MY LADY OF ORANGE

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PART IV.

CHAPTER XII.
A CHANCE FOR LIFE.

The jailer had just brought me my breakfast, and the worthy little Dutchman was all agog with news.

"Sir, a great victory at Alkmaar!" he burst out at last.

"A victory?" I asked. "Who has won it?"

"Alkmaar, sir! The Spaniards tried to storm the town two days ago, and were driven back with a loss of a full thousand men! A noble victory!"

"I never thought he would take it by storm," I said thoughtfully. "The siege goes on still, though?"

"Yes, sir, the siege goes on still," he answered, rather chopfallen.

"Harlem beat back storming parties," said I, half to myself; "and who holds Harlem to-day?"

"You have little faith in us Dutchmen," said he peevishly. "We do not despair here in Breuthe, nor is there much fear in Alkmaar to-day, sir, I guess."

"Fear? It may be not. Despair, my friend, is a soldier who often wins."

He left me, and I sat down to the meal. A day had gone by since I came to the town prison, condemned in the wisdom of Jan van Cornput, and no sign at all had come from Gabrielle. Here it all ended; all my fine deeds of the past, all my brave hopes, the glory of saving the town, the greater glory of the day when we saw the sun go down behind the house together. A bare, dark room in a prison had come as an end to them all. She believed it. Well, even Gaspar doubted, and Gaspar knew Alva's ways better than she. It looked black enough, and she had thought me eager for money before. Of course she believed it. She could do no other. And yet I had hoped—I had hoped—

A scuffling of feet came along the passage without, and an angry voice:

"No, I have no order from your squabby governor. Open the door, you little fool, lest I kill you for your keys. Yes, yes, I give you my word I will not let him out. You can look the door on us both, if you choose. Only hurry, lest I make myself turnkey by right of conquest."

The door opened and Zouch came in.

"Our illustrious governor has not lodged you too well, captain. Pah! He does not feed you too well, either. That fish should have a decent burial."

I laughed stupidly.

"It was not meant for a guest," I said. "God help its guests—or its host!" cried Zouch.

"You seem merry," I said.

"Well, and why not, captain? Do you want me to grieve because our beloved governor is a fool?"

"Nay, I care not what you do," I said wearily.

"By the fiend, but we care a great deal what you do! That ass Cornput says you are guilty of trying to kill the prince. What do we care for the prince? Little we have ever got from him. Guilty or innocent, we care not a farthing. If you have been trying to get more cash out of Alva, well and good. If you have not, well and good too. I don't say I shouldn't think better. Let Cornput and his prince look out for themselves, and let your treason look after itself, too. We care nothing about that, but we care much about you. You never risk the men too much, and you always look after their pay. You have done well by us, and, by the fiend, we will do well by you. Captain, how long are you going to stay here?"

"Till I hear the judgment of the prince," I said slowly.

"Cornput swears the prince will confirm his sentence, and he will hang you the day he hears."

"Then let him," I muttered.

"If you think the prince will set you free and you are waiting for that, you may be wise, captain, for aught I know. But it is a risky game, and if you are wrong, then——"

"Then I shall be hanged. I know it."

"See here, captain; we are more than 200 still, and if you are hanged it is your own fault."

"And if I am not, Zouch, what then?"

But he went on his own way.

"We will rescue you when and how you choose. By the fiend, I speak for all. And you may hang Cornput instead, if you will——"

"And then?" I repeated.

"Why, then, we will leave it to you to choose. I suppose Alva will not want us back again; but there is fighting enough in the world. They say France has need of good horsemen."

Was it very tempting? It was a chance for life, and if Cornput's words weighed with the prince perhaps it was the only chance. But then, cordieu! A man has his honor! To take my men away from the prince in his utmost need, when I had pledged my honor to him—was that a deed one would love to do? Would you in my place? It is easy to pay too high for life, and the price was too high now.

"I will stand or fall by the prince's judgment," said I. "I thank you for the offer, but its savor is not to my liking. If I hang, or if not, you took service under the prince, and Gaspar is here still to lead you."

He looked at me in amazement.

"Then you will hang?" he stammered.

"If they care to hang me," said I.

He rose and kicked at the door angrily.

"Let me out of here, you fool!" he cried to the jailer. "By the fiend, I think you keep a madhouse!"

So he went away in a rage, and left me alone in the gloomy little room. I paced to and fro in its narrow walls, and one mood after another came to me and passed away. But I think the first feeling was joy. Let her think of me as she chose, let her believe me as base as she would, yet I had not put honor second. Pho! What good was all that to me? Even if things turned out all for the best, if, after all, life was left me, a poor life it would be. I would not desert Orange? Nay, there would be no need for desertion. I should be distrusted and dismissed in any case, with all the past a blank, and the future a blank, too. Cordieu! How things play with men! I stamped there, madly wroth with Alva, with Vitelli, with Orange, with Zouch, with myself—aye, and with her at last! God help me, with her! And while I stormed there, in a mad, lonely rage, there came floating up to me, borne on a sweet, low voice, an old French song:

A lad came up across the down;
Heigho, the folly!
A lass came out beyond the town.
Heigho, the folly!

It was Gabrielle! God in heaven, it was Gabrielle!

His brow was dark, his step was slow;
Heigho, the folly!
She begged him, weeping, tell his woe,
Heigho, the folly!

"Alack!" quoth he, "mine honor's lost;"
(Heigho, his folly!)
"A murky blot my shield has crossed."
(Heigho, his folly!)

"All—all believe me traitor knave;"
(Heigho, his folly!)
"Take back, my love, the love you gave."
(Heigho, his folly!)

She stopped for a moment, and then, in a voice very low, but thrilling through wall and gate of that Dutch prison-house, she sang:

The tear strayed, darkling, in her eyes;
(Heigho, her folly!)
"Believe who will, yet will not I."
(Heigho, her folly!)

"My love I gave, for good or ill;"
(Heigho, her folly!)
"For good, for ill, yours am I still."
(Heigho, her folly!)

The words died away, and I fell into a chair and sat looking at the floor. So I was wrong, wrong, wrong! O, I ought to have known her love better! In that dingy room I began to hum the words over again, with a smile on my face. Yes, indeed, I might have known. You cannot forgive me, young mistress? Well, I do not blame you; but she forgave me long ago, as you will perhaps in your turn, when needs comes. What did anything matter now? Whether I lived or died her love was mine. O, gentlemen of the sword, you at least may guess how glad I was my honor was my own too! But with my rejoicings my tale has little to do, and for them you care perhaps even less. I, too, love a brief tale. I love to know what men did.

When he left me Zouch sought out Gaspar at the burgomaster's house, and flung into the room (Gaspar told me the tale) with a rattling oath.

"Ach, give God the glory, quartermaster," quoth Gaspar, though indeed he is free enough with oaths himself.

"God, say you?" cried Zouch, and another storm of swearing followed.

"Teuel! did you come here to teach me your oaths? Or are you holding a commination service, eh?"

"Is the captain mad, or am I? Tell me that."

"Ach!—I should say you, my friend!"

"You would, would you" And the oaths broke out again.

"Ten thousand fiends! You may swear at yourself, or the devil who taught you, till you choke; but, by your own friend, the fiend, you shall not swear at me! Devil of devils! sit down and talk sense!" and Gaspar pushed him into a chair. Sobered a little Zouch wiped his face and began:

"I have been to the prison, lieutenant—"

"And a very good place for you!" grunted Gaspar. "Go on."

"To see the captain. By the fiend! I never thought he was such a fool!"

"Ach! so. You did not agree, then. Well?"

"I offered to take him out of this fool Cornput's hands—"

"Ach, you did! By whose orders?"

"By the fiend! my own, lieutenant. O, you may spare your anger—he refused. The cursed fool refused."

Gaspar chuckled.

"O, you laugh!" cried Zouch. "I tell you, lieutenant, you were one of those that judged him. They say you were one of those that condemned him; and some of us are wondering if you are looking out for dead men's shoes."

"Ach! the wise quartermaster!" grunted Gaspar.

"And if you are I can tell you you are out in your reckoning. I would see you in hell before I let you step into the captain's shoes, when you had murdered him!"

"Ach, the brave Zouch!" grunted Gaspar. "My foot is large for the captain's shoes, my friend."

"Then who is to lead us, in the fiend's name? Are you playing the Frenchman's game. That olly Vermeil?"

"Ach, no," grunted Gaspar.

"Then what is to happen?"

"Gott! Do I rule the world But, my friend, the captain is not hanged yet."

"If they think him guilty, and they will think him guilty, these fools of Dutchmen, hanged he will be. That is what I told him. But the fool says he will stand by the judgment of Orange."

"So, so," grunted Gaspar. "I never believed that letter. It is a lie, then."

"You think he is not guilty?"

"He seems to think so; and God in heaven! he should know best."

"What do we care whether or no? What odds to us whether he sought to murder Orange or not?"

"Much—to me," quoth Gaspar.

"And none to us, by the fiend! He has led us well before, and we want him to lead us again."

"But I led the escort," quoth Gaspar; "and I want to know. I want to know very much, my good quartermaster, who sent the Spaniards to Veermut bridge."

"'S wounds! you are all mad," cried Zouch, angrily, and burst out of the room.

Gaspar sat silent for some time after he had gone, with his foot kicking at the table leg.

"Cui bono fuerit?" he muttered to himself. "The wise old Roman! Gott, he knew his word; who takes the pay? Eh, my good quartermaster, who takes the pay?"

CHAPTER XIII.
THE GARDEN AGAIN.

Gabrielle had sung her song to me, there in the lonely alley behind the prison, and she went back slowly to the burgomaster's house. She left me so exultant that for the moment I wished nothing more; but her own heart was very heavy. They tell us women bear heavy sorrows better than men; but, cordieu! I think it is because they have so much that they learn to bear it quietly and the grief makes a man cry out goes deeper, too deep, in a woman. It is only the little things that women tell of.

She went back sad-eyed, and in the house met her father.

"I have written to the prince, Gabrielle," said he.

"Father, you think—you believe he will take your word?" she cried.

"I cannot give my word when I know nothing," St. Trond answered. "I have said I did not believe John Newstead capable of this, and that Col Van Cornput seemed to me over hasty before the trial began. But the evidence has gone to the prince, too, and he must be the judge."

"But he must be saved! The prince must save him!"

"The prince is just," said St. Trond.

"When he has done so much, to condemn him on a lying paper like that! Oh, I hate Col Van Cornput!"

"He did what he thought right," St. Trond repeated.

"I hate him! I hate him!" she cried, stamping her foot. "Oh, why did this thing ever come? He had freed us from the Spaniards, and I thought our troubles were over. And then this—this dreadful thing—the bravest man in Breuthe—Oh, it is hard, hard. And no one knows how it will end—it is all dark!"

"Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" said St. Trond, slowly.

She went to her own room and lay on the bed and wept. Then the fancy took her to go out into the garden and sit again on that stone seat in the wall, where not many days ago she sat for the first time at my side. She had not been there long when Vermeil came up and swept her a low bow.

"Mademoiselle, I have come but to tell you that I, in my feeble way, have been doing my best to save our captain," quoth he.

"Ah! you—you were not one of those who tried him?"

"Indeed, no; mademoiselle; that honor was reserved for my lieutenant. Perhaps if I had been one of those wise judges I should have thought death a punishment over heavy for the man who saved Breuthe."

"What have you done?" she asked, eagerly.

"Why, I have stated my views with such clearness as I was capable of to Col Van Cornput, our worthy and wise governor. I have ventured to write a letter to our general, the Prince of Orange, and I have been striving to obtain a petition from our men begging that the death penalty may be spared. And let me tell you, mademoiselle, a petition from two hundred men-at-arms is not to be treated lightly."

"Do you hope to save him?" she cried.

"Indeed, mademoiselle—may I sit?—I am not without hopes, though candor compels me to admit that the offense is not a small one, and the prince may view an attempt on his own life less lightly than I," quoth Vermeil, crossing his legs and looking sideways at her face.

"What? You—you think him guilty?" cried Gabrielle.

"Mademoiselle, I should be as willing as you to believe him innocent!" said Vermeil quickly. "Ah! it grates upon my conscience to think that my captain should be a traitor!" Gabrielle drew close into a corner of the seat. "I would not believe it at first; I cried out that it could not be! I drove from the room the man who told me! I quarreled with Gaspar! We all but fought! But, mademoiselle, the facts, ah! the facts are too strong. He is a traitor. No captain of mine can he ever be again. I do not ask much from my leaders, but, indeed, mademoiselle, honor I must have. What is a soldier without honor? And yet, and yet, mademoiselle, I loved the man, and because I loved him, and because he has fought well before he forgot his faith, I have done what I could to save him!" He stopped and looked at her, but she made no answer. "I fancied, mademoiselle," he went on. "I fancied that you, too, had thought well of him, and you, too, might be glad to know there were efforts afoot to save him. Those efforts I will make to the utmost of my strength. It may be wrong to try and save a traitor's life; perhaps it is—I am no preacher, only a soldier and a man. His punishment will be heavy enough in life; it is not needful to take that, too. Never again can he be our leader; dishonored and dismissed, he must go his own way," and Vermeil's voice broke. "Yet, is it not just?" he cried, sharply. "Is it not just that he should pay for the pain he has given others? I loved the man; I made him a very idol, and now he has shown me that my love, my honor, were ill bestowed. Ah! there is pain in that, mademoiselle, such pain as I pray heaven you may never know."

"I have never known it," she cried quickly.

"I am glad, mademoiselle. May I go on?"

"Is there more?" she asked.

"Thus, far, mademoiselle, I have answered your questions—"

"Why should he have done it?" she broke in.

"He had done Alva much harm mademoiselle. He thought, as I guess, that it would be well to be on fair terms with Alva again, and this was the way he chose."

"In fear of Alva?" she cried. Vermeil bowed.

"And, now, mademoiselle, I have answered your questions, will you let me ask one of you? I have been laying my mind bare to you to-day, and you see it and may judge it for what it is. You know my actions; I have shown you my thoughts, my feelings, my inmost desires. Ah! mademoiselle, save one, save one! And that—can you guess it?—perhaps—that is to be able to say, 'Here am I who have fought in fifty fights and never lost one; here am I, the husband of Gabrielle!'"

He ended with a flourish of his hand and a bow. She sat silent for a moment and then turned.

"I will tell you," she said, looking him full in the face. "I will answer you when you have set your captain free!"

He started back, and his color changed. His eyes flashed angrily at her, and he caught at her arm. A step sounded on the path; he started, rose and walked quickly into the house. Then, with a long sigh of relief, Gabrielle turned, to see Gaspar standing over her, with his lips curled into a sneer.

"So times are changed, eh, mistress?" said he, gruffly, looking from her to Vermeil's retreating figure.

"May I choose my companions, sir?" she asked, coldly.

"Gott! yes, choose the devil of you like. I wonder how the captain ever came to choose you!"

"Do you dare to taunt me? You, who condemned him to death?" she cried.

"The arrow goes by, mistress. Talk of what you know. Or what you see—like me. I did no condemning."

"You—you did not think him guilty?" she cried.

"God in heaven! as if you cared! What odds to a light o' love who is in another man's arms in two days?"

"It is a lie!" she cried, springing up and fronting him. "It is a lie! I would not have him touch me with a finger-tip!"

"So; he was close enough," grunted Gaspar. "Well, if I was wrong I take it back. Only, if you want to be worth the captain's taking, mistress, keep clear of Vermeil."

"Worthy of him?" she asked. "You believe in him still, then?" she cried, quickly.

"Even so, mistress."

"Ah!" she caught his arm, eagerly. "I am glad, very glad. Tell me why!" she cried, looking up into his face.

"Why? I am no speechmaker. Because I doubt that fine letter now. Because I did not think the captain would send me to be murdered—all that is idle. Because when that fool Zouch offered to take him out of prison he would not go. Is that like a guilty man?"

"Then it is proved, it is proved!" she cried, gladly.

"Ach, no. What would our wise Cornput say to Zouch? Tell him it was all a trick to prove the captain's innocence, a trick he saw through, the wise Cornput? No; if you want to prove him innocent, don't tell me who is not the traitor; tell me who is!"

"And I can tell you!" she cried. "That man—the Frenchman——"

"Vermeil? Ach, I believe you. Prove it."

"He came to me when I was sitting here, and he began to talk of all he had done for—for him; and then he went on to say he thought him guilty; he said he had loved him, and he put in a lot of words, but they were false, false! And I let him go on and on, and asked him questions, and then at last—at last he asked me to marry him."

"Cui bono fuerit?" grunted Gaspar. "Ach, the wise Roman! But is that all, mistress?"

"He said that the reason for betraying the prince was fear of Alva. Fear would not——"

"Move the captain? Ach, no; but 'tis the very thing to move Vermeil! It seems you have used some of the serpent's wisdom, mistress?"

"I love him," she said, and Gaspar looked down at her and put his big red hand on her golden hair.

"I think he chose well, lass," said he, quietly.

"Is it enough?" she asked.

"Ach, no. It is not doubts and chances and hints we want. They might serve to save his life. How much would he or you care for life if nine in ten think him a traitor?"

"You will not give him up?" she cried.

"By Almighty God, no!" he thundered. "But what to do next? I could kill Vermeil to-night—if that were useful. But dead men are dumb. And the letter? That was Alva's own game, I guess. Curse the crafty knave!"

A servant came down the garden and gave him a letter.

"Teufel! what's this? Host of the Yellow Pig? New arrival of old Rhenish wine? To Hon. Lieutenant Gaspar Wiederman? Hoping for his favor? Very best flavor? Favor—flavor? Is the fool turned poet? Is this a time—Ach, God in heaven!—Mine host, mine host. I will wait on the Yellow Pig!" And he ran off down the garden, leaving Gabrielle standing amazed.

CHAPTER XIV.
THE GUESTS OF THE YELLOW PIG.

At the corner of the street of the tanners, where it leaves the market place, stands the hostelry of the Yellow Pig. Mighty fine it is nowadays, with its front all built of stone, and its rooms lofty and light; but to me and Gaspar—will you laugh if I say Gabrielle, too?—to us the Yellow Pig is timber and brick, with a low, dark little room up a steep flight of stairs, for its chief guest chamber.

"Ah, sir, your valor has received my humble letter?"

"Never mind your humble letter; I want your Rhenish wine," quoth Gaspar.

"You shall have it, most noble. You shall have it ere the words are a minute old. At great risk and mighty cost it has been brought through the Spaniards' army. If only they knew how precious——"

"Gott! I know Vitelli has a paunch. Fetch it!"

"It is here, sir, at your bidding, and if you do not find it the noblest wine you ever tasted, why call me——"

"Draw the cork, fool!" cried Gaspar.

"Why, call me—call me—call me—call me," quoth the innkeeper, struggling with the bottle, "call me an ass!" The cork came out, and, wiping the bottle neck, he poured out a full goblet. Gaspar drank it.

"Ah!—yes, it's wine!" he grunted.

"Is it not noble wine, my noble sir? Consider the flavor, consider the color, consider the odor! Is it not a drink for the gods?"

"They like it strong, then," quoth Gaspar. "And so do I. How much is there?"

"There is enough, most valiant—oh, enough to drown you—gallons—hogsheads—oceans. Never has the Yellow Pig run dry, save in that distressing siege. Oh, most illustrious, it played the devil with the business. The wine we had was given to the sick; and the sick got well and forgot the score. Even the good Samaritan paid the innkeeper, most noble; but our modern Samaritans, they bring you the sick, and they keep their pence in their pockets. Very virtuous Samaritans—but we pay their bill."

While he ran on, Gaspar finished the bottle.

"Fetch up your wine to the room above," quoth Gaspar. "And send—ach, no, I will go myself!"

"All the wine, most illustrious?"

"Teufel! Yes, all the wine!" cried Gaspar, and ran off.

"But there are gallons—hogsheads—" began the innkeeper. Oh, he has gone! Well, well, if he can drink it, let him in God's name. These Germans pay much better drunk."

Down the market place Gaspar ran, bareheaded, and the folk in the streets sprang out of his way and stood against the wall, looking at him in stolid surprise. But Gaspar ran, heedless of round-eyed Dutchmen, till he was all but back at the burgomaster's again, and there in the street he met Vermeil.

"Ach, so there you are!" he cried. "Come on, come on, my brave little man. Come and embrace the Yellow Pig."

"Sangdieu! Are you drunk?"

"Teufel! No, not yet, we will be soon. Ah, my little Frenchman, there is liquor come straight from heaven—or the Rhineland—'tis all one. The Yellow Pig bleeds red wine. Come on, come and worship at the shrine of the Yellow Pig!" And Gaspar caught his arm and dragged him along.

"You shall taste, ach! such wine as we have not tastetd since we came into this country of frogs. Teufel! I drank a bottle in two minutes, and we'll drink a hogshead in an hour!"

The two swaggered along back, and Vermeil was not loth to go, for he loved wine as well as Gaspar. And so in due course they came to the inn.

"Your valors will find the wine and the flagons set out, most noble, in the upper room. If something to eat, now—say a lamprey, now—or a wild duck roast, now—or—"

"Or the devil in hell, now! The wine's enough—if there is enough. Up you go, my little man."

Up they ment into the dark room, with the black rafters scarce higher than Vermeil's head. Gaspar filled a cup.

"There, drink that, and say if it isn't the divinest liquor ever laid the dust in your gullet."

"Ah, yes, it's good;" quoth Vermeil.

"Good? Don't insult it with a word like that. Try again; there! Good, eh? It's divine, it's spiritual, it's inspiration, it's all the blessings in one, it's battle and sword play and sudden death, it's Rhenish! And fair's fair; come, I'll have a goblet now! Sit down to it, man! Drink away, and I'll sing you a song!"

And, waving the goblet round his head, Gaspar began to roar out a German catch:

Up with the goblet and down with the wine;
Drink, ho!
Who dines on red Rhenish he knows not to pine;
Who sups on red Rhenish three suns on him shine;
Drink, ho!

"Drink to it, drink to it, and give me the other bottle. You don't take your share, man. More for me. Come, give us a song yourself! Why, you're as dull as that fool, the captain! What, you won't? Well, I'll give you another. Pass me the other bottle, first! Ah!—now then:

When the lass she did beg me to stay,
I gave her for answer a "nay."
When the lass she made bold with her charms,
I caught her at once in my arms;
And I kissed her and said:
"Not until we are wed
Go I thirsty to bed,
Or bear a dry mouth without wine!"

"Eh, Henri, my boy, d'ye take me, d'ye take me? 'Without wine'—ha, ho—or 'without whine,' see? Two words—make a difference—see? Pass me the other bottle! Ah!—And now let's be serious. Drink, man, drink! What do you think I brought you for? Not to sit and look at me like a damned heap of lime! And now let's be serious! Captain—ach, captain is in prison—and we're here, and so is the wine. Drink, man, drink! What I want to know is who is to be captain now? See? He is in prison, and—give me the bottle—and there's no captain. Must be a captain! Must be a captain! Never went without a captain before. Who's to be captain, eh?" and Gaspar leered at him drunkenly over the empty bottles. The wine was getting into both their heads, but it made Vermeil sullen at first, while it loosed Gaspar's tongue.

"Well, I don't know," Gaspar went on. "Take some more wine. Who's to be captain? Not I. Teufel! I'm well enough suited. Too much trouble for me. I like the fighting well enough. But the plotting! Ach! Drink, man, drink! And pass me the bottle!"

"How d'ye know we want a captain?" cried Vermeil.

"Teufel! He's as good as hanged. What odds? He was too good for me. Now I like a man who'll drink a bit, and curse a bit, and sing a good song, and be a jolly—good—fellow," quoth Gaspar, nodding his head sagely at each word.

"Well, then, if you don't like the job, Gaspar, and you won't take it yourself, why, somebody else must!" said Vermeil.

"Ach, yes," Gaspar answered knowingly. "Gott! yes, somebody else must. Of course, somebody else must." Vermeil looked at him unsteadily. He was certainly very drunk. And Vermeil, why, he was perfectly sober.

"And why not your humble servant, Henri Vermeil? Eh, Gaspar?"

Gaspar shook his head jerkily.

"No, no, not you, Henri, my lad, not you. Why, curse it, I come before you! Not you!"

"And why not I?" cried Vermeil, angrily. "Why not I, Gaspar? You said you didn't want the place. Well, am I not good enough for it? Sangdieu! a better man than Jack Newstead, at least."

"You may be—better man—John Newstead. No better man—Gaspar Wiederman. There, there—more wine."

Vermeil tossed off another goblet.

"A better man than either, sangdieu!" he cried. The wine was making him quarrelsome. "See here, the captain's to be hanged; well, let the better man have his place."

"Jus' so; what I say; let better man—have his place," quoth Gaspar, nodding wisely.

"And I say I am the better man!" cried Vermeil, filling the goblet again.

"And I say—you're not," grunted Gaspar, stolidly reaching out for the bottle.

"Look here, then; who put it into his head to save Breuthe by selling it? You or I? Eh, you or I? You or I?" Vermeil said, his voice rising to a scream at the last. Gaspar laughed stupidly.

"He didn't—didn't do it—your way, anyhow."

"No, because he was a fool. Where shall we be when Alva has come back again, eh? Tell me that! Tell me that, you better man!" he yelled.

"Hell, p'raps," quoth Gaspar.

"Who's to get you out of that scrape? Can you do it, Gaspar, you better man?"

"What, out of hell?" said Gaspar dully.

"Out of Alva's hands, fool!"

"Same thing, same thing," grunted Gaspar. "But can you, my wis-wis-wiseacre?" and he looked at Vermeil with drunken cunning. Vermeil laughed.

"Oh, yes, my clever lieutenant, I can," he cried exultingly. "I, Henri Vermeil, whose counsel that fool Newstead wouldn't listen to; I've had all the kicks and none of the pay long enough. Let him try how he likes the kicks now, or a halter! A halter! I should like to see him swinging, wriggling in the sunlight, with the jerky shadows on the ground, and the people hissing, and that fool of a girl watching him kick! And I will see it, sangdieu! I'll see it yet!"

"What—you talking about?" grunted Gaspar. "How—about Alva?"

Vermeil laughed and drank again.

"Oh, Alva? My good friend Gaspar, I can twist Ferdinando Alvarez de Toledo round my finger like that girl's curls——"

"Ho, ho, very fine!" laughed Gaspar. Vermeil turned on him.

"You think yourself very clever—better man than I, and the rest of it. I tell you it was only the devil's own luck brought you back alive out of the trap we laid!"

"Trap—what trap?" grunted Gaspar. "Give me the wine!" Vermeil filled his own goblet and passed the bottle.

"The trap we laid for you at Veermut, my noble lieutenant," cried Vermeil, and he laughed and drank again. "You sent me with dispatches to Orange, as if I were an orderly, you and your precious captain. And, by heaven, you paid for the insult."

"Paid for what?" quoth Gaspar. "Here am I," and he tried to rise, but fell back in his chair.

"And where's he, eh, Gaspar? Where's he? 'Twas I told Vitelli to write the letter, 'twas I laid the whole plan, and they were mad for revenge for Breuthe, and did as they were bid. Sangdieu! It's better to do as I bid, Gaspar! The two fools, Ferdinando and Vitelli, they danced when I showed them the way. Yes, I showed them, I! Eh, Gaspar, who's the better man?"

"Well, well, peace—peace and qu-quietness. Drink your wine—drink your wine," grunted Gaspar. "Give me—give me—bottle! No' that one. Horrid dirty one. Give me the other; give it me, will you?" He rose to get it himself, staggered round the table, and reached over Vermeil's shoulder with an unsteady hand. Then he staggered and fell on top of Vermeil, and the two rolled on the floor together. Vermeil lay stunned, but Gaspar rose to his feet and dashed out of the room.

"Ach, give me some water," he cried. "Teufel! not a mug, you fool—a bucket, a tub, a river!"

They brought him a bucket and he dipped his head in and held it under the water.

"Ah—phew! 'Twas good wine!" he flung down his purse on the table. "Pay yourself, my friend," and he turned to go out.

"The other gentleman, most noble?" quoth the host.

"The other—umph! Let him lie, as yet," quoth Gaspar, and hurried away.

Back to the burgomaster's house once again he hurried through the dark deserted streets.

"Mistress de St. Trond, woman; tell her I wait on her," he said gruffly to a serving maid.

"In that state!" she cried. "Pho! a pretty thing." For his hair and beard were wet and bedraggled, and his hands and coat bore the wine stains thick and wet; and he reeked, I dare swear, of Rhenish.

"Ten thousand fiends! yes, in this state. Go when you are bid," he thundered, and the woman turned and fairly fled from him. Doubtless he was a terrible sight enough to a serving maid. Six feet and a half of him leaning menacingly forward, a huge fist whistling through the air, a red face flushed dark with the wine looking out of a ring of tangled matted yellow hair and beard, and two big gray eyes flashing in the candle light; it was enough to frighten a serving maid.

She was soon back again, and stood at the other end of the passage beckoning to him.

"She will see you; the second door upstairs," she cried from afar and ran away. I guess she thought Gabrielle far gone in madness.

Gaspar ran up the stairs hot foot and burst in, and Gabrielle sprang forward, crying:

"What is it? What is it?" and caught his arm. She was not frightened.

"It came to pass that behold a man came out of the camp from Saul with his clothes rent and earth upon his head.' Gott! do you remember what he said, mistress?" cried Gaspar.

"He is not dead?" she cried.

"Nor shall be. But, mistress, that man boasted—and our man has boasted, too, and, God in heaven! we will fall upon him like David!"

"He—that man—has confessed?" she asked, eagerly.

"Ach, you might call it confession. Likely he would not. When wine comes in the truth comes out, mistress. Teufel! I put the wine in and he brought the truth out."

"Ah, then he is safe, safe at last!" she murmured, and she sank into a chair.

"Safe? He has been safe from the first. I want this lie shown for what it is, and now I know how to do it."

"Let me help!" she cried, eagerly. "I would have helped now if you had let me!"

"It was more in my way than yours," quoth Gaspar, with a chuckle. "But, mistress, checkmate is yet to call. He told me he taught Vitelli to write the letter, and he sent the Spaniards to Veermut. But the fool was half drunk, and they might say I was, too. There is still a chance for Vermeil to save his own dirty hide, and by God, when I play, I play to win!"

"Yes, yes," she cried. "What can I do?"

"The fool—bah! fool is too good a name—the rat lies there half drunk, half stunned, half asleep, and when he wakes his head will be like a beehive. So; let us send him a letter from his friend, Vitelli!" and Gaspar sat himself down and chuckled. She looked at him wondering, and he went on, leaning across the table toward her: "If I took it—I am too big to be anybody but myself. If one of our knaves took it, he knows their faces to a man. The burghers are fools. Who will bear the sign manual of Vitelli of Cetona?"

Her eyes began to sparkle.

"If I went—" she began.

"Gott! no. Do you think he has forgotten you? Have you no man you can trust?"

"Only my father," she said. "The others—why, you are one, and—"

"Yes, I know the other!" cried Gaspar. "Your father—umph!" and he shrugged his shoulders and frowned.

"But if I went," she persisted, "I could go in—in soldier's clothes, with a cloak. I am sure he would not know me. I am sure, quite sure!"

"He is a dangerous rascal to cheat," grunted Gaspar.

"Do you think I care for danger?" she cried.

Gaspar sat silent, tugging at his beard and gazing steadily at the wall. At the last:

"We all trot when the devil drives," quoth he. "If you know no man—"

"There is none," she cried quickly.

"Then you must be the man," said Gaspar. "See here—have you paper? I could write once in the old days when they thought I was to be a scholar. How is it Master Chiapin writes? Aye, like a camel, letter tails yards long. So," he made a few trials on the paper, while Gabrielle looked eagerly over his shoulder.

"My friend, the work has been done so well that I send by the bearer some wages. Give the said bearer a token to show you have had them. And now he that hindered is taken out of the way, tell the bearer by word of mouth when we may expect to see you leading your company back to us.

"—No Names Are Best."

So he wrote, and looked at his handiwork with a placid smile. Then he turned to Gabrielle. "See, now," he said; "he will give you an answer, and then, then we have him on the hip."

While I lay in the hot, foul room in the prison tossing, helpless, to and fro, the trap was baited and laid. While I rose and peered through the tiny grated window to see the first dawn in the east there came to the Yellow Pig two early guests, and the bigger knocked at the door. Mine host opened it at last, unkempt and half undressed.

"A pretty time to rouse—O, it is you, most noble? The other gentleman, he is asleep still—your friend upstairs. Ah! and so was I five minutes ago!"

"My—friend? Hold your chattering tongue," quoth Gaspar, softly, and shook him by the shoulders. "So, are you awake now? Go up to that—that gentleman—wake him; tell him there is a messenger asking for him who will tell neither his name nor his business. If you mention me I will spit you like a chicken! Say what I tell you, and come back when you have said it."

"But, sir, your valor—"

"Curse my valor! Up with you!"

The good man went up; there was a little noise. Then came Vermeil's voice, thick and hoarse, in slow, puzzled questioning. And then back came mine host.

"Come out the minute you have his answer," muttered Gaspar, and took his companion to the foot of the stairs. He pulled the burgomaster to him, and whispered in his ear:

"Come and listen by the door, and remember what you hear."

They went up.

"Softly, fool, softly!" grunted Gaspar under his breath.

"I bring you this," said the messenger gruffly to Vermeil, drawing a bag from under a cloak, and giving him a letter.

"And sangdieu! who are you?" asked Vermeil.

"Read it," quoth the messenger.

Vermeil tore open the letter and read it. It took him a long time, for his head was humming, and the letters danced up and down before his eyes. At last he made it out, and took up the bag with a laugh. He poured out the money on the table, and tried to count it once or twice. At last he gave it up in despair, and turned to the messenger.

"It looks a lot," he said, stupidly.

"You have done a lot," the messenger answered.

"So I have, so I have. We have Newstead out of the way at last. Tell your master—tell your master—that I will bring all the men into the trenches at Alkmaar before two weeks are out. If that fool Newstead had not come up, tell him I would have let those cursed burgher pikemen fall into his hands on the day—the day—curse this head!—the day his fools let the prince escape."

"The token for the money?" said the messenger.

"Ah, yes; curse it; I can't count it. 'Received the money—Vermeil.' There; I daresay there is not too much for the job. There! Come, now, what does Vitelli think of Newstead? I told him the man was a fool. But Vitelli was too anxious about him to believe that. What does he think now?"

"He thinks John Newstead is a good soldier," said the messenger.

"Oh, does he?" cried Vermeil, with an angry laugh. "And what do you think yourself, my friend?"

"I think so, too," said the messenger slowly. Just then the sunlight broke in at the window, and the messenger stepped aside.

"Oh, you do, too. Well, I tell you you are both wrong. He is the veriest fool that ever led a free company, and would be the biggest knave, too, if he had the brains."

I suppose she flushed, or her lips moved. At least, Vermeil made a step forward, and tore back the cloak.

"Sangdieu! So it was you, his leman, was it?" and he drew his sword.

"It was I!" she cried. "I! I!" springing back, facing him still. He rushed at her, the door burst open, and Gaspar put her behind him with one sweep of his arm, and parried Vermeil's thrust.

"Not captain yet," he grunted, and Vermeil fell back against the wall. Another moment, and Vermeil rushed at him again, mad with rage, and Gaspar coolly put his thrusts by on this side and that, till he drew back again foiled. Again and again he dashed at the doorway, and again and again Gaspar pushed him back.

"Ach! who is the better man?" grunted Gaspar, and now he attacked in his turn, and drove Vermeil backwards round and round the room.

"Who is the better man?" he asked again, and Vermeil flashed hate at him from bloodshot eyes.

"Shall I call a guard, your honor?" cried the innkeeper from the doorway.

"Guard? Gott! No," grunted Gaspar, a grim smile on his face as he played with his foe. Round the room they went once more, and then came a quick flash of steel, Vermeil's sword crashed against the wall, and Gaspar, flinging his own away, jumped at him and sent him reeling to the ground. And then, with Gaspar's knee on his chest and Gaspar's hands at his throat, he heard Gaspar say:

"See him swinging, wriggling in the sunlight, with the jerky shadows on the ground! Ach! So! Now you may call a guard."

(To Be Continued.)

Sabbath-School Lesson.

FOR APRIL 21, 1901

The Walk to Emmaus—Luke XXIV. 13-35.

By John R. Whitney.—Copyright, 1901.

Golden Text—Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way?—Luke xxiv., 32.

It is very evident that, on the third day after the crucifixion, as many of Jesus' disciples as possibly could gathered themselves together in some convenient place for conference, sympathy and strength.

When they met together, they met in secret, and—"for fear of the Jews"—were very careful to see that "the doors were shut where" they "were assembled." (John xx., 19.) How many met together on that "third day," we are not told, but it is evident that the number was not confined to the apostles. For among them were these two men of Emmaus and several women; and if these, probably many others. In fact, it is not unlikely that the greater part of the "one hundred and twenty," spoken of in Acts i., 15, were present some time during the day, if not most of the time.

As we have already seen, very early that morning, four of their number—four women—left the company bearing "sweet spices that they might anoint" the body of Jesus. Probably all of the rest contributed as they were able, to purchase this token of loving remembrance. Finding that the stone which closed the mouth of the sepulchre had been rolled away, Mary Magdalene hurried back to report the fact. Before reaching the place of assembly, she was probably joined by other women, who were also on their way thither. To them she told her story, and, as they entered the room together, with one voice they all told it to those who were present. In their excitement and effort to understand it, it is not at all improbable that they claimed that some one "had seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive." (Verse 23.)

As soon as Mary Magdalene and her companions had made their report, Peter and John, as we saw last week, ran to the sepulchre to see for themselves if it was really true that it was open and empty. Mary probably lingered for a while, until the whole company had been assured of the fact, and then she returned to the sepulchre. Soon after she left, Peter and John came back and reported that they had "found it even so as the women had said, but him they saw not." (Verse 24.)

It was at this juncture that the incident now demanding our attention took place. It is recorded in full by only one of the evangelists—St. Luke. The only other reference to it in the gospels is that given by St. Mark, who simply says that "He appeared in another form unto two of them as they walked and went into the country." (xvi., 12.) By "another form" is undoubtedly meant "in another manner, or way," and not in or with a different bodily shape or appearance.

It was probably about noon or a little later that Cleopas and his companion left the company of the disciples to return to their home. This was in a "village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem, about three-score furlongs." (v. 13.) It has