Solomon, in all his wisdom, could have made the like. Considering, therefore, this proposition, I stayed to contemplate more closely the shell of the purple murex, because I assured myself that God had given to it something more, to make compensation for its weakness; and so, having dwelt long upon these thoughts, I noticed that, in the shell of the murex, there were a number of tolerably large projections, by which it is surrounded.” “I see what you mean; they add greatly to its beauty and ornament.” “Do you think that is all? No, no, there is something more. These are so many bulwarks and defences for the fortress and refuge of the inhabitant of the shell. Now, seeing this, I resolved to take example from it, for the building of my fortified town, and I took straightway a compass, rule, and the other tools, necessary for the making of my picture.”

p. 133

Bernard then produced the plan he had drawn, which he described at length in his little book. As

a curiosity and specimen of ingenuity, this idea of his is exceedingly interesting, and it shows another of the numerous subjects on which his busy wits were exercised, and shows too, how thoroughly his love of nature governed all his other thoughts. Who, but an enthusiast in that delightful study, would have had recourse to the nests of birds, and the shells of the sea, when he wished to plan a fortress that would resist the utmost fury of a siege?

At length his book was completed and printed at Rochelle, in the year 1563, the one succeeding that of his imprisonment. He prefixed to it three letters, written after his release, addressed to the constable, to his son the marshal Montmorency, and to the queen mother. Having rendered his grateful acknowledgments to these illustrious patrons, he proceeded to relate the particulars of the ill-usage he had received, desiring that it might be understood that he was "not imprisoned as a thief or a murderer." He then went on to explain the subjects of which his work treated, and showed that they were, in themselves, worthy of attention, although not couched in learned language, "seeing," he said, "I am not Greek nor Hebrew, poet nor rhetorician, but a simple artisan, poorly enough trained in letters. Notwithstanding, these things are no less valuable than if uttered by one more eloquent. I had rather speak truth in my rustic tongue than lie in rhetoric; therefore I hope you will receive this small work with as ready a will as I have desire that it shall give you pleasure." In his address to queen Catherine, he hinted at his readiness to be employed in her service, and at his ability to assist much in her building work and gardens. Nor was it long before he had an opportunity to exercise his skill. Through the medium of his excellent friends, the Sire de Pons and his lady, he received the tidings that he had been chosen, in company with Jean Bullant, his co-worker at the château d'Écouen, to assist in the new works commenced by the queen mother. His removal to Paris would follow, as a matter of course. "Indeed," said the Sire de Pons, "it is time, Master Bernard, that you left Saintes, for many reasons. Your position here is cramped and inconvenient. Your enemies are but muzzled—not removed out of the way. Your principal patrons are great men, necessarily much in attendance upon the court; and in a remote province you can neither receive, nor execute, their commands. In Paris your advantages will be great. You will live in constant intercourse with men of genius, and your taste will be perfected by the study of the choicest works of art collected in the capital." "Your sons, too, Nicole and Mathurin, are now young men, for whom employment and patronage will be thus secured," said Madame; "and though we shall be sorry to lose you, we cannot be selfish enough to regret an event so fortunate for yourself and your family." "I had not thought," said Bernard, "to be thus distinguished. It is doubtless the good word of my lord, the constable, which has gained me this appointment. I am resolved, according to the ability I possess, to do credit to his patronage. And this I may say, that the work which I have wrought for him gives witness enough of the gift which God has been pleased to bestow on me as an artist in earth. I am, therefore, not without hope that my work may prove acceptable in that place to which his providence now calleth me." "It is our purpose to journey before long to Paris," said the Sire, "and you can, if you think fit, accompany us. The time is but short, ten days or a fortnight, at the utmost; but, I doubt not, you will be in readiness."

This friendly proposal was gratefully accepted, and, at the time appointed, Palissy bade farewell to Saintes, and, accompanied by his two sons, set off for the French capital, which was thenceforward to be his place of residence. It was with a full heart that he left the city which had been, for so many years, his home; where his children had been born, and where he had served his long apprenticeship of sorrow and trial, and eventually triumphed over all the obstacles that threatened to overwhelm him, and to blight his fond expectations. As he returned, the evening before his departure, from visiting the graves of his wife and their six little ones, while meditating, and slowly and pensively moving onward, he was overtaken by Victor, who had gone in search of him, anxious to spend the last few hours in his company. They returned together, and Victor announced to his friend a most unexpected piece of tidings. "I shall not remain here long after you have gone," he exclaimed, with unwonted energy, his pale face flushed and eager. "A kinsman of mine has this very afternoon brought me a communication which will lead to my removal hence, probably within a few months. Had you not been leaving I should have felt it a grief indeed, but now, it is well; for I could scarcely have borne your loss." "What has befallen, and where will you go?" asked Bernard, in his quick manner. "My eldest brother was killed (as you know) last year, in one of the murderous assaults upon those of our religion. He has left a young family, and his poor wife, who has never recovered the shock of his death, is now sinking rapidly. She entreats me, through the kinsman she has sent, to go back to my native place, and to undertake the care of my brother's children. They will inherit the small property which was our father's, and which would, in all probability, be soon dissipated in the hands of strangers. I have myself no family; and my wife, loving soul, will be a true mother to these poor orphans. It seems the voice of our heavenly Father, which is saying to us, 'Arise and go hence.'" "I have never heard you speak of your early days, Victor." "True; I was thinking, as I came hither, of my boyhood. Happy time, and happy household ours, where comfort and content reigned! The property on which we all subsisted was very small; but order, domestic arrangement, labour, and frugality, kept us above want. Our little garden produced nearly as many vegetables as we required, and the orchard yielded us fruits. Our quinces, apples, and pears, preserved, with the honey of our bees, were, in winter, most excellent breakfasts for us children, and the good old women, our grandmother and aunts. We were all clothed by the small flock that pastured on the neighbouring hills; my aunts spun the wool; and the hemp of the field furnished us with linen. In the evenings, by the light of our lamp, which was fed with oil from our walnut trees, the young people of the neighbourhood came to help us to dress our flax, and we, in our turn, did the same for them. The harvest of the little farm sufficed for our subsistence. Our buckwheat cakes, moistened, smoking hot, with the good butter of Mont d'Or, were a delicious treat to us. I know

not what dish we should have relished better than our turnips and chestnuts. When we sat, on a winter evening, round the fire, and saw these fine turnips roasting, and heard the water boiling in the vase where our chestnuts were cooking so sweet and nice, our mouths watered; and the grandmother, delighted with our childish pleasure, added, now and then, to the feast, a quince, whose delicious perfume, while roasting under the ashes, I still remember. Dear, kind old dame! She, with all her frugality and moderation, nevertheless made little gluttons of us boys. Ah! my friend, it is the women who begin it from our cradle, and go on fondling and humouring us to the grave. So, you see we had enough to satisfy all our wants, for, in our household, if there were little to expend, there was nothing lost, and trifling things united, made plenty. In the neighbouring forest, too, there was abundance of dead wood, of small value, and there my father was permitted to take his annual provision. Dear and honoured father! He ruled us all, in the fear of the Lord; and the crowning bliss of my life it has ever been to come before God and plead, "Thou wast my father's God; be thou also my God."

p. 138

How much longer Victor would have indulged in these fond memories, cannot be told. He was interrupted by the entrance of some neighbours who came to take leave of Palissy and his sons, and when they had departed, the hour was late. The two friends bent the knee together in prayer at the throne of heavenly grace, and commended each other to the divine protection and favour. Victor then arose and departed; but, on the threshold, he paused, and looking fixedly on his friend, his eyes filled with tears, as he grasped his hand, and said, "Yes, God is a sweet consolation." And, with these words, he turned away and was gone.

p. 139

How often, in after years, did this farewell recur to the mind of Bernard, with sweet and consolatory power!

CHAPTER XIV.

p. 140

"And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her I wondered with great admiration."—REV. xvii. 6.

THE present chapter will embrace the history of ten years in the life of Palissy—years full of terrible interest to France, during which there were two more bursts of civil war, with intervals of peace between, and followed by that event of world-wide renown in the annals of crime and blood, the massacre of St. Bartholomew. During those years Bernard was quietly and laboriously engaged, protected from harm by the patronage of the court, and probably also, having learned from experience the necessity of a prudent restraint in the utterance of his opinions.



Palissy dishes.

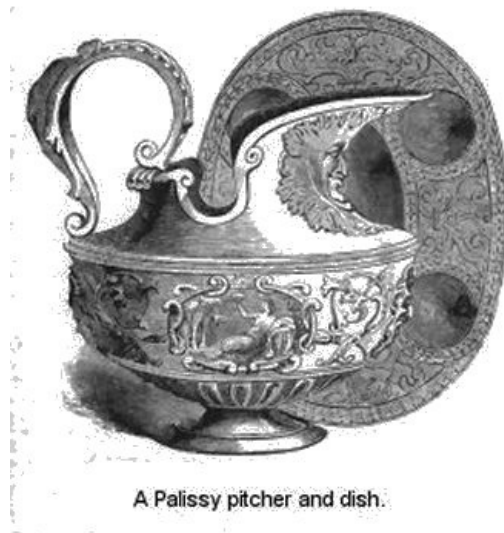
Arrived at Paris, he established his workshop in a place allotted to him in the precincts of the Tuileries, and the gardens that partly occupied the site of the new palace, and surrounded by the debris of buildings that had to be removed, and the scaffolding of workmen who were engaged about the new erections. At no great distance was the Louvre itself, then a new structure and the royal residence; and queen Catherine, attended by her courtiers, frequently went to watch the progress of the buildings, and to direct, with her admirable taste, the works of Palissy, familiarly known as "Master Bernard, of the Tuileries." There is still in existence, in the royal library at Paris, a MS., containing an account of the queen's expenditures, dated 1570, among which is a note of payment "to Bernard, Nicole, and Mathurin Palissy, sculptors in earth, for the sum of 2,600 livres, for all the works in earth, baked and enamelled, which have yet to be made to complete the *quatre pans au pourtour*, (the four parts of the circumference) of the grotto commenced by the queen, in her palace, near the Louvre at Paris, according to the agreement

p. 141

made with them."

We are told that his taste being improved by the study of the great works of Italian art, he became a more consummate artist, and produced masterpieces, far surpassing his former efforts. He found, also, much employment in garden architecture, then greatly in vogue, and for which his larger pieces, rocks, trees, animals, and even human figures, were designed. A few only of these have withstood the accidents of time, but it is known they adorned some of the sumptuous residences of the French nobles in that day, especially the château of Chaulnes, that of Nesles, in Picardy, and of Reux, in Normandy. His smaller productions, designed to ornament rooms, and to find a place in the buffets and cabinets of the wealthy, were very numerous; and such as have been preserved are highly valued, as works of art, at the present time. Statuettes, elegant groups, ewers, vases, with grotesque ornaments, plates, rustic basins, cups, tiles for the walls and floors of mansions, as well as for the stoves used on the continent; all these, and many similar articles, were made in great perfection by our skilful artist. [142] Working thus, with busy hands and inventive skill, Palissy saw the years pass by, and beheld strange scenes, far exceeding in fearful interest all he had formerly witnessed.

p. 142



He spoke from experience when he said, "If you had seen the horrible excesses of men that I have seen, during these troubles, not a hair of your head but would have trembled at the fear of falling to the mercy of men's malice; and he who has not beheld such things, could never think how great and fearful a persecution is." He had scarcely become settled in his new occupation when the "Second Troubles" broke out; and one of the first victims of the war was his great patron, the constable Montmorency. Upon the tenth of November, 1567, the battle of St. Denys was fought outside the walls of Paris, when the aged constable, at the head of his army, in fine array, with colours flying and drums beating, marched out to meet the foe. The heights of Montmartre presented, on that occasion, a strange spectacle. They were crowded with eager spectators, in the highest excitement; all the busy, restless population of the great city flocking there, to gaze upon the scene of warfare. Priests chanting litanies and distributing chaplets to the warriors, foreign ambassadors, fair ladies dressed as Amazons, some even carrying lances, which they vibrated in the air, and magistrates and doctors, wearing cuirasses beneath their robes; a motley crowd of every rank and condition huddled together, with mingled curiosity and terror, waiting the result of the fight.

p. 143

The short winter's day was closing fast when the battle commenced, and an hour of bloody strife followed. The result was fatal to the gallant old veteran, whose resolution and bravery led him to push forward into the midst of the Huguenot ranks. Five times was he wounded, yet still fought on, and then received the mortal stroke, and was left, stretched, amid the dead and dying, on the field. Still living, though suffering deadly agony, he was borne back within those walls he had left in so different a manner but a few hours before. The night was dark and rainy, his pains were grievous, and he desired to breathe his last where he lay; but those around intreated that he would suffer himself to be carried to Paris, where he died on the following day, preserving to the last a surprising fortitude and endurance.

p. 144

The court ordered a magnificent funeral for the grim old warrior, whose rugged and austere manners had rendered him so obnoxious to many, and whose religious bigotry was but too much in accordance with the spirit of his times. At his own request he was buried at his favourite estate at Écouen, where Palissy had so long wrought in his service. To Bernard he had proved a generous patron and a steady friend, and his hand had been outstretched to save him from the gallows.

Would that this had been done from a higher motive than the love of art! Then he might one day have been among the number of those to whom shall be addressed the joyful words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Happily, it is not necessary for this narrative to dwell upon the well-known story of the massacre. Its fearful horrors are but too familiar to every reader of history. Bernard escaped being an eyewitness of them, as he happened to be at the time occupied about one of those commissions to

p. 145

which we have alluded, and which had carried him to Chaulnes, where he laid out the park according to a plan resembling that he described in his "Delectable Garden."

There was one among the numerous men of science with whom Palissy associated who narrowly escaped destruction. This was Ambroise Paré, first surgeon to the king, who seems to have been a truly pious and excellent man. Having embraced the Reformed tenets, he steadily adhered to them, and despite the dangers of his situation, persisted in openly avowing his principles. As he had drawn upon himself the odium of heresy, and in addition to that, the rancorous jealousy of a host of practitioners in his art, he was a marked character; and Charles IX., who owed his life to the skill of Paré, and is said to have "loved him infinitely," took measures to secure his safety. "I will tell you, my friend," said he, describing that eventful night to Bernard, "how it fared with me, and what I saw and heard. I was in attendance upon the admiral [145] till late into the night, and was on the point of leaving him, when one of the royal hussars came, bringing a summons to me to repair immediately to the king. I obeyed, and found him in evident trepidation. As soon as he saw me, he exclaimed, 'It is well that you have come, my dear Ambroise; you must remain with me this night, and in my chamber.' So saying, he put me into his dressing room, adding, 'Be sure you don't stir from hence. It will never do to have you who can save our lives, massacred after this fashion.' My hiding place adjoined a saloon where the king remained, and to which, after midnight, the queen came, evidently for the purpose of watching over her son. Four of the principal agitators were present, all urging him to preserve his courage, while his mother endeavoured, by every means in her power, to irritate his fiercer passions, and to silence his remorse. Though I could not hear all that passed, a few words occasionally reached my ears, and the appearance of Charles, and the words he had spoken to me, sufficed to convince me that a terrible crisis was at hand. At length a single pistol-shot rang through the silence. It was dark, the morning had not yet dawned, when at that signal, through the deep silence of the night, the tocsin of St. Germain's was heard uttering its dreadful alarm. The queen and her two sons came, with stealthy tread, to the windows of the small closet through the king's chamber, which overlooked the gate of the Louvre: and there those three miserable and guilty beings, opening the window, looked out, to watch the first outbreak of the dreadful tragedy. Presently shouts were heard of 'Vive Dieu et le Roi,' and armed men, issuing from the gates, trampled along the causeway, hastening to perform their bloody work.

p. 146

p. 147

"About five in the morning, I ventured to quit the dressing room, and, eager to see what was passing, gazed from one of the windows which looked in the direction of the Fauxbourg St. Germain's, where Montgomery, Rohan, Paradaillan, and many of the Calvinist gentlemen lodged. As you know, it lies upon the opposite bank of the river from the Louvre; all had hitherto been quiet in that direction, but the sound of the tocsin, and the cries and screams which were heard across the river, had roused the Huguenots, who, suspecting some mischief, hastily prepared to cross the water and join their friends; but as they were about to embark, they saw several boats filled with Swiss and French guards, approaching, who began to fire upon them. It is said the king himself, from his closet window, was seen pointing and apparently directing their movements. They took the hint in time to save their lives by flight. They mounted their horses, and rode off at full speed." "Thanks be to God, they escaped, as a bird from the hand of the fowler. May they live to avenge the blood of the saints." "I shall never forget," continued Paré, "the scene, when the broad light of an August day displayed, in all their extent, the horrors which had been committed. The bright, glowing sun, and the unclouded sky, and magnificent beauty over-head; and at our feet, the blood-stained waters of the Seine, and the streets bestrewn with mangled corpses. It was too terrible. To crown the whole, it was the holy sabbath.

p. 148

"Towards the evening of the second day, the king called again for me. Sickened with horror and remorse, his mind and spirits were giving way. 'Ambroise,' said he, taking me into his cabinet, 'I don't know what ails me, but these last two or three days, I find both mind and body in great disorder. I see nothing around me but hideous faces, covered with blood. I wish the weak and innocent had been spared.' I seized the moment of relenting in the unhappy monarch, and urged him to put an immediate stop to the massacre, and he did, in effect, issue orders by sound of trumpet, forbidding any further violence to be committed, upon pain of death." "Alas!" said Palissy, "no hand was outstretched to save our French Phidias, Jean Goujon, the master of my comrade and co-worker, Bullant. He was struck down on his platform, while working on the Caryatides of the Louvre; with his chisel yet in his hand, he fell a corpse at the foot of the marble his genius was moulding into life." "No power could restrain the violence of the rabble. In vain were the royal commands, and useless every effort of the bourgeoisie, and the higher orders. Day after day the barbarous slaughter continued. Ah! my friend," concluded Paré, "that fatal night will form a black page in our history, which Frenchmen will vainly desire to erase, or to tear from its records."—"Feuillet de notre histoire à arracher, à brûler.")

p. 149

CHAPTER XV.

p. 150

"He spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes."—1 KINGS iv.
33.

WE learn from his own words that king Solomon, amid all his magnificence and glory, found nothing truly satisfying to his spirit. He discovered that silver and gold, and costly apparel, and

singing men and singing women, with all the luxuries of the East, sufficed not to give him happiness. They did not even keep him amused: he wanted something better. And a purer, more refined, and enduring delight was tasted by him when he turned the powers of his active and inquiring mind to the investigation of nature, the works of God's hands, in the diversified and beautiful productions of the fields, woods, and lakes of Judea. He sought them out diligently, and then he "spake of" them—spake of the richly-varied productions of the animal kingdom, and "spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes." Very interesting it must have been to hear the great Solomon speaking of these works of God's hands, and no wonder the sacred writers have recorded the fact. Most edifying of all to the thoughtful part of his audience it would be to reflect on the moral phenomenon he himself presented—taking his refreshment, his recreation, his pleasure, after the toils and disappointments of riches and of worldly honours, in considering the lilies, how they grew, and the fowls of the air, how God cared for them.

p. 151

But if Solomon found, in this pursuit, a relief from ennui and satiety, how many, in all succeeding times, have found therein support and consolation amidst inevitable anxieties and painful trials. There have been persons who declared that it was the study of nature alone which made their condition tolerable, by diverting their minds from painful and oppressive thoughts. It must have been the same experience which caused Palissy, amid the terrible scenes of his day, to retire into his cabinet, or to wander in the roadside, among the fields and caves, searching after "things note-worthy and monstrous," which he "took from the womb of the earth," and placed among his other treasures, the accumulated hoard of long years. We find him the same Bernard still—unaltered by time and change of fortune; as simple-minded, as diligent in research, and as enthusiastic in utterance as at Saintes, in the days of his youth. He had found, too, some congenial associates and friends. Among them, we have seen, was Ambroise Paré, who had a great taste for natural history, and himself possessed a collection of valuable and curious specimens, especially of foreign birds, for which he was principally indebted to Charles IX., who used to send him many of the rarest and most valuable he obtained, to preserve.

p. 152



Palissy exploring a quarry.

There was, too, one "Maistre François Choisy," physician to the queen of Navarre, a special favourite with Bernard, of whom he says—"His company and visits were a source of great consolation to me." These two went a little geological exploration together, in the year 1575. "He had heard me often speak," said Palissy, "of these matters, and knowing that he was a lover of the same, I begged him to accompany me to the quarries, near St. Marceau, that I might give him ocular proof of what I had said concerning petrifications; and he, full of zeal in the affair, immediately caused waxen flambeaux to be brought, and taking with him his medical pupil, named Milon, [152] we went to a place in the said quarries, conducted by two quarrymen; and there we saw what I had long before known, from the form of stones shaped like icicles, having seen a number of such stones, which had been brought, by command of the queen mother, from Marseilles; also among the rocks on the shores of the river Loire. Now, in those quarries we saw the distilled water congeal in our presence, which set the matter at rest." Another day, walking with his friend, he found himself, while wandering over the fields, very thirsty, and passing by some village, asked where he could meet with a good spring, in order to refresh himself; but he was told there was no spring in that place, all their wells being exhausted on account of the drought, and that there was nothing but a little muddy water left in them. This caused him "much vexation," and expressing his surprise at the distress suffered by the inhabitants of that village through want of water, he proceeded to explain to his companion his theory on springs, in which he propounded a doctrine which the science of the present day has pronounced absolutely correct. [153]

p. 153

This subject led Bernard to recur to the home of his early manhood, and he added, "At Saintes, which is a very ancient town, there are still found the remains of an aqueduct, by which, formerly, they caused the water to come from a distance of two great leagues. There are now no ancient fountains; by which I do not mean to say we have lost the water-courses, for it is well known that the ancient spring of the town of Saintes is still on the spot where it formerly existed; to see which, the chancellor De l'Hôpital, travelling from Bayonne, turned out of his way to

admire the excellence of the said spring. Now, in the neighbourhood of Saintes, is a small town called Brouage, situated on the coast amongst the marshes of Saintonge. Its name points out its nature, the word 'brou,' meaning, marshy soil. That said town has undergone two sieges during the civil wars; the last in the year 1570. When besieged, it suffered much from want of water, and I am, at the present time, preparing an advertisement to the governor and inhabitants thereof, to explain to them that the situation of the place is very commodious for making a fountain there, at small expense."

p. 154

"Your mention of this reminds me," said his companion, "of the remarkable manner in which the city of Nismes fell into the hands of the Huguenots, some four or five winters ago."

Palissy expressed a wish to hear the particulars, with which he was but imperfectly acquainted; and as the story affords a striking instance of the spirit which animated even obscure individuals in the cause of religion and freedom, it shall be told here.

The governor of Nismes, a ferocious old man, had treated the Huguenots with the utmost barbarity, and had plundered and banished great numbers of them, who had retired to a neighbouring town. Among those left in Nismes was a carpenter, named Maderon, who resolved to deliver the town into the hands of his exiled brethren, and for that purpose took advantage of the famous fountain, the abundant waters of which flowed between the gate of Carmes and the castle, through a channel which was closed by a grate. Just above, and close by the castle, a sentinel was placed, who was relieved every hour. When he was about to leave he was accustomed to ring a bell, in order to advertise the soldier who was to relieve him, to come and take his place. A short interval always elapsed between the departure of one soldier and the arrival of the other, and Maderon having observed this, undertook, in those moments, to file asunder the bars of the grate.

p. 155

He executed his purpose thus. In the evening he went down into the ditch, with a cord fastened round his body, the end of which was pulled by a friend when the soldier quitted his post, and again, when the other arrived. Maderon worked during these few moments, and then ceasing, waited in patience till another hour elapsed. In the morning he covered his work with mud and wax. In this manner did this indefatigable man work for fifteen nights, the noise he made being drowned by the rushing of the waters. It was not till his work was nearly completed that he informed the exiles of his success, and invited them to take possession of the town. They appear to have wanted courage for the undertaking; and while irresolute, a flash of lightning, though the weather was otherwise serene, terrified and put them to flight; but their minister, pulling them by their sleeves, exhorted them to come back, saying, "Courage! this lightning shows that God is with us."

Twenty of them entered the town, and being joined by others who were exasperated at the cruelty of the governor, it was taken, and the castle surrendered a few days after. "That was truly an admirable occurrence," said Bernard. "And the results were very important, since the town, by the large supplies it afforded, was of great service to the army of the princes during the ensuing spring." "There will doubtless be many historians who will employ themselves upon these matters," said Palissy; "and the better to describe the truth, I should think it wise that in each town there should be persons deputed to write faithfully the things that have been done during these troubles. I have myself already given a short narrative of what befell when I was resident in Saintonge, and I have left others to write of those things which themselves have witnessed. At present I am engaged in preparing a volume of Discourses on Natural Objects, of practical use to agriculturists and others, and I purpose, in the Lectures I have just commenced, to discuss various positions with reference to these matters, to which end, as you know, I have invited interruption, contradiction, and discussion, from those who may attend them."

p. 156

Palissy referred, in these words, to an undertaking which we find he commenced in the Lent of the year 1575, and which he carried on, for several seasons, annually. "Considering," he says, "that I had employed much time in the study of earths, stones, waters, and metals, and that old age pressed me to multiply the talents which God had given me, I thought good to bring forward to light those excellent secrets, in order to bequeath them to posterity."

p. 157

But, like a true philosopher, he was anxious, first, to subject his theories to the test of keen criticism. Free discussion was, he knew, the best friend to the true interests of science, and he resolved, therefore to invite about him the most learned persons then resident in the capital, and to meet them in his lecture room to state to them his opinions, and to hear their arguments in reply. He set about doing this in a peculiar manner, which he describes. "Thus debating in my mind, I decided to cause notices to be affixed to the street corners in Paris, in order to assemble the most learned doctors, and others, to whom I would promise to demonstrate, in three lessons, all I have learned concerning fountains, stones, metals, and other natures. And, in order that none might come but the most learned and curious, I put in my placards that none should have admission without payment of a dollar. I did this partly to see whether I could extract from my hearers some contradiction which might have more assurance of truth than the arguments I should propound; knowing well that, if I spoke falsely, there would be Greeks and Latins who would resist me to my face, and who would not spare me, as well on account of the dollar I should have taken from each, as on account of the time I should have caused them to misspend. For there were very few of my hearers who could not elsewhere have extracted profit out of something during the time spent by them at my lessons. Also, I put in my placards that if the things therein promised did not prove trustworthy, I would restore the quadruple."

p. 158

The result of this experimental course was most successful. "Thanks be to God," says the

triumphant lecturer, "never man contradicted me a single word."

Of the character of the audience whom Palissy attracted around him in his museum (as he called his cabinet of natural history), on this occasion, we are fully informed. He has given a list of more than thirty of them, including many skilful physicians, celebrated surgeons, grand seigneurs, gentlemen, and titled ecclesiastics, also some of the legal profession, and others, who were drawn together by a common love of scientific research. These were no idlers, but an assemblage of the choicest students—a sort of Royal Society, instituted for the occasion—who sat listening to the self-taught philosopher, the wise and vigorous old man, who, illustrating his cases as he went on, by specimens of the things about which he spoke, turned his cabinet into a lecture-room, where he delivered the first course of lectures upon natural history ever given in the French metropolis, held in the first natural history museum ever thrown open to the public there. Supported by the favourable opinion of such judges—than whom he could not have "more faithful witnesses, nor men more assured in knowledge," Bernard "took courage to discourse" of various matters concerning which he had attained a surprising degree of knowledge.

p. 159

The science taught by the self-educated potter was such as has entitled him, in the present day, to the admiration of men like Buffon, Haller, and Cuvier.

CHAPTER XVI.

p. 160

"Be thou faithful unto death."—REVELATION ii. 10.

"THE number of my years hath given me courage to tell you that, a short time since, I was considering the colour of my beard, which caused me to reflect on the few days which remain to me before my course shall end: and that has led me to admire the lilies and the corn, and many kinds of plants, whose green colours are changed into white when they are ready to yield their fruits. Thus, also, certain trees become hoary when they feel their natural vegetative power is about to cease. A like consideration has reminded me that it is written, 'Better is the fool who hides his folly, than the wise man who conceals his wisdom.'" We are peeping over Palissy's shoulder as he bends his silvery locks over his writing-desk, and commences the dedication of his last volume of "Admirable Discourses." Its superscription is as follows:—"To the very high and very powerful lord, the sire Antoine de Pons, knight of the order of the king, captain of a hundred gentlemen, and his majesty's very faithful counsellor." It is to his ancient patron he pays this tribute of loving respect. The good old sire was probably still more aged than himself, but his friendship had stood the test of years, and their intercourse had been renewed "in these later days," with mutual pleasure and edification; their conversation having often turned on "divers sciences; to wit, philosophy, astrology, and other arts drawn from mathematics," in which, "without any flattery," Bernard declares himself convinced of the venerable knight's marvellous ability, which "length of years had but augmented, instead of diminishing therefrom."

p. 161

It is pleasant to find Bernard thus steadfastly retaining the friendship of earlier years, but far more satisfactory to perceive that he had preserved his religion pure, and that the source whence his activity in the pursuit of knowledge was derived remained the same. At the close of a pious and laborious life, he remembered there was still something left which he might do. He had learned the wonderful secrets of nature to the glory of Him who had given him the hearing ear, and the seeing and observing eye; and now, recurring to the ruling motive of his life—that solemn idea of responsibility—he says, "It is a just and reasonable thing that the talents a man has received from God, he should endeavour to multiply, following his commandment. For which reason I have studied to bring unto the light the things of which it has pleased God to give me understanding. Having seen how many pernicious errors have been set abroad, I have betaken me to scratch in the earth for the space of forty years, and search into the entrails of the same, in order to understand the things which she produces in herself; and by such means I have found grace before God, who has caused me to understand secrets which have hitherto been unknown even to the learned."

p. 162

The book, thus dedicated and prefaced, contained the mature fruit of his studies as a naturalist. It is a collection of short treatises upon waters and fountains, metals, salts, stones, and earths, fire, enamels, and many other things, besides a treatise on marl, "very useful and necessary for those concerned in agriculture." It was published at Paris in the year 1580, when its author was more than seventy years of age.

Four years later he was still lecturing in his museum, wandering out, now and then, to the river side and elsewhere to find an illustration of some lesson he was teaching. Thus, one winter's day, he was seen standing beside the Seine, opposite the Tuileries, surrounded by a throng of listeners and objectors, among whom were several of the boatmen, who persisted in maintaining what Palissy was combatting: namely, that the floating masses of ice upon the river came from the bottom of the water. Among those who listened with interest and discernment to his instruction was the Sieur de la Croix Dumaine, who afterwards, in a volume published in 1584, described Palissy as "a natural philosopher, and a man of remarkably acute and ready wit, flourishing in Paris, and giving lessons in his science and profession."

p. 163

His was a vigorous old age, and he looked so much younger than he really was, that the Sieur

supposed him little more than sixty. He might, in all probability, have continued thus to lecture and discourse about the wonders of the earth and waters some years longer; yet, even a few months later we should have vainly sought him in his beloved museum, or on his pleasant rambles around the environs of Paris. He was no longer there, but immured within the walls of yon grim fortress—

“That shame to manhood, and opprobrious more
To France, than all her losses and defeats
Old, or of later date; by sea or land;
Her house of bondage, worse than that of old
Which God avenged on Pharaoh—the Bastile.”

Although in his lectures and in his book he had abstained from all allusion to the struggles of the times, he was well-known for a staunch Huguenot, a man whom nothing could induce to change or to conceal his religion. They were indeed “evil days” in which his lot was cast. It had been sorrow and trouble enough to live in Paris then, and behold the vice, frivolity, and riot which prevailed. True, most true it is, that “between the excesses of depravity, and those of bigotry, there exist remarkable and intimate affinities.” Nowhere was this more strikingly exemplified than in the French court and capital during the rule of the house of Valois. The religious ideas of a court in which fanatical intolerance reigned, give sufficient proof of this. The vilest and most sanguinary passions were excited by the ceremonies of religion. The sermons of “the League” preachers were like torches, which set the kingdom in a blaze. The most impious and revolting spectacles were presented to the eyes of the mob. Thus, at Chartres, after the day of barricades, a Capuchin monk in the presence of Henry III., represented the Saviour ascending Mount Calvary. This wretched priest had drops of blood apparently trickling from his crown of thorns, and seemed with difficulty to drag the cross of painted card-board which he bore; while, ever and anon, he uttered piercing cries and fell beneath the load. The king himself, utterly steeped in the vicious pleasures of the court, became a member of the brotherhood of Flagellants, and, in a solemn procession, king, queen, and cardinal, headed the white, black, and blue friars, as they traversed the city barefoot, with heads uncovered, chaplets of skulls around their waists, and flogging their backs with cords till the blood flowed. The atrocities committed within many of the churches by the soldiers of “the League,” it is impossible here to relate. Since the massacre of St. Bartholomew the mobs of Paris had become familiar with blood, and a spirit of increased ferocity prevailed. Assassinations, tortures, and executions were frequent, and the extreme Roman Catholic party, to which the city had, from that time, been heartily attached, was pledged to exterminate the Huguenots.

p. 164

p. 165

At the head of “the League” was the Duke of Guise, the hero of the violent among the Roman Catholics, whom they desired to make king, instead of the worthless and despised Henry. At length, in the year 1585, the king, finding no other way of saving himself from the imminent peril which threatened him, made peace with the duke at the expense of the Reformers, and issued a decree, prohibiting the future exercise of the Reformed worship, and commanding all its adherents to abjure, or emigrate immediately, on pain of death and confiscation. This was no miserable court quarrel; it affected the interests of all, and touched the liberty, faith, fortune, and life of every man. So rigorously was the edict carried out, that the petition of a few poor women, who begged permission to dwell with their children in any remote corner of the kingdom, was refused. The most they could obtain was a safe conduct to England. Flight was out of the question for Palissy; and he remained at the mercy of men who respected neither age, virtue, nor misfortune. That he had friends who would gladly have protected him was known; nay, the king himself would willingly have sheltered one who had so long and skilfully served his mother. But the protection of the court was now unavailing; and the venerable man was sent to the Bastile.

p. 166

Four years of life yet remained to Bernard; all spent within the walls of his prison-house. There, in communion with God and his own soul, he passed the residue of his days, shut out from the eye of man, within that gloomy fabric, the very thought of which inspires one’s soul with shrinking horror. Profound secrecy and mystery were among the most prominent features in the management of the Bastile, and he who was retained there to waste away life within its damp and dismal cells, was sedulously kept from all knowledge of what was passing in the busy world without, while no tidings of him were ever permitted to reach the ears of his kindred and former companions.

Debarred from the enjoyment of the beautiful sights of nature, the treasures of intellect, and the delights of social converse, fearful, indeed, was the lot of such a prisoner, unless sustained by divine consolations. We know not in what words our beloved Palissy would have clothed his thoughts, could he have spoken to us from his living tomb; but the following passage, contained in the narrative of one who was for some months a prisoner there, affords a pleasing example how, even in such circumstances, the soul has been sustained in hope. “I recollect,” says the narrator, “with humble gratitude, the first idea of comfort that shot across this gloom. It was the idea that neither massive walls, nor tremendous bolts, nor all the vigilance of suspicious keepers, could conceal me from the sight of God. This thought I fondly cherished, and it gave me infinite consolation in the course of my imprisonment, and principally contributed to enable me to support it with a degree of fortitude and resignation that I have since wondered at: I no longer felt myself alone.” So true it is,

p. 167

“Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;

Minds innocent and quiet take
That for a hermitage.
If I have freedom in my love,
And in myself am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty."

And Palissy was a true Christian. He was free with the freedom wherewith Jesus Christ makes his people free. Therefore, as an old and faithful servant of the Lord, he was willing, for the testimony of Christ, to suffer affliction, even unto bonds; nay, he counted not his life dear unto him, so that he might win Christ, and be found in him.

One glimpse we have within his dungeon. Its doors are, for once, unbarred, and we are permitted to look, for the last time, at him whose history we have lovingly retraced.

Sentence of death, executed upon many who had remained staunch in their refusal to obey the royal edict, had been deferred, in the case of Palissy, only by the artifice of friends in power. But now, at length, the formidable Council of Sixteen became urgent for the public execution (already too long deferred) of so obstinate a heretic.

p. 168

The king was loath to yield to these barbarous and bloodthirsty counsels, and determined to try what a personal interview might effect in bringing the recusant to a more pliant mood.

He went, accompanied by some of his gay courtiers, to visit and remonstrate with Bernard, whom he found not solitary, for his captivity was shared by two young girls, the daughters of Jacques Foucand, the attorney to the parliament, condemned, as he was, for the firm faith and resolute tenacity with which they refused to yield to the threats of their persecutors.



The King visting Palissy in his dungeon.

"My good man," said the king, addressing himself to Bernard, "for many years you have been in the service of our family, and we have suffered you to retain your religion amidst fires and massacres; but at present I find myself so pressed by the Guises and my own people, that I am compelled to give you into the hands of my enemies. These two poor women, whom I see with you, are to be burned to-morrow; and so will you, unless you be converted." "Sire," replied Bernard, "I am ready to yield up my life for the glory of God. You say you feel pity for me. It is rather I that should pity you, who utter such words as these, 'I am compelled.' This is not the language of a king, and neither yourself nor the Guises, with all your people, shall compel *me*; for I know how to die." "What an impudent rascal!" said one of the courtiers, who afterwards recorded the scene he had witnessed; "one might have supposed that he knew that line of Seneca, 'Qui mori scit, cogi nescit.'" [169]

p. 169

Two months later there were fagots blazing in the Place de Grève, and monks gesticulated around the fires which were consuming to ashes the "two poor women" of whom the king had spoken, and who had found grace to continue steadfast to the end.

But Palissy still lived. Some powerful arm had sheltered him, and he was saved from the fiery trial. A few months longer he remained captive in the bonds of his prison-house, and then the message came for him also, Thou hast been faithful unto death, "I will give thee a crown of life."

He died in the Bastile, in the year 1589.

THE END.

NOTES.

[4] "A true Recipe, whereby all the inhabitants of France may learn to multiply and augment their possessions."

[58] They occupy forty-five plates in volume vi. of the "Musée des Monuments Français."

[60] By the body of his countrymen in his own day, his teaching was disregarded, and his writings passed, after a time, into unmerited oblivion. There were, however, a few who made practical use of his suggestions; and of the application of his theory on springs a most remarkable instance is on record.

Coulange la Vineuse, in Burgundy, was a place in which there was much wine and little water. In fact, the town was entirely destitute of that necessary element. Thrice had it fallen a prey to alarming conflagrations, and great efforts had been made, though with fruitless labour and expense, to supply its natural deficiency. At length the domain of the town having come into the possession of the chancellor d'Aguesseau, he invited M. Couplet, a distinguished mathematician and hydraulicist, to consider the case, in September, 1705, the dry month of an unusually dry year. M. Couplet had studied the theory of springs as contained in the writings of Palissy, and to such good purpose did this shrewd pupil apply the knowledge he had derived from the pages of Master Bernard, that he was enabled to point out to his employer, not only on what spots to dig, but at what depth he would find water. In three months his prophecies having been fulfilled, a plenteous supply of water was brought into the town. The joy exceeded that of the most profitable vintage time; men, women, and children ran to drink; and the judge of the town, a blind man, travelled out, incredulous, to wave the waters through his hands, as a miser fingers gold. The grateful inhabitants testified their feelings by a device representing Moses bringing water from a rock encircled with vines, with the words, *Utile dulci*, and a laudatory inscription.

Mr. Morley, in his Life of Palissy (after quoting this anecdote from the quarto edition of his works), says, "Palissy has a statue somewhere I think. This, among other pictures, would look well upon its pedestal."

[77] "Die Asche will nicht lassen ab,
Sie staübt in alle Landen.
Hie hilft kein Bach, noch Loch, noch Grab."

[82] The pottery made by Palissy (of which, under the name of Palissy Ware, exquisite specimens are still existing) was very characteristic of himself. He was a naturalist, and had a keen, innate love of the beautiful. To reproduce, in his works, the bright colours and elegant forms of the plants and animals on which he had so long and so often gazed in the woods and fields was his delight, and he founded his reputation on what he called rustic pieces. The title which he took for himself was, Ouvrier de Terre, et Inventeur de Rusticities Figulines—Worker in Earth, and Inventor of Rustic Figulines (*i.e.*, small modellings). These were, in fact, accurate models from life of wild animals, reptiles, plants, and other productions of nature, tastefully introduced as ornaments upon a vase or plate. His rich fancy covered his works with elaborate adornment; but all these designs were so accurately copied from nature, in form and colour, that the species of each can be readily recognized, and there is hardly found a fancy leaf, and not one lizard, butterfly, or beetle, which does not belong to the rocks, woods, fields, rivers, and seas of France.

[93] Radiata.

[95] Sixty-three years after this time, these opinions of Palissy concerning stones were propounded, in a public disputation by three savants (one of them an inhabitant of Saintes). The faculty of theology at Paris protested against their doctrines as unscriptural. The treatises were destroyed, and the authors banished from Paris, and forbidden to live in towns or enter places of public resort. It was only the contemptuous neglect in which Palissy was held, that saved him from a similar fate.

[126] "Francis the First has plainly foretold,
That they of the household of Guise
Would clothe their children in purple and gold,
But the poor folk only in frieze."

[127] "Justum et tenacem propositi virum
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Non vultus instantis tyranni
Mente quatit solidâ, . . ."

[142] The master-pieces of Palissy adorn the private collections of the wealthy and noble continental amateurs. Mr. Marryat, in his history of pottery, says, the most extensive and complete collection of his Fayence crockery exists in the Musée Royale, in the Louvre, and in the Hôtel de Cluny; purchased since the death of its late proprietor, M. de Sommerard, by the French government. "These magnificent specimens," he says, "have been eagerly bought up, from a just appreciation of the merits of their talented and much persecuted countryman." Mr. M. gives the following description of the Fayence of Palissy. "It is characterized by a peculiar style and many singular qualities. The forms of his figures are generally chaste. The ornaments, the historical, mythological, and allegorical subjects, are in relief and coloured. The colours are generally bright, but not much varied, being usually confined to yellows, blues, and grays, though sometimes extending to green, violet, and brown. The enamel is hard, but the glaze is not so good as that of Delft, and he never succeeded in attaining the purity of the white enamel of Luca della Robbia." "At a sale at Phillip's, of Palissy ware, belonging to M. Roussel, of Paris," it is

added, "an extraordinary large vase, enriched with boys in relief, supporting flowers and fruit in festoons, with masked heads, on a fine blue ground, and snake handles, sold for £57 15s. A very curious candlestick, with perforated work and heads in relief sold for £20; equal to \$100."

[145] Coligny, who had been wounded by the dagger of an assassin only two days before.

[152] Afterwards first physician to Henry IV.

[153] It is worthy of note, that a work of great pretensions, published by French naturalists, ("The New Dictionary of Natural History, 1816-1830,") two hundred and fifty years after Palissy's demonstrations, gives an incorrect theory on this subject.

[169] "He who knows how to die cannot be compelled."

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