The Inn of the Well Beloved

—BY—

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It was the day after Cahors surrendered to Navarre, and it took five days and nights of the devil's own work, but was over at last.

Now the Huguenots were jubilant, since they no longer feared the heavy handed dandies who had garrisoned Cahors for the Valois. M. De Vezin, the Governor, had perished, swearing cheerfully, as became a gallant gentleman and a man of fashion; while the walls were wrecked and the streets were narrow lanes, where violence, rape and murder had given the devil some of the pleasantest hours of a long and rather melancholy existence. Most of the garrison were dead, for they fought earnestly, and the wounded endeavored to crawl into the breaches in the walls that their bodies might hinder the onset of the Bearnaise.

There was a lull while the besiegers rested before taking the last resisting spot in the town, and this barricade was tottering, and six cavaliers were seated behind it repairing the rents in their powder-blackened clothing; the wall in front was hopeless. They glanced about the ruined city which Henri Trois, King of France, had intrusted to their care.

"Messieurs," said De Sarbonne, who was disgracefully dirty, "we have fought because it was our duty; secondly, because we hate this little King of Navarre, who has grown so tall in the last five days, and we have fought because we are young and like it. But now," he continued, looking gloomily at his five companions, "we are tired and the King is so busy with his dogs and his prayers that he has forgotten us. Vezin—may the Blessed Virgin rest his soul!—is dead and we are hungry, which is more uncomfortable; so we will call to these persistent gentlemen, who have hunted us through every street in Cahors, and tell them that we will surrender, and they shall invite us to dinner. I have eaten nothing but a rat since yesterday. Think of it! Decidedly we must give up."

"We have a horse," suggested Carbonnel, who was arranging his tattered costume as tastefully as it permitted.

"Diable! Can we all ride on the one poor beast? And, besides, we will have an easier time with Navarre than hiding in the country, for we have ill used every other man we would meet, and they would run their knives in us as if we were pigs."

The cavaliers nodded a mournful conviction, and De Sarbonne continued:

"Let us trust Navarre, for he is not a bad fellow, but he wanted Cahors. They say that he would not sleep at night, but awoke twenty times, crying out: 'Cahors! Cahors!' Then what would you have, my friends? A man must sleep, and, besides, the town was part of his wife's dowry, which the King of France refused to give him; hence he has taken it, curse him!"

"Then we will surrender," decided five gentlemen. And they rose and stretched out their arms to confirm the affair by a handclasp. But as only five were there, they turned to see who was the last to deny Cahors to Henri de Bourbon.

"Hey, chevalier," cried Carbonnel, addressing a tall cavalier, whose rich attire was torn and stained in many places. "Is it that you would fight the enemy single-handed?"

The chevalier De Vernieul smiled as he thoughtfully scratched his ear with his dagger, and answered them as he thrust it back into its velvet scabbard:

"It is not so bad as that, Monsieur, but I may not surrender to him, for surely you know," he said, appealing to De Sarbonne, "that I cannot yield to Navarre."

"It is true, but I had forgotten it," said he. "He hates you because of the little Ni-ni, the miller's wench, who refused him for your sake, and he tried to kill you then. She was charming, such red lips, such strong, white teeth, and her hair was black as the night, and over it hung the white cloud of the mill. She could shoulder you a sack of flour as well as her brother, the little rascal with the crooked legs, whom De Vezin hung because he was drunk and fell through the box hedge around Madame De Vezin's pavilion. Sang Dieu! such an affair with Navarre makes your life worth about three crowns."

The others nodded, for they had heard of all this, but had forgotten it after they had laughed at the chagrin of the King of Bearn; but at present their mirth lacked the ring of true merriment. De Vernieul rose and shook out the short red military cloak which he had laid on a charred timber and used as a seat, and came close to them:

"You see that you yield," he said, "and I must fight alone the last of them that were with me."

It appeared to him that he could die contentedly after killing all that he might, and his world would sigh, perhaps, when they heard that the Chevalier de Vernieul lay alone facing the living and the dead behind the last barrier of the Cahors which had held for the King of France. Decidedly, it would sound well, and it was better to die gloriously than to live unhappily.

Now, the chevalier was unhappy since Yeseult de Mirapoix refused to love him, for this had surprised and then annoyed him until the annoyance became an actual pain and the caprice a real love. She was a Huguenot, but a woman; and, since the hatred of De Bourbon forbade him to give quarter, he would perish and in a way which would atone for his living. As he glanced over the city wall and one forest of Dordogne he remembered how he had attempted to take her in his arms, but she drew away and he failed to press her, for he wanted her love and not a reluctant caress. When he had thought of it for a moment he turned to the waiting five.

"Yes, messieurs, I will stay here alone; for, after all, it does not matter, and the prospect appears to me interesting."

"You are wrong to insult us, sir," said De Sarbonne gravely. "We will stay here and die also, since God wills it."

"Yes, but the horse?" murmured Carbonnel, again getting a word.

"Curse the horse!" cried De Sarbonne in a fury. "We will eat steaks off him, for it is disagreeable to die fasting."

"Why may not the chevalier ride away on him," demanded the other, timidly. "It will not be pleasant, but it is better than getting one's throat cut in this hole."

"Parfandious!" swore De Sarbonne, "that is true and I had not thouhgt of it. Come, chevalier," he continued, leading him to the horse, fastened to the wall of Cahors, just back of the barricade.

Eugene submitted and mounted, nodding farewell, and reaching the walltop over the ruins heaped against it he leaped down ten feet to the ground outside the city. The horse threatened to shatter into fragments, but he managed to retain his integrity, and De Vernieul made for the woods to the north of Dordogne, while the five laughed heartily and turned toward the camp of Navarre, where the braying of trumpets announced the renewal of the assault.

De Vernieul rode for three hours and was about three leagues from Dordogne and ten leagues northwest from Cahors. Here he paused and meditated, for he dared not ride through the town, because the bourgeois were Huguenots to a man, and prayed daily that their partisans might drink a little Catholic blood in return for the crimson maelstrom of St. Bartholomew.

A lark sang in the wood to his right, while a whippoorwill spoke further north, and a hind sprang across the road, where a minute later two hounds bayed clearly and leaped after. She had passed so closely that the chevalier's horse reared with his forefeet above the little animal's back, and her face was white, shading into a flaky brown where the neck was set into the shoulders.

De Vernieul watched for the hunters, for should they recognize him it meant a fatal fight, since his horse was too weak to attempt flight, and, besides, it was not to his taste. He had yielded at Cahors and fled rather than cause the death of his five companions, for they refused to surrender unless he escaped. He would have given much to see Navarre ride out the wood after the fleeting hind.

No one came. Evidently the gentlemen of Guienne were with the King at Cahors, and the dogs, tiring of inaction, pursued the deer of their own volition. The horse ambled slowly and stopped to nibble the heavy moss off a great beech which swung a giant arm across the road. Deep into the forest he could see the dew glistening here and there, for the wood was thick and every path ran but a rod or so, only to end in a pool or ravine, or else the rest of the path lay up the trunk of a great oak which dammed its progress. The road itself was hot in places, and at intervals the wind soughed and moved the arboreal covering of the Dordogne valley. From the heart of the wood there swept across the narrow ribbon of open clay which made the road soft fragrantness of thyme and violet, and a cool greenness as if inside the wood the earth was still young and of great hopefulness.

Suddenly the horse dropped dead before he could get away from him, for the brute's heart had burst in his body, and the chevalier cursed his horse for dying while in his service. He knew the country well. Up the straight road to the left was the chateau De Vesny, while the lane massed with roses went to the home of the Mirapoix. Yeseult was there, but her brother was probably with Navarre; for on every side were adherents to De Bourbon and the reformed religion.

The chevalier knew his life was seriously threatened, but he wished to see Yeseult de Mirapoix, so he loosened his sword and ventured up the lane. In a few moments the leaves ahead nooded, and, slipping into the wayside bushes, he saw Mlle. De Mirapoix approaching, and with her her page, a lad of fifteen and as mischievous as a six-weeks puppy.

"Ciel!" she cried, as he stepped in front of her, "how you startled me! Do you expect to be more welcome if you first frighten me out of my wits?"

"Pardon me, mademoiselle," said the chevalier, "but, as you can see by my costume, there has been fighting at Cahors."

"And, having won, you are come to tell me of it," she cried with vexation. "It was just like you, chevalier."

"You are wrong, Mademoiselle Yeseult," he answered, "for we were beaten, and I have come to say adieu. I am for Paris, if, luckily, I may reach there."

"And what of the garrison, monseiur?" she asked curiously, for she had known many of them.

"All save six are dead, and the other five have surrendered to your champion," he answered, gloomily, for defeat pressed heavily upon him.

"Then you alone escaped," murmured the girl, quietly, for the magnitude of the slaughter subdued her joy in the victory.

"You are right, mademoiselle; as for myself. I could not surrender, for Henri hates me too greatly for me to expect an honorable reception in the camp of Navarre."

"Yes," she said slowly, "I remember, you were more fortunate than he, and I congratulate you, chevalier, for it is not every one who is successful against kings."

"You are very kind, mademoiselle," said De Vernieul sadly, for it was evident that she knew of the folly of a moment and that it would ruin his life, yet he had gone into it reluctantly, urged by his companions.

" 'Mon dieu!' they had cried when he had showed his unwillingness, 'it is your duty as a Frenchman to defeat Navarre at night as well as when the sun shines. Otherwise, when he is drunk he will boast of beating the most noted of our gallants.' "

Therefore he had submitted, for after all it was only a matter of taste which had withheld him, and he looked at her now with a hopelessness that in itself heightened his desire.

For Mlle. De Mirapoix was dark with a clear paleness more beautiful than any dead blonde whiteness, and she was tall, but not too tall for perfect grace. He noticed, as he glanced at her, that her head reached to his shoulder, so that, could he have held her close, the beatings of his heart would have told its love to her ears. She wore the hideous costume of the time, swelling with the great hooped skirt with grace, and it is doubtful if Venus could have done the same. She looked at him questioningly with her serious, darkly glowing eyes, and one hand, bare of all rings, pushed back the black masses of her hair.

De Vernieul sighed as he thought of the other one, the mill girl, whose lusty beauty had caused such bitter hate between a king who sought and the man who possessed it. How Yeseult had learned of it he could not guess, but it would have seemed strange if he had wronged her for a queen. He fancied that he understood now why she had refused him so determinedly when he last saw her. He had never told her in words that he loved her, but he had whispered the thought in a thousand ways and places to her woman's mind and heart.

The reason which had appealed to him in the matter seemed nothing in her eyes, for what if the King of Navarre had been his rival—Henri's taste in such matters was notoriously bad. He had not been bound to her in any formal way, but none the less it appeared to her an unpardonable offense.

Yeseult arranged the stiffened ruff about her throat, for its muslin points irritated her soft skin, and moreover she was growing tired of the silence and wondered of what he could be thinking. The hopelessness of his dark eyes softened her, yet she would not show it to him, and, although the fact of his danger moved her, still the reason for it hurt her greatly. However, she would help him now, and—then she would not see him for a long time, but the thought was painful. At any rate, she must save him from the King, and, perhaps, the Bearnaise horsemen were only a little way behind them.

She pulled a few of the roses and negligently crushed them in her hands, so that they died while clinging to the destroying fingers, and their last breath was sweet with the fragrance of their yellow hearts.

"How did you reach here?" she asked, at length.

"On my horse, who is dead in the road yonder," replied the chevalier, gazing with compassion at the bruised flowers; evidently those little hands could be carelessly cruel.

"Do you realize that you will be killed if you are discovered?" Yeseult demanded.

"It is probable."

"It is certain, and you must fly at once; do you hear me, monsieur?"

"Why fly?" he asked, laconically, as he stood watching a toad climb down a sun-warmed rock.

"To save your life," and she looked at him curiously, wondering if it was because of her indifference that he cared so little for his life.

"Believe me, mademoiselle, it is not worth the trouble."

"But why are you so unhappy? You are young, rich—I had almost said loved," and she looked at him mischievously, but there was a warmer light in her eyes.

"Ah, say it, Yeseult!" he exclaimed, catching her hand.

She looked about her anxiously, but turned again to the chevalier, for the page had wandered off in play and no one was to be seen.

"You have been beaten," she said, "and are in your enemy's country without food or a horse; and, finally, you are pursued by the King, who seeks your life because of a woman's favor."

"It is true," he admitted, low and regretfully.

"Then a woman's wit shall save you, if it be possible," she said, and whistled shrilly for the page.

"I thank mademaiselle," he said, a trifle coldly; for it was not his life that he wanted from her hands, but something infinitely more precious; but she caught the meaning of his manner and it pleased her much.

"Come," she said, "we must hurry, for I shall take you to the inn of the 'Well Beloved' a league from here toward Dordogne; do you know it? The host is a Huguenot," she continued, after he had bowed assent; "but he will do what I bid him; it is because he professes to worship me as a wonderful sort of being."

"Of course," said De Vernieul, to whom nothing seemed more natural than this feeling of the tavern keeper.

"I will hide you there to-night," explained the girl, "and in the early morning I will bring you a horse and a costume, and you can obtain sufficient food at the inn to last until you reach Chalus. There, as you know, you will be safe," and then she rose from the bank where she had been sitting.

"Now, it is all planned, and"—she smiled at him—"you may kiss—no, not my face, if you please, but my hand," and he was forced to stop, disappointed, while his face clouded, but then he joined in her laugh.

"So be it!" he said, and kissed the slender fingers.

They went through the forest, and after an hour's hurried walking they reached the back of the inn of the "Well Beloved," and here she sent the page, who returned with the host. Mine host was very fat, about fifty years of age, and he adored Mlle. De Mirapoix. He bent his knee before her, and at the same time chided her for coming so far through the forest with naught but that imp of a page. He pretended not to notice M. De Vernieul, and that personage felt a strong desire to kick the impertinent fellow, but he knew that his life was dependent to a great extent on his complaisance, so he said nothing, but registered a hope. The business was related, and after many protests the host consented to shelter De Vernieul for the night.

"Adieu, chevalier," said Yeseult. "At dawn my page will bring you the things you need."

Apparently she would have nothing more to do with the matter than if she had helped any other gentleman in distress; but, proud as other women had found him, the chevalier could not let her go without some hope for a future meeting.

"Where shall I have the pleasure of seeing you again?" he asked humbly.

"I shall be in Paris when Henri of Navarre is crowned King of France," said Mlle. De Mirapoix, and she left the host and De Vernieul together and vanished with her page into the wood.

"Come," said the innkeeper, ungraciously.

The chevalier was shown up into the garret, where he disturbed many generations of mice, which, when he had settled down to eat his dinner, sat about and watched him with great interest. The day wore on toward evening, and the chevalier, mad with ennui, descended the ladder and went down to the living room of the inn, where the landlord found him when he came in from the stables and protested vainly.

"I will not be cooped up in that infernal cage," said the nobleman.

"Then the consequences will be yours," retorted the tavern keeper. But the chevalier continued looking over the lower half of the oaken outer door and wondering when he should next see Yeseult de Mirapoix.

He loved her, that much he knew; but did she love him? It was strange that she should relent toward him when he was prescribed and hunted. "But, after all," thought the chevalier, "women are often so."

Suddenly a body of horsemen dashed out of the wood opposite the inn, and, entering hastily, they called for wine. It happened so quickly that De Vernieul barely managed to slip behind an old sideboard in one corner, and the conversation soon showed him that his life was hanging on the merest thread.

"Shall we stay here to-night, sire?" asked some one who leaned on the sideboard two feet from De Verhieul's head.

"Yes, Ventre St. Gris, for I am tired to death," replied the harsh voice of the King of Navarre.

Now De Vernieul was brave, every gentleman in France was sure of that, and he would have died cheerfully at Cahors, sword in hand and with his face toward the foe, but his capture here meant no chance to fight, but only a rope and a few muttered prayers in the dim and chilly light of the dawn. So, despite his courage, he prayed earnestly that Navarre and his friends would depart without suspecting his nearness.

"Was the body of De Vernieul found?" asked Henri.

"I regret to say no, sire, although a careful search was ordered," replied the Vicomte De Turenne.

"Then he has escaped; curse him!" growled the king.

"So it seems, but we could get nothing from the five gentlemen who surrendered."

"I thought that he might have been at Mirapoix," interposed Gascoigne.

"Why?"

"I have heard that he was mademoiselle's lover, sire."

"Mille tonnerres!" exploded Henri, "but the fellow is a Turk, a pagan Turk; he will leave nothing for the rightful owners of the province; but are you sure, Gascoigne?"

"Be comforted, sire, since he was not the first."

"Ah! perhaps you also were so fortunate, my little Gascoigne?" asked the king, banteringly, for he did not believe a word of it.

"Sire, it would be indiscreet in me to say so," replied the little Gascoigne, who was five feet ten, and so three inches taller than Henri himself.

"It is true then?" demanded the King with an impatient oath.

"Who knows?" answered the baron, who was lying wonderfully, desiring to impress the King with his gallantry.

Gascoigne fell, knocked over by a terrible blow, and De Vernieul appeared from behind the sideboard, perfectly mad from hearing Mlle. de Mirapoix traduced.

"I know, sire," he said, bowing politely to the King, "and I know that the baron lies, and, what is worse, he lies unskillfully; he should have looked behind the furniture before slandering a virtuous woman."

"De Vernieul!" cried the group of gentlemen, and Navarre smiled cruelly.

"At your service," he replied, saluting coldly several with whom he was acquainted.

"Monsieur, do you know that you have only a short time to live?" asked the King.

"I feared so, sire," replied the chevalier, "but long enough, at least, in order to give the Baron de Gascoigne the satisfaction which that blow demands."

"Yes, he must fight me first, sire," cried the baron, who was prevented from attacking the chevalier by two gentlemen crossing their swords in front of him.

"He wishes to cheat the executioner," murmured De Bourbon, who saw in this duel a plan on the part of the chevalier to avoid the ignominy of the death which he had prepared for him.

"Be assured, sire," replied De Vernieul, perfectly understanding the little by-play on the part of the King. "I will die contentedly after killing the baron, who, if he fences as badly as he lies, will not be much trouble."

The King nodded a reluctant assent. "Very well, amuse yourselves," said he, with a shrug.

The others grouped themselves about Navarre, and the two cavaliers, after saluting, fought with mad energy. The two adversaries were strong contrasts, both as to method of fence and their physical characteristics. Each was angry; for the baron smarted under the shame of the blow which the other had given him, and his arm trembled from the intensity of his desire to kill. He was red with anger, while on the other hand the chevalier was white from hate.

Gascoigne was strong, with the strength of the bull, and had the contest been with nature's weapons, his opponent would have stood but little chance of victory. Now, the baron fenced from childhood, and knew nearly all the tricks of the art, and this his adversary discovered after a few passes; the pressure of his blade was terrible in its aggressivness, and the chevalier was forced to retreat, while Henri called out:

"Do not kill him, Gascoigne; remember that he belongs to me."

"Never fear, sire," he replied, but his breath was rather thick, for he was much too fat and his condition told against him.

The chevalier breathed, on his part, as easily as if he were asleep, for he lacked the other's fault of gluttony. The larger man felt the need of a breathing space and slackened the energy of his attack; but immediately De Vernieul forced the fighting and he was compelled to resume his former activity. The heavier man was in a perilous position, for his bulk, which made him so dangerous in attacking, was a weakness when a lighter, more agile foe pressed hard upon him. The gentlemen surrounding the two duellists ceased the little cries of "Bravo! Well done!" with which they had approved Gascoigne's apparent success.

The King of Navarre moved uneasily in his arm chair. No man in Europe could gauge one's fighting measure more surely than Henri, and it appeared to him that the baron was certain of defeat; only some lucky slip or a most fortunate thrust could save him. The King grew angry that he should have allowed this foolish thing, but no decent pretext for stopping the combat occurred to him. The chevalier was condemned to a death more certain than any duel, while the baron was a good man in a general brawl, where strength is invaluable, and to waste a good man and lose a trusted adherent annoyed Henri greatly.

The result was not long in doubt, for Gascoigne made a great thrust forward, but he met no answering pressure, and knew by instinct that the chevalier had dropped on one knee. A leap backward was all that could save him, and this thought flashed through his mind swifter than light; but he was unable to respond to the emergency; his foot slipped, and he felt the sword of his antagonist pass through his throat. The baron fell with the blood spurting from the great vein in his neck, and he choked to death in a few moments, when they threw a horsecloth over the body. The rest stood about and glared at the chevalier, who smiled gently at these frowning faces.

"You are fresh, gentlemen," he said, courteously; "surely one of you will honor me." and he tapped the blade of his rapier with his finger tips; but the King interfered.

"You return with us to Cahors," he growled, "and you will be hung at the dawn the day after to-morrow."

The chevalier remained silent, for he had expected to be hanged when captured, and the glow of satisfaction at killing the traducer of Yeseult de Mirapoix still conquered other emotions. The figure of a woman was framed in the inner doorway, for Mlle. De Mirapoix had returned, being anxious concerning the safety of De Vernieul.

The Baron De Gascoigne, as we know, had made a detour and gone to the Chateau De Mirapoix, hoping to discover something of the hiding place of the chevalier, for it was evident, equipped in the way he was, he could not succeed in getting far unassisted. The baron learned nothing from Yeseult, who feigned entire ignorance of the fall of Cahors and the pursuit of the Chevalier De Vernieul. Then the baron had ridden hastily to rejoin the King of Navarre, and he was able to reach the inn of the "Well Beloved" at the same time as the royal party.

Meanwhile the girl, riding immediately after him, had crept into the back of the inn and had observed everything.

Now Henri rose, for the demoiselle standing before him was evidently of noble birth, and she was very beautiful.

"Sire," she said, somewhat timidly, "I am Yeseult de Mirapoix and your faithful subject."

"Welcome, mademoiselle," said Henri, graciously; "but, alas! I have sad tidings for you, since your brother died at the taking of Cahors. Perhaps it will comfort a daughter of the Mirapoix to know that he died after being the first to scale the breach and after killing many of his foes. He was buried with the utmost honors of our camp," finished the King, turning appealingly to his gentlemen, who bowed in assent.

As for Yeseult, she had cared little for her brother, who was seldom at home and whom she knew slightly; but she grasped the news eagerly because it might help her to get what she so desired, and to save the life of De Vernieul, after what had just passed, she would have sacrificed her own life first of all. She knew that he was condemned to a shameful death because of the very act which had caused her such painful disgust; yet the revenge of the King was worse in its petty cruelty.

She had believed that her love for him had died during the night of sorrow which succeeded the day she first learned of his intrigue, and hence her refusal when a week later he had asked her to be his wife. When she had met him to-day her emotions had refused analysis even to herself. The sorrowful repentance of the chevalier had touched her and the evident carelessness of life because of her indifference appealed to her as it does to every woman in her lover, however much it may cause mirth when observed in the lover of another. After all, above all and all in all to her was the act of the chevalier when he threw away his life without a moment's hesitation to defend her honor. She had herself started to give Gascoigne the lie when he had fallen, overturned by the nervous arm of De Vernieul, and then had come the duel. Her heart had sickened when the chevalier seemed fated to be vanquished, but then arrived the terrible thrust of his rapier and the baron was dead.

Now, he was to be hung; and yet, perhaps, the king would listen to her request, and meanwhile the chevalier stood holding his sword, dripping with the blood of the unfortunate Gascoigne. The king was seated in the only armchair the inn afforded, and around the back of the royal seat were stationed the favorite nobles of De Bourbon, while facing them was Yeseult de Mirapoix.

"Sire," she said, "I am loath to recall an indebtedness, but is it not true that my father died in saving the life of yours in battle and before your gracious Majesty was born by several years?"

"Precisely, mademoiselle," replied the king, "and therefore I presume I owe to him my crown, and, in fact, my very existence. It is a heavy debt, indeed."

"And my brother has given Navarre his life at the taking of Cahors?"

"Alas! yes," murmured the king.

"Sire!" she cried, choking back a sudden sob, which would persist in coming, "I alone am left of all my family, for my mother died when I was born. I have no one—ah! yes, I have one; one I love; see, I say it plainly, throwing away a maiden's proper pride. Sire, there were three members of the Mirapoix—two have given their lives to you, my king; would you take the last of the three?" and she buried her burning fact in the scarf about her throat.

Henri thought of the father, Gaston De Mirapoix, as he looked at the girl kneeling before him; and but the day before her brother had fallen, carrying the white banner of Bearn. He continued to gaze steadily on her, but a mist seemed to come between them, for there were tears in the hard bright eyes of the King.

"You say your life, my child?" asked the King, at last, when he could trust his voice.

"Yes, sire," she answered.

Now, Henri possessed the quickest mind of a remarkably bright family, and he knew perfectly what Mlle. De Mirapoix desired, but he was reluctant to relinquish his revenge; yet the girl's appeal conquered him.

"Come, chevalier," he said, finally; "decidedly you are a lucky man to secure such an advocate."

"Ah! thank you, sire," she cried, for she understood that she had won her champion's life.

"Mademoiselle," replied Navarre, ungraciously, for the thing went hard with him, "do not thank me, since I only repay you that which I owe your family; but not," he added, "as I think they would wish it done."

"Our duty, sire, belongs to the living; our respect alone lies with the dead," commented a sad-faced man, dressed in somber clothing.

"Doubtless you are right, Romney," replied the King; "and we will soon have need of you, M. de Vernieul," he continued. "I forgive you the killing of my faithful servitor, De Gascoigne, for the sake of Mlle. de Mirapoix, to whose family Navarre is signally indebted. Is it true that you would make her your wife?"

"Gladly, sire," replied the chevalier, who, nevertheless, could not repress a smile at the cleverness with which Henri ignored the real reason for which he had desired to hang him.

"And you, mademoiselle," went on Henri, "will you wed with the chevalier?"

"Yes, sire," she answered him, but her eyes sought the face of him who had lost his life to protect her reputation and who had found the happiness that his heart craved in doing this.

"Then do your best for them, Romney," and Ernest Romney, the King's chaplain, came forward and after the simple, yet beautiful, fashion of the Reformed religion, they were joined man and wife.

Henri kissed the bride and presented her with a valuable diamond brooch, which he was wearing in his cap, and the others in the party made suitable congratulations.

"Well, well, gentlemen," cried the King at last, "let us leaved this accursed inn."

"And Gascoigne, sire?" asked Turenne, timidly.

"They can send to-morrow," said Henri, and the royal party vanished, but Yeseult de Vernieul stood beside her husband in the dimness of the falling night, and behind, near a dead body, was the host of the "Well Beloved."

Sleep Is a Sea.

Sleep is a sea; we lave the landmarks of the day,
The song of birds, the bells of sheep, and drift
away.
Sleep is a sea; the lights fade out along the
shore,
Across hope's bar the floods of memory pour,
And now the sweet voice of the night is in our
ears—
Once out beyond the headland we forget our
fears.

Far out upon the tide the darkness softer grows;
We fix our eyes upon a star, but no one knows
The chartless track. Sleep is a sea; far, far the
shore—
Good night! We shall come back to yesterday
no more,
But, following the distant calling of the deep,
We set our sails and steer down, down to drown
in sleep.

—Martha Gilbert Dickinson.

OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

The skeleton measures one inch less than the height of the living man.

The Denmark dykes have stood the storms of more than seven centuries.

The English railways cost, on an average, £50,000 per mile; the German, £20,000, and the American, £11,000.

Western Australia's aborigines, notwithstanding many years of missionary work, are, with the exception of fifty-one, returned as pagans.

The Salvation Army has representatives at work in forty-seven different countries and issues forty-five periodicals printed in twenty-one languages.

The Presbyterians hope to secure pledges to the amount of $20,000,000 for their twentieth century fund for religious work before the close of the year.

The ink plant at New Granada is a curiosity. The juice of it can be used as ink without any preparation. At first the writing is red, but after a few hours it changes to black.

One of the curiosities of Cuba is a Quaker meeting house, which has been erected at Gibara, near Santiago. The congregation of Friends is said to number over two hundred.

Northern winter resorts are a new suggestion, the programme for visitors including toboggan slides, iceboats, sleighing, skating, sun parlors and big log fires for evening entertainment.

Peter Postell, who died recently at Hopkinsville, Ky., was said to be the richest negro in the South. He was sixty years old, had been a slave in his youth and has left an estate valued at $500,000.

One of the novel provisions before the constitutional convention of Alabama was presented by Delegate Waddell, of Russell county, and allows the ballot of an ignorant man in any election to count only one-fourth of a vote.

The preliminary figures of the Irish census, which include returns of religious profession, show that nearly all the principal religious bodies have lost ground during the past ten years. The Roman Catholic loss is over 6½ per cent.

There is a law in Austria which makes it a very serious offense to insult a public official. Public officials include all railway employes, from traffic director to porters, as well as policemen, tramway drivers and conductors and municipal street cleaners.

Five brothers named Backus live in Trenton, N. J. All are lawyers enjoying lucrative practice, and not one of them had more than a grammar school education. Their father died in 1874, leaving a widow and six boys, the eldest of whom was but fourteen years old.

An Elizabethean cup, parcel gilt, of the year 1577, eight inches high, was sold in London lately for $3,687, or at the rate of $295 an ounce. At the same time an old Irish potota ring, 7½ inches in diameter, was sold for $167, and a William III plain tankard for $821.

The canal system in China is the most extensive in the world with the possible exception of that of Holland. Wherever the lay of the land permits the thrifty native has made a canal. Thus he is enabled to carry the products of his labor to market with the minimum expense.

In New Jersey alone last year there was $30,000,000 capital invested in the silk business and almost as much in Pennsylvania; 44,250 operatives were employed in the two States, drawing $13,500,000 in wages, and in the whole country there were nearly sixty-four thousand operatives who earned more than $20,000,000.

The United States is the greatest food-producing country of the world. Although this country represents but one-fifth of the total civilized population of the world it produces more than one-fourth of all food stuffs. The United States produces 74,000,000 tons of grain of a total of 229,000,000 and 4,500,000 tons of meat of a total of 15,300,000 tons. The Americans also produce a large percentage of the dairy and fishery production of the world.

As an illustration of wealth among Indians it is officially stated that the homes of the most progressive Osages compare favorably with the dwellings of white people of equal wealth. Their houses are richly furnished with carpets and modern furniture, and in many homes there are pianos, upon which the boarding school training of the daughters has taught them to perform. Horses and carriages are not infrequent, and though the automobile has not yet made its appearance it is not an impossibility of the future.

The smelting of iron in Sheffield, England, is supposed to date from Roman times, and there is distinct proof carrying it back as far as the Norman conquest, in 1066. The town had become famed for its cutlery by the fourteenth century. The town was the capital of Hallamshire from the Norman conquest. Owing to the antiquity of the town it is not known exactly when it was founded.

A German doctor advises the adoption of a hard bed, and that children should be trained from the beginning to sleep upon no other kind. It is certainly true that, as a rule, the hard bed conduces to the utmost refreshing kind of sleep, the feather bed, so dearly loved by our grandmothers, being enervating in the extreme, and encouraging weaknesses of mind in the matter of getting up in the morning.

Herr Paschen has just presented to the Hamburg Museum a splendid specimen of a giant gorilla, which he himself shot in the Cameroon hinterland. The gorilla is seven feet long from the crown of the head to the tip of the middle toe, and the span of its arms is slightly greater than its height. The weight is adjudged at about five hundred pounds. It is said that this is the largest specimen possessed by any museum in the world.

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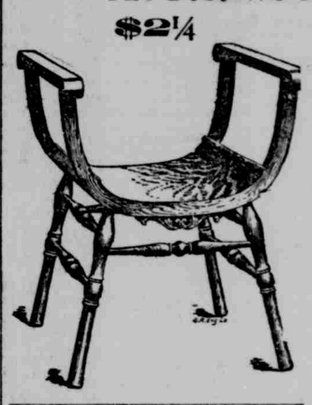

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