

## By Monseigneur Le Duc

*The first story tells of how one found means to enjoy the wife of his neighbour, whose husband he had sent away in order that he might have her the more easily, and how the husband returning from his journey, found his friend bathing with his wife. And not knowing who she was, he wished to see her, but was permitted only to see her back—, and then thought that she resembled his wife, but dared not believe it. And thereupon left and found his wife at home, she having escaped by a postern door, and related to her his suspicions.*

In the town of Valenciennes there lived formerly a notable citizen, who had been receiver of Hainault, who was renowned amongst all others for his prudence and discretion, and amongst his praiseworthy virtues, liberality was not the least, and thus it came to pass that he enjoyed the grace of princes, lords, and other persons of good estate. And this happy condition, Fortune granted and preserved to him to the end of his days.

Both before and after death unloosed him from the chains of matrimony, the good citizen mentioned in this Story, was not so badly lodged in the said town but that many a great lord would have been content and honoured to have such a lodging. His house faced several streets, in one of which was a little postern door, opposite to which lived a good comrade of his, who had a pretty wife, still young and charming.

And, as is customary, her eyes, the archers of the heart, shot so many arrows into the said citizen, that unless he found some present remedy, he felt his case was no less than mortal.

To more surely prevent such a fate, he found many and subtle manners of making the good comrade, the husband of the said quean, his private and familiar friend, so, that few of the dinners, suppers, banquets, baths, and other such amusements took place, either in the hotel or elsewhere, without his company. And of such favours his comrade was very proud, and also happy.

When our citizen, who was more cunning than a fox, had gained the good-will of his friend, little was needed to win the love of his wife, and in a few days he had worked so much and so well that the gallant lady was fain to hear his case, and to provide a suitable remedy thereto. It remained but to provide time and place; and for this she promised him that, whenever her husband lay abroad for a night, she would advise him thereof.

The wished-for day arrived when the husband told his wife that he was going to a chateau some three leagues distant from Valenciennes, and charged her to look after the house and keep within doors, because his business would not permit him to return that night.

It need not be asked if she was joyful, though she showed it not either in word, or deed, or otherwise. Her husband had not journeyed a league before the citizen knew that the opportunity had come.

He caused the baths to be brought forth, and the stoves to be heated, and pasties, tarts, and hippocras, and all the rest of God's good gifts, to be prepared largely and magnificently.

When evening came, the postern door was unlocked, and she who was expected entered thereby, and God knows if she was not kindly received. I pass over all this.

Then they ascended into a chamber, and washed in a bath, by the side of which a good supper was quickly laid and served. And God knows if they drank often and deeply. To speak of the wines and viands would be a waste of time, and, to cut the story short, there was plenty of everything. In this most happy condition passed the great part of this sweet but short night; kisses often given and often returned, until they desired nothing but to go to bed.

Whilst they were thus making good cheer, the husband returned from his journey, and knowing nothing of this adventure, knocked loudly at the door of the house. And the company that was in the ante-chamber refused him entrance until he should name his surety.

Then he gave his name loud and clear, and so his good wife and the citizen heard him and knew him. She was so amazed to hear the voice of her husband that her loyal heart almost failed her; and she would have fainted, had not the good citizen and his servants comforted her.

The good citizen being calm and well advised how to act, made haste to put her to bed, and lay close by her; and charged her well that she should lie close to him and hide her face, so that no one could see it. And that being done as quickly as may be, yet without too much haste, he ordered that

the door should be opened. Then his good comrade sprang into the room, thinking to himself that there must be some mystery, else they had not kept him out of the room. And when he saw the table laid with wines and goodly viands, also the bath finely prepared, and the citizen in a handsome bed, well curtained, with a second person by his side, God knows he spoke loudly, and praised the good cheer of his neighbour. He called him rascal, and whore-monger, and drunkard, and many other names, which made those who were in the chamber laugh long and loud; but his wife could not join in the mirth, her face being pressed to the side of her new friend.

"Ha!" said the husband, "Master whore-monger, you have well hidden from me this good cheer; but, by my faith, though I was not at the feast, you must show me the bride."

And with that, holding a candle in his hand, he drew near the bed, and would have withdrawn the coverlet, under which, in fear and silence, lay his most good and perfect wife, when the citizen and his servants prevented him; but he was not content, and would by force, in spite of them all, have laid his hand upon the bed.

But he was not master there, and could not have his will, and for good cause, and was fain to be content with a most gracious proposal which was made to him, and which was this, that he should be shown the backside of his wife, and her haunches, and thighs—which were big and white, and moreover fair and comely—without uncovering and beholding her face.

The good comrade, still holding a candle in his hand, gazed for long without saying a word; and when he did speak, it was to praise highly the great beauty of that dame, and he swore by a great oath that he had never seen anything that so much resembled the back parts of his own wife, and that were he not well sure that she was at home at that time, he would have said it was she.

She had by this somewhat recovered, and he drew back much disconcerted, but God knows that they all told him, first one and then the other, that he had judged wrongly, and spoken against the honour of his wife, and that this was some other woman, as he would afterwards see for himself.

To restore him to good humour, after they had thus abused his eyes, the citizen ordered that they should make him sit at the table, where he drowned his suspicions by eating and drinking of what was left of the supper, whilst they in the bed were robbing him of his honour.

The time came to leave, and he said good night to the citizen and his companions, and begged they would let him leave by the postern door, that he might the sooner return home. But the citizen replied that he knew not then where to find the key; he thought also that the lock was so rusted that they could not open the door, which they rarely if ever used. He was content therefore to leave by the front gate, and make a long detour to reach his house, and whilst the servants of the citizen led him to the door, the good wife was quickly on her feet, and in a short time, clad in a simple sark, with her corset on her arm, and come to the postern. She made but one bound to her house, where she awaited her husband (who came by a longer way) well-prepared as to the manner in which she should receive him.

Soon came our man, and seeing still a light in the house, knocked at the door loudly; and this good wife, who was pretending to clean the house, and had a besom in her hands, asked — what she knew well; "Who is there?"

And he replied; "It is your husband."

"My husband!" said she. "My husband is not here! He is not in the town!"

With that he knocked again, and cried, "Open the door! I am your husband."

"I know my husband well," quoth she, "and it is not his custom to return home so late at night, when he is in the town. Go away, and do not knock here at this hour."

But he knocked all the more, and called her by name once or twice. Yet she pretended not to know him, and asked why he came at that hour, but for all reply he said nothing but, "Open! Open!"

"Open!" said she. "What! are you still there you rascally whore-monger? By St. Mary, I would rather see you drown than come in here! Go! and sleep as badly as you please in the place where you came from."

Then her good husband grew angry, and thundered against the door as though he would knock the house down, and threatened to beat his wife, such was his rage,—of which she had not great fear; but at length, because of the noise he made, and that she might the better speak her mind to him, she opened the door, and when he entered, God knows whether he did not see an angry face,

and have a warm greeting. For when her tongue found words from a heart overcharged with anger and indignation, her language was as sharp as well-ground Guingant razors.

And, amongst other things, she reproached him that he had wickedly pretended a journey in order that he might try her, and that he was a coward and a recreant, unworthy to have such a wife as she was.

Our good comrade, though he had been angry, saw how wrong he had been, and restrained his wrath, and the indignation that in his heart he had conceived when he was standing outside the door was turned aside. So he said, to excuse himself, and to satisfy his wife, that he had returned from his journey because he had forgotten a letter concerning the object of his going.

Pretending not to believe him, she invented more stories, and charged him with having frequented taverns and bagnios, and other improper and dissolute resorts, and that he behaved as no respectable man should, and she cursed the hour in which she had made his acquaintance, and doubly cursed the day she became his wife.

The poor man, much grieved, seeing his wife more troubled than he liked, knew not what to say. And his suspicions being removed, he drew near her, weeping and falling upon his knees and made the following fine speech.

“My most dear companion, and most loyal wife, I beg and pray of you to remove from your heart the wrath you have conceived against me, and pardon me for all that I have done against you. I own my fault, I see my error. I have come now from a place where they made good cheer, and where, I am ashamed to say, I fancied I recognised you, at which I was much displeased. And so I wrongfully and causelessly suspected you to be other than a good woman, of which I now repent bitterly, and pray of you to forgive me, and pardon my folly.”

The good woman, seeing her husband so contrite, showed no great anger.

“What?” said she, “You have come from filthy houses of ill-fame, and you dare to think that your honest wife would be seen in such places?”

“No, no, my dear, I know you would not. For God’s sake, say no more about it.” said the good man, and repeated his aforesaid request.

She, seeing his contrition, ceased her reproaches, and little by little regained her composure, and with much ado pardoned him, after he had made a hundred thousand oaths and promises to her who had so wronged him. And from that time forth she often, without fear or regret, passed the said postern, nor were her escapades discovered by him who was most concerned. And that suffices for the first story.

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## Story the Second.

### THE MONK-DOCTOR

BY

MONSEIGNEUR.

The second story, related by Duke Philip, is of a young girl who had piles, who put out the only eye he had of a Cordelier monk who was healing her; and of the lawsuit that followed thereon.



In the chief town of England, called London, which is much resorted to by many folks, there lived, not long ago, a rich and powerful man who was a merchant and citizen, who beside his great wealth and treasures, was enriched by the possession of a fair daughter, whom God had given him over and above his substance, and who for goodness, prettiness, and gentleness, surpassed all others of her time, and who when she was fifteen was renowned for her virtue and beauty.

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God knows that many folk of good position desired and sought for her good grace by all the divers manners used by lovers,—which was no small pleasure to her father and mother, and increased their ardent and paternal affection for their beloved daughter.

But it happened that, either by the permission of God, or that Fortune willed and ordered it so, being envious and discontented at the prosperity of this beautiful girl, or of her parents, or all of them,—or may be from some secret and natural cause that I leave to doctors and philosophers to determine, that she was afflicted with an unpleasant and dangerous disease which is commonly called piles.

The worthy family was greatly troubled when they found the fawn they so dearly loved, set on by the sleuth-hounds and beagles of this unpleasant disease, which had, moreover, attacked its prey in a dangerous place. The poor girl—utterly cast down by this great misfortune,—could do naught else than weep and sigh. Her grief-stricken mother was much troubled; and her father, greatly vexed, wrung his hands, and tore his hair in his rage at this fresh misfortune.

Need I say that all the pride of that household was suddenly cast down to the ground, and in one moment converted into bitter and great grief.

The relations, friends, and neighbours of the much-enduring family came to visit and comfort the damsel; but little or nothing might they profit her, for the poor girl was more and more attacked and oppressed by that disease.

Then came a matron who had much studied that disease, and she turned and re-turned the suffering patient, this way, and that way, to her great pain and grief, God knows, and made a medicine of a hundred thousand sorts of herbs, but it was no good; the disease continued to get worse, so there was no help but to send for all the doctors of the city and round about, and for the poor girl to discover unto them her most piteous case.

There came Master Peter, Master John, Master This, Master That—as many doctors as you would, who all wished to see the patient together, and uncover that portion of her body where this cursed disease, the piles had, alas, long time concealed itself.

The poor girl, as much cast down and grieved as though she were condemned to die, would in no wise agree or permit that her affliction should be known; and would rather have died than shown such a secret place to the eyes of any man.

This obstinacy though endured not long, for her father and her mother came unto her, and remonstrated with her many times,—saying that she might be the cause of her own death, which was no small sin; and many other matters too long to relate here.

Finally, rather to obey her father and mother than from fear of death, the poor girl allowed herself to be bound and laid on a couch, head downwards, and her body so uncovered that the physicians might see clearly the seat of the disease which troubled her.

They gave orders what was to be done, and sent apothecaries with clysters, powders, ointments, and whatsoever else seemed good unto them; and she took all that they sent, in order that she might recover her health.

But all was of no avail, for no remedy that the said physicians could apply helped to heal the distressing malady from which she suffered, nor could they find aught in their books, until at last the poor girl, what with grief and pain was more dead than alive, and this grief and great weakness lasted many days.

And whilst the father and mother, relations, and neighbours sought for aught that might alleviate their daughter's sufferings, they met with an old Cordelier monk, who was blind of one eye, and who in his time had seen many things, and had dabbled much in medicine, therefore his presence was agreeable to the relations of the patient, and he having gazed at the diseased part at his leisure, boasted much that he could cure her.

You may fancy that he was most willingly heard, and that all the grief-stricken assembly, from whose hearts all joy had been banished, hoped that the result would prove as he had promised.

Then he left, and promised that he would return the next day, provided and furnished with a drug of such virtue, that it would at once remove the great pain and martyrdom which tortured and annoyed the poor patient.

The night seemed over-long, whilst waiting for the wished-for morrow; nevertheless, the long hours passed, and our worthy Cordelier kept his promise, and came to the patient at the hour appointed. You may guess that he was well and joyously received; and when the time came when he was to heal the patient, they placed her as before on a couch, with her backside covered with a fair white cloth of embroidered damask, having, where her malady was, a hole pierced in it through which the Cordelier might arrive at the said place.

He gazed at the seat of the disease, first from one side, then from the other: and anon he would touch it gently with his finger, or inspect the tube by which he meant to blow in the powder which was to heal her, or anon would step back and inspect the diseased parts, and it seemed as though he could never gaze enough.

At last he took the powder in his left hand, poured upon a small flat dish, and in the other hand the tube, which he filled with the said powder, and as he gazed most attentively and closely through the opening at the seat of the painful malady of the poor girl, she could not contain herself, seeing the strange manner in which the Cordelier gazed at her with his one eye, but a desire to burst out laughing came upon her, though she restrained herself as long as she could.

But it came to pass, alas! that the laugh thus held back was converted into a f—t, the wind of which caught the powder, so that the greater part of it was blown into the face and into the eye of the good Cordelier, who, feeling the pain, dropped quickly both plate and tube, and almost fell backwards, so much was he frightened. And when he came to himself, he quickly put his hand to his eye, complaining loudly, and saying that he was undone, and in danger to lose the only good eye he had.

Nor did he lie, for in a few days, the powder which was of a corrosive nature, destroyed and ate away his eye, so that he became, and remained, blind.

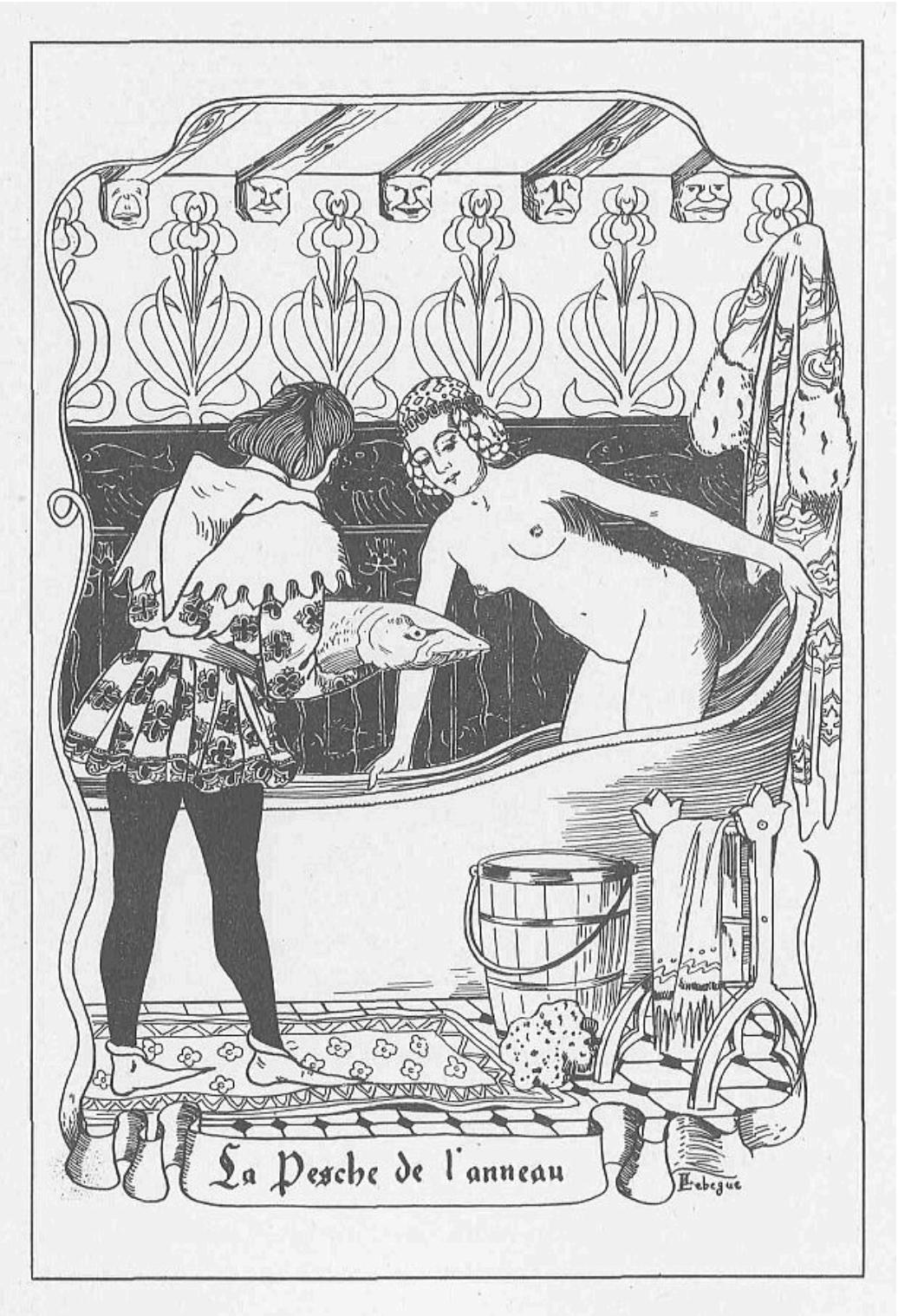
Then he caused himself to be led one day to the house where he had met with this sad mischance, and spoke to the master of the house, to whom he related his pitiful case, demanding, as was his right, that there should be granted to him such amends as his condition deserved, in order that he might live honourably.

The merchant replied that though the misadventure greatly vexed him, he was in nowise the cause of it, nor could he in any way be charged with it, but that he would, out of pity and charity, give him some money, and though the Cordelier had undertaken to cure his daughter and had not so done, would give him as much as he would if she had been restored to health, though not forced to do so.

The Cordelier was not content with this offer, but required that he should be kept for the rest of his life, seeing that the merchant's daughter had blinded him, and that in the presence of many people, and thereby he was deprived from ever again performing Mass or any of the services of the Holy Church, or studying what learned men had written concerning the Holy Scriptures, and thus could no longer serve as a preacher; which would be his destruction, for he would be a beggar and without means, save alms, and these he could no longer obtain.

But all that he could say was of no avail, and he could get no other answer than that given. So he cited the merchant before the Parliament of the said city of London, which called upon the aforesaid merchant to appear. When the day came, the Cordelier's case was stated by a lawyer well-advised as to what he should say, and God knows that many came to the Court to hear this strange trial, which much pleased the lords of the said Parliament, as much for the strangeness of the case as for the allegations and arguments of the parties debating therein, which were not only curious but amusing.

To many folk was this strange and amusing case known, and was often adjourned and left undecided by the judges, as is their custom. And so she, who before this was renowned for her beauty, goodness, and gentleness, became notorious through this cursed disease of piles, but was in the end cured, as I have been since told.





## Story the Third.

### THE SEARCH FOR THE RING

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE LA ROCHE.

Of the deceit practised by a knight on a miller's wife whom he made believe that her front-piece was loose, and fastened it many times. And the miller, informed of this, searched for a diamond that the knight's lady had lost, and found it in her body, as the knight knew afterwards: so he called the miller "fisherman", and the miller called him "fastener".



**T**N the Duchy of Burgundy lived formerly a noble knight, whose name is not mentioned in the present story, who was married to a fair and gentle lady. And near the castle of the said knight lived a miller, also married to a fair young wife.

It chanced once, that the knight, to pass the time and enjoy himself, was strolling around his castle, and by the banks of the river on which stood the house and mill of the said miller, who at that time was not at home, but at Dijon or Beaune, — he saw and remarked

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It chanced once, that the knight, to pass the time and enjoy himself, was strolling around his castle, and by the banks of the river on which stood the house and mill of the said miller, who at that time was not at home, but at Dijon or Beaune,—he saw and remarked the wife of the said miller carrying two jars and returning from the river, whither she had been to draw water.

He advanced towards her and saluted her politely, and she, being well-mannered, made him the salutation which belonged to his rank. The knight, finding that the miller's wife was very fair but had not much sense, drew near to her and said.

"Of a truth, my friend, I see well that you are in ill case, and therefore in great peril."

At these words the miller's wife replied.

"Alas, monseigneur, and what shall I do?"

"Truly, my dear, if you walk thus, your 'front piece' is in danger of falling off, and if I am not mistaken, you will not keep it much longer."

The foolish woman, on hearing these words was astonished and vexed;—astonished to think how the knight could know, without seeing, of this unlucky accident, and vexed to think of the loss of the best part of her body, and one that she used well, and her husband also.

She replied; "Alas! sir, what is this you tell me, and how do you know that my 'front piece' is in danger of falling off? It seems to keep its place well."

"There, there! my dear," replied the knight. "Let it suffice that I have told you the truth. You would not be the first to whom such a thing had happened."

"Alas, sir," said she. "I shall be an undone, dishonoured and lost woman; and what will my husband say when he hears of the mischance? He will have no more to do with me."

"Be not discomfited to that degree, my friend; it has not happened yet; besides there is a sure remedy."

When the young woman heard that there was a remedy for her complaint, her blood began to flow again, and she begged the knight for God's sake that he would teach her what she must do to keep this poor front-piece from falling off. The knight, who was always most courteous and gracious, especially towards the ladies, replied;

"My friend, as you are a good and pretty girl, and I like your husband, I will teach you how to keep your front-piece."

"Alas, sir, I thank you; and certainly you will do a most meritorious work: for it would be better to die than to live without my front-piece. And what ought I to do sir?

"My dear," he said, "to prevent your front-piece from falling off, you must have it fastened quickly and often."

"Fastened, sir? And who will do that? Whom shall I ask to do this for me?"

"I will tell you, my dear," replied the knight. "And because I warned you of this mischance being so near, and told you of the remedy necessary to obviate the inconveniences which would arise, and which I am sure would not please you,—I am content, in order to further increase the love between us, to fasten your front-piece, and put it in such a good condition that you may safely carry it anywhere, without any fear or doubt that it will ever fall off; for in this matter I am very skilful."

It need not be asked whether the miller's wife was joyful. She employed all the little sense she had to thank the knight. So they walked together, she and the knight, back to the mill, where they were no sooner arrived than the knight kindly began his task, and with a tool that he had, shortly fastened, three or four times, the front-piece of the miller's wife, who was most pleased and joyous; and after having appointed a day when he might again work at this front-piece, the knight left, and returned quickly to his castle.

On the day named, he went again to the mill, and did his best, in the way above mentioned, to fasten this front-piece; and so well did he work as time went on, that this front-piece was most safely fastened, and held firmly and well in its place.

Whilst our knight thus fastened the front-piece of the miller's wife, the miller one day returned from his business, and made good cheer, as also did his wife. And as they were talking over their affairs, this most wise wife said to her husband.

"On my word, we are much indebted to the lord of this town."

"Tell me how, and in what manner," replied the miller.

"It is quite right that I should tell you, that you may thank him, as indeed you must. The truth is that, whilst you were away, my lord passed by our house one day that I was carrying two pitchers from the river. He saluted me and I did the same to him; and as I walked away, he saw, I know not how, that my front-piece was not held properly, and was in danger of falling off. He kindly told me so, at which I was as astonished and vexed as though the end of the world had come. The good lord who saw me thus lament, took pity on me, and showed me a good remedy for this cursed disaster. And he did still more, which he would not have done for every one, for the remedy of which he told me,—which was to fasten and hold back my front-piece in order to prevent it from dropping off,—he himself applied, which was great trouble to him, and he did it many times because that my case required frequent attention.

"What more shall I say? He, has so well performed his work that we can never repay him. By my faith, he has in one day of this week fastened it three times; another day, four times; another day, twice; another day, three times; and he never left me till I was quite cured, and brought to such a condition that my front-piece now holds as well and firmly as that of any woman in our town."

The miller, on hearing this adventure, gave no outward sign of what was passing in his mind, but, as though he had been joyful, said to his wife:

"I am very glad, my dear, that my lord hath done us this service, and, God willing, when it shall be possible, I will do as much for him. But at any rate, as it is not proper it should be known, take care that you say no word of this to anyone; and also, now that you are cured, you need not trouble my lord any further in this matter."

"You have warned me," replied his wife, "not to say a word about it and that is also what my lord bade me."

Our miller, who was a good fellow, often thought over the kindness that my lord had done him, and conducted himself so wisely and carefully that the said lord never suspected that he knew how he had been deceived, and imagined that he knew nothing. But alas, his heart and all his thoughts were bent on revenge and how he could repay in like manner the deceit practised on his wife. And at length he bethought himself of a way by which he could, he imagined, repay my lord in butter for his eggs.

At last, owing to other circumstances, the knight was obliged to mount his horse and say farewell to his wife for a month; at which our miller was in no small degree pleased.

One day, the lady had a desire to bathe, and caused the bath to be brought forth and the stoves to be heated in her private apartments; of which our miller knew soon, because he learned all that went on in the house; so he took a fine pike, that he kept in the ditch near his house, and went to the castle to present it to the lady.

None of the waiting-women would he let take the fish, but said that he must present it himself to the lady, or else he would take it back home. At last, because he was well-known to the household, and a good fellow, the lady allowed him to enter whilst she was in her bath.

The miller gave his present, for which the lady thanked him, and caused it to be taken to the kitchen and cooked for supper.

Whilst he was talking, the miller perceived on the edge of the bath, a fine large diamond which she had taken from her finger, fearing lest the water should spoil it. He took it so quietly that no one saw him, and having gained his point, said good night to the lady and her women, and returned to the mill to think over his business.

The lady, who was making good cheer with her attendants, seeing that it was now very late, and supper-time, left the bath and retired to her bed. And as she was looking at her arms and hands, she

saw not the diamond, and she called her women, and asked them where was the diamond, and to whom she had given it. Each said, "It was not to me;"—"Nor to me,"—"Nor to me either."

They searched inside and outside the bath, and everywhere, but it was no good, they could not find it. The search for this diamond lasted a long time, without their finding any trace of it, which caused the lady much vexation, because it had been unfortunately lost in her chamber, and also because my lord had given it to her the day of their betrothal, and she held it very precious. They did not know whom to suspect nor whom to ask, and much sorrow prevailed in the household.

Then one of the women bethought herself, and said.

"No one entered the room but ourselves and the miller; it seems right that he should be sent for."

He was sent for, and came. The lady who was much vexed, asked the miller if he had not seen her diamond. He, being as ready to lie as another is to tell the truth, answered boldly, and asked if the lady took him for a thief? To which she replied gently;

"Certainly not, miller; it would be no theft if you had for a joke taken away my diamond."

"Madame," said the miller, "I give you my word that I know nothing about your diamond."

Then were they all much vexed, and my lady especially, so that she could not refrain from weeping tears in great abundance at the loss of this trinket. They all sorrowfully considered what was to be done. One said that it must be in the chamber, and another said that they had searched everywhere, and that it was impossible it should be there or they would have found it, as it was easily seen.

The miller asked the lady if she had it when she entered the bath; and she replied, yes.

"If it be so, certainly, madam, considering the diligence you have made in searching for it, and without finding it, the affair is very strange. Nevertheless, it seems to me that if there is any man who could give advice how it should be found, I am he, and because I would not that my secret should be discovered and known to many people, it would be expedient that I should speak to you alone."

"That is easily managed," said the lady. So her attendants left, but, as they were leaving, Dames Jehanne, Isabeau, and Katherine said,

"Ah, miller, you will be a clever man if you bring back this diamond."

"I don't say that I am over-clever," replied the miller, "but I venture to declare that if it is possible to find it I am the man to do so."

When he saw that he was alone with the lady, he told her that he believed seriously, that as she had the diamond when she entered the bath, that it must have fallen from her finger and entered her body, seeing that there was no one who could have stolen it.

And that he might hasten to find it, he made the lady get upon her bed, which she would have willingly refused if she could have done otherwise.

After he had uncovered her, he pretended to look here and there, and said,

"Certainly, madam, the diamond has entered your body."

"Do you say, miller, that you have seen it?"

"Truly, yes."

"Alas!" said she, "and how can it be got out?"

"Very easily, madam. I doubt not to succeed if it please you."

"May God help you! There is nothing that I would not do to get it again," said the lady, "or to advance you, good miller."

The miller placed the lady on the bed, much in the same position as the lord had placed *his* wife when he fastened her front-piece, and with a like tool was the search for the diamond made.

Whilst resting after the first and second search that the miller made for the diamond, the lady asked him if he had not felt it, and he said, yes, at which she was very joyful, and begged that he would seek until he had found it.

To cut matters short, the good miller did so well that he restored to the lady her beautiful diamond, which caused great joy throughout the house, and never did miller receive so much honour and advancement as the lady and her maids bestowed upon him.

The good miller, who was high in the good graces of the lady after the much-desired conclusion of his great enterprise, left the house and went home, without boasting to his wife of his recent adventure, though he was more joyful over it than though he had gained the whole world.

A short time after, thank God, the knight returned to his castle, and was kindly received and humbly welcomed by the lady, who whilst they were enjoying themselves in bed, told him of the most wonderful adventure of the diamond, and how it was fished out of her body by the miller; and, to cut matters short, related the process, fashion, and manner employed by the said miller in his search for the diamond, which hardly gave her husband much joy, but he reflected that the miller had paid him back in his own coin.

The first time he met the good miller, he saluted him coldly, and said,

“God save you! God save you, good diamond-searcher!”

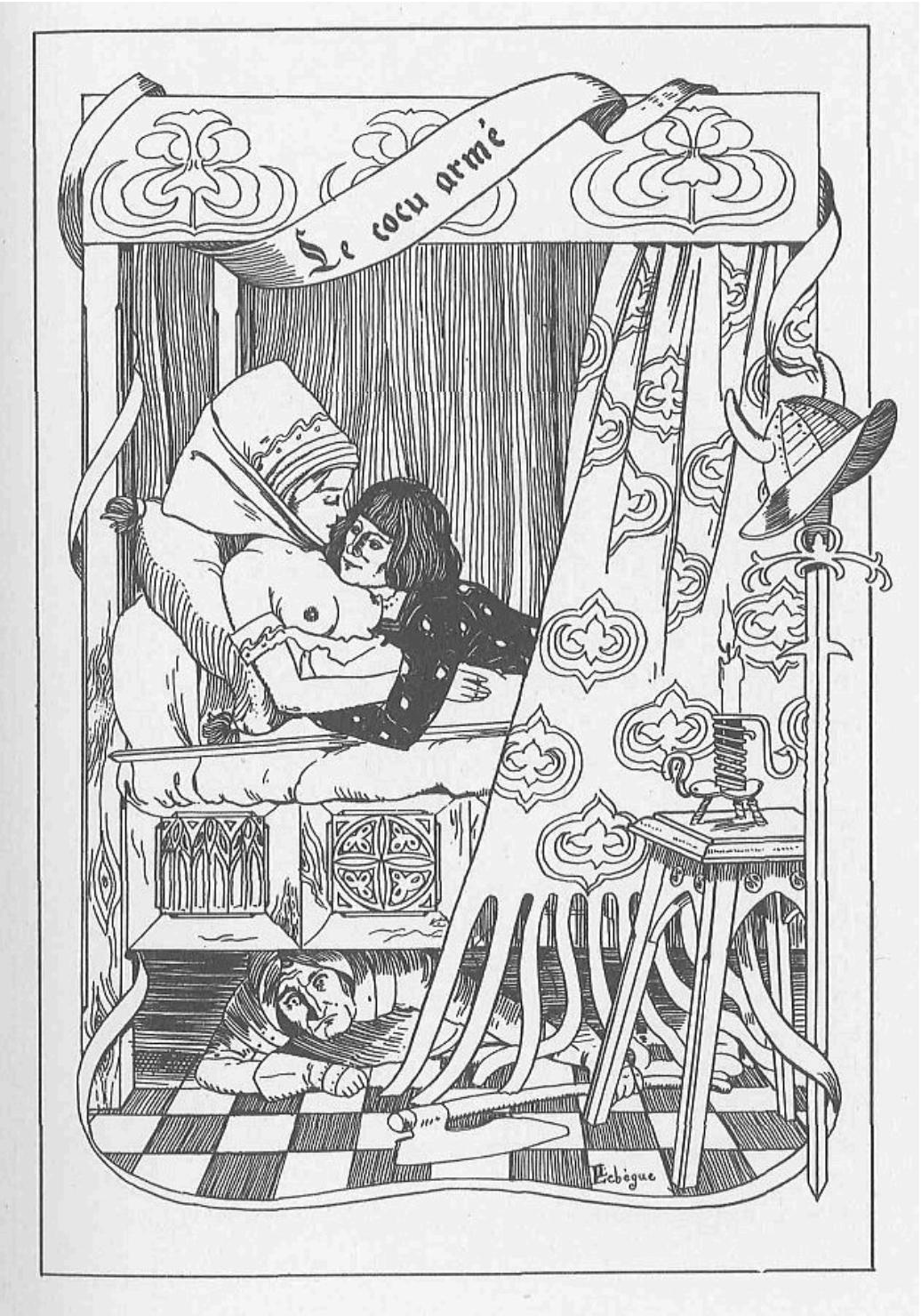
To which the good miller replied,

“God save you! God save you, fastener of front-pieces!”

“By our Lady, you speak truly,” said the knight. “Say nothing about me, and I will say nothing about you.”

The miller was satisfied, and never spoke of it again; nor did the knight either, so far as I know.

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## Story the Fourth.

### THE ARMED CUCKOLD

BY

MONSEIGNEUR.

The fourth tale is of a Scotch archer who was in love with a fair and gentle dame, the wife of a mercer, who, by her husband's orders appointed a day for the said Scot to visit her, who came and treated her as he wished, the said mercer being hid by the side of the bed, where he could see and hear all.



HEN the king was lately in the city of Tours, a Scottish gentleman, an archer of his body-guard, was greatly enamoured of a beautiful and gentle damsel married to a mercer; and when he could find time and place, related to her his sad case, but received no favourable reply,—at which he was neither content nor joyous. Nevertheless, as he was much in love, he relaxed not the pursuit, but besought her so eagerly, that the damsel, wishing to drive him away for good and all, told him that she would inform her husband of the dishonourable and damnable proposals made to her,—which at length she did.

## By Monseigneur

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The husband,—a good and wise man, honourable and valiant, as you will see presently,—was very angry to think that the Scot would dishonour him and his fair wife. And that he might avenge himself without trouble, he commanded his wife that if the Scot should accost her again, she should appoint a meeting on a certain day, and, if he were so foolish as to come, he would buy his pleasure dearly.

The good wife, to obey her husband's will, did as she was told. The poor amorous Scot, who spent his time in passing the house, soon saw the fair mercer, and when he had humbly saluted her, he besought her love so earnestly, and desired that she would listen to his final piteous prayer, and if she would, never should woman be more loyally served and obeyed if she would but grant his most humble and reasonable request.

The fair mercer, remembering the lesson that her husband had given her, finding the opportunity propitious, after many subterfuges and excuses, told the Scot that he could come to her chamber on the following evening, where he could talk to her more secretly, and she would give him what he desired.

You may guess that she was greatly thanked, and her words listened to with pleasure and obeyed by her lover, who left his lady feeling more joyous than ever he had in his life.

When the husband returned home, he was told of all the words and deeds of the Scot, and how he was to come on the morrow to the lady's chamber.

“Let him come,” said the husband. “Should he undertake such a mad business I will make him, before he leaves, see and confess the evil he has done, as an example to other daring and mad fools like him.”

The evening of the next day drew near,—much to the joy of the amorous Scot, who wished to see and enjoy the person of his lady;—and much also to the joy of the good mercer who was desiring a great vengeance to be taken on the person of the Scot who wished to replace him in the marriage bed; but not much to the taste of his fair wife, who expected that her obedience to her husband would lead to a serious fight.

All prepared themselves; the mercer put on a big, old, heavy suit of armour, donned his helmet and gauntlets, and armed himself with a battle-axe. Like a true champion, he took up his post early, and as he had no tent in which to await his enemy, placed himself behind a curtain by the side of the bed, where he was so well-hidden that he could not be perceived.

The lover, sick with desire, knowing the longed-for hour was now at hand, set out for the house of the mercer, but he did not forget to take his big, good, strong two-handed sword; and when he was within the house, the lady went up to her chamber without showing any fear, and he followed her quietly. And when he came within the room, he asked the lady if she were alone? To which she replied casually, and with some confusion, that she was.

“Tell me the truth,” said the Scot. “Is not your husband here?”

“No,” said she.

“Well! let him come! By Saint Aignan, if he should come, I would split his skull to the teeth. By God! if there were three of them I should not fear them. I should soon master them!”

After these wicked words, he drew his big, good sword, and brandished it three or four times; then laid it on the bed by his side.

With that he kissed and cuddled her, and did much more at his leisure and convenience, without the poor coward by the side of the bed, who was greatly afraid he should be killed, daring to show himself.

Our Scot, after this adventure, took leave of the lady for a while, and thanked her as he ought for her great courtesy and kindness, and went his way.

As soon as the valiant man of arms knew that the Scot was out of the house, he came out of his hiding place, so frightened that he could scarcely speak, and commenced to upbraid his wife for having let the archer do his pleasure on her. To which she replied that it was his fault, as he had made her appoint a meeting.

“I did not command you,” he said, “to let him do his will and pleasure.”

“How could I refuse him,” she replied, “seeing that he had his big sword, with which he could have killed me?”

At that moment the Scot returned, and came up the stairs to the chamber, and ran in and called out, “What is it?” Whereupon the good man, to save himself, hid under the bed for greater safety, being more frightened than ever.

The Scot served the lady as he had done before, but kept his sword always near him. After many long love-games between the Scot and the lady, the hour came when he must leave, so he said good-night and went away.

The poor martyr who was under the bed would scarcely come out, so much did he fear the return of his adversary,—or rather, I should say, his companion. At last he took courage, and by the help of his wife was, thank God, set on his feet, and if he had scolded his wife before he was this time harder upon her than ever, for she had consented, in spite of his forbidding her, to dishonour him and herself.

“Alas,” said she, “and where is the woman bold enough to oppose a man so hasty and violent as he was, when you yourself, armed and accoutred and so valiant,—and to whom he did more wrong than he did to me—did not dare to attack him, and defend me?”

“That is no answer,” he replied. “Unless you had liked, he would never have attained his purpose. You are a bad and disloyal woman.”

“And you,” said she, “are a cowardly, wicked, and most blamable man; for I am dishonoured since, through obeying you, I gave a rendezvous to the Scot. Yet you have not the courage to undertake the defence of the wife who is the guardian of your honour. For know that I would rather have died than consent to this dishonour, and God knows what grief I feel, and shall always feel as long as I live, whilst he to whom I looked for help suffered me to be dishonoured in his presence.”

He believed that she would not have allowed the Scot to tumble her if she had not taken pleasure in it, but she maintained that she was forced and could not resist, but left the resistance to him and he did not fulfil his charge. Thus they both wrangled and quarrelled, with many arguments on both sides. But at any rate, the husband was cuckolded and deceived by the Scot in the manner you have heard.

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## Story the Fifth.

### THE DUEL WITH THE BUCKLE-STRAP

BY

PHILIPPE DE LAON.

The fifth story relates two judgments of Lord Talbot. How a Frenchman was taken prisoner (though provided with a safe-conduct) by an Englishman, who said that buckle-straps were implements of war, and who was made to arm himself with buckle-straps and nothing else and meet the Frenchman who struck him with a sword in the presence of Talbot. The other story is about a man who robbed a church, and who was made to swear that he would never enter a church again.



ORD Talbot (whom may God pardon) who was, as every one knows, so victorious as leader of the English, gave in his life two judgments which were worthy of being related and held in perpetual remembrance, and in order that the said judgments should be known, I will relate them briefly in this my first story, though it is the fifth amongst the others. I will tell it thus.

### STORY THE FIFTH — THE DUEL WITH THE BUCKLE-STRAP. 5

By Philippe De Laon.

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During the time that the cursed and pestilent war prevailed between France and England, and which has not yet finished, (\*) it happened, as was often the case, that a French soldier was taken prisoner by an Englishman, and, a ransom having been fixed, he was sent under a safe-conduct, signed by Lord Talbot, to his captain, that he might procure his ransom and bring it back to his captor.

As he was on his road, he was met by another Englishman, who, seeing he was a Frenchman, asked him whence he came and whither he was going? The other told him the truth.

“Where is your safe-conduct?” asked the Englishman.

“It is not far off,” replied the Frenchman. With that he took the safe-conduct, which was in a little box hung at his belt, and handed it to the Englishman, who read it from one end to the other. And, as is customary, there was written on the safe-conduct, “Forbidden to carry any implements of warfare.”

The Englishman noted this, and saw that there were *esguillettes* on the Frenchman’s doublet. (\*\*\*) He imagined that these straps were real implements of war, so he said,

“I make you my prisoner, because you have broken your safe-conduct.”

“By my faith, I have not,” replied the Frenchman, “saving your grace. You see in what condition I am.”

“No! no!” said the Englishman. “By Saint John you have broken your safe-conduct. Surrender, or I will kill you.”

The poor Frenchman, who had only his page with him, and was quite unprovided with weapons, whilst the other was accompanied by three or four archers, did the best thing he could, and surrendered. The Englishman led him to a place near there, and put him in prison.

(\*) *It had virtually finished, and the English only retained the town of Calais when this tale was written (about 1465) but they had not relinquished their claim to the French Crown, and hostilities were expected to recommence.*

(\*\*\*) *Esguillettes were small straps or laces, used to fasten the cuirass to the doublet.*

The Frenchman, finding himself thus ill-treated, sent in great haste to his captain, who when he heard his man’s case, was greatly and marvellously astonished. Thereupon he wrote a letter to Lord Talbot, and sent it by a herald, to ask how it was that one of his men had been arrested by one of Lord Talbot’s men whilst under that general’s safe-conduct.

The said herald, being well instructed as to what he was to say and do, left his master, and presented the letters to Lord Talbot. He read them, and caused them to be read also by one of his secretaries before many knights and squires and others of his followers.

Thereupon he flew into a great rage, for he was hot-tempered and irritable, and brooked not to be disobeyed, and especially in matters of war; and to question his safe-conduct made him very angry.

To shorten the story, he caused to be brought before him both the Frenchman and the Englishman, and told the Frenchman to tell his tale.

He told how he had been taken prisoner by one of Lord Talbot’s people, and put to ransom;

“And under your safe-conduct, my lord, I was on my way to my friends to procure my ransom. I met this gentleman here, who is also one of your followers, who asked me whither I was going, and if I had a safe-conduct? I told him, yes, and showed it to him. And when he had read it he told me

that I had broken it, and I replied that I had not, and that he could not prove it. But he would not listen to me, and I was forced, if I would not be killed on the spot, to surrender. I know of no cause why he should have detained me, and I ask justice of you."

Lord Talbot, when he had heard the Frenchman, was not well content, nevertheless when the latter had finished, my Lord turned to the Englishman and asked,

"What have you to reply to this?"

"My lord," said he, "it is quite true, as he has said, that I met him and would see his safe-conduct, which when I had read from end to end, I soon perceived that he had broken and violated; otherwise I should never have arrested him."

"How had he broken it?" asked Lord Talbot. "Tell me quickly!"

"My Lord, because in his safe-conduct he is forbidden all implements of war, and he had, and has still, real implements of war; that is to say he has on his doublet, buckle-straps, which are real implements of war, for without them a man cannot be armed."

"Ah!" said Lord Talbot, "and so buckle-straps are implements of war are they? Do you know of any other way in which he had broken his safe-conduct?"

"Truly, my lord, I do not," replied the Englishman.

"What, you villain!" said Lord Talbot. "Have you stopped a gentleman under my safe-conduct for his buckle-straps? By St. George, I will show you whether they are implements of war."

Then, hot with anger and indignation, he went up to the Frenchman, and tore from his doublet the two straps, and gave them to the Englishman; then he put a sword in the Frenchman's hand, and drawing his own good sword out of the sheath, said to the Englishman,

"Defend yourself with that implement of war, as you call it, if you know how!"

Then he said to the Frenchman,

"Strike that villain who arrested you without cause or reason, and we shall see how he can defend himself with this implement of war. If you spare him, by St. George I will strike you."

Thus the Frenchman, whether he would or not, was obliged to strike at the Englishman with the sword, and the poor Englishman protected himself as best he could, and ran about the room, with Talbot after him, who made the Frenchman keep striking the other, and cried out;

"Defend yourself, villain, with your implement of war!" In truth, the Englishman was so well beaten that he was nearly dead, and cried for mercy to Talbot and the Frenchman. The latter was released from his ransom by Lord Talbot, and his horse, harness, and all his baggage, were given back to him.

Such was the first judgment of Lord Talbot; there remains to be given an account of the other, which was thus.

He learned that one of his soldiers had robbed a church of the pyx in which is placed the Corpus Domini, and sold it for ready money—I know not for how much, but the pyx was big and fine, and beautifully enamelled.

Lord Talbot, who though he was very brutal and wicked in war, had always great reverence for the Church, and would never allow a monastery or church to be set on fire or robbed, heard of this, and he was very severe on those who broke his regulations.

So he caused to be brought before him the man who had stolen the pyx from the church; and when he came, God knows what a greeting he had. Talbot would have killed him, if those around had not begged that his life might be saved. Nevertheless, as he would punish him, he said.

"Rascal traitor! why have you dared to rob a church in spite of my orders?"

"Ah, my lord," said the poor thief, "for God's sake have mercy upon me; I will never do it again."

"Come here, villain," said Talbot; and the other came up about as willingly as though he were going to the gallows. And the said Lord Talbot rushed at him, and with his fist, which was both large and heavy, struck him on the head, and cried.

"Ha! you thief! have you robbed a church?"

And the other cried,

"Mercy my lord! I will never do it again."

“Will you do it again?”

“No, my lord!”

“Swear then that you will never again enter a church of any kind. Swear, villain!”

“Very good, my lord,” said the other.

Then Talbot made the thief swear that he would never set foot in a church again, which made all who were present and who heard it, laugh, though they pitied the thief because Lord Talbot had forbidden him the church for ever, and made him swear never to enter it. Yet we may believe that he did it with a good motive and intention. Thus you have heard the two judgments of Lord Talbot, which were such as I have related to you.

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## Story the Sixth.

### THE DRUNKARD IN PARADISE

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE LANNOY.

The sixth story is of a drunkard, who would confess to the Prior of the Augustines at the Hague, and after his confession said that he was then in a holy state and would die; and believed that his head was cut off and that he was dead, and was carried away by his companions who said they were going to bury him.



N the city of The Hague in Holland, as the prior of the Augustine Monastery was one day saying his prayers on the lawn near the chapel of St. Antony, he was accosted by a great, big Dutchman who was exceedingly drunk, and who lived in a village called Schevingen, about two leagues from there.

The prior, who saw him coming from afar, guessed his condition by his heavy and uncertain step, and when they met, the drunkard saluted the prior, who returned the salute, and passed on reading his prayers, proposing neither to stop nor question him.

### STORY THE SIXTH — THE DRUNKARD IN PARADISE. [6](#)

By Monseigneur de Lannoy

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The prior, who saw him coming from afar, guessed his condition by his heavy and uncertain step, and when they met, the drunkard saluted the prior, who returned the salute, and passed on reading his prayers, proposing neither to stop nor question him.

The drunkard, being half beside himself, turned and pursued the prior, and demanded to be confessed.

“Confession!” said the prior. “Go away! Go away! You have confessed already.”

“Alas, sir,” replied the drunkard, “for God’s sake confess me. At present, I remember all my sins, and am most contrite.”

The prior, displeased to be interrupted by a drunkard, replied.

“Go your ways; you have no need of confession, for you are in a very comfortable case as it is.”

“Oh, no,” said the drunkard, “as sure as death you shall confess me, master Curé, for I am most devout,” and he seized him by the sleeve, and would have stopped him.

The priest would not listen to him, and made wonderful efforts to escape, but it was no good, for the other was obstinate in his desire to confess, which the priest would not hear.

The devotion of the drunkard increased more and more, and when he saw that the priest still refused to hear his sins, he put his hand on his big knife and drew it from its sheath, and told the priest he would kill him, if he did not listen to his confession.

The priest, being afraid of a knife in such dangerous hands, did not know what to do, so he asked the other,

“What is is you want?”

“I wish to confess,” said he.

“Very well; I will hear you,” said the priest. “Come here.”

Our drunkard,—being more tipsy than a thrush in a vineyard,—began, so please you, his devout confession,—over which I pass, for the priest never revealed it, but you may guess it was both novel and curious.

The priest cut short the wearisome utterances of the drunkard, and gave him absolution, and, to get rid of him, said;

“Go away now; you have made a good confession.”

“Say you so, sir?” he replied.

“Yes, truly,” said the priest, “it was a very good confession. Go, and sin no more!”

“Then, since I have well confessed and received absolution, if I were to die now, should I go to paradise?” asked the drunkard.

“Straight! Straight!” replied the priest. “There can be no doubt about it.”

“Since that is so,” said the drunkard, “and I am now in a holy state, I would like to die at once, in order that I may go to heaven.”

With that he took and gave his knife to the priest, begging of him to cut off his head, in order that he might go to paradise.

“Oh, no!” said the priest, much astonished. “It is not my business to do that—you must go to heaven by some other means.”

“No,” replied the drunkard, “I wish to go there now, and to die here by your hands. Come, and kill me.”

“I will not do that,” said the prior. “A priest must not kill any one.”

"You shall I swear; and if you do not at once despatch me and send me to heaven I will kill you with my own hands," and at these words he brandished his big knife before the eyes of the priest, who was terrified and alarmed.

At last, having thought the matter over,—that he might get rid of this drunkard, who was becoming more and more aggressive, and perchance might have taken his life, he seized the knife, and said;

"Well! since you wish to die by my hands in order that you may go to paradise,—kneel down before me."

The words were hardly uttered before the drunkard fell flat, and with some trouble raised himself to his knees, and with his hands joined together, awaited the blow of the sword which was to kill him.

The priest gave the drunkard a heavy blow with the back of the knife, which felled him to the ground, where he lay, and would not get up, believing himself to be in paradise.

Then the priest left, not forgetting for his own safety to take the knife with him, and ere he had gone far he met a waggon full of people some of whom had been along with the drunkard that day, to whom he recounted all the story—begging that they would raise him and convey him home; he also gave them the knife.

They promised to take charge of him, and the priest went away. They had hardly started on their way, when they perceived the good toper, lying as though dead, with his face to the ground; and when they were nigh to him, they all with one voice shouted his name,—but, shout as they would, he made no reply. Then they cried out again, but it was no use.

Then some of them descended from the waggon, and they took him by the head, and the feet, and the legs, and raised him from the ground, and so shook him that he opened his eyes and said,

"Leave me alone! Leave me alone! I am dead!"

"No, you are not," said his companions. "You must come along with us."

"I will not," said the drunkard. "Where should I go? I am dead, and already in heaven."

"You must come," said the others. "We will get some drink."

"Drink?" said the other. "I shall never drink again; I am dead;" and for all that his comrades could say or do, they could not get it out of his head but that he was dead.

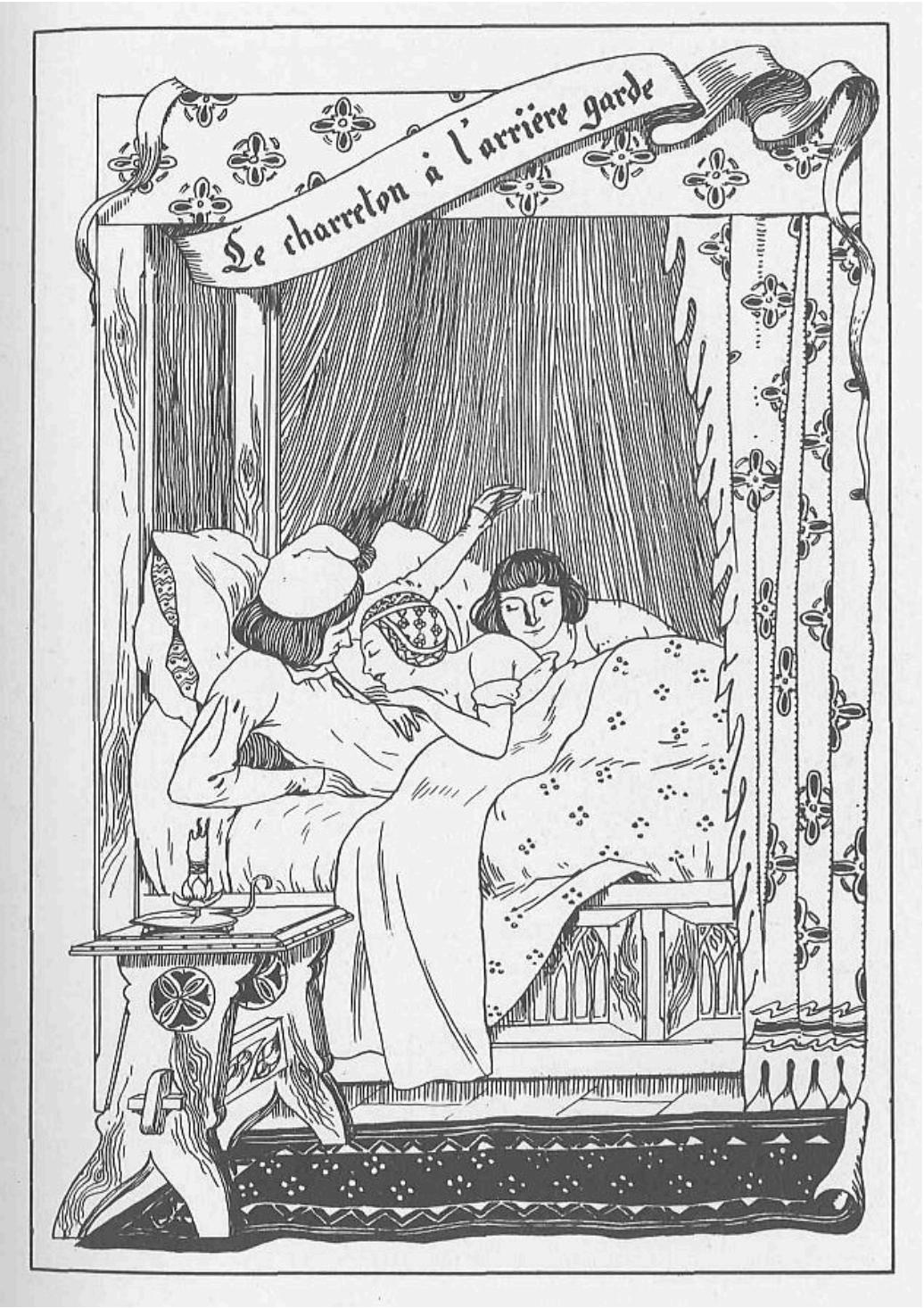
The dispute lasted long, and they could not persuade the drunkard to accompany them; for to all that they said he always replied, "I am dead".

At last one of them bethought himself, and said,

"Then since you are dead, you must not lie here and be buried like a beast of the field. Come! come along with us, and we will carry you in our waggon to the grave-yard of our town as befits a Christian. Otherwise you will not go to heaven."

When the drunkard heard that he must be buried in order that he might go to heaven, he was satisfied to obey, so he was soon tucked up in the waggon, where he was quickly asleep. The waggon was drawn by good cattle, and they were speedily at Schevingen, where the good drunkard was put down in front of his house. His wife and servants were called, and the body given to them, for he slept so soundly that he was carried from the waggon to the house and put in his bed without ever waking, and being laid between the sheets, at last woke up two days later.

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## Story the Seventh.

### THE WAGGONER IN THE REAR

BY

MONSEIGNEUR.

Of a goldsmith of Paris who made a waggoner sleep with him and his wife, and how the waggoner dallied with her from behind, which the goldsmith perceived and discovered, and of the words which he spake to the waggoner.



goldsmith of Paris, once, in order to complete some of his wares in time for the fair of Lendit, laid in a large stock of willow charcoal.

It happened one day amongst others, that the waggoner who delivered this charcoal, knowing that the goldsmith was in great haste, brought two waggons more than he had on any previous day, but hardly had he entered Paris with the last load than the city gates were shut on his heels. Nevertheless, he was well received by the goldsmith, and after the charcoal was unloaded, and the horses stabled, they all supped at their leisure, and made great cheer, and drank heavily. Just as the meal finished the clock struck midnight, which astonished them greatly, so quickly had the time passed at supper.

**STORY THE SEVENTH — THE  
WAGGONER IN THE BEAR.**

## By Monseigneur

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Each one thanked God, and being heavy-eyed, only asked to go to bed, but as it was so late, the goldsmith detained the waggoner, fearing that he might meet the watch, who would have put him into the Châtelet had they found him at that hour of the night.

At that time the goldsmith had many persons working for him, and he was obliged to make the waggoner lie with him and his wife, and, not being of a suspicious nature, he made his wife lie between him and the waggoner.

He had great trouble to arrange this, for the good waggoner refused his hospitality, and would rather have slept in the barn or stable, but he was obliged to obey the goldsmith. And after he had undressed, he got into bed, in which already were the goldsmith and his wife, as I have already said.

The wife feeling the waggoner approach her, moved nearer her husband, both on account of the cold and the smallness of the bed, and, instead of a pillow, placed her head upon her husband's breast, whilst her backside rested on the waggoner's knees.

Our goldsmith soon went to sleep, and his wife pretended to also, and the waggoner, being tired from his work, did the same. But as the stallion grows hot as soon as he approaches the mare, so did this stallion lift up his head on feeling so near to him the aforesaid woman.

It was not within the power of the waggoner to refrain from attacking her closely; and this lasted for some time without the woman waking, or at least pretending to wake. Nor would the husband have awaked, had it not been that the head of his wife reclined on his breast, and owing to the assault of this stallion, gave him such a bump that he quickly woke.

He thought at first that his wife was dreaming, but as her dream continued, and he heard the waggoner moving about and breathing hard, he gently put down his hand, and found what ravage the stallion of the waggoner was making in his warren;—at which, as he loved his wife, he was not well content. He soon made the waggoner with draw, and said to him,

“What are you doing, you wicked rascal? You must be mad to attack my wife in that way. Don’t do it again! Morbleu! I declare to you that if she had woke just now when your machine was pushing her, I don’t know what she would have done; but I feel certain, as I know her well, that she would have scratched your face, and torn out your eyes with her nails. You don’t know what she will do when she loses her temper, and there is nothing in the world which puts her out more. Take it away, I beg, for your own sake.”

The waggoner, in a few words, declared that it was unintentional, and, as day was breaking, he rose and took his leave and went away with his cart.

You may fancy that the good woman on whom the waggoner made this attempt was displeased in another way than her husband fancied; and afterwards it was said that the waggoner met her in the proper way: but I would not believe it or credit the report.



## Story the Eighth.

### TIT FOR TAT

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE LA ROCHE.

Of a youth of Picardy who lived at Brussels, and made his master's daughter pregnant, and for that cause left and came back to Picardy to be married. And soon after his departure the girl's mother perceived the condition of her daughter, and the girl confessed in what state she was; so her mother sent her to the Picardian to tell him that he must undo that which he had done. And how his new bride refused then to sleep with him, and of the story she told him, whereupon he immediately left her, and returned to his first love, and married her.



In the city of Brussels, where a good many adventures have happened in our time, there lived not long ago a young man of Picardy, who served his master well and faithfully for a long period. And amongst other services which he did the said master was this; that by his civil speech, bearing, and courtesy he so gained the graces of his master's daughter, that he

## STORY THE EIGHTH — TIT FOR TAT. 8

By Monseigneur de la Roche

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The youth, knowing the lady was in that condition, was not such a fool as to wait until his master should perceive and know it. So he quickly asked leave to absent himself for a few days,—albeit he had no intention to return—pretending that he must go to Picardy to see his father and mother, and some others of his relations.

Then he took farewell of his master and mistress, and had a most piteous leave-taking with the daughter; to whom he promised quickly to return,—which he did not, and for good cause.

When he was in Picardy, at the house of his father, his master's daughter grew so big with child that her sad condition could no longer be concealed; amongst others, her worthy mother, who was experienced in such matters, was the first to notice it. She took her daughter on one side, and asked her how she came to be in that condition, and who was the cause of it. The girl had to be much pressed and scolded before she would say anything, but at last was forced to confess her sad condition, and own that it was the Picardian, who, a short while before, had been servant to her father, who had seduced her, and left her in that pitiful case.

Her mother was furious, and abused her till she could say no more, which the poor girl bore so patiently and without saying a word, that it was enough to excuse her for letting herself be put in the family-way by the Picardian.

But alas! her patient endurance had no effect upon her mother, who said;

“Go away! go away! disgraceful hussy! and do your best to find the man who made you pregnant, and tell him to undo that which he has done! Never come back to me till he has undone the wrong he has done you.”

The poor girl, who was in the condition you have heard, was crushed and overcome by the wrath of her cruel mother, and set out in search of the young man who had ruined her; and you may well imagine, had to endure much trouble and pain before she could hear any news of him.

But at last, as God so willed it, after much wandering about through Picardy, she came, one Sunday, to a large village in the county of Artois, and she came most opportunely, for on that day her friend, the Picardian who had deceived her, was to be married, at which she was very joyful. And she cared so little about obeying her mother, that, big as she was, she pressed amongst the crowd, and when she saw her lover, she saluted him. He, when he saw her, blushed, and returned her salutation, and said to her;

“You are very welcome! What brings you here at this time, my dear?”

“My mother,” she replied, “sent me to you, and God knows that you have caused me much upbraiding. She charged and commanded me that I should tell you that you must undo that which you have done, or, if you do not, I am never to go back to her.”

The other, when he heard this, to get rid of her as soon as he could, spoke as follows.

“My dear, I will willingly do that which you ask and your mother requires me to do, for it is very reasonable, but at this moment I cannot be seen talking to you. I beg of you to have patience for to-day, and to-morrow I will attend to your request.”

With that she was content, and then he caused her to be taken and put in a fair chamber, and commanded that she should be well-treated, as she deserved to be, after the great trouble and difficulty she had had in seeking him out.

Now you must know that the bride had kept her eyes open, and when she saw her husband talking to a woman big with child, she had misgivings, and was by no means satisfied, but much troubled and vexed in mind.

She nursed her wrath, and said nothing until her husband came to bed. And when he would have cuddled and kissed her, and done his proper duty as a husband, and so earned his “caudle”, (\*)

she turned herself first on one side and then on the other, so that he could not attain his purpose, at which he was greatly astonished and angry, and said to her,

(\*) *It was the custom in the Middle Ages to bring in the middle of the wedding night, a caudle of hot milk, soup, or spiced wine to the married couple.*

“Why do you do that, my dear?”

“I have good cause,” she replied, “for I see from your acts that you do not care for me. There are many others you like better than me.”

“By my faith,” said he, “there is no woman in the world I love better than you.”

“Ah!” she said, “did I not see you after dinner holding discourse for a long time with a woman who was in the room! I saw you only too plainly, and you cannot excuse yourself.”

“By our Lady,” he replied, “you have no cause to be jealous about her,” and with that he told her that it was the daughter of his master at Brussels, and how he had lain with her and made her pregnant, and on that account he had left the place; and how also after his departure, she became so big with child that it was perceived, and then she had confessed to her mother who had seduced her, and her mother had sent her to him that he might undo that which he had done, or else she must never return home.

When the young man had finished his story, his wife who had been struck by one portion of it, said;

“What? Do you say that she told her mother you had slept with her?”

“Yes,” he said; “she made it all known to her.”

“On my word!” she replied, “then she proved herself very stupid. The waggoner at our house slept with me more than forty nights, but you don’t suppose that I breathed a word of that to my mother. I took good care to say nothing.”

“Truly,” quoth he, “the devil takes care that the gibbet is not cheated. (\*\*) Go back to your waggoner if you like; for I care nothing for you.”

(\*\*) *In other words, we are punished for our ill-deeds.*

Thereupon he arose and went to the woman he had seduced, and left the other one; and when the morning came and this news was noised abroad, God knows that it amused many and displeased many others, especially the father and mother of the bride.

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## Story the Ninth.

### THE HUSBAND PANDAR TO HIS OWN WIFE

BY

MONSIEUR.

Of a knight of Burgundy, who was marvellously amorous of one of his wife's waiting-women, and thinking to sleep with her, slept with his wife who was in the bed of the said tire-woman. And how he caused, by his order, another knight, his neighbour, to sleep with the said woman, believing that it was really the tire-woman—and afterwards he was not well pleased, albeit that the lady knew nothing, and was not aware. I believe, that she had had to do with aught other than her own husband.



N order to properly continue these stories, the incidents of which happen in divers places and under various circumstances, there should not be omitted the tale of a gentle knight of Burgundy, who lived in a castle of his own that was fair and strong, and well provided with retainers and artillery, as his condition required.

**STORY THE NINTH — THE HUSBAND  
PANDAR TO HIS OWN WIFE. 9**

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He fell in love with a fair damsel of his household, who was chief tire-woman to his wife, and his great affection for her took such hold upon him that he could not be happy without her, and was always conversing with her and beseeching her, and, in short, life seemed no good without her, so filled with love of her was he.

The girl, being chaste and prudent, wished to keep her honour, which she valued as she did her own soul, and would not betray the duty she owed to her mistress, and therefore she lent no ear to her master when he importuned her. And whenever he spoke to her, God knows what a rebuff he met, and how she remonstrated with him as to his boldness and ill-conduct. Moreover, she told him that if he continued she would inform her mistress.

But, in spite of her threats, he would not abandon the enterprise, but pursued her more and more, so that at last the girl was forced to tell her mistress.

The lady being informed of her lord's love affair, though she did not show it, was not well pleased; but she devised a plan, which was this.

She charged the girl that the next time the knight solicited her, that she should lay aside all reserve, and inform him that on the following night she would expect him in her chamber and in her bed; "And if he should accept the rendezvous," added the lady; "I will take your place; and leave the rest to me."

The girl was pleased to obey her mistress, as was her duty, and promised she would do as she was bid.

It was not long before my lord again returned to the charge, and prayed her more warmly than before, saying that if she did not grant his prayer, he would rather die than live longer in this hopeless passion.

What need is there of a long story? The girl, being thoroughly well-instructed by her mistress, appointed an hour at which he should come to her the next night, at which he was so well-pleased that his heart leapt for joy, and he promised himself that he would not fail to be there.

The desired day arrived, but in the evening, a gentle knight, a neighbour of my lord and his great friend, came to see him, for whom my lord made, as he well knew how, great cheer; as did my lady also, and the rest of the household were not behind-hand, knowing that to be the good pleasure of my lord and my lady.

After much feasting and a supper and a banquet, it was time to retire to rest, and having said good-night to the lady and her women, the two knights began to talk over various matters, and, amongst other things, the visitor asked my lord if there were any pretty women with shoulder-knots in the village, (\*) for the weather being fine, and having made good cheer, he had a desire for a woman.

(\*) In some towns of the south of France, in the Middle Ages, the courtesans used to wear a knot of coloured ribbon on the shoulder.

My lord, on account of the great love he bore his friend, would hide nothing from him, and told him how he had that night agreed to sleep with the tire-woman; and that he might do his friend

pleasure, when he had been with her a certain time, he would, he said, rise gently, and go away, and let the visitor do the rest.

The visitor thanked his host, and God knows that the hour seemed long in coming. At last the host took leave of his guest, and went to his room, as was his custom, to undress.

Now you must know that whilst the knights were talking, my lady went to the bed in which my lord expected to find the tiring-maid, and there she awaited whatever God might be pleased to send her.

My lord was a long time undressing, to give time to his wife to go to sleep. He then dismissed his valet, and in his long dressing-gown went to where his lady awaited him,—he thinking to find some-one else,—and silently undressed and got into bed.

And as the candle was put out, and the lady uttered no word, he believed he was with the woman. Hardly had he got into bed before he began to perform his duty, and so well did he acquit himself, that three, even four, times did not content him; whereat his wife felt great pleasure, and thinking that that was all, fell asleep.

My lord, now much lighter than when he came, seeing that the lady slept, and remembering his promise, rose quietly and went to his friend, who was awaiting orders to go into action, and told him to take his place, but that he must not speak a word, and must come away when he had done all that he wished.

The other, as wide-awake as a rat, and straining at the leash like a greyhound,—went, and lay down by the lady without her knowing of it. And though he felt assured that my lord had already worked well, and he was in haste, he did better, at which my lady was in no small degree astonished, and after this amusement—which was not distasteful to her—she again fell asleep.

Then the good knight left her, and returned to my lord, who again resumed his place by my lady's side as before, and made a fresh attack upon her—so well did the exercise please him.

Thus the hours passed,—either in sleeping or doing something else,—until day broke; and as he turned round in bed, expecting to behold the tire-woman, he saw and knew that it was his wife, who thereupon said to him.

“Are you not a recreant, cowardly, and wicked whoremonger? You thought to have had my tire-woman, and it is upon me that you have so many times essayed your unbridled and measureless lust. Thank God you have been deceived, for no one else shall ever have that which belongs to me.”

The good knight was both astonished and angry, and no wonder. And when he spoke at last, he said.

“My dear, I cannot hide from you my folly, and I greatly grieve ever to have undertaken such an enterprise. I beg of you to be satisfied with what you have done, and never mention it for never in all my life shall it occur again. That I promise you on my honour; and that you may never have occasion to be reminded of it, I will send away the woman who has played this trick upon me.”

The lady, who was more satisfied with this adventure than her woman, and seeing how contrite her husband was, allowed herself to be gained-over, but not without making some remonstrances and scoldings.

In the end, all was arranged satisfactorily, but the knight, who had a flea in his ear, as soon as he rose, went to his companion, to whom he related the adventure at full length, and demanded from him two promises; the first was that he should strictly promise to say nothing of the matter, and the second that he should never meet his wife again.

The other, who was much vexed at this unfortunate affair, comforted the knight as best he could, and promised to perform his very reasonable requests; then mounted his horse and rode off. The tire-woman, who was not to blame for the *contretemps*, bore the punishment however, and was sent away. The knight and the lady lived long together without her ever being aware that she had had to do with a strange knight.

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## Story the Tenth.

### THE EEL PASTIES

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE LA ROCHE.

Of a knight of England, who, after he was married, wished his mignon to procure him some pretty girls, as he did before; which the mignon would not do, saying that one wife sufficed; but the said knight brought him back to obedience by causing eel pasties to be always served to him, both at dinner and at supper.



ANY wonderful and curious adventures have occurred in England, though their recital would be out of place amongst these tales.

Nevertheless, the present story is appropriate to be told here to increase the number of these tales, and is of a great lord of the kingdom of England, who was very rich and powerful, and who, amongst all his servitors, had especial trust, confidence, and affection in a young gentleman of his household, and that for various reasons. And because of his loyalty, diligence, cunning, and prudence, and other good qualities he found in him, he hid from him nothing concerning his love-affairs.

### STORY THE TENTH — THE EEL PASTIES. 10

By Monseigneur de la Roche

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As time went on, the said young gentleman, by his cleverness, grew so much in his master's favour, that he not only knew his master's love-affairs, but acted as emissary and go-between on every occasion, as long as his master was unmarried.

But a certain time after that, it happened that by the advice of his relatives, friends, and well-wishers, my lord was married to a beautiful, noble, good, and rich lady, much to the joy of many persons; and amongst other our *mignon* was not the least joyful, as he said to himself that the marriage would be to his master's welfare and honour, and would cause him he hoped to cease from those pleasures of love which he had hitherto practised.

One day he told the lord how glad he was that he had married a fair and good lady, for now he would not need to have women sought for him as before. To which my lord replied that nevertheless he did not intend to abandon all his love-affairs, and although he was married would sometimes employ the young man's services.

The youth was not pleased to hear this, and replied that such amours should cease now that his love was shared by a lady who excelled all others in beauty, prudence, and goodness.

"Do as you please, my lord," said he, "but, for my part, I will never carry a message to any woman if it is to prejudice my mistress."

"I know not what you mean by prejudice," said his master, "but you must prepare to go to such and such ladies. For I would have you know that your duties will be as they were before."

"Oh, my lord," said the youth, "it seems that you take a pleasure in abusing women, which is not right; for you know well that all those you have named are not to be compared in beauty or other respects to my lady, to whom you are offering a deadly insult if she should ever hear of your misconduct. And what is more, you cannot be ignorant that in so doing you damn your own soul."

"Cease your preaching," said my lord, "and do as I command."

"Pardon me, my lord," said the youth. "I would rather die than, through my means, trouble should arise between you and my lady; and I beg of you to be satisfied with me as I am, for certainly I will no more act as I once used."

My lord, who saw how obstinate the young man was, pressed him no more at that time. But three or four days after that, without alluding to the conversation they had had, he demanded of the young man, amongst other things, what dish he preferred, and he replied that no dish pleased him so much as eel pasties.

"By St. John, it is a good dish," said his master; "you have not chosen badly."

That being said, my lord retired, and caused to be sent to him his major-domo, whom he charged by his obedience that he should serve to the young man nothing but eel pasties, whatsoever he might say or do; and the major-domo promised to perform his commands, which he did, for on the same day, as the said youth was seated at table in his chamber, his servant brought unto him many fair and large eel pasties which had been delivered to him from the kitchen,—at which he was pleased, and ate his fill.

On the morrow it was the same, and the five or six following days he was brought like pasties, of which he was already weary. So the youth asked of his servants why they brought him nothing but these pasties?

"By my faith, sir," they replied, "they will give us nothing else. We see very well that they send to the hall and elsewhere, other meats; but for you there is nothing but pasties."

The young man, being wise and prudent, and caring little for his stomach, made no complaint, and several days passed; during which he was still served with these everlasting pies, at which he was not best pleased.

One day he determined to go and dine with the stewards, where he was served as before with eel pasties. And when he saw that, he could not help asking why they served him differently to the others.

“God’s death!” quoth he, “I am so stuffed that I can eat no more. It seems to me that I see nothing but eel pies. Let me tell you there is no sense in it,—you carry the joke too far. For more than a month you have played this trick upon me. I am so worn-out that I have neither health nor strength. I do not like to be treated in this manner.”

The stewards told him that they only did as their master had bidden them, and that it was not their own doing. The young man, wearied of these pies, determined to complain to my lord, and ask him why he had caused the eel pies to be always served, and forbidden the cooks to supply any other dish.

In reply, my lord said unto him, “Did you not tell me that eel pie was the dish that you most liked in all the world?”

“By St. John, yes, my lord,” said the youth.

“Then why do you complain now,” said my lord, “since I cause you to be served with that which you like?”

“I like them,” replied the young man, “in moderation. I like exceedingly to have eel pies once, or twice, or three times, or now and then, and there is no dish I love better. But to eat it always, and nothing else beside,—by Our Lady I will not. Any man would be sick and weary. My stomach is so sick of eel pasties, that the moment I smell them I have already dined. For God’s sake, my lord, command that I be given some other food that I may recover my appetite; otherwise I am a dead man.” “Ah!” said my lord, “Yet it seems that you do not think I shall be a dead man if I content myself with the charms of my wife. By my soul, you may believe that I am as weary of them as you are of the pasties, and would as willingly have a change,—though there is none I love so much—as you desire another dish, though you like pasties best. In short, you shall eat no other food until you consent to serve me as you did before, and bring me a variety of women,—even as you would have a variety of dishes.”

The young man, when he heard this subtle comparison, was confused, and promised his master that he would do all that was desired, if he could but be quit of his pasties, and would carry messages and conduct intrigues as before. And from that time forth my lord, to spare my lady, and by the good help of his *mignon*, passed his time with fair and honest damsels, and the young man was relieved of his eel pasties, and restored to his old office.

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## Story the Eleventh.

### A SACRIFICE TO THE DEVIL

BY

MONSEIGNEUR.

Of a jealous rogue, who after many offerings made to divers saints to cure him of his jealousy, offered a candle to the devil who is usually painted under the feet of St. Michael; and of the dream that he had and what happened to him when he awoke.



cowardly, jealous old hunk (I will not say that he was a cuckold) knew not to whom to have recourse to be cured of his jealous grief and misery. To-day he would make one pilgrimage, and to-morrow another, and often would send his servants to perform his devotions and make offerings whilst he was seated in his house to look after his wife, who passed her time miserably with the most cursed husband and suspicious grumbler that ever woman married.

One day, as he thought of the many offerings that he had made or was to make to the various saints in heaven and amongst others to St. Michael, he bethought him that

### STORY THE ELEVENTH — A SACRIFICE TO THE DEVIL. 11

By Monseigneur

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One day, as he thought of the many offerings that he had made or was to make to the various saints in heaven and amongst others to St. Michael, he bethought him that he would make one to the figure that is under the feet of the said St. Michael.

With that he commanded one of his servants to light and bring a large wax candle, and offer it on his behalf. Soon it was reported to him that his orders had been obeyed.

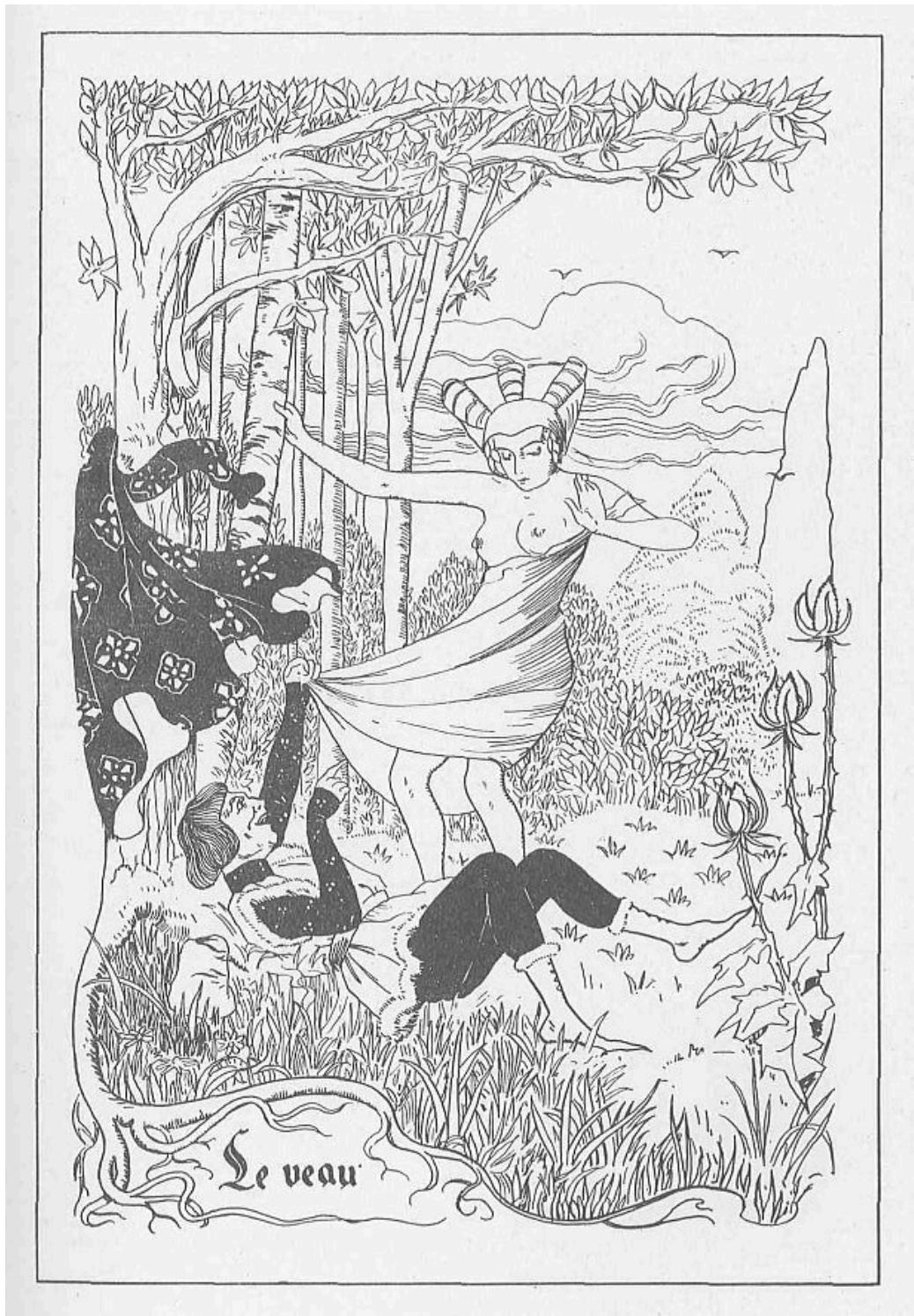
“Thus,” said he to himself, “I shall see if God or the devil can cure me,” and in his usual ill-temper he went to bed with his good and honest wife, and perhaps because he had so many fancies and whims in his head that nature was restrained, she lay in peace.

In fact he slept soundly, and when he was in the depth of his sleep, he to whom the candle had that day been offered, appeared unto him in a vision, and thanked him for his offering, declaring that such a sacrifice had never before been made to him. Moreover, he told the man that he had not lost his labour, and should obtain his request, and whilst the other lay still in deep sleep, it seemed to him that a ring was placed on his finger, and he was told that whilst that ring was on his finger he should never be jealous or have any cause for jealousy.

After the vision had vanished, our jealous hunk awoke, and expected to find on his finger the said ring, and found that one of his fingers was in the backside of his wife, at which both he and she were much astonished.

But of the rest of the life of this jealous fool, and of his business and condition, this story is silent.

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## Story the Twelfth.

### THE CALF

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE LA ROCHE.

Of a Dutchman, who at all hours of the day and night ceased not to dally with his wife in love sports; and how it chanced that he laid her down, as they were passing through a wood, under a great tree in which was a labourer who had lost his calf. And as he was enumerating the charms of his wife, and naming all the pretty things he could see, the labourer asked him if he could not see the calf he sought, to which the Dutchman replied that he thought he could see a tail.



N the borders of Holland there formerly lived a foolish fellow, who determined to do the worst thing he could—that is, get married. And so entranced was he with the joys of wedlock, that although it was winter, he was so heated that the night—which at that season was nine or ten hours—was not sufficiently long to enable him to appease the ardent desires which he felt.

**STORY THE TWELFTH — THE CALF.**

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*Of a Dutchman, who at all hours of the day and night ceased not to dally with his wife in love sports; and how it chanced that he laid her down, as they went through a wood, under a great tree in which was a labourer who had lost his calf. And as he was enumerating the charms of his wife, and naming all the pretty things he could see, the labourer asked him if he could not see the calf he sought, to which the Dutchman replied that he thought he could see a tail.*

In the borders of Holland there formerly lived a foolish fellow, who determined to do the worst thing he could—that is, get married. And so entranced was he with the joys of wedlock, that although it was winter, he was so heated that the night—which at that season was nine or ten hours—was not sufficiently long to enable him to appease the ardent desires which he felt.

Wherever he met his wife he put her on her back; whether it was in the chamber, or in the stable, or any other place, he always attacked her. And this did not last only one or two months, but longer than I care to tell, for it would not be convenient that many women should hear of the zeal of this insatiable worker. What more shall I say? He performed so often that his memory has never been forgotten, or will be, in that country. And in truth the woman who formerly complained to the Bailli of Amiens had not such good cause as this man's wife, but, notwithstanding that she could often have dispensed with this pleasant task she was always obedient to her husband, and never restive under the spur.

It chanced one day, after dinner, when the weather was very fine, and the sun shot its rays over the flower-embroidered earth, that the fancy came to this man and his wife that they two would go alone to the woods, and they started on their road.

Now, in order that you may learn my story, let me tell you that exactly at the same time as these good folk went forth to play in the wood, it chanced that a labourer had lost his calf, which he had put to graze in a field at the edge of the wood; but when he came to search for his calf he could not find it, at which he was sad at heart.

So he set out to search for the said calf both in the wood and in the fields, and the places round about, to gather news of it.

He bethought him that perchance it might have wandered into some thicket to graze, or to some grassy ditch which it would not leave till it had filled its belly; and to the end that he might the better see, without running hither and thither, whether his surmise was right, he chose the highest and thickest tree that he could find, and climbed into it, and when he had climbed to the top of his tree, from whence he could see all the adjacent fields and wood, he was sure that he was half-way towards finding his calf.

Whilst the honest fellow was casting his eyes on all sides to find his calf, there came through the wood our man and his wife, singing, playing, and rejoicing, as light hearts will do in a pleasant place. Nor was it wonderful that the desire came to him to tumble his wife in such a pleasant and suitable place, and looking now to the right now to the left for a spot where he might conveniently take his pleasure, he saw the big tree in which was the labourer—though he knew it not—and under that tree he prepared to accomplish his pleasant purposes.

And when he came to that place, his desires soon inflamed him, and he waited not to begin his work, but attacked his wife and threw her on the ground, for at that time he was very merry and his wife also.

He would fain see her both before and behind, and for that reason took off her dress, so that she was only in her petticoat, and that he pulled up very high in spite of her efforts, and that he might the better see at his ease her beauties, he turned her this way and that, and three or four times did his strong hand fall upon her big buttocks. Then he turned her on the other side, and as he had regarded her backside, so did he her front, to which the good, honest woman would in no wise consent, and besides the resistance that she made, her tongue was not idle.

She called him “ungracious”, “a fool”, “a madman”, “disgusting”, and many other things, but it was no good; he was stronger than she was, and would make an inventory of all her charms, and she was forced to let him,—preferring, like a wise woman, to please her husband, than to annoy him by a refusal.

Having broken down all her defences, this valiant man feasted his eyes on her front part, and, shame to say, was not content until his hands had revealed to his eyes all the secrets for which he searched.

And as he was profoundly studying her body, he would say, "I see this! I see that! Now again this! Now again that!" until whosoever heard him would have thought he saw all the world and much beside. And, finally, after a long and thorough examination, he cried, "Holy Mary! what a lot of things I see!"

"Alas, good people," then said the labourer in the tree; "you do not happen to see my calf? It seems to me, sir, that I can see its tail."

The other was much vexed and astonished, and replied quickly,

"That tail is not the tail of your calf," and with that he walked away, and his wife after him.

If it should be asked what moved the labourer to put that question, the writer of this story would reply that the hair in front of this woman was very long and thick, as is usual with the Dutch women, and he might well have thought it was the tail of his calf, and as also her husband was saying that he could see so many things—nearly everything there was in the world—the labourer thought to himself that the calf could hardly be far off, but might be hidden inside along with the other things.

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## Story the Thirteenth.

### THE CASTRATED CLERK

BY

MONSEIGNEUR L'AMANT DE BRUCELLES.

How a lawyer's clerk in England deceived his master, making him believe that he had no testicles, by which reason he had charge over his mistress both in the country and in the town, and enjoyed his pleasure.



T London, in England, there formerly lived a lawyer, who, amongst his other servitors, had a clerk who was clever, and diligent, wrote well, and was a handsome lad, and was, moreover, let it be stated, as cunning as any man of his age.

This gentle and lusty clerk was much smitten with his mistress,—a beautiful, kind, and gentle dame—who so much admired him that if ever he had but dared to reveal his affection, the god of love would have led her to confess that he was the only man on earth who pleased her.

It chanced that once, being in a suitable place, and all fear being laid aside, he recounted unto the said lady his sad, but not unpleasant, case; and she by the great courtesy which God had not forgotten to give her, being

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It chanced that once, being in a suitable place, and all fear being laid aside, he recounted unto the said lady his sad, but not unpleasant, case; and she by the great courtesy which God had not forgotten to give her, being already touched as has before been said, did not long delay; for after she had addressed to him many excuses and remonstrances, she was glad to let him know that he pleased her well.

The other,—who was no fool—was more joyed than he had ever been, and determined to hammer the iron while it was hot, and so warmly pursued her, that ere long he enjoyed her love.

The love of the mistress for the clerk, and of the clerk for the mistress, was for a long time so ardent, that never were people more taken with each other; for not seldom did they forget to eat and drink, and it would not have been in the power of Malbouche or Dangier (\*) nor other such cursed sprites, to have disturbed their happiness.

(\*) *Allegorical personages, typifying slander and jealousy, mentioned in the Romaunt de la Rose.*

In this joyous state and pleasant pastime, they passed many days such as are rarely given to lovers, and so fond were they of each other, that they would almost have renounced their share of paradise, to live in the world in that condition.

It chanced one day they were together, talking of the great affection they bore each other, and devising how they could safely continue to take their pleasure without some inkling of their dangerous pastime being known to her husband, who was as jealous as a man could be.

You may fancy that more than one idea occurred to them, which I here pass over, but the final conclusion and supreme resolution of the good clerk, was to vow to act carefully and bring his undertaking to a lucky termination,—in which he failed not, and this is how he accomplished his end.

You must know that while the clerk was on intimate and friendly terms with his mistress, and diligently served and pleased her, he was at the same time not less diligent to serve and please his master, that he might the better conceal his own faults and blind the eyes of the jealous husband, who little suspected what was being prepared for him.

One day soon after, our clerk, seeing that his master was well satisfied with him, spoke to him when he was alone, most humbly, softly, and with great respect, and told him that he had a great secret which he would willingly reveal if he dared.

And, it must be told, that like women, who have tears at their command and can shed them whenever they like, our clerk, whilst he spoke, let fall from his eyes tears in great abundance,—which any man would have taken to be signs of sorrow, pity, and honest purpose.

When the poor abused master heard his clerk, he was much astonished, and said,  
“What is the matter, my son, and why do you weep?”

“Alas, sir, I have much more cause than anyone else to be sorrowful, but my case is so strange, and not the less pitiful, that it should be hidden; nevertheless I have determined to tell you, if I can lay aside the fear which for long has haunted me.”

“Do not weep, my son,” replied his master, “and tell me what it is, and I assure you that if it is possible for me to aid, you I will willingly give you all the assistance I can.”

"Master," said the cunning clerk, "I thank you; but I have thought the matter over, and I do not think my tongue will be able to relate the great misfortune that I have long time borne."

"Leave all your grief and pratings," replied the master. "Nothing ought to be hidden from me, as your master, and I wish to know what is the matter; therefore come here and tell me."

The clerk, who knew the length of his master's foot, had to be much entreated, and pretended to be in great fear, and shed great abundance of tears before he would accede and say what he had to say, and then made his master promise that he would reveal the secret to no man, for he would rather die than have his misfortune known.

The master having given this promise, the clerk—pale, and trembling like a man who was going to be hanged—told his story.

"My most worthy master, I know that all people, and you amongst them, imagine that I am a natural man like any other, capable of having connexion with a woman, and creating children; but I affirm and can prove that I am not such—to my great sorrow, alas."

And with these words he pulled out his member and showed his bag. He had with much time and trouble pushed up his testicles towards his lower belly, and so well concealed them that it seemed as though he had none. Then he said,

"Master, you now know my misfortune, which I again beg of you not to let be known, and moreover, I humbly beg of you by all the services I have ever rendered,—which would have been greater if my power had equalled my will—that you will allow me to pass the rest of my life in some holy monastery, where I may spend my time in the service of God, for I am of no use in the world."

His worthy and much-abused master discoursed unto him of the austerities of a religious life, and how little merit there was in becoming a monk out of grief for a misfortune, and by many other means, too numerous to recount here, prevailed on him to renounce his intention. And you must know, moreover, that he would on no account lose his clerk, on account of his skill in writing, and diligence, and the use he intended to make of him. What need to say more? He so remonstrated that the clerk, in short, promised to remain for a further time in his service. And as the clerk had revealed his secret, so also did the master lay bare his own heart, and said;

"My son, I am not glad to hear of your misfortune; but in the end God orders all things for the best, and knows what is most suitable for us. You can in future serve me well, and merit all that is in my power to do for you. I have a young wife, who is light-hearted and flighty, and I am old and staid; which might give occasion to some to dishonour me and her also, if she should prove other than chaste, and afford me matter for jealousy, and many other things. I entrust her to you that you may watch over her, and I beg of you to guard her so that I may have no reason to be jealous."

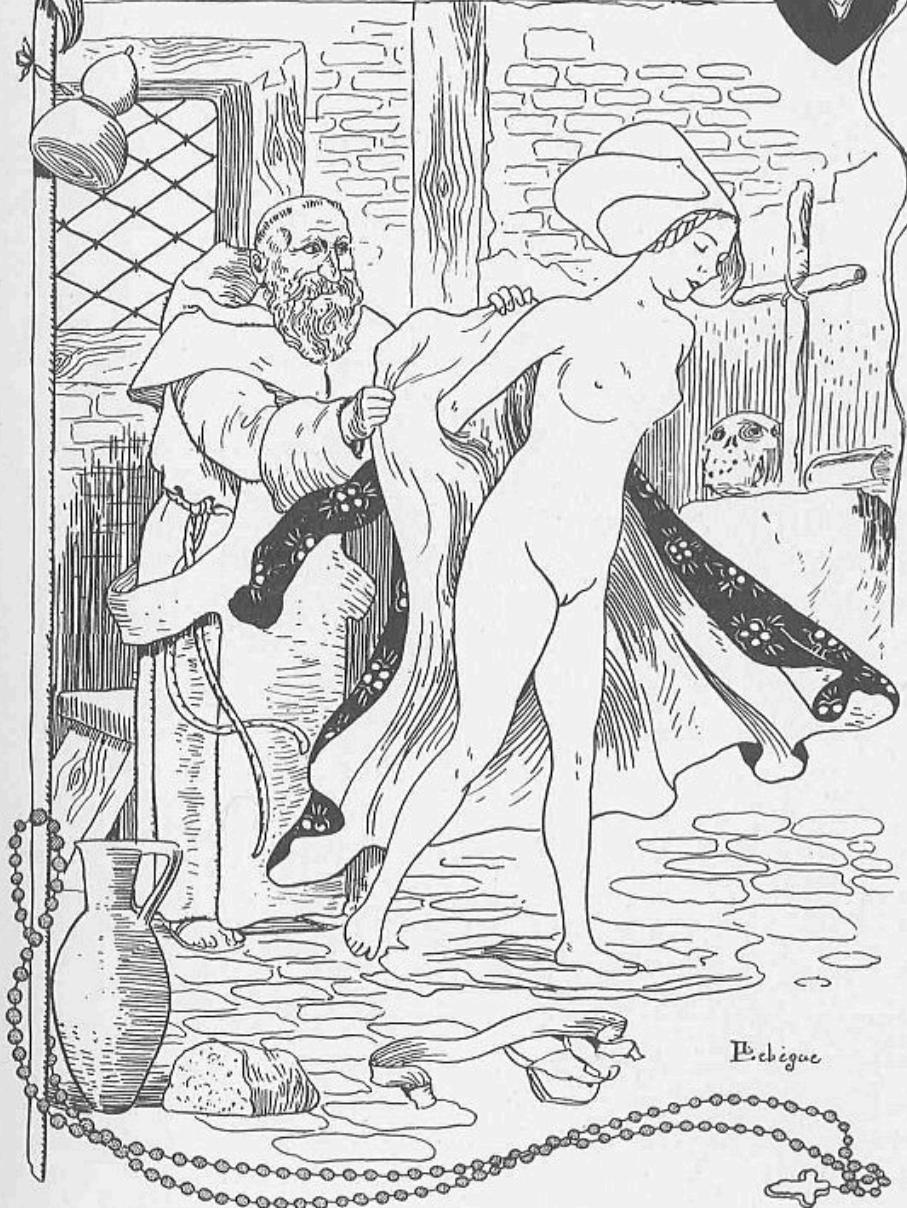
After long deliberation, the clerk gave his reply, and when he spoke, God knows how he praised his most fair and kind mistress, saying that she excelled all others in beauty and goodness, of that he was sure. Nevertheless, that service or any other he would perform with all his heart, and never leave her whatever might happen, but inform his master of all that occurred, as a good servant should.

The master, pleased and joyful at the new guardian he had found for his wife, left the house, and went to the town to do his business. And the good clerk at once entered upon his duties, and, as much as they dared, employed the members with which they were provided, and made great cheer over the subtle manner in which the husband had been deceived. For a long period did they continue thus to enjoy themselves; and if at any time the good husband was forced to go abroad, he took care to leave his clerk behind; rather would he borrow a servant from one of his neighbours than not leave the clerk to mind house. And if the lady had leave to go on any pilgrimage, she would rather go without her tire-woman than without the kind and obliging clerk.

In short, as you may suppose, never could clerk boast of a more lucky adventure, and which—so far as I know—never came to the knowledge of the husband, who would have been overcome with grief had he learned of the trick.

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*Le faiseur de pape*



É. Chigot



## Story the Fourteenth.

### THE POPE-MAKER, OR THE HOLY MAN

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE CREQUY.

Of a hermit who deceived the daughter of a poor woman, making her believe that her daughter should have a son by him who should become Pope; and how, when she brought forth it was a girl, and thus was the trickery of the hermit discovered, and for that cause he had to flee from that country.



HE borders of Burgundy furnish many adventures worthy to be written and remembered, and have provided the present story, not to speak of many others which could be related. I will here only speak of an adventure which happened formerly in a big village on the river Ousche.

There was, and is still, a mountain near, on which a hermit—of God knows what sort—made his residence, and who under the cloak of hypocrisy did many strange things, which did not come to the knowledge of the common people until the time when God would no longer suffer his most damnable abuses to continue.

### STORY THE FOURTEENTH — THE POPE-MAKER, OR THE HOLY MAN. 14

By Monseigneur de Crequy

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There was, and is still, a mountain near, on which a hermit—of God knows what sort—made his residence, and who under the cloak of hypocrisy did many strange things, which did not come to the knowledge of the common people until the time when God would no longer suffer his most damnable abuses to continue.

This holy hermit was during all his life as lewd and mischievous as an old ape, but surpassed all ordinary mortals in cunning. And this is what he did.

He sought amongst all the women and pretty girls the one most worthy to be loved and desired, and resolved that it was the daughter of a poor, simple woman,—a widow who was very devout and charitable—and made up his mind that, if he could have his way, she should become his prey.

One night, about midnight, when the weather was very rough and stormy, he descended from the mountain and came to the village, and passing by bye-roads and footpaths, came to where the mother and daughter lived, without being seen or heard. He knew the house, which was not large, and to which he had often been for devotional purposes.

He bored a hole in a part of the wall not exposed, and near the spot where stood the bed of the simple widow woman, and passing a long, hollow stick, with which he was provided, and without awaking the widow, placed it near her ear, and said in a low voiced three times,

“Hear my voice, woman of God. I am an angel of the Creator, and have been sent to you to announce that for your many good deeds which you have performed there shall issue from your seed, that is your daughter, one who shall unite, reform, and restore his bride the Church. And it shall be in this manner. Thou shalt go to the mountain, to the holy hermit, and take thy daughter, and relate to him at length that which God now commands you by me. He shall know thy daughter, and from them shall spring a son, the elect of God, and destined to fill the Holy Seat of Rome, who shall do such good deeds that he may fitly be compared to St. Peter and St. Paul. Hearken to my voice! Obey God!”

The foolish widow, much astonished and surprised, and half ravished with delight, really believed that God had sent this messenger. She vowed to herself that she would not disobey, and it was long ere she slept again, and then not very soundly, so greatly did she desire and await the day.

Meanwhile the good hermit returned to his hermitage in the mountain. The much-desired day at last dawned, and the sun pierced into the chamber of the said widow, and both mother and daughter rose in great haste.

When they were up and dressed, and their little household set in order, the mother asked her daughter if she had heard anything in the night.

The daughter replied, “No, mother; nothing.”

“It was not to you,” said the mother, “that the message was first delivered, albeit it concerns you greatly.”

Then she related at length the angel’s message which God had sent her, and asked her what she should reply thereto?

The girl, who was like her mother, simple and devout, replied; “Praise be to God. Whatever pleases you, mother, shall be done.”

“That is well spoken,” replied the mother. “Let us go to the mountain to the holy man, as the angel bade us.”

The hermit was on the watch to see whether the foolish woman would bring her innocent daughter, and beheld them coming. He left his door half open, and knelt down in prayer in his chamber, in order that he might be found at his devotions.

It happened as he wished, for the good woman and her daughter, when they saw the door open, entered at once; and when they beheld the hermit in holy contemplation, as though he had been a

god, they did homage to him.

The hermit, with his eyes bent down to the earth, said in a humble voice; "God save you both."

Then the poor, old woman, anxious that he should know the cause of her coming, took him on one side, and told him from beginning to end the story—which he knew better than she did. And as she related the tale with great veneration and respect, the hermit folded his hands and turned up his eyes to heaven, and the good old woman wept, more for joy than for grief; and the poor girl also wept when she saw this good and holy hermit pray with such deep devotion she did not know why.

When the story was finished, the old woman awaited the reply, which he did not hasten to give. But after a certain time he spoke, and said,

"Praise be to God! But, my dear friend, are you really sure that the message you say you heard, may not have been some fancy or illusion created by your own heart? The matter is a serious one."

"I certainly heard the voice, father, which brought me this joyful message, as plainly as I now hear you, and I do not think I was asleep."

"Well," said he, "I should be unwilling to act against the wishes of my Creator; but it seems best to me that you and I should again sleep upon this matter, and if the angel should appear to you again, come back and tell me, and God will give us good counsel. We should not believe too readily, good mother. The devil, who is always envious of the good, has many tricks, and can change himself into an angel of light. Believe me, mother, it is no light thing you ask of me, and it is no marvel if I seem to hesitate. Have I not sworn before God, a vow of chastity? And here you bring me word that I am to break my oath! Return to your house and pray to God, and to-morrow we shall see what will happen. God be with you."

After much discussion, they left the hermit and returned home thoughtfully.

To cut the story short, our hermit, at the accustomed time set forth, carrying a hollow stick instead of a staff, and putting it near the pillow of the foolish woman, delivered much the same message as on the previous night; and that being done, returned at once to his hermitage.

The good woman, filled with joy, rose early and related all the story to her daughter, showing how the vision of the previous night had been confirmed. "There is no time to be lost! We must go to the holy man!"

They went, and he saw them coming, and took his breviary and acted the hypocrite as before, but God knows he was not thinking of his devotions. And just as he had finished, and was about to recommence, there were the two women in front of his hut saluting him, and you may fancy that the old lady hurried through her narration; whereupon the good man made the sign of the cross, and feigning great surprise, said,

"Oh God! my Creator! What is this? Do with me as you will—though, if it were not for thy great grace, I am not worthy to perform such a great work!"

"But see, father!" said the much-abused and deceived woman: "the message is true, since the angel has again appeared unto me."

"In truth, my dear friend, this matter is of great importance and very difficult and strange, so that I yet can give but a doubtful reply. Not that I would tempt God by demanding another vision, but there is a saying 'The third time is sure'. Therefore I beg and desire of you to let pass this night also, and await the pleasure of God, and if of His great mercy it please Him to show us also this night as on the previous nights, we will do as He bids us to His praise."

It was not with a good grace that the foolish old woman was induced to put off this act of obedience to God, but she knew the hermit was wiser than she was.

When she was in bed, and thinking over all these marvellous visions, this perverse hypocrite came down from his mountain, placed his hollow stick to her ear, as before, and commanded her, once for all, to obey the message and take her daughter to the hermit for the purpose mentioned.

She did not forget, as soon as it was day, to do her duty, and when she and her daughter had given thanks to God, they set out for the hermitage, where the hermit came forth to meet them, and saluted and blessed them in the name of God.

The good woman, more joyous than ever, informed him of the last vision. The hermit took her by the hand and led her into the chapel, and the girl followed them. There they made most devout prayers to the all-powerful God who had vouchsafed to show them this mystery.

Then the hermit delivered a short sermon, touching dreams, visions, apparitions, and revelations, which often come to certain people, and alluded to the cause for which they were there assembled, and God knows that he preached well and righteously.

“Since God willed and commanded that he should create a successor to the Pope, and had deigned to reveal His will not once or twice, but three times, he must needs believe and conclude that great results must follow from this deed. It is my opinion,” he concluded, “that we should no longer defer the execution of His orders, seeing that we have already delayed so long, through refusing to believe in this holy vision.”

“That is well said, father. What would it please you to do?” replied the old woman.

“You will leave your fair daughter here,” said the hermit, “and she and I will pray together, and moreover do whatever God shall teach us.”

The good widow was much pleased, and her daughter was content to obey. When the hermit found himself alone with the damsel, he made her strip entirely as though he would baptise her, and you may fancy that the hermit did not long remain dressed. But why make a long story? He lay with her so long, and so often repeated it both in his cell and at her home, that at last she could not leave the house for shame, for her belly began to swell,—at which you need not be told she was overjoyed.

But if the daughter rejoiced to find herself pregnant, the mother rejoiced a hundred times more, and the hypocritical hermit also pretended to rejoice at the news, though inwardly he was bitterly vexed.

The poor credulous mother, really believing that her daughter would bring forth a son who should in due time be Pope of Rome, could not help relating the story to one of her intimate friends, who was as much astonished as though she had found horns growing on her head, but, nevertheless, suspected no trickery.

Ere long the neighbour had told the other male and female neighbours, how the daughter of such an one was pregnant by the holy hermit of a son who was to be Pope of Rome.

“And what I tell you,” she said, “the mother of the girl told me, and God revealed it to her.”

The news soon spread through all the neighbouring towns. Soon afterwards the girl was brought to bed, and duly delivered of a female child, at which she and her foolish mother were both astonished and angry, and the neighbours also, who expected the holy hermit to have been there to receive the child.

The report spread quite as quickly as the previous one, and the hermit was one of the first to hear of it, and quickly fled into another country—I know not where—to deceive another woman or girl, or perhaps into the desert of Egypt to perform penance, with a contrite heart, for his sin. However that may be, the poor girl was dishonoured; which was a great pity, for she was fair, good, and amiable.

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## Story the Fifteenth.

### THE CLEVER NUN

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE LA ROCHE.

Of a nun whom a monk wished to deceive, and how he offered to show her his weapon that she might feel it, but brought with him a companion whom he put forward in his place, and of the answer she gave him.



N the fair country of Brabant, near to a monastery of white monks (<sup>1</sup>), is situated a nunnery of devout and charitable nuns, but their name and order need not be mentioned.

The two convents being close together, there was always a barn for the threshers, as the saying is, for, thank God, the nuns were so kind-hearted that few who sought amorous intercourse with them were refused, provided only they were worthy to receive their favours.

But, to come to the story, there was amongst these white monks, a young and handsome monk, who fell in love with one of the nuns, and after some preliminaries,

(<sup>1</sup>) Either Carthusians, who wear white robes and hoods, or Dominicans who wear white robes and black hoods.

## By Monseigneur De La Roche

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But, to come to the story, there was amongst these white monks, a young and handsome monk who fell in love with one of the nuns, and after some preliminaries, had the courage to ask her for the love of God to grant him her favours.

The nun, who knew how he was furnished, though she was by nature courteous, gave him a harsh and sharp reply. He was not to be rebuffed, however, but continued to implore her love with most humble requests, until the pretty nun was forced either to lose her reputation for courtesy, or give the monk what she had granted to many others as soon as she was asked.

She said to him; “Truly you weary me with requests for that which honestly I ought not to give you. But I have heard what sort of weapon you carry, and if it be so you have not much to thank Nature for.”

“I do not know who told you,” replied the monk, “but I am sure that you will be satisfied with me, and I will prove to you that I am as good a man as any other.”

“Oh, yes. I believe you are a man,” said she “but your machine is so small that if you were to put it in a certain place, I should hardly know that it was there.”

“It is quite the reverse,” said the monk, “and, if I were in that place, I would do so well that you would confess that those who gave me that reputation were liars.”

After these fair speeches, the kind nun, that she might know what he could do, and perhaps not forgetting her own share in the pleasure, told him to come to the window of her cell at midnight; for which favour he thanked her gratefully.

“But at any rate,” said she, “you shall not enter until I really know what sort of lance you carry, and whether you can be of use to me or not.”

“As you please,” replied the monk, and with that he quitted his mistress, and went straight to Brother Conrad, one of his companions, who was furnished, God knows how well, and for that reason was much esteemed in the nunnery.

To him the young monk related how he had begged a favour of such an one, and how she had refused, doubting whether his foot would fit her shoe, but in the end had consented that he should come to her, but would first feel and know with what sort of lance he would charge against her shield.

“I have not,” said he, “a fine thick lance, such as I know she would desire to meet. Therefore I beg of you with all my heart, to come with me this night at the hour when I am to meet her, and you will do me the greatest service that ever one man did to another. I know very well that she will want to touch and handle the lance, and this is what you must do. You will be behind me; but do not speak. Then take my place, and put your great machine in her hand. She will open the door then, I expect, and you will go away and I will enter in,—and leave the rest to me.”

Brother Conrad greatly doubted whether it would happen as his friend wished, but he agreed to do as he was asked. At the appointed hour they set forth to visit the nun. When they came to the window, the young monk, who was more eager than a stallion, knocked once with his stick, and the nun did not wait for him to knock a second time, but opened the window, and said in a low voice;

“Who is there?”

“It is I,” he replied; “Open your door, lest anyone should hear us.”

"By my faith," quoth she, "you shall not be entered on the roll of my lovers, until you have passed a review, and I know what equipments you have. Come hither, and show me what it is like."

"Willingly," said he.

Then Brother Conrad took his place, and slipped into the nun's hand his fine, powerful weapon, which was thick, long, and round. But as soon as she felt it she recognized it, and said;

"No! No! I know that well enough. That is the lance of Brother Conrad. There is not a nun here who does not know it! You thought I should be deceived, but I know too much for you! Go and try your luck elsewhere!"

And with that she closed the window, being very angry and ill-pleased, not with Brother Conrad, but with the other monk; and they after this adventure, returned to their convent, pondering over all that had happened.





## Story the Sixteenth.

### ON THE BLIND SIDE

BY

MONSEIGNEUR LE DUC.

Of a knight of Picardy who went to Prussia, and meanwhile his lady took a lover, and was in bed with him when her husband returned; and how by a cunning trick she got her lover out of the room without the knight being aware of it.



N the County of Artois there lived formerly a noble knight, rich and powerful, and married to a beautiful dame of high family. These two lived together for long, and passed their days in peace and happiness. And because the most powerful Duke of Burgundy, Count of Artois, and their lord, was then at peace with all the great princes of Christendom, the knight, who was most devout, reflected that he ought to offer to God the body which had been given him, and which was fair and strong, and as well-formed as that of any man in that country, save that he had lost an eye in a battle.

To perform the vow he had made,—after he had taken leave of his wife and relatives, he betook himself to the

**STORY THE SIXTEENTH — ON THE  
BLIND SIDE. 16**

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*(\*) Doubtless there was a confusion In the writer's mind between Prussia and Hungary, and he alludes to the Crusade against the Turks which ended disastrously for the Crusaders in 1396, and in which Jean sans Peur and many Burgundian knights took part.*

Now you must know that his lady, who stayed at home, had bestowed her affection on a squire who sought her love, and was glad to have a substitute for her liege lord, who was away fighting the Saracens.

Whilst my lord was fasting and doing penance, my lady made good cheer with the squire; often did my lord dine and sup on bread and water, whilst my lady was enjoying all the good things which God had given her in plenty; my lord,—if he could do no better,—lay upon straw, and my lady rested in a fine bed with the squire.

To cut matters short, whilst my lord was fighting the Saracens, my lady was indulging in another sort of combat with the squire, and did so well thereat, that if my lord had never returned he would not have been much missed or regretted.

The knight finding that—thanks be to God—the Saracens were no longer on the offensive; and that it was a long time since he had seen his home, and his good wife, who much desired and regretted him, as she had many times told him in her letters, prepared to return, and started with the few retainers he had. And he fared so well, owing to the great desire he had to return to his home, and the arms of his wife, that in a few days he was near there.

Being more anxious than any of his followers, he was always the first to rise, and the foremost on the journey. In fact, he made such speed that he often rode alone, a quarter of a league or more ahead of his retainers.

One day, it chanced the knight had lodged about six leagues from his home. He rose early in the morning and mounted his horse, intending to arrive at his house before his wife, who knew nothing of his coming, was awake.

He set out as he intended, and, when on the road, he said to his followers, “Come at your leisure; there is no need for you to follow me. I will ride on fast that I may surprise my wife in bed.”

His retainers being weary, and their horses also, did not oppose his wishes, but travelled along at their ease, though they had some fears for the knight, who rode thus fast in the dark and alone.

He made such speed that soon he was in the courtyard of his castle, where he found a serving-man, to whom he gave his horse; then, in his boots and spurs, he went straight, and without meeting any one, for it was yet early in the morning, towards the chamber where my lady slept, and where the squire was doing that which the knight longed to do.

You may guess that the squire and the lady were both astonished when the knight thundered on the door—which was locked—with his staff.

“Who is there?” asked the lady.

“It is I,” replied the knight. “Open the door!”

The lady, who knew her husband's voice, did not feel comfortable; nevertheless she caused the squire to dress himself which he did as quickly as he could, wondering how he should escape from his dangerous position. She meanwhile pretended to be asleep, and not recognise her husband's voice, and when he knocked at the door a second time, she asked again, "Who is there?" "It is your husband, wife! Open the door quickly!"

"My husband?" said she. "Alas, he is far from here! May God soon bring him back in safety."

"By my soul, wife, I am your husband! Did you not know my voice? I knew yours as soon as I heard you speak."

"When he does come, I shall know of it long beforehand, that I may receive him as I ought, and that I may call together his relations and friends to wish him a hearty welcome. Go away! Go away! and let me sleep!"

"By St. John I will take care you do not! Open the door! Do you not know your own husband?" and with that he called her by her name.

She saw that her lover was by that time quite ready, and made him stand behind the door. Then she said to the knight.

"Is it really you? For God's sake pardon me! And are you in good health?"

"Yes; thank God," said the knight.

"God be praised!" said the lady. "I will come directly and let you in; but I am not dressed, and must get a candle."

"Take your time!" said the knight.

"Truly," said the lady, "just as you knocked, my lord, I was much disturbed by a dream I had about you."

"And what was that, my dear?"

"Faith, my lord! I dreamed that you came back, and talked with me, and that you saw as well with one eye as with the other."

"Would to God it were so," said my lord.

"By our Lady," said his wife, "I believe it is as I say."

"By my word", replied the knight, "you are very foolish. How could it be so?"

"I maintain," said she, "that it is so."

"There is nothing of the kind," said the knight. "You must be mad to think so."

"Ah, my lord," she replied, "you will never make me believe it is not as I say, and, to set my mind at rest, I ask of you to give me a proof."

Thereupon she opened the door, holding a lighted candle in her hand, and he, not displeased at her words, permitted her to make trial, and thus the poor man allowed her to cover up his eye with her one hand, whilst with the other she held the candle before his blind eye. Then she said;

"My lord! on your oath, can you not see well?"

"I swear I cannot," said my lord.

Whilst this trick was being played, my lord's substitute stole out of the chamber without being perceived by him.

"Wait a moment, my lord," said she. "Now cannot you see well? Tell me the truth!"

"No, by God, my dear," replied the knight. "How should I see? You have stopped up my right eye, and the other I lost more than ten years ago."

"Then," said she, "I see it was but an idle, foolish dream; but, be that as it may, God be praised and thanked that you are here."

"Amen," said the knight, and with that he kissed and embraced her many times, and they rejoiced greatly.

And my lord did not forget to tell her how he had left his retainers behind, and what speed he had made that he might find her in bed.

"Truly," said my lady, "you are a good husband."

And with that there came women and other servants, who took off the knight's armour, and undressed him. That being done, he got into bed with the lady, and enjoyed what the squire had left

—who, for his part, meanwhile went his way, happy and joyful to have escaped.

Thus was the knight deceived, as you have heard; nor was he ever informed of it that I am aware, though it was known to many people.





## Story the Seventeenth.

### THE LAWYER AND THE BOLTING-MILL BY MONSEIGNEUR LE DUC.

Of a President of Parliament, who fell in love with his chambermaid, and would have forced her whilst she was sifting flour, but by fair speaking she dissuaded him, and made him shake the sieve whilst she went unto her mistress, who came and found her husband thus, as you will afterwards hear.



HERE lived formerly at Paris a President of the Court of Accounts, who was a learned clerk, a knight, and a man of ripe age, but right joyous and pleasant to both men and women.

This worthy lord had married a woman who was both elderly and sickly, and by her had divers children. And amongst the other damsels, waiting women, and servant maids in his house, was a serving-wench whom nature had made most fair, and who did the household work; made the beds, baked the bread, and did other low offices.

The gentleman, who made love whenever he found a chance, did not conceal from the fair wench his intentions

## STORY THE SEVENTEENTH — THE LAWYER AND THE BOLTING-MILL.

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When he found that kindness was of no use, he tried harshness and rough words, but the wench was not frightened, and told him that, "He might do as he pleased, but whilst she had life she would never let him near her."

The gentleman, seeing that her mind was fully made-up, spake no more to her for some days, but spared not loving looks and signs; which much annoyed her, and if she had not feared to make discord between husband and wife, she would have told the latter how unfaithful her spouse was, but, in the end, she resolved to conceal this as long as she could.

The infatuation of the old man increased every day, and begging and praying no longer sufficed. He went to her and renewed his entreaties and vows, which he confirmed by a hundred thousand oaths. But—to cut matters short—it was all no good; he could not obtain a single word, or the least shadow of hope, that he would ever attain his purpose.

Thereupon he left her, but he did not forget to say that if ever he found a favourable opportunity she would have to comply with his wishes, or it would be the worse for her.

The wench was not much frightened, thought no more of it, and went about her duties as usual.

Some time afterwards, one Monday morning, the pretty servant, having some pies to make, was sifting meal. Now you must know that the room where she was thus engaged, was not far from her master's bedroom, and he heard the noise of the sieve, and knew very well that it was made by the servant-girl at her work.

He thought that perhaps she was not alone, but, if she should be, he would never find a better chance.

He said to himself, "Though she has often refused me by word of mouth, I shall succeed at last if I only keep to my purpose."

It was early dawn, and his wife was not awake, at which he was glad. He stole quietly out of bed; put on his dressing-gown and his slippers, and crept to the damsels' room so quietly that she never knew he was there until she saw him.

The poor girl was much astonished, and trembled; suspecting that her master had come to take that which she would never give him.

Seeing she was frightened, he said nothing but attacked her with such violence that he would soon have taken the place by storm if she had not sued for peace. She said to him;

"Alas, sir, I beg for mercy! My life and honour are in your hands;—have pity on me!"

"I care nothing about honour," said her master, who was very hot and excited. "You are in my hands and cannot escape me," and with that he attacked her more violently than before.

The girl, finding resistance was useless, bethought herself of a stratagem, and said,

"Sir, I prefer to surrender of free-will than by force. Leave me alone, and I will do all that you may require."

"Very well," said her master, "but be sure that I will not let you go free."

"There is but one thing I would beg of you, sir" replied the girl. "I greatly fear that my mistress may hear you; and if, by chance, she should come and find you here, I should be lost and ruined, for she would either beat me or kill me."

"She is not likely to come," said he, "she is sleeping soundly."

"Alas, sir, I am in great fear of her and, as I would be assured, I beg and request of you, for my peace of mind and our greater security in what we are about to do, that you let me go and see whether she is sleeping, or what she is doing."

"By our Lady! you would never return," said the gentleman.

"I swear that I will," she replied, "and that speedily."

"Very good then," said he. "Make haste!"

"Ah, sir," said she. "It would be well that you should take this sieve and work as I was doing; so that if my lady should by chance awake, she will hear the noise and know that I am at work."

"Give it to me, and I will work well;—but do not stay long."

"Oh, no, sir. Hold this sieve, and you will look like a woman."

"As to that, God knows I care not," said he, and with that laid hold of the sieve and began to work it as best he could.

Meanwhile the virtuous wench mounted to her lady's room and woke her, and told her how her husband had attempted her virtue, and attacked her whilst she was sifting meal, "And if it please you to come and see how I escaped him," she said, "come down with me and behold him."

The lady rose at once, put on her dress, and was soon before the door of the room where her lord was diligently sifting. And when she saw him thus employed, and struggling with the sieve, she said to him;

"Ah, master, what is this? Where are now all your learning, your honour, your knowledge and prudence?"

He saw that he had been deceived, and replied quickly.

"Wife, they are all collected at the end of my c—k.", and with that, being much annoyed and angry, he threw down the sieve and went back to his room.

His wife followed him, and began to lecture him again, but he paid little heed. When he was ready, he ordered his mule, and went to the palace, where he related his adventure to divers gentlemen, who laughed loudly thereat. And, although he was at first angry with the wench, he afterwards helped her, by his influence and rich gifts, to find a husband.

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## Story the Eighteenth.

### FROM BELLY TO BACK

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE LA ROCHE.

Of a gentleman of Burgundy who paid a chambermaid ten crowns to sleep with her, but before he left her room, had his ten crowns back, and made her carry him on her shoulders though the host's chamber. And in passing by the said chamber he let wind so loudly that all was known, as you will hear in the story which follows.



gentleman of Burgundy went on some business to Paris, and lodged at a good inn, for it was his custom always to seek out the best lodgings.

He knew a thing or two, and he noticed that the chambermaid did not look a sort of woman who was afraid of a man. So, without much ado, or making two bites at a cherry, he asked if he could sleep with her?

But she set her back up at once. "How dare you make such a proposal to me," she said. "I would have you to know that I am not one of those girls who bring scandal upon the houses in which they live." And in

**STORY THE EIGHTEENTH — FROM  
BELLY TO BACK. 18**

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But she set her back up at once. "How dare you make such a proposal to me," she said. "I would have you to know that I am not one of those girls who bring scandal upon the houses in which they live." And in short, for all he could say she refused to have anything to do with him "for any money."

The gentleman who knew well what all these protestations were worth, said to her;

"My dear, if fitting time and place were given me, I would tell you something you would be glad to learn; but as, perhaps, it might hurt your reputation if you were seen conversing with me, talk to my valet, and he will arrange matters on my behalf."

"I have nothing to say either to him or to you," she replied, and with that she walked away, and the gentleman called his valet, who was a clever rogue, and ordered him to follow her and win her over at any cost.

The valet, who was well trained, promised that he would perform his task, and, as soon as he found her, set to work to employ honied phrases, and if she had not been of Paris, and not the least cunning of the women of that city, his soft speeches and the promises he made on behalf of his master, would soon have gained her heart.

But as it was, after much talk between them, she cut matters short by saying;

"I know well what your master wants, but he shall not touch me unless I have ten crowns."

The servant reported this to his master, who was not so generous, or at least not in such a case, as to give ten crowns to enjoy a kitchen wench.

"Be that as it may," replied the valet, "she will not budge from that; and even then you must use precautions in going to her chamber, for you must pass through that of the host. What do you intend to do?"

"By my oath!" said his master, "I regret sorely having to pay ten crowns, but I am so smitten with the wench that I cannot give her up. To the devil with avarice! she shall have the money."

"Shall I tell her then you will give her the money?"

"Yes, in the devil's name! Yes!"

The valet found the girl, and told her she should have the money, and perhaps something more.

"Very good," she replied.

To cut matters short, a time was arranged for the gentleman to come to her, but, before she would show him the way to her room, she insisted on the ten crowns being paid down.

The Burgundian was not over-pleased, and as he was on the way to her chamber, it struck him that he was paying dearly for his amusement, and he resolved that he would play her a trick.

He stole into her room so quietly that neither the host nor his wife awaked. There he undressed, and said to himself that he would at least have his money's worth. He did marvels, and got as good as he sent.

What with jesting and other matters, the hours passed quickly, and dawn was near. He was then more willing to sleep than to do anything else, but the fair chambermaid said to him;

"Sir, I have heard and seen so much of your nobleness, honour, and courtesy that I have consented to allow you to take that which I hold dearest in all the world. I now beg and request of you that you will at once dress and hasten away, for it is now day, and if by chance my master or mistress should come here, as is often their custom in the morning, and should find you here, I should be dishonoured, nor would it do you any good."

"I care not," quoth he, "what good or evil may happen, but here I will remain, and sleep at my ease and leisure before I leave. I am entitled to that for my money. Do you think you have so easily earned my ten crowns? You took them quickly enough. By St. George! I have no fear; but I will stay here and you shall bear me company, if you please."

"Oh, sir," she replied, "by my soul I cannot do this. You must leave. It will be full day directly, and if you are found here what will become of me? I would rather die than that should happen; and if you do not make haste I much fear some one will come."

"Let them come," said the gentleman. "I care not, but, I tell you plainly, that until you give me back my ten crowns, I will not leave here, happen what may."

"Your ten crowns?" she answered. "Are you a man of that sort, and so devoid of any courtesy or grace as to take back from me in that fashion, that which you have given? By my faith that is not the way to prove yourself a gentleman."

"Whatever I am," said he, "I will not leave here, or shall you either, until you have given me back my ten crowns; you gained them too easily."

"May God help me," she replied, "though you speak thus I do not believe you would be so ungrateful, after the pleasure I have given you, or so discourteous, as not to aid me to preserve my honour, and therefore I beg of you to grant my request, and leave here."

The gentleman said that he would do nothing of the sort, and in the end the poor girl was forced—though God knows with what regret—to hand-over the ten crowns in order to make him go. When the money had returned to the hand that gave it, the girl was very angry, but the man was in great glee.

"Now," said the girl, angrily, "that you have thus tricked and deceived me, at least make haste. Let it suffice that you have made a fool of me, and do not by delay bring dishonour upon me by being seen here."

"I have nothing to do with your honour," said he. "Keep it as much as like, but you brought me here and you must take me back to the place from whence I came, for I do not intend to have the double trouble of coming and returning."

The chambermaid, seeing that she only made him more obstinate, and that day was breaking fast, took the gentleman on her back, and though sick at heart with fear and anger, began to carry him. And as she was picking her way carefully and noiselessly, this courteous gentleman, who after having ridden on her belly was now riding on her back, broke wind so loudly that the host awoke, and called out in his fright;

"Who is there?"

"It is your chambermaid," said the gentleman, "who is taking me back to the place from whence she brought me."

At these words the poor girl's heart and strength failed her. She could no longer bear her unpleasant burden, and she fell on the floor and rolled one way, whilst the squire went rolling the other.

The host, who knew what was the matter, spoke sharply to the girl, who soon afterwards left his house; and the gentleman returned to Burgundy, where he often gleefully related to his gallant companions the above written adventure.

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## Story the Nineteenth.

### THE CHILD OF THE SNOW

BY

PHILIPPE VIGNIER.

*Of an English merchant whose wife had a child in his absence, and told him that it was his; and how he cleverly got rid of the child—for his wife having asserted that it was born of the snow, he declared it had been melted by the sun.*

**M**OVED by a strong desire to see and know foreign countries, and to meet with adventures, a worthy and rich merchant of London left his fair and good wife, his children, relations, friends, estates, and the greater part of his possessions, and quitted the kingdom, well furnished with money and great abundance of merchandise, such as England can supply to foreign countries, and with many other things which, for the sake of brevity, I do not mention here.

On this first voyage, the good merchant wandered about for a space of five years, during which time his good wife looked after his property, disposed of much merchandise profitably, and managed so well that her husband, when

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On this first voyage, the good merchant wandered about for a space of five years, during which time his good wife looked after his property, disposed of much merchandise profitably, and managed so well that her husband, when he returned at the end of five years, greatly praised her, and loved her more than ever.

The merchant, not content with the many strange and wonderful things he had seen, or with the large fortune he had made, four or five months after his return, again set forth in quest of adventures in foreign lands, both Christian and pagan, and stayed there so long that ten years passed before his wife again saw him, but he often wrote to her, that she might know that he was still alive.

She was young and lusty, and wanted not any of the goods that God could give, except the presence of her husband. His long absence constrained her to provide herself with a lover, by whom shortly she had a fine boy.

This son was nourished and brought up with the others, his half-brothers, and, when the merchant returned, was about seven years old.

Great were the rejoicings between husband and wife when he came back, and whilst they were conversing pleasantly, the good woman, at the demand of her husband, caused to be brought all their children, not omitting the one who had been born during the absence of him whose name she bore.

The worthy merchant seeing all these children, and remembering perfectly how many there should be, found one over and above; at which he was much astonished and surprised, and he inquired of his wife who was this fair son, the youngest of their children?

“Who is he?” said she; “On my word, husband, he is our son! Who else should he be?”

“I do not know,” he replied, “but, as I have never seen him before, is it strange that I should ask?”

“No, by St. John,” said she; “but he is our son.”

“How can that be?” said her husband. “You were not pregnant when I left.”

“Truly I was not, so far as I know,” she replied, “but I can swear that the child is yours, and that no other man but you has ever lain with me.”

“I never said so,” he answered, “but, at any rate, it is ten years since I left, and this child does not appear more than seven. How then can it be mine? Did you carry him longer than you did the others?”

“By my oath, I know not!” she said; “but what I tell you is true. Whether I carried it longer than the others I know not, and if you did not make it before you left, I do not know how it could have come, unless it was that, not long after your departure, I was one day in our garden, when suddenly there came upon me a longing and desire to eat a leaf of sorrel, which at that time was thickly covered with snow. I chose a large and fine leaf, as I thought, and ate it, but it was only a white and hard piece of snow. And no sooner had I eaten it than I felt myself to be in the same condition as I was before each of my other children was born. In fact, a certain time afterwards, I bore you this fair son.”

The merchant saw at once that he was being fooled, but he pretended to believe the story his wife had told him, and replied;

“My dear, though what you tell me is hardly possible, and has never happened to anyone else, let God be praised for what He has sent us. If He has given us a child by a miracle, or by some secret method of which we are ignorant, He has not forgotten to provide us with the wherewithal to keep it.”

When the good woman saw that her husband was willing to believe the tale she told him, she was greatly pleased. The merchant, who was both wise and prudent, stayed at home the next ten years, without making any other voyages, and in all that time breathed not a word to his wife to make her suspect he knew aught of her doings, so virtuous and patient was he.

But he was not yet tired of travelling, and wished to begin again. He told his wife, who was very dissatisfied therat.

“Be at ease,” he said, “and, if God and St. George so will, I will return shortly. And as our son, who was born during my last voyage, is now grown up, and capable of seeing and learning, I will, if it seem good to you, take him with me.”

"On my word", said she "I hope you will, and you will do well."

"It shall be done," he said, and thereupon he started, and took with him the young man, of whom he was not the father, and for whom he felt no affection.

They had a good wind, and came to the port of Alexandria, where the good merchant sold the greater part of his merchandise very well. But he was not so foolish as to keep at his charge a child his wife had had by some other man, and who, after his death, would inherit like the other children, so he sold the youth as a slave, for good money paid down, and as the lad was young and strong, nearly a hundred ducats was paid for him.

When this was done, the merchant returned to London, safe and sound, thank God. And it need not be told how pleased his wife was to see him in good health, but when she saw her son was not there, she knew not what to think.

She could not conceal her feelings, and asked her husband what had become of their son?

"Ah, my dear," said he, "I will not conceal from you that a great misfortune has befallen him."

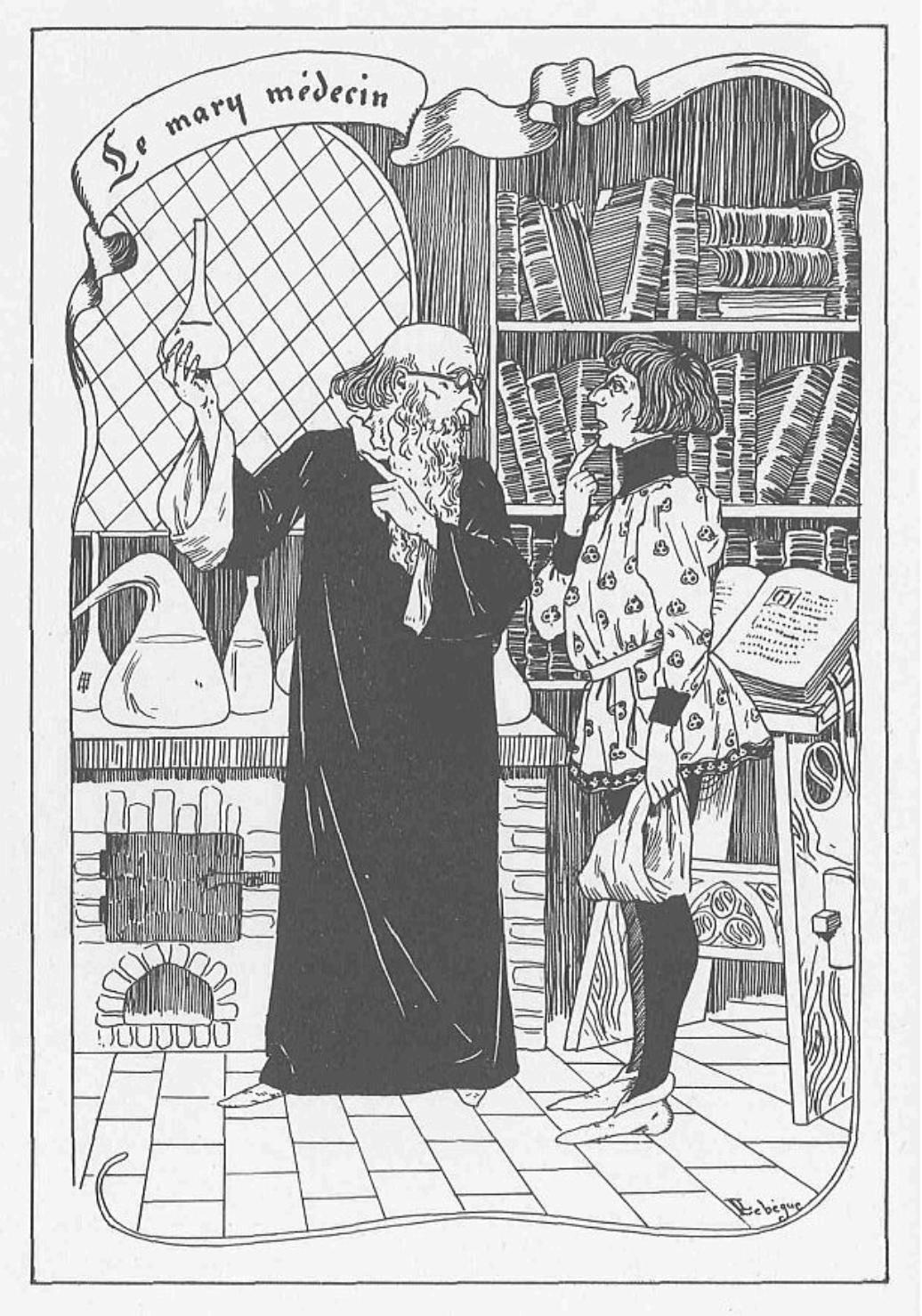
"Alas, what?" she asked. "Is he drowned?"

"No; but the truth is that the wind and waves wafted us to a country that was so hot that we nearly died from the great heat of the sun. And one day when we had all left the ship, in order that we each might dig a hole in which to shield ourselves from the heat,—our dear son, who, as you know was made of snow, began to melt in the sun, and in our presence was turned into water, and ere you could have said one of the seven psalms, there was nothing left of him. Thus strangely did he come into the world, and thus suddenly did he leave it. I both was, and am, greatly vexed, and not one of all the marvels I have ever seen astonished me so greatly."

"Well!" said she. "Since it has pleased God to give and to take away, His name be praised."

As to whether she suspected anything or not, the history is silent and makes no mention, but perhaps she learned that her husband was not to be hood-winked.

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## Story the Twentieth.

### THE HUSBAND AS DOCTOR

BY

PHILIPPE DE LAON.

Of a young squire of Champagne who, when he married, had never mounted a Christian creature,—much to his wife's regret. And of the method her mother found to instruct him, and how the said squire suddenly wept at a great feast that was made shortly after he had learned how to perform the carnal act—as you will hear more plainly hereafter.



T is well-known that in the province of Champagne you are sure to meet heavy and dull-witted persons—which has seemed strange to many persons, seeing that the district is so near to the country of Mischief.<sup>(1)</sup> Many stories could be told of the stupidity of the Champenois, but this present story will suffice.

In this province, there lived a young man, an orphan, who at the death of his father and mother had become rich and powerful. He was stupid, ignorant, and disagreeable, but hard-working and knew well how to take

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In this province, there lived a young man, an orphan, who at the death of his father and mother had become rich and powerful. He was stupid, ignorant, and disagreeable, but hard-working and knew well how to take care of himself and his affairs, and for this reason, many persons,—even people of condition,—were willing to give him their daughter in marriage.

One of these damsels, above all others, pleased the friends and relations of our Champenois, for her beauty, goodness, riches, and so forth. They told him that it was time he married.

“You are now,” they said, “twenty-three years old, and there could not be a better time. And if you will listen to us, we have searched out for you a fair and good damsel who seems to us just suited to you. It is such an one—you know her well;” and they told him her name.

The young man, who cared little whether he was married or not, as long as he lost no money by it, replied that he would do whatever they wished. “Since you think it will be to my advantage, manage the business the best way you can, and I will follow your advice and instructions.”

“You say well,” replied these good people. “We will select your wife as carefully as though it were for ourselves, or one of our children.”

To cut matters short, a little time afterwards our Champenois was married; but on the first night, when he was sleeping with his wife, he, never having mounted on any Christian woman, soon turned his back to her, and a few poor kisses was all she had of him, but nothing on her back. You may guess his wife was not well pleased at this; nevertheless, she concealed her discontent.

This unsatisfactory state of things lasted ten days, and would have continued longer if the girl's mother had not put a stop to it.

It should be known to you that the young man was unskilled in the mysteries of wedlock, for during the lifetime of his parents he had been kept with a tight hand, and, above all things, had been forbidden to play at the beast with two backs, lest he should take too much delight therein, and waste all his patrimony. This was wise of his parents, for he was not a young man likely to be loved for his good looks.

As he would do nothing to anger his father or mother, and was, moreover, not of an amorous disposition, he had always preserved his chastity, though his wife would willingly have deprived him of it, if she had known how to do so honestly.

One day the mother of the bride came to her daughter, and asked her all about her husband's state and condition, and the thousand other things which women like to know. To all of these questions the bride replied that her husband was a good man, and she hoped and believed that she would be happy with him.

But the old woman knew by her own experience that there are more things in married life than eating and drinking, so she said to her daughter;

“Come here, and tell me, on your word of honour, how does he acquit himself at night?”

When the girl heard this question she was so vexed and ashamed that she could not reply, and her eyes filled with tears. Her mother understood what these tears meant, and said;

“Do not weep, my child! Speak out boldly! I am your mother, and you ought not to conceal anything from me, or be afraid of telling me. Has he done nothing to you yet?”

The poor girl, having partly recovered, and being re-assured by her mother's words, ceased her tears, but yet could make no reply. Thereupon, her mother asked again;

"Lay aside your grief and answer me honestly: has he done nothing to you yet?"

In a low voice, mingled with tears, the girl replied, "On my word, mother, he has never yet touched me, but, except for that, there is no more kind or affectionate man."

"Tell me," said the mother; "do you know if he is properly furnished with all his members? Speak out boldly, if you know."

"By St. John! he is all right in that respect," replied the bride. "I have often, by chance, felt his luggage as I turned to and fro in our bed when I could not sleep."

"That is enough," said the mother; "leave the rest to me. This is what *you* must do. In the morning you must pretend to be very ill—even as though your soul were departing from your body. Your husband will, I fully expect, seek me out and bid me come to you, and I will play my part so well that your business will be soon settled, for I shall take your water to a certain doctor, who will give such advice as I order."

All was done as arranged, for on the morrow, as soon as it was dawn, the girl, who was sleeping with her husband, began to complain and to sham sickness as though a strong fever racked her body.

Her booby husband was much vexed and astonished, and knew not what to say or do. He sent forthwith for his mother-in-law, who was not long in coming. As soon as he saw her, "Alas! mother!" said he, "your daughter is dying."

"My daughter?" said she. "What does she want?" and whilst she was speaking she walked to the patient's chamber.

As soon as the mother saw her daughter, she asked what was the matter; and the girl, being well instructed what she was to do, answered not at first, but, after a little time, said, "Mother, I am dying."

"You shall not die, please God! Take courage! But how comes it that you are taken ill so suddenly?"

"I do not know! I do not know!" replied the girl. "It drives me wild to answer all these questions."

The old woman took the girl's hand, and felt her pulse; then she said to her son-in-law;

"On my word she is very ill. She is full of fire, and we must find some remedy. Have you any of her water?"

"That which she made last night is there," said one of the attendants.

"Give it me," said the mother.

She took the urine, and put it in a proper vessel, and told her son-in-law that she was about to show it to such-and-such a doctor, that he might know what he could do to her daughter to cure her.

"For God's sake spare nothing," said she. "I have yet some money left, but I love my daughter better than money."

"Spare!" quoth he. "If money can help, you shall not want."

"No need to go so fast," said she. "Whilst she is resting, I will go home; but I will come back if I am wanted."

Now you must know that the old woman had on the previous day, when she left her daughter, instructed the doctor, who was well aware of what he ought to say. So the young man carried his wife's water to the doctor, and when he had saluted him, related how sick and suffering his wife was.

"And I have brought you some of her water that you may judge how ill she is, and more easily cure her."

The doctor took the vessel of urine, and turned it about and examined it, then said;

"Your wife is afflicted with a sore malady, and is in danger of dying unless help be forthcoming; her water shows it."

"Ah, master, for God's sake tell me what to do, and I will pay you well if you can restore her to health, and prevent her from dying."

"She need not die," said the doctor; "but unless you make haste, all the money in the world will not save her life."

"Tell me, for God's sake," said the other, "what to do, and I will do it."

"She must," said the doctor, "have connection with a man, or she will die."

"Connection with a man?" said the other, "What is that?"

"That is to say," continued the doctor, "that you must mount on the top of her, and speedily ram her three or four times, or more if you can; for, if not, the great heat which is consuming her will not be put out."

"Ah! will that be good for her?"

"There is no chance of her living," said the doctor, "if you do not do it, and quickly too."

"By St. John," said the other, "I will try what I can do."

With that he went home and found his wife, who was groaning and lamenting loudly.

"How are you, my dear?" said he.

"I am dying, my dear," she replied.

"You shall not die, please God," said he. "I have seen the doctor, who has told me what medicine will cure you," and as he spoke, he undressed himself, and lay down by his wife, and began to execute the orders he had received from the doctor.

"What are you doing?" said she. "Do you want to kill me?"

"No! I am going to cure you," he replied. "The doctor said so;" and Nature instructing him, and the patient helping, he performed on her two or three times.

When he was resting from his labours, much astonished at what had happened, he asked his wife how she was?

"I am a little better than I was before;" she replied.

"God be praised," said he. "I hope you will get well and that the doctor told me truly:" and with that he began again.

To cut matters short, he performed so well that his wife was cured in a few days, at which he was very joyful, and so was her mother when she knew it.

The young man after this became a better fellow than he was before, and his wife being now restored to health, he one day invited all his relations and friends to dinner, and also the father and mother of his wife, and he served grand cheer after his own fashion. They drank to him, and he drank to them, and he was marvellous good company.

But hear what happened to him: in the midst of the dinner he began to weep, which much astonished all his friends who were at table with him, and they demanded what was the matter, but he could not reply for weeping scalding tears. At last he spoke, and said;

"I have good cause to weep."

"By my oath you have not," replied his mother-in-law. "What ails you? You are rich and powerful, and well housed, and have good friends; and you must not forget that you have a fair and good wife whom God brought back to health when she was on the edge of the grave. In my opinion you ought to be light-hearted and joyful."

"Alas!" said he, "woe is me! My father and mother, who both loved me, and who amassed and left me so much wealth, are both dead, and by my fault, for they died of a fever, and if I had well towzled them both when they were ill, as I did to my wife, they would still be on their feet."

There was no one at table who, on hearing this, would not have liked to laugh, nevertheless they restrained themselves as best they could. The tables were removed, and each went his way, and the young man continued to live with his wife, and—in order that she might continue in good health—he failed not to tail her pretty often.

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## Story the Twenty-First.

### THE ABBESS CURED

BY

PHILIPPE DE LAON.

Of an abbess who was ill for want of—you know what—but would not have it done, fearing to be reproached by her nuns, but they all agreed to do the same, and most willingly did so.



N Normandy there is a fair nunnery, the Abbess of which was young, fair, and well-made. It chanced that she fell ill. The good sisters who were charitable and devout, hastened to visit her, and tried to comfort her, and do all that lay in their power. And when they found she was getting no better, they commanded one of the sisters to go to Rouen, and take her water to a renowned doctor of that place.

So the next day one of the nuns started on this errand, and when she arrived there she showed the water to the physician, and described at great length the illness of the Lady Abbess, how she slept, ate, drank, etc.

The learned doctor understood the case, both from his

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So the next day one of the nuns started on this errand, and when she arrived there she showed the water to the physician, and described at great length the illness of the Lady Abbess, how she slept, ate, drank, etc.

The learned doctor understood the case, both from his examination of the water, and the information given by the nun, and then he gave his prescription.

Now I know that it is the custom in many cases to give a prescription in writing, nevertheless this time he gave it by word of mouth, and said to the nun;

“Fair sister, for the abbess to recover her health there is but one remedy, and that is that she must have company with a man; otherwise in a short time she will grow so bad that death will be the only remedy.”

Our nun was much astonished to hear such sad news, and said,

“Alas! Master John! is there no other method by which our abbess can recover her health?”

“Certainly not,” he replied; “there is no other, and moreover, you must make haste to do as I have bid you, for if the disease is not stopped and takes its course, there is no man living who could cure it.”

The good nun, though much disconcerted, made haste to announce the news to the Abbess, and by the aid of her stout cob, and the great desire she had to be at home, made such speed that the abbess was astonished to see her returned.

“What says the doctor, my dear?” cried the abbess. “Is there any fear of death?”

“You will be soon in good health if God so wills, madam,” said the messenger. “Be of good cheer, and take heart.”

“What! has not the doctor ordered me any medicine?” said the Abbess.

“Yes,” was the reply, and then the nun related how the doctor had looked at her water, and asked her age, and how she ate and slept, etc. “And then in conclusion he ordered that you must have, somehow or other, carnal connection with some man, or otherwise you will shortly be dead, for there is no other remedy for your complaint.”

“Connection with a man!” cried the lady. “I would rather die a thousand times if it were possible.” And then she went on, “Since it is thus, and my illness is incurable and deadly unless I take such a remedy, let God be praised! I will die willingly. Call together quickly all the convent!”

The bell was rung, and all the nuns flocked round the Abbess, and, when they were all in the chamber, the Abbess, who still had the use of her tongue, however ill she was, began a long speech concerning the state of the church, and in what condition she had found it and how she left it, and then went on to speak of her illness, which was mortal and incurable as she well knew and felt, and as such and such a physician had also declared.

“And so, my dear sisters, I recommend to you our church, and that you pray for my poor soul.”

At these words, tears in great abundance welled from all eyes, and the heart’s fountain of the convent was moved. This weeping lasted long, and none of the company spoke.

After some time, the Prioress, who was wise and good, spoke for all the convent, and said;

“Madam, your illness—what it is, God, from whom nothing is hidden, alone knows—vexes us greatly, and there is not one of us who would not do all in her power to aid your recovery. We therefore pray you to spare nothing, not even the goods of the Church, for it would be better for us to lose the greater part of our temporal goods than be deprived of the spiritual profit which your presence gives us.”

"My good sister," said the Abbess, "I have not deserved your kind offer, but I thank you as much as I can, and again advise and beg of you to take care of the Church—as I have already said—for it is a matter which concerns me closely, God knows; and pray also for my poor soul, which hath great need of your prayers."

"Alas, madam," said the Prioress, "is it not possible that by great care, or the diligent attention of some physician, that you might be restored to health?"

"No, no, my good sister," replied the Abbess. "You must number me among the dead—for I am hardly alive now, though I can still talk to you."

Then stepped forth the nun who had carried the water to Rouen, and said;

"Madam, there is a remedy if you would but try it." "I do not choose to," replied the Abbess. "Here is sister Joan, who has returned from Rouen, and has shown my water, and related my symptoms, to such and such a physician, who has declared that I shall die unless I suffer some man to approach me and have connection with me. By this means he hopes, and his books informed him, that I should escape death; but if I did not do as he bade me, there was no help for me. But as for me, I thank God that He has deigned to call me, though I have sinned much. I yield myself to His will, and my body is prepared for death, let it come when it may."

"What, madam!" said the infirmary nun, "would you murder yourself? It is in your power to save yourself, and you have but to put forth your hand and ask for aid, and you will find it ready! That is not right; and I even venture to tell you that you are imperilling your soul if you die in that condition."

"My dear sister," said the Abbess, "how many times have I told you that it is better for a person to die than commit a deadly sin. You know that I cannot avoid death except by committing a deadly sin. Also I feel sure that even by prolonging my life by this means, I should be dishonoured for ever, and a reproach to all. Folks would say of me, 'There is the lady who ——'.

"All of you,—however you may advise me—would cease to reverence and love me, for I should seem—and with good cause—unworthy to preside over and govern you."

"You must neither say nor think that," said the Treasurer. "There is nothing that we should not attempt to avoid death. Does not our good father, St. Augustine, say that it is not permissible to anyone to take his own life, nor to cut off one of his limbs? And are you not acting in direct opposition to his teaching, if you allow yourself to die when you could easily prevent it?"

"She says well!" cried all the sisters in chorus. "Madam, for God's sake obey the physician, and be not so obstinate in your own opinion as to lose both your body and soul, and leave desolate, and deprived of your care, the convent where you are so much loved."

"My dear sisters," replied the Abbess, "I much prefer to bow my head to death than to live dishonoured. And would you not all say—'There is the woman who did so and so'."

"Do not worry yourself with what people would say: you would never be reproached by good and respectable people."

"Yes, I should be," replied the Abbess.

The nuns were greatly moved, and retired and held a meeting, and passed a resolution, which the Prioress was charged to deliver to the Abbess, which she did in the following words.

"Madam, the nuns are greatly grieved,—for never was any convent more troubled than this is, and you are the cause. We believe that you are ill-advised in allowing yourself to die when we are sure you could avoid it. And, in order that you should comprehend our loyal and single-hearted love for you, we have decided and concluded in a general assembly, to save you and ourselves, and if you have connection secretly with some respectable man, we will do the same, in order that you may not think or imagine that in time to come you can be reproached by any of us. Is it not so, my sisters?"

"Yes," they all shouted most willingly.

The Abbess heard the speech, and was much moved by the testimony of the love the sisters bore her, and consented, though with much regret, that the doctor's advice should be carried out. Monks, priests, and clerks were sent for, and they found plenty of work to do, and they worked so well that the Abbess was soon cured, at which the nuns were right joyous.



## Story the Twenty-Second.

### THE CHILD WITH TWO FATHERS

BY

C A R O N.

Of a gentleman who seduced a young girl, and then went away and joined the army. And before his return she made the acquaintance of another, and pretended her child was by him. When the gentleman returned from the war he claimed the child, but she begged him to leave it with her second lover, promising that the next she had she would give to him, as is hereafter recorded.



ORMERLY there was a gentleman living at Bruges who was so often and so long in the company of a certain pretty girl that at last he made her belly swell.

And about the same time that he was aware of this, the Duke called together his men-at-arms, and our gentleman was forced to abandon his lady-love and go with others to serve the said lord, which he willingly did. But, before leaving, he provided sponsors and a nurse against the time his child should come into the world, and lodged the mother with good people to whose care he

## By Caron.

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Formerly there was a gentleman living at Bruges who was so often and so long in the company of a certain pretty girl that at last he made her belly swell.

And about the same time that he was aware of this, the Duke called together his men-at-arms, and our gentleman was forced to abandon his lady-love and go with others to serve the said lord, which he willingly did. But, before leaving, he provided sponsors and a nurse against the time his child should come into the world, and lodged the mother with good people to whose care he recommended her, and left money for her. And when he had done all this as quickly as he could, he took leave of his lady, and promised that, if God pleased, he would return quickly.

You may fancy if she wept when she found that he whom she loved better than any one in the world, was going away. She could not at first speak, so much did her tears oppress her heart, but at last she grew calmer when she saw that there was nothing else to be done.

About a month after the departure of her lover, desire burned in her heart, and she remembered the pleasures she had formerly enjoyed, and of which the unfortunate absence of her friend now deprived her. The God of Love, who is never idle, whispered to her of the virtues and riches of a certain merchant, a neighbour, who many times, both before and since the departure of her lover, had solicited her love, so that she decided that if he ever returned to the charge he should not be sent away discouraged, and that even if she met him in the street she would behave herself in such a way as would let him see that she liked him.

Now it happened that the day after she arrived at this determination, Cupid sent round the merchant early in the morning to present her with dogs and birds and other gifts, which those who seek after women are always ready to present.

He was not rebuffed, for if he was willing to attack she was not the less ready to surrender, and prepared to give him even more than he dared to ask; for she found in him such chivalry, prowess, and virtue that she quite forgot her old lover, who at that time suspected nothing.

The good merchant was much pleased with his new lady, and they so loved each other, and their wills, desires, and thoughts so agreed, that it was as though they had but a single heart between them. They could not be content until they were living together, so one night the wench packed up all her belongings and went to the merchant's house, thus abandoning her old lover, her landlord and his wife, and a number of other good people to whose care she had been recommended.

She was not a fool, and as soon as she found herself well lodged, she told the merchant she was pregnant, at which he was very joyful, believing that he was the cause; and in about seven months the wench brought forth a fine boy, and the adoptive father was very fond both of the child and its mother.

A certain time afterwards the gentleman returned from the war, and came to Bruges, and as soon as he decently could, took his way to the house where he had left his mistress, and asked news of her from those whom he had charged to lodge her and clothe her, and aid her in her confinement.

"What!" they said. "Do you not know? Have you not had the letters which were written to you?"

"No, by my oath," said he. "What has happened?"

"Holy Mary!" they replied, "you have good reason to ask. You had not been gone more than a month when she packed up her combs and mirrors and betook herself to the house of a certain merchant, who is greatly attached to her. And, in fact, she has there been brought to bed of a fine boy. The merchant has had the child christened, and believes it to be his own."

"By St. John! that is something new," said the gentleman, "but, since she is that sort of a woman, she may go to the devil. The merchant may have her and keep her, but as for the child I am sure it is mine, and I want it."

Thereupon he went and knocked loudly at the door of the merchant's house. By chance, the lady was at home and opened the door, and when she recognised the lover she had deserted, they were both astonished. Nevertheless, he asked her how she came in that place, and she replied that Fortune had brought her there.

"Fortune?" said he; "Well then, fortune may keep you; but I want my child. Your new master may have the cow, but I will have the calf; so give it to me at once, for I will have it whatever may happen."

"Alas!" said the wench, "what will my man say? I shall be disgraced, for he certainly believes the child is his."

"I don't care what he thinks," replied the other, "but he shall not have what is mine."

"Ah, my friend, I beg and request of you to leave the merchant this child; you will do him a great service and me also. And by God! you will not be tempted to have the child when once you have seen him, for he is an ugly, awkward boy, all scrofulous and mis-shapen."

"Whatever he is," replied the other, "he is mine, and I will have him."

"Don't talk so loud, for God's sake!" said the wench, "and be calm, I beg! And if you will only leave me this child, I promise you that I will give you the next I have."

Angry as the gentleman was, he could not help smiling at hearing these words, so he said no more and went away, and never again demanded the child, which was brought up by the merchant.

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## Story the Twenty-Third.

### THE LAWYER'S WIFE WHO PASSED THE LINE

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE COMMESURAM.

Of a clerk of whom his mistress was enamoured, and what he threatened to do and did to her if she crossed a line which the said clerk had made. Seeing which, her little son told his father when he returned that he must not cross the line; or said he, "the clerk will serve you as he did mother."



ORMERLY there lived in the town of Mons, in Hainault, a lawyer of a ripe old age, who had, amongst his other clerks, a good-looking and amiable youth, with whom the lawyer's wife fell deeply in love, for it appeared to her that he was much better fitted to do her business than her husband was.

She decided that she would behave in such a way that, unless he were more stupid than an ass, he would know what she wanted of him; and, to carry out her design, this lusty wench, who was young, fresh, and buxom, often brought her sewing to where the clerk was, and

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She decided that she would behave in such a way that, unless he were more stupid than an ass, he would know what she wanted of him; and, to carry out her design, this lusty wench, who was young, fresh, and buxom, often brought her sewing to where the clerk was, and talked to him of a hundred thousand matters, most of them about love.

And during all this talk she did not forget to practise little tricks: sometimes she would knock his elbow when he was writing; another time she threw gravel and spoiled his work, so that he was forced to write it all over again. Another time also she recommenced these tricks, and took away his paper and parchment, so that he could not work,—at which he was not best pleased, fearing that his master would be angry.

For a long time his mistress practised these tricks, but he being young, and his eyes not opened, he did not at first see what she intended; nevertheless at last he concluded he was in her good books.

Not long after he arrived at this conclusion, it chanced that the lawyer being out of the house, his wife came to the clerk to tease him as was her custom, and worried him more than usual, nudging him, talking to him, preventing him from working, and hiding his paper, ink &c.

Our clerk more knowing than formerly, and seeing what all this meant, sprang to his feet, attacked his mistress and drove her back, and begged of her to allow him to write—but she who asked for nothing better than a tussle, was not inclined to discontinue.

"Do you know, madam," said he, "that I must finish this writing which I have begun? I therefore ask of you to let me alone or, morbleu, I will pay you out."

"What would you do, my good lad?" said she. "Make ugly faces?"

"No, by God!\*

"What then?"

"What?"

"Yes, tell me what!"

"Why," said he, "since you have upset my inkstand, and crumpled my writing, I will well crumple your parchment, and that I may not be prevented from writing by want of ink, I will dip into your inkstand."

"By my soul," quoth she, "you are not the man to do it. Do you think I am afraid of you?"

"It does not matter what sort of man I am," said the clerk, "but if you worry me any more, I am man enough to make you pay for it. Look here! I will draw a line on the floor, and by God, if you overstep it, be it ever so little, I wish I may die if I do not make you pay dearly for it."

"By my word," said she, "I am not afraid of you, and I will pass the line and see what you will do," and so saying the merry hussy made a little jump which took her well over the line.

The clerk grappled with her, and threw her down on a bench, and punished her well, for if she had rumpled him outside and openly, he rumpled her inside and secretly.

Now you must know that there was present at the time a young child, about two years old, the son of the lawyer. It need not be said either, that after this first passage of arms between the clerk and his mistress, there were many more secret encounters between them, with less talk and more action than on the first occasion.

You must know too that, a few days after this adventure, the little child was in the office where the clerk was writing, when there came in the lawyer, the master of the house, who walked across the room to his clerk, to see what he wrote, or for some other matter, and as he approached the line which the clerk had drawn for his wife, and which still remained on the floor, his little son cried,

"Father, take care you do not cross the line, or the clerk will lay you down and tumble you as he did mother a few days ago."

The lawyer heard the remark, and saw the line, but knew not what to think; but if he remembered that fools, drunkards, and children always tell the truth, at all events he made no sign, and it has never come to my knowledge that he ever did so, either through want of confirmation of his suspicions, or because he feared to make a scandal.

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## Story the Twenty-Fourth.

### HALF-BOOTTED

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE FIENNES.

Of a Count who would ravish by force a fair young girl who was one of his subjects, and how she escaped from him by means of his leggings, and how he overlooked her conduct and helped her to a husband, as is hereafter related.



I know that in many of the stories already related the names of the persons concerned are not stated, but I desire to give, in my little history, the name of Comte Valerien, who was in his time Count of St. Pol, and was called "the handsome Count". Amongst his other lordships, he was lord of a village in the district of Lille, called Vrelenchem, about a league distant from Lille.

This gentle Count, though of a good and kind nature, was very amorous. He learned by report from one of his retainers, who served him in these matters, that at the said Vrelenchem there resided a very pretty girl of good condition. He was not idle in these matters, and soon after he heard the news, he was in that village, and

## STORY THE TWENTY-FOURTH — HALF-BOOTED. 24

By Monseigneur De Fiennes.

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“The next thing to be done,” said the noble Count, “is that I must speak to her alone, no matter what it may cost me.”

One of his followers, who was a doctor by profession, said, “My lord, for your honour and that of the maiden also, it seems to me better that I should make known to her your will, and you can frame your conduct according to the reply that I receive.”

He did as he said, and went to the fair maiden and saluted her courteously, and she, who was as wise as she was fair and good, politely returned his salute.

To cut matters short, after a few ordinary phrases, the worthy messenger preached much about the possessions and the honours of his master, and told her that if she liked she would be the means of enriching all her family.

The fair damsel knew what o’clock it was. (\*) Her reply was like herself—fair and good—for it was that she would obey, fear, and serve the Count in anything that did not concern her honour, but that she held as dear as her life.

(\*) *A literal translation. La bonne fille entendit tantost quelle heure il estoit.*

The one who was astonished and vexed at this reply was our go-between, who returned disappointed to his master, his embassy having failed. It need not be said that the Count was not best pleased at hearing of this proud and harsh reply made by the woman he loved better than anyone in the world, and whose person he wished to enjoy. But he said, “Let us leave her alone for the present. I shall devise some plan when she thinks I have forgotten her.”

He left there soon afterwards, and did not return until six weeks had passed, and, when he did return it was very quietly, and he kept himself private, and his presence unknown.

He learned from his spies one day that the fair maiden was cutting grass at the edge of a wood, and aloof from all company; at which he was very joyful, and, all booted as he was, set out for the place in company with his spies. And when he came near to her whom he sought, he sent away his company, and stole close to her before she was aware of his presence.

She was astonished and confused, and no wonder, to see the Count so close to her, and she turned pale and could not speak, for she knew by report that he was a bold and dangerous man to

women.

"Ha, fair damsel," said the Count, "you are wondrous proud! One is obliged to lay siege to you. Now defend yourself as best you can, for there will be a battle between us, and, before I leave, you shall suffer by my will and desire, all the pains that I have suffered and endured for love of you."

"Alas, my lord!" said the young girl, who was frightened and surprised. "I ask your mercy! If I have said or done anything that may displease you, I ask your pardon; though I do not think I have said or done anything for which you should owe me a grudge. I do not know what report was made of me. Dishonourable proposals were made to me in your name, but I did not believe them, for I deem you so virtuous that on no account would you dishonour one of your poor, humble subjects like me, but on the contrary protect her."

"Drop this talk!" said my lord, "and be sure that you shall not escape me. I told you why I sent to you, and of the good I intended to do you," and without another word, he seized her in his arms, and threw her down on a heap of grass which was there, and pressed her closely, and quickly made all preparations to accomplish his desire.

The young girl, who saw that she was on the point of losing that which she held most precious, bethought her of a trick, and said,

"Ah, my lord, I surrender! I will do whatever you like, and without refusal or contradiction, but it would be better that you should do with me whatever you will by my free consent, than by force and against my will accomplish your intent."

"At any rate," said my lord, "you shall not escape me! What is it you want?"

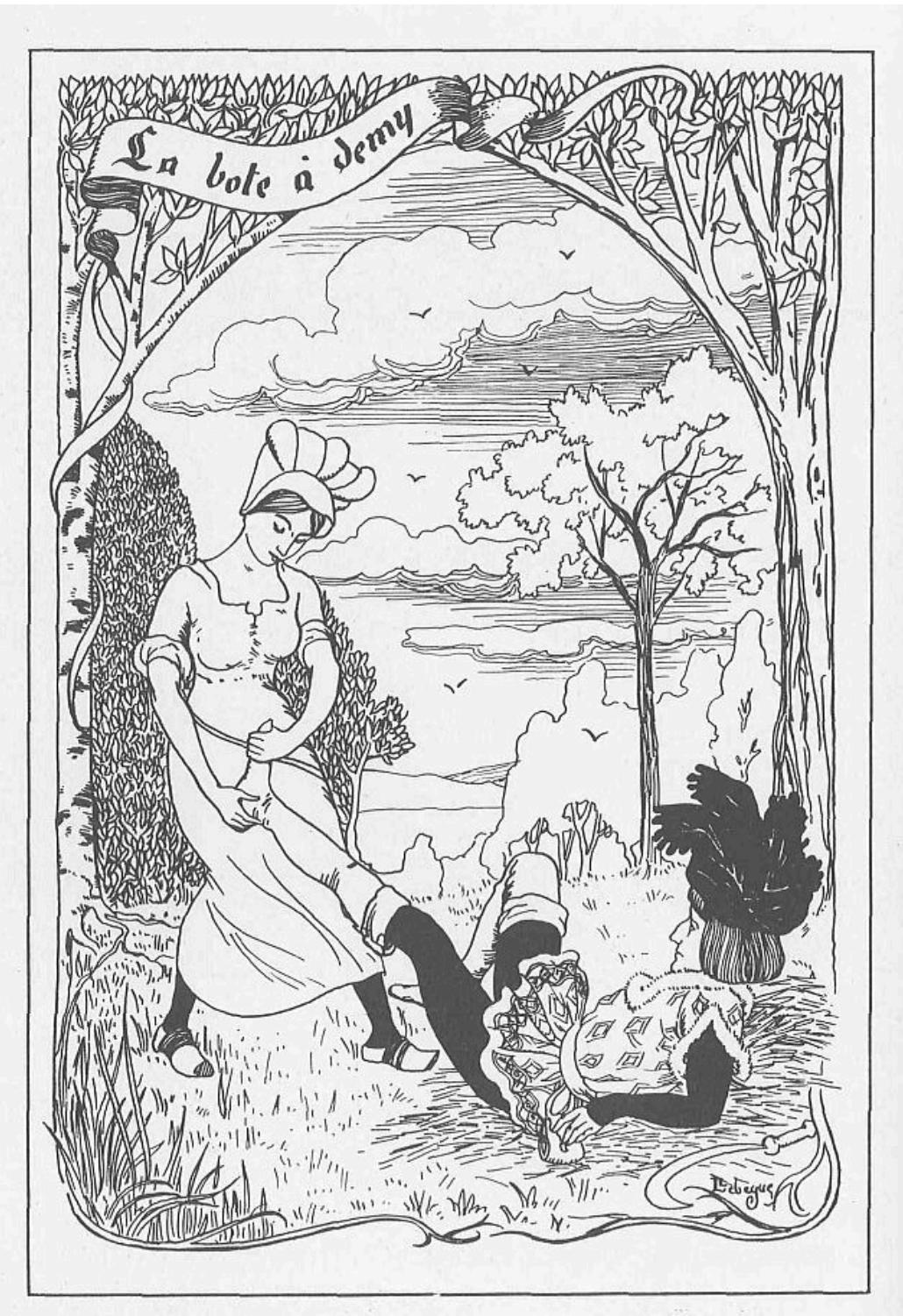
"I would beg of you," said she, "to do me the honour not to dirty me with your leggings, which are greasy and dirty, and which you do not require."

"What can I do with them?" asked my lord.

"I will take them off nicely for you," said she, "if you please; for by my word, I have neither heart nor courage to welcome you if you wear those mucky leggings."

"The leggings do not make much difference," said my lord, "nevertheless if you wish it, they shall be taken off."

Then he let go of her, and seated himself on the grass, and stretched out his legs, and the fair damsel took off his spurs, and then tugged at one of his leggings, which were very tight. And when with much difficulty she had got it half off, she ran away as fast as her legs could carry her with her will assisting, and left the noble Count, and never ceased running until she was in her father's house.



The worthy lord who was thus deceived was in as great a rage as he could be. With much trouble he got on his feet, thinking that if he stepped on his legging he could pull it off, but it was no good, it was too tight, and there was nothing for him to do but return to his servants. He did not go very far before he found his retainers waiting for him by the side of a ditch; they did not know what to think when they saw him in that disarray. He related his story, and they put his boots on for him, and if you had heard him you would have thought that she who thus deceived him was not long for this world, he so cursed and threatened her.

But angry as he was for a time, his anger soon cooled, and was converted into sincere respect. Indeed he afterwards provided for her, and married her at his own cost and expense to a rich and good husband, on account of her frankness and loyalty.



## Story the Twenty-Fifth.

### FORCED WILLINGLY

BY

PHILIPPE DE SAINT-YON.

Of a girl who complained of being forced by a young man, whereas she herself had helped him to find that which he sought; and of the judgment which was given thereon.



HE incident on which I found my story happened so recently that I need not alter, nor add to, nor suppress, the facts.

There recently came to the provost at Quesnay, a fair wench, to complain of the force and violence she had suffered owing to the uncontrollable lust of a young man. The complaint being laid before the provost, the young man accused of this crime was seized, and as the common people say, was already looked upon as food for the gibbet, or the headsman's axe.

The wench, seeing and knowing that he of whom she had complained was in prison, greatly pestered the provost that justice might be done her, declaring that without her will and consent, she had by force been violated and dishonoured.

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The provost, who was a discreet and wise man, and very experienced in judicial matters, assembled together all the notables and chief men, and commanded the prisoner to be brought forth, and he having come before the persons assembled to judge him, was asked whether he would confess, by torture or otherwise, the horrible crime laid to his charge, and the provost took him aside and adjured him to tell the truth.

“Here is such and such a woman,” said he, “who complains bitterly that you have forced her. Is it so? Have you forced her? Take care that you tell the truth, for if you do not you will die, but if you do you will be pardoned.”

“On my oath, provost,” replied the prisoner, “I will not conceal from you that I have often sought her love. And, in fact, the day before yesterday, after a long talk together, I laid her upon the bed, to do you know what, and pulled up her dress, petticoat, and chemise. But my weasel could not find her rabbit hole, and went now here now there, until she kindly showed it the right road, and with her own hands pushed it in. I am sure that it did not come out till it had found its prey, but as to force, by my oath there was none.”

“Is that true?” asked the provost.

“Yes, on my oath,” answered the young man.

“Very good,” said he, “we shall soon arrange matters.”

After these words, the provost took his seat in the pontifical chair, surrounded by all the notable persons; and the young man was seated on a small bench in front of the judges, and all the people, and of her who accused him.

“Now, my dear,” said the provost, “what have you to say about the prisoner?”

“Provost!” said she, “I complain that he has forced me and violated me against my will and in spite of me. Therefore I demand justice.”

“What have you to say in reply?” asked the provost of the prisoner.

“Sir,” he replied, “I have already told how it happened, and I do not think she can contradict me.”

“My dear!” said the provost to the girl, “think well of what you are saying! You complain of being forced. It is a very serious charge! He says that he did not use any force, but that you consented, and indeed almost asked for what you got. And if he speaks truly, you yourself directed his weasel, which was wandering about near your rabbit-hole, and with your two hands—or at least with one—pushed the said weasel into your burrow. Which thing he could never have done without your help, and if you had resisted but ever so little he would never have effected his purpose. If his weasel was allowed to rummage in your burrow, that is not his fault, and he is not punishable.”

“Ah, Provost,” said the girl plaintively, “what do you mean by that? It is quite true, and I will not deny it, that I conducted his weasel into my burrow—but why did I do so? By my oath, Sir, its head was so stiff, and its muzzle so hard, that I was sure that it would make a large cut, or two or three, on my belly, if I did not make haste and put it where it could do little harm—and that is what I did.”

You may fancy what a burst of laughter there was at the end of this trial, both from the judges and the public. The young man was discharged,—to continue his rabbit-hunting if he saw fit.

The girl was angry that he was not hanged on a high forked tree for having hung on her “low forks” (\*). But this anger and resentment did not last long, for as I heard afterwards on good authority, peace was concluded between them, and the youth had the right to ferret in the coney burrow whenever he felt inclined.

(\*) *A play upon words, which is not easily translatable, in allusion to the gallows.*



## Story the Twenty-Sixth.

### THE DAMSEL KNIGHT

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE FOQUESSOLES.

Of the loves of a young gentleman and a damsel, who tested the loyalty of the gentleman in a marvellous and courteous manner, and slept three nights with him without his knowing that it was not a man—as you will more fully hear hereafter.



N the duchy of Brabant—not so long ago but that the memory of it is fresh in the present day—happened a strange thing, which is worthy of being related, and is not unfit to furnish a story. And in order that it should be publicly known and reported, here is the tale.

In the household of a great baron of the said country there lived and resided a young, gracious, and kind gentleman, named Gerard, who was greatly in love with a damsel of the said household, named Katherine. And when he found opportunity, he ventured to tell her of his piteous case. Most people will be able to guess the answer he received, and therefore, to shorten matters, I omit it here.

## STORY THE TWENTY-SIXTH — THE DAMSEL KNIGHT. 26

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In due time Gerard and Katherine loved each other so warmly that there was but one heart and one will between them. This loyal and perfect love endured no little time—indeed two years passed away. Love, who blinds the eyes of his disciples, had so blinded these two that they did not know that this affection, which they thought secret, was perceived by every one; there was not a man or a woman in the chateau who was not aware of it—in fact the matter was so noised abroad that all the talk of the household was of the loves of Gerard and Katherine.

These two poor, deluded fools were so much occupied with their own affairs that they did not suspect their love affairs were discussed by others. Envious persons, or those whom it did not concern, brought this love affair to the knowledge of the master and mistress of the two lovers, and it also came to the ears of the father and mother of Katherine.

Katherine was informed by a damsel belonging to the household, who was one of her friends and companions, that her love for Gerard had been discovered and revealed both to her father and mother, and also to the master and mistress of the house.

“Alas, what is to be done, my dear sister and friend?” asked Katherine. “I am lost, now that so many persons know, or guess at, my condition. Advise me, or I am ruined, and the most unfortunate woman in the world,” and at these words her eyes filled with tears, which rolled down her fair cheeks and even fell to the edge of her robe.

Her friend was very vexed to see her grief, and tried to console her.

“My sister,” she said, “it is foolish to show such great grief; for, thank God, no one can reproach you with anything that touches your honour or that of your friends. If you have listened to the vows of a gentleman, that is not a thing forbidden by the Court of Honour, it is even the path, the true road, to arrive there. You have no cause for grief, for there is not a soul living who can bring a charge against you. But, at any rate, I should advise that, to stop chattering tongues which are discussing your love affairs, your lover, Gerard, should, without more ado, take leave of our lord and lady, alleging that he is to set out on a long voyage, or take part in some war now going on, and, under that excuse, repair to some house and wait there until God and Cupid have arranged matters. He will keep you informed by messages how he is, and you will do the same to him; and by that time the rumours will have ceased, and you can communicate with one another by letter until better times arrive. And do not imagine that your love will cease—it will be as great, or greater, than ever, for during a long time you will only hear from each other occasionally, and that is one of the surest ways of preserving love.”

The kind and good advice of this gentle dame was followed, for as soon as Katherine found means to speak to her lover, Gerard, she told him how the secret of their love had been discovered and had come to the knowledge of her father and mother, and the master and mistress of the house.

"And you may believe," she said, "that it did not reach that point without much talk on the part of those of the household and many of the neighbours. And since Fortune is not so friendly to us as to permit us to live happily as we began, but menaces us with further troubles, it is necessary to be fore-armed against them. Therefore, as the matter much concerns me, and still more you, I will tell you my opinion."

With that she recounted at full length the good advice which had been given by her friend and companion.

Gerard, who had expected a misfortune of this kind, replied;

"My loyal and dear mistress, I am your humble and obedient servant, and, except God, I love no one so dearly as you. You may command me to do anything that seems good to you, and whatever you order shall be joyfully and willingly obeyed. But, believe me, there is nothing left for me in the world when once I am removed from your much-wished-for presence. Alas, if I must leave you, I fear that the first news you will hear will be that of my sad and pitiful death, caused by your absence, but, be that as it may, you are the only living person I will obey, and I prefer rather to obey you and die, than live for ever and disobey you. My body is yours. Cut it, hack it, do what you like with it!"

You may guess that Katherine was grieved and vexed at seeing her lover, whom she adored more than anyone in the world, thus troubled. Had it not been for the virtue with which God had largely endowed her, she would have proposed to accompany him on his travels, but she hoped for happier days, and refrained from making such a proposal. After a pause, she replied;

"My friend you must go away, but do not forget her who has given you her heart. And that you may have courage in the struggle which is imposed on you, know that I promise you on my word that as long as I live I will never marry any man but you of my own free-will, provided that you are equally loyal and true to me, as I hope you will be. And in proof of this, I give you this ring, which is of gold enamelled with black tears. If by chance they would marry me to some one else, I will defend myself so stoutly that you will be pleased with me, and I will prove to you that I can keep my promise without flinching from it. And, lastly, I beg of you that wherever you may stop, you will send me news about yourself, and I will do the same."

"Ah, my dear mistress," said Gerard, "I see plainly that I must leave you for a time. I pray to God that he will give you more joy and happiness than I am likely to have. You have kindly given me, though I am not worthy of it, a noble and honourable promise, for which I cannot sufficiently thank you. Still less do I deserve it, but I venture in return to make a similar promise, begging most humbly and with all my heart, that my vow may have as great a weight as if it came from a much nobler man than I. Adieu, dearest lady. My eyes demand their turn, and prevent my tongue from speaking."

With these words he kissed her, and pressed her tightly to his bosom, and then each went away to think over his or her griefs.

God knows that they wept with their eyes, their hearts, and their heads, but ere they showed themselves, they concealed all traces of their grief, and put on a semblance of cheerfulness.

To cut matters short, Gerard did so much in a few days that he obtained leave of absence from his master—which was not very difficult, not that he had committed any fault, but owing to his love affair with Katherine, with which her friends were not best pleased, seeing that Gerard was not of such a good family or so rich as she was, and could not expect to marry her.

So Gerard left, and covered such a distance in one day that he came to Barrois, where he found shelter in the castle of a great nobleman of the country; and being safely housed he soon sent news of himself to the lady, who was very joyful thereat, and by the same messenger wrote to tell him of her condition, and the goodwill she bore him, and how she would always be loyal to him.

Now you must know that as soon as Gerard had left Brabant, many gentlemen, knights and squires, came to Katherine, desiring above all things to make her acquaintance, which during the time that Gerard had been there they had been unable to do, knowing that her heart was already occupied.

Indeed many of them demanded her hand in marriage of her father, and amongst them was one who seemed to him a very suitable match. So he called together many of his friends, and summoned his fair daughter, and told them that he was already growing old, and that one of the greatest pleasures he could have in the world was to see his daughter well married before he died. Moreover, he said to them;

“A certain gentleman has asked for my daughter’s hand, and he seems to me a suitable match. If your opinion agrees with mine, and my daughter will obey me, his honourable request will not be rejected.”

All his friends and relations approved of the proposed marriage, on account of the virtues, riches, and other gifts of the said gentleman. But when they asked the opinion of the fair Katherine, she sought to excuse herself, and gave several reasons for refusing, or at least postponing this marriage, but at last she saw that she would be in the bad books of her father, her mother, her relatives, friends, and her master and mistress, if she continued to keep her promise to her lover, Gerard.

At last she thought of a means by which she could satisfy her parents without breaking her word to her lover, and said,

“My dearest lord and father, I do not wish to disobey you in anything you may command, but I have made a vow to God, my creator, which I must keep. Now I have made a resolution and sworn in my heart to God that I would never marry unless He would of His mercy show me that that condition was necessary for the salvation of my poor soul. But as I do not wish to be a trouble to you, I am content to accept this condition of matrimony, or any other that you please, if you will first give me leave to make a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Nicolas at Varengeville (\*) which pilgrimage I vowed and promised to make before I changed my present condition.”

(\*) *A town of Lorraine, on the Meurthe, about six miles from Kancy. Pilgrims flocked thither from all parts to worship the relics of St. Nicolas.*

She said this in order that she might see her lover on the road, and tell him how she was constrained against her will.

Her father was rather pleased to hear the wise and dutiful reply of his daughter. He granted her request, and wished to at once order her retinue, and spoke to his wife about it when his daughter was present.

“We will give her such and such gentlemen, who with Ysabeau, Marguerite and Jehanneton, will be sufficient for her condition.”

“Ah, my lord,” said Katherine, “if it so please you we will order it otherwise. You know that the road from here to St. Nicolas is not very safe, and that when women are to be escorted great precautions must be taken. I could not go thus without great expense; moreover, the road is long, and if it happened that we lost either our goods or honour (which may God forfend) it would be a great misfortune. Therefore it seems good to me—subject to your good pleasure—that there should be made for me a man’s dress and that I should be escorted by my uncle, the bastard, each mounted on a stout horse. We should go much quicker, more safely, and with less expense, and I should have more confidence than with a large retinue.”

The good lord, having thought over the matter a little while, spoke about it to his wife, and it seemed to them that the proposal showed much common sense and dutiful feeling. So everything was prepared for their departure.

They set out on their journey, the fair Katherine and her uncle, the bastard, without any other companion. Katherine, who was dressed in the German fashion very elegantly, was the master, and her uncle, the bastard, was the serving man. They made such haste that their pilgrimage was soon accomplished, as far as St. Nicolas was concerned, and, as they were on their return journey-praising God for having preserved them, and talking over various matters Katherine said to her uncle,

“Uncle, you know that I am sole heiress to my father, and that I could bestow many benefits upon you, which I will most willingly do if you will aid me in a small quest I am about to undertake—that is to go to the castle of a certain lord of Barrois (whom she named) to see Gerard, whom you know. And, in order that when we return we may have some news to tell, we will demand

hospitality, and if we obtain it we will stop there for some days and see the country, and you need be under no fear but that I shall take care of my honour, as a good girl should."

The uncle, who hoped to be rewarded some day, and knew she was virtuous, vowed to himself that he would keep an eye upon her, and promised to serve her and accompany her wherever she wished. He was much thanked no doubt, and it was then decided that he should call his niece, Conrad.

They soon came, as they desired, to the wished-for place, and addressed themselves to the lord's major-domo, who was an old knight, and who received them most joyfully and most honourably.

Conrad asked him if the lord, his master, did not wish to have in his service a young gentleman who was fond of adventures, and desirous of seeing various countries?

The major-domo asked him whence he came, and he replied, from Brabant.

"Well then," said the major-domo, "you shall dine here, and after dinner I will speak to my lord."

With that he had them conducted to a fair chamber, and ordered the table to be laid, and a good fire to be lighted, and sent them soup and a piece of mutton, and white wine while dinner was preparing.

Then he went to his master and told him of the arrival of a young gentleman of Brabant, who wished to serve him, and the lord was content to take the youth if he wished.

To cut matters short, as soon as he had served his master, he returned to Conrad to dine with him, and brought with him, because he was of Brabant, the aforesaid Gerard, and said to Conrad;

"Here is a young gentleman who belongs to your country."

"I am glad to meet him," said Conrad.

"And you are very welcome," replied Gerard.

But he did not recognise his lady-love, though she knew him very well.

Whilst they were making each other's acquaintance, the meat was brought in, and each took his place on either hand of the major-domo.

The dinner seemed long to Conrad, who hoped afterwards to have some conversation with her lover, and expected also that she would soon be recognised either by her voice, or by the replies she made to questions concerning Brabant; but it happened quite otherwise, for during all the dinner, the worthy Gerard did not ask after either man or woman in all Brabant; which Conrad could not at all understand.

Dinner passed, and after dinner my lord engaged Conrad in his service; and the major-domo, who was a thoughtful, experienced man, gave instructions that as Gerard and Conrad came from the same place, they should share the same chamber.

After this Gerard and Conrad went off arm in arm to look at their horses, but as far as Gerard was concerned, if he talked about anything it was not Brabant. Poor Conrad—that is to say the fair Katherine—began to suspect that she was like forgotten sins, and had gone clean out of Gerard's mind; but she could not imagine why, at least, he did not ask about the lord and lady with whom she lived. The poor girl was, though she could not show it, in great distress of mind, and did not know what to do; whether to still conceal her identity, and test him by some cunning phrases, or to suddenly make herself known.

In the end she decided that she would still remain Conrad, and say nothing about Katherine unless Gerard should alter his manner.

The evening passed as the dinner had done, and when they came to their chamber, Gerard and Conrad spoke of many things, but not of the one subject pleasing to the said Conrad. When he saw that the other only replied in the words that were put into his mouth, she asked of what family he was in Brabant, and why he left there, and where he was when he was there, and he replied as it seemed good to him.

"And do you not know," she said, "such and such a lord, and such another?"

"By St. John, yes!" he replied.

Finally, she named the lord at whose castle she had lived; and he replied that he knew him well, but not saying that he had lived there, or ever been there in his life.

"It is rumoured," she said, "there are some pretty girls there. Do you know of any?"

"I know very little," he replied, "and care less. Leave me alone; for I am dying to go to sleep!"

"What!" she said. "Can you sleep when pretty girls are being talked about? That is a sign that you are not in love!"

He did not reply, but slept like a pig, and poor Katherine began to have serious doubts about him, but she resolved to try him again.

When the morrow came, each dressed himself, talking and chattering meanwhile of what each liked best—Gerard of dogs and hawks, and Conrad of the pretty girls of that place and Brabant.

After dinner, Conrad managed to separate Gerard from the others, and told him that the country of Barrois was very flat and ugly, but Brabant was quite different, and let him know that he (Conrad) longed to return thither.

"For what purpose?" asked Gerard. "What do you see in Brabant that is not here? Have you not here fine forests for hunting, good rivers, and plains as pleasant as could be wished for flying falcons, and plenty of game of all sorts?"

"Still that is nothing!" said Conrad. "The women of Brabant are very different, and they please me much more than any amount of hunting or hawking!"

"By St. John! they are quite another affair," said Gerard. "You are exceedingly amorous in your Brabant, I dare swear!"

"By my oath!" said Conrad, "it is not a thing that can be hidden, for I myself am madly in love. In fact my heart is drawn so forcibly that I fear I shall be forced to quit your Barrois, for it will not be possible for me to live long without seeing my lady love."

"Then it was a madness," said Gerard, "to have left her, if you felt yourself so inconstant."

"Inconstant, my friend! Where is the man who can guarantee that he will be constant in love. No one is so wise or cautious that he knows for certain how to conduct himself. Love often drives both sense and reason out of his followers."

The conversation dropped as supper time came, and was not renewed till they were in bed. Gerard would have desired nothing better than to go to sleep, but Conrad renewed the discussion, and began a piteous, long, and sad complaint about his ladylove (which, to shorten matters, I omit) and at last he said,

"Alas, Gerard, and how can you desire to sleep whilst I am so wide awake, and my soul is filled with cares, and regrets, and troubles. It is strange that you are not a little touched yourself, for, believe me, if it were a contagious disease you could not be so close to me and escape unscathed. I beg of you, though you do not feel yourself, to have some pity and compassion on me, for I shall die soon if I do not behold my lady-love."

"I never saw such a love-sick fool!" cried Gerard. "Do you think that I have never been in love? I know what it is, for I have passed through it the same as you—certainly I have! But I was never so love-mad as to lose my sleep or upset myself, as you are doing now. You are an idiot, and your love is not worth a doit. Besides do you think your lady is the same as you are? No, no!"

"I am sure she is," replied Conrad; "she is so true-hearted."

"Ah, you speak as you wish," said Gerard, "but I do not believe that women are so true as to always remain faithful to their vows; and those who believe in them are blockheads. Like you, I have loved, and still love. For, to tell you the truth, I left Brabant on account of a love affair, and when I left I was high in the graces of a very beautiful, good, and noble damsel, whom I quitted with much regret; and for no small time I was in great grief at not being able to see her—though I did not cease to sleep, drink, or eat, as you do. When I found that I was no longer able to see her, I cured myself by following Ovid's advice, for I had not been here long before I made the acquaintance of a pretty girl in the house, and so managed, that—thank God—she now likes me very much, and I love her. So that now I have forgotten the one I formerly loved, and only care for the one I now possess, who has turned my thoughts from my old love!"

"What!" cried Conrad. "Is it possible that, if you really loved the other, you can so soon forget her and desert her? I cannot understand nor imagine how that can be!"

"It is so, nevertheless, whether you understand it or not." "That is not keeping faith loyally," said Conrad. "As for me, I would rather die a thousand times, if that were possible, than be so false

to my lady. However long God may let me live, I shall never have the will, or even the lightest thought, of ever loving any but her."

"So much the greater fool you," said Gerard, "and if you persevere in this folly, you will never be of any good, and will do nothing but dream and muse; and you will dry up like the green herb that is cast into the furnace, and kill yourself, and never have known any pleasure, and even your mistress will laugh at you,—if you are lucky enough to be remembered by her at all."

"Well!" said Conrad. "You are very experienced in love affairs. I would beg of you to be my intermediary, here or elsewhere, and introduce me to some damsel that I may be cured like you."

"I will tell you what I will do," said Gerard. "Tomorrow I will speak to my mistress and tell her that we are comrades, and ask her to speak to one of her lady friends, who will undertake your business, and I do not doubt but that, if you like, you will have a good time, and that the melancholy which now bears you down will disappear—if you care to get rid of it."

"If it were not for breaking my vow to my mistress, I should desire nothing better," said Conrad, "but at any rate I will try it."

With that Gerard turned over and went to sleep, but Katherine was so stricken with grief at seeing and hearing the falsehood of him whom she loved more than all the world, that she wished herself dead and more than dead. Nevertheless, she put aside all feminine feeling, and assumed manly vigour. She even had the strength of mind to talk for a long time the next day with the girl who loved the man *she* had once adored; and even compelled her heart and eyes to be witnesses of many interviews and love passages that were most galling to her.

Whilst she was talking to Gerard's mistress, she saw the ring that she had given her unfaithful lover, but she was not so foolish as to admire it, but nevertheless found an opportunity to examine it closely on the girl's finger, but appeared to pay no heed to it, and soon afterwards left.

As soon as supper was over, she went to her uncle, and said to him;

"We have been long enough in Barrois! It is time to leave. Be ready to-morrow morning at daybreak, and I will be also. And take care that all our baggage is prepared. Come for me as early as you like."

"You have but to come down when you will," replied the uncle.

Now you must know that after supper, whilst Gerard was conversing with his mistress, she who had been his lady-love went to her chamber and began to write a letter, which narrated at full length the love affairs of herself and Gerard, also "the promises which they made at parting, how they had wished to marry her to another and how she had refused, and the pilgrimage that she had undertaken to keep her word and come to him, and the disloyalty and falsehood she had found in him, in word, act, and deed. And that, for the causes mentioned, she held herself free and disengaged from the promise she had formerly made. And that she was going to return to her own country and never wished to see him or meet him again, he being the falsest man who ever made vows to a woman. And as regards the ring that she had given him, that he had forfeited it by passing it into the hands of a third person. And if he could boast that he had lain three nights by her side, there was no harm, and he might say what he liked, and she was not afraid."

*Letter written by a hand you ought to know, and underneath Katherine etc., otherwise known as Conrad; and on the back, To the false Gerard etc.*

She scarcely slept all night, and as soon as she saw the dawn, she rose gently and dressed herself without awaking Gerard. She took the letter, which she had folded and sealed, and placed it in the sleeve of Gerard's jerkin; then in a vow voice prayed to God for him, and wept gently on account of the grief she endured on account of the falseness she had met with.

Gerard still slept, and did not reply a word. Then she went to her uncle, who gave her her horse which she mounted, and they left the country, and soon came to Brabant, where they were joyfully received, God knows.

You may imagine that all sorts of questions were asked about their adventures and travels, and how they had managed, but whatever they replied they took care to say nothing about their principal adventure.

But to return to Gerard. He awoke about 10 o'clock on the morning of the day when Katherine left, and looked to see if his companion Conrad was already risen. He did not know it was so late,

and jumped out of bed in haste to seek for his jerkin. When he put his arm in the sleeve, out dropped the letter, at which he was much astonished, for he did not remember putting it there.

At any rate, he picked it up, and saw that it was sealed, and had written on the back, *To the false Gerard*. If he had been astonished before, he was still more so now.

After a little while he opened it and saw the signature, *Katherine known as Conrad* etc.

He did not know what to think, nevertheless he read the letter, and in reading it the blood mounted to his cheeks, and his heart sank within him, so that he was quite changed both in looks and complexion.

He finished reading the letter the best way he could, and learned that his falseness had come to the knowledge of her who wished so well to him, and that she knew him to be what he was, not by the report of another person, but by her own eyes; and what touched him most to the heart was that he had lain three nights with her without having thanked her for the trouble she had taken to come so far to make trial of his love.

He champed the bit, and was wild with rage, when he saw how he had been mystified. After much thought, he resolved that the best thing to do was to follow her, as he thought he might overtake her.

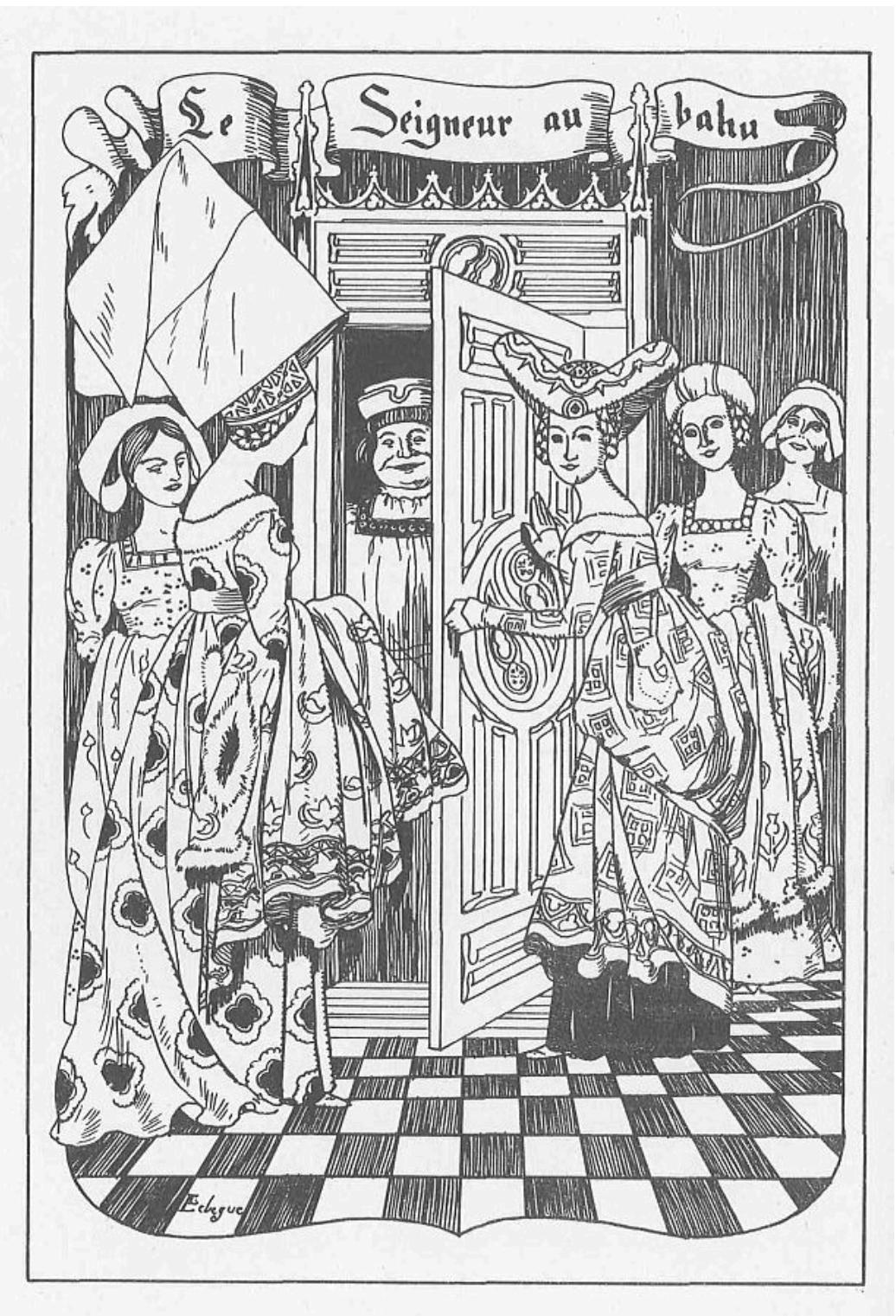
He took leave of his master and set out, and followed the trail of their horses, but did not catch them up before they came to Brabant, where he arrived opportunely on the day of the marriage of the woman who had tested his affection.

He wished to kiss her and salute her, and make some poor excuse for his fault, but he was not able to do so, for she turned her back on him, and he could not, all the time that he was there, find an opportunity of talking with her.

Once he advanced to lead her to the dance, but she flatly refused in the face of all the company, many of whom took note of the incident. For, not long after, another gentleman entered, and caused the minstrels to strike up, and advanced towards her, and she came down and danced with him.

Thus, as you have heard, did the false lover lose his mistress. If there are others like him, let them take warning by this example, which is perfectly true, and is well known, and happened not so very long ago.

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## Story the Twenty-Seventh.

### THE HUSBAND IN THE CLOTHES-CHEST

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE BEAUVOIR.

Of a great lord of this kingdom and a married lady, who, in order that she might be with her lover, caused her husband to be shut in a clothes-chest by her waiting women, and kept him there all the night, whilst she passed the time with her lover; and of the wagers made between her and the said husband, as you will find afterwards recorded.

**I**T is not an unusual thing, especially in this country, for fair dames and damsels to often and willingly keep company with young gentlemen, and the pleasant joyful games they have together, and the kind requests which are made, are not difficult to guess.

Not long ago, there was a most noble lord, who might be reckoned as one of the princes, but whose name shall not issue from my pen, who was much in the good graces of a damsel who was married, and of whom report spoke so highly that the greatest personage in the kingdom might have deemed himself lucky to be her lover.

**STORY THE TWENTY-SEVENTH —  
THE HUSBAND IN THE CLOTHES-  
CHEST. 27**

## By Monseigneur De Beauvoir.

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She would have liked to prove to him how greatly she esteemed him, but it was not easy; there were so many adversaries and enemies to be outwitted. And what more especially annoyed her was her worthy husband, who kept to the house and played the part of the cursed Dangier, (\*) and the lover could not find any honourable excuse to make him leave.

(\*) *Allegorical personage typifying jealousy, taken from Le Romaunt de la Rose.*

As you may imagine, the lover was greatly dissatisfied at having to wait so long, for he desired the fair quarry, the object of his long chase, more than he had ever desired anybody in all his life.

For this cause he continued to importune his mistress, till she said to him.

“I am quite as displeased as you can be that I can give you no better welcome; but, you know, as long as my husband is in the house he must be considered.”

“Alas!” said he, “cannot you find any method to abridge my hard and cruel martyrdom?”

She—who as has been said above, was quite as desirous of being with her lover as he was with her—replied;

“Come to-night, at such and such an hour, and knock at my chamber door. I will let you in, and will find some method to be freed from my husband, if Fortune does not upset our plans.”

Her lover had never heard anything which pleased him better, and after many gracious thanks,—which he was no bad hand at making—he left her, and awaited the hour assigned.

Now you must know that a good hour or more before the appointed time, our gentle damsel, with her women and her husband, had withdrawn to her chamber after supper; nor was her imagination idle, but she studied with all her mind how she could keep her promise to her lover. Now she thought of one means, now of another, but nothing occurred to her by which she could get rid of her cursed husband; and all the time the wished-for hour was fast approaching.

Whilst she was thus buried in thought, Fortune was kind enough to do her a good turn, and her husband a bad one.

He was looking round the chamber, and by chance he saw at the foot of the bed his wife’s clothes-chest. In order to make her speak, and arouse her from her reverie, he asked what that chest was used for, and why they did not take it to the wardrobe, or some other place where it would be more suitable.

“There is no need, Monseigneur,” said Madame; “no one comes here but us. I left it here on purpose, because there are still some gowns in it, but if you are not pleased, my dear, my women will soon take it away.”

“Not pleased?” said he. “No, I am not; but I like it as much here as anywhere else, since it pleases you; but it seems to me much too small to hold your gowns well without crumpling them, seeing what great and long trains are worn now.”

“By my word, sir,” said she, “it is big enough.”

“It hardly seems so,” replied he, “really; and I have looked at it well.”

“Well, sir,” said she, “will you make a bet with me?”

"Certainly I will," he answered; "what shall it be?"

"I will bet, if you like, half a dozen of the best shirts against the satin to make a plain petticoat, that we can put you inside the box just as you are."

"On my soul," said he, "I will bet I cannot get in."

"And I will bet you can."

"Come on!" said the women. "We will soon see who is the winner."

"It will soon be proved," said Monsieur, and then he made them take out of the chest all the gowns which were in it, and when it was empty, Madam and her women put in Monsieur easily enough.

Then there was much chattering, and discussion, and laughter, and Madam said;

"Well, sir; you have lost your wager! You own that, do you not?"

"Yes," said he, "you are right."

As he said these words, the chest was locked, and the girls all laughing, playing, and dancing, carried both chest and man together, and put it in a big cupboard some distance away from the chamber.

He cried, and struggled, and made a great noise; but it was no good, and he was left there all the night. He could sleep, or think, or do the best he could, but Madam had given secret instructions that he was not to be let out that day, because she had been too much bothered by him already.

But to return to the tale we had begun. We will leave our man in his chest, and talk about Madam, who was awaiting her lover, surrounded by her waiting women, who were so good and discreet that they never revealed any secrets. They knew well enough that the dearly beloved adorer was to occupy that night the place of the man who was doing penance in the clothes-chest.

They did not wait long before the lover, without making any noise or scare, knocked at the chamber door, and they knew his knock, and quickly let him in. He was joyfully received and kindly entertained by Madam and her maids; and he was glad to find himself alone with his lady love, who told him what good fortune God had given her, that is to say how she had made a bet with her husband that he could get into the chest, how he had got in, and how she and her women had carried him away to a cupboard.

"What?" said her lover. "I cannot believe that he is in the house. By my word, I believed that you had found some excuse to send him out whilst I took his place with you for a time."

"You need not go," she said. "He cannot get out of where he is. He may cry as much as he will, but there is no one here likes him well enough to let him out, and there he will stay; but if you would like to have him set free, you have but to say so."

"By Our Lady," said he, "if he does not come out till I let him out, he will wait a good long time."

"Well then, let us enjoy ourselves," said she, "and think no more about him."

To cut matters short, they both undressed, and the two lovers lay down in the fair bed, and did what they intended to do, and which is better imagined than described.

When day dawned, her paramour took leave of her as secretly as he could, and returned to his lodgings to sleep, I hope, and to breakfast, for he had need of both.

Madam, who was as cunning as she was wise and good, rose at the usual hour, and said to her women;

"It will soon be time to let out our prisoner. I will go and see what he says, and whether he will pay his ransom."

"Put all the blame on us," they said. "We will appease him."

"All right, I will do so," she said.

With these words she made the sign of the Cross, and went nonchalantly, as though not thinking what she was doing, into the cupboard where her husband was still shut up in the chest. And when he heard her he began to make a great noise and cry out, "Who is there? Why do you leave me locked up here?"

His good wife, who heard the noise he was making replied timidly, as though frightened, and playing the simpleton;

“Heavens! who is it that I hear crying?”

“It is I! It is I!” cried the husband.

“You?” she cried; “and where do you come from at this time?”

“Whence do I come?” said he. “You know very well, madam. There is no need for me to tell you—but what you did to me I will some day do to you,”—for he was so angry that he would willingly have showered abuse upon his wife, but she cut him short, and said;

“Sir, for God’s sake pardon me. On my oath I assure you that I did not know you were here now, for, believe me, I am very much astonished that you should be still here, for I ordered my women to let you out whilst I was at prayers, and they told me they would do so; and, in fact, one of them told me that you had been let out, and had gone into the town, and would not return home, and so I went to bed soon afterwards without waiting for you.”

“Saint John!” said he; “you see how it is. But make haste and let me out, for I am so exhausted that I can stand it no longer.”

“That may well be,” said she, “but you will not come out till you have promised to pay me the wager you lost, and also pardon me, or otherwise I will not let you out.”

“Make haste, for God’s sake! I will pay you—really.”

“And you promise?”

“Yes—on my oath!”

This arrangement being concluded, Madam opened the chest, and Monsieur came out, tired, cramped, and exhausted.

She took him by the arm, and kissed him, and embraced him as gently as could be, praying to God that he would not be angry.

The poor blockhead said that he was not angry with her, because she knew nothing about it, but that he would certainly punish her women.

“By my oath, sir,” said she, “they are well revenged upon you—for I expect you have done something to them.”

“Not I certainly, that I know of—but at any rate the trick they have played me will cost them dear.”

He had hardly finished this speech, when all the women came into the room, and laughed so loudly and so heartily that they could not say a word for a long time; and Monsieur, who was going to do such wonders, when he saw them laugh to such a degree, had not the heart to interfere with them. Madame, to keep him company, did not fail to laugh also. There was a marvellous amount of laughing, and he who had the least cause to laugh, laughed one of the loudest.

After a certain time, this amusement ceased, and Monsieur said;

“Mesdames, I thank you much for the kindness you have done me.”

“You are quite welcome, sir,” said one of the women, “and still we are not quits. You have given us so much trouble, and caused as so much mischief, that we owed you a grudge, and if we have any regret it is that you did not remain in the box longer. And, in fact, if it had not been for Madame you would still be there;—so you may take it how you will!”

“Is that so?” said he. “Well, well, you shall see how I will take it. By my oath I am well treated, when, after all I have suffered, I am only laughed at, and what is still worse, must pay for the satin for the petticoat. Really, I ought to have the shirts that were bet, as a compensation for what I have suffered.”

“By Heaven, he is right,” said the women. “We are on your side as to that, and you shall have them. Shall he not have them, Madame?”

“On what grounds?” said she. “He lost the wager.”

“Oh, yes, we know that well enough: he has no right to them,—indeed he does not ask for them on that account, but he has well deserved them for another reason.”

“Never mind about that,” said Madame. “I will willingly give the material out of love for you, mesdames, who have so warmly pleaded for him, if you will undertake to do the sewing.”

“Yes, truly, Madame.”

Like one who when he wakes in the morning has but to give himself a shake and he is ready, Monsieur needed but a bunch of twigs to beat his clothes and he was ready, and so he went to Mass; and Madame and her women followed him, laughing loudly at him I can assure you.

And you may imagine that during the Mass there was more than one giggle when they remembered that Monsieur, whilst he was in the chest (though he did not know it himself) had been registered in the book which has no name. (\*) And unless by chance this book falls into his hands, he will never,—please God—know of his misfortune, which on no account would I have him know. So I beg of any reader who may know him, to take care not to show it to him.

(\*) *The Book of Cuckolds.*





## Story the Twenty-Eighth.

### THE INCAPABLE LOVER

BY

MESSIRE MICHAUT DE CHANGY.

Of the meeting assigned to a great Prince of this kingdom by a damsel who was chamber-woman to the Queen; of the little feats of arms of the said Prince, and of the neat replies made by the said damsel to the Queen concerning her Greyhound, which had been purposely shut out of the room of the said Queen, as you shall shortly hear.



In the time of the most renowned and eloquent Boccaccio, the adventure which forms the subject of my tale had come to his knowledge, I do not doubt but that he would have added it to his stories of great men who met with bad fortune. For I think that no nobleman ever had a greater misfortune to bear than the good lord (whom may God pardon!) whose adventure I will relate, and whether his ill fortune is worthy to be in the aforesaid books of Boccaccio, I leave those who hear it to judge.

The good lord of whom I speak was, in his time, one of the great princes of this kingdom, apparelled and

## By Messire Miohaut De Changy.

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The good lord of whom I speak was, in his time, one of the great princes of this kingdom, appareled and furnished with all that befits a nobleman; and amongst his other qualities was this,—that never was man more destined to be a favourite with the ladies.

Now it happened to him at the time when his fame in this respect most flourished, and everybody was talking about him, that Cupid, who casts his darts wherever he likes, caused him to be smitten by the charms of a beautiful, young, gentle and gracious damsel, who also had made a reputation second to no other of that day on account of her great and unequalled beauty and her good manners and virtues, and who, moreover, was such a favourite with the Queen of that country that she shared the royal bed on the nights when the said Queen did not sleep with the king.

This love affair, I must tell you, had advanced to such a point that each only desired time and place to say and do what would most please both. They were many days considering how to find a convenient opportunity, and at last, she—who was as anxious for the welfare of her lover as she was for the safety of her own reputation—thought of a good plan, of which she hastened to inform him, saying as follows;

“My dearest friend, you know that I sleep with the Queen, and that it is not possible for me—unless I would spoil everything—to resign that honour and position which the noblest lady of the land would think herself proud and happy to obtain. So that, though I would like to please you and do your pleasure, I would remain on good terms with her, and not desert her who can and does give me all the advancement and honour in the world. I do not suppose that you would have me act otherwise.”

“No, by my soul, dearest,” replied the worthy lord; “but at any rate I would beg you that in serving your mistress your devoted lover should not be forgotten, and that you do for him all that lies in your power, for he would rather gain your love and good-will than aught else in the world.”

“This is what I will do for you, Monseigneur,” said she. “The Queen, as you know, has a greyhound of which she is very fond, that sleeps in her chamber. I will find means to shut it out of the room without her knowledge, and when everybody has retired, I will jump out of bed, run to the reception room, and unbolt the door. Then, when you think that the Queen is in bed, you must come quietly, and enter the reception room and close the door after you. There you will find the greyhound, who knows you well enough, and will let you approach it; pull its ears and make it cry out, and when the Queen hears that, I expect that she will make me get out of bed at once to let it in. Then I will come to you, and fail me not, if ever you would speak to me again.”

“My most dear and loyal sweetheart,” said Monseigneur, “I thank you all I can. Be sure that I will fail not to be there.”

Then he rose and went away, and the lady also; each thinking and desiring how to carry out the proposed plan.

What need of a long story? The greyhound wanted to come into the chamber of his mistress at the usual time, as it had been accustomed, but the damsel had condemned it to banishment, and it was quickly made to beat a retreat. The Queen went to bed without noticing the absence of the dog, and soon afterwards there came to keep her company, the gentle damsel, who was only waiting to hear the greyhound cry out as the signal for the battle.

It was not long before the worthy lord set to work, and soon managed to reach the chamber where the greyhound was sleeping. He felt for it, with his foot or with his hand, until he found it, then he took it by the ears and made it cry aloud two or three times.

The Queen, who heard it, soon knew that it was her greyhound, and thought that it wanted to come in. She called the damsels, and said;

“My dear, my greyhound is howling outside. Get up, and let it in!”

“Willingly, madam,” said the damsels, and as she awaited the battle, the day and hour of which she had herself appointed, she only armed herself with her chemise, and in that guise, came to the door and opened it, and soon met with him who was awaiting her.

He was so delighted and so surprised to see his ladylove so beautiful, and so well-prepared for the encounter, that he lost his strength and sense, and had not force enough left to draw his dagger, and try whether it could penetrate her cuirass. Of kissing, and cuddling, and playing with her breasts, he could do plenty; but for the grand operation—nihil.

So the fair damsels was forced to return without leaving him that which he could not gain by force of arms. But when she would quit him, he tried to detain her by force and by soft speeches, but she dared not stay, so she shut the door in his face, and came back to the Queen, who asked her if she had let the greyhound in? And she said, “No, because she could not find it though she had looked well for it.”

“Oh, well” said the Queen, “go to bed. It will be all right.”

The poor lover was very dissatisfied with himself, and thought himself dishonoured and disgraced, for he had up till then had such confidence in himself that he believed he could in less than one hour have tackled three ladies, and come off every time with honour.

At last his courage returned, and he said to himself that if he ever were so fortunate as to find another such opportunity with his sweetheart, she should not escape as she did the previous time.

Thus animated and spurred on by shame and desire, he again took the greyhound by the ears, and made it cry out much louder than it had before.

Awakened by this cry, the Queen again sent her damsels, who opened the door as before, but had to return to her mistress without getting any more pleasure than she had the first time.

A third time did the poor gentleman do all in his power to tumble her, but the devil a bit could he find a lance to encounter her with, though she awaited his onslaught with a firm foot. And when she saw that she could not have her basket pierced, and that he could not lay his lance in rest, whatever advantage she gave him, she knew that the joust had come to nothing, and had a very poor opinion of the jouster.

She would no longer stay with him for all that he could say or do. She wished to return to the chamber, but her lover held her by force and said;

“Alas, sweetheart, stay a little longer, I pray!”

“I cannot,” she said: “let me go! I have stayed too long already, considering the little I got by it,” and with that she turned towards the chamber, but he followed her and tried to detain her.

When she saw that—to pay him out, and also hoodwink the Queen—she called out loud,

“Get out! get out! dirty beast that you are! By God! you shall not come in here, dirty beast that you are!” and so saying she closed the door.

The Queen, who heard it, asked,

“To whom are you speaking, my dear?”

“To this dirty dog, madam, who has given me such trouble to look for him. He was lying quite flat, and with his nose on the ground, hidden under a bench, so that I could not find him. And when I did find him he would not get up for anything that I could do. I would willingly have put him in, but he would not deign to lift up his head, so, in disgust, I have shut the door upon him and left him outside.”

“You did quite right, my dear,” said the Queen. “Come to bed, and go to sleep!”

Such, as you have heard, was the bad luck of this noble lord; and since he could not when his lady would, I believe that since then, when he had the power, his lady’s will was not to be had.



## Story the Twenty-Ninth.

### THE COW AND THE CALF

BY

MONSEIGNEUR.

Of a gentleman to whom—the first night that he was married, and after he had but tried one stroke—his wife brought forth a child, and of the manner in which he took it, and of the speech that he made to his companions when they brought him the caudle, as you shall shortly hear.



T is not a hundred years ago since a young gentleman of this country wished to know and experience the joys of matrimony, and—to cut matters short—the much-desired day of his marriage duly came.

After much good cheer and the usual amusements, the bride was put to bed, and a short time afterwards her husband followed, and lay close to her, and without delay duly began the assault on her fortress. With some trouble he entered in and gained the stronghold, but you must understand that he did not complete the conquest without accomplishing many feats of arms which it would take long to enumerate; for before he came to the donjon

**STORY THE TWENTY-NINTH — THE  
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When he was master of the place, he broke his lance, and ceased the assault. But the fair damsels when she saw herself at the mercy of her husband, and how he had foraged the greater part of her manor, wished to show him a prisoner whom she held confined in a secret place,—or to speak plainly she was delivered on the spot, after this first encounter, of a fine boy; at which her husband was so ashamed and so astonished that he did not know what to do except to hold his tongue.

Out of kindness and pity, he did all that he possibly could for both mother and child, but, as you may believe, the poor woman could not restrain from uttering a loud cry when the child was born. Many persons heard this cry, and believed that it was “the cry of the maidenhead,” (\*) which is a custom of this country.

(\*) *A singular custom which obliged the bride to utter a loud cry when she lost her virginity, and to which the groomsmen replied by bringing a large bowl of caudle or some invigorating drink into the bed chamber. From some verses written by Clement Marot on the marriage of the Duke of Ferrara to Princess Rénée, it would appear that the custom existed at the Court of France.*

Immediately all the gentlemen in the house where the bridegroom resided, came and knocked at the door of the chamber, and brought the caudle; but though they knocked loudly they received no reply, for the bride was in a condition in which silence is excusable, and the bridegroom had not much to chatter about.

“What is the matter?” cried the guests. “Why do you not open the door? If you do not make haste we will break it open; the caudle we have brought you will be quite cold;” and they began to knock louder than ever.

But the bridegroom would not have uttered a word for a hundred francs; at which those outside did not know what to think, for he was not ordinarily a silent man. At last he rose, and put on a dressing-gown he had, and let in his friends, who soon asked him whether the caudle had been earned, and what sort of a time he had had? Then one of them laid the table-cloth, and spread the banquet, for they had everything prepared, and spared nothing in such cases. They all sat round to eat, and the bridegroom took his seat in a high-backed chair placed near his bed, looking very stupid and pitiful as you may imagine. And whatever the others said, he did not answer a word, but sat there like a statue or a carved idol.

“What is the matter?” cried one. “You take no notice of the excellent repast that our host has provided. You have not said a single word yet.”

“Marry!” said another, “he has no jokes ready.”

“By my soul!” said another, “marriage has wondrous properties. He has but been married an hour and he has lost his tongue. If he goes on at that rate there will soon be nothing left of him.”

To tell the truth, he had formerly been known as a merry fellow, fond of a joke, and never uttered a word but a jest; but now he was utterly cast down.

The gentlemen drank to the bride and bridegroom, but devil a drop would either of them quaff in return; the one was in a violent rage, and the other was far from being at ease.

"I am not experienced in these affairs," said a gentleman, "but it seems we must feast by ourselves. I never saw a man with such a grim-looking face, and so soon sobered by a woman. You might hear a pin drop in his company. Marry! his loud jests are small enough now!"

"I drink to the bridegroom," said another, but the bridegroom neither drank, eat, laughed, or spoke. Nevertheless, after some time that he had been both scolded and teased by his friends, like a wild boar at bay, he retorted;

"Gentlemen, I have listened for some time to your jokes and reproofs. I would like you to understand that I have good reason to reflect and keep silent, and I am sure that there is no one here but would do the same if he had the same reasons that I have. By heavens! if I were as rich as the King of France, or the Duke of Burgundy, or all the princes of Christendom, I should not be able to provide that which, apparently, I shall *have* to provide. I have but touched my wife once, and she has brought forth a child! Now if each time that I begin again she does the same, how shall I be able to keep my family?"

"What? a child?" said his friends.

"Yes, yes! Really a child! Look here!" and he turned towards the bed and lifted up the clothes and showed them.

"There!" said he. "There is the cow and the calf! Am I not well swindled?"

Many of his friends were much astonished, and quite excused their host's conduct, and went away each to his own home. And the poor bridegroom abandoned his newly-delivered bride the first night, fearing that she would do the same another time, and not knowing what would become of him if so.

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## Story the Thirtieth.

### THE THREE CORDELIERS

BY

MONSIEUR DE BEAUVOIR.

Of three merchants of Savoy who went on a pilgrimage to St. Anthony in Vienne (<sup>1</sup>) and who were deceived and cuckolded by three Cordeliers who slept with their wives. And how the women thought they had been with their husbands, and how their husbands came to know of it, and of the steps they took, as you shall shortly hear.



T is as true as the Gospel, that three worthy merchants of Savoy set out with their wives to go on a pilgrimage to St. Anthony of Vienne.

And in order to render their journey more devout and more agreeable to God and St. Anthony, they determined that from the time they left their houses, and all through the journey, they would not sleep with their wives, but live in continence, both going and returning.

They arrived one night in the town, where they found

(<sup>1</sup>) This according to M. Lacroix is the old town of La Mothe St. Didier in Dauphiné, which took the name of Saint Antoine on account of the relics of the Saint, which were brought there in the 11th century.

### STORY THE THIRTIETH — THE THREE CORDELIERS

By Monsieur de Beauvoir