





# ONE HUNDRED MERRIE AND DELIGHTSOME STORIES

Project Gutenberg's One Hundred Merrie And Delightful Stories, by Various

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—  
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PARIS  
1899



ONE HUNDRED  
MERRIE and DELIGHTSOME  
STORIES



right pleasaunte to relate  
in all goodly companie  
by way  
of Joyance and Jollity:

LES CENT NOUVELLES NOUVELLES

now first done into the English tongue  
by  
ROBERT B. DOUGLAS

PARIS  
CHARLES CARRINGTON  
13 faubourg Montmartre



**ONE HUNDRED MERRIE AND DELIGHTSOME  
STORIES**

**Right Pleasaunte To Relate In All Goodly Companie By Way Of Joyance  
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NOUVELLES***

**Now First Done Into The English Tongue By Robert B. Douglas**

**Various Authors**



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## ONE HUNDRED MERRIE AND DELIGHTSOME STORIES

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## INTRODUCTION

### STORY THE FIRST — THE REVERSE OF THE MEDAL.

*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.*

### STORY THE SECOND — THE MONK-DOCTOR.

*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.*

### STORY THE THIRD — THE SEARCH FOR THE RING.

*Of the deceit practised by a knight on a miller's wife whom he made believe that her front 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”.

[STORY THE FOURTH — THE ARMED CUCKOLD.](#)

*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.*

[STORY THE FIFTH — The Duel with the Buckle-Strap.](#)

*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.*

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

*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.*

[STORY THE SEVENTH — THE WAGGONER IN THE BEAR.](#)

*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.

STORY THE EIGHTH — TIT FOR TAT.

*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.*

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

*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 tirewoman—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.*

STORY THE TENTH — THE EEL PASTIES.

*Of a knight of England, who, after he was married, wished his mignon to procuré 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.

[STORY THE ELEVENTH — A SACRIFICE TO THE DEVIL.](#)

Of a jealous rogue, who after many offerings made to divers saints to  
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[STORY THE TWELFTH — THE CALF.](#)

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.

[STORY THE THIRTEENTH — THE CASTRATED CLERK.](#)

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.

[STORY THE FOURTEENTH — THE POPE-MAKER, OR THE HOLY MAN.](#)

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  
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[STORY THE FIFTEENTH — THE CLEVER NUN.](#)

Of a nun whom a monk wished to deceive, and how he offered to  
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he put forward in his place, and of the answer she gave him.

[STORY THE SIXTEENTH — ON THE BLIND SIDE.](#)

Of a knight of Picardy who went to Prussia, and, meanwhile his  
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[STORY THE SEVENTEENTH — THE LAWYER AND THE  
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Of a President of Parliament, who fell in love with his chamber-  
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and would have forced her whilst she was sifting flour, but by  
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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.

[STORY THE EIGHTEENTH — FROM BELLY TO BACK.](#)

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 through 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.*

[STORY THE NINETEENTH — THE CHILD OF THE SNOW.](#)

*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.*

[STORY THE TWENTIETH — THE HUSBAND AS DOCTOR.](#)

*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.*

[STORY THE TWENTY-FIRST — THE ABBESS CURED](#)

*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.*

[STORY THE TWENTY-SECOND — THE CHILD WITH TWO FATHERS.](#)

*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.*

[STORY THE TWENTY-THIRD — THE LAWYER'S WIFE WHO](#)

[PASSED THE LINE.](#)

*Of a clerk of whom his mistress was enamoured, and what he promised 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.”*

[STORY THE TWENTY-FOURTH — HALF-BOOTED.](#)

*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.*

[STORY THE TWENTY-FIFTH — FORCED WILLINGLY.](#)

*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.*

[STORY THE TWENTY-SIXTH — THE DAMSEL KNIGHT.](#)

*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.*

[STORY THE TWENTY-SEVENTH — THE HUSBAND IN THE CLOTHES-CHEST.](#)

*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*

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whilst she passed the time with her lover; and of the wagers  
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between her and the said husband, as you will find afterwards  
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[STORY THE TWENTY-EIGHTH — THE INCAPABLE LOVER.](#)

Of the meeting assigned to a great Prince of this kingdom by a  
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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.

[STORY THE TWENTY-NINTH — THE COW AND THE CALF.](#)

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.

[STORY THE THIRTIETH — THE THREE CORDELIERS.](#)

Of three merchants of Savoy who went on a pilgrimage to St.  
Anthony  
in Vienne, 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.

[STORY THE THIRTY-FIRST — TWO LOVERS FOR ONE  
LADY.](#)

Of a squire who found the mule of his companion, and mounted  
thereon  
and it took him to the house of his master's mistress; and the

squire  
slept there, where his friend found him; also of the words which  
passed  
between them—as is more clearly set out below.

[STORY THE THIRTY-SECOND — THE WOMEN WHO PAID TITHE.](#)

Of the Cordeliers of Ostelleria in Catalonia, who took tithe from  
the  
women of the town, and how it was known, and the punishment  
the lord of  
that place and his subjects inflicted on the monks, as you shall  
learn  
hereafter.

[STORY THE THIRTY-THIRD — THE LADY WHO LOST HER HAIR.](#)

Of a noble lord who was in love with a damsel who cared for  
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great lord, but tried to keep it secret; and of the agreement made  
between the two lovers concerning her, as you shall hereafter  
hear.

[STORY THE THIRTY-FOURTH — THE MAN ABOVE AND THE MAN BELOW.](#)

Of a married woman who gave rendezvous to two lovers, who  
came and  
visited her, and her husband came soon after, and of the words  
which  
passed between them, as you shall presently hear.

[STORY THE THIRTY-FIFTH — THE EXCHANGE.](#)

Of a knight whose mistress married whilst he was on his travels,  
and on  
his return, by chance he came to her house, and she, in order  
that she  
might sleep with him, caused a young damsel, her chamber-  
maid, to go to  
bed with her husband; and of the words that passed between the  
husband  
and the knight his guest, as are more fully recorded hereafter.

[STORY THE THIRTY-SIXTH — AT WORK.](#)

Of a squire who saw his mistress, whom he greatly loved,

*between  
two other gentlemen, and did not notice that she had hold of  
both of  
them till another knight informed him of the matter as you will  
hear.*

*STORY THE THIRTY-SEVENTH — THE USE OF DIRTY  
WATER.*

*Of a jealous man who recorded all the tricks which he could  
hear or  
learn by which wives had deceived their husbands in old times;  
but at  
last he was deceived by means of dirty water which the lover of  
the said  
lady threw out of window upon her as she was going to Mass, as  
you shall  
hear hereafter.*

*STORY THE THIRTY-EIGHTH — A ROD FOR ANOTHER'S  
BACK.*

*Of a citizen of Tours who bought a lamprey which he sent to his  
wife  
to cook in order that he might give a feast to the priest, and the  
said  
wife sent it to a Cordelier, who was her lover, and how she  
made a woman  
who was her neighbour sleep with her husband, and how the  
woman was  
beaten, and what the wife made her husband believe, as you will  
hear  
hereafter.*

*STORY THE THIRTY-NINTH — BOTH WELL SERVED.*

*Of a knight who, whilst he was waiting for his mistress amused  
himself  
three times with her maid, who had been sent to keep him  
company that  
he might not be dull; and afterwards amused himself three times  
with  
the lady, and how the husband learned it all from the maid, as  
you will  
hear.*



[STORY THE FORTIETH — THE BUTCHER'S WIFE THE GHOST IN THE CHIMNEY.](#)

*Of a Jacobin who left his mistress, a butcher's wife, for another woman who was younger and prettier, and how the said butcher's wife tried to enter his house by the chimney.*

[STORY THE FORTY-FIRST — LOVE IN ARMS.](#)

*Of a knight who made his wife wear a hauberk whenever he would do you know what; and of a clerk who taught her another method which she almost told her husband, but turned it off suddenly.*

[STORY THE FORTY-SECOND — THE MARRIED PRIEST.](#)

*Of a village clerk who being at Rome and believing that his wife was dead became a priest, and was appointed curé of his own town, and when he returned, the first person he met was his wife.*

[STORY THE FORTY-THIRD — A BARGAIN IN HORNS.](#)

*Of a labourer who found a man with his wife, and forwent his revenge for a certain quantity of wheat, but his wife insisted that he should complete the work he had begun.*

[STORY THE FORTY-FOURTH —THE MATCH-MAKING PRIEST.](#)

*Of a village priest who found a husband for a girl with whom he was in love, and who had promised him that when she was married she would do whatever he wished, of which he reminded her on the wedding-day, and the husband heard it, and took steps accordingly, as you will hear.*

[STORY THE FORTY-FIFTH — THE SCOTSMAN TURNED WASHERWOMAN](#)

*Of a young Scotsman who was disguised as a woman for the space of fourteen years, and by that means slept with many girls and*

married

women, but was punished in the end, as you will hear.

[STORY THE FORTY-SIXTH — HOW THE NUN PAID FOR THE PEARS.](#)

Of a Jacobin and a nun, who went secretly to an orchard to enjoy

pleasant pastime under a pear-tree; in which tree was hidden one who

knew of the assignation, and who spoiled their sport for that time, as

you will hear.

[STORY THE FORTY-SEVENTH — TWO MULES DROWNED TOGETHER.](#)

Of a President who knowing of the immoral conduct of his wife, caused

her to be drowned by her mule, which had been kept without drink for a

week, and given salt to eat—as is more clearly related hereafter.

[STORY THE FORTY-EIGHTH — THE CHASTE MOUTH.](#)

Of a woman who would not suffer herself to be kissed, though she

willingly gave up all the rest of her body except the mouth, to her

lover—and the reason that she gave for this.

[STORY THE FORTY-NINTH — THE SCARLET BACKSIDE.](#)

Of one who saw his wife with a man to whom she gave the whole of her

body, except her backside, which she left for her husband and he made

her dress one day when his friends were present in a woollen gown on the

backside of which was a piece of fine scarlet, and so left her before

all their friends.

[STORY THE FIFTIETH — TIT FOR TAT.](#)

Of a father who tried to kill his son because the young man wanted to

lie with his grandmother, and the reply made by the said son.

[STORY THE FIFTY-FIRST — THE REAL FATHERS.](#)

*Of a woman who on her death-bed, in the absence of her husband, made over her children to those to whom they belonged, and how one of the youngest of the children informed his father.*

[STORY THE FIFTY-SECOND — THE THREE REMINDERS.](#)

*Of three counsels that a father when on his deathbed gave his son, but to which the son paid no heed. And how he renounced a young girl he had married, because he saw her lying with the family chaplain the first night after their wedding.*

[STORY THE FIFTY-THIRD — THE MUDDLED MARRIAGES.](#)

*Of two men and two women who were waiting to be married at the first Mass in the early morning; and because the priest could not see well, he took the one for the other, and gave to each man the wrong wife, as you will hear.*

[STORY THE FIFTY FOURTH — THE RIGHT MOMENT.](#)

*Of a damsel of Maubeuge who gave herself up to a waggoner, and refused many noble lovers; and of the reply that she made to a noble knight because he reproached her for this—as you will hear.*

[STORY THE FIFTY-FIFTH — A CURÉ FOR THE PLAGUE.](#)

*Of a girl who was ill of the plague and caused the death of three men who lay with her, and how the fourth was saved, and she also.*

[STORY THE FIFTY-SIXTH — THE WOMAN, PRIEST, SERVANT, AND WOLF.](#)

*Of a gentleman who caught, in a trap that he laid, his wife, the priest, her maid, and a wolf; and burned them all alive, because his wife committed adultery with the priest.*

[STORY THE FIFTY-SEVENTH — THE OBLIGING BROTHER.](#)

*Of a damsel who married a shepherd, and how the marriage*

was arranged,

and what a gentleman, the brother of the damsel, said.

[STORY THE FIFTY-EIGHTH — SCORN FOR SCORN.](#)

*Of two comrades who wished to make their mistresses better inclined*

*towards them, and so indulged in debauchery, and said, that as after*

*that their mistresses still scorned them, that they too must have played*

*at the same game—as you will hear.*

[STORY THE FIFTY-NINTH — THE SICK LOVER.](#)

*Of a lord who pretended to be sick in order that he might lie with the*

*servant maid, with whom his wife found him.*

[STORY THE SIXTIETH — THREE VERY MINOR BROTHERS.](#)

*Of three women of Malines, who were acquainted with three cordeliers,*

*and had their heads shaved, and donned the gown that they might not be*

*recognised, and how it was made known.*

[STORY THE SIXTY-FIRST — CUCKOLDED—AND DUPED.](#)

*Of a merchant who locked up in a bin his wife's lover, and she secretly*

*put an ass there which caused her husband to be covered with confusion.*

[STORY THE SIXTY-SECOND — THE LOST RING.](#)

*Of two friends, one of whom left a diamond in the bed of his hostess,*

*where the other found it, from which there arose a great discussion*

*between them, which the husband of the said hostess settled in an*

*effectual manner.*

[STORY THE SIXTY-THIRD — MONTBLERU; OR THE THIEF.](#)

*Of one named Montbleru, who at a fair at Antwerp stole from his*

*companions their shirts and handkerchiefs, which they had given to the*

*servant-maid of their hostess to be washed; and how afterwards*

they  
pardoned the thief, and then the said Montbleru told them the  
whole of  
the story.

[STORY THE SIXTY-FOURTH — THE OVER-CUNNING  
CURÉ.](#)

Of a priest who would have played a joke upon a gelder named  
Trenche-couille, but, by the connivance of his host, was himself  
castrated.

[STORY THE SIXTY-FIFTH — INDISCRETION REPROVED,  
BUT NOT PUNISHED.](#)

Of a woman who heard her husband say that an innkeeper at  
Mont St.

Michel was excellent at copulating, so went there, hoping to try  
for

herself, but her husband took means to prevent it, at which she  
was much

displeased, as you will hear shortly.

[STORY THE SIXTY-SIXTH — THE WOMAN AT THE BATH.](#)

Of an inn-keeper at Saint Omer who put to his son a question for  
which

he was afterwards sorry when he heard the reply, at which his  
wife was

much ashamed, as you will hear, later.

[STORY THE SIXTY-SEVENTH — THE WOMAN WITH THREE  
HUSBANDS](#)

Of a “fur hat” of Paris, who wished to deceive a cobbler’s wife,  
but

over-reached, himself, for he married her to a barber, and  
thinking that

he was rid of her, would have wedded another, but she  
prevented him, as

you will hear more plainly hereafter.

[STORY THE SIXTY-EIGHTH — THE JADE DESPOILED.](#)

Of a married man who found his wife with another man, and  
devised

means to get from her her money, clothes, jewels, and all, down  
to

her chemise, and then sent her away in that condition, as shall

be

afterwards recorded.

[STORY THE SIXTY-NINTH — THE VIRTUOUS LADY WITH TWO HUSBANDS.](#)

*Of a noble knight of Flanders, who was married to a beautiful and noble*

*lady. He was for many years a prisoner in Turkey, during which time his*

*good and loving wife was, by the importunities of her friends, induced*

*to marry another knight. Soon after she had remarried, she heard that*

*her husband had returned from Turkey, whereupon she allowed herself to*

*die of grief, because she had contracted a fresh marriage.*

[STORY THE SEVENTIETH — THE DEVIL'S HORN.](#)

*Of a noble knight of Germany, a great traveller in his time; who after*

*he had made a certain voyage, took a vow to never make the sign of*

*the Cross, owing to the firm faith and belief that he had in the holy*

*sacrament of baptism—in which faith he fought the devil, as you will*

*hear.*

[STORY THE SEVENTY-FIRST — THE CONSIDERATE CUCKOLD](#)

*Of a knight of Picardy, who lodged at an inn in the town of St. Omer,*

*and fell in love with the hostess, with whom he was amusing himself—you*

*know how—when her husband discovered them; and how he behaved—as you*

*will shortly hear.*

[STORY THE SEVENTY-SECOND — NECESSITY IS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION.](#)

*Of a gentleman of Picardy who was enamoured of the wife of a knight his*

*neighbour; and how he obtained the lady's favours and was*



nearly caught  
with her, and with great difficulty made his escape, as you will  
hear  
later.

[STORY THE SEVENTY-THIRD — THE BIRD IN THE CAGE.](#)

Of a curé who was in love with the wife of one of his  
parishioners,  
with whom the said curé was found by the husband of the  
woman, the  
neighbours having given him warning—and how the curé  
escaped, as you  
will hear.

[STORY THE SEVENTY-FOURTH — THE OBSEQUIOUS  
PRIEST.](#)

Of a priest of Boulogne who twice raised the body of Our Lord  
whilst  
chanting a Mass, because he believed that the Seneschal of  
Boulogne  
had come late to the Mass, and how he refused to take the Pax  
until the  
Seneschal had done so, as you will hear hereafter.

[STORY THE SEVENTY-FIFTH — THE BAGPIPE.](#)

Of a hare-brained half-mad fellow who ran a great risk of being  
put  
to death by being hanged on a gibbet in order to injure and  
annoy the  
Bailly, justices, and other notables of the city of Troyes in  
Champagne  
by whom he was mortally hated, as will appear more plainly  
hereafter.

[STORY THE SEVENTY-SIXTH — CAUGHT IN THE ACT.](#)

Of the chaplain to a knight of Burgundy who was enamoured of  
the wench  
of the said knight, and of the adventure which happened on  
account of  
his amour, as you will hear below.

[STORY THE SEVENTY-SEVENTH — THE SLEEVELESS  
ROBE.](#)

Of a gentleman of Flanders, who went to reside in France, but

whilst he  
was there his mother was very ill in Flanders; and how he often  
went  
to visit her believing that she would die, and what he said and  
how he  
behaved, as you will hear later.

[STORY THE SEVENTY-EIGHTH — THE HUSBAND TURNED CONFESSOR.](#)

Of a married gentleman who made many long voyages, during  
which time his  
good and virtuous wife made the acquaintance of three good  
fellows, as  
you will hear; and how she confessed her amours to her  
husband when he  
returned from his travels, thinking she was confessing to the  
curé, and  
how she excused herself, as will appear.

[STORY THE SEVENTY-NINTH — THE LOST ASS FOUND.](#)

Of a good man of Bourbonnais who went to seek the advice of a  
wise man  
of that place about an ass that he had lost, and how he believed  
that he  
miraculously recovered the said ass, as you will hear hereafter.

[STORY THE EIGHTIETH — GOOD MEASURE!](#)

Of a young German girl, aged fifteen or sixteen or thereabouts  
who was  
married to a gentle gallant, and who complained that her  
husband had too  
small an organ for her liking, because she had seen a young ass  
of only  
six months old which had a bigger instrument than her husband,  
who was  
24 or 26 years old.

[STORY THE EIGHTY-FIRST — BETWEEN TWO STOOLS.](#)

Of a noble knight who was in love with a beautiful young  
married lady,  
and thought himself in her good graces, and also in those of  
another  
lady, her neighbour; but lost both as is afterwards recorded.

[STORY THE EIGHTY-SECOND — BEYOND THE MARK.](#)

*Of a shepherd who made an agreement with a shepherdess that he should mount upon her “in order that he might see farther,” but was not to penetrate beyond a mark which she herself made with her hand upon the instrument of the said shepherd—as will more plainly appear hereafter.*

[STORY THE EIGHTY-THIRD — THE GLUTTONOUS MONK.](#)

*Of a Carmelite monk who came to preach at a village and after his sermon, he went to dine with a lady, and how he stuffed out his gown, as you will hear.*

[STORY THE EIGHTY-FOURTH — THE DEVIL’S SHARE.](#)

*Of one of his marshals who married the sweetest and most lovable woman there was in all Germany. Whether what I tell you is true—for I do not swear to it that I may not be considered a liar—you will see more plainly below.*

[STORY THE EIGHTY-FIFTH — NAILED!](#)

*Of a goldsmith, married to a fair, kind, and gracious lady, and very amorous withal of a curé, her neighbour, with whom her husband found her in bed, they being betrayed by one of the goldsmith’s servants, who was jealous, as you will hear.*

[STORY THE EIGHTY-SIXTH — FOOLISH PEAR.](#)

*Of a young man of Rouen, married to a fair, young girl of the age of fifteen or thereabouts; and how the mother of the girl wished to have the marriage annulled by the Judge of Rouen, and of the sentence which the said Judge pronounced when he had heard the parties—as*

you will  
hear more plainly in the course of the said story.

[STORY THE EIGHTY-SEVENTH — WHAT THE EYE DOES NOT SEE.](#)

*Of a gentle knight who was enamoured of a young and beautiful girl, and how he caught a malady in one of his eyes, and therefore sent for a doctor, who likewise fell in love with the same girl, as you will hear; and of the words which passed between the knight and the doctor concerning the plaster which the doctor had put on the knight's good eye.*

[STORY THE EIGHTY-EIGHTH — A HUSBAND IN HIDING.](#)

*Of a poor, simple peasant married to a nice, pleasant woman, who did much as she liked, and who in order that she might be alone with her lover, shut up her husband in the pigeon-house in the manner you will hear.*

[STORY THE EIGHTY-NINTH — THE FAULT OF THE ALMANAC.](#)

*Of a curé who forgot, either by negligence or ignorance, to inform his parishioners that Lent had come until Palm Sunday arrived, as you will hear—and of the manner in which he excused himself to his parishioners.*

[STORY THE NINETIETH — A GOOD REMEDY.](#)

*Of a good merchant of Brabant whose wife was very ill, and he supposing that she was about to die, after many remonstrances and exhortations for the salvation of her soul, asked her pardon, and she pardoned him all his misdeeds, excepting that he had not worked her as much as he ought*

to have done—as will appear more plainly in the said story.

[STORY THE NINETY-FIRST — THE OBEDIENT WIFE.](#)

*Of a man who was married to a woman so lascivious and lickerish, that*

*I believe she must have been born in a stove or half a league from the*

*summer sun, for no man, however well he might work, could satisfy her;*

*and how her husband thought to punish her, and the answer she gave him.*

[STORY THE NINETY-SECOND — WOMEN'S QUARRELS.](#)

*Of a married woman who was in love with a Canon, and, to avoid*

*suspicion, took with her one of her neighbours when she went to visit*

*the Canon; and of the quarrel that arose between the two women, as you*

*will hear.*

[STORY THE NINETY-THIRD — HOW A GOOD WIFE WENT ON A PILGRIMAGE.](#)

*Of a good wife who pretended to her husband that she was going on*

*a pilgrimage, in order to find opportunity to be with her lover the*

*parish-clerk—with whom her husband found her; and of what he said and*

*did when he saw them doing you know what.*

[STORY THE NINETY-FOURTH — DIFFICULT TO PLEASE.](#)

*Of a curé who wore a short gown, like a gallant about to be married,*

*for which cause he was summoned before the Ordinary, and of the sentence*

*which was passed, and the defence he made, and the other tricks he*

*played afterwards—as you will plainly hear.*

[STORY THE NINETY-FIFTH — THE SORE FINGER CURED.](#)

*Of a monk who feigned to be very ill and in danger of death, that he*

*might obtain the favours of a certain young woman in the*

manner which is  
described hereafter.

[STORY THE NINETY-SIXTH — A GOOD DOG.](#)

*Of a foolish and rich village curé who buried his dog in the church-yard; for which cause he was summoned before his Bishop, and*

*how he gave 60 gold crowns to the Bishop, and what the Bishop said to*

*him—which you will find related here.*

[STORY THE NINETY-SEVENTH — BIDS AND BIDDINGS.](#)

*Of a number of boon companions making good cheer and drinking at*

*a tavern, and how one of them had a quarrel with his wife when he*

*returned home, as you will hear.*

[STORY THE NINETY-EIGHTH — THE UNFORTUNATE LOVERS.](#)

*Of a knight of this kingdom and his wife, who had a fair daughter aged*

*fifteen or sixteen. Her father would have married her to a rich old*

*knight, his neighbour, but she ran away with another knight, a young*

*man who loved her honourably; and, by strange mishap, they both died sad*

*deaths without having ever co-habited,—as you will hear shortly.*

[STORY THE NINETY-NINTH — THE METAMORPHOSIS.](#)

*Relates how a Spanish Bishop, not being able to procure fish, ate*

*two partridges on a Friday, and how he told his servants that he had*

*converted them by his prayers into fish—as will more plainly be related*

*below.*

[STORY THE HUNDREDTH AND LAST — THE CHASTE LOVER.](#)

*Of a rich merchant of the city of Genoa, who married a fair damsel,*



*who owing to the absence of her husband, sent for a wise clerk  
—a young,  
fit, and proper man—to help her to that of which she had need;  
and  
of the fast that he caused her to make—as you will find more  
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below.*

## STORY THE NINETY-NINTH. . . . . 499

**The Metamorphosis.**

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## STORY THE HUNDREDTH AND LAST. . . . . 503

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## INTRODUCTION

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The highest living authority on French Literature—Professor George Saintsbury—has said:

“The *Cent Nouvelles* is undoubtedly the first work of literary prose in French, and the first, moreover, of a long and most remarkable series of literary works in which French writers may challenge all comers with the certainty of victory. The short prose tale of a comic character is the one French literary product the pre-eminence and perfection of which it is impossible to dispute, and the prose tale first appears to advantage in the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*. The subjects are by no means new. They are simply the old themes of the *fabliaux* treated in the old way. The novelty is in the application of prose to such a purpose, and in the crispness, the fluency, and the elegance, of the prose used.”

Besides the literary merits which the eminent critic has pointed out, the stories give us curious glimpses of life in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. We get a genuine view of the social condition of the nobility and the middle classes, and are pleasantly surprised to learn from the mouths of the nobles

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Besides the literary merits which the eminent critic has pointed out, the stories give us curious glimpses of life in the 15th Century. We get a genuine view of the social condition of the nobility and the middle classes, and are pleasantly surprised to learn from the mouths of the nobles themselves that the peasant was not the down-trodden serf that we should have expected to find him a century after the Jacquerie, and 350 years before the Revolution.

In fact there is an atmosphere of tolerance, not to say *bonhomie* about these stories which is very remarkable when we consider under what circumstances they were told, and by whom, and to whom.

This seems to have struck M. Lenient, a French critic, who says:

“Generally the incidents and personages belong to the *bourgeoisie*; there is nothing chivalric, nothing wonderful; no dreamy lovers, romantic dames, fairies, or enchanters. Noble dames, bourgeois, nuns, knights, merchants, monks, and peasants mutually dupe each other. The lord deceives the miller’s wife by imposing on her simplicity, and the miller retaliates in much the same manner. The shepherd marries the knight’s sister, and the nobleman is not over scandalized.

“The vices of the monks are depicted in half a score tales, and the seducers are punished with a severity not always in proportion to the offence.”

It seems curious that this valuable and interesting work has never before been translated into English during the four and a half centuries the book has

been in existence. This is the more remarkable as the work was edited in French by an English scholar—the late Thomas Wright. It can hardly be the coarseness of some of the stories which has prevented the *Nouvelles* from being presented to English readers when there are half a dozen versions of the *Heptameron*, which is quite as coarse as the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, does not possess the same historical interest, and is not to be compared to the present work as regards either the stories or the style.

In addition to this, there is the history of the book itself, and its connection with one of the most important personages in French history—Louis XI. Indeed, in many French and English works of reference, the authorship of the *Nouvelles* has been attributed to him, and though in recent years, the writer is now believed—and no doubt correctly—to have been Antoine de la Salle, it is tolerably certain that Prince Louis heard all the stories related, and very possibly contributed several of them. The circumstances under which these stories came to be narrated requires a few words of explanation.

At a very early age, Louis showed those qualities by which he was later distinguished. When he was only fourteen, he caused his father, Charles VII, much grief, both by his unfilial conduct and his behaviour to the beautiful Agnes Sorel, the King's mistress, towards whom he felt an implacable hatred. He is said to have slapped her face, because he thought she did not treat him with proper respect. This blow was, it is asserted, the primary cause of his revolt against his father's authority (1440). The rebellion was put down, and the Prince was pardoned, but relations between father and son were still strained, and in 1446, Louis had to betake himself to his appanage of Dauphiné, where he remained for ten years, always plotting and scheming, and braving his father's authority.

At length the Prince's Court at Grenoble became the seat of so many conspiracies that Charles VII was obliged to take forcible measures. It was small wonder that the King's patience was exhausted. Louis, not content with the rule of his province, had made attempts to win over many of the nobility, and to bribe the archers of the Scotch Guard. Though not liberal as a rule, he had also expended large sums to different secret agents for some specific purpose, which was in all probability to secure his father's death, for he was not the sort of man to stick at parricide even, if it would secure his ends.

The plot was revealed to Charles by Antoine de Chabannes, Comte de Dampmartin. Louis, when taxed with his misconduct, impudently denied that he had been mixed up with the conspiracy, but denounced all his accomplices, and allowed them to suffer for his misdeeds. He did not, however, forget to revenge

them, so far as lay in his power. The fair Agnès Sorel, whom he had always regarded as his bitterest enemy, died shortly afterwards at Jumièges, and it has always been believed, and with great show of reason, that she was poisoned by his orders. He was not able to take vengeance on Antoine de Chabannes until after he became King.

Finding that his plots were of no avail, he essayed to get together an army large enough to combat his father, but before he completed his plans, Charles VII, tired of his endless treason and trickery, sent an army, under the faithful de Chabannes, into the Dauphiné, with orders to arrest the Dauphin.

The forces which Louis had at his disposal were numerically so much weaker, that he did not dare to risk a battle.

“If God or fortune,” he cried, “had been kind enough to give me but half the men-at-arms which now belong to the King, my father, and will be mine some day, by Our Lady, my mistress, I would have spared him the trouble of coming so far to seek me, but would have met him and fought him at Lyon.”

Not having sufficient forces, and feeling that he could not hope for fresh pardon, he resolved to fly from France, and take refuge at the Court of the Duke of Burgundy.

One day in June, 1456, he pretended to go hunting, and then, attended by only half a dozen friends, rode as fast as he could into Burgundian territory, and arrived at Saint Claude.

From there he wrote to his father, excusing his flight, and announcing his intention of joining an expedition which Philippe le Bon, the reigning Duke of Burgundy was about to undertake against the Turks. The Duke was at that moment besieging Utrecht, but as soon as he heard the Dauphin had arrived in his dominions, he sent orders that he was to be conducted to Brussels with all the honours befitting his rank and station.

Shortly afterwards the Duke returned, and listened with real or pretended sympathy to all the complaints that Louis made against his father, but put a damper on any hopes that the Prince may have entertained of getting the Burgundian forces to support his cause, by saying;

“Monseigneur, you are welcome to my domains. I am happy to see you here. I will provide you with men and money for any purpose you may require, except to be employed against the King, your father, whom I would on no account displease.”

Duke Philippe even tried to bring about a reconciliation between Charles and his son; but as Louis was not very anxious to return to France, nor Charles to

have him there, and a good many of the nobles were far from desiring that the Prince should come back, the negotiations came to nothing.

Louis could make himself agreeable when he pleased, and during his stay in the Duke's domains, he was on good terms with Philippe le Bon, who granted him 3000 gold florins a month, and the castle of Genappe as a residence. This castle was situated on the Dyle, midway between Brussels and Louvain, and about eight miles from either city. The river, or a deep moat, surrounded the castle on every side. There was a drawbridge which was drawn up at night, so Louis felt himself quite safe from any attack.

Here he remained five years (1456-1461) until the death of his father placed him on the throne of France.

It was during these five years that these stories were told to amuse his leisure. Probably there were many more than a hundred narrated—perhaps several hundreds—but the literary man who afterwards “edited” the stories only selected those which he deemed best, or, perhaps, those he heard recounted. The narrators were the nobles who formed the Dauphin's Court. Much ink has been spilled over the question whether Louis himself had any share in the production. In nearly every case the author's name is given, and ten of them (Nos. 2, 4, 7, 9, 11, 29, 33, 69, 70 and 71) are described in the original edition as being by “Monseigneur.” Publishers of subsequent editions brought out at the close of the 15th, or the beginning of the 16th, Century, jumped to the conclusion that “Monseigneur” was really the Dauphin, who not only contributed largely to the book, but after he became King personally supervised the publication of the collected stories.

For four centuries Louis XI was credited with the authorship of the tales mentioned. The first person—so far as I am aware—to throw any doubt on his claim was the late Mr. Thomas Wright, who edited an edition of the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, published by Jannet, Paris, 1858. He maintained, with some show of reason, that as the stories were told in Burgundy, by Burgundians, and the collected tales were “edited” by a subject of the Duke (Antoine de la Salle, of whom I shall have occasion to speak shortly) it was more probable that “Monseigneur” would mean the Duke than the Dauphin, and he therefore ascribed the stories to Philippe le Bel. Modern French scholars, however, appear to be of opinion that “Monseigneur” was the Comte de Charolais, who afterwards became famous as Charles le Téméraire, the last Duke of Burgundy.

The two great enemies were at that time close friends, and Charles was a very frequent visitor to Genappe. It was not very likely, they say, that Duke Philippe who was an old man would have bothered himself to tell his guest



indecent stories. On the other hand, Charles, being then only Comte de Charolais, had no right to the title of “Monseigneur,” but they parry that difficulty by supposing that as he became Duke before the tales were printed, the title was given him in the first printed edition.

The matter is one which will, perhaps, never be satisfactorily settled. My own opinion—though I claim for it no weight or value—is that Louis appears to have the greatest right to the stories, though in support of that theory I can only adduce some arguments, which if separately weak may have some weight when taken collectively. Vérard, who published the first edition, says in the Dedication; “Et notez que par toutes les Nouvelles où il est dit par Monseigneur il est entendu par Monseigneur le Dauphin, lequel depuis a succédé à la couronne et est le roy Loys unsieme; car il estoit lors es pays du duc de Bourgoingne.”

The critics may have good reason for throwing doubt on Vérard’s statement, but unless he printed his edition from a M.S. made after 1467, and the copyist had altered the name of the Comte de Charolais to “Monseigneur” it is not easy to see how the error arose, whilst on the other hand, as Vérard had every facility for knowing the truth, and some of the copies must have been purchased by persons who were present when the stories were told, the mistake would have been rectified in the subsequent editions that Vérard brought out in the course of the next few years, when Louis had been long dead and there was no necessity to flatter his vanity.

On examining the stories related by “Monseigneur,” it seems to me that there is some slight internal evidence that they were told by Louis.

Brantôme says of him that, “he loved to hear tales of loose women, and had but a poor opinion of woman and did not believe they were all chaste. (This sounds well coming from Brantôme) Anyone who could relate such tales was gladly welcomed by the Prince, who would have given all Homer and Virgil too for a funny story.” The Prince must have heard many such stories, and would be likely to repeat them, and we find the first half dozen stories are decidedly “broad,” (No XI was afterwards appropriated by Rabelais, as “Hans Carvel’s Ring”) and we may suspect that Louis tried to show the different narrators by personal example what he considered a really “good tale.”

We know also Louis was subject to fits of religious melancholy, and evinced a superstitious veneration for holy things, and even wore little, leaden images of the saints round his hat. In many of the stories we find monks punished for their immorality, or laughed at for their ignorance, and nowhere do we see any particular veneration displayed for the Church. The only exception is

No LXX, "The Devil's Horn," in which a knight by sheer faith in the mystery of baptism vanquishes the Devil, whereas one of the knight's retainers, armed with a battle-axe but not possessing his master's robust faith in the efficacy of holy water, is carried off bodily, and never heard of again. It seems to me that this story bears the stamp of the character of Louis, who though suspicious towards men, was childishly credulous in religious matters, but I leave the question for critics more capable than I to decide.

Of the thirty-two noblemen or squires who contributed the other stories, mention will be made in the notes. Of the stories, I may here mention that 14 or 15 were taken from Boccaccio, and as many more from Poggio or other Italian writers, or French *fabliaux*, but about 70 of them appear to be original.

The knights and squires who told the stories had probably no great skill as *raconteurs*, and perhaps did not read or write very fluently. The tales were written down afterwards by a literary man, and they owe "the crispness, fluency, and elegance," which, as Prof. Saintsbury remarks, they possess in such a striking degree, to the genius of Antoine de la Sale. He was born in 1398 in Burgundy or Touraine. He had travelled much in Italy, and lived for some years at the Court of the Comte d' Anjou. He returned to Burgundy later, and was, apparently, given some sort of literary employment by Duke Philippe le Bel. At any rate he was appointed by Philippe or Louis to record the stories that enlivened the evenings at the Castle of Genappe, and the choice could not have fallen on a better man. He was already known as the author of two or three books, one of which—*Les Quinze Joyes de Mariage*—relates the woes of married life, and displays a knowledge of character, and a quaint, satirical humour that are truly remarkable, and remind the reader alternately of Thackeray and Douglas Jerrold,—indeed some of the Fifteen Joys are "Curtain Lectures" with a mediaeval environment, and the word pictures of Woman's foibles, follies, and failings are as bright to-day as when they were penned exactly 450 years ago. They show that the "Eternal Feminine" has not altered in five centuries—perhaps not in five thousand!

The practised and facile pen of Antoine de la Sale clothed the dry bones of these stories with flesh and blood, and made them live, and move. Considering his undoubted gifts as a humourist, and a delineator of character it is strange that the name of Antoine de la Sale is not held in higher veneration by his countrymen, for he was the earliest exponent of a form of literary art in which the French have always excelled.

In making a translation of these stories I at first determined to adhere as closely as possible to the text, but found that the versions differed greatly. I have

followed the two best modern editions, and have made as few changes and omissions as possible.

Three or four of the stories are extremely coarse, and I hesitated whether to omit them, insert them in the original French, or translate them, but decided that as the book would only be read by persons of education, respectability, and mature age, it was better to translate them fully,—as has been done in the case of the far coarser passages of Rabelais and other writers. This course appeared to me less hypocritical than that adopted in a recent expensive edition of Boccaccio in which the story of Rusticus and Alibech was given in French—with a highly suggestive full-page illustration facing the text for the benefit of those who could not read the French language.

ROBERT B. DOUGLAS.

Paris, 21st October 1899.

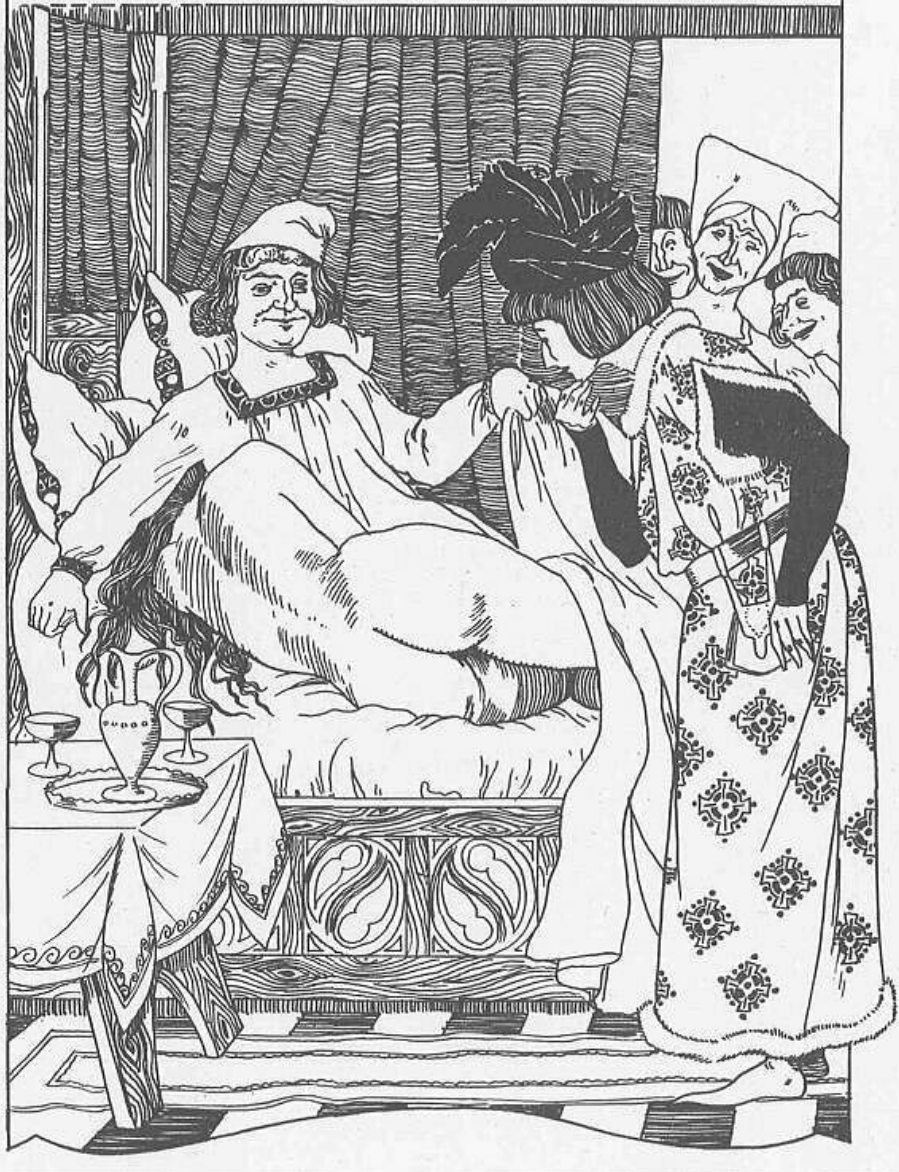
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Good friends, my readers, who peruse this book,  
Be not offended, whilst on it you look:  
Denude yourselves of all deprav'd affection,  
For it contains no badness nor infection:  
'T is true that it brings forth to you no birth  
Of any value, but in point of mirth;  
Thinking therefore how sorrow might your mind  
Consume, I could no apter subject find;  
One inch of joy surmounts of grief a span;  
Because to laugh is proper to the man.

(RABELAIS: *To the Readers*).

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La Médaille à revers





## Story the First.

### THE REVERSE OF THE MEDAL

BY

MONSEIGNEUR LE DUC.

The first story tells of one who 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 he 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,

# STORY THE FIRST —THE REVERSE OF THE MEDAL. [1](#)

**By Monseigneur Le Duc**

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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 goodwill 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.

**I**N 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.

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

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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.

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La Pêche de l'anneau

Lebegue



## 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".



**I**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

# STORY THE THIRD — THE SEARCH FOR THE RING. 3

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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.

**W**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.

## STORY THE FOURTH — THE ARMED CUCKOLD. 4

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.



**L**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.



IN 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.

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By Monseigneur de Lannoy

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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 it 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”.

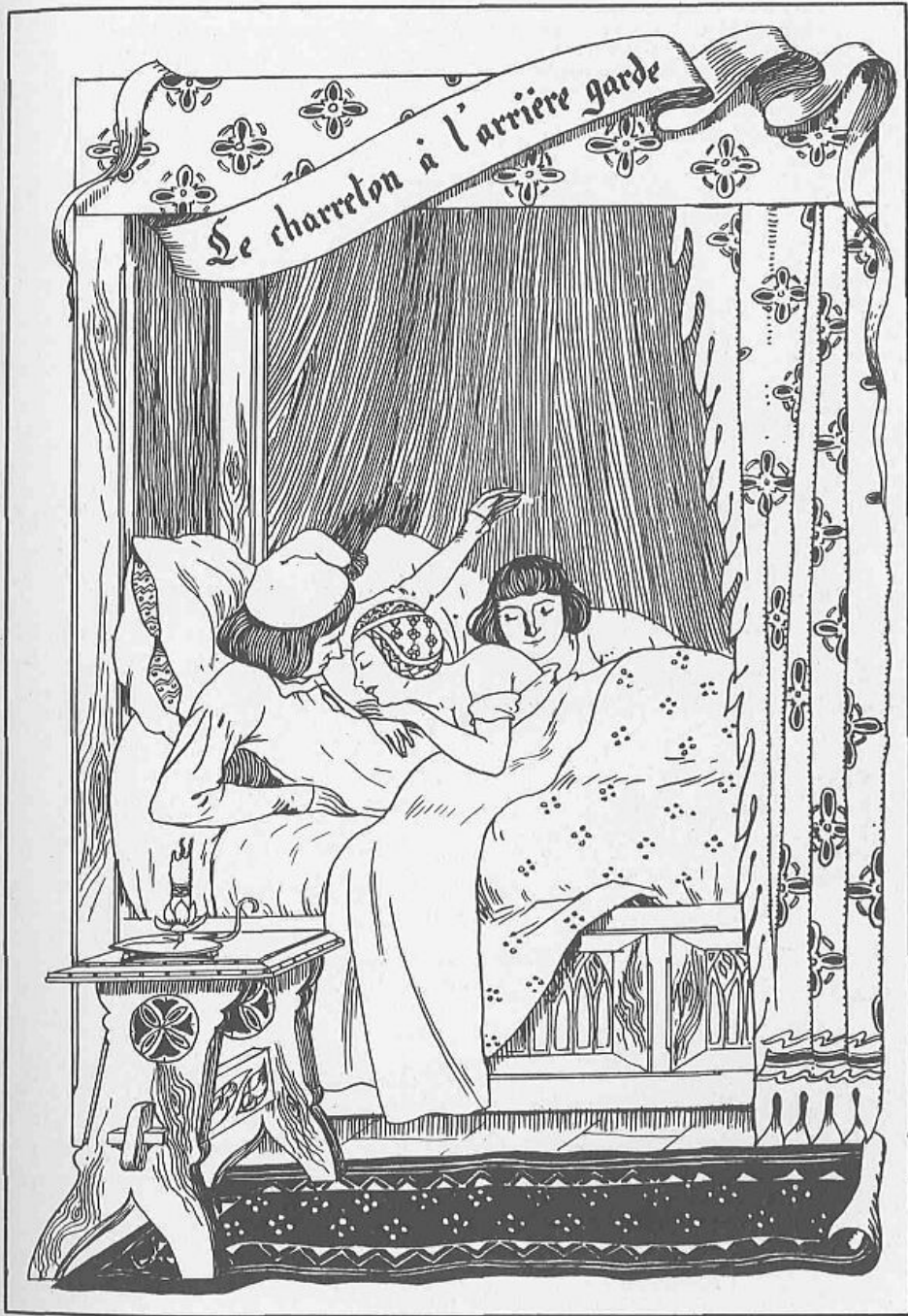
At last one of them bethought himself, and said,

“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.



A 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**

*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.*

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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.

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## 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.

**I**N 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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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 lay with her, and owing to his meritorious actions she became pregnant.

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.





## Story the Ninth.

### THE HUSBAND PANDAR TO HIS OWN WIFE

BY

MONSEIGNEUR.

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.

**I**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

By Monseigneur

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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.



MANY 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.

**A** 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 hunks 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.





## 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.



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.

## STORY THE TWELFTH — THE CALF. [12](#)

**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 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.*

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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.



AT 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



# STORY THE THIRTEENTH — THE CASTRATED CLERK. [13](#)

**By Monseigneur L'amant De Bruxelles.**

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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



Lebigue



## 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.



THE 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

*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.*

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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.



IN 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.

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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.

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## 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.



IN 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.

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Se conseiller au buleteau

E. Drouot



## 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.

**T**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 damsel's 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.





## 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.



A 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 discorteous, 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 thereat.

“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.”

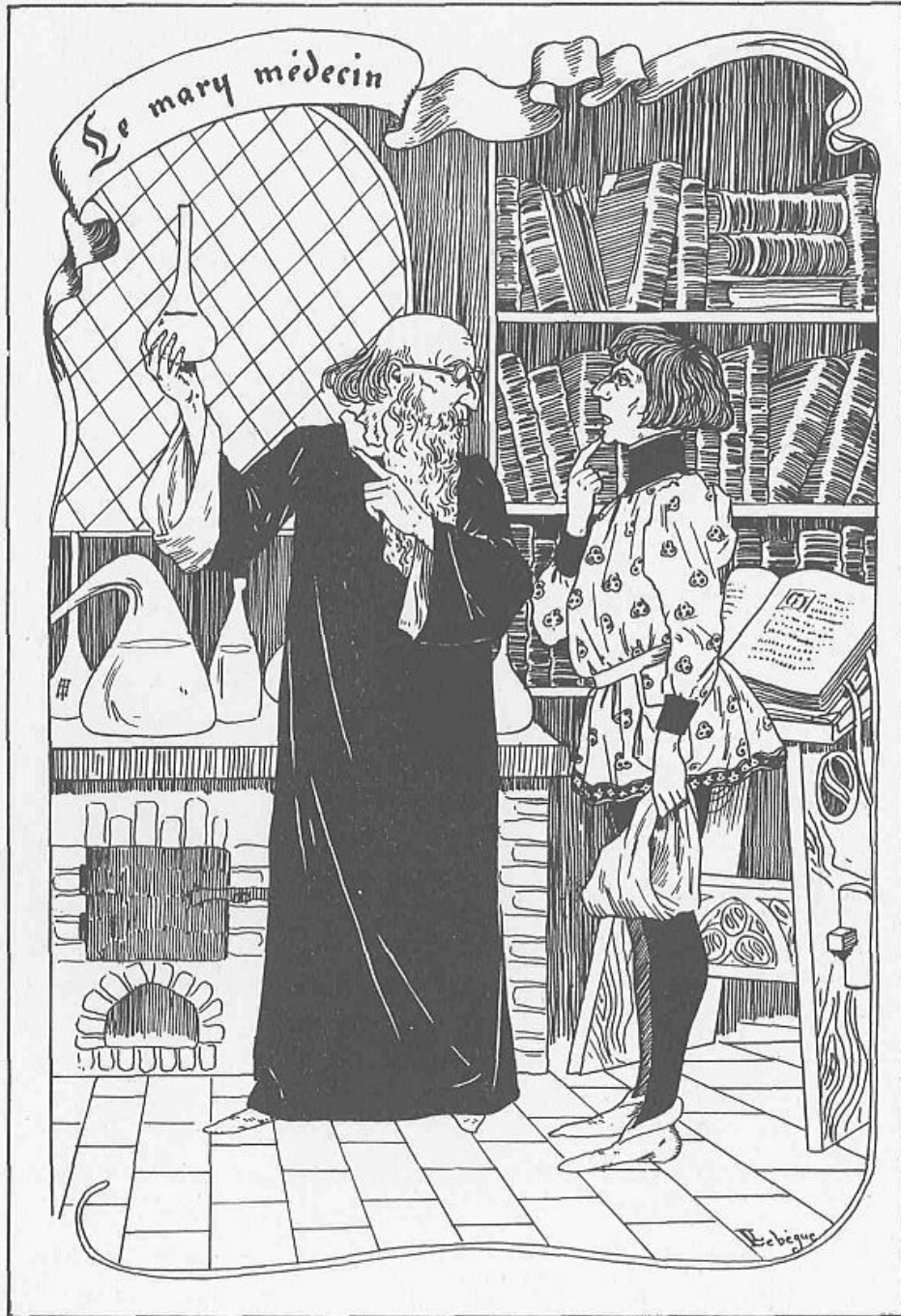
“Alas, what?” she asked. “Is he drowned?”

“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.



It 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.



IN 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

# STORY THE TWENTY-FIRST — THE ABBESS CURED [21](#)

**By Philippe De Laon.**

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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 infirmiry 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.

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## Story the Twenty-Second.

### THE CHILD WITH TWO FATHERS

BY

CARON.

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.

**H**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

## STORY THE TWENTY-SECOND — THE CHILD WITH TWO FATHERS. [22](#)

**By Caron.**

*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.*

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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La Procureuse passe la raye

Lobéque



## 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."



FORMERLY 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

## STORY THE TWENTY-THIRD — THE LAWYER'S WIFE WHO PASSED THE LINE. [23](#)

By Monseigneur De Commesuram.

*Of a clerk of whom his mistress was enamoured, and what he promised 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."*

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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 rumped him outside and openly, he rumped 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-BOOTED

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.**

*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.*

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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 with his own eyes confirmed the report that his faithful servants had given him concerning the said maiden.

“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.

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## 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.



THE 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.



# STORY THE TWENTY-FIFTH — FORCED WILLINGLY. [25](#)

**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.*

The 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.

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.

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## 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.

**I**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](#)

**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.*

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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 forbend) 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 tomorrow 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.**

*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.*

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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."

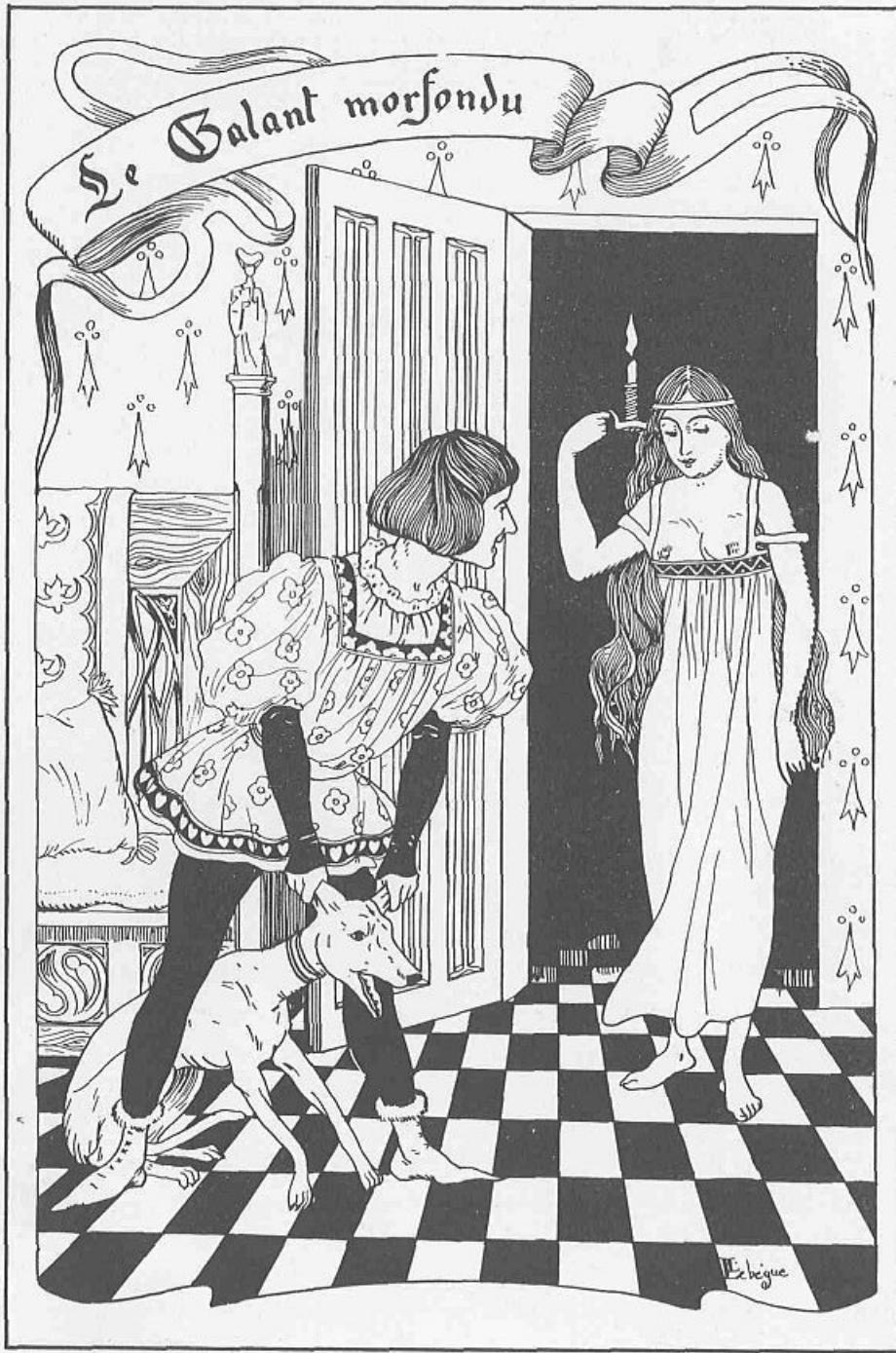
"Yes, truly, Madame."

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.

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## 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.



**I**F 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

## STORY THE TWENTY-EIGHTH — THE INCAPABLE LOVER. [28](#)

**By Messire Miohaut 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.*

If 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 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 damsel, and said;

“My dear, my greyhound is howling outside. Get up, and let it in!”

“Willingly, madam,” said the damsel, 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 damsel 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 damsel, 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 joust.

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.

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## 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 cauble, as you shall shortly hear.

**I**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 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.*

It 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 of the castle he had other outworks, with which it was provided, to carry, like a place that had never been taken or was still quite new, and which nature had provided with many defences.

When he was master of the place, he broke his lance, and ceased the assault. But the fair damsel 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 R enee, 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.





## 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 (1) 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.



IT 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

(1) 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

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They arrived one night in the town, where they found good lodgings, and had excellent cheer at supper, like those who have plenty of money and know well what to do with it, and enjoyed themselves so much that each determined to break his oath, and sleep with his wife.

However, it happened otherwise, for when it was time to retire to rest, the women said good night to their husbands and left them, and shut themselves up in a chamber near, where each had ordered her bed to be made.

Now you must know that that same evening there arrived in the house three Cordeliers, who were going to Geneva, and who ordered a chamber not very far from that of the merchant's wives.

The women, when they were alone, began to talk about a hundred thousand things, and though there were only three of them they made enough noise for forty.

The good Cordeliers, hearing all this womens' chatter, came out of their

chamber, without making any noise, and approached the door without being heard. They saw three pretty women, each lying by herself in a fair bed, big enough to accommodate a second bed-fellow; then they saw and heard also the three husbands go to bed in another chamber, and they said to themselves that fortune had done them a good turn, and that they would be unworthy to meet with any other good luck if they were cowardly enough to allow this opportunity to escape them.

“So,” said one of them, “there needs no further deliberation as to what we are to do; we are three and they are three—let each take his place when they are asleep.”

As it was said, so it was done, and such good luck had the good brothers that they found the key of the room in which the women were, and opened the door so gently that they were not heard by a soul, and they were not such fools when they had gained the outworks as not to close the door after them and take out the key, and then, without more ado, each picked out a bed-fellow, and began to ruffle her as well as he could.

One of the women, believing it was her husband, spoke, and said;

“What are you doing? Do you not remember your vow?” But the good Cordelier answered not a word, but did that for which he came, and did it so energetically that she could not help assisting in the performance.

The other two also were not idle, and the good women did not know what had caused their husbands thus to break their vow. Nevertheless, they thought they ought to obey, and bear it all patiently without speaking, each being afraid of being heard by her companions, for really each thought that she alone was getting the benefit.

When the good Cordeliers had done all they could, they left without saying a word, and returned to their chamber, each recounting his adventures. One had broken three lances; another, four; and the other, six. They rose early in the morning, and left the town.

The good ladies, who had not slept all night, did not rise very early in the morning, for they fell asleep at daybreak, which caused them to get up late.

On the other hand, their husbands, who had supped well the previous night, and who expected to be called by their wives, slept heavily till an hour so late that on other days they had generally travelled two leagues by that time.

At last the women got up, and dressed themselves as quickly as they could, and not without talking. And, amongst other things, the one who had the longest tongue, said;

“Between ourselves, mesdames—how have you passed the night? Have your husbands worked like mine did? He has not ceased to ruffle me all night.”

“By St. John!” said they, “if your husband ruffled you well last night, ours have not been idle. They have soon forgotten what they promised at parting; though believe us we did not forget to remind them.”

“I warned mine also,” said the first speaker, “when he began, but he did not leave off working, and hurried on like a hungry man who had been deprived of my company for two nights.”

When they were attired, they went to find their husbands, who were already dressed;

“Good morning, good morning! you sleepers!” cried the ladies.

“Thank you,” said the men, “for having called us.”

“By my oath!” said one lady. “We have no more qualms of conscience for not calling you than you have for breaking your vow.”

“What vow?” said one of the men.

“The vow,” said she, “that you made on leaving, not to sleep with your wife.”

“And who has slept with his wife?” asked he. “You know well enough,” said she, “and so do I.”

“And I also,” said her companion. “Here is my husband who never gave me such a tumbling as he did last night—indeed if he had not done his duty so well I should not be so pleased that he had broken his vow, but I pass over that, for I suppose he is like young children, who when they know they deserve punishment, think they may as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb.”

“By St. John! so did mine!” cried the third. “But I am not going to scold him for it. If there was any harm done there was good reason for it.”

“And I declare by my oath,” cried one of the men, “that you dream, and that you are drunken with sleep. As for me I slept alone, and did not leave my bed all night.”

“Nor did I,” said another.

“Nor I, by St. John!” said the third. “I would not on any account break my oath. And I feel sure that my friend here, and my neighbour there, who also promised, have not so quickly forgotten.”

The women began to change colour and to suspect some trickery, when one of the husbands began to fear the truth. Without giving the women time to reply,

he made a sign to his companions, and said, laughing;

“By my oath, madam, the good wine here, and the excellent cheer last night made us forget our promise; but be not displeased at the adventure; if it please God we each last night, with your help, made a fine baby, which is a work of great merit, and will be sufficient to wipe out the fault of breaking our vow!”

“May God will it so!” said the women. “But you so strongly declared that you had not been near us that we began to doubt a little.”

“We did it on purpose,” said he, “in order to hear what you would say.”

“And so you committed a double sin; first to break your oath, then to knowingly lie about it; and also you have much troubled us.”

“Do not worry yourselves about that,” said he; “it is no great matter; but go to Mass, and we will follow you.”

The women set out towards the church, and their husbands remained behind, without following them too closely; then they all said together, without picking their words;

“We are deceived! Those devils of Cordeliers have cuckolded us; they have taken our places, and shown us the folly of not sleeping with our wives. They should never have slept out of our rooms, and if it was dangerous to be in bed with them, is there not plenty of good straw to be had?”

“Marry!” said one of them, “we are well punished this time; but at any rate it is better that the trick should only be known to us than to us and our wives, for there would be much danger if it came to their knowledge. You hear by their confession that these ribald monks have done marvels—both more and better than we could do. And, if our wives knew that, they would not be satisfied with this experience only. My advice is that we swallow the business without chewing it.”

“So help me God!” cried the third, “my friend speaks well. As for me, I revoke my vow, for it is not my intention to run any more risks.”

“As you will,” said the other two; “and we will follow your example.”

So all the rest of the journey the wives slept with their husbands, though the latter took care not to explain the cause. And when the women saw that, they demanded the cause of this sudden change. And they answered deceitfully, that as they had begun to break their vow they had better go on.

Thus were the three worthy merchants deceived by the three good Cordeliers, without it ever coming to the knowledge of their wives, who would have died of grief had they known the truth; for every day we see women die for

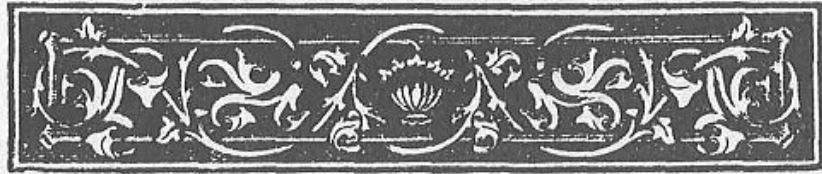


less cause and occasion.

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## Story the Thirty-First.

### TWO LOVERS FOR ONE LADY

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE LA BARDE.

Of a squire who found the mule of his companion, and mounted thereon and it took him to the house of its master's mistress; and the squire slept there, where his friend found him; also of the words which passed between them—as is more clearly declared below.



A gentleman of this kingdom—a squire of great renown and reputation—fell in love with a beautiful damsel of Rouen, and did all in his power to gain her good graces. But fortune was contrary to him, and his lady so unkind, that finally he abandoned the pursuit in despair.

He was not very wrong to do so, for she was provided with a lover—not that the squire knew of that, however much he might suspect it.

He who enjoyed her love was a knight, and a man of great authority, and was so familiar with the squire as to tell him much concerning his love-affair.

Often the knight said; “By my faith, friend, I would

## STORY THE THIRTY-FIRST — TWO LOVERS FOR ONE LADY. [31](#)

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He who enjoyed her love was a knight, and a man of great authority, and was so familiar with the squire as to tell him much concerning his love-affair. Often the knight said; “By my faith, friend, I would have you know that I have a mistress in this town to whom I am devoted; for, however tired I may be, I would willingly go three or four leagues to see her—a mere couple of leagues I would run over without stopping to take breath.”

“Is there no request or prayer that I can make” said the squire, “that will cause you to tell me her name?”

“No, no!” said the other, “you shall not know that.”

“Well!” said the squire, “when I am so fortunate as to have something good, I will be as reticent as you are.”

It happened some time after this that the good knight asked the squire to supper at the castle of Rouen, where he was then lodged. He came, and they had some talk; the gentle knight, who had an appointment to see his lady at a certain hour, said farewell to the squire, and added,

“You know that we have various things to see to to-morrow, and that we must rise early in order to arrange various matters. It is advisable therefore to go to bed early, and for that reason I bid you goodnight.”

The squire, who was cunning enough, suspected that the good knight wished to go somewhere, and that he was making the duties of the morrow an excuse to get rid of him, but he took no notice, and on taking leave and wishing good-night to his host, said;

“Monseigneur you say well; rise early to-morrow morning, and I will do the same.”

When the good squire went down, he found a little mule at the foot of the staircase of the castle, with no one minding it. He soon guessed that the page he had met as he came down had gone to seek for a saddle-cloth for his master.

“Ah, ah” he said to himself, “my host did not get rid of me at this early hour for nothing. Here is his mule, which only waits till I am gone to carry his master to some place he does not wish me to know. Ah, mule!” said he, “if you could speak, you could tell me some news. Let me beg of you to lead me where your master wishes to be.”

With that he made his page hold the stirrup, and mounted the mule, and laid the reins on the mule’s neck, and let it amble on wherever it liked.

And the little mule led him by streets and alleys here and there, till at last it stopped before a little wicket, which was in a side street where its master was accustomed to come, and which was the garden gate of the house of the very damsel the squire had so loved and had abandoned in despair.

He dismounted, and tapped gently at the wicket, and a damsel, who was watching through a hidden lattice, believing it to be the knight, came down and opened the door, and said;

“Monseigneur you are welcome; mademoiselle is in her chamber, and awaits you.”

She did not recognise him, because it was late, and he had a velvet cap drawn down over his face. And the good squire replied, “I will go to her.”

The he whispered to his page, “Go quickly and put the mule where we found it; then go to bed.”

“It shall be done, sir,” he said.

The woman closed the gate, and led the way to the chamber. Our good squire, much occupied with the business in hand, walked boldly to the room where the lady was, and he found her simply dressed in a plain petticoat, and with a gold chain round her neck.

He saluted her politely, for he was kind, courteous and well-spoken, but she, who was as much astonished as though horns had sprouted out of her head,

did not for the moment know how to reply, but at last she asked him what he sought there, why he came at that hour, and who had sent him?

“Mademoiselle,” said he, “you may well imagine that if I had had to rely on myself alone I should not be here; but, thank God, one who has more pity for me than you ever had, has done this kindness to me.”

“Who brought you here, sir?” she asked.

“By my oath, mademoiselle, I will not conceal that from you; it was such and such a lord (and he named the knight who had invited him to supper), who sent me here.”

“Ah!” she cried. “Traitor and disloyal knight that he is, has he betrayed my confidence? Well, well! I will be revenged on him some day.”

“Oh, mademoiselle! it is not right of you to say that, for it is no treason to give pleasure to one’s friend, or to render him aid and service when one can. You know what a great friendship exists between him and me, and that neither hides from the other what is in his heart. It happened that not long ago I related and confessed to him the great love I bore you, and that because of you I had no happiness left in the world, for that by no means could I ever win your affection, and that it was not possible for me to long endure this horrible martyrdom. When the good knight knew that my words were really true, and was aware of the sorrow I endured, he was fain to tell me how he stood with regard to you, and preferred to lose you, and so save my life, than to see me die miserably and retain your affection. And if you are such a woman as you should be, you would not hesitate to give comfort and consolation to me, your obedient servant, who has always loyally served and obeyed you.”

“I beg of you,” she said, “not to speak of that, and to leave here at once. Cursed be he who made you come!”

“Do you know, mademoiselle,” he replied, “that it is not my intention to leave here before to-morrow morning?”

“By my oath,” she cried, “you will go now, at once!”

“Morableu! I will not—for I will sleep with you.”

When she saw that he was not to be got rid of by hard words, she resolved to try kindness, and said;

“I beg of you with all my heart to leave my house now, and by my oath, another time I will do whatever you wish.”

“Bah!” said he; “Waste no more words, for I shall sleep here,” and with that he removed his cloak, and led the damsel to the table, and finally—to cut the tale

short—she went to bed with him by her side.

They had not been in bed long, and he had but broken one lance, when the good knight arrived on his mule, and knocked at the wicket. When the squire heard that and knew who it was, he began to growl, imitating a dog very well.

The knight, hearing this, was both astonished and angry. He knocked at the door more loudly than before, and the other growled louder than ever.

“Who is that growling?” said he outside. “Morbleu! but I will soon find out! Open the door, or I will carry it away!”

The fair damsel, who was in a great rage, went to the window in her chemise, and said;

“Are you there, false and disloyal knight? You may knock as much as you like, but you will not come in!”

“Why shall I not come in?” said he.

“Because,” said she, “you are the falsest man that ever woman met, and are not worthy to be with respectable people.”

“Mademoiselle,” said he, “you blason my arms very well, but I do not know what excites you, for I have never been false to you that I am aware of.”

“Yes, you have,” she cried, “done me the greatest wrong that ever man did to woman.”

“I have not, I swear. But tell me who is in there?”

“You know very well, wretched traitor that you are,” she replied.

Thereupon the squire, who was in bed, began to growl like a dog as before.

“Marry!” said he outside, “I do not understand this. Who is this growler?”

“By St. John! you shall know,” cried the other, and jumped out of bed and came to the window, and said;

“And please you, sir, you have no right to wake us up.”

The good knight, when he knew who spoke to him, was marvellously astonished, and when at last he spoke, he said.

“How did you come here?”

“I supped at your house and slept here.”

“The fault is mine,” said he. Then addressing the damsel, he added, “Mademoiselle, do you harbour such guests in your house?”

“Yes, monseigneur,” she replied, “and thank you for having sent him.”

“I?” said he. “By St. John I have nothing to do with it. I came to occupy my

usual place, but it seems I am too late. At least I beg, since I cannot have anything else, that you open the door and let me drink a cup of wine.”

“By God, you shall not enter here!” she cried.

“By St. John! he shall,” cried the squire, and ran down and opened the door, and then went back to bed, and she did also, though, God knows, much ashamed and dissatisfied.

When the good knight entered the chamber, he lighted a candle, and looked at the couple in bed and said;

“Good luck to you, mademoiselle, and to you also squire.”

“Many thanks, monseigneur,” said he.

But the damsel could not say a word, her heart was so full, for she felt certain that the knight had connived at the squire’s coming, and she felt so angry that she would not speak to him.

“Who showed you the way here, squire?” asked the knight.

“Your little mule, monseigneur,” said he. “I found it at the foot of the stairs, when I supped with you at the castle. It was there alone, and seemingly lost, so I asked it what it was waiting for, and it replied that it was waiting for its saddle-cloth and you. ‘To go where?’ I asked. ‘Where we usually go,’ replied the mule. ‘I am sure,’ said I, ‘that your master will not leave the house to-night, for he is going to bed, so take me where you usually go, I beg.’ It was content, so I mounted on it, and it brought me here, for which I give it thanks.”

“God reward the little beast that betrayed me,” said the good knight.

“Ah, you have fully deserved it, monseigneur,” said the damsel, when at last she was able to speak. “I know well that you have deceived me, but I wish you to know that it is not much to your honour. There was no need, if you would not come yourself, to send some one else surreptitiously. It was an evil day for me when first I saw you.”

“Morbleu! I never sent him,” he said; “but since he is here I will not drive him away. Besides there is enough for the two of us; is there not my friend?”

“Oh, yes, monseigneur, plenty of spoil to divide. Let us celebrate the arrangement by a drink.”

He went to the side-board and filled a large cup with wine, and said, “I drink to you, friend.”

“And I pledge you, friend,” said the other, and poured out another cup for the damsel, who refused to drink, but at last, unwillingly, kissed the cup.



“Well, friend,” said the knight, “I will leave you here. Ruffle her well; it is your turn to-day and will be mine to morrow, please God, and I hope you will be as obliging to me, if ever you find me here, as I am to you now.”

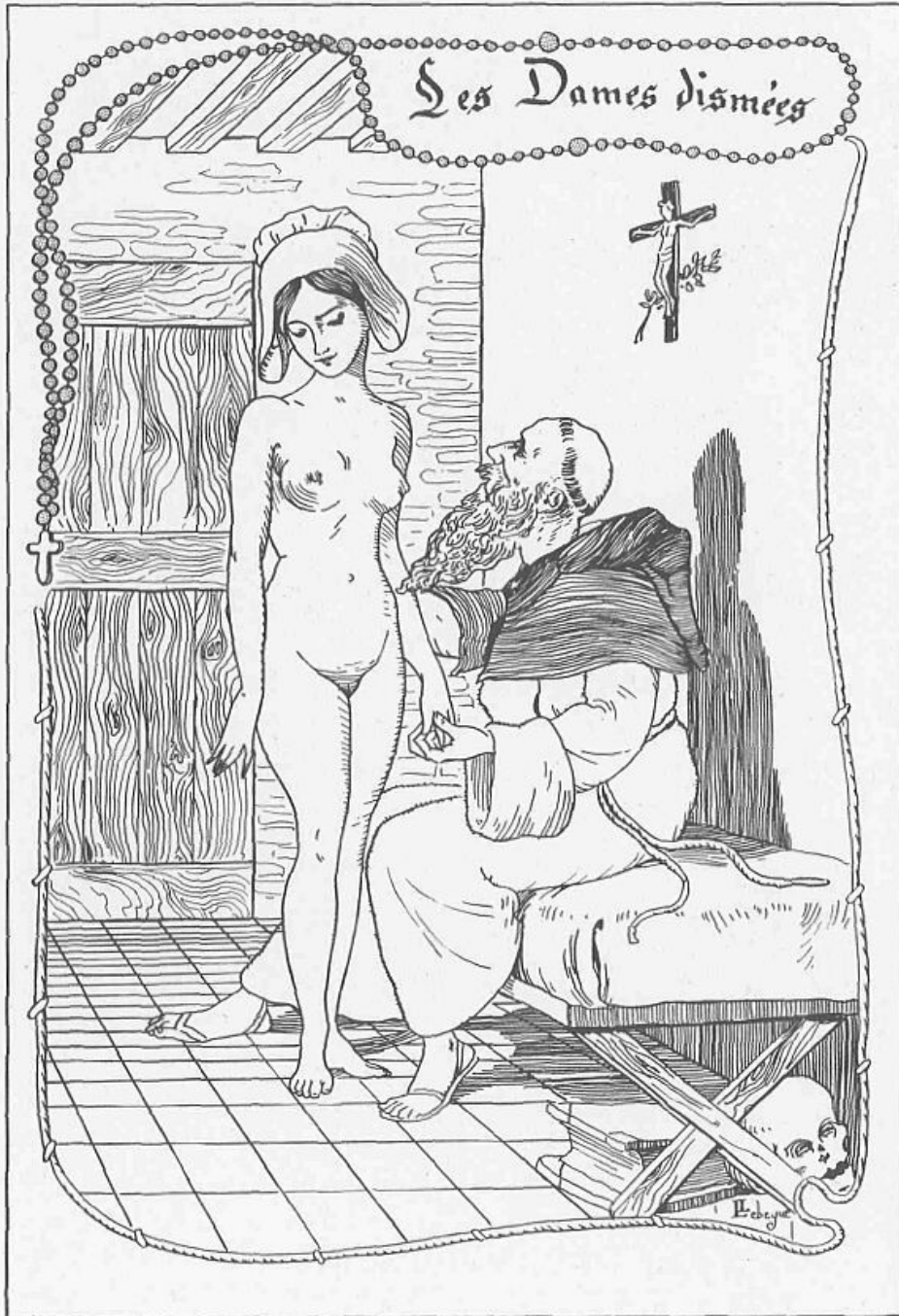
“By Our Lady, friend, doubt not but I shall be.”

Then the knight went away and left the squire, who did as well as he could on the first night. And he told the damsel the whole truth of his adventure, at which she was somewhat relieved to find that he had not been sent.

Thus was the fair damsel deceived by the mule, and obliged to obey the knight and the squire, each in his turn—an arrangement to which she finally became accustomed. The knight and squire grew more attached to each other than before this adventure; their affection increased, and no evil counsels engendered discord and hate between them.

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Les Dames Dismées





## Story the Thirty-Second.

### THE WOMEN WHO PAID TITHE

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE VILLIERS.

Of the Cordeliers of Ostelleria in Catalonia, who took tithe from the women of the town, and how it was known, and the punishment the lord of that place and his subjects inflicted on the monks, as you shall learn hereafter.

**I**N order that I may not be excluded from the number of fortunate and meritorious writers who have worked to increase the number of stories in this book, I will briefly relate a new story, which will serve as a substitute for the tale previously required of me.

It is a well-known fact that in the town of Hostelleria, in Catalonia, <sup>(1)</sup> there arrived some minor friars of the order of Observance, <sup>(2)</sup> who had been driven out of the kingdom of Spain.

They managed to worm themselves into the good graces of the Lord of that town, who was an old man, so that

<sup>(1)</sup> Hostalrich, a town of Catalonia, some 26 miles from Girona.

<sup>(2)</sup> One of the principal branches of the order of Franciscans.

## STORY THE THIRTY-SECOND — THE WOMEN WHO PAID TITHE. [32](#)

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They managed to worm themselves into the good graces of the Lord of that town, who was an old man, so that he built for them a fair church and a large convent, and maintained and supported them all his life as best he could. And after him came his eldest son, who did quite as much for them as his worthy father had done.

In fact they prospered so, that, in a few years they had everything that a convent of mendicant friars could desire. Nor were they idle during all the time they were acquiring these riches; they preached both in the town and in the neighbouring villages, and had such influence over the people that there was not a good christian who did not confess to them, they had such great renown for pointing out faults to sinners.

But of all who praised them and held them in esteem, the women were foremost, such saints did they deem them on account of their charity and devotion.

Now listen to the wickedness, deception, and horrible treason which these false hypocrites practised on the men and women who every day gave them so many good gifts. They made it known to all the women in the town that they were to give to God a tenth of all their goods.

“You render to your Lord such and such a thing; to your parish and priest such and such a thing; and to us you must render and deliver the tithe of the number of times that you have carnal connection with your husband. We will take no other tithe from you, for, as you know, we carry no money—for the temporal and transitory things of this world are nothing to us. We ask and demand only spiritual goods. The tithes which we ask and which you owe us are not temporal goods; as the Holy Sacrament, which you receive, is a divine and holy thing, so no one may receive the tithe but us, who are monks of the order of the Observance.”

The poor simple women, who believed the good friars were more like angels than terrestrial beings, did not refuse to pay the tithe. There was not one who did not pay in her turn, from the highest to the lowest, even the wife of the Lord was not excused.

Thus were all the women of the town parcelled out amongst these rascally monks, and there was not a monk who did not have fifteen or sixteen women to pay tithes to him, and God knows what other presents they had from the women, and all under cover of devotion.

This state of affairs lasted long without its ever coming to the knowledge of those who were most concerned in the payment of the new tithe; but at last it was discovered in the following manner.

A young man who was newly married, was invited to supper at the house of one of his relations—he and his wife—and as they were returning home, and passing the church of the above-mentioned good Cordeliers, suddenly the bell rang out the *Ave Maria*, and the young man bowed to the ground to say his prayers.

His wife said, “I would willingly enter this church.”

“What would you do in there at this hour?” asked her husband. “You can easily come again when it is daylight; to-morrow, or some other time.”

“I beg of you,” she said, “to let me go: I will soon return.”

“By Our Lady!” said he, “you shall not go in now.”

“By my oath!” she replied, “it is compulsory. I must go in, but I will not stay. If you are in a hurry to get home, go on, and I will follow you directly.”

“Get on! get forward!” he said, “you have nothing to do here. If you want to say a *Pater noster*, or an *Ave Maria*, there is plenty of room at home, and it is quite as good to say it there as in this monastery, which is now as dark as pitch.”

“Marry!” said she, “you may say what you like, but by my oath, it is necessary that I should enter here for a little while.”

“Why?” said he. “Do you want to sleep with any of the brothers.”

She imagined that her husband knew that she paid the tithe, and replied;

“No, I do not want to sleep with him; I only want to pay.”

“Pay what?” said he.

“You know very well,” she answered; “Why do you ask?”

“What do I know well?” he asked, “I never meddle with your debts.”

“At least,” she said, “you know very well that I must pay the tithe.”

“What tithe?”

“Marry!” she replied. “It always has to be paid;—the tithe for our nights together. You are lucky—I have to pay for us both.”

“And to whom do you pay?” he asked.

“To brother Eustace,” she replied. “You go on home, and let me go in and discharge my debt. It is a great sin not to pay, and I am never at ease in my mind when I owe him anything.”

“It is too late to-night,” said he, “he has gone to bed an hour ago.”

“By my oath,” said she, “I have been this year later than this. If one wants to pay one can go in at any hour.”

“Come along! come along!” he said. “One night makes no such great matter.”

So they returned home; both husband and wife vexed and displeased—the wife because she was not allowed to pay her tithe, and the husband because he had learned how he had been deceived, and was filled with anger and thoughts of vengeance, rendered doubly bitter by the fact that he did not dare to show his anger.

A little later they went to bed together, and the husband, who was cunning enough, questioned his wife indirectly, and asked if the other women of the town paid tithes as she did?

“By my faith they do,” she replied. “What privilege should they have more than me? There are sixteen to twenty of us who pay brother Eustace. Ah, he is so devout. And he has so much patience. Brother Bartholomew has as many or

more, and amongst others my lady (\*) is of the number. Brother Jacques also has many; Brother Anthony also—there is not one of them who has not a number.”

(\*) The wife of the Seigneur.

“St. John!” said the husband, “they do not do their work by halves. Now I understand well that they are more holy than I thought them; and truly I will invite them all to my house, one after the other, to feast them and hear their good words. And since Brother Eustace receives your tithes, he shall be the first. See that we have a good dinner to-morrow, and I will bring him.”

“Most willingly,” she replied, “for then at all events I shall not have to go to his chamber to pay him; he can receive it when he comes here.”

“Well said,” he replied; “give it him here;” but as you may imagine he was on his guard, and instead of sleeping all night, thought over at his leisure the plan he intended to carry out on the morrow.

The dinner arrived, and Brother Eustace, who did not know his host’s intentions stuffed a good meal under his hood. And when he had well eaten, he rolled his eyes on his hostess, and did not spare to press her foot under the table—all of which the host saw, though he pretended not to, however much to his prejudice it was.

After the meal was over and grace was said, he called Brother Eustace and told him that he wanted to show him an image of Our Lady that he had in his chamber, and the monk replied that he would willingly come.

They both entered the chamber, and the host closed the door so that he could not leave, and then laying hold of a big axe, said to the Cordelier.

“By God’s death, father! you shall never go out of this room—unless it be feet foremost—if you do not confess the truth.”

“Alas, my host, I beg for mercy. What is it you, would ask of me?”

“I ask,” said he, “the tithe of the tithe you have received from my wife.”

When the Cordelier heard the word tithes, he began to think that he was in a fix, and did not know what to reply except to beg for mercy, and to excuse himself as well as he could.

“Now tell me,” said the husband, “what tithe it is that you take from my wife and the others?”

The poor Cordelier was so frightened that he could not speak, and answered never a word.

“Tell me all about it,” said the young man, “and I swear to you I will let you go and do you no harm;—but if you do not confess I will kill you stone

dead.”

When the other felt convinced that he had better confess his sin and that of his companions and escape, than conceal the facts and be in danger of losing his life, he said;

“My host, I beg for mercy, and I will tell you the truth. It is true that my companions and I have made all the women of this town believe that they owe us tithes for all the times their husbands sleep with them. They believed us, and they all pay—young and old—when once they are married. There is not one that is excused—my lady even pays like the others—her two nieces also—and in general there is no one that is exempt.”

“Marry!” said the other, “since my lord and other great folks pay it, I ought not to be dissatisfied, however much I may dislike it. Well! you may go, worthy father, on this condition—that you do not attempt to collect the tithe that my wife owes you.”

The other was never so joyous as when he found himself outside the house, and said to himself that he would never ask for anything of the kind again, nor did he, as you will hear.

When the host of the Cordelier was informed by his wife of this new tithe, he went to his Lord and told him all about the tax and how it concerned him. You may imagine that he was much astonished, and said;

“Ah, cursed wretches that they are! Cursed be the hour that ever my father—whom may God pardon—received them! And now they take our spoils and dishonour us, and ere long they may do worse. What is to be done?”

“By my faith, Monseigneur” said the other, “if it please you and seem good to you, you should assemble all your subjects in this town, for the matter touches them as much as you. Inform them of this affair, and consult with them what remedy can be devised before it is too late.”

Monseigneur approved, and ordered all his married subjects to come to him, and in the great hall of his castle, he showed them at full length why he had called them together.

If my lord had been astonished and surprised when he heard the news, so also were all the good people who were there assembled. Some of them said, “We ought to kill them,” others “They should be hanged!” others “Drown them!” Others said they could not believe it was true—the monks were so devout and led such holy lives. One said one thing, another said another.

“I will tell you,” said the Seigneur, “what we will do. We will bring our



wives hither, and Master John, or some other, shall preach a little sermon in which he will take care to make allusion to tithes, and ask the women, in the name of all of us, whether they discharge their debts, as we are anxious they should be paid, and we shall hear their reply.”

After some discussion they all agreed to the Seigneur’s proposal. So orders were issued to all the married women of the town, and they all came to the great hall, where their husbands were assembled. My lord even brought my lady, who was quite astonished to see so many persons. An usher of my lord’s commanded silence, and Master John, who was slightly raised above the other people, began the address which follows;

“Mesdames and mesdemoiselles, I am charged by my lord and those of his council to explain briefly the reason why you are called together. It is true that my lord, his council, and all his people who are here met together, desire to make a public examination of their conscience,—the cause being that that they wish (God willing) to make ere long a holy procession in praise of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and His Glorious Mother, and from the present moment to be in such a devout frame of mind that they may the better praise him in their prayers, and that all the works which they do may be most agreeable to God. You know that there have been no wars in our time, and that our neighbours have been terribly afflicted both by pestilence and famine. Whilst others have been cast down, we have nothing to complain of, and we must own that God has preserved us. There is good reason that we should acknowledge that this is not due to our own virtues, but to the great and liberal mercy of our Blessed Redeemer, who cries, calls, and invites us to put up in our parish church, devout prayers, to which we are to add great faith and firm devotion. The holy convent of the Cordeliers in this town has greatly aided, and still aids us in preserving the above-mentioned benefits. Moreover, we wish to know if you women also perform that which you have undertaken, and whether you sufficiently remember the obligation you owe the Church, and therefore it will be advisable that, by way of precaution, I should mention the principal points. Four times a year,—that is to say at the four Natales (\*) you must confess to some priest or monk having the power of absolution, and if at each festival you receive your Creator that will be well done, but twice, or at least once a year, you ought to receive the Communion. Bring an offering every Sunday to each Mass; those who are able should freely give tithes to God—as fruit, poultry, lambs, pigs, and other accustomed gifts. You owe also another tithes to the holy monks of the convent of St. Francis, and which we earnestly desire to see paid. It greatly concerns us, and we desire it to be continued, nevertheless there are many of you

who have not acted properly in this respect, and who by negligence, or backwardness, have neglected to pay in advance. You know that the good monks cannot come to your houses to seek their tithes;—that would disturb and trouble them too much; it is quite enough if they take the trouble to receive it. It is important that this should be mentioned—it remains to see who have paid, and who still owe.”

(\*) The four principal festivals in the life of Christ—Christmas, Easter, Whitsuntide, and Ascension.

Master John had no sooner finished his discourse, than more than twenty women began to cry at the same time, “I have paid!” “I have paid!” “I owe nothing!” “Nor I,” “Nor I.” A hundred other voices chimed in—generally to say that they owed nothing—and four or six pretty young women were even heard to declare that they had paid well in advance, one four times; one, six; and another, ten.

There were also I know not how many old women who said not a word, and Master John asked them if they had paid their tithe, and they replied that they had made an arrangement with the Cordeliers.

“What!” said he, “you do not pay? You ought to advise and persuade the others to do their duty, and you yourselves are in default!”

“Marry!” said one of them, “I am not to blame. I have been several times to perform my duty, but my confessor would not listen to me: he always says he is too busy.”

“St. John!” said the other old women, “we have compounded with the monks to pay them the tithes we owe them in linen, cloth, cushions, quilts, pillow-cases and such other trifles; and that by their own instructions and desire, for we should prefer to pay like the others.”

“By Our Lady!” said Master John, “there is no harm done; it is quite right.

“I suppose they can go away now; can they not?” said the Seigneur to Master John.

“Yes!” said he, “but let them be sure and not forget to pay the tithes.”

When they had all left the hall, the door was closed, and every man present looked hard at his neighbour.

“Well!” said the Seigneur. “What is to be done? We know for certain what these ribald monks have done to us, by the confession of one of them, and by our wives; we need no further witness.”

After many and various opinions, it was resolved to set the convent on fire, and burn both monks and monastery.

They went to the bottom of the town, and came to the monastery, and took away the *Corpus Domini* and all the relics and sent them to the parish church. Then without more ado, they set fire to the convent in several places, and did not leave till all was consumed—monks, convent, church, dormitory, and all the other buildings, of which there were plenty. So the poor Cordeliers had to pay very dearly for the new tithes they had levied. Even God could do nothing, but

had His house burned down.

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## Story the Thirty-Third.

### THE LADY WHO LOST HER HAIR

BY

MONSEIGNEUR.

Of a noble lord who was in love with a damsel who cared for another great lord, but tried to keep it secret; and of the agreement made between the two lovers concerning her, as you shall hereafter hear.

**A**noble knight who lived in the marches of Burgundy, who was wise, valiant, much esteemed, and worthy of the great reputation he had, was so much in the graces of a fair damsel, that he was esteemed as her lover, and obtained from her, at sundry times, all the favours that she could honourably give him. She was also smitten with a great and noble lord, a prudent man, whose name and qualities I pass over, though if I were to recount them there is not one of you who would not recognise the person intended, which I do not wish.

This gentle lord, I say, soon perceived the love affair of the valiant gentleman just named, and asked him if he were not in the good graces of such and such a damsel,—that is to say the lady before mentioned.

# STORY THE THIRTY-THIRD — THE LADY WHO LOST HER HAIR.

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This gentle lord, I say, soon perceived the love affair of the valiant gentleman just named, and asked him if he were not in the good graces of such and such a damsel,—that is to say the lady before mentioned.

He replied that he was not, but the other, who knew the contrary to be case, said that he was sure he was,

“For whatever he might say or do, he should not try to conceal such a circumstance, for if the like or anything more important had occurred to him (the speaker) he would not have concealed it.”

And having nothing else to do, and to pass the time, he found means to make her fall in love with him. In which he succeeded, for in a very short time he was high in her graces and could boast of having obtained her favours without any trouble to win them.

The other did not expect to have a companion, but you must not think that the fair wench did not treat him as well or better than before, which encouraged him in his foolish love. And you must know that the brave wench was not idle, for she entertained the two at once, and would with much regret have lost either, and more especially the last-comer, for he was of better estate and furnished with

a bigger lance than her first lover; and she always assigned them different times to come, one after the other, as for instance one to-day and the other to-morrow.

The last-comer knew very well what she was doing, but he pretended not to, and in fact he cared very little, except that he was rather disgusted at the folly of the first-comer, who esteemed too highly a thing of little value.

So he made up his mind that he would warn his rival, which he did. He knew that the days on which the wench had forbidden him to come to her (which displeased him much) were reserved for his friend the first-comer. He kept watch several nights, and saw his rival enter by the same door and at the same hour as he did himself on the other days.

One day he said to him, "You well concealed your amours with such an one. I am rather astonished that you had so little confidence in me, considering what I know to be really the case between you and her. And in order that you may understand that I know all, let me tell you that I saw you enter her house at such and such an hour, and indeed no longer ago than yesterday I had an eye upon you, and from a place where I was, I saw you arrive—you know whether I speak the truth."

When the first-comer heard this accusation, he did not know what to say, and he was forced to confess what he would have willingly concealed, and which he thought no one knew but himself; and he told the last-comer that he would not conceal the fact that he was in love, but begged him not to make it known.

"And what would you say," asked the other, "if you found you had a companion?"

"Companion?" said he; "What companion? In a love affair? I never thought of it."

"By St. John!" said the last-comer, "I ought not to keep you longer in suspense—it is I. And since I see that you are in love with a woman who is not worth it, and if I had not more pity on you than you have on yourself I should leave you in your folly, but I cannot suffer such a wench to deceive you and me so long."

If any one was astonished at this news it was the first-comer who believed himself firmly established in the good graces of the wench, and that she loved no one but him. He did not know what to say or think, and for a long time could not speak a word. When at last he spoke, he said,

"By Our Lady! they have given me the onion (\*) and I never suspected it. I was easily enough deceived. May the devil carry away the wench, just as she is!"

(\*) i.e. "they have made a fool of me."

"She has fooled the two of us," said the last-comer;

"at least she has begun well,—but we must even fool her."

"Do so I beg," said the first. "St. Anthony's fire burn me if ever I see the jade again."

"You know," said the second, "that we go to her each in turn. Well, the next time that you go, you must tell her that you well know that I am in love with her, and that you have seen me enter her house at such an hour, and dressed in such a manner, and that, by heaven, if ever you find me there again you will kill me stone dead, whatever may happen to you. I will say the same thing about you, and we shall then see what she will say and do, and then we shall know how to act."

"Well said, and just what I would wish," said the first.

As it was arranged, so was it done, for some days later it was the last-comer's turn to go and visit her; he set out and came to the place appointed.

When he was alone with the wench, who received him very kindly and lovingly it appeared, he put on—as he well knew how—a troubled, bothered air, and pretended to be very angry. She, who had been accustomed to see him quite otherwise, did not know what to think, and she asked what was the matter, for his manner showed that his heart was not at ease.

"Truly, mademoiselle," said he, "you are right; and I have good cause to be displeased and angry. Moreover, it is owing to you that I am in this condition."

"To me?" said she. "Alas, I have done nothing that I am aware of, for you are the only man in the world to whom I would give pleasure, and whose grief and displeasure touch my heart."

"The man who refuses to believe that will not be damned," said he. "Do you think that I have not perceived that you are on good terms with so-and-so (that is to say the first-comer). It is so, by my oath, and I have but too often seen him speak to you apart, and, what is more, I have watched and seen him enter here. But by heaven, if ever I find him here his last day has come, whatever may happen to me in consequence. I could not allow him to be aware that he has done me this injury—I would rather die a thousand times if it were possible. And you are as false as he is for you know of a truth that after God I love no one but you, and yet you encourage him, and so do me great wrong!"

"Ah, monseigneur!" she replied, "who has told you this story? By my soul! I wish that God and you should know that it is quite otherwise, and I call Him to witness that never in my life have I given an assignation to him of whom you



speak, nor to any other whoever he may be—so you have little enough cause to be displeased with me. I will not deny that I have spoken to him, and speak to him every day, and also to many others, but I have never had ought to do with him, nor do I believe that he thinks of me even for a moment, or if so, by God he is mistaken. May God not suffer me to live if any but you has part or parcel in what is yours entirely.”

“Mademoiselle,” said he, “you talk very well, but I am not such a fool as to believe you.”

Angry and displeased as he was, he nevertheless did that for which he came, and on leaving, said,

“I have told you, and given you fair warning that if ever I find any other person comes here, I will put him, or cause him to be put, in such a condition that he will never again worry me or any one else.”

“Ah, Monseigneur,” she replied, “by God you are wrong to imagine such things about him, and I am sure also that he does not think of me.”

With that, the last-comer left, and, on the morrow, his friend, the first-comer did not fail to come early in the morning to hear the news, and the other related to him in full all that had passed, how he had pretended to be angry and threatened to kill his rival, and the replies the jade made.

“By my oath,” said the first, “she acted the comedy well! Now let me have my turn, and I shall be very much surprised if I do not play my part equally well.”

A certain time afterwards his turn came, and he went to the wench, who received him as lovingly as she always did, and as she had previously received her other lover. If his friend the last-comer had been cross and quarrelsome both in manner and words, he was still more so, and spoke to her in this manner;

“I curse the hour and the day on which I made your acquaintance, for it is not possible to load the heart of a poor lover with more sorrows, regrets, and bitter cares than oppress and weigh down my heart to-day. Alas! I chose you amongst all others as the perfection of beauty, gentleness, and kindness, and hoped that I should find in you truth and fidelity, and therefore I gave you all my heart, believing in truth that it was safe in your keeping, and I had such faith in you that I would have met death, or worse, had it been possible, to save your honour. Yet, when I thought myself most sure of your faith, I learned, not only by the report of others but by my own eyes, that another had snatched your love from me, and deprived me of the hope of being the one person in the world who was dearest to you.”

“My friend,” said the wench, “I do not know what your trouble is, but from your manner and your words I judge that there is something the matter, but I cannot tell what it is if you do not speak more plainly—unless it be a little jealousy which torments you, and if so, I think, if you are wise, that you will soon banish it from your mind. For I have never given you any cause for that, as you know me well enough to be aware, and you should be sorry for having used such expressions to me.”

“I am not the sort of man,” said he, “to be satisfied with mere words. Your excuses are worth nothing. You cannot deny that so-and-so (that is to say the last-comer) does not keep you. I know well he does, for I have noticed you, and moreover, have watched, and saw him yesterday come to you at such an hour, dressed in such and such a manner. But I swear to God he has had his last pleasure with you, for I bear him a grudge, and were he ten times as great a man as he is, when I meet him I will deprive him of his life, or he shall deprive me of mine; one of us two must die for I cannot live and see another enjoy you. You are false and disloyal to have deceived me, and it is not without cause that I curse the hour I made your acquaintance, for I know for a certainty that you will cause my death if my rival knows my determination, as I hope he will. I know that I am now as good as dead, and even if he should spare me, he does but sharpen the knife which is to shorten his own days, and then the world would not be big enough to save me, and die I must.”

The wench could not readily find a sufficient excuse to satisfy him in his present state of mind. Nevertheless, she did her best to dissipate his melancholy, and drive away his suspicions, and said to him;

“My friend, I have heard your long tirade, which, to tell the truth, makes me reflect that I have not been so prudent as I ought, and have too readily believed your deceitful speeches, and obeyed you in all things, which is the reason you now think so little of me. Another reason why you speak to me thus, is that you know that I am so much in love with you that I cannot bear to live out of your presence. And for this cause, and many others that I need not mention, you deem me your subject and slave, with no right to speak or look at any but you. Since that pleases you, I am satisfied, but you have no right to suspect me with regard to any living person, nor have I any need to excuse myself. Truth, which conquers all things, will right me in the end!”

“By God, my dear,” said the young man, “the truth is what I have already told you—as both and he will find to your cost if you do not take care.”

After these speeches, and others too long to recount here, he left, and did not forget on the following morning to recount everything to his friend the last-

comer; and God knows what laughter and jests they had between them.

The wench, who still had wool on her distaff (\*), saw and knew very well that each of her lovers suspected the other, nevertheless she continued to receive them each in his turn, without sending either away. She warned each earnestly that he must come to her in the most secret manner, in order that he should not be perceived.

(\*) i.e. plenty of tricks or resources.

You must know that when the first-comer had his turn that he did not forget to complain as before, and threatened to kill his rival should he meet him. Also at his last meeting, he pretended to be more angry than he really was, and made very light of his rival, who, according to him, was as good as dead if he were caught with her. But the cunning and double-dealing jade had so many deceitful speeches ready that her excuses sounded as true as the Gospel. For she believed that, whatever doubts and suspicions they had, the affair would never really be found out, and that she was capable of satisfying them both.

It was otherwise in the end, for the last-comer, whom she was greatly afraid to lose, one day read her a sharp lesson. In fact he told her that he would never see her again, and did not for a long time afterwards, at which she was much displeased and dissatisfied.

And in order to embarrass and annoy her still more, he sent to her a gentleman, a confidential friend, to point out how disgusted he was to find he had a rival, and to tell her, in short, that if she did not send away this rival, that he would never see her again as long as he lived.

As you have already heard, she would not willingly give up his acquaintance, and there was no male or female saint by whom she did not perjure herself in explaining away her love passages with her other lover, and at last, quite beside herself, she said to the squire;

“I will show your master that I love him; give me your knife.”

Then, when she had the knife, she took off her headdress, and with the knife cut off all her hair—not very evenly.

The squire, who knew the facts of the case, took this present, and said he would do his duty and give it to his master, which he soon did. The last-comer received the parcel, which he undid, and found the hair of his mistress, which was very long and beautiful. He did not feel much at ease until he had sent for his friend and revealed to him the message he had sent, and the valuable present she had given him in return, and then he showed the beautiful long tresses.

“I fancy,” said he, “I must be very high in her good graces. You can

scarcely expect that she would do as much for you.”

“By St. John!” said the other, “this is strange news. I see plainly that I am left out in the cold. It is finished! You are the favoured one. But let us” he added, “think what is to be done. We must show her plainly that we know what she is.”

“That’s what I wish,” said the other.

They thought the matter over, and arranged their plan as follows.

The next day, or soon afterwards, the two friends were in a chamber where there were assembled their fair lady and many others. Each took his place where he liked; the first-comer sat near the damsel, and after some talk, he showed her the hair which she had sent to his friend.

Whatever she may have thought, she was not startled, but said she did not know whose hair it was, but it did not belong to her.

“What?” he said. “Has it so quickly changed that it cannot be recognised?”

“That I cannot say,” she replied, “but it does not belong to me.”

When he heard that, he thought it was time to play his best card, and, as though by accident, gave her *chaperon* (\*) such a twitch that it fell to the ground, at which she was both angry and ashamed. And all those who were present saw that her hair was short, and had been badly hacked.

(\*) The chaperon, in the time of Charles VII, was fastened to the shoulder by a long band which sometimes passed two or three times round the neck, and sometimes hung down the back.

She rose in haste, and snatched up her head-dress, and ran into another chamber to attire herself, and he followed her. He found her angry and ashamed, and weeping bitterly with vexation at being thus caught. He asked her what she had to weep about, and at what game she had lost her hair?

She did not know what to reply, she was so vexed and astonished; and he, who was determined to carry out the arrangement he had concluded with his friend, said to her;

“False and disloyal as you are, you have not cared that I and my friend were deceived and dishonoured. You wished,—as you have plainly shown—to add two more victims to your list, but, thank God, we were on our guard. And, in order that you may see that we both know you, here is your hair which you sent him, and which he has presented to me; and do not believe that we are such fools as you have hitherto thought us.”

Then he called his friend, who came, and the first said,

“I have given back this fair damsel her hair, and have begun to tell her how

she has accepted the love of both of us, and how by her manner of acting she has shown us that she did not care whether she disgraced us both—may God save us!”

“Truly—by St. John!” said the other, and thereupon he made a long speech to the wench, and God knows he talked to her well, remonstrating with her on her cowardice and disloyal heart. Never was woman so well lectured as she was at that time, first by one then by the other.

She was so taken by surprise that she did not know what to reply, except by tears, which she shed abundantly.

She had never had enough pleasure out of both her lovers to compensate for the vexation she suffered at that moment.

Nevertheless, in the end they did not desert her, but lived as they did before, each taking his turn, and if by chance they both came to her together, the one gave place to the other, and they were both good friends as before, without ever talking of killing or fighting.

For a long time the two friends continued this pleasant manner of loving, and the poor wench never dared to refuse either of them. And whenever the one wished to have intercourse with her, he told the other, and whenever the second went to see her, the first stayed at home. They made each other many compliments, and sent one another rondels and songs which are now celebrated, about the circumstances I have already related, and of which I now conclude the account.

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## Story the Thirty-Fourth.

### THE MAN ABOVE AND THE MAN BELOW

BY

MONSIEUR DE LA ROCHE.

Of a married woman who gave rendezvous to two lovers, who came and visited her, and her husband came soon after, and of the words which passed between them, as you shall presently hear.



I knew in my time a brave and worthy woman, deserving to be remembered and respected, for her virtues should not be hidden and kept dark, but publicly blazoned to the world. You will shortly hear, if you will, in this story something which will increase and magnify her fame.

This gallant wench was married to a countryman of ours, and had many lovers seeking and desiring her favours,—which were not over difficult to obtain, for she was so kind and compassionate that she both would and could bestow herself freely whenever she liked.

It happened one day that two men came to see her, as both were accustomed, to ask for a rendezvous.

She would not have retreated before two or even three,

## STORY THE THIRTY-FOURTH — THE MAN ABOVE AND THE MAN BELOW. [34](#)

**By Monsigneur De La Roche.**

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It happened one day that two men came to see her, as both were accustomed, to ask for a rendezvous. She would not have retreated before two or even three, and appointed a day and hour for each to come to her—the one at eight o'clock the morrow morning, and the other at nine, and charged each one expressly that he should not fail to keep his appointed hour.

They promised on their faith and honour that if they were alive they would keep their assignation.

When the morrow came, at about 6 o'clock in the morning, the husband of this brave wench rose, dressed himself, and called his wife, but she bluntly refused to get up when ordered.

“Faith!” she said, “I have such a headache that I cannot stand on my feet, or if I did get up I should die, I am so weak and worn-out; and, as you know, I did not sleep all the night. I beg of you to leave me here, and I hope that when I am alone I shall get a little rest.”

Her husband, though he suspected something, did not dare to contradict her or reply, but went about his business in the town, whilst his wife was not idle at



home, for eight o'clock had no sooner struck than the honest fellow, to whom on the previous day an assignation had been given, came and knocked at the door, and she let him in. He soon took off his long gown and his other clothes, and joined madame in bed, in order to cheer her up.

Whilst these two were locked in each other's arms, and otherwise engaged, the time passed quickly without her noticing it, when she heard some one knock loudly at the door.

"Ah!" she said, "as I live, there is my husband; make haste and take your clothes."

"Your husband?" he said, "Why, do you know his knock?"

"Yes," she replied, "I know it very well. Make haste lest he find you here."

"If it be your husband, he must find me here, for I know not where I can hide."

"No, please God, he must not find you here, for you would be killed and so should I, he is so terrible. Get up into this little attic, and keep quite quiet and do not move, that he may not find you here."

The other climbed into the garret as he was told, and found the planks stripped away in many places, and the laths broken.

As soon as he was safe, mademoiselle made one bound to the door, knowing very well that it was not her husband who was there, and let in the man who had promised to come to her at nine o'clock. They came into the chamber, where they were not long on their feet, but laid down and cuddled and kissed in the same manner as he in the garret had done, whilst he, through a chink, kept his eye on the couple, and was not best pleased. He could not make up his mind whether he should speak or hold his tongue. At last he determined to keep silence, and not say a word till the opportunity came,—and you may guess that he had plenty of patience.

Whilst he was waiting and looking at the lady engaged with the last comer, the worthy husband came home to enquire after the health of his good wife, as it was very proper of him to do.

She soon heard him, and as quickly as may be, made her lover get out of bed, and as she did not know where to hide him, since she could not put him in the garret, she made him lie down between the bed and the wall, and covered him with his clothes, and said to him.

"I have no better place to put you—have a little patience."

She had hardly finished speaking when her husband came into the room,

and though he had heard nothing, he found the bed all rumpled and tossed about, the quilt dirty and soiled, and looking more like the bed of a bride than the couch of an invalid.

The doubts he had formerly entertained, combined with the appearance of the bed, made him call his wife by her name, and say.

“Wicked whore that you are! I did not believe you when you shammed illness this morning! Where is the whoremonger? I swear to God, if I find him, he will have a bad end, and you too.” Then, putting his hand on the quilt, he went on. “This looks nice, doesn’t it? It looks as though the pigs had slept on it!”

“What is the matter with you, you nasty drunkard?” she replied. “Why make me suffer when you get too much wine in your belly? That’s a nice salutation, to call me a whore! I would have you to know that I am nothing of the kind, but much too virtuous and too honest for a rascal like you, and my only regret is that I have been so good to you, for you are not worth it. I do not know why I do not get up and scratch your face in such a manner that you would remember it all your life, for having abused me without cause.”

If you ask how she dared reply to her husband in this manner, I should answer there were two reasons,—that is she had both right and might on her side. For, as you may guess, if it had come to blows, both the lover in the garret, and the one by the bed, would have come to her assistance.

The poor husband did not know what to say when he heard his wife abuse him thus, and as he saw that big words were of no use, he left the matter to God, who does justice to all, and replied;

“You make many excuses for your palpable faults, but I care little what you say. I am not going to quarrel and make a noise; there is One above who will repay all!”

By “One above”, he meant God,—as though he had said,

“God, who gives everyone his due, will repay you according to your deserts.” But the gallant who was in the garret, and heard these words, really believed they were meant for him, and that he was expected to pay for the misdeeds of another besides himself, and he replied aloud;

“What? Surely it will suffice if I pay half! The man who is down by the side of the bed can pay the other half—he is as much concerned as I am!”

You may guess that the husband was much astonished, for he thought that God was speaking to him; and the man by the bed did not know what to think, for he knew nothing about the existence of the other man. He quickly jumped up,

and the other man came down, and they recognised each other.

They went off together, and left the couple looking vexed and angry, but they did not trouble much about that and for good reason.

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## Story the Thirty-Fifth.

### THE EXCHANGE

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE VILLIERS.

Of a knight whose mistress married whilst he was on his travels, and on his return, by chance he came to her house, and she, in order that she might sleep with him, caused a young damsel, her chamber-maid, to go to bed with her husband; and of the words that passed between the husband and the knight his guest, as are more fully recorded hereafter.



A gentleman, a knight of this kingdom, a most virtuous man, and of great renown, a great traveller and a celebrated warrior, fell in love with a very beautiful damsel, and so advanced in her good graces that nothing that he demanded was refused him.

It happened, I know not how long after that, this good knight, to acquire honour and merit, left his castle, in good health and well accompanied, by the permission of his master, to bear arms elsewhere, and he went to Spain and various places, where he did such feats that he was received in great triumph at his return.

# STORY THE THIRTY-FIFTH — THE EXCHANGE.

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During this time the lady married an old knight who was courteous and wise, and who in his time had been a courtier, and—to say truth—was known as the very mirror of honour. It was a matter for regret that he did not marry better, but at any rate he had not then discovered his wife's misconduct, as he did afterwards, as you shall hear.

The first-named knight, returning from the war, as he was travelling through the country, arrived by chance one night at the castle where his mistress lived, and God knows what good cheer she and her husband made for him, for there had been a great friendship between them.

But you must know that whilst the master of the house was doing all he could to honour his guest, the guest was conversing with his former lady-love, and was willing to renew with her the intimacy that had existed before she married. She asked for nothing better, but excused herself on account of want of opportunity.

“It is not possible to find a chance.”

“Ah, madam,” he said, “by my oath, if you want to, you will make a chance. When your husband is in bed and asleep, you can come to my chamber, or, if you prefer it, I will come to you.”

“It cannot be managed so,” she replied; “the danger is too great; for monseigneur is a very light sleeper, and he never wakes but what he feels for me, and if he did not find me, you may guess what it would be.”

“And when he does find you,” he said, “what does he do to you?”

“Nothing else,” she replied; “he turns over on the other side.”

“Faith!” said he, “he is a very bad bed-fellow; it is very lucky for you that I came to your aid to perform for you what he cannot.”

“So help me God,” she said, “when he lies with me once a month it is the best he can do. I may be difficult to please, but I could take a good deal more than that.”

“That is not to be wondered at,” he said; “but let us consider what we shall do.”

“There is no way that I see,” she replied, “that it can be managed.”

“What?” he said; “have you no woman in the house to whom you can explain the difficulty?”

“Yes, by God! I have one,” she said, “in whom I have such confidence that I would tell her anything in the world I wanted kept secret? without fearing that she would ever repeat it.”

“What more do we want then?” he said. “The rest concerns you and her.”

The lady who was anxious to be with her lover, called the damsel, and said,

“My dear, you must help me to-night to do something which is very dear to my heart.”

“Madam,” said the damsel, “I am ready and glad, as I ought to be, to serve you and obey you in any way possible; command me, and I will perform your orders.”

“I thank you, my dear,” said madam, “and be sure that you will lose nothing by it. This is what is the matter. The knight here is the man whom I love best in all the world, and I would not that he left here without my having a few words with him. Now he cannot tell me what is in his heart unless we be alone together, and you are the only person to take my place by the side of monseigneur. He is accustomed, as you know, to turn in the night and touch me, and then he leaves me and goes to sleep again.”

“I will do your pleasure, madam; there is nothing that you can command that I will not do.”

“Well, my dear,” she said, “you will go to bed as I do, keeping a good way off from monseigneur, and take care that if he should speak to you not to reply, and suffer him to do whatever he may like.”

“I will do your pleasure, madam.”

Supper-time came. There is no need to describe the meal, suffice it to say there was good cheer and plenty of it, and after supper, sports, and the visitor took madam’s arm, and the other gentlemen escorted the other damsels. The host came last, and enquired about the knight’s travels from an old gentleman who had accompanied him.

Madame did not forget to tell her lover that one of her women would take her place that night, and that she would come to him; at which he was very joyful, and thanked her much, and wished that the hour had come.

They returned to the reception hall, where monseigneur said good night to his guest, and his wife did the same. The visitor went to his chamber, which was large and well-furnished, and there was a fine sideboard laden with spices and preserves, and good wine of many sorts.

He soon undressed, and drank a cup, and made his attendants drink also, and then sent them to bed, and remained alone, waiting for the lady, who was with her husband. Both she and her husband undressed and got into bed.

The damsel was in the *ruelle*, and as soon as my lord was in bed, she took the place of her mistress, who—as her heart desired—made but one bound to the chamber of the lover, who was anxiously awaiting her.

Thus were they all lodged—monseigneur with the chambermaid, and his guest with madame—and you may guess that these two did not pass all the night in sleeping.

Monseigneur, as was his wont, awoke an hour before day-break, and turned to the chamber-maid, believing it to be his wife, and to feel her he put out his hand, which by chance encountered one of her breasts, which were large and firm, and he knew at once that it was not his wife, for she was not well furnished in that respect.

“Ha, ha!” he said to himself, “I understand what it is! They are playing me a trick, and I will play them another.”

He turned towards the girl, and with some trouble managed to break a lance, but she let him do it without uttering a word or half a word.

When he had finished, he began to call as loudly as he could to the man who was sleeping with his wife.

“Hallo! my lord of such a place! Where are you? Speak to me!”

The other, when he heard himself called, was much astonished, and the lady quite overwhelmed with shame.

“Alas!” she said, “our deeds are discovered: I am a lost woman!”

Her husband called out,

“Hallo, monseigneur! hallo, my guest! Speak to me.”

The other ventured to speak, and said,

“What is it, so please you, monsieur?”

“I will make this exchange with you whenever you like.”

“What exchange?” he asked.

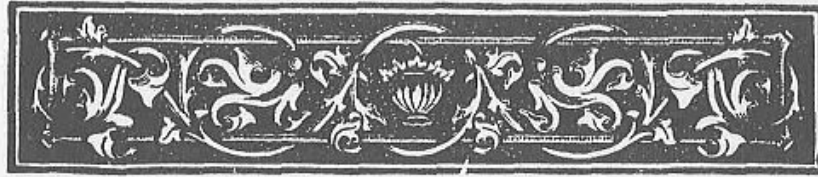
“An old, worn-out false, treacherous woman, for a good, pretty, and fresh young girl. That is what I have gained by the exchange and I thank you for it.”

None of the others knew what to reply, even the poor chamber-maid wished she were dead, both on account of the dishonour to her mistress and the unfortunate loss of her own virginity.

The visitor left the lady and the castle as soon as could, without thanking his host, or saying farewell. And never again did he go there, so he never knew how she settled the matter with her husband afterwards, so I can tell you no more.

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## Story the Thirty-Six.

### AT WORK

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE LA ROCHE.

Of a squire who saw his mistress, whom he greatly loved, between two other gentlemen, and did not notice that she had hold of both of them, till another knight informed him of the matter, as you will hear.



A kind and noble gentleman, who wished to spend his time in the service of the Court of Love, devoted himself, heart, body, and goods, to a fair and honest damsel who well deserved it, and who was specially suited to do what she liked with men; and his amour with her lasted long. And he thought that he stood high in her good graces, though to say the truth, he was no more a favourite than the others, of whom there were many.

It happened one day that this worthy gentleman found his lady, by chance, in the embrasure of a window, between a knight and a squire, to whom she was talking. Sometimes she would speak to one apart and not let the other hear, another time she did the same to the other, to please

## STORY THE THIRTY-SIXTH — AT WORK.

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It happened one day that this worthy gentleman found his lady, by chance, in the embrasure of a window, between a knight and a squire, to whom she was talking. Sometimes she would speak to one apart and not let the other hear, another time she did the same to the other, to please both of them, but the poor lover was greatly vexed and jealous, and did not dare to approach the group.

The only thing to do was to walk away from her, although he desired her presence more than anything else in the world. His heart told him that this conversation would not tend to his advantage, in which he was not far wrong. For, if his eyes had not been blinded by affection, he could easily have seen what another, who was not concerned, quickly perceived, and showed him, in this wise.

When he saw and knew for certain that the lady had neither leisure nor inclination to talk to him, he retired to a couch and lay down, but he could not sleep.

Whilst he was thus sulking, there came a gentleman, who saluted all the company, and seeing that the damsel was engaged, withdrew to the recess where the squire was lying sleepless upon the couch; and amongst other conversation the squire said,

“By my faith, monseigneur, look towards the window; there are some people who are making themselves comfortable. Do you not see how pleasantly

they are talking.”

“By St. John, I see them,” said the knight, “and see that they are doing something more than talking.”

“What else?” said the other.

“What else? Do you not see that she has got hold of both of them?”

“Got hold of them!”

“Truly yes, poor fellow! Where are your eyes? But there is a great difference between the two, for the one she holds in her left hand is neither so big nor so long as that which she holds in her right hand.”

“Ha!” said the squire, “you say right. May St. Anthony burn the wanton;” and you may guess that he was not well pleased.

“Take no heed,” said the knight, “and bear your wrong as patiently as you can. It is not here that you have to show your courage: make a virtue of necessity.”

Having thus spoken, the worthy knight approached the window where the three were standing, and noticed by chance that the knight on the left, hand, was standing on tip-toe, attending to what the fair damsel and the squire were saying and doing.

Giving him a slight tap on his hat, the knight said,

“Mind your own business in the devil’s name, and don’t trouble about other people.”

The other withdrew, and began to laugh, but the damsel, who was not the sort of woman to care about trifles, scarcely showed any concern, but quietly let go her hold without brushing or changing colour, though she was sorry in her heart to let out of her hand what she could have well used in another place.

As you may guess, both before and after that time, either of those two would most willingly have done her a service, and the poor, sick lover was obliged to be a witness of the greatest misfortune which could happen to him, and his poor heart would have driven him to despair, if reason had not come to his help, and caused him to abandon his love affairs, out of which he had never derived any benefit.

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## Story the Thirty-Seventh.

### THE USE OF DIRTY WATER

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE LA ROCHE.

Of a jealous man who recorded all the tricks which he could hear or learn by which wives had deceived their husbands in old times; but at last he was deceived by means of dirty water which the lover of the said lady threw out of window upon her as she was going to Mass, as you shall hear hereafter.

**W**HILST others are thinking and ransacking their memories for adventures and deeds fit to be narrated and added to the present history, I will relate to you, briefly, how the most jealous man in this kingdom, in his time, was deceived. I do not suppose that he was the only one who ever suffered this misfortune, but at any rate I will not omit to describe the clever trick that was played upon him.

This jealous old hunk was a great historian, and had often read and re-read all sorts of stories; but the principal end and aim of all his study was to learn and know all the ways and manners in which wives had deceived

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This jealous old hunk was a great historian, and had often read and re-read all sorts of stories; but the principal end and aim of all his study was to learn and know all the ways and manners in which wives had deceived their husbands. For—thank God—old histories like Matheolus (\*), Juvenal, the Fifteen Joys of Marriage (\*\*), and more others than I can count, abound in descriptions of deceits, tricks, and deceptions of that sort.

(\*) *Le Lime*, de Matheolus, a poem of the early part of the 15th Century, written by Jean le Febvre, Bishop of Therouenne. It is a violent satire against women.

(\*\*) A curious old work the authorship of which is still doubtful. It is often ascribed to Antoine de la Sale, who is believed to have partly written and edited the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*. The allusion is interesting as showing that the *Quinze Joyes de mariage* was written before the present work.

Our jealous husband had always one or other of these books in his hand, and was as fond of them as a fool is of his bauble,—reading or studying them; and indeed he had made from these books a compendium for his own use, in which all the tricks and deceits practised by wives on their husbands were noted and described.

This he had done in order to be forewarned and on his guard, should his wife perchance use any of the plans or subterfuges chronicled or registered in his

book. For he watched his wife as carefully as the most jealous Italian would, and still was not content, so ruled was he by this cursed passion of jealousy.

In this delectable state did the poor man live three or four years with his wife, and the only amusement she had in that time was to escape out of his hateful presence by going to Mass, and then she was always accompanied by an old servant, who was charged to watch over her.

A gentle knight, who had heard how the fair lady was watched, one day met the damsel, who was both beautiful and witty, and told her how willing he was to do her a service, that he sighed for her love, and condoled with her evil fortune in being allied to the most jealous wretch there was on the face of the earth, and saying, moreover, that she was the sole person on earth for whom he cared.

“And since I cannot tell you here how much I love you, and many other things which I hope you will be glad to hear, I will, if you wish, put it all in writing and give it you to-morrow, begging also that any small service that I most willingly do for you, be not refused.”

She gladly listened, but owing to the presence of Dangier, (\*) who was near, hardly replied; nevertheless she said she would be glad to have his letter when it came.

(\*) See note page 159.

Her lover was very joyful when he took leave of her, and with good cause, and the damsel said farewell to him in a kind and gracious manner, but the old woman, who watched her, did not fail to ask her what conversation had taken place between her and the man who had just left.

“He brought me news of my mother,” she replied; “at which I am very joyful, for she is in good health.”

The old woman asked no more, and they returned home.

On the morrow, the lover, provided with a letter written God knows in what terms, met the lady, and gave her this letter so quickly and cunningly that the old servant, who was watching, saw nothing.

The letter was opened by her most joyfully when she was alone. The gist of the contents was that he had fallen in love with her, and that he knew not a day’s happiness when he was absent from her, and finally hoped that she would of her kindness appoint a suitable place where she could give him a reply to this letter.

She wrote a reply in which she said she could love no one but her husband, to whom she owed all faith and loyalty; nevertheless, she was pleased to know the writer was so much in love with her, but, though she could promise him no

reward, would be glad to hear what he had to say, but certainly that could not be, because her husband never left her except when she went to church, and then she was guarded, and more than guarded, by the dirtiest old hag that ever interfered with anybody.

The lover, dressed quite differently to what he had been the preceding day, met the lady, who knew him at once, and as he passed close to her, received from her hand the letter already mentioned. That he was anxious to know the contents was no marvel. He went round a corner, and there, at his leisure, learned the condition of affairs, which seemed to be progressing favourably.

It needed but time and place to carry out his enterprise, and he thought night and day how this was to be accomplished. At last he thought of a first-rate trick, for he remembered that a lady friend of his lived between the church where his lady went to Mass and her house, and he told her the history of his love affair, concealing nothing from her, and begging her to help him.

“Whatever I can do for you, I will do with all my heart,” she said.

“I thank you,” said he. “Would you mind if I met her here?”

“Faith!” she said, “to please you, I do not mind!”

“Well!” he replied, “if ever it is in my power to do you a service, you may be sure that I will remember this kindness.”

He was not satisfied till he had written again to his lady-love and given her the letter, in which he said that he had made an arrangement with a certain woman, “who is a great friend of mine, a respectable woman, who can loyally keep a secret, and who knows you well and loves you, and who will lend us her house where we may meet. And this is the plan I have devised. I will be tomorrow in an upper chamber which looks on the street, and I will have by me a large pitcher of water mingled with ashes, which I will upset on you suddenly as you pass. And I shall be so disguised that neither your old woman, nor anyone else in the world, will recognise me. When you have been drenched with this water, you will pretend to be very angry and surprised, and take refuge in the house, and send your Dangier to seek another gown; and while she is on the road we will talk together.”

To shorten the story, the letter was given, and the lady, who was very well pleased, sent a reply.

The next day came, and the lady was drenched by her lover with a pitcher of water and cinders, in such fashion that her kerchief, gown, and other habiliments were all spoiled and ruined. God knows that she was very astonished and displeased, and rushed into the house, as though she were beside herself, and



ignorant of where she was.

When she saw the lady of the house, she complained bitterly of the mischief which had been done, and I cannot tell you how much she grieved over this misadventure. Now she grieved for her kerchief, now for her gown, and another time for her other clothes,—in short, if anyone had heard her, they would have thought the world was coming to an end.

The old woman, who was also in a great rage, had a knife in her hand, with which she scraped the gown as well as she could.

“No, no, my friend! you only waste your time. It cannot be cleaned as easily as that: you cannot do any good. I must have another gown and another kerchief—there is nothing else to be done. Go home and fetch them, and make haste and come back, or we shall lose the Mass in addition to our other troubles.”

The old woman seeing that there was imperative need of the clothes, did not dare to refuse her mistress, and took the gown and kerchief under her mantle, and went home.

She had scarcely turned on her heels, before her mistress was conducted to the chamber where her lover was, who was pleased to see her in a simple petticoat and with her hair down.

Whilst they are talking together, let us return to the old woman, who went back to the house, where she found her master, who did not wait for her to speak, but asked her at once,

“What have you done with my wife? where is she?”

“I have left her,” she replied, “at such a person’s house, in such a place.”

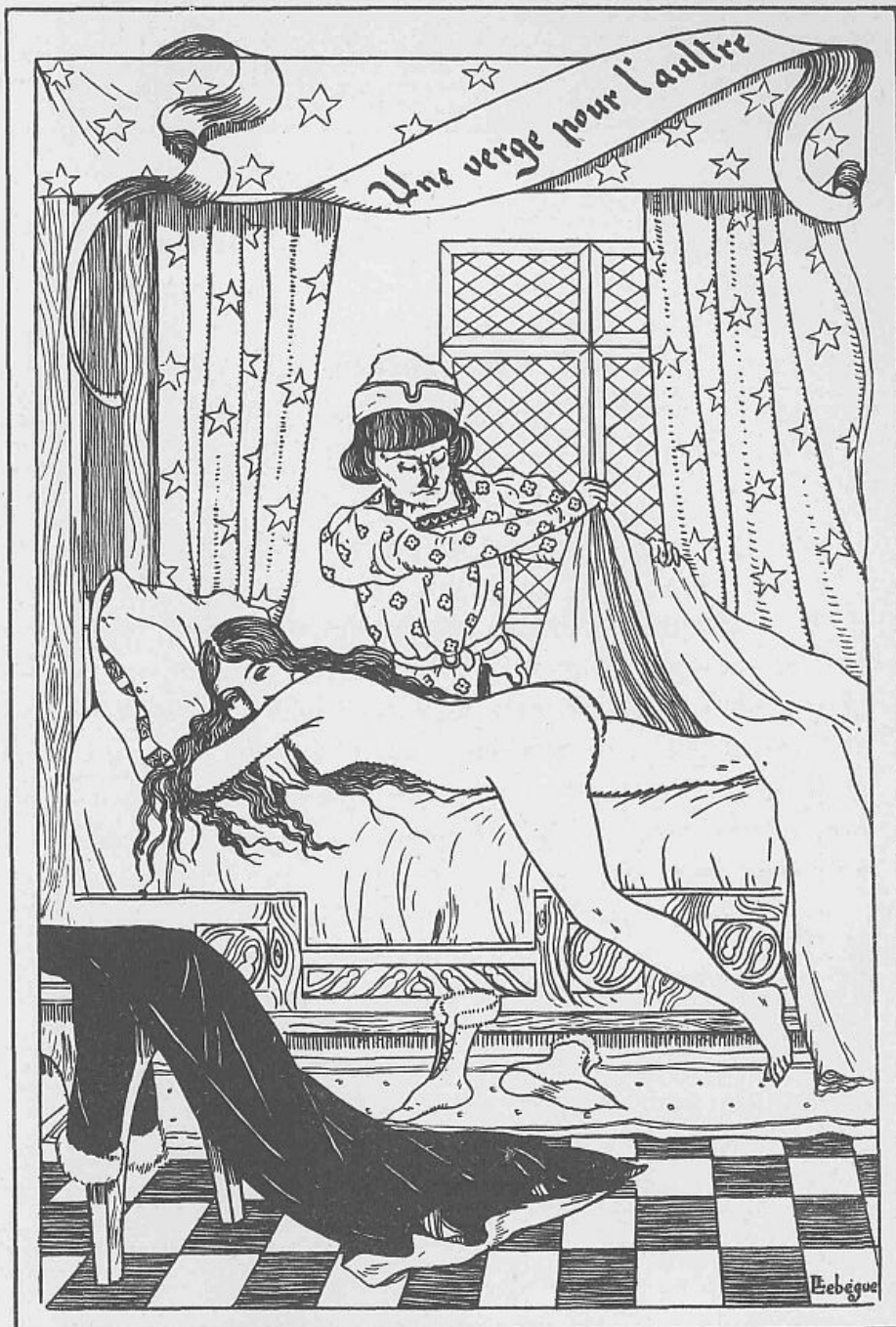
“And for what purpose?” said he.

Then she showed him the gown and the kerchief, and told him about the pitcher of water and ashes, and said that she had been sent to seek other clothes, for her mistress could not leave the place where she was in that state.

“Is that so?” said he. “By Our Lady! that trick is not in my book! Go! Go! I know well what has happened.”

He would have added that he was cuckolded, and I believe he was at that time, and he never again kept a record of the various tricks that had been played on husbands. Moreover, it is believed that he never forgot the trick which had been played on him. There was no need for him to write it down—he preserved a lively memory of it the few good days that he had to live.

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## Story the Thirty-Eight.

### A ROD FOR ANOTHER'S BACK

BY

THE SENESCHAL OF GUYENNE.

Of a citizen of Tours who bought a lamprey which he sent to his wife to cook in order that he might give a feast to the priest, and the said wife sent it to a Cordelier, who was her lover, and how she made a woman who was her neighbour sleep with her husband, and how the woman was beaten, and what the wife made her husband believe, as you will hear hereafter.



HERE was formerly a merchant of Tours, who, to give a feast to his curé and other worthy people, bought a large lamprey, and sent it to his house, and charged his wife to cook it, as she well knew how to do.

"And see," said he, "that the dinner is ready at twelve o'clock, for I shall bring our curé, and some other people" (whom he named).

"All shall be ready," she replied, "bring whom you will." She prepared a lot of nice fish, and when she saw the

## STORY THE THIRTY-EIGHTH — A ROD FOR ANOTHER’S BACK. [38](#)

**By The Seneschal Of Guyenne.**

*Of a citizen of Tours who bought a lamprey which he sent to his wife to cook in order that he might give a feast to the priest, and the said wife sent it to a Cordelier, who was her lover, and how she made a woman who was her neighbour sleep with her husband, and how the woman was beaten, and what the wife made her husband believe, as you will hear hereafter.*

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“All shall be ready,” she replied, “bring whom you will.”

She prepared a lot of nice fish, and when she saw the lamprey she wished that her paramour, a Cordelier, could have it, and said to herself,

“Ah, Brother Bernard, why are you not here? By my oath, you should not leave till you had tasted this lamprey, or, if you liked, you should take it to your own room, and I would not fail to keep you company.”

It was with great regret that the good woman began to prepare the lamprey for her husband, for she was thinking how the Cordelier could have it. She thought so much about it that she finally determined to send the lamprey by an old woman, who knew her secret. She did so, and told the Cordelier that she would come at night, and sup and sleep with him.

When the Cordelier heard that she was coming, you may guess that he was joyful and contented, and he told the old woman that he would get some good wine to do honour to the lamprey. The old woman returned, and delivered his message.

About twelve o’clock came our merchant, the curé, and the other guests, to eat this lamprey, which had now gone far out of their reach. When they were all

in the merchant's house, he took them all into the kitchen to show them the big lamprey that he was going to give them, and called his wife, and said,

“Show us our lamprey, I want to tell our guests how cheap I bought it.”

“What lamprey?” she asked.

“The lamprey that I gave you for our dinner, along with the other fish.”

“I have seen no lamprey,” she said; “I think you must be dreaming. Here are a carp, two pike, and I know not what fish beside, but I have seen no lamprey to day.”

“What?” said he. “Do you think I am drunk?”

“Yes,” replied the curé and the other guests, “we think no less. You are too niggardly to buy such a lamprey.”

“By God,” said his wife, “he is either making fun of you or he is dreaming—for certainly I have never seen this lamprey.”

Her husband grew angry, and cried,

“You lie, you whore! Either you have eaten it, or you have hidden it somewhere. I promise you it will be the dearest lamprey you ever had.”

With that he turned to the curé and the others, and swore by God's death and a hundred other oaths, that he had given his wife a lamprey which had cost him a franc; but they, to tease him and torment him still more, pretended not to believe him, and that they were very disappointed, and said;

“We were invited to dinner at such houses, but we refused in order to come here, thinking we were going to eat this lamprey; but, as far as we can see, there is no chance of that.”

Their host, who was in a terrible rage, picked up a stick, and advanced towards his wife to thrash her, but the others held him back, and dragged him by force out of the house, and with much trouble appeased him as well as they could. Then, since they could not have the lamprey, the curé had the table laid, and they made as good cheer as they could.

The good dame meanwhile sent for one of her neighbours, who was a widow, but still good-looking and lively, and invited her to dinner; and when she saw her opportunity, she said;

“My dear neighbour, it would be very kind of you to do me a great service and pleasure, and if you will do this for me, I will repay you in a manner that will please you.”

“And what do you want me to do?” asked the other.

“I will tell you,” said she. “My husband is so violent in his night-work that it is astounding, and, in fact, last night he so tumbled me, that by my oath I am afraid of him to-night. Therefore I would beg of you to take my place, and if ever I can do anything for you in return, you may command me—body and goods.”

The good neighbour, to oblige her, promised to take her place—for which she was greatly thanked.

Now you must know that our merchant when he returned from dinner, laid in a good stock of birch rods, which he carried secretly into his house, and hid near his bed, saying to himself that if his wife worried him she should be well paid.

But he did not do this so secretly but what his wife was on her guard and prepared, for she knew by long experience her husband’s brutality.

He did not sup at home, but stopped out late, and came home when he expected she would be in bed and naked. But his design failed, for late that evening she made her neighbour undress and go to bed in her place, and charged her expressly not to speak to her husband when he came, but pretend to be dumb and ill. And she did more, for she put out the fire both in the chamber and in the kitchen. That being done, she told her neighbour that as soon as ever her husband rose in the morning, she was to leave and return to her own house, and she promised that she would.

The neighbour being thus put to bed, the brave woman went off to the Cordelier to eat the lamprey and gain her pardons, as was her custom.

While she was feasting there, the merchant came home after supper, full of spite and anger about the lamprey, and to execute the plan he had conceived, took his rods in his hand and then searched for a light for the candle, but found no fire even in the chimney.

When he saw that, he went to bed without saying a word, and slept till dawn, when he rose and dressed, and took his rods, and so thrashed his wife’s substitute, in revenge for the lamprey, till she bled all over, and the sheets of the bed were as bloody as though a bullock had been flayed on them, but the poor woman did not dare to say a word, or even to show her face.

His rods being all broken, and his arm tired, he left the house, and the poor woman, who had expected to enjoy the pleasant pastime of the sports of love, went home soon afterwards to bemoan her ill-luck and her wounds, and not without cursing and threatening the woman who had brought this upon her.

Whilst the husband was still away from home, the good woman returned

from seeing the Cordelier, and found the bed-chamber all strewn with birch twigs, the bed all crumpled, and the sheets covered with blood, and she then knew that her neighbour had suffered bodily injury, as she had expected. She at once remade the bed, and put on fresh and clean sheets, and swept the chamber, and then she went to see her neighbour, whom she found in a pitiable condition, and it need not be said was not able to give her any consolation.

As soon as she could, she returned home, and undressed, and laid down on the fair white bed that she had prepared, and slept well till her husband returned from the town, his anger quite dissipated by the revenge he had taken, and came to his wife whom he found in bed pretending to sleep.

“What is the meaning of this, mademoiselle?” he said. “Is it not time to get up?”

“Oh dear!” she said, “is it day yet? By my oath I never heard you get up. I was having a dream which had lasted a long time.”

“I expect,” he replied, “that you were dreaming about the lamprey, were you not? It would not be very wonderful if you did, for I gave you something to remember it by this morning.”

“By God!” she said, “I never thought about you or your lamprey.”

“What?” said he. “Have you so soon forgotten?”

“Forgotten?” she answered. “Why not? a dream is soon forgotten.”

“Well, then, did you dream about the bundle of birch rods I used on you not two hours ago?”

“On me?” she asked.

“Yes, certainly; on you,” he said. “I know very well I thrashed you soundly, as the sheets of the bed would show.”

“By my oath, dear friend,” she replied, “I do not know what you did or dreamed, but for my part I recollect very well that this morning you indulged in the sports of love with much desire; I am sure that if you dreamed you did anything else to me it must be like yesterday, when you made sure you had given me the lamprey.”

“That would be a strange dream,” said he. “Show yourself that I may see you.”

She turned down the bed-clothes and showed herself quite naked, and without mark or wound. He saw also that the sheets were fair and white, and without any stain. It need not be said that he was much astonished, and he thought the matter over for a long time, and was silent. At last he said;

“By my oath, my dear, I imagined that I gave you a good beating this morning, even till you bled—but I see well I did nothing of the kind, and I do not know exactly what *did* happen.”

“Marry!” she said “Get the idea that you have beaten me out of your head, for you never touched me, as you can see. Make up your mind that you dreamed it.”

“I am sure you are right,” said he, “and I beg of you to pardon me, for I did wrong to abuse you before all the strangers I brought to the house.”

“That is easily pardoned,” she replied; “but at any rate take care that you are not so rash and hasty another time.”

“No, I will not be, my dear!” said he.

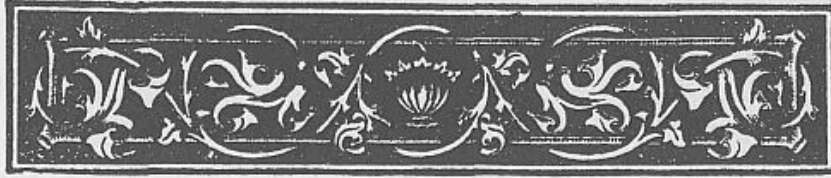
Thus, as you have heard, was the merchant deceived by his wife, and made to believe that he had dreamed that he had bought the lamprey; also in the other matters mentioned above.

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L'un et l'autre payé





## Story the Thirty-Ninth.

### BOTH WELL SERVED

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE SAINT POL.

Of a knight who, whilst he was waiting for his mistress amused himself three times with her maid, who had been sent to keep him company that he might not be dull; and afterwards amused himself three times with the lady, and how the husband learned it all from the maid, as you will hear.



A noble knight of the Marches of Haynau—rich, powerful, brave, and a good fellow—was in love with a fair lady for a long time, and was so esteemed and secretly loved by her, that whenever he liked he repaired to a private and remote part of her castle, where she came to visit him, and they conversed at their leisure of their pleasant mutual love.

Not a soul knew of their pleasant pastime, except a damsel who served the lady, and who had kept the matter secret for a long time, and had served the dame so willingly in all her affairs that she was worthy of a great reward. Moreover, she was such a good girl, that not

## STORY THE THIRTY-NINTH — BOTH WELL SERVED. [39](#)

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Not a soul knew of their pleasant pastime, except a damsel who served the lady, and who had kept the matter secret for a long time, and had served the dame so willingly in all her affairs that she was worthy of a great reward. Moreover, she was such a good girl, that not only had she gained the affection of her mistress for her services in this and other matters, but the husband of the lady esteemed her as much as his wife did, because he found her good, trustworthy, and diligent.

It chanced one day that the lady knew her aforesaid lover to be in the house, but could not go to him as soon as she wished, because her husband detained her; at which she was much vexed, and sent the damsel to tell him that he must yet have patience, and that, as soon as she could get rid of her husband, she would come to him.

The damsel went to the knight, who was awaiting the lady, and delivered her message, and he, being a courteous knight, thanked her much for her message, and made her sit by him; then tenderly kissed her two or three times. She did not object, which gave the knight encouragement to proceed to other liberties, which also were not refused him.

This being finished, she returned to her mistress, and told her that her lover was anxiously awaiting her.

“Alas!” said the lady, “I know full well he is, but my husband will not go to bed, and there are a lot of people here whom I cannot leave. God curse them! I would much rather be with him. He is very dull, is he not—all alone up there?”

“Faith! I believe he is,” replied the damsel, “but he comforts himself as well as he can with the hope of your coming.”

“That I believe, but at any rate he has been all alone, and without a light, for more than two hours; it must be very lonely. I beg you, my dear, to go back to him again and make excuses for me, and stay with him. May the devil take the people who keep me here!”

“I will do what you please, madam, but it seems to me that he loves you so much you have no need to make excuses; and also, that, if I go, you will have no woman here, and perhaps monseigneur may ask for me and I cannot be found.”

“Do not trouble about that,” said the lady. “I will manage that all right if he should ask for you. But it vexes me that my friend should be alone—go and see what he is doing, I beg.”

“I will go, since you wish it,” she replied.

That she was pleased with her errand need not be said, though to conceal her willingness she had made excuses to her mistress. She soon came to the knight, who was still waiting, and said to him;

“Monseigneur, madame has sent me to you again to make her excuses for keeping you so long waiting, and to tell you how vexed she is.”

“You may tell her,” said he, “that she may come at her leisure, and not to hurry on my account, for you can take her place.”

With that he kissed and cuddled her, and did not suffer her to depart till he had tumbled her twice, which was not much trouble to him, for he was young and vigorous, and fond of that sport.

The damsel bore it all patiently, and would have been glad to often have the same luck, if she could without prejudice to her mistress.

When she was about to leave, she begged the knight to say nothing to her mistress.

“Have no fear,” said he.

“I beg of you to be silent,” she said.

Then she returned to her mistress, who asked what her friend was doing?

“He is still,” the damsel replied, “awaiting you.”

“But,” said the lady, “is he not vexed and angry?”

“No,” said the damsel, “since he had company. He is much obliged to you for having sent me, and if he often had to wait would like to have me to talk to him to pass the time,—and, faith! I should like nothing better, for he is the pleasantest man I ever talked to. God knows that it was good to hear him curse the folks who detained you—all except monseigneur; he would say nothing against him.”

“St. John! I wish that he and all his company were in the river, so that I could get away.”

In due time monseigneur—thank God—sent away his servants, retired to his chamber, undressed, and went to bed. Madame, dressed only in a petticoat, put on her night-dress, took her prayer-book, and began,—devoutly enough God knows—to say her psalms and paternosters, but monseigneur, who was as wide awake as a rat, was anxious for a little conversation, and wished madame to put off saying her prayers till the morrow, and talk to him.

“Pardon me,” she replied, “but I cannot talk to you now—God comes first you know. Nothing would go right in the house all the week if I did not give God what little praise I can, and I should expect bad luck if I did not say my prayers now.”

“You sicken me with all this bigotry,” said monseigneur. “What is the use of saying all these prayers? Come on, come on! and leave that business to the priests. Am I not right, Jehannette?” he added, addressing the damsel before mentioned.

“Monseigneur,” she replied, “I do not know what to say, except that as madame is accustomed to serve God, let her do so.”

“There, there!” said madame to her husband, “I see well that you want to argue, and I wish to finish my prayers, so we shall not agree. I will leave Jehannette to talk to you, and will go to my little chamber behind to petition God.”

Monseigneur was satisfied, and madame went off at full gallop to her friend, the knight, who received her with God knows how great joy, and the honour that he did her was to bend her knees and lay her down.

But you must know that whilst madame was saying her prayers with her lover, it happened, I know not how, that her husband begged Jehannette, who was keeping him company, to grant him her favours.

To cut matters short, by his promises and fine words she was induced to obey him, but the worst of it was that madame, when she returned from seeing her lover, who had tumbled her twice before she left, found her husband and

Jehannette, her waiting-woman, engaged in the very same work which she had been performing, at which she was much astonished; and still more so were her husband and Jehannette at being thus surprised.

When madame saw that, God knows how she saluted them, though she would have done better to hold her tongue; and she vented her rage so on poor Jehannette that it seemed as though she must have a devil in her belly, or she could not have used such abominable words.

Indeed she did more and worse, for she picked up a big stick and laid it across the girl's shoulders, on seeing which, monseigneur, who was already vexed and angry, jumped up and so beat his wife that she could not rise.

Having then nothing but her tongue, she used it freely God knows, but addressed most of her venomous speeches to poor Jehannette, who no longer able to bear them, told monseigneur of the goings-on of his wife, and where she had been to say her prayers, and with whom.

The whole company was troubled—monseigneur because he had good cause to suspect his wife, and madame, who was wild with rage, well beaten, and accused by her waiting-woman.

How this unfortunate household lived after that, those who know can tell.

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## Story the Fortieth.

### THE BUTCHER'S WIFE WHO PLAYED THE GHOST IN THE CHIMNEY

BY

MICHAULT DE CHANGY.

*Of a Jacobin who left his mistress, a butcher's wife, for another woman who was younger and prettier, and how the said butcher's wife tried to enter his house by the chimney.*

**I**T happened formerly at Lille, that a famous clerk and preacher of the order of St. Dominic, converted, by his holy and eloquent preaching, the wife of a butcher; in such wise that she loved him more than all the world, and was never perfectly happy when he was not with her.

But in the end Master Monk tired of her, and wished that she would not visit him so often, at which she was as vexed as she could be, but the rebuff only made her love him the more.

The monk, seeing that, forbade her to come to his chamber, and charged his clerk not to admit her, whatever she might say; at which she was more vexed and infuriated than ever, and small marvel.

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If you ask me why the monk did this, I should reply that it was not from devotion, or a desire to lead a chaste life, but that he had made the acquaintance of another woman, who was prettier, much younger, and richer, and with whom he was on such terms that she had a key to his chamber.

Thus it was that the butcher's wife never came to him, as she had been accustomed, so that his new mistress could in all leisure and security come and gain her pardons and pay her tithe, like the women of Ostelleria, of whom mention has been made.

One day, after dinner, there was a great feast held in the chamber of Master Monk, and his mistress had promised to come and bring her share both of wine and meat. And as some of the other brothers in that monastery were of the same kidney, he secretly invited two or three of them; and God knows they had good cheer at this dinner, which did not finish without plenty of drink.

Now you must know that the butcher's wife was acquainted with many of



the servants of these preachers, and she saw them pass her house, some bearing wine, some pasties, some tarts, and so many other things that it was wonderful.

She could not refrain from asking what feast was going forward at their house? And the answer was that all this dainties were for such an one,—that is to say her monk—who had some great people to dinner.

“And who are they?” she asked.

“Faith! I know not,” he said. “I only carry my wine to the door, and there our master takes it from us. I know not who is there!”

“I see,” she said, “that it is a secret. Well, well! go on and do your duty.”

Soon there passed another servant, of whom she asked the same questions, and he replied as his fellow had done, but rather more, for he said,

“I believe there is a damsel there;—but she wishes her presence to be neither seen nor known.”

She guessed who it was, and was in a great rage, and said to herself that she would keep an eye upon the woman who had robbed her of the love of her friend, and, no doubt, if she had met her she would have read her a pretty lesson, and scratched her face.

She set forth with the intention of executing the plan she had conceived. When she arrived at the place, she waited long to meet the person she most hated in the world, but she had not the patience to wait till her rival came out of the chamber where the feast was being held, so at last she determined to use a ladder that a tiler, who was at work at the roof, had left there whilst he went to dinner.

She placed this ladder against the kitchen chimney of the house, with the intention of dropping in and saluting the company, for she knew well that she could not enter in any other way.

The ladder being placed exactly as she wished it, she ascended it to the chimney, round which she tied a fairly thick cord that by chance she found there. Having tied that firmly, as she believed, she entered the said chimney and began to descend; but the worst of it was that she stuck there without being able to go up or down, however much she tried—and this was owing to her backside being so big and heavy, and to the fact that the cord broke, so that she could not climb back. She was in sore distress, God knows, and did not know what to say or do. She reflected that it would be better to await the arrival of the tiler, and make an appeal to him when he came to look for his ladder and his rope; but this hope was taken from her, for the tiler did not come to work until the next morning, on account of the heavy rain, of which she had her share, for she was quite

drenched.

When the evening grew late, the poor woman heard persons talking in the kitchen, whereupon she began to shout, at which they were much astonished and frightened, for they knew not who was calling them, or whence the voice came. Nevertheless, astonished as they were, they listened a little while, and heard the voice now in front and now behind, shrieking shrilly. They believed it was a spirit, and went to tell their master, who was in the dormitory, and was not brave enough to come and see what it was, but put it off till the morning.

You may guess what long hours the poor woman spent, being all night in the chimney. And, by bad luck, it rained heavily for a long time.

The next day, early in the morning, the tiler came to work, to make up for the time the rain had made him lose on the previous day. He was quite astonished to find his ladder in another place than where he left it, and the rope tied round the chimney, and did not know who had done it. He determined to fetch the rope, and mounted the ladder and came to the chimney, and undid the cord, and put his head down the chimney, where he saw the butcher's wife, looking more wretched than a drowned cat, at which he was much astonished.

"What are you doing here, dame?" he asked. "Do you want to rob the poor monks who live here?"

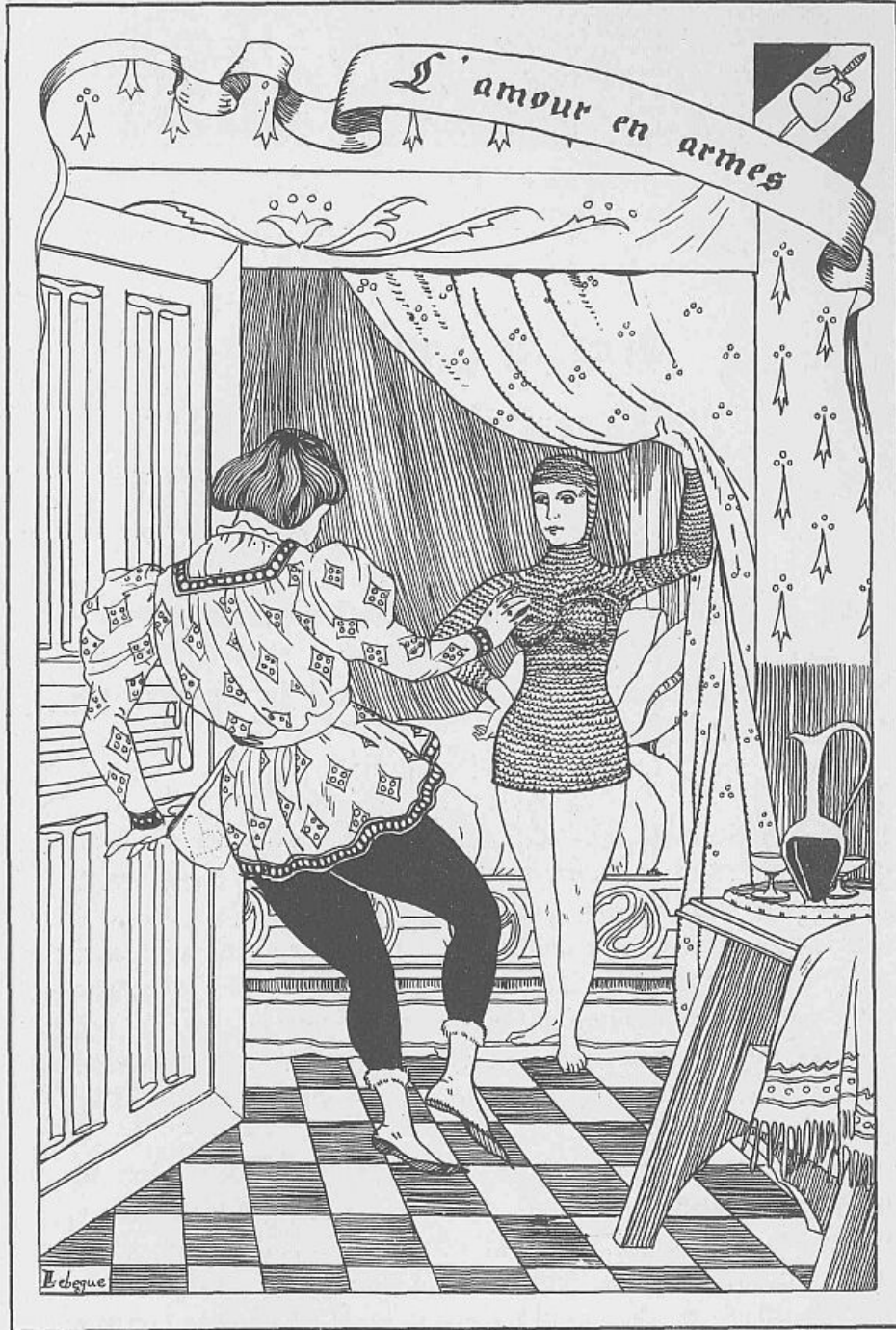
"Alas, friend," she replied, "by my oath I do not. I beg of you to help me to get out, and I will give you whatever you ask."

"I will do nothing of the kind," he said, "if I do not know who you are and whence you come."

"I will tell you if you like," she said, "but I beg of you not to repeat it."

Then she told him all about her love affair with the monk, and why she had come there. The tiler took pity on her, and with some trouble, and by means of his rope, pulled her out, and brought her down to the ground. And she promised him that if he held his tongue she would give him beef and mutton enough to supply him and his family all the year, which she did. And the other kept the matter so secret that everybody heard of it.

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## Story the Forty-First.

### LOVE IN ARMS

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE LA ROCHE.

Of a knight who made his wife wear a hauberk whenever he would do you know what; and of a clerk who taught her another method which she almost told her husband, but turned it off suddenly.



A noble knight of Haynau, who was wise, cunning, and a great traveller, found such pleasure in matrimony, that after the death of his good and prudent wife, he could not exist long unmarried, and espoused a beautiful damsel of good condition, who was not one of the cleverest people in the world, for, to tell the truth, she was rather dull-witted, which much pleased her husband, because he thought he could more easily bend her to his will.

He devoted all his time and study to training her to obey him, and succeeded as well as he could possibly have wished. And, amongst other matters, whenever he would indulge in the battle of love with her—which was not as often as she would have wished—he made her put

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He devoted all his time and study to training her to obey him, and succeeded as well as he could possibly have wished. And, amongst other matters, whenever he would indulge in the battle of love with her—which was not as often as she would have wished—he made her put on a splendid hauberk, at which she was at first much astonished, and asked why she was armed, and he replied that she could not withstand his amorous assaults if she were not armed. So she was content to wear the hauberk; and her only regret was that her husband was not more fond of making these assaults, for they were more trouble than pleasure to him.

If you should ask why her lord made her wear this singular costume, I should reply that he hoped that the pain and inconvenience of the hauberk would prevent his wife from being too fond of these amorous assaults; but, wise as he was, he made a great mistake, for if in each love-battle the hauberk had broken her back and bruised her belly, she would not have refused to put it on, so sweet and pleasant did she find that which followed.

They thus lived together for a long time, till her husband was ordered to serve his prince in the war, in another sort of battle to that above-mentioned, so he took leave of his wife and went where he was ordered, and she remained at home in the charge of an old gentleman, and of certain damsels who served her.

Now you must know that there was in the house a good fellow, a clerk, who

was treasurer of the household, and who sang and played the harp well. After dinner he would often play, which gave madame great pleasure, and she would often come to him when she heard the sound of his harp.

She came so often that the clerk at last made love to her, and she, being desirous to put on her hauberk again, listened to his petition, and replied;

“Come to me at a certain time, in such a chamber, and I will give you a reply that will please you.”

She was greatly thanked, and at the hour named, the clerk did not fail to rap at the door of the chamber the lady had indicated, where she was quietly awaiting him with her fine hauberk on her back.

She opened the door, and the clerk saw her armed, and thinking that some one was concealed there to do him a mischief, was so scared that, in his fright, he tumbled down backwards I know not how many stairs, and might have broken his neck, but luckily he was not hurt, for, being in a good cause, God protected him.

Madame, who saw his danger, was much vexed and displeased; she ran down and helped him to rise, and asked why he was in such fear? He told her that truly he thought he had fallen into an ambush.

“You have nothing to fear,” she said, “I am not armed with the intention of doing you any hurt,” and so saying they mounted the stairs together, and entered the chamber.

“Madame,” said the clerk, “I beg of you to tell me, if you please, why you have put on this hauberk?”

She blushed and replied, “You know very well.”

“By my oath, madame, begging your pardon,” said he, “if I had known I should not have asked.”

“My husband,” she replied, “whenever he would kiss me, and talk of love, makes me dress in this way; and as I know that you have come here for that purpose, I prepared myself accordingly.”

“Madame,” he said, “you are right, and I remember now that it is the manner of knights to arm their ladies in this way. But clerks have another method, which, in my opinion is much nicer and more comfortable.”

“Please tell me what that is,” said the lady.

“I will show you,” he replied. Then he took off the hauberk, and the rest of her apparel down to her chemise, and he also undressed himself, and they got into the fair bed that was there, and—both being disarmed even of their chemises

—passed two or three hours very pleasantly. And before leaving, the clerk showed her the method used by clerks, which she greatly praised, as being much better than that of knights. They often met afterwards, also in the same way, without its becoming known, although the lady was not over-cunning.

After a certain time, her husband returned from the war, at which she was not inwardly pleased, though outwardly she tried to pretend to be. His coming was known, and God knows how great a dinner was prepared. Dinner passed, and grace being said, the knight—to show he was a good fellow, and a loving husband—said to her,

“Go quickly to our chamber, and put on your hauberk.” She, remembering the pleasant time she had had with her clerk, replied quickly,

“Ah, monsieur, the clerks’ way is the best.”

“The clerks’ way!” he cried. “And how do you know their way?” and he began to fret and to change colour, and suspect something; but he never knew the truth, for his suspicions were quickly dissipated.

Madame was not such a fool but what she could see plainly that her husband was not pleased at what she had said, and quickly bethought herself of a way of getting out of the difficulty.

“I said that the clerks’ way is the best; and I say it again.”

“And what is that?” he asked.

“They drink after grace.”

“Indeed, by St. John, you speak truly!” he cried. “Verily it is their custom, and it is not a bad one; and since you so much care for it, we will keep it in future.”

So wine was brought and they drank it, and then Madame went to put on her hauberk, which she would willingly have done without, for the gentle clerk had showed her another way which pleased her better.

Thus, as you have heard, was Monsieur deceived by his wife’s ready reply. No doubt her wits had been sharpened by her intercourse with the clerk, and after that he showed her plenty of other tricks, and in the end he and her husband became great friends.

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## Story the Forth-Second.

### THE MARRIED PRIEST

BY

MERIADECH.

Of a village clerk who being at Rome and believing that his wife was dead, became a priest, and was appointed cure of his own town, and when he returned, the first person he met was his wife.

**I**N the year '50 <sup>(1)</sup> just passed, the clerk of a village in the diocese of Noyon, that he might gain the pardons, which as every one knows were then given at Rome <sup>(2)</sup>, set out in company with many respectable people of Noyon, Compeigne, and the neighbouring places.

But, before leaving, he carefully saw to his private affairs, arranged for the support of his wife and family, and entrusted the office of sacristan, which he held, to a young and worthy clerk to hold until his return.

In a fairly brief space of time, he and his companions arrived at Rome, and performed their devotions and their

<sup>(1)</sup> 1450

<sup>(2)</sup> Special indulgences were granted that year on account of the Jubilee



# STORY THE FORTY-SECOND — THE MARRIED PRIEST. [42](#)

By Meriadech.

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In the year '50 (\*) just passed, the clerk of a village in the diocese of Noyon, that he might gain the pardons, which as every one knows were then given at Rome (\*\*), set out in company with many respectable people of Noyon, Compeigne, and the neighbouring places.

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But, before leaving, he carefully saw to his private affairs, arranged for the support of his wife and family, and entrusted the office of sacristan, which he held, to a young and worthy clerk to hold until his return.

In a fairly brief space of time, he and his companions arrived at Rome, and performed their devotions and their pilgrimage as well as they knew how. But you must know that our clerk met, by chance, at Rome, one of his old school-fellows, who was in the service of a great Cardinal, and occupied a high position, and who was very glad to meet his old friend, and asked him how he was. And the other told him everything—first of all that he was, alas! married, how many children he had, and how that he was a parish clerk.

“Ah!” said his friend, “by my oath! I am much grieved that you are married.”

“Why?” asked the other.

“I will tell you,” said he; “such and such a Cardinal has charged me to find him a secretary, a native of our province. This would have suited you, and you would have been largely remunerated, were it not that your marriage will cause you to return home, and, I fear, lose many benefits that you cannot now get.”

“By my oath!” said the clerk, “my marriage is no great consequence, for—

to tell you the truth—the pardon was but an excuse for getting out of the country, and was not the principal object of my journey; for I had determined to enjoy myself for two or three years in travelling about, and if, during that time, God should take my wife, I should only be too happy. So I beg and pray of you to think of me and to speak well for me to this Cardinal, that I may serve him; and, by my oath, I will so bear myself that you shall have no fault to find with me; and, moreover, you will do me the greatest service that ever one friend did another.”

“Since that is your wish,” said his friend, “I will oblige you at once, and will lodge you too if you wish.”

“Thank you, friend,” said the other.

To cut matters short, our clerk lodged with the Cardinal, and wrote and told his wife of his new position, and that he did not intend to return home as soon as he had intended when he left. She consoled herself, and wrote back that she would do the best she could.

Our worthy clerk conducted himself so well in the service of the Cardinal, and gained such esteem, that his master had no small regret that his secretary was incapable of holding a living, for which he was exceedingly well fitted.

Whilst our clerk was thus in favour, the curé of his village died, and thus left the living vacant during one of the Pope’s months. (\*) The Sacristan who held the place of his friend who had gone to Rome, determined that he would hurry to Rome as quickly as he could, and do all in his power to get the living for himself. He lost no time, and in a few days, after much trouble and fatigue, found himself at Rome, and rested not till he had discovered his friend—the clerk who served the Cardinal.

After mutual salutations, the clerk asked after his wife, and the other, expecting to give him much pleasure and further his own interests in the request he was about to make, replied that she was dead—in which he lied, for I know that at this present moment (\*\*) she can still worry her husband.

(\*) During eight months of the year, the Pope had the right of bestowing all livings which became vacant.

(\*\*) That is when the story was written.

“Do you say that my wife is dead?” cried the clerk. “May God pardon her all her sins.”

“Yes, truly,” replied the other; “the plague carried her off last year, along with many others.”

He told this lie, which cost him dear, because he knew that the clerk had

only left home on account of his wife, who was of a quarrelsome disposition, and he thought the most pleasant news he could bring was to announce her death, and truly so it would have been, but the news was false.

“And what brings you to this country?” asked the clerk after many and various questions.

“I will tell you, my friend and companion. The curé of our town is dead; so I came to you to ask if by any means I could obtain the benefice. I would beg of you to help me in this matter. I know that it is in your power to procure me the living, with the help of monseigneur, your master.”

The clerk, thinking that his wife was dead, and the cure of his native town vacant, thought to himself that he would snap up this living, and others too if he could get them. But, all the same, he said nothing to his friend, except that it would not be his fault if the other were not curé of their town,—for which he was much thanked.

It happened quite otherwise, for, on the morrow, our Holy Father, at the request of the Cardinal, the master of our clerk, gave the latter the living.

Thereupon this clerk, when he heard the news, came to his companion, and said to him,

“Ah, friend, by my oath, your hopes are dissipated, at which I am much vexed.”

“How so?” asked the other.

“The cure of our town is given,” he said, “but I know not to whom. Monseigneur, my master, tried to help you, but it was not in his power to accomplish it.”

At which the other was vexed, after he had come so far and expended so much. So he sorrowfully took leave of his friend, and returned to his own country, without boasting about the lie he had told.

But let us return to our clerk, who was as merry as a grig at the news of the death of his wife, and to whom the benefice of his native town had been given, at the request of his master, by the Holy Father, as a reward for his services. And let us record how he became a priest at Rome, and chanted his first holy Mass, and took leave of his master for a time, in order to return and take possession of his living.

When he entered the town, by ill luck the first person that he chanced to meet was his wife, at which he was much astonished I can assure you, and still more vexed.

“What is the meaning of this, my dear?” he asked. “They told me you were dead!”

“Nothing of the kind,” she said. “You say so, I suppose, because you wish it, as you have well proved, for you have left me for five years, with a number of young children to take care of.”

“My dear,” he said, “I am very glad to see you in good health, and I praise God for it with all my heart. Cursed be he who brought me false news.”

“Amen!” she replied.

“But I must tell you, my dear, that I cannot stay now; I am obliged to go in haste to the Bishop of Noyon, on a matter which concerns him; but I will return to you as quickly as I can.”

He left his wife, and took his way to Noyon; but God knows that all along the road he thought of his strange position.

“Alas!” he said, “I am undone and dishonoured. A priest! a clerk! and married! I suppose I am the first miserable wretch to whom that ever occurred!”

He went to the Bishop of Noyon, who was much surprised at hearing his case, and did not know what to advise him, so sent him back to Rome.

When he arrived there, he related his adventure at length to his master, who was bitterly annoyed, and on the morrow repeated it to our Holy Father, in the presence of the Sacred College and all the Cardinals.

So it was ordered that he should remain priest, and married, and curé also; and that he should live with his wife as a married man, honourably and without reproach, and that his children should be legitimate and not bastards, although their father was a priest. Moreover, that if it was found he lived apart from his wife, he should lose the living.

Thus, as you have heard, was this gallant punished for believing the false news of his friend, and was obliged to go and live in his own parish, and, which was worse, with his wife, with whose company he would have gladly dispensed if the Church had not ordered it otherwise.

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Les cornes marchandes





## Story the Forty-Third.

### A BARGAIN IN HORNS

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE FIENNES.

Of a labourer who found a man with his wife, and forewent his revenge for a certain quantity of wheat, but his wife insisted that the other should complete the work he had begun.



HERE lived formerly, in the district of Lille, a worthy man who was a labourer and tradesman, and who managed, by the good offices of himself and his friends, to obtain for a wife a very pretty young girl, but who was not rich, neither was her husband, but he was very covetous, and diligent in business, and loved to gain money.

And she, for her part, attended to the household as her husband desired; who therefore had a good opinion of her, and often went about his business without any suspicion that she was other than good.

But whilst the poor man thus came and went, and left his wife alone, a good fellow came to her, and, to cut the story short, was in a short time the deputy for the trusting

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And she, for her part, attended to the household as her husband desired; who therefore had a good opinion of her, and often went about his business without any suspicion that she was other than good.

But whilst the poor man thus came and went, and left his wife alone, a good fellow came to her, and, to cut the story short, was in a short time the deputy for the trusting husband, who still believed that he had the best wife in the world, and the one who most thought about the increase of his honour and his worldly wealth.

It was not so, for she gave him not the love she owed him, and cared not whether he had profit or loss by her. The good merchant aforesaid, being out as usual, his wife soon informed her friend, who did not fail to come as he was desired, at once. And not to lose his time, he approached his mistress, and made divers amorous proposals to her, and in short the desired pleasure was not refused him any more than on the former occasions, which had not been few.

By bad luck, whilst the couple were thus engaged, the husband arrived, and found them at work, and was much astonished, for he did not know that his wife was a woman of that sort.

“What is this?” he said. “By God’s death, scoundrel, I will kill you on the spot.”

The other, who had been caught in the act, and was much scared, knew not

what to say, but as he was aware that the husband was miserly and covetous, he said quickly:

“Ah, John, my friend, I beg your mercy; pardon me if I have done you any wrong, and on my word I will give you six bushels of wheat.”

“By God!” said he, “I will do nothing of the kind. You shall die by my hands and I will have your life if I do not have twelve bushels.”

The good wife, who heard this dispute, in order to restore peace, came forward, and said to her husband.

“John, dear, let him finish what he has begun, I beg, and you shall have eight bushels. Shall he not?” she added, turning to her lover.

“I am satisfied,” he said, “though on my oath it is too much, seeing how dear corn is.”

“It is too much?” said the good man. “Morable! I much regret that I did not say more, for you would have to pay a much heavier fine if you were brought to justice: however, make up your mind that I will have twelve bushels, or you shall die.”

“Truly, John,” said his wife, “you are wrong to contradict me. It seems to me that you ought to be satisfied with eight bushels, for you know that is a large quantity of wheat.”

“Say no more,” he replied, “I will have twelve bushels, or I will kill him and you too.”

“The devil,” quoth the lover; “you drive a bargain; but at least, if I must pay you, let me have time.”

“That I agree to, but I will have my twelve bushels.”

The dispute ended thus, and it was agreed that he was to pay in two instalments,—six bushels on the morrow, and the others on St. Remy’s day, then near.

All this was arranged by the wife, who then said to her husband.

“You are satisfied, are you not, to receive your wheat in the manner I have said?”

“Certainly,” he replied.

“Then go,” she said, “whilst he finishes the work he had begun when you interrupted him; otherwise the contract will not be binding.”

“By St. John! is it so?” said the lover.

“I always keep my word,” said the good merchant. “By God, no man shall



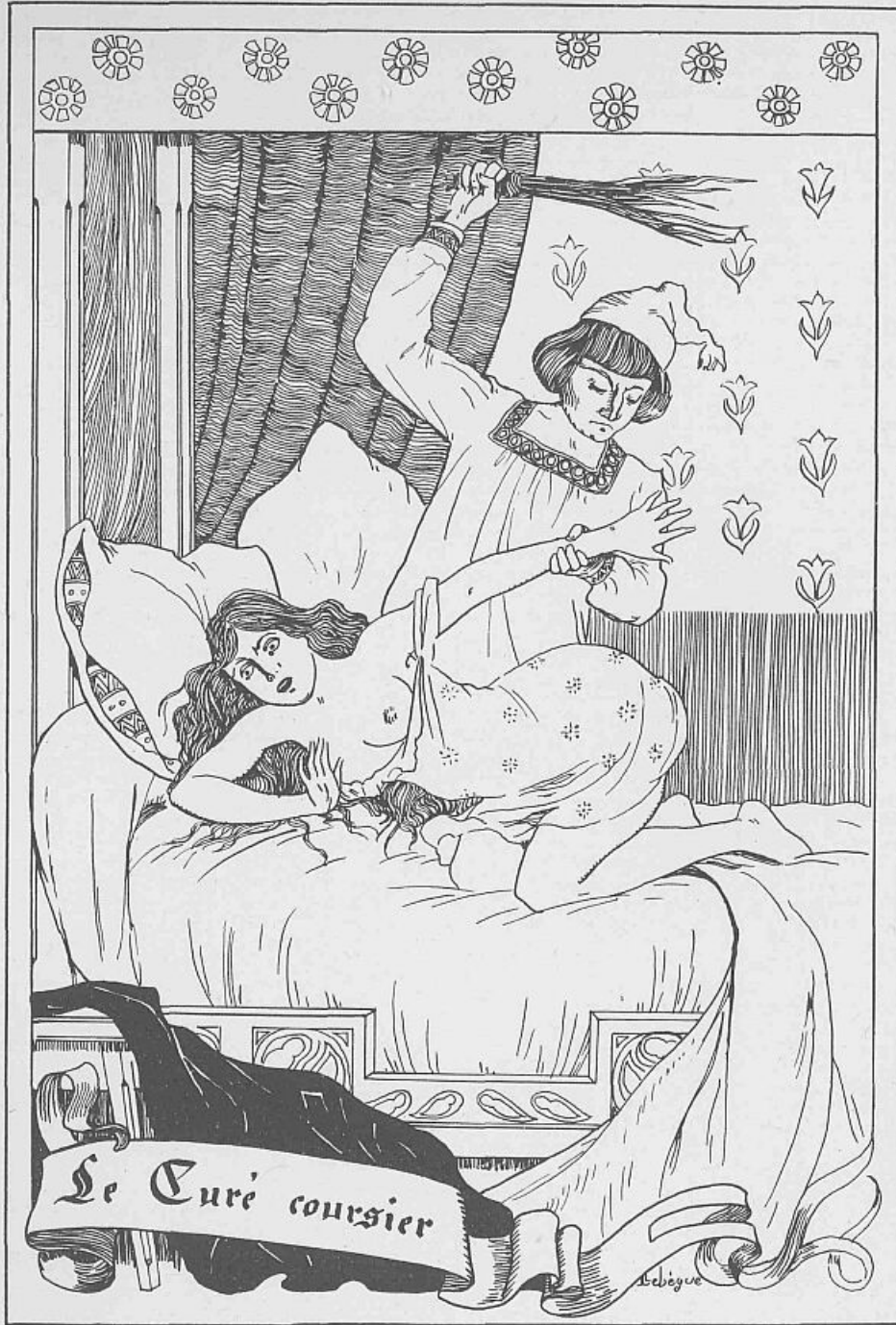
say I am a cheat or a liar. You will finish the job you have begun, and I am to have my twelve bushels of wheat on the terms agreed. That was our contract—was it not?”

“Yes, truly,” said his wife.

“Good bye, then,” said the husband, “but at any rate be sure that I have six bushels of wheat to-morrow.”

“Don’t be afraid,” said the other. “I will keep my word.” So the good man left the house, quite joyful that he was to have twelve bushels of wheat, and his wife and her lover recommenced more heartily than ever. I have heard that the wheat was duly delivered on the dates agreed.







## Story the Forty-Fourth.

### THE MATCH-MAKING PRIEST

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE LA ROCHE.

*Of a village priest who found a husband for a girl with whom he was in love, and who had promised him that when she was married, she would do whatever he wished, of which he reminded her on the wedding-day, and the husband heard it, and took steps accordingly, as you will hear.*



IN the present day they are many priests and curés who are good fellows, and who can as easily commit follies and imprudences as laymen can.

In a pretty village of Picardy, there lived formerly a curé of a lecherous disposition. Amongst the other pretty girls and women of his parish, he cast eyes on a young and very pretty damsel of nubile age, and was bold enough to tell her what he wanted.

Won over by his fair words, and the hundred thousand empty promises he made, she was almost ready to listen to his requests, which would have been a great pity, for she was a nice and pretty girl with pleasant manners,

# STORY THE FORTY-FOURTH — THE MATCH- MAKING PRIEST.

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Won over by his fair words, and the hundred thousand empty promises he made, she was almost ready to listen to his requests, which would have been a great pity, for she was a nice and pretty girl with pleasant manners, and had but one fault,—which was that she was not the most quick-witted person in the world.

I do not know why it occurred to her to answer him in that manner, but one day she told the curé, when he was making hot love to her, that she was not inclined to do what he required until she was married, for if by chance, as happened every day, she had a baby, she would always be dishonoured and reproached by her father, mother, brothers, and all her family, which she could not bear, nor had she strength to sustain the grief and worry which such a misfortune would entail.

“Nevertheless, if some day I am married, speak to me again, and I will do what I can for you, but not otherwise; so give heed to what I say and believe me once for all.”

The cure was not over-pleased at this definite reply, bold and sensible as it was, but he was so amorous that he would not abandon all hope, and said to the

girl;

“Are you so firmly decided, my dear, not to do anything for me until you are married?”

“Certainly, I am,” she replied.

“And if you are married, and I am the means and the cause, you will remember it afterwards, and honestly and loyally perform what you have promised?”

“By my oath, yes,” she said, “I promise you.”

“Thank you,” he said, “make your mind easy, for I promise you faithfully that if you are not married soon it will not be for want of efforts or expense on my part, for I am sure that you cannot desire it more than I do; and in order to prove that I am devoted to you soul and body, you will see how I will manage this business.”

“Very well, monsieur le curé,” she said, “we shall see what you will do.”

With that she took leave of him, and the good curé, who was madly in love with her, was not satisfied till he had seen her father. He talked over various matters with him, and at last the worthy priest spoke to the old man about his daughter, and said,

“Neighbour, I am much astonished, as also are many of your neighbours and friends, that you do not let your daughter marry. Why do you keep her at home when you know how dangerous it is? Not that—God forbid—I say, or wish to say, that she is not virtuous, but every day we see girls go wrong because they do not marry at the proper age. Forgive me for so openly stating my opinion, but the respect I have for you, and the duty I owe you as your unworthy pastor, require and compel me to tell you this.”

“By the Lord, monsieur le curé,” said the good man, “I know that your words are quite true, and I thank you for them, and do not think that I have kept her so long at home from any selfish motive, for if her welfare is concerned I will do all I can for her, as I ought. You would not wish, nor is it usual, that I should buy a husband for her, but if any respectable young man should come along, I will do everything that a good father should.”

“Well said,” replied the curé, “and on my word, you could not do better than marry her off quickly. It is a great thing to be able to see your grandchildren round you before you become too old. What do you say to so-and-so, the son of your neighbour?—He seems to me a good, hard-working man, who would make a good husband.”

“By St. John!” said the old man, “I have nothing but good to say about him. For my own part, I know him to be a good young man and a good worker. His father and mother, and all his relatives, are respectable people, and if they do me the honour to ask my daughter’s hand in marriage for him, I shall reply in a manner that will satisfy them.”

“You could not say more,” replied the curé, “and, if it please God, the matter shall be arranged as I wish, and as I know for a fact that this marriage would be to the benefit of both parties, I will do my best to farther it, and with this I will now say farewell to you.”

If the curé had played his part well with the girl’s father, he was quite as clever in regard to the father of the young man. He began with a preamble to the effect that his son was of an age to marry, and ought to settle down, and brought a hundred thousand reasons to show that the world would be lost if his son were not soon married.

“Monsieur le curé,” replied also the second old man, “there is much truth in what you say, and if I were now as well off as I was, I know not how many years ago, he would not still be unmarried; for there is nothing in the world I desire more than to see him settled, but want of money has prevented it, and so he must have patience until the Lord sends us more wealth than we have at present.”

“Then,” said the curé, “if I understand you aright, it is only money that is wanting.”

“Faith! that is so,” said the old man. “If I had now as much as I had formerly, I should soon seek a wife for him.”

“I have concerned myself,” said the curé, “because I desire the welfare and prosperity of your son, and find that the daughter of such an one (that is to say his ladylove) would exactly suit him. She is pretty and virtuous, and her father is well off, and, as I know, would give some assistance, and—which is no small matter—is a wise man of good counsel, and a friend to whom you and your son could have recourse. What do you say?”

“Certainly,” said the good man, “if it please God that my son should be fortunate enough to be allied to such a good family; and if I thought that he could anyhow succeed in that, I would get together what money I could, and would go round to all my friends, for I am sure that he could never find anyone more suitable.”

“I have not chosen badly then,” said the curé. “And what would you say if I spoke about this matter to her father, and conducted it to its desired end, and, moreover, lent you twenty francs for a certain period that we could arrange?”

“By my oath, monsieur le curé,” said the good man, “you offer me more than I deserve. If you did this, you would render a great service to me and mine.”

“Truly,” answered the curé, “I have not said anything that I do not mean to perform; so be of good cheer, for I hope to see this matter at an end.”

To shorten matters, the curé, hoping to have the woman when once she was married, arranged the matter so well that, with the twenty francs he lent, the marriage was settled, and the wedding day arrived.

Now it is the custom that the bride and bridegroom confess on that day. The bridegroom came first, and when he had finished, he withdrew to a little distance saying his orisons and his paternosters. Then came the bride, who knelt down before the curé and confessed. When she had said all she had to say, he spoke to her in turn, and so loudly, that the bridegroom, who was not far off, heard every word, and said,

“My dear, I beg you to remember now the promise you formerly made me. You promised me that when you were married that I should ride you; and now you are married, thank God, by my means and endeavours, and through the money that I have lent.”

“Monsieur le curé,” she said, “have no fear but what I will keep the promise I have made, if God so please.”

“Thank you,” he replied, and then gave her absolution after this devout confession, and suffered her to depart.

The bridegroom, who had heard these words, was not best pleased, but nevertheless thought it not the right moment to show his vexation.

After all the ceremonies at the church were over, the couple returned home, and bed-time drew near. The bridegroom whispered to a friend of his whom he dearly loved, to fetch a big handful of birch rods, and hide them secretly under the bed, and this the other did.

When the time came, the bride went to bed, as is the custom, and kept to the edge of the bed, and said not a word. The bridegroom came soon after, and lay on the other edge of the bed without approaching her, or saying a word and in the morning he rose without doing anything else, and hid his rods again under the bed.

When he had left the room, there came several worthy matrons who found the bride in bed, and asked her how the night had passed, and what she thought of her husband?

“Faith!” she said, “there was his place over there”—pointing to the edge of

the bed—"and here was mine. He never came near me, and I never went near him."

They were all much astonished, and did not know what to think, but at last they agreed that if he had not touched her, it was from some religious motive, and they thought no more of it for that once.

The second night came, and the bride lay down in the place she had occupied the previous night, and the bridegroom, still furnished with his rods, did the same and nothing more; and this went on for two more nights, at which the bride was much displeased, and did not fail to tell the matrons the next day, who knew not what to think.

"It is to be feared he is not a man, for he has continued four nights in that manner. He must be told what he has to do; so if to-night he does not begin,"—they said to the bride—"draw close to him and cuddle and kiss him, and ask him if married people do not do something else besides? And if he should ask you what you want him to do? tell him that you want him to ride you, and you will hear what he will say."

"I will do so," she said.

She failed not, for that night she lay in her usual place, and her husband took up his old quarters, and made no further advances than he had on the previous nights. So she turned towards him, and throwing her arms round him, said;

"Come here husband! Is this the pleasant time I was to expect? This is the fifth night I have slept with you, and you have not deigned to come near me! On my word I should never have wished to be married if I had not thought married people did something else."

"And what did they tell you married people did?" he asked.

"They say," she replied, "that the one rides the other. I want you to ride me."

"Ride!" he said. "I would not like to do that.—I would not be so unkind."

"Oh, I beg of you to do it—for that is what married people do."

"You want me to do it?" he asked.

"I beg of you to do it," she said, and so saying she kissed him tenderly.

"By my oath!" he said, "I will do it, since you ask me to though much to my regret, for I am sure that you will not like it."

Without saying another word he took his stock of rods, and stripped his wife, and thrashed her soundly, back and belly, legs and thighs, till she was



bathed in blood. She screamed, she cried, she struggled, and it was piteous to see her, and she cursed the moment that she had ever asked to be ridden.

“I told you so,” said her husband, and then took her in his arms and “rode” her so nicely that she forgot the pain of the beating.

“What do you call that you have just done?” she asked.

“It is called,” he said, “‘to blow up the backside’.”

“Blow up the backside!” she said. “The expression is not so pretty as ‘to ride’, but the operation is much nicer, and, now that I have learned the difference, I shall know what to ask for in future.”

Now you must know that the curé was always on the look-out for when the newly married bride should come to church, to remind her of her promise. The first time she appeared, he sidled up to the font, and when she passed him, he gave her holy water, and said in a low voice,

“My dear! you promised me that I should ride you when you were married! You are married now, thank God, and it is time to think when and how you will keep your word.”

“Ride?” she said. “By God, I would rather see you hanged or drowned! Don’t talk to me about riding. But I will let you blow up my backside if you like!”

“And catch your quartain fever!” said the curé, “beastly dirty, ill-mannered whore that you are! Am I to be rewarded after all I have done for you, by being permitted to blow up your backside!”

So the curé went off in a huff, and the bride took her seat that she might hear the holy Mass, which the good curé was about to read.

And thus, in the manner which you have just heard, did the curé lose his chance of enjoying the girl, by his own fault and no other’s, because he spoke too loudly to her the day when he confessed her, for her husband prevented him, in the way described above, by making his wife believe that the act of ‘riding’ was called ‘to blow up the backside’.

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## Story the Forth-Fifth.

### THE SCOTSMAN TURNED WASHER- WOMAN

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE LA ROCHE.

Of a young Scotsman who disguised as a woman for the space of fourteen years, and by that means slept with many girls and married women, but was punished in the end, as you will hear.



ONE of the preceding stories have related any incidents which happened in Italy, but only those which occurred in France, Germany, England, Flanders, and Brabant,—therefore I will relate, as something new, an incident which formerly happened in Rome, and was as follows.

At Rome was a Scotsman of the age of about 22, who for the space of fourteen years had disguised himself as a woman, without it being publicly known all that time that he was a man. He called himself Margaret, and there was hardly a good house in Rome where he was not known, and he was specially welcomed by all the women,

# STORY THE FORTY-FIFTH — THE SCOTSMAN TURNED WASHERWOMAN

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At Rome was a Scotsman of the age of about 22, who for the space of fourteen years had disguised himself as a woman, without it being publicly known all that time that he was a man. He called himself Margaret, and there was hardly a good house in Rome where he was not known, and he was specially welcomed by all the women, such as waiting-women, and wenches of the lower orders, and also many of the greatest ladies in Rome.

This worthy Scotsman carried on the trade of laundress, and had learned to bleach sheets, and called himself the washerwoman, and under that pretence frequented, as has been said, all the best houses in Rome, for there was no woman who could bleach sheets as he did.

But you must know that he did much else beside, for when he found himself with some pretty girl, he showed her that he was a man. Often, in order to prepare the lye, he stopped one or two nights in the aforesaid houses, and they made him sleep with the maid, or sometimes with the daughter; and very often, if her husband were not there, the mistress would have his company. And God knows that he had a good time, and, thanks to the way he employed his body, was welcome everywhere, and many wenches and waiting maids would fight as to who was to have him for a bedfellow.

The citizens of Rome heard such a good account of him from their wives, that they willingly welcomed him to their houses, and if they went abroad, were glad to have Margaret to keep house along with their wives, and, what is more,

made her sleep with them, so good and honest was she esteemed, as has been already said.

For the space of fourteen years did Margaret continue this way of living, but the mischief was at last brought to light by a young girl, who told her father that she had slept with Margaret and been assaulted by her, and that in reality she was a man. The father informed the officers of justice, and it was found that she had all the members and implements that men carry, and, in fact, was a man and not a woman.

So it was ordered that he should be put in a cart and led through all the city of Rome, and at every street corner his genitals should be exposed.

This was done, and God knows how ashamed and vexed poor Margaret was. But you must know that when the cart stopped at a certain corner, and all the belongings of Margaret were being exhibited, a Roman said out loud;

“Look at that scoundrel! he has slept more than twenty nights with my wife!”

Many others said the same, and many who did not say it knew it well, but, for their honours sake, held their tongue. Thus, in the manner you have heard, was the poor Scotsman punished for having pretended to be a woman, and after that punishment was banished from Rome; at which the women were much displeased, for never was there such a good laundress, and they were very sorry that they had so unfortunately lost her.

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## Story the Forty-Sixth.

### HOW THE NUN PAID FOR THE PEARS

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE THIANGES (<sup>1</sup>).

Of a Jacobin and a nun, who went secretly to an orchard to enjoy pleasant pastime under a pear-tree; in which tree was hidden one who knew of the assignation, and who spoiled their sport for that time, as you will hear.



It is no means unusual for monks to run after nuns. Thus it happened formerly that a Jacobin so haunted, visited, and frequented a nunnery in this kingdom, that his intention became known,—which was to sleep with one of the ladies there.

And God knows how anxious and diligent he was to see her whom he loved better than all the rest of the world, and continued to visit there so often, that the Abbess and many of the nuns perceived how matters stood, at which they were much displeased. Nevertheless, to avoid scandal, they said not a word to the monk, but gave a good scolding to the nun, who made many excuses, but

(<sup>1</sup>) The name of the author of this story is spelled in four different ways in different editions of these tales—viz, Thieurges, Thienges, Thieuges and Thianges.

## STORY THE FORTY-SIXTH — HOW THE NUN PAID FOR THE PEARS. [46](#)

**By Monseigneur De Thianges (\*).**

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And God knows how anxious and diligent he was to see her whom he loved better than all the rest of the world, and continued to visit there so often, that the Abbess and many of the nuns perceived how matters stood, at which they were much displeased. Nevertheless, to avoid scandal, they said not a word to the monk, but gave a good scolding to the nun, who made many excuses, but the abbess, who was clear-sighted, knew by her replies and excuses that she was guilty.

So, on account of that nun, the Abbess restrained the liberty of all, and caused the doors of the cloisters and other places to be closed, so that the poor Jacobin could by no means come to his mistress. That greatly vexed him, and her also, I need not say, and you may guess that they schemed day and night by what means they could meet; but could devise no plan, such a strict watch did the Abbess keep on them.

It happened one day, that one of the nieces of the Abbess was married, and a great feast was made in the convent. There was a great assemblage of people from the country round, and the Abbess was very busy receiving the great people who had come to do honour to her niece.

The worthy Jacobin thought that he might get a glimpse of his mistress, and by chance be lucky enough to find an opportunity to speak to her. He came

therefore, and found what he sought; for, because of the number of guests, the Abbess was prevented from keeping watch over the nun, and he had an opportunity to tell his mistress his griefs, and how much he regretted the good time that had passed; and she, who greatly loved him, gladly listened to him, and would have willingly made him happy. Amongst other speeches, he said;

“Alas! my dear, you know that it is long since we have had a quiet talk together such as we like; I beg of you therefore, if it is possible, whilst everyone is otherwise engaged than in watching us, to tell me where we can have a few words apart.”

“So help me God, my friend,” she replied, “I desire it no less than you do. But I do not know of any place where it can be done; for there are so many people in the house, and I cannot enter my chamber, there are so many strangers who have come to this wedding; but I will tell you what you can do. You know the way to the great garden; do you not?”

“By St. John! yes,” he said.

“In the corner of the garden,” she said, “there is a nice paddock enclosed with high and thick hedges, and in the middle is a large pear-tree, which makes the place cool and shady. Go there and wait for me, and as soon as I can get away, I will hurry to you.”

The Jacobin greatly thanked her and went straight there. But you must know there was a young gallant who had come to the feast, who was standing not far from these lovers and had heard their conversation, and, as he knew the paddock, he determined that he would go and hide there, and see their love-making.

He slipped out of the crowd, and as fast as his feet could carry him, ran to this paddock, and arrived there before the Jacobin; and when he came there, he climbed into the great pear-tree—which had large branches, and was covered with leaves and pears,—and hid himself so well that he could not be easily seen.

He was hardly ensconced there when there came trotting along the worthy Jacobin, looking behind him to see if his mistress was following; and God knows that he was glad to find himself in that beautiful spot, and never lifted his eyes to the pear-tree, for he never suspected that there was anyone there, but kept his eyes on the road by which he had come.

He looked until he saw his mistress coming hastily, and she was soon with him, and they rejoiced greatly, and the good Jacobin took off his gown and his scapulary, and kissed and cuddled tightly the fair nun.

They wanted to do that for which they came thither, and prepared



themselves accordingly, and in so doing the nun said;

“Pardieu, Brother Aubrey, I would have you know that you are about to enjoy one of the prettiest nuns in the Church. You can judge for yourself. Look what breasts! what a belly! what thighs! and all the rest.”

“By my oath,” said Brother Aubrey, “Sister Jehanne, my darling, you also can say that you have for a lover one of the best-looking monks of our Order, and as well furnished as any man in this kingdom,” and with these words, taking in his hand the weapon with which he was about to fight, he brandished it before his lady’s eyes, and cried, “What do you say? What do you think of it? Is it not a handsome one? Is it not worthy of a pretty girl?”

“Certainly it is,” she said.

“And you shall have it.”

“And you shall have,” said he who was up in the pear-tree, “all the best pears on the tree;” and with that he took and shook the branches with both hands, and the pears rattled down on them and on the ground, at which Brother Aubrey was so frightened that he hardly had the sense to pick up his gown, but ran away as fast as he could without waiting, and did not feel safe till he was well away from the spot.

The nun was as much, or more, frightened, but before she could set off, the gallant had come down out of the tree, and taking her by the hand, prevented her leaving, and said; “My dear, you must not go away thus: you must first pay the fruiterer.”

She saw that a refusal would appear unseasonable, and was fain to let the fruiterer complete the work which Brother Aubrey had left undone.

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## Story the Forty-Seventh.

### TWO MULES DROWNED TOGETHER

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE LA ROCHE.

Of a President who knowing of the immoral conduct of his wife, caused her to be drowned by her mule, which had been kept without drink for a week, and given salt to eat—as is more clearly related hereafter.

**I**N Provence there lived formerly a President of great and high renown, who was a most learned clerk and prudent man, valiant in arms, discreet in counsel, and, in short, had all the advantages which man could enjoy. (1)

One thing only was wanting to him, and that was the one that vexed him most, and with good cause—and it was that he had a wife who was far from good. The

(1) Though not mentioned here by name, the principal character in this story has been identified with Chaffrey Carles, President of the Parliament of Grenoble. On the front of a house in the Rue de Cleres, in Grenoble is carved a coat of arms held by an angel who has her finger on her lips. The arms are those of the Carles family and the figure is supposed to refer to this story. At any rate the secret was very badly kept, for the story seems to have been widely known within a few years of its occurrence.

## STORY THE FORTY-SEVENTH — TWO MULES DROWNED TOGETHER. [47](#)

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One thing only was wanting to him, and that was the one that vexed him most, and with good cause—and it was that he had a wife who was far from good. The good lord saw and knew that his wife was unfaithful, and inclined to play the whore, but the sense that God had given him, told him that there was no remedy except to hold his tongue or die, for he had often both seen and read that nothing would cure a woman of that complaint.

But, at any rate, you may imagine that a man of courage and virtue, as he was, was far from happy, and that his misfortune rankled in his sorrowing heart. Yet as he outwardly appeared to know or see nothing of his wife's misconduct, one of his servants came to him one day when he was alone in his chamber, and said,

“Monsieur, I want to inform you, as I ought, of something which particularly touches your honour. I have watched your wife's conduct, and I can assure you that she does not keep the faith she promised, for a certain person (whom he named) occupies your place very often.”

The good President, who knew as well or better than the servant who made

the report, how his wife behaved, replied angrily;

“Ha! scoundrel, I am sure that you lie in all you say! I know my wife too well, and she is not what you say—no! Do you think I keep you to utter lies about a wife who is good and faithful to me! I will have no more of you; tell me what I owe you and then go, and never enter my sight again if you value your life!”

The poor servant, who thought he was doing his master a great service, said how much was due to him, received his money and went, but the President, seeing that the unfaithfulness became more and more evident, was as vexed and troubled as he could be. He could not devise any plan by which he could honestly get rid of her, but it happened that God willed, or fortune permitted that his wife was going to a wedding shortly, and he thought it might be made to turn out lucky for him.

He went to the servant who had charge of the horses, and a fine mule that he had, and said,

“Take care that you give nothing to drink to my mule either night or day, until I give you further orders, and whenever you give it its hay, mix a good handful of salt with it—but do not say a word about it.”

“I will say nothing,” said the servant, “and I will do whatever you command me.”

When the wedding day of the cousin of the President’s wife drew near, she said to her husband,

“Monsieur, if it be your pleasure, I would willingly attend the wedding of my cousin, which will take place next Sunday, at such a place.”

“Very well, my dear; I am satisfied: go, and God guide you.”

“Thank you, monsieur,” she replied, “but I know not exactly how to go. I do not wish to take my carriage; your nag is so skittish that I am afraid to undertake the journey on it.”

“Well, my dear, take my mule—it looks well, goes nicely and quietly, and is more sure-footed than any animal I ever saw.”

“Faith!” she said, “I thank you: you are a good husband.”

The day of departure arrived, and all the servants of Madame were ready, and also the women who were to serve her and accompany her, and two or three cavaliers who were to escort Madame, and they asked if Madame were also ready, and she informed them that she would come at once.

When she was dressed, she came down, and they brought her the mule

which had not drank for eight days, and was mad with thirst, so much salt had it eaten. When she was mounted, the cavaliers went first, making their horses caracole, and thus did all the company pass through the town into the country, and on till they came to a defile through which the great river Rhone rushes with marvellous swiftness. And when the mule which had drank nothing for eight days saw the river, it sought neither bridge nor ford, but made one leap into the river with its load, which was the precious body of Madame.

All the attendants saw the accident, but they could give no help; so was Madame drowned, which was a great misfortune. And the mule, when it had drunk its fill, swam across the Rhone till it reached the shore, and was saved.

All were much troubled and sorrowful that Madame was lost, and they returned to the town. One of the servants went to the President, who was in his room expecting the news; and with much sorrow told him of the death of his wife.

The good President, who in his heart was more glad than sorry, showed great contrition, and fell down, and displayed much sorrow and regret for his good wife. He cursed the mule, and the wedding to which his wife was going.

“And by God!” he said, “it is a great reproach to all you people that were there that you did not save my poor wife, who loved you all so much; you are all cowardly wretches, and you have clearly shown it.”

The servant excused himself, as did the others also, as well as they could, and left the President, who praised God with uplifted hands that he was rid of his wife.

He gave his wife’s body a handsome funeral, but—as you may imagine—although he was of a fit and proper age, he took care never to marry again, lest he should once more incur the same misfortune.

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## Story the Forty-Eighth.

### THE CHASTE MOUTH

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE LA ROCHE.

Of a woman who could not suffer herself to be kissed, though she willingly gave up all the rest of her body, except the mouth, to her lover—and the reason that she gave for this.



A noble youth fell in love with a young damsel who was married, and when he had made her acquaintance, told her, as plainly as he could, his case, and declared that he was ill for love of her,—and, to tell truth, he was much smitten.

She listened to him graciously enough, and after their first interview, he left well satisfied with the reply he had received. But if he had been love sick before he made the avowal, he was still more so afterwards. He could not sleep night or day for thinking of his mistress, and by what means he could gain her favour.

He returned to the charge when he saw his opportunity, and God knows, if he spoke well the first time, he played his part still better on the second occasion, and, by good

# STORY THE FORTY-EIGHTH — THE CHASTE MOUTH.

**By Monseigneur De La Roche.**

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He returned to the charge when he saw his opportunity, and God knows, if he spoke well the first time, he played his part still better on the second occasion, and, by good luck, he found his mistress not disinclined to grant his request,—at which he was in no small degree pleased. And as he had not always the time or leisure to come and see her, he told her on that occasion of the desire he had to do her a service in any manner that he could, and she thanked him and was as kind as could be.

In short, he found in her so great courtesy, and kindness, and fair words, that he could not reasonably expect more, and thereupon wished to kiss, but she refused point-blank; nor could he even obtain a kiss when he said farewell, at which he was much astonished.

After he had left her, he doubted much whether he should ever gain her love, seeing that he could not obtain a single kiss, but he comforted himself by remembering the loving words she had said when they parted, and the hope she had given him.

He again laid siege to her; in short, came and went so often, that his mistress at last gave him a secret assignation, where they could say all that they had to say, in private. And when he took leave of her, he embraced her gently

and would have kissed her, but she defended herself vigorously, and said to him, harshly;

“Go away, go away! and leave me alone! I do not want to be kissed!”

He excused his conduct as he best could, and left.

“What is this?” he said to himself. “I have never seen a woman like that! She gives me the best possible reception, and has already given me all that I have dared to ask—yet I cannot obtain one poor, little kiss.”

At the appointed time, he went to the place his mistress had named, and did at his leisure that for which he came, for he lay in her arms all one happy night, and did whatsoever he wished, except kiss her, and that he could never manage.

“I do not understand these manners,” he said to himself; “this woman lets me sleep with her, and do whatever I like to her; but I have no more chance of getting a single kiss than I have of finding the true Cross! Morbleu! I cannot make it out; there is some mystery about it, and I must find out what it is.”

One day when they were enjoying themselves, and were both gay, he said,

“My dear, I beg of you to tell me the reason why you invariably refuse to give me a kiss? You have graciously allowed me to enjoy all your fair and sweet body—and yet you refuse me a little kiss!”

“Faith! my friend,” she replied, “as you say, a kiss I have always refused you,—so never expect it, for you will never get it. There is a very good reason for that, as I will tell you. It is true that when I married my husband, I promised him—with the mouth only—many fine things. And since it is my mouth that swore and promised to be chaste, I will keep it for him, and would rather die than let anyone else touch it—it belongs to him and no other, and you must not expect to have anything to do with it. But my backside has never promised or sworn anything to him; do with that and the rest of me—my mouth excepted—whatever you please; I give it all to you.”

Her lover laughed loudly, and said;

“I thank you, dearest! You say well, and I am greatly pleased that you are honest enough to keep your promise.”

“God forbid,” she answered, “that I should ever break it.”

So, in the manner that you have heard, was this woman shared between them; the husband, had the mouth only, and her lover all the rest, and if, by chance, the husband ever used any other part of her, it was rather by way of a loan, for they belonged to the lover by gift of the said woman. But at all events the husband had this advantage, that his wife was content to let him have the use



of that which she had given to her lover; but on no account would she permit the lover to enjoy that which she had bestowed upon her husband.

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## Story the Forty-Ninth.

### THE SCARLET BACKSIDE

BY

PIERRE DAVID.

Of one who saw his wife with a man to whom she gave the whole of her body, except her backside, which she left for her husband, and he made her dress, one day when his friends were present, in a woollen gown, on the backside of which was a piece of fine scarlet, and so left her before all their friends.



I am well aware that formerly there lived in the city of Arras, a worthy merchant, who had the misfortune to have married a wife who was not the best woman in the world, for, when she saw a chance, she would slip as easily as an old cross-bow.

The good merchant suspected his wife's misdeeds, and was also informed by several of his friends and neighbours. Thereupon he fell into a great frenzy and profound melancholy; which did not mend matters. Then he determined to try whether he could know for certain that which was hardly likely to please him—that is to see one or more

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By Pierre David.

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The good merchant suspected his wife's misdeeds, and was also informed by several of his friends and neighbours. Thereupon he fell into a great frenzy and profound melancholy; which did not mend matters. Then he determined to try whether he could know for certain that which was hardly likely to please him—that is to see one or more of those who were his deputies come to his house to visit his wife.

So one day he pretended to go out, and hid himself in a chamber of his house of which he alone had the key. The said chamber looked upon the street and the courtyard, and by several secret openings and chinks upon several other chambers in the house.

As soon as the good woman thought her husband had gone, she let one of the lovers who used to come to her know of it, and he obeyed the summons as he should, for he followed close on the heels of the wench who was sent to fetch him.

The husband, who as has been said, was in his secret chamber, saw the man who was to take his place enter the house, but he said not a word, for he wished to know more if possible.

“When the lover was in the house, the lady led him by the hand into her chamber, conversing all the while. Then she locked the door, and they began to

kiss and to cuddle, and enjoy themselves, and the good woman pulled off her gown and appeared in a plain petticoat, and her companion threw his arms round her, and did that for which he came. The poor husband, meanwhile, saw all this through a little grating, and you may imagine was not very comfortable; he was even so close to them that he could hear plainly all they said. When the battle between the good woman and her lover was over, they sat upon a couch that was in the chamber, and talked of various matters. And as the lover looked upon his mistress, who was marvellously fair, he began to kiss her again, and as he kissed her he said;

“Darling, to whom does this sweet mouth belong?”

“It is yours, sweet friend,” she replied.

“I thank you. And these beautiful eyes?”

“Yours also,” she said.

“And this fair rounded bosom—does that belong to me?” he asked.

“Yes, by my oath, to you and none other,” she replied.

Afterwards he put his hand upon her belly, and upon her “front” and each time asked, “Whose is this, darling?”

“There is no need to ask; you know well enough that it is all yours.”

Then he put his hand upon her big backside, and asked smiling,

“And whose is this?”

“It is my husband’s,” she said. “That is his share; but all the rest is yours.”

“Truly,” he said, “I thank you greatly. I cannot complain, for you have given me all the best parts. On the other hand, be assured that I am yours entirely.”

“I well know it,” she said, and with that the combat of love began again between them, and more vigorously than ever, and that being finished, the lover left the house.

The poor husband, who had seen and heard everything, could stand no more; he was in a terrible rage, nevertheless he suppressed his wrath, and the next day appeared, as though he had just come back from a journey.

At dinner that day, he said that he wished to give a great feast on the following Sunday to her father and mother, and such and such of her relations and cousins, and that she was to lay in great store of provisions that they might enjoy themselves that day. She promised to do this and to invite the guests.

Sunday came, the dinner was prepared, those who were bidden all

appeared, and each took the place the host designated, but the merchant remained standing, and so did his wife, until the first course was served.

When the first course was placed on the table, the merchant who had secretly caused to be made for his wife a robe of thick duffle grey with a large patch of scarlet cloth on the backside, said to his wife, "Come with me to the bedroom."

He walked first, and she followed him. When they were there, he made her take off her gown, and showing her the aforesaid gown of duffle grey, said, "Put on this dress!"

She looked, and saw that it was made of coarse stuff, and was much surprised, and could not imagine why her husband wished her to dress in this manner.

"For what purpose do you wish me to put this on?" she asked. "Never mind," he replied, "I wish you to wear it." "Faith!" she replied, "I don't like it! I won't put it on! Are you mad? Do you want all your people and mine to laugh at us both?"

"Mad or sane," he said, "you will wear it." "At least," she answered, "let me know why." "You will know that in good time." In short, she was compelled to put on this gown, which had a very strange appearance, and in this apparel she was led to the table, where most of her relations and friends were seated.

But you imagine they were very astonished to see her thus dressed, and, as you may suppose, she was very much ashamed, and would not have come to the table if she had not been compelled.

Some of her relatives said they had the right to know the meaning of this strange apparel, but her husband replied that they were to enjoy their dinner, and afterwards they should know.

The poor woman who was dressed in this strange garb could eat but little; there was a mystery connected with the gown which oppressed her spirits. She would have been even more troubled if she had known the meaning of the scarlet patch, but she did not.

The dinner was at length over, the table was removed, grace was said, and everyone stood up. Then the husband came forward and began to speak, and said;

"All you who are here assembled, I will, if you wish, tell you briefly why I have called you together, and why I have dressed my wife in this apparel. It is true that I had been informed that your relative here kept but ill the vows she had

made to me before the priest, nevertheless I would not lightly believe that which was told me, but wished to learn the truth for myself, and six days ago I pretended to go abroad, and hid myself in an upstairs chamber. I had scarcely come there before there arrived a certain man, whom my wife led into her chamber, where they did whatsoever best pleased them. And amongst other questions, the man demanded of her to whom belonged her mouth, her eyes, her hands, her belly, her 'front', and her thighs? And she replied, '*To you, dear*'. And when he came to her backside, he asked, '*And whose is this, darling?*' '*My husband's*' she replied. Therefore I have dressed her thus. She said that only her backside was mine, and I have caused it to be attired as becomes my condition. The rest of her have I clad in the garb which is befitting an unfaithful and dishonoured woman, for such she is, and as such I give her back to you."

The company was much astonished to hear this speech, and the poor woman overcome with shame. She never again occupied a position in her husband's house, but lived, dishonoured and ashamed, amongst her own people.

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## Story the Fiftieth.

### TIT FOR TAT

BY

ANTHOINE DE LA SALE.

Of a father who tried to kill his son because the young man wanted to lie with his grandmother, and the reply made by the said son.



YOUNG men like to travel and to seek after adventures; and thus it was with the son of a labourer, of Lannoys, who from the age of ten until he was twenty-six, was away from home; and from his departure until his return, his father and mother heard no news of him, so they often thought that he was dead.

He returned at last, and God knows what joy there was in the house, and how he was feasted to the best of such poor means as God had given them.

But the one who most rejoiced to see him was his grandmother, his father's mother. She was most joyful at his return, and kissed him more than fifty times, and ceased not to praise God for having restored her grandson in good health.

## STORY THE FIFTIETH — TIT FOR TAT. [50](#)

**By Anthoine De La Sale.**

*Of a father who tried to kill his son because the young man wanted to lie with his grandmother, and the reply made by the said son.*

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But the one who most rejoiced to see him was his grandmother, his father's mother. She was most joyful at his return, and kissed him more than fifty times, and ceased not to praise God for having restored her grandson in good health.

After the feasting was over, bed-time came. There were in the cottage but two beds—the one for the father and mother, and the other for the grandmother. So it was arranged that the son should sleep with his grandmother, at which she was very glad, but he grumbled, and only complied to oblige his parents, and as a makeshift for one night.

When he was in bed with his grandmother, it happened, I know not how, that he began to get on the top of her.

“What are you doing?” she cried.

“Never you mind,” he replied, “and hold your tongue.” When she saw that he really meant to ravish her, she began to cry out as loud as she could for her son, who slept in the next room, and then jumped out of bed and went and complained to him, weeping bitterly meanwhile.

When the other heard his mother's complaint, and the unfilial conduct of his son, he sprang out of bed in great wrath, and swore that he would kill the young man.

The son heard this threat, so he rose quickly, slipped out of the house, and made his escape. His father followed him, but not being so light of foot, found



the pursuit hopeless, so returned home, where his mother was still grieving over the offence her grandson had committed.

“Never mind, mother!” he said. “I will avenge you.”

I know not how many days after that, the father saw his son playing tennis in the town of Laon, and drawing his dagger, went towards him, and would have stabbed him, but the young man slipped away and his father was seized and disarmed.

There were many there who knew that the two were father and son; so one said to the son,

“How does this come about? What have you done to your father that he should seek to kill you?”

“Faith! nothing,” he replied. “He is quite in the wrong. He wants to do me all the harm in the world, because, just for once, I would ride his mother—whereas he has mounted mine more than five hundred times, and I never said a word about it.”

All those who heard this reply began to haugh heartily, and swore that he must be a good fellow. So they did their best to make peace for him with his father, and at last they succeeded, and all was forgiven and forgotten on both sides.

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## Story the Fifty-First.

### THE REAL FATHERS

BY

THE EDITOR.

Of a woman who on her death-bed, in the absence of her husband, made over her children to those to whom they belonged, and how one of the youngest of the children informed his father.



HERE formerly lived in Paris, a woman who was married to a good and simple man—he was one of our friends and it would have been impossible to have had a better. This woman was very beautiful and complaisant, and, when she was young, she never refused her favours to those who pleased her, so that she had as many children by her lovers as by her husband—about twelve or thirteen in all.

When at last she was very ill, and about to die, she thought she would confess her sins and ease her conscience. She had all her children brought to her, and it almost broke her heart to think of leaving them. She thought it would not be right to leave her husband the charge of so many children, of some of which he was not the father,

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When at last she was very ill, and about to die, she thought she would confess her sins and ease her conscience. She had all her children brought to her, and it almost broke her heart to think of leaving them. She thought it would not be right to leave her husband the charge of so many children, of some of which he was not the father, though he believed he was, and thought her as good a woman as any in Paris.

By means of a woman who was nursing her, she sent for two men who in past times had been favoured lovers. They came to her at once, whilst her husband was gone away to fetch a doctor and an apothecary, as she had begged him to do.

When she saw these two men, she made all her children come to her, and then said;

“You, such an one, you know what passed between us two in former days. I now repent of it bitterly, and if Our Lord does not show me the mercy I ask of Him, it will cost me dear in the next world. I have committed faults, I know, but to add another to them would be to make matters worse. Here are such and such of my children;—they are yours, and my husband believes that they are his. You cannot have the conscience to make him keep them, so I beg that after my death, which will be very soon, that you will take them, and bring them up as a father

should, for they are, in fact, your own.”

She spoke in the same manner to the other man, showing him the other children:

“Such and such are, I assure you, yours. I leave them to your care, requesting you to perform your duty towards them. If you will promise me to care for them, I shall die in peace.”

As she was thus distributing her children, her husband returned home, and was met by one of his little sons, who was only about four years old. The child ran downstairs to him in such haste that he nearly lost his breath, and when he came to his father, he said,

“Alas, father! come quickly, in God’s name!”

“What has happened?” asked his father. “Is your mother dead?”

“No, no,” said the child, “but make haste upstairs, or you will have no children left. Two men have come to see mother, and she is giving them most of my brothers and sisters. If you do not make haste, she will give them all away.”

The good man could not understand what his son meant, so he hastened upstairs, and found his wife very ill, and with her the nurse, two of his neighbours, and his children.

He asked the meaning of the tale his son had told him about giving away his children.

“You will know later on,” she said; so he did not trouble himself further, for he never doubted her in the least.

The neighbours went away, commending the dying woman to God, and promising to do all she had requested, for which she thanked them.

When the hour of her death drew near, she begged her husband to pardon her, and told him of the misdeeds she had committed during the years she had lived with him, and how such and such of the children belonged to a certain man, and such to another—that is to say those before-mentioned—and that after her death they would take charge of their own children.

He was much astonished to hear this news, nevertheless he pardoned her for all her misdeeds, and then she died, and he sent the children to the persons she had mentioned, who kept them.

And thus he was rid of his wife and his children, and felt much less regret for the loss of his wife than he did for the loss of the children.

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Les trois monimens





## Story the Fifty-Second.

### THE THREE REMINDERS

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE LA ROCHE.

Of three counsels that a father when on his death-bed gave his son, but to which the son paid no heed. And how he renounced a young girl he had married, because he saw her lying with the family chaplain the first night after their wedding.

**O**NCE upon a time there was a nobleman who was wise, prudent, and virtuous. When he was on his deathbed, he settled his affairs, eased his conscience as best he could, and then called his only son to whom he left his wordly wealth.

After asking his son to be sure and pray for the repose of his soul and that of his mother, to help them out of purgatory, he gave him three farewell counsels, saying;

“My dear son, I advise you first of all never to stay in the house of a friend who gives you black bread to eat. Secondly, never gallop your horse in a valley. Thirdly, never choose a wife of a foreign nation. Always bear these three things in mind, and I have no doubt

## STORY THE FIFTY-SECOND — THE THREE REMINDERS. [52](#)

**By Monseigneur De La Roche.**

*Of three counsels that a father when on his deathbed gave his son, but to which the son paid no heed. And how he renounced a young girl he had married, because he saw her lying with the family chaplain the first night after their wedding.*

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The good son thanked his father for his wise counsels, and promised that he would heed them, and never act contrary to them.

His father died soon after, and was buried with all befitting pomp and ceremony; for his son wished to do his duty to one to whom he owed everything.

Some time after this, the young nobleman, who was now an orphan and did not understand household affairs, made the acquaintance of a neighbour, whom he constantly visited, drinking and eating at his house.

This friend, who was married and had a beautiful wife, became very jealous, and suspected that our young nobleman came on purpose to see his wife, and that he was in reality her lover.

This made him very uncomfortable but he could think of no means of getting rid of his guest, for it would have been useless to have told him what he

thought, so he determined that little by little he would behave in such a way that, if the young man were not too stupid, he would see that his frequent visits were far from welcome.

To put this project into execution, he caused black bread to be served at meals, instead of white. After a few of these repasts, the young nobleman remembered his father's advice. He knew that he done wrong, and secretly hid a piece of the black bread in his sleeve, and took it home with him, and to remind himself, he hung it by a piece of string from a nail in the wall of his best chamber, and did not visit his neighbour's house as formerly.

One day after that, he, being fond of amusement, was in the fields, and his dogs put up a hare. He spurred his horse after them, and came up with them in a valley, when his horse, which was galloping fast, slipped, and broke its neck.

He was very thankful to find that his life was safe, and that he had escaped without injury. He had the hare for his reward, and as he held it up, and then looked at the horse of which he had been so fond, he remembered the second piece of advice his father had given him, and which, if he had kept in mind, he would have been spared the loss of his horse, and also the risk of losing his life.

When he arrived home, he had the horse's skin hung by a cord next to the black bread; to remind him of the second counsel his father had given him.

Some time after this, he took it in his head to travel and see foreign countries, and having arranged all his affairs, he set out on his journey, and after seeing many strange lands, he at last took up his abode in the house of a great lord, where he became such a favourite that the lord was pleased to give him his daughter in marriage, on account of his pleasant manners and virtues.

In short, he was betrothed to the girl, and the wedding-day came. But when he supposed that he was to pass the night with her, he was told that it was not the custom of the country to sleep the first night with one's wife, and that he must have patience until the next night.

"Since it is the custom of the country," he said, "I do not wish it broken for me."

After the dancing was over, his bride was conducted to one room, and he to another. He saw that there was only a thin partition of plaster between the two rooms. He made a hole with his sword in the partition, and saw his bride jump into bed; he saw also the chaplain of the household jump in after her, to keep her company in case she was afraid, or else to try the merchandise, or take tithes as monks do.

Our young nobleman, when he saw these goings on, reflected that he still



had some tow left on his distaff, and then there flashed across his mind the recollection of the counsel his good father had given him, and which he had so badly kept.

He comforted himself with the thought that the affair had not gone so far that he could not get out of it.

The next day, the good chaplain, who had been his substitute for the night, rose early in the morning, but unfortunately left his breeches under the bride's bed. The young nobleman, not pretending to know anything, came to her bedside, and politely saluted her, as he well knew how, and found means to surreptitiously take away the priest's breeches without anyone seeing him.

There were great rejoicings all that day, and when evening came, the bride's bed was prepared and decorated in a most marvellous manner, and she went to bed. The bridegroom was told that that night he could sleep with his wife. He was ready with a reply, and said to the father and mother, and other relations.

“You know not who I am, and yet you have given me your daughter, and bestowed on me the greatest honour ever done to a foreign gentleman, and for which I cannot sufficiently thank you. Nevertheless, I have determined never to lie with my wife until I have shown her, and you too, who I am, what I possess, and how I am housed.”

The girl's father immediately replied,

“We are well aware that you are a nobleman, and in a high position, and that God has not given you so many good qualities without friends and riches to accompany them. We are satisfied, therefore do not leave your marriage unconsummated; we shall have time to see your state and condition whenever you like.”

To shorten the story, he vowed and swore that he would never sleep with her if it were not in his own house, and he conducted thither the bride's father and mother, and many of her relations and friends. He put his house in order to receive them, and to do so arrived there a day before them. And as soon as he alighted, he took the priest's breeches, and hung them in the chamber, by the black bread and the horse's skin.

Most cordially received were the relations and friends of the fair bride, and they were much astonished to see the house of the young gentleman so well furnished with vessels, carpets, and all other kinds of furniture, and they thought themselves lucky to have procured such a husband for the girl.

As they were looking round, they came to the great chamber, which was all

hung round with fair tapestry, and they perceived the brown bread, the horse's skin, and a pair of breeches hanging there; at which they were much astonished, and asked their host the meaning.

He replied that he would willingly, and for a very good reason, tell them the meaning,—but after they had eaten.

Dinner was prepared, and God knows that it was well served, They had no sooner dined, than they demanded the interpretation of the mystery of the black bread, the horse's skin etc., and the worthy young gentleman related the story at length, and told how his father,—being on his death-bed as has been already narrated,—gave him three counsels.

“The first was never to remain in a house where they gave me black bread. I paid no heed to this advice, for, after his death, I frequented the house of a neighbour, who became jealous of his wife, and in place of the white bread with which I was always served, gave me black; so in recollection and acknowledgment of the truth of that advice, I hung that piece of black bread there. The second counsel that my father gave me, was never to gallop my horse in a valley. I did not bear that in mind, and suffered for it, for one day, when riding in a valley after a hare pursued by my dogs, my horse fell and broke its neck, and it is a wonder I was not badly hurt. To remind me of my escape from death, the skin of the horse I then lost is hung there. The third counsel and advice that my father—whose soul is with God—gave me, was never to marry a woman of a strange nation. In this also I failed, and I will tell you what happened to me. The first night after I was married to your daughter, and you refused to let me sleep with her, I was lodged in a chamber close to hers, and as the partition between her and me was but thin, I pierced a hole with my sword, and I saw the chaplain of your household come and lie with her; but he left his breeches under the bed when he rose in the morning—which breeches I obtained possession of, and have hung them there as evidence of the everlasting truth of the third counsel that my late father gave me, and which I had not duly remembered and borne in mind; but in order that I may not again fall into the same errors, have placed here these three objects to render me prudent. And because—thank God—I am not so much committed to your daughter that she cannot now leave me, I would ask of you to take her back, and return to your own country, for as long as I live I will never come near her. But, because I have made you come a long way to show you that I am not the sort of man to take a priest's leavings, I am prepared to pay your expenses.”

The others did not know what to say, but seeing that their misdeeds were discovered, and seeing also that being far from their own country, force would

not be on their side, were content to take the money for their expenses, and return whence they came; for if they had staked more they would have lost more.

Such, as you have heard, were the three counsels which the good father gave his son, and which should not be forgotten; let everyone remember them, so far as they concern himself.

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## Story the Fifty-Third.

### THE MUDDLED MARRIAGES

BY

THE ARCHIVIST OF BRUSSELS.

Of two men and two women who were waiting to be married at the first Mass in the early morning; and because the priest could not see well, he took the one for the other, and gave to each man the wrong wife, as you will hear.

**O**NE morning there were assembled in the cathedral of Sainte Gudule at Brussels, many men and women who wished to be married at the first Mass, which is said between four and five o'clock; and amongst others who wished to enter this sweet and happy condition, and promise before the priest to live honestly and uprightly, were a young man and a young woman who were not rich, who were standing near each other, waiting for the priest to call them to marry them.

Near them were an old man and an old woman, who had great possessions and wealth, but who, out of covetousness and the desire to have more, had also promised troth to one another, and were also waiting to be married at this first Mass.

# STORY THE FIFTY-THIRD — THE MUDDLED MARRIAGES.

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Near them were an old man and an old woman, who had great possessions and wealth, but who, out of covetousness and the desire to have more, had also promised troth to one another, and were also waiting to be married at this first Mass.

The priest came and recited this much-desired Mass, and at the end thereof, as is the custom, had ranged before him those who wished to be married, of whom there were many, without counting the four I have mentioned.

Now you must know that the good priest who was standing ready before the altar to accomplish the wedding rites, was blind of one eye, having lost an eye by some mischance a little time before. Also there was hardly any light in the chapel or on the altar, and, as it was winter, it was very dark. So he could not see the couples properly, and when he came to marry them, he took the rich old man and the poor, young girl, and joined them together with the wedding ring.

On the other hand, he also took the poor, young man and married him to the rich, old woman,—without any of those in the church noticing it, either men or women—which was very strange, especially on the part of the men, for they dare to raise their heads and their eyes when they are on their knees before the priest, whilst the women who are modest and shy, always look down on the

ground.

It is the custom on leaving the church for the friends of the bride to meet her, and conduct her to her husband's house. So it was that the poor, young girl was taken to the house of the rich man, and also the rich, old woman was escorted to the cottage of the young man.

When the young bride found herself in the court, and then in the great hall of the house of the man she had married by mistake, she was much astonished, and knew well that was not the house she had left that morning. When she was in the dressing-room, which was hung round with rich tapestries, she saw a large fire, a table well covered, on which a good breakfast was all ready, and a handsome sideboard, well garnished with vessels of all sorts, and was more astonished than ever, and thought it strange she did not know a soul present to whom she could speak.

She was soon relieved of the cloak in which she was huddled-up, and when the bridegroom and the others who were there saw her uncovered, you may guess they were as much surprised as though horns had cropped up on their heads.

“What?” said the bridegroom. “Is that my wife? By Our Lady, I am very lucky. She is much changed since yesterday; I think she must have been to the fountain of youth.”

“We do not know,” replied those who had brought her, “whence she comes, or what she has done; but we are certain that is the woman you have married, for we took her at the altar, and since then she has never left our hands.”

They were all much astonished, and remained long without saying a word, but the most foolish-looking and surprised of all was the poor bride; she was quite downcast and wept gently, for she would have much preferred to be with her lover, whom she had expected to marry that day.

The bridegroom, seeing her so miserable, had pity on her, and said,

“My dear, do not be downcast; you are in a good house, please God, and no one is going to do you any harm. But tell me, if you please, who you are, and what information you can as to how you came here.”

When she heard herself spoken to so courteously, she regained a little courage, and gave the names of her father and mother, and said that she was of Brussels, and was betrothed to a certain young man, whom she named, and whom she had expected to have married.

The bridegroom, and all those who were there, began to laugh, and said that

the priest had played them this trick.

“Well, God be praised for the change!” said the bridegroom at last. “I do not greatly regret that God sent you to me, and I promise you on my word to make you a good husband.”

“No, no,” she said, weeping. “You are not my husband. I wish to go back to him to whom my father gave me.”

“That shall not be,” said he. “I married you in the holy church, and you cannot deny it. You are, and you will remain, my wife; and be content, for you are very lucky. I have, thank God, riches enough, of which you shall be the lady and mistress, and you will be very comfortable.”

He, and the others who were there, talked her over till at last she consented. So they had a light breakfast together, and then went to bed, and the old man did the best he knew how.

But let us return to the old woman, and the young man.

When she found herself in the house, she was in a great rage, and said;

“What am I doing here? Why do you not take me either to my own house, or to the house of my husband?”

The bridegroom, when he saw the old woman, and heard her speak, was much surprised, and so were his father and mother, and all who were there assembled. Then came out the father and mother, who knew the old woman, and the father spoke to his son, and said,

“My son, they have given you the wife of some one else, and it is to be supposed he has your wife. It is all the fault of our curé, who sees so badly, and—God help me—I was so far away from you when you were married that I never perceived the change.”

“What must I do?” asked the bridegroom.

“Upon my word,” said his father, “I do not well know, but I greatly doubt if you can have any other wife than this.”

“St. John!” said the old woman, “I will not have him. I do not care for such a sorry fellow! I should be very happy, should I not? with a young fellow who did not care for me and would spend all my money, and if, I ventured to say a word would give me a crack on the head. Go away! go away! and fetch your wife, and let me go where I ought to be.”

“By Our Lady!” said the bridegroom, “if I can get her back, I would rather have her than you, however poor she may be; but if I cannot obtain her, you will not go.”

His father, and some of his relations, went to the house where the old woman wished to be, and found the company breakfasting well, and preparing the caudle for the bride and bridegroom.

The father stated the case, but the others replied,

“You come too late; each must keep what he has; the master of the house is content with the wife that God has given him; he wedded her, and he does not want any other. And do not complain, for you would never have been so fortunate as to get your daughter married so well; now you will all be rich.”

The father returned home, and reported the answer he had, at which the old woman was in a great rage.

“Indeed!” she said, “am I to be deceived in this manner? By God, the matter shall not rest here; justice shall be done me!”

If the old woman was displeased, as much, or more, was the young man, who was deprived of his ladylove. Still, he might have looked over that if he could have had the old woman, and all her money, but it was no good, she made herself so disagreeable that he was obliged to let her return home.

So he was advised to summon her before the Bishop of Cambrai; and she also summoned the old man who had married the young woman, and a great lawsuit began, judgment in which is not given yet, so I can tell you no more about it.

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Le Quiproquo des épousailles





## Story the Fifty-Fourth.

### THE RIGHT MOMENT

BY

MAHIOT D'AUQUESNES.

Of a damsel of Maubeuge who gave herself up to a waggoner, and refused many noble lovers; and of the reply that she made to a noble knight because he reproached her for this—as you will hear.



A noble knight of Flanders—young, lusty, and a good jouter, dancer, and singer, was once living in the county of Hainault with another noble knight of the same rank then living there, though he had a fine residence in Flanders. Love—as often happens—was the cause that he remained there, for he was much smitten by a damsel of Maubeuge, and God knows what he did for her; often giving jousts, masquerades, banquets, and whatever else was possible, and that he thought would please his mistress.

He was to some extent in her good graces for a time, but not so much as he wished to be. His friend, the knight of Hainault, who knew of his love affair, did all he could to assist him, and it was not his fault that his

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He was to some extent in her good graces for a time, but not so much as he wished to be. His friend, the knight of Hainault, who knew of his love affair, did all he could to assist him, and it was not his fault that his friend did not succeed better. But why make a long story? The good knight of Flanders, do all he would, and his friend also, could never obtain from the lady the supreme favour, but found her still harsh and unkind.

At last he was compelled to return to Flanders; so he took leave of his mistress, and left his friend there, and promised that if he did not return shortly he would often write to her, and give news about himself; and she promised the same on her side.

Now it came to pass that a few days after the knight had returned to Flanders, that the lady wished to go on a pilgrimage, and made her arrangements accordingly.

And when the carriage was in front of her house, and the waggoner, who was a lusty fellow, strong and active, in it, preparing it for her, that she threw a cushion on his head, which caused him to fall on his hands and knees, at which she laughed loud and long.

“By God, mademoiselle, you made me fall, but I will have my revenge, and before night I will make you tumble.”

“You would not be so unkind,” she replied, and so saying she took another cushion, and when the waggoner was off his guard, she knocked him down again, and then laughed more heartily than ever.

“What is this, mademoiselle?” cried the waggoner. “Do you want to hurt me? I swear that if I were near you I would take my revenge at once.”

“What would you do?” said she.

“If I were up there I would show you,” he replied.

“You would do miracles—to hear you talk; but you would never dare to come.”

“No?” said he. “You shall see.”

He jumped out of the vehicle, entered the house, and ran upstairs, where he found the damsel in her petticoat, and as happy as she could be. He at once began to assail her, and—to cut matters short—she was not sorry to let him take what she could not in honour have given him.

At the end of the appointed time she brought forth a fine little waggoner. The matter was not so secret but what the knight of Hainault heard of it, and was much surprised.

He wrote in haste, and sent the letter by a messenger to his friend in Flanders, to say that his mistress had had a child with the help of a waggoner.

You may guess that the other was much surprised at the news, and he quickly came to Hainault to his friend, and begged of him to come and see his mistress and upbraid her with her misdeeds.

Although she was keeping herself concealed at the time, the two knights found means to come to her. She was much ashamed and vexed to see them, as she well knew she would hear nothing pleasant from them, but she plucked up her courage, and put on the best countenance she could.

They began by talking of various matters; and then the good knight of Flanders began his tirade, and called her all the names he could think of.

“You are,” he said, “the most shameful and depraved woman in the world, and you have shown the wickedness of your heart by abandoning yourself to a low villain of a waggoner; although many noble persons offered you their services and you refused them all. For my own part, you know what I did to gain your love, and was I not more deserving of reward than a rascally waggoner who never did anything for you?”

“I beg of you, monsieur,” she replied, “to say no more about it—what is done cannot be undone—but I tell you plainly that if you had come at the moment when the waggoner did, that I would have done for you what I did for him.”

“Is that so?” he said. “By St. John! he came at a lucky moment! Devil take it! why was I not so fortunate as to know the right time to come.”

“Truly,” she said, “he came just at the moment when he ought to have come.”

“Oh, go to the devil!” he cried, “your moments, and you, and your waggoner as well.”

And with that he left, and his friend followed him, and they never had anything more to do with her,—and for a very good reason.

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## Story the Fifty-Fifth.

### A CURE FOR THE PLAGUE

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE VILLIERS.

Of a girl who was ill of the plague and caused the death of three men who lay with her, and how the fourth was saved, and she also.



IN the year of the pardons of Rome (<sup>1</sup>) just past, the plague was so great and terrible in Dauphiné, that the greater part of the better-class people left the country.

At that time a fair, young damsel felt herself stricken with the malady, and at once repaired to a neighbour, a woman of good condition, and rather old, and related her piteous condition.

The neighbour, who was a wise and prudent woman, was not frightened at what she told her, and had even sufficient courage and assurance to comfort her with words, and what little she could do in the way of medicine.

"Alas!" said the young girl who was sick, "my good

(<sup>1</sup>) The great Jubilee of 1450.

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The neighbour, who was a wise and prudent woman, was not frightened at what she told her, and had even sufficient courage and assurance to comfort her with words, and what little she could do in the way of medicine. “Alas!” said the young girl who was sick, “my good neighbour, I greatly grieve that I must now leave the world and all the happinesses and amusements I have long enjoyed! But, by my oath! and between ourselves, my greatest sorrow is that I must die before I have known and tasted the good things of this world; such and such young men have often solicited me, and I bluntly refused them, for which I am now sorry; and if I die I shall never have another chance to let a man show me how to lose my maidenhead. They have told me that it is so pleasant and good, that I sorrow for my fair and tender body, which must rot without having had this much desired pleasure. And, to tell the truth, my good neighbour, it seems to me that if I once tasted this delight before my death, my end would be easier—I should die more easily, and with less regret. And, what is more, my heart is so set upon this that it might be medicine to me, and the cause of my cure.”

“Would to God!” said the old woman, “that nothing else were needed; you would be soon cured it seems to me, for—thank God—our town is not yet so destitute of men that we cannot find a good fellow to do this job for you.”

“My good neighbour,” said the young girl, “I would beg of you to go to



such an one”—whom she named, who was a fine gentleman, and who had formerly been in love with her—“and tell him to come here and speak to me.”

The old woman set out, and found the gentleman, whom she sent to the house. As soon as he came there, the young girl, who, on account of her disease had a high colour, threw her arms round his neck, and kissed him twenty times. The young man, more joyful than ever to find her whom he had so much loved abandon herself to him, seized her without more ado, and showed her that which she so much desired to know.

She was not ashamed to beg and pray him to continue as he had commenced; and, in short, she made him begin again so often that he could do no more. When she saw that, as she had not yet had her fill, she was bold enough to say;

“My friend you have often beseeched for that which I ask you now. You have done all that in you is, I know well. Nevertheless, I know that I have not all I want, and I am sure that I cannot live unless some one else comes and does to me what you have done, and therefore I beg of you, if you value my life, to go to such an one and bring him hither.”

“It is true, my dear, that I know well he will do what you want.”

The gentleman was much astonished at the request; nevertheless, though he had worked till he could do no more, he went off and found his companion, and brought him to her, and he soon set to work as the other had done.

When he was played out as his friend had been, she was not ashamed to ask him, as she had done the first, to bring to her another gentleman, and he did so.

This made three with whom she had fought a love battle and defeated them all; but you must know that the first gentleman felt ill, and stricken with the plague, as soon as he had sent his friend to take his place; so he hastened to the priest, and confessed as best he could, and then died in the priest’s arms.

His friend also, the second comer, as soon as he had given up his place to the third, felt very ill, and asked everywhere after the one who was already dead. He met the priest, weeping and exhibiting great grief, who told him of the death of his friend.

“Ah, monsieur le curé, I am stricken as he was; hear my confession.”

The curé, in a great fright, made haste to hear his confession, and, when that was finished, the gentleman, though within two hours of his end, went to her from whom he and his friend had taken the contagion, and found with her the man he had fetched, and said to her;

“Cursed woman! you have killed me and my friend also. You ought to be burned to death! Nevertheless I pardon you, and may God pardon you! You have the plague, and have given it to my friend, who died in the priest’s arms, and I shall soon follow him.” With that he left, and died an hour later in his own house.

The third gentleman, who had run the same risks as his companions, who were both dead, did not feel very safe. Nevertheless, he took courage, and cast aside all fear, and bethought him that he had often been in perils and dangerous battles before, and went to the father and mother of the girl who had killed his two companions, and told them that their daughter was ill, and that they must take care of her. That being done, he so conducted himself that he escaped the danger of which his two friends had died.

Now you must know that when this slayer of men was brought back to her father’s house, whilst they were making a bed ready in which she could repose and sweat, she sent secretly for the son of a shoe-maker, a neighbour, and had him brought to her father’s stable, where she made him work as she had done the others, but he did not live four hours after.

She was put to bed, and they made her sweat greatly. And soon there appeared upon her body four buboes, of which she was afterwards cured. And I believe that you will find her now amongst the prostitutes at Avignon, Vienne, Valence, or some other place in Dauphiné.

And the doctors said that she had escaped death because she had tasted the joys of this life; which is a notable and true example to many young girls to never refuse a good thing when it comes in their way.

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## Story the Fifty-Sixth.

### THE WOMAN, THE PRIEST, THE SERVANT, AND THE WOLF

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE VILLIERS.

Of a gentleman who caught, in a trap that he laid, his wife, the priest, her maid, and a wolf; and burned them all alive, because his wife committed adultery with the priest.

**I**N a town in this kingdom, in the duchy of Auvergne, there formerly lived a gentleman, who, to his misfortune, had a very pretty young wife.

This damsel was acquainted with a priest, a neighbour, who lived half a league off, and they were so neighbourly together that the good priest took the gentleman's place whenever he was absent.

And this damsel had a waiting-maid who was acquainted with all their doings, and often carried messages to the priest, and advised him of the place and hour when he could safely come to her mistress.

The matter was not so well hid as the lovers would have liked, for a gentleman, who was a near relative of

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And this damsel had a waiting-maid who was acquainted with all their doings, and often carried messages to the priest, and advised him of the place and hour when he could safely come to her mistress.

The matter was not so well hid as the lovers would have liked, for a gentleman, who was a near relative of him to whom this dishonour was done, was informed of the affair, and told the person most concerned all that he knew.

You may fancy that the good gentleman, when he heard that in his absence his wife was helped by the priest, was not overpleased, and if it had not been for his cousin would have taken terrible vengeance as soon as he heard the news; but consented to put it off until he had taken them both in the act.

He and his cousin arranged to go on a pilgrimage, four or six leagues from home, and take his wife and the priest, in order to take note how they behaved towards each other.

As they were returning from this pilgrimage, during which the curé had made love as he best could,—that is to say by glances and other little devices—the husband caused himself to be sent for by a messenger he had instructed, to come at once to a lord of that country.

He pretended to be very vexed, and to leave with much regret, — nevertheless, since the lord had sent for him he could not disobey. So he went

his way, and his cousin, the other gentleman, said that he would keep him company, as that was his way to return home.

The priest and the lady much rejoiced to hear this news; they consulted together and decided that the priest should take leave and quit the house, in order that none of the people there might suspect him, and about midnight he would return to the lady, as he was accustomed. No sooner was this determined on than the priest said farewell, and left the house.

Now you must know that the husband and his relative were hidden in a gorge through which the priest would have to pass, and could neither go or return any other way, without going out of the right road.

They saw the priest pass, and judged that he would return that night—as indeed was his intention. They let him pass without saying a word, and then prepared a large pitfall, with the help of some peasants who aided them in the task. The trap was quickly and well made, and it was not long before a wolf, passing that way, fell into the pit.

Soon after came the priest, clad in a short gown, and with a curtle axe hung round his neck; and when he came to where the pitfall had been dug, he fell into it on the wolf, at which he was much alarmed, and the wolf, who was down there first, was as much afraid of the priest as the priest was of it.

When the two gentlemen saw the priest lodged along with the wolf, they were much delighted, and he who was most concerned, declared that the priest should never come out alive, for he would kill him there. The other blamed him for this, and did not wish the priest killed, and was of opinion they should rather cut off his genitals; but the husband wanted him killed, and this discussion lasted for a long time, while they were awaiting the dawn, when they could see clearly.

Whilst they were thus waiting, the lady, who expected the priest, and did not know why he tarried so long, sent her servant-maid in order to make him hurry.

The maid, whilst on her road to the cure's house, fell into the trap with the wolf and the curé. She was much astonished to find herself in such company.

“Alas!” said the priest, “I am lost. We have been found out, and someone has laid this trap for us.”

The husband and his cousin, who heard and saw all, were both as pleased as they could be; and they felt as sure as though the Holy Spirit had revealed it to them, that the mistress would follow the maid, for they had heard the maid say that her mistress had sent her to the priest to know why he had failed to come at the hour agreed upon between them.

The mistress, finding that neither the curé or the maid came, and that dawn was approaching, suspected that there was something, and that she should find them in a little wood there was on the road—which was where the trap was laid—and determined to go there and try and find out if there was any news.

She walked along towards the priest's house, and when she came to the spot where the trap was laid, she tumbled in along with the others.

When they found themselves all assembled, it need not be said that they were much astonished, and each did his or her utmost to get out of the pit, but it was no good, and they looked upon themselves as being as good as dead, as well as dishonoured.

Then the two prime movers in the affair—that is to say the husband of the lady, and his cousin—came to the edge of the pit, and saluted the company, and told them to be comfortable, and asked them if they were ready for breakfast.

The husband, who was anxious for his revenge, managed to send his cousin to look after their horses, which were at a house near by, and when he had got rid of him, he made all the haste he could, and threw a quantity of brushwood into the pit, and set it on fire, and burned them all—wife, priest, waiting-woman and wolf.

After that he left that part of the country, and went to the King to ask his pardon, which he easily obtained.

And some say that the King remarked that it was a pity the poor wolf should have been burned alive for the faults of the others.

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Le frère traitable



Le ebeque



## Story the Fifty-Seventh.

### THE OBLIGING BROTHER

BY

MONSIEUR DE VILLIERS.

Of a damsel who married a shepherd, and how the marriage was arranged, and what a gentleman, the brother of the damsel, said.



IF you are all ready to listen to me, and no one comes forward at the present moment to continue this glorious and edifying book of a Hundred Stories, I will relate an instance which happened formerly in Dauphiné, fit to be included in the number of the said novels.

A gentleman who lived in Dauphiné, had in his house a sister, aged about eighteen or twenty, who was a companion to his wife, who loved her dearly, so that they agreed together like two sisters.

It happened that this gentleman was bidden to the house of a neighbour, who lived a couple of short leagues away, to visit him, and took with him his wife and sister. They went, and God knows how cordially they were received.



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It happened that this gentleman was bidden to the house of a neighbour, who lived a couple of short leagues away, to visit him, and took with him his wife and sister. They went, and God knows how cordially they were received.

The wife of the neighbour who invited them, took the wife and sister of the said gentleman for a walk after supper, talking of various matters, and they came to the hut of the shepherd, which was near a large and fine park in which the sheep were kept, and found there the chief shepherd looking after his flock. And—as women will—they enquired about many and various things, and amongst others they asked if he was not cold in his cottage? He replied he was not, and that he was more comfortable in his hut than they were in their glazed, matted, and well-floored chambers.

They talked also of other matters, and some of their phrases had a bawdy meaning; and the worthy shepherd, who was neither a fool nor a blockhead, swore to them that he was prepared to undertake to do the job eight or nine times in one night.

The sister of our gentleman cast amorous glances at the shepherd when she heard this, and did not fail to tell him, when she found a fitting opportunity, that he had made an impression on her, and that he was to come to see her at her

brother's house, and that she would make him welcome.

The shepherd, who saw she was a pretty girl, was not a little pleased at this news, and promised to come and see her. And, in short, he did as he had promised, and at the hour arranged between his lady-love and him was in front of her window; and though it was a high and dangerous ascent, nevertheless he accomplished it by means of a cord which she let down, and a vine there was there, and was soon in her chamber, where, it need not be said, he was heartily welcomed.

He showed that it was no empty boast he had made, for before daylight, the stag had eight horns, at which the lady was greatly pleased. And you must know that before the shepherd could come to the lady, he had to walk two leagues, and swim the broad river, Rhone, which was close to the house where his mistress lived; and when day came he had to recross the Rhone, and return to his sheepfold; and he continued to do this for a long time without being discovered.

During this time many gentlemen of that country demanded the hand of this damsel turned shepherdess, in marriage, but not one of them was to her taste; at which her brother was not best pleased, and said so many times, but she was always well provided with answers and excuses. She informed her lover, the shepherd, of all this, and one night she promised him that, if he wished, she would never have any other husband but him. He replied that he desired nothing better;

“But it can never be,” he said; “on account of your brother and your other friends.”

“Do not trouble yourself about that,” she said, “let me manage as I like and it will be all right.”

So they plighted troth to one another. But soon after that there came a gentleman to make a last request for the hand of the lady shepherdess, and who said he would marry her if she were only dressed in the manner becoming her station without any other portion. Her brother would have willingly listened to this demand, and tried to persuade his sister to give her consent, pointing out to her what her duty was in such a case; but he could not succeed, at which he was much displeased.

When she saw that he was angry with her, she took him on one side, and said;

“Brother, you have long lectured me, and pressed me to marry such and such a man, and I would never consent. Now I beg of you not to be angry with or bear any resentment towards me, and I will tell you what has prevented my

acceding to any of these requests, if you will promise not to be still more enraged against me.”

Her brother willingly promised. When she had obtained this assurance, she told him that she was as good as married already, and that as long as she lived she would never have for husband any other man than the one she would show him that night if he wished.

“I should much like to see him,” replied her brother, “but who is he?”

“You will see in good time,” she said.

At the accustomed hour the shepherd came, and climbed to the lady’s chamber, God knows how wet from having crossed the river. The brother looked at him, and saw it was his neighbour’s shepherd, and was in no small degree astonished; and still more so was the shepherd, who would have fled when he saw him.

“Stay! Stay!” said the gentleman, “there is nothing to fear.”

“Is this,” he added turning to his sister, “the man of whom you spoke to me?”

“Yes, truly, brother,” said she.

“Then make a good fire for him to warm himself,” said the gentleman, “for he much needs it. And do you regard him as your husband; and truly you are not wrong to like him, for he has run great dangers for love of you. And since the matter has gone so far, and you have the courage to take him for a husband, never mind me, and cursed be he who does not hurry on the marriage.”

“Amen!” she said. “It shall be to-morrow, if you wish.”

“I do wish,” he replied; then turning to the shepherd.

“What do you say?”

“Whatever you wish.”

“There is nothing else for it then,” said the gentleman. “You are, and shall be, my brother-in-law. Not so long ago our family was not noble; so I may well have a shepherd for a brother-in-law.”

To cut the story short, the gentleman consented to the marriage of his sister to the shepherd; and it was performed, and they both continued to live in his house, though it was much talked about throughout the country.

And when he was in some place where the affair was being talked about, and surprise was expressed that he had not killed or beaten the shepherd, the gentleman replied that he would never harm one whom his sister loved; and that

he would rather have for a brother-in-law, a shepherd his sister liked, than some great man she did not like.

All this was said as a joke, and sportingly; for he was, and has always been, a courteous and pleasant gentleman, and liked not to hear his sister's name bandied about, even amongst his friends and boon companions.

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## Story the Fifty-Eighth.

### SCORN FOR SCORN

BY

MONSEIGNEUR.

Of two comrades who wished to make their mistresses better inclined towards them, and so indulged in debauchery, and said, that as after that their mistresses still scorned them, that they too must have played at the same game—as you will hear.

**I**knew, in the time of my green and virtuous youth, two gentlemen, good comrades, accomplished, and provided with every quality to be praised in a virtuous gentleman. They were friends, and were alike each other in every respect, not only bodily, but as regarded their clothes, their servants, and their horses.

It happened that they fell in love with two fair young damsels of good family and gracious, and they did for these fair ladies' sake a hundred thousand little courtesies. Their vows were listened to—but nothing more. Perhaps the damsels had lovers already, or did not wish to have a love affair on their hands, for in truth the youths were

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Be that as it may, they could not win their ladies' love, which caused them to pass many nights in God knows what sorrow, now cursing fortune, now love, and most often their mistresses for being so unkind. Whilst they were suffering this rage and grief, one of them said one day to his friend,

“We can see with half an eye that our mistresses do not care for us, and yet we more madly desire them than ever, and the more scorn and harshness they show us the more we desire to please, serve, and obey them! Upon my word this seems to me the height of folly. Let us, I pray you, think no more of them than they do of us, and you will see that when they know that, it will be their turn to seek and importune us.”

“Ah!” said the other, “very good advice, no doubt, but how can it be carried out?”

“I have found the means,” said the first. “I have always heard it said, and Ovid puts it in his book, *The Remedy of Love*, that to do—you know what—much and often, makes you forget or think little of the person with whom you are in love. I will tell you what we will do. We will take home with us a couple of nice young ‘cousins’ (\*), and we will sleep with them, and commit every folly with them that our strength will permit, and then we will go and see our ladies, and the devil is in it if they do not then care for us.”

(\*) Prostitutes. The word is doubtless derived from *coussin*.

The other agreed, and the proposal was carried out, and each took home a nice wench. And after that they went to a great feast where their ladies were, and they flaunted in front of the damsels, chattering carelessly here and there, and seeming to say in a hundred thousand ways, “We do not care for you”, believing that, as they had devised, their mistresses would be displeased, and would try to make their lovers return to their allegiance.

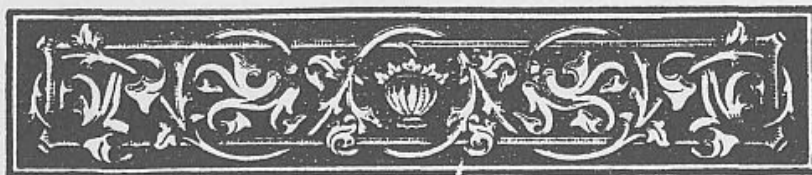
But it happened quite otherwise, for if the youths appeared to think but little of the ladies, they on the other hand, showed openly that they cared nothing for the young men, which the latter perceived, and were much amazed at. The one said to his friend;

“Do you know what is the matter? Morbleu! our mistresses have done exactly what we have done. Do you not see how scornful they are? They carry themselves exactly as we do—and, believe me, for the very same reason. They have each chosen a paramour and indulged in folly to the utmost. Devil take the bitches! Let us leave them alone!”

“By my oath!” replied the other, “I believe it is as you say. I never expected to find them like this.”

So the two friends thought that their mistresses had done the same as they had done themselves, because the damsels took no more heed of them than they did of the damsels—which may not have been true, but was not difficult to believe.

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## Story the Fifty-Ninth.

### THE SICK LOVER

BY

PONCELET.

*Of a lord who pretended to be sick in order that he might lie with the servant maid, with whom his wife found him.*



IN the town of St. Omer there lived formerly a good fellow, sergeant to the king, who was married to a good and chaste woman, who had, by a former marriage, a son grown up and married.

This good fellow, notwithstanding that he had a virtuous and prudent wife, made love day and night with whomsoever he had a chance, and as often as possible. And as in winter it was often inconvenient to go far to seek for his love affairs, he bethought himself and reflected that he need not leave home for a mistress, for that his wife's maid was a very pretty, young, and well-mannered girl, and he might manage to become her lover.

In short, by gifts and promises, he obtained the girl's permission to do whatever he wished, but there were difficulties in the way, for his wife, knowing her husband's character, always kept an eye upon him.



## STORY THE FIFTY-NINTH — THE SICK LOVER.

59

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In short, by gifts and promises, he obtained the girl's permission to do whatever he wished, but there were difficulties in the way, for his wife, knowing her husband's character, always kept an eye upon him.

Nevertheless, Cupid, who always comes to the help of his true followers, inspired his good and loyal worshipper with an idea by which he could accomplish his ends; for he pretended to be very sick of a chill, and said to his wife;

“My dear helpmate, come here! I am as ill as I can be; I must go to bed, and I beg of you to make all the servants go to bed too, in order that there may be no noise or disturbance, and then come to our chamber.”

The worthy woman, who was much vexed at her husband's illness, did as she was ordered, and took fair sheets and warmed them, and put them over her husband after he was in bed. And when he had been well warmed for a long time, he said.

“My dear, that will suffice. I am well enough now, thanks be to God and to you for the trouble you have taken; and I beg of you to come and lie down by my side.”

She only desired her husband's health and repose, and did as she was desired, and went to sleep as quickly as possible. As soon as he perceived she was asleep, he slipped quietly out of bed, and went to the servant's bed, where he was well received, and broke so many lances that he was tired and worn out, and dropped off to sleep in her fair arms.

It often happens that when we go to bed vexed or melancholy we are easily awakened,—indeed that may be the cause of our waking, and so it happened to the wife. And as she took great care of her husband, she put out her hand to touch him, and discovered that he was not in the bed; and on feeling the pillow and the place where he had been lying, she found that they were cold, and that he had been out of bed a long time.

Then, in despair, she jumped out of bed and put on a chemise and a petticoat, and said to herself;

“Idle and worthless wretch that you are, you have much to reproach yourself with, for by your neglect you have let your husband die. Alas! why did I come to bed to-night and fall asleep; O Virgin Mary! I pray that nothing has happened to him through my fault, or I shall deem myself guilty of his death.”

After these regrets and lamentations, she went off to seek a light, and in order that the servant-maid might help her to find her lost husband, she went to her room to arouse her, and there found the happy pair, asleep locked in each other's arms, and it seemed that they must have worked well that night, for they were not awakened by her coming into the room or by the light she carried.

She was glad that her husband was not as ill as she had feared or expected; and went to seek her children and all the servants of the household, and brought them to see the couple, and asked them in a low voice, who that was in the maid's bed, sleeping with her? And the children replied that it was their father, and the servants that it was their master. Then she led them out, and made them go to bed again, for it was too early to get up, and she also went back to bed, but did not sleep again till it was time to rise.

Soon after she had left the lovers, they woke up, and took leave of each other amorously. The master returned to bed, to his wife's side, without saying a word, nor did she, but pretended to be asleep, at which he was very glad, thinking that she knew nothing of his adventure, for he greatly feared her, both for his peace and that of the girl. So he slept soundly, and his wife, as soon as it was time to get up, rose, and to please her husband, and give him something comforting after the laxative medicine that he had taken that night, woke up her servants, and called her maid, and told her to kill the two fattest capons in the

fowl-house, and prepare them nicely, and then go to the butcher and buy the best bit of beef she could procure, and put it in water to make a good soup, as she well knew how, for she was a capital cook.

The girl, who heartily desired to please her mistress and her master, the one for love and the other from fear, said that she would willingly do all that was commanded.

Then the wife went to Mass, and on her return passed by the house of her son, of whom I have spoken, and asked him to come and dine with her husband, and to bring with him three or four good fellows whom she named, and whom she and her husband wished invited.

Then she returned home to see after the dinner, and found that her husband had gone to church. Meanwhile, her son had gone round to invite the guests his mother had named, and who were the greatest jokers in St. Omer.

The good man came back from Mass, and embraced his wife, and she did the same to him, and, in order that he should not suspect anything, she said that she rejoiced at his recovery, for which he thanked her, and said;

“Indeed I am in fairly good health, my dear, after last night, and I think I have a very good appetite, so we will have dinner at once if you like.”

She replied, “I am very glad to hear, it but you must wait a little till the dinner is ready; and until such and such people, whom I have invited to dine with you, have arrived.”

“Invited!” said he, “and for what reason? I do not care about them and would rather they stayed where they are; for they jest at everything, and if they know I have been ill, they will tease me about it. At least, my dear, let me beg of you to say nothing about it. And there is another thing—what will they eat?”

She said he need not trouble about that; they would have enough to eat, for she had dressed the two best capons, as well as a fine piece of beef, and all in his honour, at which he was very glad, and said it was well done.

Soon after came those who had been invited, and the woman’s son. And when all was ready, they sat at the table and made good cheer, especially the host, and they drank often one to another.

The host said to his stepson;

“John, my friend, drink with your mother, and enjoy yourself.”

And he replied that he would willingly do so; and when he drank to his mother, the maid, who was waiting at table came into the room.

Then the wife called her, and said,

“Come here, my dear friend and companion! drink to me, and I will pledge thee.”

“Friend and companion!” said the host. “What is the meaning of all this affection? What mischief is brewing now? This is something new!”

“Indeed, she is truly my honest and trusted companion! Why do you wonder at that?”

“Oh, the devil, Joan! take care what you say! Any one would think there was something between her and me.”

“And why should they not?” she said. “Did I not find you last night lying in her bed, and sleeping in her arms?”

“In her bed?” he said.

“Truly, yes,” she replied.

“On my honour, gentlemen, it is not true, and she only says so to spite me, and bring shame on the poor girl, for she never saw me there.”

“The devil I did not!” she replied. “You shall hear the statement again from those of your own household.”

With that she called the children, and the servants who were standing there, and asked them if they had not seen their father lying with the maid, and they answered, yes.

“You lie, you naughty boys,” replied their father. “Your mother told you to say it.”

“Begging your pardon, father, we saw you there; and so did the servants.”

“Is that so?” asked the lady of the servants.

“That is quite true,” they replied.

Then all who were present laughed loudly, and teased him terribly, for his wife related all about his pretended illness, and what he had done, and how she had prepared the dinner and invited his friends in order to make the story known, at which he was so ashamed that he hardly dared hold up his head, and did not know what to reply except to say,

“Go on! you are all against me, so I will hold my tongue and let you have your own way, for I can’t contend against the lot of you.”

Afterwards he ordered the table to be removed, and when grace was said, he called his stepson and whispered to him;

“John, my friend, although the others accuse me, I know that you believe me. See how much is owing to that poor girl, and pay her so liberally that she

will have no cause to complain, and send her away; for I know well that your mother will never permit her to stay in the house.”

The stepson went and did as he was ordered, then he returned to the friends whom he had brought, whom he found talking to his mother, then they thanked her for their entertainment, and took leave and went.

The husband and wife remained at home, and it is to be supposed that he did not hear the last of it for some time. For the poor husband did not drain his cup of bitterness at the dinner-table, but found that the proverb about dogs, hawks, war, and love, which says, “Every pleasure has a thousand sorrows,” is true. But none should run the risk if they are not prepared to pay the penalty. Thus did it happen that the adventure of this worthy fellow ended in the manner related.

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Les nouveaux frères mineurs





## Story the Sixtieth.

### THREE VERY MINOR BROTHERS

BY

PONCELET.

Of three women of Malines, who were acquainted with three cordeliers, and had their heads shaved, and donned the gown that they might not be recognised, and how it was made known.

**F**ORMERLY there were in the town of Malines three damsels, the wives of three burghers of the town,—rich, powerful, and of good position, who were in love with three Minor Friars; and to more secretly and covertly manage their amours under the cloak of religion, they rose every day an hour or two before dawn, and when it appeared a fit time to go and see their lovers, they told their husbands they were going to matins to the first Mass.

Owing to the great pleasure that they took in these exercises and the monks also, it often happened that it was broad daylight, and they could not leave the convent without being perceived by the other monks. Therefore, fearing the great perils and inconveniences which might

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Formerly there were in the town of Malines three damsels, the wives of three burghers of the town,—rich, powerful, and of good position, who were in love with three Minor Friars; and to more secretly and covertly manage their amours under the cloak of religion, they rose every day an hour or two before dawn, and when it appeared a fit time to go and see their lovers, they told their husbands they were going to matins to the first Mass.

Owing to the great pleasure that they took in these exercises and the monks also, it often happened that it was broad daylight, and they could not leave the convent without being perceived by the other monks. Therefore, fearing the great perils and inconveniences which might arise, they arranged between them that each should wear a monk's gown, and have a tonsure made on her head, as though they belonged to the convent. So finally one day that they were in the convent, and whilst their husbands suspected nothing of it, a barber,—that is to say a monk belonging to the convent—was sent for secretly to the cells of the three brothers, and he cut a tonsure on the head of each.

And when the time came to leave, they put on the friars' gowns with which they were provided, and in that state returned to their respective homes, and undressed, and left their disguise with certain discreet matrons, and then returned to their husbands; and this continued for a long while, without any person being aware of it.

But since it would have been a great pity that such excessive devotion should not be known, fortune so willed that as on a certain day one of these ladies was on her road to the accustomed haunt, her trick was discovered, and she was caught in her disguise by her husband, who had followed her, and who said:



“Good brother, I am glad to have met you! I would beg of you to return to my house, for I have many things to say to you,” and with that he took her back, at which she hardly felt joyful.

When they were in the house, the husband said, in a joking manner;

“My dear helpmate, can you swear on your honour that it is true piety, which in the middle of winter, causes you to don the habit of St. Francis, and have your head shaved like the good monks? Tell me the name of your confessor, or by St. Francis you shall suffer for it,”—and he pretended to draw his dagger.

The poor woman threw herself on her knees, and cried;

“Have mercy upon me, husband! for I have been led astray by bad companions! I know that you could kill me if you liked, and that I have not behaved as I should, but I am not the only one the monks have led astray, and, if you promise that you will do nothing to me, I will tell you all.”

To this her husband agreed; and then she told him how she often went to the monastery with two of her cronies who were in love with two of the monks, and they often breakfasted together in the monks’ cells. “A third monk was in love with me,” she continued, “and made such humble and impassioned requests to me that I could not excuse myself, and by the instigation and example of my companions, I did as they did, they all saying that we should have a good time together, and no one would know about it.”

Then the husband demanded the names of her female friends, and she told him. He was acquainted with their husbands, and they had often eaten and drunk together. Finally, he asked who was the barber, and the names of the three monks.

The good husband, after considering all things, and moved by the piteous groans and sad regrets of his wife, said;

“Take care that you tell no one that you have spoken to me on this matter, and I promise you that I will do you no harm.”

She promised that she would do whatever he wished. With that he went away at once, and invited to dinner the two husbands and their wives, the three Cordeliers, and the barber, and they all promised to come.

The next day they all came, and sat at table, and enjoyed themselves without expecting any bad news. After the table was removed, they had many joyous jests and devices to discover who should pay scot for all, and as they could not agree, the host said;

“Since we cannot agree as to who is to pay the reckoning, I will tell you what we will do. The one who has the baldest crown to his head shall pay—of course excluding these good monks, who pay nothing—at present.”

To which they all agreed, and were content that it should be thus, and that the barber should be the judge. And when all the men had shown their heads, the host said that they ought to look at their wives’ heads.

It need not be asked if there were not some there present who felt their hearts sink within them. Without an instant’s delay, the host uncovered his wife’s head, and when he saw the tonsure he pretended to admire it greatly, pretending that he knew nothing about it, and said,

“We must see if the others are the same.”

Then their husbands made them remove their head-dresses, and they were found to be tonsured like the first one, at which the men were not best pleased, notwithstanding that they laughed loudly, and declared that the question had been settled, and that it was for their wives to pay the reckoning.

But they wished to know how these tonsures came there, and the host, rejoicing to be able to divulge such a secret, related the whole affair, on condition that they would pardon their wives this time, after they had been witnesses of the penance the good monks were to undergo in their presence,—and to this both husbands agreed.

Then the host caused four or five sturdy varlets to come out of a chamber near by, and they, knowing what they had to do, seized the worthy monks and gave them as many blows as they could find room for on their shoulders, and then turned them out of the house. The others remained for a certain space, and it is to be supposed that a good deal of conversation passed between them, but as it would take too long to recount, I pass it over here, for the sake of brevity.

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## Story the Sixty-First.

### CUCKOLDED—AND DUPED

BY

PONCELET.

*Of a merchant who locked up in a bin his wife's lover, and she secretly put an ass there, which caused her husband to be covered with confusion.*



IT happened once that in a large town of Hainault there lived a good merchant married to a worthy woman. He travelled much, to buy and sell his merchandise, and this caused his wife to have a lover in his absence, and this continued for a long time.

Nevertheless, the secret was at last discovered by a neighbour, who was a relative of the husband, and lived opposite the merchant's house, and who often saw a gallant enter the merchant's house at night and leave in the morning. Which matter was brought to the knowledge of the person to whose prejudice it was, by this neighbour.

The merchant was much vexed, nevertheless he thanked his relative and neighbour, and said that he would shortly see into the matter, and for that purpose would shut him-

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Nevertheless, the secret was at last discovered by a neighbour, who was a relative of the husband, and lived opposite the merchant's house, and who often saw a gallant enter the merchant's house at night and leave in the morning. Which matter was brought to the knowledge of the person to whose prejudice it was, by this neighbour.

The merchant was much vexed, nevertheless he thanked his relative and neighbour, and said that he would shortly see into the matter, and for that purpose would shut himself up one night in his neighbour's house, that he might see if anyone visited his wife.

Lastly, he pretended to start on a journey, and told his wife and his servants that he did not know when he should return. He started in the early morning, but returned the same evening, and having left his horse at some house, came secretly to his cousin, and peeped through a little lattice, expecting to see that which would hardly have pleased him.

He waited till about nine o'clock, when the gallant, whom the damsel had informed that her husband was away, passed once or twice before his lady-love's house, and looked at the door to see if he might enter, but found it closed. He guessed that it was not yet time, and whilst he strolled about waiting, the good merchant, who thought that this was the man he wanted, came down, and went to his door, and said,

“Friend, the lady heard you, and as she is afraid that the master may come

back, she sent me down to let you in, if you please.”

The gallant, thinking it was the servant, followed him, the door was opened gently, and he was conducted into a chamber in which there was a large bin, which the merchant unlocked and made the young man enter, that he should not be discovered if the husband returned. “My mistress will come and talk to you and let you out,” added the merchant as he turned the key in the lock.

The gallant suffered all this for the sake of what was to follow, and because he believed that the other spoke the truth.

Then the merchant started off at once as quickly as he could, and went to the cousin and his wife, and said to them:

“The rat is caught; but now we must consider what to do.”

The cousin, and more particularly his wife—for there was no love lost between the two women—were very glad to hear this, and said that it would be best for him to show the gallant to all his wife’s relations in order that they might know how she conducted herself.

This being determined on, the merchant went to the house of his wife’s father and mother, and told them that if ever they wished to see their daughter alive they must come at once to his house.

They jumped up at once, and, whilst they were preparing, he also went off to two of her brothers and her sisters, and told them the same thing. Then he took them all to the cousin’s house, and related the whole history, and how the rat had been caught.

Now you must know what the gallant did in the bin all the time, until he was luckily released. The damsel, who wondered greatly that her lover did not come, went backwards and forwards to the door, to see if he were coming. The young man, who heard her pass close to him without ever speaking to him, began to thump with his fist on the side of the bin. The damsel heard it, and was greatly frightened; nevertheless she asked who was there, and the gallant replied;

“Alas, my dearest love, I am dying here of heat and doubt, for I am much surprised that I have been shut in here, and that no one has yet come to me.”

“Virgin Mary! who can have put you there, my dear?”

“By my oath I know not,” he replied; “but your varlet came to me and told me that you had asked him to bring me into the house, and that I was to get into this bin, that the husband might not find me if by chance he should come back to-night.”

“Ah!” said she, “by my life that must have been my husband. I am a lost

woman; and our secret has been discovered.”

“Do you know what is to be done?” he said. “In the first place you must let me out, or I will break everything, for I can no longer endure being shut up.”

“By my oath!” said the damsel, “I have not the key; and if you break through, I am undone, for my husband will say that I did it to save you.”

Finally, the damsel searched about, and found a lot of old keys, amongst which was one that delivered the poor captive. As soon as he was out, he tumbled the lady, to show her what a grudge he had against her, which she bore patiently. After that her lover would have left her, but the damsel hung round his neck, and told him that if he went away like that, she would be as much dishonoured as though he had broken out of the bin.

“What is to be done then?” said the gallant.

“We must put something there for my husband to find, or he will think that I have let you out.”

“And what shall we put there?” asked the lover. “For it is time for me to go.”

“We have in the stable,” she said, “an ass, that we will put in if you will help me.”

“Certainly, I will,” he answered.

The ass was driven into the bin, and it was locked again, and then her lover took leave of her with a sweet kiss, and left by a back-door, whilst the damsel quickly got into bed.

Whilst these things were happening, her husband had assembled all his wife’s relatives, and brought them to his cousin’s house, as has been said, where he informed them of what he had done, and how he had caught the gallant, and had him under lock and key.

“And in order that you shall not say,” he added, “that I blame your daughter without cause, you shall both see and touch the scoundrel who has done us this dishonour, and I beg that he may be killed before he can get away.”

Every one present declared that it should be so.

“And then,” said the merchant, “I will send you back your daughter for such as she is.”

With that they all accompanied him, though sorrowing much at the news, and they took with them torches and flambeaux, so as to be better able to search, and that nothing should escape them.

They knocked so loudly that the damsel came before anyone else in the house was awakened, and opened the door, and when they had come in, she abused her husband, her father, her mother, and the others, and declared that she wondered greatly what could have brought them all at that hour of the night. At these words her husband stepped forward, and gave her a good buffet, and said,

“You shall know soon enough, false such and such that you are.”

“Ah! take care what you say. Was it for that you brought my father and mother here?”

“Yes,” said the mother, “false wench that you are. We will drag forth your paramour directly.”

And her sisters said,

“By God, sister you did not learn at home to behave like this.”

“Sisters,” she replied, “by all the saints of Rome, I have done nothing that a good woman should not do. I should like to see anyone prove the contrary.”

“You lie!” said her husband. “I can prove it at once, and the rascal shall be killed in your presence. Up quickly! and open me this bin.”

“I?” she replied. “In truth I think you must be dreaming, or out of your senses, for you know well that I have never had the key, but that it hangs at your belt along with the others, ever since the time that you locked up your goods. If you want to open it, open it. But I pray to God that, as truly as I have never kept company with whoever is in that box, that He will deliver me, to my great joy, and that the evil spite that you have against me may be clearly proved and demonstrated—and I have full hope and confidence that it will be so.”

“And I hope,” said her husband, addressing the crowd, “that you will see her on her knees, weeping and groaning, and squalling like a drenched cat. She would deceive anybody who was fool enough to believe her, but I have suspected her for a long time past. Now I am going to unlock the bin, and I beg you, gentlemen, to lay hands on the scoundrel, that he escape us not, for he is strong and bold.”

“Have no fear!” they cried in chorus. “We will give a good account of him.”

“With that they drew their swords, and brandished their hammers to knock down the poor lover, and they shouted to him,

“Confess your sins! for you will never have a priest nearer you.”

The mother and sisters, not wishing to witness the murder, drew on one side, and then the good man opened the bin, and as soon as the ass saw the light,



it began to bray so hideously that the boldest person there was affrighted.

And when they saw that it was an ass, and that they had been befooled, they cursed the merchant, and showered more abuse on him than ever St. Peter had praise, and even the women inveighed against him. In fact, if he had not fled, his wife's brothers would have killed him, in revenge for the blame and dishonour he had wrongly tried to bring on the family.

There was such ado between him and his wife's family that peace had to be made between them by the chief burghers of the town, and this was not effected without much trouble, and many demands on the part of her friends, and many strict promises on his part. But ever after that he was all kindness and consideration, and never did a man conduct himself better to his wife than he did all his life; and thus they passed their days together.

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L'anneau perdu



## Story the Sixty-Second.

### THE LOST RING

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE COMMESURAM.

Of two friends, one of whom left a diamond in the bed of his hostess, where the other found it, from which there arose a great discussion between them, which the husband of the said hostess settled in an effectual manner.

**A**BOUT the month of July <sup>(1)</sup> a great meeting and assembly was held between Calais and Gravelines, and near the castle of Oye, at which were assembled many princes and great lords, both of France and of England, to consider the question of the ransom of the Duke of Orléans, <sup>(2)</sup> then prisoner to the king of England. Amongst the English representatives was the Cardinal of Winchester, who had come to the

<sup>(1)</sup> 1440.

<sup>(2)</sup> Charles, Duke of Orléans, was taken prisoner at the battle of Agincourt in 1415, and, as his ransom was not forthcoming was detained a captive for 25 years, when the Duke and Duchess of Burgundy intervened to procure his freedom. Cardinal Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, accepted a ransom of 200,000 gold crowns, payment of which was guaranteed by the Dauphin of France, Duke Philip of Burgundy, and other princes, with the consent of the King of France. The agreement was signed 22 Nov. 1440.

# STORY THE SIXTY-SECOND — THE LOST RING.

By Monseigneur De Commesuram.

*Of two friends, one of whom left a diamond in the bed of his hostess, where the other found it, from which there arose a great discussion between them, which the husband of the said hostess settled in an effectual manner.*

About the month of July (\*) a great meeting and assembly was held between Calais and Gravelines, and near the castle of Oye, at which were assembled many princes and great lords, both of France and of England, to consider the question of the ransom of the Duke of Orléans, (\*\*) then prisoner to the king of England. Amongst the English representatives was the Cardinal of Winchester, who had come to the said assembly in great and noble state, with many knights, and squires and ecclesiastics.

(\*) 1440.

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And amongst the other noblemen were two named John Stockton, squire, and carver, and Thomas Brampton, cup-bearer to the said Cardinal—which said John and Thomas loved each other like two brothers, for their clothes, harness, and arms were always as nearly alike as possible, and they usually shared the same room and the said bed, and never was there heard any quarrel, dispute, or misunderstanding between them.

When the said Cardinal arrived at the said town of Calais, there was hired for him to lodge the said noblemen, the house of Richard Fery, which is the largest house in the town of Calais, and it is the custom of all great lords passing through the town to lodge there.

The said Richard was married to a Dutchwoman; who was beautiful,

courteous, and well accustomed to receive guests.

While the treaty was being discussed, which was for more than two months, John Stockton and Thomas Brampton, who were both of the age of 26 or 28 years, wore bright crimson clothes, (\*) and were ready for feats of arms by night or day—during this time, I say, notwithstanding the intimacy and friendship which existed between these two brothers-in-arms, the said John Stockton, unknown to the said Thomas, found means to visit their hostess, and often conversed with her, and paid her many of those attentions customary in love affairs, and finally was emboldened to ask the said hostess if he might be her friend, and she would be his lady-love.

(\*) Shakespeare several times in the course of the First Part of Henry VI mentions "the tawny robes of Winchester." Which is right?

To which, as though pretending to be astonished at such a request, she replied coldly that she did not hate him, or anyone, nor wish to, but that she loved all the world as far as in honour she could, but if she rightly understood his request, she could not comply with it without great danger of dishonour and scandal, and perhaps risk to her life, and for nothing in the world would she consent thereto.

John replied that she might very well grant his request, for that he would rather perish, and be tormented in the other world, than that she should be dishonoured by any fault of his, and that she was in no wise to suspect that her honour would not be safe in his keeping, and he again begged her to grant him this favour, and always deem him her servant and loving friend.

She pretended to tremble, and replied that truly he made all the blood freeze in her veins, such fear and dread had she of doing that which he asked. Then he approached her and requested a kiss, which the ladies and damsels of the said country of England are ready enough to grant, (\*) and kissing her, begged her tenderly not to be afraid, for no person living should ever be made acquainted with what passed between them.

(\*) Is this a libel on the English ladies of the 16th century, or is it true—as Bibliophile Jacob asserts in the foot-note to this passage—that "English prudery is a daughter of the Reformation?"

Then she said;

"I see that there is no escape, and that I must do as you wish, and as this must be so, in order to guard my honour, let me tell you that a regulation has been made by all the lords now living in Calais that every householder shall watch one night a week on the town walls. But as my husband has done so much, either himself or by his friends, for the lords and noblemen of the

Cardinal, your master, who lodge here, he has only to watch half the night, and he will do so on Thursday next, from the time the bell rings in the evening until midnight; and whilst my husband is away on his watch, if you have anything to say to me, you will find me in my chamber, quite willing to listen to you, and along with my maid;”—who was quite ready to perform whatever her mistress wished.

John Stockton was much pleased with this answer, and thanked his hostess, and told her that it would not be his fault if he did not come at the appointed hour.

This conversation took place on the Monday, after dinner. But it should here be stated that Thomas Brampton had, unknown to his friend John Stockton, made similar requests to their hostess, but she would not grant his desire, but now raised his hopes and then dashed them to the ground, saying that he must have but a poor idea of her virtue, and that, if she did what he wished, she was sure that her husband and his relations and friends would take her life.

To this Thomas replied;

“My beloved mistress and hostess, I am a nobleman, and for no consideration would I bring upon you blame or dishonour, or I should be unworthy of the name of a gentleman. Believe me, that I would guard your honour as I do my own, and would rather die than reveal your secret; and that there is no friend or other person in the world, however dear to me, to whom I would relate our love-affair.”

She, therefore, noting the great affection and desire of the said Thomas, told him, on the Wednesday following the day on which she had given John the gracious reply recorded above—that, as he had a great desire to do her any service, she would not be so ungrateful as not to repay him. And then she told him how it was arranged that her husband should watch the morrow night, like the other chief householders of the town, in compliance with the regulation made by the lords then staying in Calais. But as—thank God—her husband had powerful friends to speak to the Cardinal for him, he had only to watch half the night, that is to say from midnight till the morning, and that if Thomas wished to speak to her during that time, she would gladly hear him, but, for God’s sake let him come so secretly that no blame could attach to her.

Thomas replied that he desired nothing better, and with that he took leave of her.

On the morrow, which was Thursday, at vespers, after the bell had rung for the watch, John Stockton did not forget to appear at the hour his hostess had

appointed. He went to her chamber, and found her there quite alone, and she received him and made him welcome, for the table was laid.

John requested that he might sup with her, that they might the better talk together,—which she would not at first grant, saying that it might cause scandal if he were found with her. But she finally gave way, and the supper—which seemed to John to take a long time—being finished, he embraced his hostess, and they enjoyed themselves together, both naked.

Before he entered the chamber, he had put on one of his fingers, a gold ring set with a large fine diamond, of the value of, perhaps, thirty nobles. And in playing together, the ring slipped from his finger in the bed without his knowing it.

When it was about 11 o'clock, the damsel begged him kindly to dress and leave, that he might not be found by her husband, whom she expected as soon as midnight sounded, and that he would guard her honour as he had promised.

He, supposing that her husband would return soon, rose, dressed, and left the chamber as soon as the clock struck twelve, and without remembering the diamond he had left in the bed.

Not far from the door of the chamber John Stockton met Thomas Brampton, whom he mistook for his host, Richard. Thomas,—who had come at the hour the lady appointed,—made a similar mistake, and took John Stockton for Richard, and waited a few moments to see which way he would go.

Having watched the other disappear, Thomas went to the chamber, found the door ajar, and entered. The lady pretended to be much frightened and alarmed, and asked Thomas, with doubt and fear, whether he had met her husband who had just left to join the watch? He replied that he had met a man, but did not know whether it was her husband or another, and had waited a little in order to see which way he would go.

When she heard this, she kissed him boldly, and told him he was welcome, and Thomas, without more ado, laid her on the bed and tumbled her. When she found what manner of man he was, she made haste to undress, and he also, and they both got into bed, and sacrificed to the god of love, and broke several lances.

But in performing these feats, Thomas met with an adventure, for he suddenly felt under his thigh, the diamond that John Stockton had left there, and without saying anything, or evincing any surprise, he picked it up, and put it on his finger.

They remained together until the morning, when the watch bell was about

to ring, when, at the request of the damsel he rose, but before he left they embraced with a long, loving kiss. He had scarcely gone when Richard came off the watch, on which he had been all night, very cold and sleepy, and found his wife just getting up. She made him a fire, and then he went to bed, for he had worked all night,—and so had his wife though not in the same fashion.

It is the custom of the English, after they have heard Mass, to breakfast at a tavern, with the best wine; and about two days after these events, John and Thomas were in a company of other gentlemen and merchants, who were breakfasting together, and Stockton and Brampton were seated opposite each other.

Whilst they were eating, John looked at Thomas, and saw on one of his fingers the diamond. He gazed at it a long time, and came to the conclusion that it was the ring he had lost, he did not know where or when, and he begged Thomas to show him the diamond, who accordingly handed it to him, and when he had it in his hand he saw that it was his own, and told Thomas so, and asked him how he came by it. To this Thomas replied that it belonged to *him*. Stockton maintained, on the contrary, that he had lost it but a short time before, and that if Thomas had found it in the chamber where they slept, it was not right of him to keep it, considering the affection and fraternity which had always existed between them. High words ensued, and both were angry and indignant with each other.

Thomas wished to get the diamond back, but could not obtain it. When the other gentlemen and merchants heard the dispute, all tried to bring about a reconciliation, but it was no good, for he who had lost the diamond would not let it out of his hands, and he who had found it wanted it back, as a memento of his love-encounter with his mistress, so that it was difficult to settle the dispute.

Finally, one of the merchants, seeing that all attempts to make up the quarrel were useless, said that he had hit upon a plan with which both John and Thomas ought to be satisfied, but he would not say what it was unless both parties promised, under a penalty of ten nobles, to abide by what he said. All the company declared that the merchant had spoken well, and persuaded John and Thomas to abide by this decision, which they at last consented to do.

The merchant ordered the diamond to be placed in his hands, then that all those who had tried to settle the difference should be silent, and that they should leave the house where they were, and the first man they met, whatever his rank or condition should be told the whole matter of the dispute between the said John and Thomas, and, whatever he decided, his verdict should be accepted without demur by both parties.



Thereupon all the company left the house, and the first person they met was Richard, the host of both disputants, to whom the merchant narrated the whole of the dispute.

Richard—after he had heard all, and had asked those, who were present if the account was correct, and the two were unwilling to let this dispute be settled by so many notable persons,—delivered his verdict—namely that the diamond should remain his, and that neither of the parties should have it.

When Thomas saw himself deprived of the diamond he had found, he was much vexed; and most probably so also was John Stockton, who had lost it.

Then Thomas requested all the company, except their host, to return to the house where they had breakfasted, and he would give them a dinner in order that they might hear how the diamond had come into his hands, to which they all agreed. And whilst the dinner was being prepared, he related the conversation he had had with his hostess, how she had appointed him an hour for him to visit her, whilst her husband was out with the watch, and how the diamond was found.

When John Stockton heard this he was astonished, and declared that exactly the same had occurred to him, and on the same night, and that he was convinced that he must have dropped his diamond where Thomas had found it, and that it was far worse for him to lose it than it was for Thomas, for it had cost him dear, whereas Thomas had lost nothing.

To which Thomas replied that he ought not to complain that their host had adjudged it to be his, considering what their hostess had had to suffer, and that he (John) had had first innings, whilst Thomas had had to act as his page or squire, and come after him.

So John Stockton was tolerably reconciled to the loss of his ring, since he could not otherwise help it. And all those who were present laughed loudly at the story of this adventure; and after they had all dined, each returned whithersoever he wished.

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## Story the Sixth-Third.

### MONTBLERU; OR THE THIEF

BY

G. DE MONTBLERU.

Of one named Montbleru, who at a fair at Antwerp stole from his companions their shirts and handkerchiefs, which they had given to the servant-maid of their hostess to be washed; and how afterwards they pardoned the thief, and then the said Montbleru told them the whole of the story.



MONTBLERU found himself about two years ago at the fair of Antwerp, in the company of Monseigneur d'Estampes, who paid all his expenses — which was much to the liking of Montbleru.

One day amongst others, by chance he met Masters Ymbert de Playne, Roland Pipe, and Jehan Le Tourneur, who were having a merry time; and as he is pleasant and obliging, as everyone knows, they desired his company, and begged him to come and lodge with them, and then they would have a merrier time than ever.

Montbleru at first excused himself, on the ground that he ought not to quit Monseigneur d'Estampes who had brought him there;

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Montbleru at first excused himself, on the ground that he ought not to quit Monseigneur d'Estampes who had brought him there;

“And there is a very good reason,” he said, “for he pays all my expenses.”

Nevertheless, he was willing to leave Monseigneur d'Estampes if the others would pay his expenses, and they, who desired nothing better than his company, willingly and heartily agreed to this. And now hear how he paid them out.

These three worthy lords, Masters Ymbert, Roland, and Jehan Le Tourneur, stayed at Antwerp longer than they expected when they left Court, and each had brought but one shirt, and these and their handkerchiefs etc. became dirty, which was a great inconvenience to them, for the weather was very hot, it being Pentecost. So they gave them to the servant-maid at their lodgings to wash, one Saturday night when they went to bed, and they were to have them clean the following morning when they rose.

But Montbleru was on the watch. When the morning came, the maid, who had washed the shirts and handkerchiefs, and dried them, and folded them neatly

and nicely, was called away by her mistress to go to the butcher to seek provisions for the dinner. She did as her mistress ordered, and left all these clothes in the kitchen, on a stool, expecting to find them on her return, but in this she was disappointed, for Montbleru, when he awoke and saw it was day, got out of bed, and putting on a dressing gown over his shirt, went downstairs.

He went into the kitchen, where there was not a living soul, but only the shirts, handkerchiefs, and other articles, asking to be taken. Montbleru saw his opportunity, and took them, but was much puzzled to know where he could hide them. Once he thought of putting them amongst the big copper pots and pans which were in the kitchen; then of hiding them up his sleeve; but finally he concealed them in the hay in the stable, with a big heap of straw on the top, and that being done, he returned to bed and lay down by the side of Jehan Le Tourneur.

When the servant maid came back from the butcher's, she could not find the shirts, at which she was much vexed, and she asked everybody she met if they had seen them? They all told her they knew nothing about them, and God knows what a time she had. Then came the servants of these worthy lords, who expected the shirts and were afraid to go to their masters without them, and grew angry because the shirts could not be found, and so did the host, and the hostess, and the maid.

When it was about nine o'clock, these good lords called their servants, but none of them answered, for they were afraid to tell their masters about the loss of their shirts; but at last, however, when it was between 11 and 12 o'clock, the host came, and the servants, and told the gentlemen how their shirts had been stolen, at which news two of them—Masters Ymbert and Roland—lost patience, but Jehan Le Tourneur took it easily, and did nothing but laugh, and called Montbleru, who pretended to be asleep, but who heard and knew all, and said to him,

“Montbleru, we are all in a nice mess. They have stolen our shirts.”

“Holy Mary! what do you say?” replied Montbleru, pretending to be only just awake. “That is bad news.”

When they had discussed the robbery of their shirts for a long time—Montbleru well knew who was the thief—these worthy lords said;

“It is late, and we have not yet heard Mass, and it is Sunday, and we cannot very well go without a shirt. What is to be done?”

“By my oath!” said the host, “I know of nothing better than to lend you each one of my shirts, such as they are. They are not as good as yours, but they

are clean, and there is nothing better to be done.”

They were obliged to take their host's shirts which were too short and too small, and made of hard, rough linen, and God knows they were a pretty sight in them.

They were soon ready, thank God, but it was so late that they did not know where they could hear Mass. Then said Montbleru, in his familiar way,

“As for hearing Mass, it is too late to-day; but I know a church in this town where at least, we shall not fail to see God.”

“That is better than nothing,” said the worthy lords. “Come, come! let us get away, for it is very late, and to lose our shirts, and not to hear Mass to-day would be a double misfortune; and it is time we went to church if we want to hear Mass.”

Montbleru took them to the principal church in Antwerp, where there is a God on an ass (\*).

(\*) A picture or bas-relief, representing Christ's entry into Jerusalem, is probably meant.

When they had each said a paternoster, they said to Montbleru, “Where shall we see God?”

“I will show you,” he replied. Then he showed them God mounted on an ass, and added, “You will never fail to find Him here at whatever hour you come.”

They began to laugh in spite of the discomfort their shirts caused them. Then they went back to dinner, and were after that I know not how many days at Antwerp, and left without their shirts, for Montbleru had hidden them in a safe place, and afterwards sold them for five gold crowns.

Now God so willed that in the first week of Lent, Montbleru was at dinner with the three worthy gentlemen before named, and in the course of his talk he reminded them of the shirts they had lost at Antwerp, and said,

“Alas, the poor thief who robbed you will be damned for that, unless God and you pardon him. Do you bear him any ill-will?”

“By God!” said Master Ymbert, “my dear sir, I have thought no more about it,—I had forgotten it long since.”

“At least,” said Montbleru, “you pardon him, do you not?”

“By St. John!” he replied, “I would not have him damned for my sake.”

“By my oath, that is well said,” answered Montbleru. “And you Master Roland,—do you also pardon him?”

After a good deal of trouble, he agreed to pardon the thief, but as the theft rankled in his mind, he found the word hard to pronounce.

“And will you also pardon him, Master Roland?” said Montbleru. “What will you gain by having a poor thief damned for a wretched shirt and handkerchief?”

“Truly I pardon him,” said he. “He is quit as far as I am concerned, since there is nothing else to be done.”

“By my oath, you are a good man,” said Montbleru.

Then came the turn of Jehan Le Tourneur. Montbleru said to him,

“Now, Jehan, you will not be worse than the others. Everything will be pardoned to this poor stealer of shirts unless you object.”

“I don’t object,” he replied. “I have long since pardoned him, and I will give him absolution into the bargain.”

“You could not say more,” rejoined Montbleru, “and by my oath I am greatly obliged to you for having pardoned the thief who stole your shirts, as far as I personally am concerned, for I am the thief who stole your shirts at Antwerp. So I profit by your free pardon, and thank you for it, as I ought to do.”

When Montbleru confessed this theft, and had been forgiven by all the party as you have heard, it need not be asked if Masters Ymbert, Roland, and Jehan Le Tourneur were astonished, for they had never suspected that it was Montbleru who had played that trick upon them, and they reproached him playfully with the theft. But he, knowing his company, excused himself cleverly for having played such a joke upon them, and told them that it was his custom to take whatever he found unprotected,—especially with people like them.

They only laughed, but asked him how he had managed to effect the theft, and he told them the whole story, and said also that he had made five crowns out of his booty, after which they asked him no more.

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## Story the Sixty-Fourth.

### THE OVER-CUNNING CURÉ

BY

MICHAULT DE CHANGY.

Of a priest who would have played a joke upon a gelder named Trenchecouille, but, by the connivance of his host, was himself castrated.



HERE formerly lived in this country, in a place that I have a good reason for not mentioning (if any should recognise it, let him be silent as I am) a curé who was over-fond of confessing his female parishioners. In fact, there was not one who had not had to do with him, especially the young ones—for the old he did not care.

When he had long carried on this holy life and virtuous exercise, and his fame had spread through all the country round, he was punished in the way that you will hear, by one of his parishioners, to whom, however, he had done nothing concerning his wife.

He was one day at dinner, and enjoying himself, at the inn kept by his parishioner, and as they were in the midst of their dinner, there came a man named Trenchecouille,

## STORY THE SIXTY-FOURTH — THE OVER-CUNNING CURÉ. [64](#)

By Michault De Changy.

*Of a priest who would have played a joke upon a gelder named Trenche-couille, but, by the connivance of his host, was himself castrated.*

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When he had long carried on this holy life and virtuous exercise, and his fame had spread through all the country round, he was punished in the way that you will hear, by one of his parishioners, to whom, however, he had done nothing concerning his wife.

He was one day at dinner, and enjoying himself, at the inn kept by his parishioner, and as they were in the midst of their dinner, there came a man named Trenchecouille, whose business it was to cut cattle, pull teeth, and other matters, and who had come to the inn for one of these purposes.

The host received him well, and asked him to sit down, and, without being much pressed, he sat down with the curé and the others, to eat.

The curé, who was a great joker, began to talk to this gelder and asked him a hundred thousand questions about his business, and the gelder replied as he best could.

At the end, the curé turned to the host, and whispered in his ear,

“Shall we play a trick upon this gelder?”

“Oh, yes, let us,” replied the host. “But how shall we do it?”

“By my oath,” said the curé, “we will play him a pretty trick, if you will help me.”

“I am quite willing,” replied the host.



“I will tell you what we will do,” said the curé. “I will pretend to have a pain in the testicle, and bargain with him to cut it out; then I will be bound and laid on the table all ready, and when he comes near to cut me, I will jump up and show him my backside.”

“That is well said,” replied my host, who at once saw what he had to do. “We shall never hit on anything better. We will all help you with the joke.”

“Very well,” said the curé.

After this the curé began again to rally the gelder, and at last told him that he had want of a man like him, for that he had a testicle all diseased and rotten, and would like to find a man who would extract it, and he said it so quietly and calmly that the gelder believed him, and replied;

“Monsieur le curé, I would have you know that without either disparaging myself or boasting, there is not a man in this country who can do the job better than I can, and for the sake of the host here, I will do my best to satisfy you.”

“Truly, that is well said;” replied the curé.

In short, all was agreed, and when the dinner had been removed, the gelder began to make his preparations, and on the other hand the curé prepared to play the practical joke, (which was to turn out no joke for him) and told the host and the others what they were to do.

Whilst these preparations were being made on both sides, the host went to the gelder, and said,

“Take care, and, whatever the priest may say, cut out both his testicles, clean,—and fail not, if you value your carcass.”

“By St. Martin, I will,” replied the gelder, “since you wish it. I have ready a knife so sharp that I will present you with his testicles before he has time to say a word.”

“We shall see what you can do,” said the host, “but if you fail, I will never again have anything to do with you.”

All being ready, the table was brought, and the curé, in his doublet, pretended to be in great pain, and promised a bottle of good wine to the gelder.

The host and his servants laid hold of the curé so that he could not get away, and for better security they tied him tightly, and told him that was to make the joke better, and that they would let him go when he wished, and he like a fool believed them. Then came the brave gelder, having a little razor concealed in his hand, and began to feel the cure’s testicles.

“In the devil’s name,” said the curé, “do it well and with one cut. Touch

them first as you can, and afterwards I will tell you which one I want taken out.”

“Very well,” he replied, and lifting up the shirt, took hold of the testicles, which were big and heavy and without enquiring which was the bad one, cut them both out at a single stroke.

The good curé began to yell, and make more ado than ever man made.

“Hallo, hallo!” said the host; “have patience. What is done, is done. Let us bandage you up.”

The gelder did all that was necessary, and then went away, expecting a handsome present from the host.

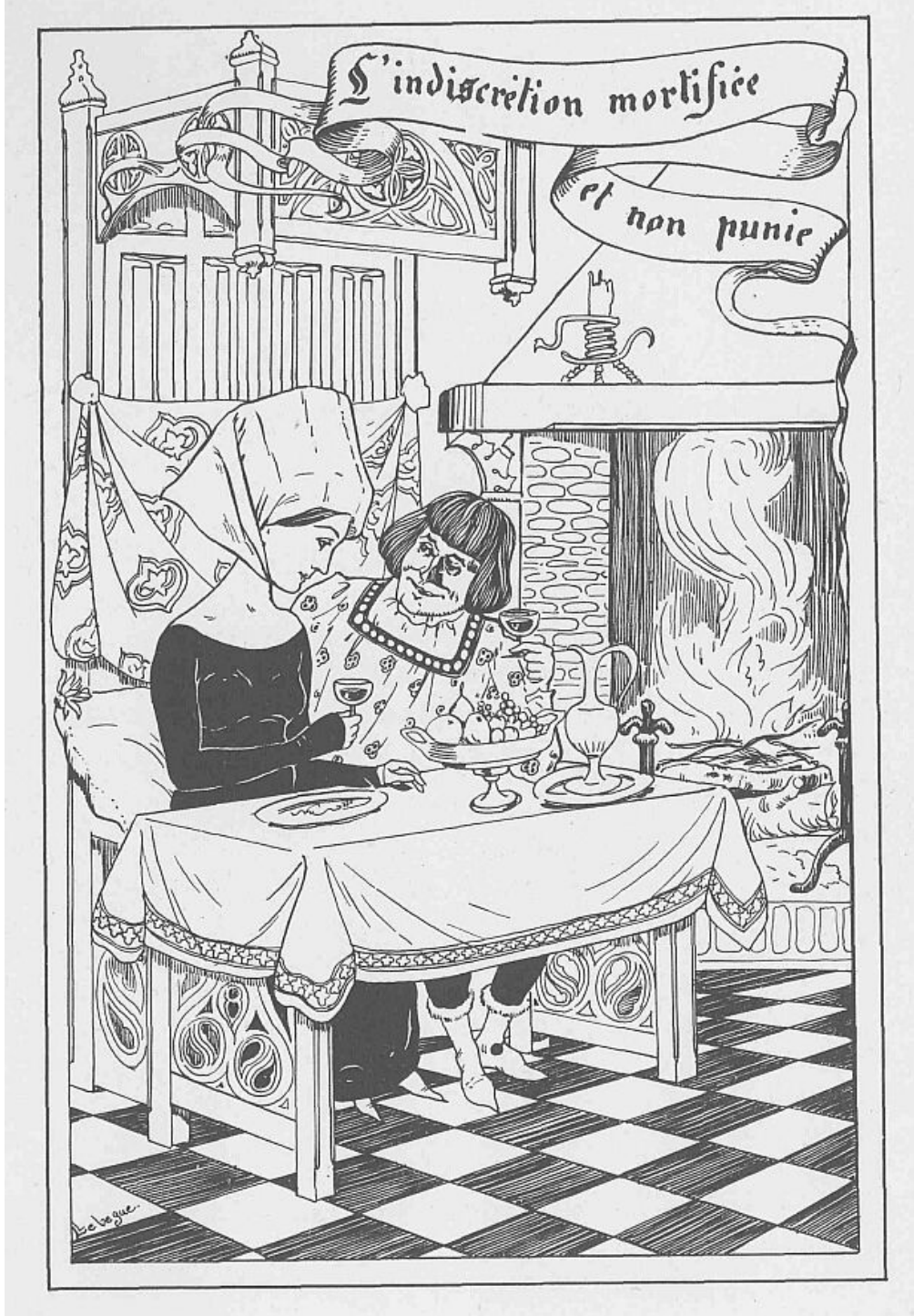
It need not be said that the curé was much grieved at this deprivation, and he reviled the host, who was the cause of the mischief, but God knows he excused himself well, and said that if the gelder had not disappeared so quickly, he would have served him so that he would never have cut any one again.

“As you imagine,” he said, “I am greatly grieved at your misfortune, and still more that it should have happened in my inn.”

The news soon spread through the town, and it need not be said that many damsels were vexed to find themselves deprived of the cure’s instrument, but on the other hand the long-suffering husbands were so happy that I could neither speak nor write the tenth part of their joy.

Thus, as you have heard, was the curé, who had deceived and duped so many others, punished. Never after that did he dare to show himself amongst men, but soon afterwards ended in grief and seclusion his miserable life.

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## Story the Sixty-Fifth.

### INDISCRETION REPROVED, BUT NOT PUNISHED

BY

THE PROVOST OF WASTENNES.

Of a woman who heard her husband say that an inn-keeper at Mont St. Michel was excellent at copulating, so went there, hoping to try for herself, but her husband took means to prevent it, at which she was much displeased, as you will hear shortly.



**Q**FTEN a man says things for which he is sorry afterwards, and so it happened formerly that a good fellow who lived in a village near Mont St. Michel, talked one night at a supper, at which were present his wife, and several strangers and neighbours, of an inn-keeper of Mont St. Michel, and declared, affirmed, and swore on his honour, that this inn-keeper had the finest, biggest, and thickest member in all the country round, and could use it so well that four, five, or six times cost him no more trouble than taking off his hat.

All those who were at table listened to this favourable account of the prowess of mine host of Mont St. Michel,

# STORY THE SIXTY-FIFTH — INDISCRETION REPROVED, BUT NOT PUNISHED.

**By The Provost Of Wastennes.**

*Of a woman who heard her husband say that an innkeeper at Mont St. Michel was excellent at copulating, so went there, hoping to try for herself, but her husband took means to prevent it, at which she was much displeased, as you will hear shortly.*

Often a man says things for which he is sorry afterwards, and so it happened formerly that a good fellow who lived in a village near Mont St. Michel, talked one night at a supper, at which were present his wife, and several strangers and neighbours, of an inn-keeper of Mont St. Michel, and declared, affirmed, and swore on his honour, that this inn-keeper had the finest, biggest, and thickest member in all the country round, and could use it so well that four, five, or six times cost him no more trouble than taking off his hat. All those who were at table listened to this favourable account of the prowess of mine host of Mont St. Michel, and made what remarks they pleased about it, but the person who took the most notice was the lady of the house, the wife of the man who related the story, who had listened attentively, and to whom it seemed that a woman would be most happy and fortunate who had a husband so endowed.

And she also thought in her heart that if she could devise some cunning excuse she would some day go to Mont St. Michel, and put up at the inn kept by the man with the big member, and it would not be her fault if she did not try whether the report were true.

To execute what she had so boldly devised, at the end of six or eight days she took leave of her husband, to go on a pilgrimage to Mont St. Michel; and she invented some clever excuse for her journey, as women well know how to do. Her husband did not refuse her permission to go, though he had his suspicions.

At parting, her husband told her to make an offering to Saint Michael, and that she was to lodge at the house of the said landlord, and he recommended her to him a hundred thousand times.

She promised to accomplish all he ordered, and upon that took leave and went away, much desiring, God knows, to find herself at Mont St. Michel. As

soon as she had left, the husband mounted his horse, and went as fast as he could, by another road to that which his wife had taken, to Mont St. Michel, and arrived secretly, before his wife, at the inn kept by the man already mentioned, who most gladly welcomed him. When he was in his chamber, he said to his host,

“My host, you and I have been friends for a long time. I will tell you what has brought me to your town now. About five or six days ago, a lot of good fellows were having supper at my house, and amongst other talk, I related how it was said throughout the country that there was no man better furnished than you”—and then he told him as nearly as possible all that had been said. “And it happened,” he continued, “that my wife listened attentively to what I said, and never rested till she obtained permission to come to this town. And by my oath, I verily suspect that her chief intention is to try if she can, if my words were true that I said about your big member. She will soon be here I expect, for she longs to come; so I pray you when she does come you will receive her gladly, and welcome her, and do all that she asks. But at all events do not deceive me; take care that you do not touch her. Appoint a time to come to her when she is in bed, and I will go in your place, and afterwards I will tell you some good news.”

“Let me alone,” said the host. “I will take care and act my part well.”

“At all events,” said the other, “be sure and serve me no trick, for I know well enough that she will be ready to.”

“By my oath,” said the host, “I assure you I will not come near her,” and he did not.

Soon after came our wench and her maid, both very tired, God knows; and the good host came forth, and received his guests as he had been enjoined, and as he had promised. He caused mademoiselle to be taken to a fair chamber, and a good fire to be made, and brought the best wine in the house, and sent for some fine fresh cherries, and came to banquet with her whilst supper was getting ready. When he saw his opportunity, he began to make his approaches to her, but in a roundabout way. To cut matters short, an agreement was made between them that he should come secretly at midnight to sleep with her.

This being arranged, he went and told the husband of the dame, who, at the hour named, went in mine host’s instead, and did the best he could, and rose before daybreak and returned to his own bed.

When it was day, the wench, quite vexed and melancholy, called her maid, and they rose, and dressed as hastily as they could, and would have paid the host, but he said he would take nothing from her. And with that she left without

hearing Mass, or seeing St. Michael, or breakfasting either; and without saying a single word, returned home. But you must know that her husband was there already, and asked her what good news there was at Mont St. Michel. She, feeling as annoyed as she could be, hardly deigned to reply.

“And what sort of welcome,” asked her husband, “did mine host give you? By God, he is a good fellow!”

“A good fellow!” she said. “Nothing very wonderful! I will not give him more praise than is his due.”

“No, dame?” he replied. “By St. John, I should have thought that for love of me he would have given you a hearty welcome.”

“I care not about his welcome,” she said. “I do not go on a pilgrimage for the sake of his, or any one else’s welcome. I only think of my devotion.”

“Devotion, wife!” he answered. “By Our Lady, you had none! I know very well why you are so vexed and sorrowful. You did not find what you expected—that is the exact truth. Ha, ha, madam! I know the cause of your pilgrimage. You wanted to make trial of the physical gifts of our host of St. Michel, but, by St. John, I was on my guard, and always will be if I can help it. And that you may not think that I lied when I told you that he had such a big affair, by God, I said nothing but what is true. But you wanted something more than hearsay evidence, and, if I had not stopped you, you would in your ‘devotion’ have tried its power for yourself. You see I know all, and to remove any doubts you may have on the subject, I may tell you that I came last night at the appointed hour, and took his place—so be content with what I was able to do, and remain satisfied with what you have. This time I pardon you, but take care that it never occurs again.”

The damsel, confused and astonished at being thus caught, as soon as she could speak, begged his pardon, and promised never to do anything of the sort again. And I believe that she never did.

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## Story the Sixty-Sixth.

### THE WOMAN AT THE BATH

BY

PHILIPPE DE LAON.

Of an inn-keeper at Saint Omer who put to his son a question, for which he was afterwards sorry when he heard the reply, at which his wife was much ashamed, as you will hear later.

**S**OME time ago I was at Saint Omer with a number of noble companions, some from the neighbourhood and Boulogne, and some from elsewhere, and after a game of tennis, we went to sup at the inn of a tavern-keeper, who is a well-to-do man and a good fellow, and who has a very pretty and buxom wife, by whom he has a fine boy, of the age of six or seven years.

We were all seated at supper, the inn-keeper, his wife, and her son, who stood near her, being with us, and some began to talk, others to sing and make good cheer, and our host did his best to make himself agreeable.

His wife had been that day to the warm baths, and her little son with her. So our host thought, to make the



# STORY THE SIXTY-SIXTH — THE WOMAN AT THE BATH.

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We were all seated at supper, the inn-keeper, his wife, and her son, who stood near her, being with us, and some began to talk, others to sing and make good cheer, and our host did his best to make himself agreeable.

His wife had been that day to the warm baths, and her little son with her. So our host thought, to make the company laugh, to ask his son about the people who were at the baths with his mother, (\*) and said;

“Come here, my son, and tell me truly which of all the women at the baths had the finest and the biggest c——?”

(\*) The public baths were then much frequented, especially by the lower classes. Men, women, and children all bathed together.

The child being questioned before his mother, whom he feared as children usually do, looked at her, and did not speak.

The father, not expecting to find him so quiet, said again;

“Tell me, my son; who had the biggest c—— Speak boldly.”

“I don’t know, father,” replied the child, still glancing at his mother.

“By God, you lie,” said his father. “Tell me! I want to know.”

“I dare not,” said the boy, “my mother would beat me.”

“No, she will not,” said the father. “You need not mind. I will see she does

not hurt you.”

Our hostess, the boy’s mother, not thinking that her son would tell (as he did) said to him.

“Answer boldly what your father asks you.”

“You will beat me,” he said.

“No, I will not,” she replied.

The father, now that the boy had permission to speak, again asked;

“Well, my son, on your word, did you look at the c——s of all the women who were at the baths?”

“By St. John, yes, father.”

“Were there plenty of them? Speak, and don’t lie.”

“I never saw so many. It seemed a real warren of c——s.”

“Well then; tell us now who had the finest and the biggest?”

“Truly,” replied the boy, “mother had the finest and biggest—but *he* had such a large nose.”

“Such a large nose?” said the father. “Go along, go along! you are a good boy.”

We all began to laugh and to drink, and to talk about the boy who chattered so well. But his mother did not know which way to look, she was so ashamed, because her son had spoken about a nose, and I expect that he was afterwards well beaten for having told tales out of school. Our host was a good fellow, but he afterwards repented having put a question the answer to which made him blush. That is all for the present.

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## Story the Sixth-Seventh.

### THE WOMAN WITH THREE HUSBANDS

BY

PHILIPPE DE LAON.

Of a "fur hat" of Paris, who wished to deceive a cobbler's wife, but overreached himself, for he married her to a barber, and thinking that he was rid of her, would have wedded another, but she prevented him, as you will hear more plainly hereafter.

**A**BOUT three years ago a noteworthy adventure happened to one of the fur hats of the Parliament of Paris. (<sup>1</sup>) And that it should not be forgotten, I relate this story, not that I hold all the "fur caps" to be good and upright men; but because there was not a little, but a large measure of duplicity about this particular one, which is a strange and peculiar thing as every one knows.

To come to my story, this fur hat,—that is to say this councillor of Parliament,—fell in love with the wife of a cobbler of Paris,—a good, and pretty woman, and ready-witted. The fur hat managed, by means of money and

(<sup>1</sup>) The councillors of Parliament wore a cap of fur, bordered with ermine.

# STORY THE SIXTY-SEVENTH — THE WOMAN WITH THREE HUSBANDS.

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To come to my story, this fur hat,—that is to say this councillor of Parliament,—fell in love with the wife of a cobbler of Paris,—a good, and pretty woman, and ready-witted. The fur hat managed, by means of money and other ways, to get an interview with the cobbler’s fair wife on the quiet and alone, and if he had been enamoured of her before he enjoyed her, he was still more so afterwards, which she perceived and was on her guard, and resolved to stand off till she obtained her price.

His love for her was at such fever heat, that by commands, prayers, promises, and gifts, he tried to make her come to him, but she would not, in order to aggravate and increase his malady. He sent ambassadors of all sorts to his mistress, but it was no good—she would rather die than come.

Finally—to shorten the story—in order to make her come to him as she used formerly to do, he promised her in the presence of three or four witnesses, that he would take her to wife if her husband died.

As soon as she obtained this promise, she consented to visit him at various times when she could get away, and he continued to be as love-sick as ever. She, knowing her husband to be old, and having the aforesaid promise, already looked upon herself as the Councillor’s wife.

But a short time afterwards, the much-desired death of the cobbler was known and published, and his fair widow at once went with a bound to the abode of the fur cap, who received her gladly, and again promised to make her his wife.

These two good people—the fur cap, and his mistress, the cobbler’s widow—were now together; But it often happens that what can be got without trouble is not worth the trouble of getting, and so it was in this case, for our fur cap soon began to weary of the cobbler’s widow, and his love for her grew cold. She often pressed him to perform the marriage he had promised, but he said;

“By my word, my dear, I can never marry, for I am a churchman, and hold such and such benefices, as you know. The promise I formerly made you is null and void, and was caused by the great love I bear you, to win you to me the more easily.”

She, believing that he did belong to the Church, and seeing that she was as much mistress of his house as though she had been his wedded wife, went her accustomed way, and never troubled more about the marriage; but at last was persuaded by the fine words of our fur cap to leave him, and marry a barber, their neighbour, to whom the Councillor gave 300 gold crowns, and God knows that the woman also was well provided with clothes.

Now you must know that our fur cap had a definite object in arranging this marriage, which would never have come off if he had not told his mistress that in future he intended to serve God, and live on his benefices, and give up everything to the Church. But he did just the contrary, as soon as he had got rid of her by marrying her to the barber; for about a year later, he secretly treated for the hand of the daughter of a rich and notable citizen of Paris.

The marriage was agreed to and arranged, and a day fixed for the wedding. He also disposed of his benefices, which were only held by simple tonsure.

These things were known throughout Paris, and came to the knowledge of the cobbler’s widow, now the barber’s wife, and, as you may guess, she was much surprised.

“Oh, the traitor,” she said; “has he deceived me like this? He deserted me under pretence of serving God, and made me over to another man. But, by Our Lady of Clery, the matter shall not rest here.”

Nor did it, for she cited our fur cap before the Bishop, and there her advocate stated his case clearly and courteously, saying that the fur cap had promised the cobbler’s wife, in the presence of several witnesses, that if her husband died he would make her his wife. When her husband died, the Councillor had kept her for about a year, and then handed her over to a barber.

To shorten the story, the witnesses having been heard, and the case debated, the Bishop annulled the marriage of the cobbler's widow to the barber, and enjoined and commanded the fur cap to take her as his wife, for so she was by right, since he had carnal connection with her after the aforesaid promise.

Thus was our fur cap brought to his senses. He missed marrying the citizen's fair daughter, and lost the 300 crowns, which the barber had for keeping his wife for a year. And if the Councillor was ill-pleased to have his old mistress again, the barber was glad enough to get rid of her.

In the manner that you have heard, was one of the fur caps of the Parliament of Paris once served.

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# La Barce despouillée





## Story the Sixty-Eighth.

### THE JADE DESPOILED

BY

MESSIRE CHRESTIEN DE DYGOIGNE.

Of a married man who found his wife with another man, and devised means to get from her her money, clothes, jewels, and all, down to her chemise, and then sent her away in that condition, as shall be afterwards recorded.



IT is no new and strange thing for wives to make their husbands jealous,—or indeed, by God, cuckolds. And so it happened formerly, in the city of Antwerp, that a married woman, who was not the chastest person in the world, was desired by a good fellow to do—you know what. And she, being kind and courteous, did not like to refuse the request, but gladly consented, and they two continued this life for a long time.

In the end, Fortune, tired of always giving them good luck, willed that the husband should catch them in the act, much to his own surprise. Perhaps though it would be hard to say which was the most surprised—the lover, or his mistress, or the husband. Nevertheless, the lover, with the aid of a good sword he had, made his escape



# STORY THE SIXTY-EIGHTH — THE JADE DESPOILED.

By Messire Chrestien De Dygoigne.

*Of a married man who found his wife with another man, and devised means to get from her her money, clothes, jewels, and all, down to her chemise, and then sent her away in that condition, as shall be afterwards recorded.*

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In the end, Fortune, tired of always giving them good luck, willed that the husband should catch them in the act, much to his own surprise. Perhaps though it would be hard to say which was the most surprised—the lover, or his mistress, or the husband. Nevertheless, the lover, with the aid of a good sword he had, made his escape without getting any harm. There remained the husband and wife, and what they said to each other may be guessed. After a few words on both sides, the husband, thinking to himself that as she had commenced to sin it would be difficult to break her of her bad habits, and that if she did sin again it might come to the knowledge of other people, and he might be dishonoured; and considering also that to beat or scold her would be only lost labour, determined to see if he could not drive her out, and never let her disgrace his house again. So he said to his wife;

“Well, I see that you are not such as you ought to be; nevertheless, hoping that you will never again behave as you have behaved, let no more be said. But let us talk of another matter. I have some business on hand which concerns me greatly, and you also. We must put in it all our jewels; and if you have any little hoard of money stored away, bring it forth, for it is required.”

“By my oath,” said the wench, “I will do so willingly, if you will pardon me the wrong I have done you.”

“Don’t speak about it,” he replied, “and no more will I.”

She, believing that she had absolution and remission of her sins, to please her husband, and atone for the scandal she had caused, gave him all the money she had, her gold rings, rich stuffs, certain well-stuffed purses, a number of very fine kerchiefs, many whole furs of great value—in short, all that she had, and that her husband could ask, she gave to do him pleasure.

“The devil!” quoth he; “still I have not enough.”

When he had everything, down to the gown and petticoat she wore, he said, “I must have that gown.”

“Indeed!” said she. “I have nothing else to wear. Do you want me to go naked?”

“You must,” he said, “give it me, and the petticoat also, and be quick about it, for either by good-will or force, I must have them.”

She, knowing that force was not on her side, stripped off her gown and petticoat, and stood in her chemise.

“There!” she said; “Have I done what pleases you?”

“Not always,” he replied. “If you obey me now, God knows you do so willingly—but let us leave that and talk of another matter. When I married you, you brought scarcely anything with you, and the little that you had you have dissipated or forfeited. There is no need for me to speak of your conduct—you know better than anyone what you are, and being what you are, I hereby renounce you, and say farewell to you for ever! There is the door! go your way; and if you are wise, you will never come into my presence again.”

The poor wench, more astounded than ever, did not dare to stay after this terrible reproof, so she left, and went, I believe, to the house of her lover, for the first night, and sent many ambassadors to try and get back her apparel and belongings, but it was no avail. Her husband was headstrong and obstinate, and would never hear her spoken about, and still less take her back, although he was much pressed both by his own friends and those of his wife.

She was obliged to earn other clothes, and instead of her husband live with a friend until her husband’s wrath is appeased, but, up to the present, he is still displeased with her, and will on no account see her.

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## Story the Sixty-Ninth.

### THE VIRTUOUS LADY WITH TWO HUSBANDS

BY

MONSEIGNEUR.

Of a noble knight of Flanders, who was married to a beautiful and noble lady. He was for many years a prisoner in Turkey, during which time his good and loving wife was, by the importunities of her friends, induced to marry another knight. Soon after she had remarried, she heard that her husband had returned from Turkey, whereupon she allowed herself to die of grief, because she had contracted a fresh marriage.



IT is not only known to all those of the city of Ghent—where the incident that I am about to relate happened not long ago—but to all those of Flanders, and many others, that at the battle fought between the King of Hungary and Duke Jehan (whom may God absolve) on one side, and the Grand Turk and all his

## STORY THE SIXTY-NINTH — THE VIRTUOUS LADY WITH TWO HUSBANDS. [69](#)

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It is not only known to all those of the city of Ghent—where the incident that I am about to relate happened not long ago—but to all those of Flanders, and many others, that at the battle fought between the King of Hungary and Duke Jehan (whom may God absolve) on one side, and the Grand Turk and all his Turks on the other, (\*) that many noble knights and esquires—French, Flemish, German, and Picardians—were taken prisoners, of whom some were put to death in the presence of the said Great Turk, others were imprisoned for life, and others condemned to slavery, amongst which last was a noble knight of the said country of Flanders, named Clayz Utenhoven.

(\*) The battle of Nicopolis (28th September, 1396) when Sigismond, King of Hungary, and Jean-sans-Peur, son of the Duke of Burgundy, who had recruited a large army for the purpose of raising the siege of Constantinople, were met and overthrown by the Sultan, Bajazet I.

For many years he endured this slavery, which was no light task but an intolerable martyrdom to him, considering the luxuries upon which he had been nourished, and the condition in which he had lived.

Now you must know that he had formerly married at Ghent a beautiful and virtuous lady, who loved him and held him dear with all her heart, and who daily prayed to God that shortly she might see him again if he were still alive; and that if he were dead, He would of His grace pardon his sins, and include him in the number of those glorious martyrs, who to repel the infidel, and that the holy Catholic faith might be exalted, had given up their mortal lives.

This good lady, who was rich, beautiful, virtuous, and possessed of many

noble friends, was continually pressed and assailed by her friends to remarry; they declaring and affirming that her husband was dead, and that if he were alive he would have returned like the others; or if he were a prisoner, she would have received notice to prepare his ransom. But whatever reasons were adduced, this virtuous lady could not be persuaded to marry again, but excused herself as well as she was able.

These excuses served her little or nothing, for her relatives and friends so pressed her that she was obliged to obey. But God knows that it was with no small regret, and after she had been for nine years deprived of the presence of her good and loyal husband, whom she believed to be long since dead, as did most or all who knew him; but God, who guards and preserves his servants and champions, had otherwise ordered it, for he still lived and performed his arduous labours as a slave.

To return to our story. This virtuous lady was married to another knight, and lived with him for half a year, without hearing anything further about her first husband.

By the will of God, however, this good and true knight, Messire Clays, who was still in Turkey, when his wife married again, and there working as a slave, was, by means of some Christian gentlemen and merchants, delivered, and returned in their galley.

As he was on his return, he met and found in passing through various places, many of his acquaintance, who were overjoyed at his delivery, for in truth he was a most valiant man, of great renown and many virtues; and so the most joyful rumour of his much wished-for deliverance spread into France, Artois, and Picardy, where his virtues were not less known than they were in Flanders, of which country he was a native. And from these countries it soon reached Flanders, and came to the ears of his beauteous and virtuous lady and spouse, who was astounded thereat, and her feelings so overcame her as to deprive her of her senses.

“Ah,” she said, as soon as she could speak, “my heart was never willing to do that which my relations and friends forced me to do. Alas! what will my most loving lord and husband say? I have not kept faith with him as I should, but—like a frail, frivolous, and weak-minded woman,—have given to another part and portion of that of which he alone should be lord and master! I cannot, and dare not await his coming. I am not worthy that he should look at me, or that I should be seen in his company,” and with these words her most chaste, virtuous, and loving heart failed her, and she fell fainting.

She was carried and laid upon a bed, and her senses returned to her, but from that time it was not in the power of man or woman to make her eat or sleep, and thus she continued three days, weeping continually, and in the greatest grief of mind that ever woman was. During which time she confessed and did all that a good Christian should, and implored pardon of all, and most especially of her husband.

Soon afterwards she died, which was a great misfortune; and it need not be told what grief fell upon the said lord, her husband, when he heard the news. His sorrow was such that he was in great danger of dying as his most loving wife had done; but God, who had saved him from many other great perils, preserved him also from this.

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## Story the Seventieth.

### THE DEVIL'S HORN

BY

MONSEIGNEUR.

Of a noble knight of Germany, a great traveller in his time; who after he had made a certain voyage, took a vow to never make the sign of the Cross, owing to the firm faith and belief that he had in the holy sacrament of baptism—in which faith he fought the devil, as you will hear.



A noble knight of Germany, a great traveller, distinguished in arms, courteous, and largely endowed with all good virtues, had just returned from a long journey, and was in his castle, when he was asked by one of his vassals living in the same town, to be godfather to his child, which had been born on the same day that the knight returned.

To which request the knight willingly acceded, and although he had during his life held many children at the font, he had never before listened to the holy words pronounced by the priest at this holy and excellent sacrament as he did this time, and they seemed to him—as indeed they are—full of high and divine mystery.

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The baptism being finished, he being liberal and courteous and willing to oblige his vassals, remained to dine in the town, instead of returning to his castle, and with him dined the curé, his fellow sponsor, and other persons of renown.

The discourse turned on various matters, when the knight began to greatly praise the excellent sacrament of baptism, and said in a loud and clear voice that all might hear;

“If I knew for a truth that at my baptism had been pronounced the great and holy words which I heard to-day at the baptism of my latest god-son, I would not believe that the devil could have any power or authority over me, except to tempt me, and I would refrain from ever making the sign of the Cross, not that—let it be well understood—I do not well know that sign is sufficient to repel the devil, but because I believe that the words pronounced at the baptism of every Christian (if they are such as I have to-day heard) are capable of driving away all



the devils of hell, however many they might be.”

“Truly then, monseigneur,” replied the curé, “I assure you *in verbo sacerdotis* that the same words which were said to-day at the baptism of your god-son were pronounced at your baptism. I know it well, for I myself baptised you, and I remember it as well as though it were yesterday. God be merciful to monseigneur your father—he asked me the day after your baptism, what I thought of his son; such and such were your sponsors, and such and such were present,” and he related all particulars about the baptism, and showed that it was certain that in not a word did it differ from that of his god-son.

“Since it is thus,” then said the noble knight, “I vow to God, my creator, that I have such firm faith in the holy sacrament of baptism that never again, for any danger, encounter, or assault that the devil may make against me, will I make the sign of the Cross, but solely by the memory of the sacrament of baptism I will drive him behind me; such a firm belief have I in this divine mystery, that it does not seem possible to me that the devil can hurt a man so shielded, for that rite needs no other aid if accompanied by true faith.”

The dinner passed, and I know not how many years after, the good knight was in a large town in Germany, about some business which drew him thither, and was lodged in an inn. As he was one night along with his servants, after supper, talking and jesting with them, he wished to retire, but as his servants were enjoying themselves he would not disturb them, so he took a candle and went alone. As he entered the closet he saw before him a most horrible and terrible monster, having large and long horns, eyes brighter than the flames of a furnace, arms thick and long, sharp and cutting claws,—in fact a most extraordinary monster, and a devil, I should imagine.

And for such the good knight took it, and was at first greatly startled at such a meeting. Nevertheless, he boldly determined to defend himself if he were attacked, and he remembered the vow he had made concerning the holy and divine mystery of baptism. And in this faith he walked up to the monster, whom I have called a devil, and asked him who he was and what he wanted?

The devil, without a word, attacked him, and the good knight defended himself, though he had no other weapons than his hands (for he was in his doublet, being about to go to bed) and the protection of his firm faith in the holy mystery of baptism.

The struggle lasted long, and the good knight was so weary that it was strange he could longer endure such an assault. But he was so well-armed by his faith that the blows of his enemy had but little effect. At last, when the combat

had lasted a full hour, the good knight took the devil by the horns, and tore one of them out, and beat him therewith soundly.

Then he went away victorious, leaving the devil writhing on the ground, and went back to his servants, who were still enjoying themselves, as they had been doing when he left. They were much frightened to see their master sweating and out of breath, and with his face all scratched, and his doublet, shirt, and hose disarranged and torn.

“Ah, sir,” they cried; “whence come you, and who has thus mauled you?”

“Who?” he replied. “Why it was the devil, with whom I have fought so long that I am out of breath, and in the condition in which you see me; and I swear to you that I truly believe he would have strangled and devoured me, if I had not at that moment remembered my baptism, and the great mystery of that holy sacrament, and the vow that I made I know not how many years ago. And, believe me, I have kept that vow, and though I was in danger, I never made the sign of the Cross, but remembering the aforesaid holy sacrament, boldly defended myself, and have escaped scot free; for which I praise and thank our Lord who with the shield of faith hath preserved me safely. Let all the other devils in hell come; as long as this protection endures, I fear them not. Praise be to our blessed God who is able to endue his knights with such weapons.”

The servants of the good knight, when they heard their master relate this story, were very glad to find he had escaped so well, and much astonished at the horn he showed them, and which he had torn out of the devil’s head. And they could not discover, neither could any person who afterwards saw it, of what it was formed; if it were bone or horn, as other horns are, or, what it was.

Then one of the knight’s servants said that he would go and see if this devil were still where his master had left it, and if he found it he would fight it, and tear out its other horn. His master told him not to go, but he said he would.

“Do not do it,” said his master; “the danger is too great.”

“I care not,” replied the other; “I will go.”

“If you take my advice,” said his master, “you will not go.”

But he would disobey his master and go. He took in one hand a torch, and in the other a great axe, and went to the place where his master had met and fought the devil. What happened no one knows, but his master, who, fearing for his servant, followed him as quickly as he could, found neither man nor devil, nor ever heard what became of the man.

Thus, in the manner that you have heard, did this good knight fight against

the devil, and overcome him by the virtue of the holy sacrament of baptism.





## Story the Seventy-First.

### THE CONSIDERATE CUCKOLD

BY

MONSEIGNEUR LE DUC.

Of a knight of Picardy, who lodged at an inn in the town of St. Omer, and fell in love with the hostess, with whom he was amusing himself—you know how—when her husband discovered them; and how he behaved—as you will shortly hear.

**A**T Saint Omer, not long ago, there happened an amusing incident, which is as true as the Gospel, and is known to many notable people worthy of faith and belief. In short, the story is as follows.

A noble knight of Picardy, who was lively and lusty, and a man of great authority and high position, came to an inn where the quartermaster of Duke Philip of Burgundy had appointed him to lodge. <sup>(1)</sup>

As soon as he had jumped off his horse, and put foot to the ground, his hostess—as is the custom in that part

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As soon as he had jumped off his horse, and put foot to the ground, his hostess—as is the custom in that part of the country—came forward smiling most affably, and received him most honourably, and, as he was the most kind and courteous of men, he embraced her and kissed her gently, for she was pretty and nice, healthy-looking and nattily dressed—in fact very tempting to kiss and cuddle—and at first sight each took a strong liking to the other.

The knight wondered by what means he could manage to enjoy the person of his hostess, and confided in one of his servants, who in a very short time so managed the affair that the two were brought together.

When the noble knight saw his hostess ready to listen to whatever he had to say, you may fancy that he was joyful beyond measure; and in his great haste and ardent desire to discuss the question he wanted to argue with her, forgot to shut the door of the room, which his servant, when he departed after bringing the woman in, had left half open.

The knight, without troubling about preludes, began an oration in dumb-

show; and the hostess, who was not sorry to hear him, replied to his arguments in such a manner that they soon agreed well together, and never was music sweeter, or instruments in better tune, than it was for those two, by God's mercy.

But it happened, by I know not what chance, that the host of the inn, the husband of the woman, was seeking his wife to tell her something, and passing by chance by the chamber where his wife and the knight were playing the cymbals, heard the sound. He turned towards the spot where this pleasant pastime was going on, and pushing open the door, saw the knight and his wife harnessed together, at which he was by far the most astonished of the three, and drew back quickly, fearing to prevent and disturb the said work which they were performing. But all that he did by way of menace or remonstrance was to call out from behind the door; "Morbleu! you are not only wicked but thoughtless. Have you not the sense, when you want to do anything of that sort, to shut the door behind you? Just fancy what it would have been if anyone else had found you! By God, you would have been ruined and dishonoured, and your misdeeds discovered and known to all the town! In the devil's name, be more careful another time!" and without another word, he closed the door and went away; and the honest couple re-tuned their bagpipes, and finished the tune they had begun.

And when this was finished, each went his or her own way as unconcernedly as though nothing had happened; and the circumstance would I believe have never been known—or at least not so publicly as to come to your ears, and the ears of so many other people,—had it not been that the husband vexed himself so little about the matter that he thought less of being cuckolded than he did of finding the door unbolted.

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## Story the Seventy-Second.

### NECESSITY IS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE COMMENSURAM.

Of a gentleman of Picardy who was enamoured of the wife of a knight his neighbour; and how he obtained the lady's favours and was nearly caught with her, and with great difficulty made his escape, as you will hear later.



PROPOS of the previous story, there lived formerly in Picardy—and I believe he is living there now—a gentlemen who was so enamoured of the wife of a knight, his neighbour, that he deemed no day or hour happy if he were not with her, or at least had news of her;—and he was quite as dear to her—which is no small matter.

But the misfortune was that they could find no means of meeting secretly to open their hearts to each other, and in no case would they do so in the presence of a third person, however good a friend he or she might be.

At last, after many sad nights and days, Love, who aids and succours his loyal servants when he pleases,

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But the misfortune was that they could find no means of meeting secretly to open their hearts to each other, and in no case would they do so in the presence of a third person, however good a friend he or she might be. At last, after many sad nights and days, Love, who aids and succours his loyal servants when he pleases, procured for them the much-desired day, when the poor husband,—the most jealous man living—was obliged to leave his house on account of some pressing business by which he would gain a large sum if he were present, and would lose his money if he were absent. By gaining which sum he reaped an even better reward—that of being called a cuckold as well as a jealous man—for he had no sooner left his house than the gentleman, who was watching for no other quarry, popped into the house, and without staying long, at once performed that for which he came, and received from his lady all that a lover can and dare demand; as pleasantly and as leisurely as they could both wish.

And they did not suppose that the husband would surprise them, but looked forward to a time of unalloyed pleasure, hoping that the night would complete that which the most joyful day—by far too short—had begun, and really believing that the poor devil of a husband could not return before dinner-time the following day at the earliest.

But it happened otherwise, for the devil brought him home. I know not, and care not to know how it was that he could get through his business so quickly,



suffice it to say that he came back that night, at which the company—that is to say the two lovers—was much alarmed, and so taken by surprise, (for they did not expect this inopportune return) that the poor gentleman could think of nothing else to do than to hide in the privy which was close to the chamber, hoping to escape by some means that his mistress would find before the knight came into the chamber.

It chanced that our knight, who that day had ridden sixteen or eighteen long leagues, was so tired and stiff that he would sup in his chamber, where he had his boots taken off, and would not go to the dining-hall.

You may guess that the poor gentleman paid dear for the pleasure he had had that day, for he was half dead with hunger, cold, and fear; and, to aggravate his misfortune, he was taken with such a horrible cough that it was wonderful that it was not heard in the chamber, where were assembled, the knight, the lady, and the other knights of the household.

The lady, whose eyes and ears were open for any sign of her lover, heard him by chance, and her heart sank within her, for she feared that her husband would hear also. Soon after supper she found an opportunity to go to the privy, and told her lover to take care, for God's sake, and not cough like that.

“Alas, my dear,” he said, “I cannot help it. God knows how I am punished. And for God's sake think of some way of getting me out of this.”

“I will,” she said, and with that she went away, and the good squire began his song over again, so loud indeed that he was much afraid he would be heard in the chamber; and might have been had not the lady talked very loudly in order to drown the noise.

When the squire had this fresh attack of coughing, he knew of nothing better to do to prevent being heard than to stuff his head down the hole of the privy, where he was well “incensed”, God knows, by the stuff therein, but he preferred that to being heard. In short, he was there a long time, with his head down the hole, spitting, sniffing, and coughing so much that it seemed as though he would never do anything else.

After this fit finished, the cough left him, and then he tried to draw out his head, but it was not in his power, so far had he pushed his shoulders through, and you may fancy that he was not very comfortable. In short he could not find means to get out, try as he would. He scraped his neck, and nearly pulled his ears off, and in the end, by God's will, he pulled so hard that he tore away the seat of the privy, which hung round his neck. It was beyond his power to get out of it, but troublesome as it was, he preferred that to his previous position:

His mistress came and found him in that state, and was much astonished. She could not help him, and all the consolation she could give him was to tell him that she could find no means of getting him out of the house.



“Is that so?” he said. “Morbleu! I am well armed to fight any one, but I must have a sword in my hand.”

He was soon provided with a good one, and the lady, seeing his

extraordinary appearance, although her heart was lull of doubt and uncertainty, could not refrain from laughing, and the squire also.

“Now I commend myself to God,” he said. “I am going to try if I can get out of the house; but first black my face well.”

She did so, and recommended him to God, and the poor fellow, with the seat of the privy round his neck, a drawn sword in his hand, and his face blacker than charcoal, sallied out into the room, and by luck the first person he met was the husband, who was in such mortal fear at the sight of him—believing it was the Devil himself—that he tumbled full length on the floor and nearly broke his neck, and was for a long time in a swoon.

His wife, seeing him in this condition, came forward, and pretending to show much more fear than she really felt, supported him in her arms, and asked him what was the matter. As soon as he came to himself, he said in broken accents, and with a piteous air; “Did you see that devil I met.”

“Yes, I did,” she replied, “and I nearly died of fright at the sight.”

“Why does it come to our house?” he asked, “And who could have sent it? I shall not recover myself for a year or two, I have been so frightened.”

“Nor shall I, by God,” said the pious lady. “I believe it must mean something. May God keep us, and protect us from all evil fortune. My heart forebodes some mischief from this vision.”

Every one in the castle gave his or her version of the devil with a drawn sword, and they all believed it was a real devil. The good lady, who held the key of the mystery, was very glad to see them of that opinion. Ever after that the said devil continued to do the work that everyone does so willingly, though the husband, and everybody except a discreet waiting woman, were ignorant of the fact.

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## Story the Seventy-Third.

### THE BIRD IN THE CAGE

BY

JEHAN LAMBIN.

Of a curé who was in love with the wife of one of his parishioners, with whom the said curé was found by the husband of the woman, the neighbours having given him warning—and how the curé escaped, as you will hear.



IN the district of Saint Pol, in a village near that town, there formerly resided a worthy man, a labourer, married to a fair and buxom woman with whom the curé of the village was in love. He was burning with love for her, but he foresaw that his intentions might be suspected, and thought that the best way to win her would be to first gain the friendship of her husband.

He confided this opinion to the woman, and asked her advice, and she replied that it was a very good plan to enable them to carry out their amorous intentions.

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The curé, by flattery and subtle means, made the acquaintance of the good man, and managed him so well that he was always talking of “his curé”, and would not eat or do anything else without him. Every day he would have him to dinner and supper, in short there was nothing done at the good man’s house without the curé being present. By this means he could come to the house as often as he pleased, and whatever time he liked.

But the neighbours of this foolish labourer, seeing what he could not see, his eyes being bandaged by weakness and confidence,—told him that it was not right and proper to have the curé at his house every day, and that, if it continued, his wife’s reputation would suffer, these frequent visits having been noticed and spoken about by his neighbours and friends.

When the good man found himself thus sharply reproved by his neighbours for the frequent visits of the curé to his house, he was obliged to tell the curé that he must cease his constant calls, and forbade him by strict orders and menaces ever to come again until he was invited; affirming by a great oath that if ever he found the curé in his house there would be an account to settle between them, and it would not be pleasant for the visitor.

This prohibition displeased the curé more than I can tell you, but though vexed, he would not break off his love affair, for it was so deeply rooted in the hearts of both parties that it could not be easily eradicated. But hear how the curé managed after this prohibition. By an agreement with his mistress, he used to be informed of the times when her husband was absent, and then visit her. But he managed clumsily, for he could not pay his visits without the knowledge of the neighbours, who had been the cause of the interdict, and who were as much displeased at the cure's acts as though they had been personally concerned.

The good man was again informed that the curé used to come and put out the fire at his house every night, (\*) as he did before he was forbidden. The foolish husband, hearing that, was much astonished and also angry, and to remedy this state of affairs, thought of the means which I will relate.

(\*) That is to say came at curfew time.

He told his wife that he was going, on a certain day which he named, to take to St. Orner a waggon-load of corn, and that the work might be well done, was going himself. When the day named for his departure arrived, he did, as is usual in Picardy, especially round St. Omer, that is loaded his waggon of corn at midnight, and at that hour took leave of his wife and departed with his waggon.

As soon as he was gone, his wife closed all the doors of the house. Now you must know that the St. Omer to which our merchant was going was the house of one of his friends who lived at the other end of the village. He arrived there, put his waggon in the courtyard of the said friend—who knew all the business—and sent him to keep watch and listen round the house to see if any thief might come.

When he arrived, he concealed himself at the corner of a thick hedge, from which spot he could see all the doors of the house of the merchant, of whom he was the friend and servant.

Hardly had he taken his place than there arrived the curé, who had come to light his candle—or rather to put it out—and softly and secretly knocked at the door, which was soon opened by one who was not inclined to sleep at that time, who came down in her chemise, and let in her confessor, and then closed the door and led him to the place where her husband ought to have been.

The watcher, when he perceived what was done, left his post, and went and informed the husband. Upon which news, the following plan was quickly arranged between them. The corn-merchant pretended to have returned from his journey on account of certain adventures which had, or might have, happened to him.

He knocked at the door, and shouted to his wife, who was much alarmed when she heard his voice, and made haste to conceal her lover, the curé, in a *casier* that was in the chamber; and you must know that a *casier* is a kind of pantry-cupboard, long and narrow and fairly deep, and very much like a trough.

As soon as the curé was concealed amongst the eggs, butter cheese, and other such victuals, the brave housewife, pretending to be half awake half asleep, let in her husband, and said.

“Oh, my dear husband, what can have happened that you have returned so quickly? There must be some reason why you did not go on your journey—for God’s sake tell it me quickly!”

The good man, who was as angry as he could be, although he did not show it, insisted on going to their bedroom and there telling her the cause of his



sudden return. When he was where he expected to find the curé, that is to say in the bedroom, he began to relate his reasons for breaking his journey. Firstly, he said he had such suspicion of her virtue that he feared much to be numbered amongst the blue vestments, (\*) or “our friends” as they are commonly called, and that it was because of this suspicion that he had returned so quickly. Also that when he was out of the house it had occurred to his mind that the curé was his deputy whilst he was away. So to put his suspicions to the test, he had come back, and now wanted the candle to see whether his wife had been sleeping alone during his absence.

(\*) In the present day, yellow is the emblematic colour for jealous or cuckolded husbands, but it would appear from this passage that in the 15th century it was blue-possibly, Bibliophile Jacob thinks, from its being the colour of the *maquereau*.

When he had finished relating the causes of his return, the good woman cried,

“Oh, my dear husband, whence comes this baseless jealousy? Have you ever seen in my conduct anything that should not be seen in that of a good, faithful, and virtuous wife? Cursed be the hour I first knew you, since you suspect me of that which my heart could never imagine. You know me badly if you do not know how clean and pure my heart is, and will remain.”

The good man paid little heed to these words, but said that he wished to allay his suspicions, and to at once inspect every corner of the chamber as well as possible,—but he did not find what he sought.

Then he caught sight of the *casier*, and he guessed that the man he wanted was inside, but he made no sign, and calling his wife said;

“My dear, I was wrong to presume that you were untrue to me, and such as my false suspicions imagined. Nevertheless, I am so obstinate in my opinions, that it would be impossible for me to live comfortably with you henceforth. And therefore I hope you will agree that a separation should be made between us, and that we divide our goods equally in a friendly manner.”

The wench, who was pleased with this arrangement, in order that she might more easily see her curé, agreed with scarcely any difficulty to her husband’s request, but she made it a condition that in the division of the furniture she should have first choice.

“And why,” said the husband, “should you have first choice? It is against all right and justice.”

They were a long time squabbling about first choice, but in the end the husband won, and took the *casier* in which there was nothing but custards, tarts,

cheeses, and other light provisions, amongst which was the good curé buried, and he heard all the discussion that went on.

When the husband chose the *casier*, his wife chose the copper; then the husband chose another article then she chose; and so on until all the articles were apportioned out.

After the division was made, the husband said;

“I will allow you to live in my house until you have found another lodging, but I am going now to take my share of the furniture, and put it in the house of one of my neighbours.”

“Do so,” she said, “when you like.”

He took a good cord and tightly tied up the *casier*; then sent for his waggoner and told him to put the *casier* on a horse’s back and take it to the house of a certain neighbour.

The good woman heard these orders, but did not dare to interfere, for she feared that if she did it would not advance matters, but perhaps cause the *casier* to be opened, so she trusted to luck.

The *casier* was placed on the horse, and taken through the streets to the house the good man had mentioned. But they had not gone far before the curé, who was choked and blinded with eggs and butter, cried,

“For God’s sake! mercy!”

The waggoner hearing this piteous appeal come out of the *casier*, jumped off the horse much frightened, and called the servants and his master, and they opened the *casier*, and found the poor prisoner all smeared and be-yellowed with eggs, cheese, milk, and more than a hundred other things, indeed it would have been hard to say which there was most of,—in such a pitiable condition was the poor lover.

When the husband saw him in that state, he could not help laughing, although he felt angry; He let him go, and then went back to his wife to tell her that he had not been wrong in suspecting her of unchastity. She seeing herself fairly caught, begged for mercy, and was pardoned on this condition, that if ever the case occurred again, she should be better advised than to put her lover in the *casier*, for the curé had stood a good chance of being killed.

After that they lived together for a long time, and the husband brought back his *casier*, but I do not think that the curé was ever found in it again, but ever after that adventure he was known, and still is, as “Sire Vadin Casier”.

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## Story the Seventy-Fourth.

### THE OBSEQUIOUS PRIEST

BY

PHILIPPE DE LAON.

Of a priest of Boulogne who twice raised the body of Our Lord whilst chanting a Mass, because he believed that the Seneschal of Boulogne had come late to the Mass, and how he refused to take the Pax until the Seneschal had done so, as you will hear hereafter.

**O**NCE when the Seneschal of the County of Boulogne was travelling through the district visiting each town, he passed through a hamlet where the bell was ringing for Mass, and as he expected that he should not reach the town to which he was going in time to hear Mass, for the hour was then nearly noon, he thought that he would dismount at this hamlet to see God in passing.

He left his horse at the door of the church, and took a seat near the altar, where high Mass was being celebrated, and placed himself so near the priest, that the latter could see his profile whilst he was celebrating the Mass.

When he raised the cup, and other things that he should,

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He left his horse at the door of the church, and took a seat near the altar, where high Mass was being celebrated, and placed himself so near the priest, that the latter could see his profile whilst he was celebrating the Mass.

When he raised the cup, and other things that he should, he thought to himself that he had noticed the Seneschal behind him, and not knowing whether he had come early enough to see the elevation, but believing that he had come too late, the priest called his clerk, and made him light the candles, and, performing all the ceremonies that he should, he again raised the Host, saying that that was for Monseigneur le Seneschal.

And after that he proceeded until he came to the *Agnus Dei* which, when he had said three times, and his clerk gave him the Pax to kiss, he refused, approaching his clerk and saying that he should first present it to the Seneschal, who refused it two or three times.

When the priest saw that the Seneschal would not take the Pax before him, he put down the Host which he had in his hands, and took the Pax, which he carried to my lord the Seneschal, and told him that if my lord did not take it first, he would not take it himself.

“For it is not right,” said the priest, “that I should take the Pax before you.”

Then the Seneschal, seeing that wisdom was not to be found in that place, gave in to the curé and took the Pax first, and the curé followed him; and that being done he returned to perform the rest of the Mass.

And this is all that was related to me.

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## Story the Seventy-Fifth.

### THE BAGPIPE

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE THALEMAS.

Of a hare-brained, half-mad fellow who ran a great risk of being put to death by being hanged on a gibbet in order to injure and annoy the Bailly, justices, and other notables of the city of Troyes in Champagne, by whom he was mortally hated, as will appear more plainly hereafter.



IN the time of the war between the Burgundians and the Armagnacs, (<sup>1</sup>) there happened at Troyes in Champagne, a rather curious incident which is well worth being recorded, and which was as follows.

The people of Troyes, though they had been Burgundians, had joined the Armagnacs, and amongst them there had formerly lived a fellow who was half mad, for he had not entirely lost his senses, though his words and actions showed more folly than good sense—nevertheless he would sometimes say and do things which a wiser than he could not

(<sup>1</sup>) The reign of Charles VI, after the assassination of the Duc d'Orléans by Jean-sans-Peur, was marked by a long civil war between the factions here named, and who each in turn called in the aid of the English.

# STORY THE SEVENTY-FIFTH — THE BAGPIPE.

75

**By Monseigneur De Thalemas.**

*Of a hare-brained half-mad fellow who ran a great risk of being put to death by being hanged on a gibbet in order to injure and annoy the Bailly, justices, and other notables of the city of Troyes in Champagne by whom he was mortally hated, as will appear more plainly hereafter.*

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(\*) The reign of Charles VI, after the assassination of the Duc d'Orléans by Jean-sans-Peur, was marked by along civil war between the factions here named, and who each in turn called in the aid of the English.

To begin the story, however; this fellow who was in garrison with the Burgundians at Sainte Menehould, one day told his companions that if they would listen to him, he would teach them how to catch a batch of the yokels of Troyes, whom, in truth, he hated mortally, and they hardly loved him, for they had always threatened to hang him if they caught him. This is what he said:

“I will go to Troyes and will approach the fortifications, and will pretend to be spying round the town, and will measure the moat with my lance, and will get so near the town that I shall be taken prisoner. I am sure that as soon as the good *bailli* gets hold of me, he will condemn me to be hanged, and there is no one in the town who will take my part for they all hate me. So, early the next morning, I shall be taken out to the gibbet, (\*) and you will all be hidden in the thicket which is near the gibbet. And as soon as you see me arrive with the procession, you will spring out upon them, and take whom you like, and deliver me out of

their hands." All his companions in garrison with him agreed to this willingly, and told him that if he would dare this adventure, they would assist him to the best of their power.

(\*) The gibbet was usually outside the town, often at some considerable distance from the walls.

To shorten the story, the simpleton went to Troyes as he had said, and, as he desired, he was taken prisoner. The report soon spread through the town, and there was no one who did not say he ought to be hanged; even the Bailly, as soon as he saw him, swore by all his gods that he should be hanged by the neck.

"Alas! monseigneur," said the poor fool, "I pray for mercy. I have done nothing wrong."

"You lie, scoundrel," said the Bailly. "You have guided the Burgundians into this district, and you have accused the citizens and merchants of this city. You shall have your reward, for you shall be hanged on a gibbet."

"For God's sake then, monseigneur," said the poor fellow; "since I must die, at least let it please you that it be in the early morning; so that, as I have many acquaintances in the town, I may not be held up to public opprobrium."

"Very well," said the Bailly, "I will think about it."

The next morning at day-break, the hangman with his cart came to the prison, and hardly had he arrived than there came the Bailly with his sergeants, and a great crowd of people to accompany them, and the poor fellow was laid, bound, on the cart, and still holding the bagpipe he was accustomed to play. Thus he was led to the gibbet, accompanied by a larger crowd than most have at their hanging, so much was he hated in the town.

Now you must know that his comrades of the garrison of Sainte Menehould had not forgotten their ambuscade, and ever since midnight had been collected near the gibbet, to save their friend, although he was not otherwise, and also to capture prisoners and whatever else they could. When they arrived they took up their position, and put a sentinel in a tree to watch when the Troyes folk should be gathered round the gibbet. The sentinel was placed in his position, and promised that he would keep a good watch.

Then all the crowd came to the gibbet, and the Bailly gave order to despatch the poor fool, who for his part wondered where his comrades were, and why they did not rush out on these rascally Armagnacs.

He did not feel at all comfortable, and he looked all round, but chiefly towards the wood, but he heard nothing. He made his confession last as long as he could, but at last the priest went away, and the poor fellow had to mount the



ladder, and from this elevated position, God knows that he looked often towards the wood; but it was of no avail, for the sentinel, who was to give the signal when the men were to rush out, had gone to sleep in the tree.

The poor fellow did not know what to say or do, and verily believed that his last hour had come. The hangman began to make preparations to put the noose round the victim's neck, who, when he saw that, bethought him of a trick, which turned out well for him, and said;

“Monseigneur le Bailli, I beg you for God's sake, that before the hangman lays hands on me, I may be allowed to play a tune on my bagpipe. That is all I ask; after that I shall be ready to die, and I pardon you and all the others for having caused my death.”

His request was granted, and the bagpipe was handed up to him. As soon as he had it, he began, as leisurely as he could, to play an air which all his comrades knew very well, and which was called. “You stay too long, Robin; you stay too long.”

At the sound of the bagpipe the sentinel woke, and was so startled that he tumbled out of the tree to the ground, and cried,

“They are hanging our comrade! Forward! Forward! make haste!”

His comrades were ready, and at the sound of the trumpet they sallied out of the wood, and rushed upon the Bailly and all the others who were round the gibbet.

The hangman was too frightened to put the rope round the man's neck and push him off the ladder, but begged for his own life, which the other would willingly have granted but it was not in his power. The victim, however, did something better, for from his place on the ladder he called out to his comrades, “Capture that man, he is rich; and that one, he is dangerous.”

In short, the Burgundians killed a great number of those who had come out of Troyes, and captured many others, and saved their man, as you have heard, but he said that never in all his life had he had such a narrow escape as on that occasion.

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Le Sages d'amour





## Story the Seventy-Sixth.

### CAUGHT IN THE ACT

BY

PHILIPPE DE LAON.

Of the chaplain to a knight of Burgundy who was enamoured of the wench of the said knight, and of the adventure which happened on account of his amour, as you will hear below.



I have often heard related, by people worthy of credit, a curious history, which will furnish me a tale without my adding or suppressing one word that is not needed.

Amongst the knights of Burgundy was formerly one, who, contrary to the custom of the country, kept in his castle—which I will not name—a fair wench to serve as his mistress.

His chaplain, who was young and frisky, seeing this nice wench, was not so virtuous but that he felt tempted, and fell in love with her, and when he saw his opportunity, told her of his love. The damsel, who was as sharp as mustard, for she had knocked about so much that no one in the world knew more than she did, thought

# STORY THE SEVENTY-SIXTH — CAUGHT IN THE ACT. [76](#)

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His chaplain, who was young and frisky, seeing this nice wench, was not so virtuous but that he felt tempted, and fell in love with her, and when he saw his opportunity, told her of his love. The damsel, who was as sharp as mustard, for she had knocked about so much that no one in the world knew more than she did, thought to herself that if she granted the priest's request her master would hear of it, however much she tried to conceal it, and thus she would lose the greater for the less.

So she determined to relate the affair to her master, who when he heard of it did nothing but laugh, for he had partly suspected it, having noticed the looks, conversation and little love-tricks that passed between the two. Nevertheless, he ordered the wench to lead the priest on, without, however, granting him her favours; and she did it so well that the priest fell into the trap. The knight used often to say him;

“By God, sir, you are too friendly with my chamber-wench. I do not know what there is between you two, but if it is anything to my prejudice, by Our Lady, I will punish the two of you.”

“In truth, monseigneur,” replied the Dominie. “I do not pretend to expect anything from her. I talk to her to pass the time, as everyone else in the house

does, but never in my life would I seek her love, or anything of the kind.”

“Very well,” said the lord, “if it were otherwise I should not be best pleased.”

If the Dominie had importuned her before, he now pursued her more than ever, and wherever he met the wench he pressed her so closely that she was obliged, whether she would or not, to listen to his requests, and, being cunning and deceitful, she so played with the priest and encouraged his love, that for her sake he would have fought Ogier the Dane himself.

As soon as she had left him, the whole conversation that had passed between them was related to her master.

To make the farce more amusing, and to deceive his chaplain, he ordered the girl to appoint a night for him to be in the *ruelle* of the bed where they slept. She was to say to him. “As soon as monseigneur is asleep, I will do what you want; come quietly into the *ruelle* of the bed.”

“And you must,” he said, “let him do what he likes, and so will I; and I am sure that when he believes I am asleep, that he will soon have his arms round you, and I will have ready, near your ——, a noose in which he will be nicely caught.”

The wench was very joyful and satisfied with this arrangement, and gave the message to the Dominie, who never in his life had been more delighted, and, without thinking of or imagining peril or danger, entered his master’s chamber, where the wench and his master slept. He cast all sense and decency to the winds, and only thought of satisfying his foolish lust,—albeit it was quite natural.

To cut the story short, Master Priest came at the hour appointed, and crept quietly enough, God knows, into the *ruelle* of the bed, and his mistress whispered to him;

“Don’t say a word: when monsieur is fast asleep I will touch you, and then come to me.”

“Very good,” he replied.

The good knight, who was not asleep, had a great inclination to laugh, but checked himself, in order not to spoil the joke. As he had proposed and arranged, he spread his noose where he wished, that is to say round the spot where the priest wanted to get.

All being ready, the Dominie was called, and as gently as he could, slipped into the bed, and without more ado, mounted on the heap in order to see the

further. (\*)

(\*) A proverbial expression founded perhaps on some old story which may be alluded to also in the 12th and 82nd stories.

As soon as he was lodged there, the good knight drew the cord tightly, and said aloud,

“Ha! scoundrelly priest, is that the sort of man you are?” The priest tried to run away, but he could not go far, for the instrument he had tried to tune to the girl’s fiddle was caught in the noose, at which he was much frightened, and did not know what had happened to him. His master pulled the cord more tightly, which would have given him great pain if his fear and alarm had not conquered all other sentiments.

In a few moments he came to himself, and felt the pain and cried piteously for mercy to his master, who had such a strong desire to laugh that he could scarcely speak. He pulled the priest into the room and said;

“Get out, and never come here again! I pardon you in this occasion, but the second time I shall be inexorable.”

“Oh, monsieur,” he replied, “I will never do it again. It is all her fault,” and with that he ran away and the knight went to bed again, and finished what the other had begun.

But you must know that never again was the priest found trespassing on his master’s preserves. Perhaps, as a recompense for his misfortunes the girl afterwards took pity on him, and to ease her conscience lent him her fiddle, and he tuned it so well that the master suffered both in goods and honour. But now I will say no more, and end my story.

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## Story the Seventy-Seventh.

### THE SLEEVELESS ROBE

BY

A L A R D I N.

Of a gentleman of Flanders who went to reside in France, but whilst he was there his mother was very ill in Flanders; and how he often went to visit her, believing that she would die, and what he said and how he behaved, as you will hear later.



A gentleman of Flanders had a mother who was very old and much weakened by disease, and more sick and infirm than any woman of her age.

Hoping that she would get better, and be cured, he often came to see her, although he resided in France, and each time that he came he found her suffering so much that he thought her soul was about to leave her body.

On one occasion that he came to see her, she said to him at his departure.

"Adieu, my son; I am sure that you will never see me again for I am about to die."

"Devil take it, mother, you have said that so often that

# STORY THE SEVENTY-SEVENTH — THE SLEEVELESS ROBE.

By Alardin.

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On one occasion that he came to see her, she said to him at his departure.

“Adieu, my son; I am sure that you will never see me again for I am about to die.”

“Devil take it, mother, you have said that so often that I am sick of it. For three years past you have been repeating that, but you have done nothing of the kind. Choose a day, I beg, and keep to it.”

The good woman, when she heard her son’s reply, smiled, though she was so sick and old, and said farewell.

One year, then two years, passed, and still she lingered on. She was again visited by her son, and one night when he was in bed in her house, and she was so ill that all believed she was about to go to Mortaigne, (\*) those who watched her called her son, and told him to come to his mother quickly, for that certainly she was about to die.

(\*) Mild puns on the names of places were very common in the Middle Ages.

“Do you say that she is about to die?” he replied. “By my soul, I will not believe it; she always says that, but she never does it.”

“No, no,” said the nurses; “this time it is certain. Come quickly for it is sure that she is dying.”



“Very well, you go first and I will follow you; and tell my mother that if she must go, not to go by Douai, for the road is so bad that I and my horses were nearly swallowed up yesterday.”

Nevertheless he rose, and put on his dressing-gown, and went off to see his mother give her last grin. When he came he found her very ill, for she had been in a swoon which all thought would carry her off, but, thank God, she was now a little better.

“Did I not tell you so?” said this good son. “Every body in this house declares, and she does herself, that she is dying—but nothing comes of it. For God’s sake choose a day—as I have often told you—and see that you keep to it! I am going to return whence I came, and I recommend you not to call me again. If she does die she must die alone, for I will not keep her company.”

Now I must tell you the end of this history. The lady, ill as she was, recovered from this extreme sickness, and lived and languished as before for the space of three years, during which time her good son visited her once, and that was just as she was about to give up the ghost. But when they came to seek him to come to her deathbed, he was trying on a new habit and would not come. Message after message was sent to him, for his good mother, who was nearing her end, wished to recommend her soul to her son’s care,—but to all the messages he replied;

“I am sure there is no hurry: she will wait till my habit is finished.”

At last so many remonstrances were made to him that he went to his mother, wearing a doublet with no sleeves to it, which, when she saw, she asked him where were the sleeves.

“They are within there,—waiting to be finished as soon as you clear out of the place.”

“Then they will be soon finished,” she replied; “for I go to God, to whom I humbly recommend my soul; and to you also, my son.”

Without another word she rendered her soul to God, with the Cross between her arms; on seeing which her good son began to weep so loudly that no one had ever heard the like; he could not be comforted, and at the end of a fortnight he died of grief.

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## Story the Seventy-Eighth.

### THE HUSBAND TURNED CONFESSOR

BY

JEHAN MARTIN.

Of a married gentleman who made many long voyages, during which time his good and virtuous wife made the acquaintance of three good fellows, as you will hear; and how she confessed her amours to her husband when he returned from his travels, thinking she was confessing to the priest, and how she excused herself, as will appear.



THE province of Brabant is a fair and pleasant land, well provided with pretty girls, who are generally clever and good; but as for the men, it is said of them, with a good deal of truth, that the longer they live the greater fools they become.

There was formerly a gentleman of this land who—being thereunto born and destined—travelled much beyond seas to various places, as Cyprus, Rhodes, and the adjacent parts, and at last came to Jerusalem, where he received the order of knighthood.

During the time that he was away, his good wife was not idle, but took her *quoniam* with three lovers, who like

## STORY THE SEVENTY-EIGHTH — THE HUSBAND TURNED CONFESSOR. [78](#)

By Jehan Martin.

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During the time that he was away, his good wife was not idle, but took her *quoniam* with three lovers, who like courtiers, each had audience in turn and for a certain time.

First came a gentle squire, fresh and frisky, and in good health, who spent so much upon her, physically and pecuniarily (for in truth she plucked him well) that at last he was sick of it, and left her altogether.

The one who came after him was a knight, and a man of a great reputation, who was very glad to have acquired the succession, and worked her as well as he could, paying his *quibus* (\*), which no one knew better than this lusty wench how to get out of a man. In short, if the squire, who had previously held the position, had been plucked, the knight was not less so, until at last he turned tail, took leave of her, and left the place open to the next comer.

(\*) Property or wealth; the expression is still used in familiar conversation.

As a tit-bit to finish with, the damsel made the acquaintance of a rich priest,

and although he was cunning enough, and not over liberal with money, he was despoiled of rich gowns, vessels, and other valuables.

Now it happened, thank God, that the husband of the wench let her know that he was coming home; and how he had been made a knight at Jerusalem. His good wife had the house cleaned and prepared as well as possible. Everything was ready for his return, except the lady, and she was somewhat disturbed on account of the vast quantity of booty—tapestry, furniture, vessels, and other valuables—which she had gained upon her back.

When her husband arrived, God knows what a joyful reception he had, especially from the one who cared least about him, that is to say his worthy wife.

I pass over all the welcomings, but her husband, although he was a fool, could not help quickly noticing the heap of furniture, which was not there at his departure. He went to the coffers, the buffets, and a number of other places, and everywhere he found his store increased, and the sight of all this booty filled his mind with evil thoughts, and in a hot temper he called for his wife, and demanded to know whence had come all these goods I have already-named.

“By St. John,” said the lady, “that is a nice question. You have good reason to go on like this and get so warm. To look at you one would think you were cross.”

“I am not in the best of tempers,” he replied; “for I did not leave you so much money that you could have saved enough to buy all these utensils, hangings, and the other things that I find here. I suspect, with good reason, that our household has been increased by some friend of yours during my absence.”

“By God!” replied the lady, “you are wrong to suspect me of such misconduct. I would have you to know that I am not a woman of that kind, but a better wife in every respect than you deserve; and it is not right that after all the trouble I have taken to save and economise to embellish and adorn your house and mine, that I should be reproved and scolded. That is not at all the sort of reward that a good husband should give to a chaste wife such as you have, you wicked wretch. It is a great pity I have not been unfaithful to you, and I would be if I did not value my honour and my soul.”

This quarrel, though it lasted a long while, ceased for a time, for the husband thought of a plan how to find out the truth about his wife. He arranged with the curé, who was a great friend of his, that he should hear her confession, and this he did with the help of the curé, who managed the whole affair, for one morning in Easter week, the curé made the husband put on the priest’s robe, and then sent word to the lady to come and confess.

It need not be asked if the husband was glad when he found himself thus disguised. He went to the chapel, and entered the confessional without saying a word; his wife approached and knelt at his feet, really believing she was confessing to the curé, and said *Benedicite*. To this her husband replied *Dominus*, as the curé had taught him, and whatever else was necessary, as well as he could manage it.

After the good woman had made a general confession, she descended to particulars, and told how, during the time that her husband had been away, a squire had been his deputy, and from him she had acquired much property, in gold, in silver, and in furniture.

God knows that the husband, when he heard this confession did not feel very comfortable; he would willingly have killed her on the spot if he had dared, nevertheless he was patient in order that he might hear the rest.

When she had said all there was to say about the squire, she accused herself of misconduct with the knight, who, like his predecessor, had paid her well. The good husband, nearly bursting with grief, had a good mind to discover himself and give her absolution without more ado, but he did nothing of the kind, and waited to hear what more she would say.

After the knight came the turn of the priest, and at this the good husband lost patience and would hear no more; he threw aside hood and gown, and, showing himself said;

“False and perfidious woman! now I see and know your treason! And would not a squire and a knight suffice you, but you must give yourself up to a priest? This vexes me more than all the other sins you have committed.”

For a moment this brave dame was taken aback, but soon recovered her confidence, and with a face as calm as though she had been the most just and virtuous woman in the world, saying her prayers to God, she replied as calmly as though the Holy Spirit had inspired her,

“Poor fool! why do you thus worry yourself, you know not wherefore? Listen to me, if you please; and be assured that I knew perfectly well that I was confessing to you. I served you as you deserved, and without one word of falsehood confessed to you the real circumstances. These are the facts: you are the squire who slept with me, for when I married you, you were a squire, and did with me as you wished; you are the knight of whom I spoke, for on your return you made me a lady; and you are the priest also, for no one who is not a priest can hear a confession.”

“By my oath, my dear,” he replied, “you have convinced me, and proved to

me that you are a virtuous woman and that I was wrong to accuse you. I repent, and ask your pardon, and promise never to suspect you again.”

“I willingly pardon you,” said his wife, “since you confess your fault.”

Thus, as you have heard, was the good knight deceived by the ready wit of his wife.

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## Story the Seventy-Ninth.

### THE LOST ASS FOUND

BY

MICHAULT DE CHANGY.

Of a good man of Bourbonnais who went to seek the advice of a wise man of that place about an ass that he had lost, and how he believed that he miraculously recovered the said ass, as you will hear hereafter.

**I**N the fair land of Bourbonnais, where many good professions are carried on, there lived, not long ago, a doctor of God knows what sort, for never Hippocrates or Galen practised the science as he did. For instead of syrups, decoctions, electuaries, and the hundred thousand other things that physicians order to preserve the health of man, or restore it if it is lost, this good doctor of whom I am speaking had only one method of procedure, and that was to order clysters. Whatever matter was brought to him, <sup>(1)</sup> he always exhibited clysters, and generally so well did this remedy turn out that everyone was satisfied with him, and he cured them all, so that his fame spread abroad and

<sup>(1)</sup> It was usual to bring the urine of an invalid to the physician.



# STORY THE SEVENTY-NINTH — THE LOST ASS FOUND. [79](#)

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(\*) It was usual to bring the urine of an invalid to the physician.

(\*\*) “Master” was then a title of honour.

It happened one day that a poor foolish countryman had lost his ass, and after seeking for it a long time, he determined to go to the wise man, who when he arrived was so surrounded by people that the countryman could not make himself heard. At last he broke through the crowd, and, in the presence of many persons, related his case, that is to say that he had lost his ass, and asked the

doctor to get it back for him.

The master, who was listening to others more than to him, just heard the sound of the words, and thinking he had some infirmity, turned towards him, and in order to get rid of him, said to his servants,

“Give him a clyster!”

The poor man who had lost his ass, did not know what the master had said, but he was seized by the physician’s servants, who led him away and gave him a clyster—at which he was much astonished, for he did not know what it was.

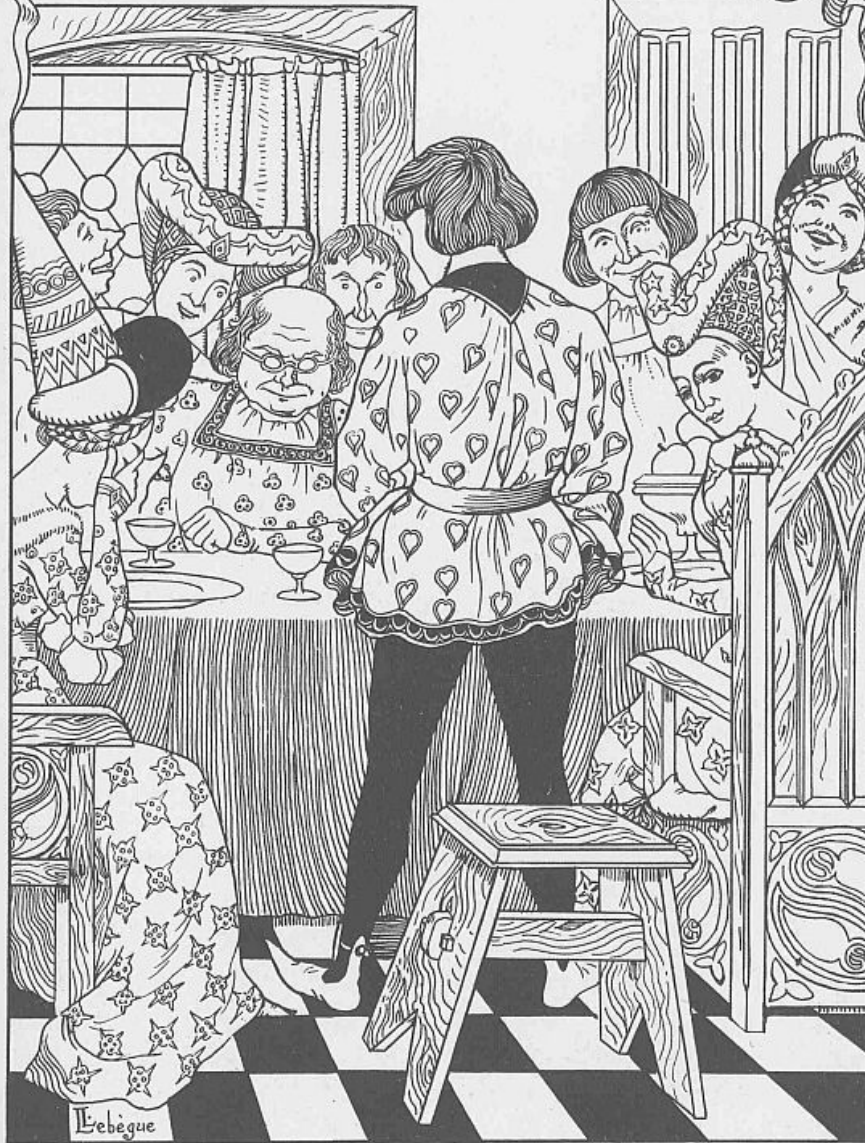
When he had this clyster in his belly, he went away, without saying anything more about his ass, which he fully believed he should recover.

He had not gone far when his belly was so tossed about that he was forced to turn aside into a deserted hut, because of the clyster which demanded to be let out. And when he began, he made such a terrible noise, that his ass, which chanced to be straying near, began to bray, and the good man rose up and cried, *Te Deum laudamus*, and went to his ass, which he believed he had found by means of the clyster which he had had from the Master, who after that had incomparably more renown than ever; for he was looked-upon as the sure finder of all lost goods, and the perfect master of all science, and all this fame sprang from a single clyster.

Thus have you heard how the ass was found by means of a clyster; it is a manifest fact, and one that often happens.

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❁ La bonne mesure ❁





## Story the Eightieth.

### GOOD MEASURE!

BY

MICHAULT DE CHANGY.

Of a young German girl, aged fifteen or sixteen or thereabouts who was married to a gentle gallant, and who complained that her husband had too small an organ for her liking, because she had seen a young ass of only six months old which had a bigger instrument than her husband, who was twenty-five years old.



I have heard it related as true by two noble lords worthy of faith and belief, that in the borders of Germany there lived a young girl, who at the age of about 15 or 16 years was married to a worthy gentleman, who did his best to satisfy the demands which, without saying a word, all girls of that age and condition earnestly ask for. But though the poor man did his duty well, and indeed more often than he should, the performance was never agreeable to his wife, who was always sulky, and often wept as sadly as though all her friends were dead.

Her good husband, seeing her thus lament, could not imagine what she could want, and asked her tenderly ;

## STORY THE EIGHTIETH — GOOD MEASURE!

80

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“What is the matter, my dear? Are you not as well clothed, lodged, and served, as people in our position of life can reasonably expect to be?”

“It is not that which vexes me,” she replied.

“Then what can it be?” he asked. “Tell me, and if I can remedy it, I will, at whatever cost to my purse or person.”

Generally, she did not reply, but still sulked, and looked miserable, at which her husband lost his patience, finding she would not tell him the cause of her grief. But he enquired so often that at last he learned partly what was the matter, for she told him that she was vexed because he was so poorly furnished with you-know-what—that is to say the stick with which you plant men, as Boccaccio calls it.

“Indeed!” said he, “and is that why you grieve? By St. Martin you have good cause! At any rate it cannot be other than it is, and you must put up with it,

since you cannot change it.”

This condition of affairs lasted a long time, till the husband, tired of her obstinacy, one day invited to dinner a great number of her friends, and stated the facts which have been already related, and said that it seemed to him that she had no particular cause to grieve, for he believed he was as well furnished with a natural instrument as any of his neighbours.

“And that I may be the better believed,” he said, “and that you may see how wrong she is, I will show it you all.”

With that he laid his furniture on the table before all the men and women there assembled, and said; “There it is!” and his wife wept louder than ever.

“By St. John!” said her mother, her sister, her aunt, her cousin, and her neighbour, “you are wrong, my dear! What do you ask? Do you expect more? Who would not be satisfied with a husband so furnished? So help me God I should deem myself very happy to have as much, or indeed less. Be comforted and enjoy yourself in future! By God, you are better off than any of us I believe.”

The young bride, hearing all the women thus speak, replied, still weeping loudly.

“There is a little ass in the house, hardly half a year old, and who has an instrument as big, as thick, and as long as your arm,”—and so saying she held her arm by the elbow and shook it up and down—“and my husband, who is quite 24 years old has but that little bit he has shown you. Do you think I ought to be satisfied?” Everyone began to laugh, and she to weep the more, so that for a long time not a word was said by any of the company. Then her mother took the girl aside, and said one thing and another to her, and left her satisfied after a great deal of trouble.

That is the way with the girls in Germany—if God pleases it will soon be the same also in France.

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## Storn the Eighty-First.

### BETWEEN TWO STOOLS

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE WAURIN.

Of a noble knight who was in love with a beautiful young married lady, and thought himself in her good graces, and also in those of another lady, her neighbour; but lost both as is afterwards recorded.



AS all the stories of asses are now finished, I will relate shortly a true story of a knight whom many of you noble lords have long known.

It is true that this knight was greatly in love—as is often the way with young men—with a beautiful and noble young lady, who, in that part of the country where she lived was renowned for her beauty. Nevertheless, try what means he could to obtain her favours, and become her accepted lover, he could not succeed—at which he was much displeased, seeing that never was woman loved more ardently, loyally, and wholly than she was. Nor should I omit to say that he did as much for her as ever lover did for his lady, such as jousts, expensive habiliments, etc.—nevertheless, as has been said, he found her always

# STORY THE EIGHTY-FIRST — BETWEEN TWO STOOLS. [81](#)

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Matters were in this condition, when another lady, a friend and neighbour of the first-named damsel, seeing how enamoured the knight was, fell in love with him herself, and by various honest ways and means which would take too long to describe, so subtly managed that in a short time the knight perceived her love, at which he was much vexed, his heart being wholly given to his harsh and cruel mistress.

Being not only kind, but possessed of much common sense he managed adroitly not to compromise himself, so that if his second love affair had come to the knowledge of his first mistress, she would have no cause to blame his conduct.

Now listen to the end of his amours. Owing to the distance at which he



lived, he could not so often see his lady-love as his trusting and loving heart desired. So he determined one day to ask certain knights and squires, good friends of his, but who knew nothing about his love affairs, to fly their hawks, and hunt the hare in the district in which the lady resided, knowing for a fact by his spies, that her husband was away, having gone to Court, as he often did.

As had been arranged, the love-sick knight and his companions started the next day, early in the morning, from the town where the Court was, and passed the time until the late afternoon in hunting the hare, and without eating or drinking. They snatched a hasty repast in a little village, and after the dinner, which was short and simple, remounted their horses and continued to hunt the hare.

The good knight, who had only one object in view, led his companions from the city, to which they always wished to return and said to him, "The hour of vespers is near and it is time to return to the town. If we do not take care we shall be locked out, and have to stay the night in some miserable village and all die of hunger."

"Don't be alarmed," said the lover; "there is plenty of time, and at the worst I know a place near here where we shall be very welcome, and I suppose you will have no objection to meeting ladies."

Being all courtiers, they were not at all disinclined to meet ladies, and were satisfied to leave the matter in his hands, and continued to hunt the hare and the partridge as long as daylight lasted.

When it was time to think of finding lodgings, the knight said to his companions,

"Come along, come along! I will lead you to the place." About an hour or two after nightfall, the knight and his comrades arrived at the place where lived the lady with whom the guide of this little band was so enamoured that he could not sleep o' nights. They knocked at the door of the castle, and the varlets quickly came and asked them what they wanted. And he who was the most deeply concerned, answered and said; "Gentlemen, are my lord and my lady at home?" "Truly," replied one of the attendants for all the others, "my lord is not here, but my lady is."

"Tell her if you please, that such and such knights and squires of the Court, and I, so-and-so, have been hunting the hare in this part of the country, and have lost our way, and now it is too late to return to the town. We beg her therefore to receive us as her guests for this night."

"Willingly will I tell her," said the other.

He went and delivered this message to his mistress, who, instead of coming to the gentlemen, sent a message, which the servant thus delivered.

“Monseigneur,” said the varlet, “my lady wishes me to inform you that her husband is not here; at which she is much vexed, for if he had been he would have given you a hearty welcome; but in his absence she does not dare to receive visitors, and begs you therefore to pardon her.”

The knight, who had led the expedition, was, you may imagine, much vexed and ashamed to hear this reply, for he expected to have seen his mistress, and had a pleasant time with her, and emptied his heart to her, and he was annoyed that he had brought his companions to a place where he had boasted they would be well received.

Like a wise and noble knight, he did not show what he felt in his heart, but with a calm countenance said to his comrades,

“Gentlemen, pardon me that I have lured you with false hopes. I did not believe that the ladies of this part of the country were so wanting in courtesy as to refuse a lodging to wandering knights. But have a little patience. I promise you on my word, to take you somewhere—not far from here—where we shall have quite a different welcome.”

“Forward then!” said all the others. “May God give us good luck.”

They set off, under the direction of their guide, to take them to the house of the lady by whom he was esteemed, though he did not return her affection as he ought to have done; but now he determined to devote to her the love which had been so roughly refused by his first mistress, and he determined to love, serve, and obey her who loved him so, and with whom, please God, he would soon be.

To shorten the story, after riding for a good hour and a half with the drenching rain on their backs, they came to the house of the lady who has previously been mentioned, and gaily knocked at the door, for it was very late, —between nine and ten o’clock at night, and they much feared that all the household would be in bed. Varlets and servant maids at once came forth, and asked, “Who is there?” and they were told.

They went at once to their mistress, who was then in her petticoat, and had put on her nightcap, and said,

“Madame, my lord so-and-so is at the gate and would fain enter; and with him certain knights and squires of the Court to the number of three.”

“They are very welcome,” she said. “Up quickly, all of you! Kill some capons and fowls, and let us have a good supper, and quickly.”

In short, she gave her orders like the great lady that she was—and still is,—and all obeyed her commands. She quickly put on her night-dress, and thus attired, came forward, as courteously as possible, to meet the gentlemen, with two torches carried before her, and only accompanied by one waiting woman, and her beautiful daughter—all the other women being employed in preparing the chambers.

She met her guests upon the drawbridge of the castle, and the noble knight who was the guide and spokesman of the others, came forward and expressed his gratitude for her kindness, and kissed her, and all the others did the same after him.

Then like a courteous woman of the world, she said to the lords,

“Gentlemen, you are very welcome. Monseigneur So-and-so (that is to say their guide) I have known a long time. He is very welcome here, and I should be glad to make the acquaintance of you other gentlemen.”

These introductions were made, the supper was soon ready, and each of the gentlemen lodged in a fair and fine chamber, well appointed and furnished with hangings and everything necessary.

It should be mentioned also, that whilst supper was preparing, the lady and the good knight had a long talk together, and arranged that they would only require one bed between them that night; her husband by good luck not being in the house, but forty leagues away.

We will leave them enjoying their supper after the adventures of the day, and return to the lady who refused to receive the little band, even the man whom she knew loved her better than anyone else in the world, and had shown herself so discourteous.

She asked her servants, when they returned from delivering her message, what the knight had said?

One of them replied: “Madame he said very little; only that he would take his friends to a place where they would have a hearty welcome and good cheer.”

She quickly guessed where they had gone, and said to herself, “Ah, he has gone to the house of such an one, who, I know, will not be sorry to see him, and no doubt they are now plotting against me.”

Whilst she was thinking thus, the harshness and un-kindness which she had felt towards her faithful lover, melted away or was transformed into hearty affection and good-will, and she longed to bestow upon her lover whatever he might ask or require. So she at once set to work and suspecting that the lady to

whom they had gone was now enjoying the society of the man she had treated so rudely, she penned a letter to her lover, most of the lines of which were written in her most precious blood, to the effect that as soon as he saw this letter, he should set all other matters aside, and follow the bearer of the missive, and he would be so kindly received that no lover in the world could expect more from his mistress. And as a token of her truth, she placed inside the letter a diamond ring he well knew.

The bearer of this missive, who was a trustworthy man, went to the castle where the knight was sitting at supper next to the hostess, and with all the guests seated round the table. As soon as grace had been said, the messenger drew the knight aside and handed him the letter.

Having perused it, the good knight was much amazed, and still more joyous, for though he had determined in his own mind no longer to seek the love or acquaintance of the writer of the letter, he still felt tempted when the letter promised him that which he most desired in the world.

He took his hostess aside, and told her that his master had sent an urgent message, and that he must leave at once—at which he pretended to feel much vexed,—and she, who had before been so joyful in the expectation of that she so much desired, became sad and sorrowful.

He quietly mounted his horse, and leaving all his comrades behind, arrived with the messenger, soon after midnight, at the castle of the lady, but her husband had just arrived from Court and was then preparing to go to bed, and she, who had sent specially to fetch her lover, was disappointed enough, God knows.

The good knight, who had been all day in the saddle, either hunting the hare or seeking for lodgings, heard at the door that the lady's husband had arrived, and you may guess how joyful he was at the news.

He asked his guide what was to be done? They consulted together, and it was decided that he should pretend to have lost his companions, and, by good chance, met this messenger, who had brought him to the castle. This being arranged, he was brought before my lord and my lady, and acted his part as he well knew how. After having quaffed a cup of wine—which did him very little good—he was led to his bed-chamber, where he scarcely slept all night, and, early the next morning, returned with his host to Court, without having tasted any of the delights which were promised him in the letter.

And I may add that he was never able to return there again, for soon afterwards the Court left that part of the country, and he went with it, and soon

forgot all about the lady—as often happens.

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## Story the Eighty-Second.

### BEYOND THE MARK

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE LANNOY.

Of a shepherd who made an agreement with a shepherdess that he should mount upon her "in order that he might see farther", but was not to penetrate beyond a mark which she herself made with her hand upon the instrument of the said shepherd—as will more plainly appear hereafter.



LISTEN, if you please, to what happened, near Lille, to a shepherd and young shepherdess who tended their flocks together, or near each other.

Nature had already stirred in them, and they were of an age to know "the way of the world", so one day an agreement was made between them that the shepherd should mount on the shepherdess "in order to see farther",—provided, however, that he should not penetrate beyond a mark which she made with her hand upon the natural instrument of the shepherd, and which was about two fingers' breadth below the head; and the mark was made with a blackberry taken from the hedge.

# STORY THE EIGHTY-SECOND — BEYOND THE MARK. [82](#)

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That being done, they began God’s work, and the shepherd pushed in as though it had cost him no trouble, and without thinking about any mark or sign, or the promise he had made to the shepherdess, for all that he had he buried up to the hilt, and if he had had more he would have found a place to put it.

The pretty shepherdess, who had never had such a wedding, enjoyed herself so much that she would willingly have done nothing else all her life. The battle being ended, both went to look after their sheep, which had meanwhile strayed some distance. They being brought together again, the shepherd, who was called Hacquin, to pass the time, sat in a swing set up between two hedges, and there he swung, as happy as a king.

The shepherdess sat by the side of a ditch, and made a wreath of flowers. She sang a little song, hoping that it would attract the shepherd, and he would begin the game over again—but that was very far from his thoughts. When she found he did not come, she began to call, “Hacquin! Hacquin!”

And he replied, "What do you want?"

"Come here! come here! will you?" she said.

But Hacquin had had a surfeit of pleasure and he replied;

"In God's name leave me alone. I am doing nothing; and enjoying myself."

Then the shepherdess cried;

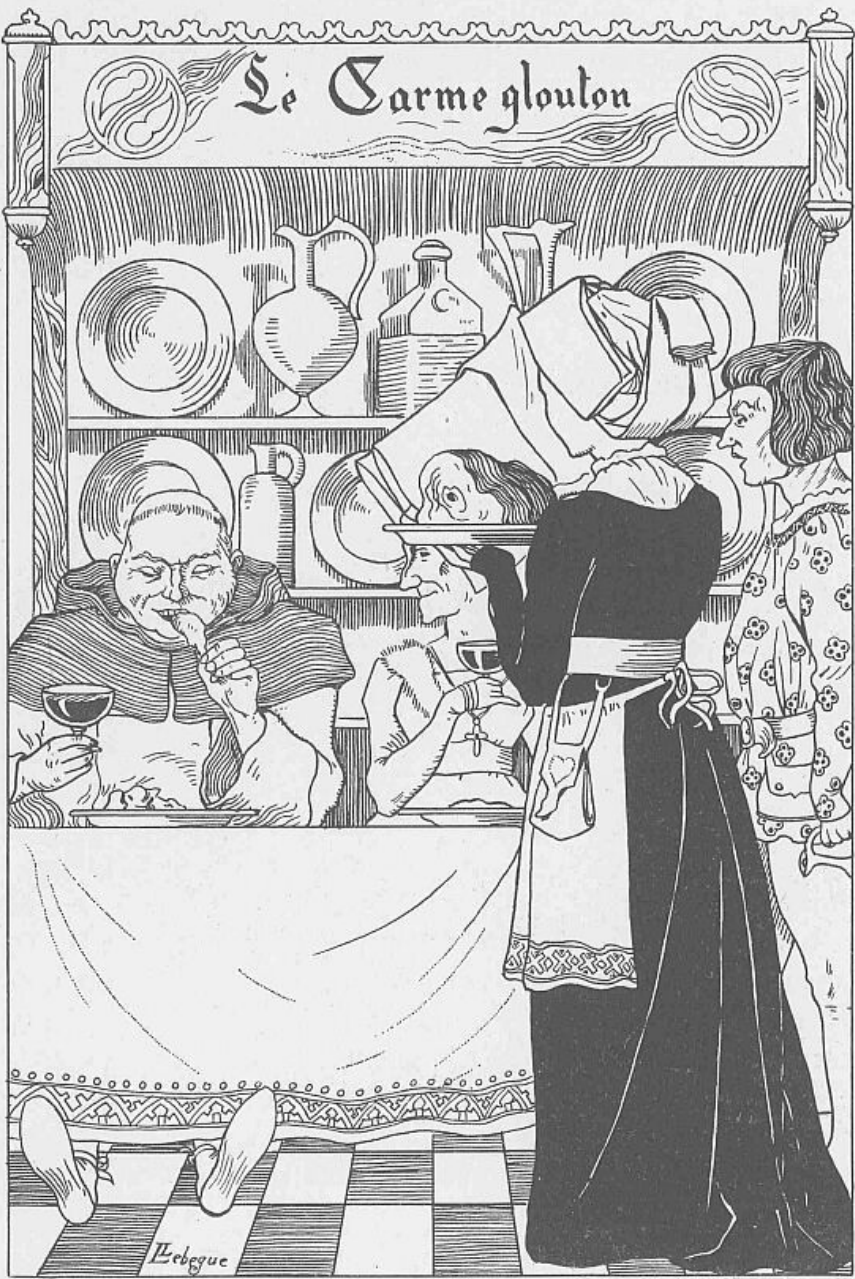
"Come here, Hacquin; I will let you go in further, without making any mark."

"By St. John," said Hacquin, "I went far beyond the mark, and I do not want any more."

He would not go to the shepherdess, who was much vexed to have to remain idle.

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## Story the Eighty-Third.

### THE GLUTTONOUS MONK

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE VAURIN.

Of a Carmelite monk who came to preach at a village, and after his sermon, he went to dine with a lady, and how he stuffed out his gown, as you will hear.

**I**T is the custom of all countries for religious mendicants—Jacobins, Cordeliers, Carmelites, and Augustinians—to go through all the towns and villages, preaching against vice, and exalting and praising virtue.

It happened once that a Carmelite, from the convent of Arras, arrived one Sunday morning, at Libers, a pretty, little town of Artois, to preach—which he could do piously and eloquently, for he was a learned man and a good orator.

Whilst the curé was chanting high Mass, our Carmelite wandered about, hoping to find some one who wanted a Mass said, whereby the monk could earn a few pence, but no one came forward.

Seeing this, an old widow lady took compassion on him, allowed him to say a Mass, and then sent her servant to

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Seeing this, an old widow lady took compassion on him, allowed him to say a Mass, and then sent her servant to give him two *patars*, and to beg him to come to dinner with her that day.

Master monk snapped up the money, and accepted the invitation, and as soon as he had preached his sermon, and high Mass was finished, he came.

The lady for whom he had said Mass, and who had invited him, left the church with her maid, and went home to make all ready for the preacher, who was conducted to the house by one of her servants, and most courteously received. After he had washed his hands, the lady assigned him a place by her side, and the varlet and the maid-servant prepared to serve the repast, and first they brought in leek soup, with a good piece of bacon, a dish of pig's chitterlings, and an ox tongue, roasted.

God knows that as soon as the monk saw the viands he drew forth from his girdle a fine, long, large, and very sharp knife, and, as he said *Benedicite*, he set to work in the leek soup.

Very soon he had finished that and the bacon as well, and drew towards

him the fine, fat chitterlings, and rioted amongst them like a wolf amongst a flock of sheep; and before his hostess had half finished her soup there was not the ghost of a chitterling left in the dish. Then he took the ox tongue, and with his sharp knife cut off so many slices that not a morsel remained.

The lady, who watched all this without saying a word, often glanced at the varlet and the servant-maid, and they smiled quietly and glanced at her. Then they brought a piece of good salt beef, and a capital piece of mutton, and put them on the table. And the good monk, who had an appetite like a hungry dog, attacked the beef, and if he had had little pity for the chitterlings and the ox tongue, still less had he for this fine piece of larded beef.

His hostess who took great pleasure in seeing him eat—which was more than the varlet and the maid, did for they cursed him beneath their breath—always filled his cup as soon as it was empty; and you may guess that if he did not spare the meat neither did he spare the drink.

He was in such a hurry to line his gown that he would hardly say a word. When the beef was all finished, and great part of the mutton—of which his hostess had scarcely eaten a mouthful—she, seeing that her guest was not yet satisfied, made a sign to the servant-maid to bring a huge ham which had been cooked the day before for the household.

The maid—cursing the priest for gorging so—obeyed the order of her mistress, and put the ham on the table. The good monk, without staying to ask “who goes there”, fell upon it tooth and nail, and at the very first attack he carried off the knuckle, then the thick end, and so dismembered it that soon there was nothing left but the bone.

The serving man and woman did not laugh much at this, for he had entirely cleared the larder, and they were half afraid that he would eat them as well.

To shorten the story—after all these before mentioned dishes, the lady caused to be placed on the table a fine fat cheese, and a dish well furnished with tarts, apples, and cheeses, with a good piece of fresh butter—of all which there was not a scrap left to take away.

The dinner which has been described being thus finished, our preacher, who was now as round as a tick, pronounced grace, and then said to his hostess;

“Damsel, I thank you for your good gifts; you have given me a hearty welcome, for which I am much obliged to you. I will pray to Him who fed five thousand men with a few loaves of barley bread and two small fishes, and after they were all filled there remained over twelve basketfuls—I will pray to Him to reward you.”

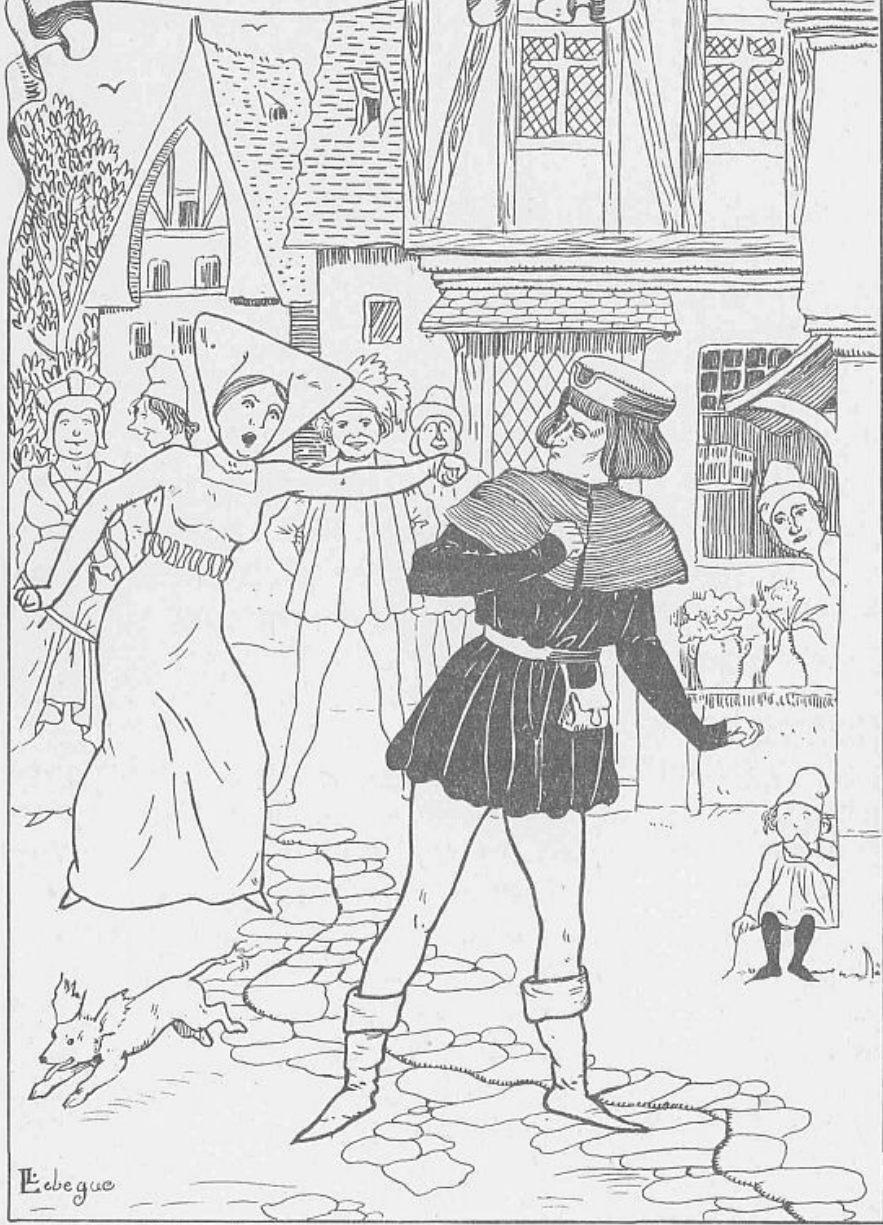
“By St. John!” said the maid-servant coming forward, “you may well talk about that. I believe that if you had been one of that multitude there would not have been anything left over; for you would have eaten up everything, and me into the bargain, if I had happened to have been there.”

“No, truly, my dear,” replied the monk, who was a jovial fellow with a ready wit, “I should not have eaten you, but I should have spitted you, and put you down to roast—that is what I should have done to you.”

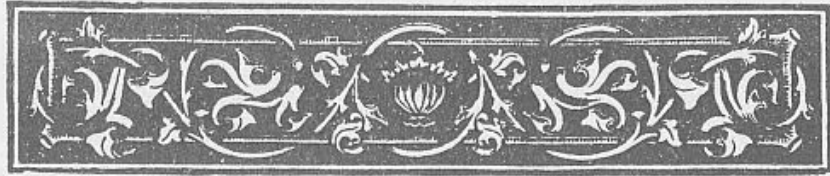
The lady began to laugh, and so did the varlet and the maid-servant, in spite of themselves. And our monk, who had his belly well stuffed, again thanked his hostess for having so well filled him, and went off to another village to earn his supper—but whether that was as good as his dinner I cannot say.

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La part au diable



E. begue



## Story the Eighth-Fourth.

### THE DEVIL'S SHARE

BY

THE MARQUIS DE ROTHELIN.

Of one of his marshals who married the sweetest and most lovable woman there was in all Germany. Whether what I tell you is true—for I do not swear to it, that I may not be considered a liar—you will see more plainly below.



**W**HILST we are waiting for some one to come forward and tell us a good story, I will relate a little one which will not detain you long, but is quite true, and happened lately.

I had a marshal, who had served me long and faithfully, and who determined to get a wife, and was married to the most ill-tempered woman in all the country; and when he found that neither by good means or bad could he cure her of her evil temper, he left her, and would not live with her, but avoided her as he would a tempest, for if he knew she was in any place he would go in the contrary direction.

When she saw that he avoided her, and that he gave

# STORY THE EIGHTY-FOURTH — THE DEVIL'S SHARE. [84](#)

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One day she, finding that her husband did not reply a word to anything she said, followed him through the street, crying as loud as she could before all the people;

“Come here, traitor! speak to me. I belong to you. I belong to you!”

And my marshal replied each time; “I give my share to the devil! I give my share to the devil.”

Thus they went all through the town of Lille, she crying all the while “I belong to you,” and the other replying “I give my share to the devil.”

Soon afterwards, so God willed, this good woman died, and my marshal was asked if he were much grieved at the loss of his wife, and he replied that never had such a piece of luck occurred to him, and if God had promised him



anything he might wish, he would have wished for his wife's death; "for she," he said, "was so wicked and malicious that if I knew she were in paradise I would not go there, for there could be no peace in any place where she was. But I am sure that she is in hell, for never did any created thing more resemble a devil than she did." Then they said to him;

"Really you ought to marry again. You should look out for some good, quiet, honest woman."

"Marry?" said he. "I would rather go and hang myself on a gibbet than again run the danger of finding such a hell as I have—thank God—now escaped from."

Thus he lived, and still lives—but I know not what he will be.

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## Story the Eighth-Fifth.

NAILED!

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE SANTILLY.

Of a goldsmith, married to a fair kind, and gracious lady, and very amorous withal of a priest, her neighbour, with whom her husband found her in bed, they being betrayed by one of the goldsmith's servants, who was jealous, as you will hear.



hundred years ago, or thereabouts, there happened in a town on the borders of France a curious incident, which I will relate, to increase my number of stories, and also because it deserves to rank with the others.

In this town there was a man whose wife was fair, kind, and gracious, and much enamoured of a churchman, her own curé and near neighbour, who loved her as much as she did him, but to find an opportunity to come together amorously was difficult, but it was at last found by the ingenuity of the lady, in the manner I will describe.

Her husband was a goldsmith, and so greedy of gain that he would never sleep an hour in which he could work.

## STORY THE EIGHTY-FIFTH — NAILED! [85](#)

**By Monseigneur De Santilly.**

*Of a goldsmith, married to a fair, kind, and gracious lady, and very amorous withal of a curé, her neighbour, with whom her husband found her in bed, they being betrayed by one of the goldsmith's servants, who was jealous, as you will hear.*

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Her husband was a goldsmith, and so greedy of gain that he would never sleep an hour in which he could work.

Every day he would rise an hour or two before dawn, and let his wife take a long rest till eight or nine o'clock, or as long as she pleased.

This amorous dame seeing how diligent her husband was, and that he rose early every day to hammer and work, determined to employ with the curé the time during which she was neglected by her husband, and arranged that at such and such an hour her lover could visit her without her husband's knowledge, for the cure's house stood next to hers.

This happy expedient was proposed to the curé, who gladly accepted it, for it seemed to him that his amour could be carried on easily and secretly. So as soon as the proposal was made it was executed, and thus they continued to live for a long time; but fortune—envious perhaps of their happiness and sweet enjoyment—willed that their amours should be unfortunately discovered in the manner you will hear.

This goldsmith had an assistant, who was in love with his master's wife, and very jealous of her, and he perceived the curé often talking to the lady, and he guessed what was the matter. But he could not imagine how and when they

met, unless it was that the curé came in the morning when he and his master were in the workshop. These suspicions so ran in his head that he watched and listened in order that he might find out the truth, and he watched so well that he learned the facts of the case, for one morning he saw the curé come, soon after the goldsmith had left the chamber, and enter and close the door after him.

When he was quite sure that his suspicions were confirmed, he informed his master of his discovery in these terms.

“Master, I serve you, not only that I may earn your money, eat your bread, and do your work well and honestly, but also to protect your honour and preserve it from harm. If I acted otherwise I should not be worthy to be your servant. I have long had a suspicion that our curé was doing you a grievous wrong, but I said nothing to you until I was sure of the facts. That you may not suppose I am trumping up an idle story, I would beg of you to let us go now to your chamber, for I am sure that we shall find him there.”

When the good man heard this news, he was much inclined to laugh, but he agreed to go to his chamber along with his assistant—who first made him promise that he would not kill the curé, or otherwise he would not accompany him, but consented that the curé should be well punished.

They went up to the chamber, and the door was soon opened. The husband entered first, and saw his wife in the arms of the curé who was forging as hard as he could.

The goldsmith cried;

“Die, die, scoundrel! What brings you here?”

The curé was surprised and alarmed, and begged for mercy.

“Silence, rascally priest, or I will kill you on the spot!”

“Oh, neighbour have mercy, for God’s sake,” said the curé; “do with me whatever you like.”

“By my father’s soul! before I let you go I will make you so that you will never want to hammer on any feminine anvil again. Get up, and let yourself be bound, unless you wish to die!”

The poor wretch allowed himself to be fastened by his two enemies to a bench, face upwards, and with his legs hanging down on each side of the bench. When he was well fastened, so that he could move nothing but his head, he was carried thus trussed (\*) into a little shed behind the house, which the goldsmith used as a melting-room.

(\*) The word in the original is *marescaucié*, which presumably means,—treated as the soldiers of the

*maréchaussée* treated their prisoners. Bibliophile Jacob avoided philological pitfalls of this sort by omitting the phrase altogether.

When the curé was safely placed in this shed, the goldsmith sent for two long nails with large heads, and with these he fastened to the bench the two hammers which had in his absence forged on his wife's anvil, and after that undid all the ropes which fastened the poor wretch. Then taking a handful of straw, he set fire to the shed, and leaving the curé to his fate, rushed into the street, crying "Fire!"

The priest, finding himself surrounded by flames, saw that he must either lose his genitals or be burned alive, so he jumped up and ran away, leaving his purse nailed there.

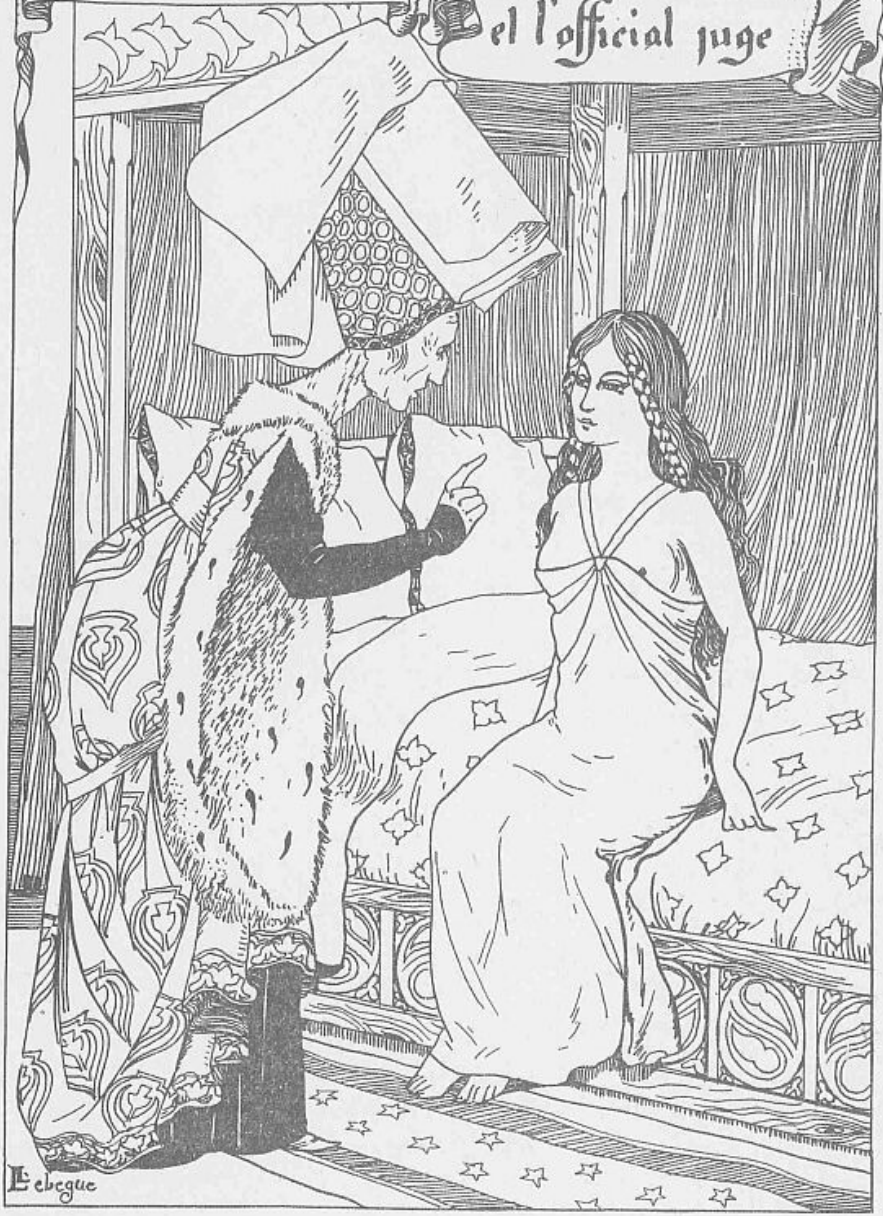
An alarm was soon raised in the street, and the neighbours ran to put out the fire. But the curé sent them back, saying that he had just come from the spot, and all the harm that could occur had already been done, so that they could give no assistance—but he did not say that it was he who had suffered all the harm.

Thus was the poor curé rewarded for his love, through the false and treacherous jealousy of the goldsmith's assistant, as you have heard.

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La terreur panique

et l'official juge



E. ebeque



## Story the Eighty-Sixth.

### FOOLISH FEAR

BY

MONSEIGNEUR PHILIPPE VIGNIER.

Of a young man of Rouen, married to a fair, young girl of the age of fifteen or thereabouts; and how the mother of the girl wished to have the marriage annulled by the judge of Rouen, and of the sentence which the said Judge pronounced when he had heard the parties—as you will hear more plainly in the course of the said story.



IN the good town of Rouen, not long ago, a young man was married to a fair and tender virgin, aged fifteen, or thereabouts. On the day of the great feast—that is to say, the wedding—the mother of the young girl, as is customary in such cases, instructed the bride in all the mysteries of wedlock, and taught her how to behave to her husband on the first night.

The young girl, who was looking forward to the time when she could put these doctrines into practice, took great pains and trouble to remember the lesson given her by her good mother, and it seemed to her that when the time came for her to put these counsels into execution, that she

## STORY THE EIGHTY-SIXTH — FOOLISH FEAR.

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The young girl, who was looking forward to the time when she could put these doctrines into practice, took great pains and trouble to remember the lesson given her by her good mother, and it seemed to her that when the time came for her to put these counsels into execution, that she would perform her duties so well that her husband would praise her, and be well pleased with her.

The wedding was performed with all honour and due solemnity, and the desired night came; and soon after the feast was ended, and the young people had withdrawn after having taken leave of the newly married couple,—the mother, cousins, neighbours, and other lady friends led the bride to the chamber where she was to spend the night with her husband, where they joyfully divested her of her raiment, and put her to bed, as was right and proper. Then they wished her good-night, and one said;

“My dear, may God give you joy and pleasure in your husband, and may you so live with him as to be for the salvation of both your souls.”

Another said: “My dear, God give you such peace and happiness with your husband, that the heavens may be filled with your works.”

After they all had expressed similar wishes, they left. The bride’s mother, who remained the last, questioned her daughter to see whether she remembered the lesson she had been taught. And the girl, who, as the proverb goes, did not



carry her tongue in her pocket, replied that she well remembered all that had been told her, and—thank God—had forgotten nothing.

“Well done,” said the mother. “Now I will leave you, and recommend you to God, and pray that He may give you good luck. Farewell, my dear child.”

“Farewell, my good and wise mother.”

As soon as the schoolmistress had finished, the husband who was outside the door expecting something better, came in. The mother closed the door, and told him that she hoped he would be gentle with her daughter. He promised that he would, and as soon as he had bolted the door, he—who had on nothing on but his doublet,—threw it off, jumped on the bed, drew as close as he could to his bride, and, lance in hand, prepared to give battle.

But when he approached the barrier where the skirmish was to take place, the girl laid hold of his lance, which was as straight and stiff as a cowkeeper’s horn, and when she felt how hard and big it was, she was very frightened, and began to cry aloud, and said that her shield was not strong enough to receive and bear the blows of such a huge weapon.

Do all he would, the husband could not persuade her to joust with him, and this bickering lasted all night, without his being able to do anything, which much displeased our bridegroom. Nevertheless, he was patient, hoping to make up for lost time the next night, but it was the same as the first night, and so was the third, and so on up to the fifteenth, matters remaining just as I have told you.

When fifteen days had passed since the young couple had been married, and they had still not come together, the mother came to visit her pupil, and after a thousand questions, spoke to the girl of her husband, and asked what sort of man he was, and whether he did his duty well? And the girl said that he was a nice, young man, quiet and peaceable.

“But,” said the mother; “does he do what he ought to do?”

“Yes,” said the girl, “but——”

“But *what?*” said the mother. “You are keeping something back I am sure. Tell me at once, and conceal nothing; for I must know now. Is he a man capable of performing his marital duties in the way I taught you?”

The poor girl, being thus pressed, was obliged to own that he had not yet done the business, but she did not say that she was the cause of the delay, and that she had always refused the combat.

When her mother heard this sad news, God knows what a disturbance she made, swearing by all her gods that she would soon find a remedy for that, for

she was well acquainted with the judge of Rouen, who was her friend, and would favour her cause.

“The marriage must be annulled,” she said, “and I have no doubt that I shall be able to find out the way, and you may be sure, my child, that before two days are over you will be divorced and married to another man who will not let you rest in peace all that time. You leave the matter to me.”

The good woman, half beside herself, went and related her wrong to her husband, the father of the girl, and told him that they had lost their daughter, and adducing many reasons why the marriage should be annulled.

She pleaded her cause so well that her husband took her side, and was content that the bridegroom, (who knew no reason why a complaint should be lodged against him) should be cited before the Judge. But, at any rate, he was personally summoned to appear before the Judge, at his wife’s demand, to show cause why he should not leave her, and permit her to marry again, or explain the reasons why, in so many days that he had lived with her, he had not demonstrated that he was a man, and performed the duties that a husband should.

When the day came, the parties presented themselves at the proper time and place, and they were called upon to state their case. The mother of the bride began to plead her daughter’s cause, and God knows the laws concerning marriage which she quoted, none of which, she maintained, had her son-in-law fulfilled; therefore she demanded that he should be divorced from her daughter at once without any more ado.

The young man was much astonished to find himself thus attacked, but lost no time in replying to the allegations of his adversary, and quietly stated his case, and related how his wife had always refused to allow him to perform his marital duties.

The mother, when she heard this reply, was more angry than ever, and would hardly believe it, and asked her daughter if that was true which her husband had said?

“Yes, truly, mother,” she replied.

“Oh, wretched girl,” said her mother, “why did you refuse? Did I not teach you your lesson many times?”

The poor girl could not reply, so ashamed was she.

“At any rate,” said her mother, “I must know the reason why you have refused. Tell it me at once, or I shall be horrible angry.”

The girl was obliged to confess that she had found the lance of the

champion so big that she had not dared to present her shield, fearing that he would kill her; and so she still felt, and was not re-assured upon that point, although her mother had told her not be afraid. After this the mother addressed the Judge, and said:

“Monseigneur, you have heard the confession of my daughter, and the defence of my son-in-law. I beg of you to give judgment at once.”

The judge ordered a bed to be prepared in his house, and the couple to lie on it together, and commanded the bride to boldly lay hold of the stick or instrument, and put it where it was ordered to go. When this judgment was given, the mother said;

“Thank you, my lord; you have well judged. Come along, my child, do what you should, and take care not to disobey the judge, and put the lance where it ought to be put.”

“I am satisfied,” said the daughter, “to put it where it ought to go, but it may rot there before I will take it out again.”

So they left the Court, and went and carried out the sentence themselves, without the aid of any sergeants. By this means the young man enjoyed his joust, and was sooner sick of it than she who would not begin.

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## Story the Eighty-Seventh.

### WHAT THE EYE DOES NOT SEE

BY

MONSIEUR LE VOYER.

Of a gentle knight who was enamoured of a young and beautiful girl, and how he caught a malady in one of his eyes, and therefore sent for a doctor, who likewise fell in love with the same girl, as you will hear; and of the words which passed between the knight and the doctor concerning the plaster which the doctor had put on the knight's good eye.



IN the pleasant and fertile land of Holland, not a hundred years ago, a noble knight lodged in a fair and good inn, where there was a young and very pretty chamber-maid, with whom he was greatly enamoured, and for love of her had arranged with the Duke of Burgundy's quartermaster that he should be lodged in this inn, in order that he might better carry out his intentions with regard to this girl.

After he had been at this inn five or six days, there happened to him a misfortune, for he had a disease in one of his eyes so that he could not keep it open, so sharp

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After he had been at this inn five or six days, there happened to him a misfortune, for he had a disease in one of his eyes so that he could not keep it open, so sharp was the pain. And as he much feared to lose it, and it was an organ that required much care and attention, he sent for the Duke's surgeon, who was at that time in the town. And you must know that the said surgeon was a good fellow, and much esteemed and spoken about throughout all the country.

As soon as the surgeon saw this eye, he declared that it could not be saved, which is what they customarily say, so that if they do cure the disease they may gain more praise and profit.

The good knight was greatly vexed at this news, and asked if there were no means of cure, and the other replied that it would be very difficult, nevertheless he might, with God's aid, cure it, if the knight would obey all his instructions.

"If you can cure me and save my eye," said the knight, "I will pay you well."

The bargain was made, and the surgeon undertook with God's aid to cure the bad eye, and arranged at what hour he would come every day to apply the

dressings.

You must know that every time the surgeon came to see his patient, the pretty chambermaid accompanied him, to hold his box or basin, or help to move the poor patient, who forgot half his pain in the presence of his lady-love.

If the good knight had been struck by the beauty of the chambermaid, so also was the surgeon; who, each time that he paid a visit, could not help casting sheep's eyes at the fair face of the chambermaid, and at last passionately declared his love, which was well received, for she immediately granted his requests, but it was not easy to find means to carry out their ardent desires.

At last, after some trouble, a plan was hit on by the prudent and cunning surgeon, and it was this:

"I will tell my patient," he said, "that his eye cannot be cured unless his other eye is bandaged, for by throwing all the work on the sound eye he prevents the other from getting well. If he will allow it to be bandaged up, we shall have a capital means of taking our pleasure, even in his chamber, without his having any suspicion of it."

The girl, whose desires were quite as warm as those of the surgeon, was quite agreeable, provided the plan could be carried out.

"We will try," said the surgeon.

He came at the usual hour to see the bad eye, and when he had uncovered it, pretended to be much surprised.

"What!" he cried. "I never saw such a disease; the eye is worse than it was fifteen days ago. You must have patience, monsieur."

"In what way?" said the knight.

"Your good eye must be bandaged and concealed, so that no light can reach it, for an hour or so after I have applied this plaster and ordered another—for, no doubt, it prevents the other from healing. Ask," he said, "this pretty girl, who sees it every day, how it is getting on."

The girl said that it looked worse than before.

"Well," said the knight, "I leave myself in your hands; do with me whatever you please. I am content to be blindfolded as much as you like, provided I am cured in the long run."

The two lovers were very joyful when they saw that the knight allowed his eyes to be bandaged. When all the arrangements had been made, and the knight had his eyes bandaged, master surgeon pretended to leave as usual, promising to come back soon to take off the bandage.

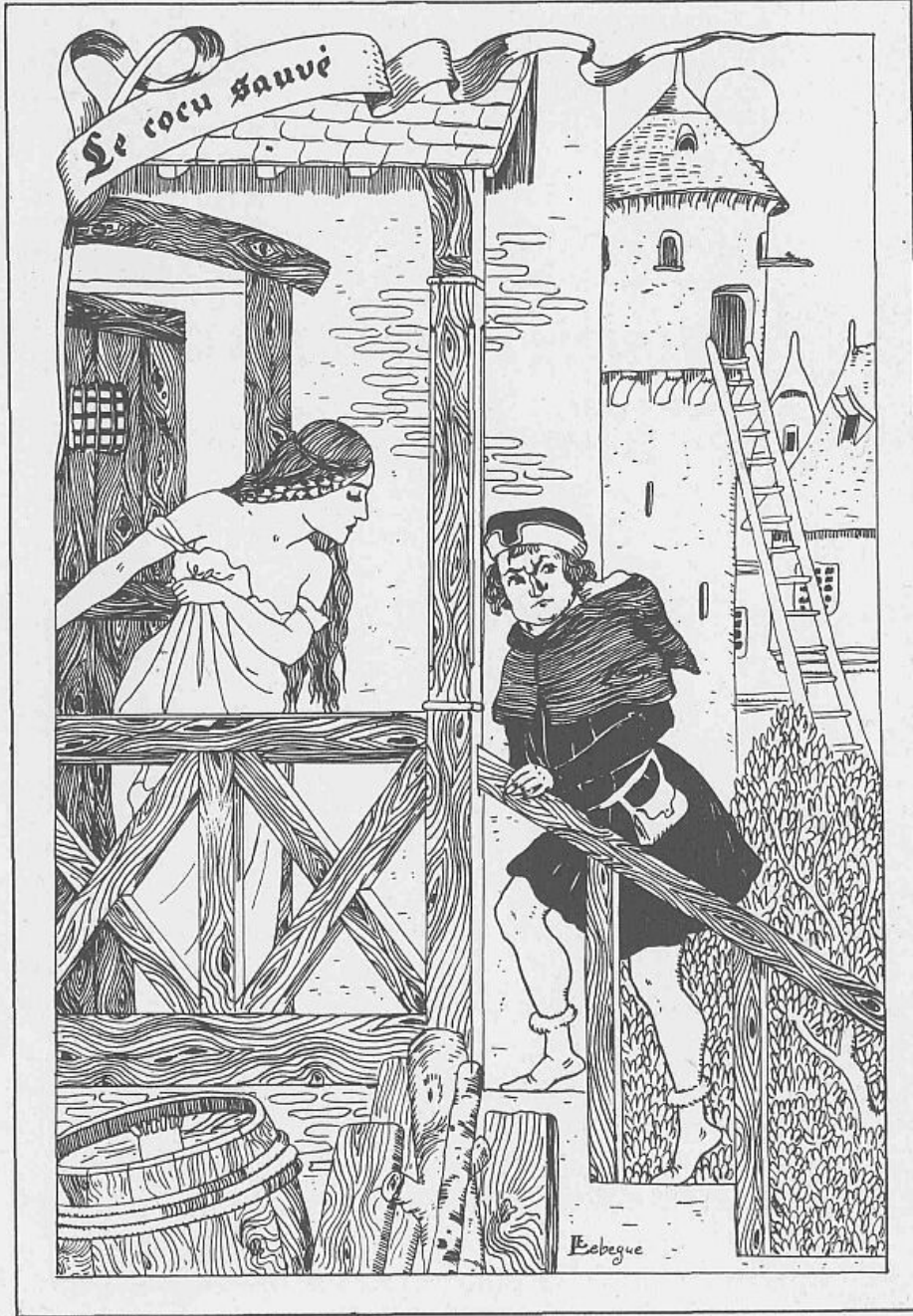
He did not go very far, for he threw the girl on a couch not far from the patient, and with quite a different instrument to that which he had employed on the knight, visited the secret cloisters of the chambermaid.

Three, four, five, six times did he perform on the pretty girl without the knight noticing it, for though he heard the storm he did not know what it was; but as it still continued, his suspicions were aroused, and this time, when he heard the noise of the combat, he tore off the bandages and plasters and threw them away, and saw the two lovers struggling together, and seeming as though they would eat each other, so closely united were their mouths.

“What is this, master surgeon?” cried he. “Have you blindfolded me in order to do me this wrong. Is my eye to be cured by this means? Tell me—did you prepare this trick for me? By St. John, I suspect I was more often visited for love of my chambermaid than for my eyes. Well! well! I am in your hands now, sir, and cannot yet revenge myself, but the day will come when I will make you remember me.”

The surgeon, who was a thoroughly good fellow, began to laugh, and made his peace with the knight, and I believe that, after the eye was cured, they agreed to divide the work between them.

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## Story the Eighty-Eighth.

### A HUSBAND IN HIDING

BY

ALARDIN.

Of a poor, simple peasant married to a nice pleasant woman, who did much as she liked, and who in order that she might be alone with her lover, shut up her husband in the pigeon-house in the manner you will hear.



IN a pretty, little town near here, but which I will not name, there recently occurred an incident which will furnish a short story.

There lived there a good, simple, unlettered peasant, married to a nice, pleasant woman, and as long as he had plenty to eat and drink he cared for little else. He was accustomed to often go into the country to a house he had there, and stay, three, or four days—sometimes more, sometimes less, as suited his pleasure, and left his wife to enjoy herself in the town, which she did, for, in order that she might not be frightened, she had always a man to take her husband's place, and look after the workshop and see that the tools did not rust.

Her method was to wait until her husband was out of

## STORY THE EIGHTY-EIGHTH — A HUSBAND IN HIDING. [88](#)

By Alardin.

*Of a poor, simple peasant married to a nice, pleasant woman, who did much as she liked, and who in order that she might be alone with her lover, shut up her husband in the pigeon-house in the manner you will hear.*

In a pretty, little town near here, but which I will not name, there recently occurred an incident which will furnish a short story. There lived there a good, simple, unlettered peasant, married to a nice, pleasant woman, and as long as he had plenty to eat and drink he cared for little else. He was accustomed to often go into the country to a house he had there, and stay, three, or four days—sometimes more, sometimes less, as suited his pleasure, and left his wife to enjoy herself in the town, which she did, for, in order that she might not be frightened, she had always a man to take her husband's place, and look after the workshop and see that the tools did not rust. Her method was to wait until her husband was out of sight, and not until she was quite sure that he would not return did she send for his deputy, in order that she might not be surprised.

But she could not always manage so well as not to be surprised, for once when her husband had remained away two or three days, and on the fourth day she had waited as long as possible until the gates of the town were closed; thinking he would not come that day, she closed the doors and the windows as on the other days, brought her lover into the house, and they began to drink and enjoy themselves.

They were scarcely seated at the table, when her husband came and thundered at the door, which he was much surprised to find closed.

When the good woman heard it, she hid her lover under the bed; then went to the door and demanded who knocked?

“Open the door,” replied her husband.

“Ah, husband, is that you?” she said. “I was going to send a message to you to-morrow morning to tell you not to come back.”

“Why; what is the matter?” asked her husband.

“What is the matter? God in heaven!” she replied. “The sergeants were here two hours and a half, waiting to take you to prison.”

“To prison!” said he; “Why to prison? Have I done anything wrong? To whom do I owe any money? Who brings any charge against me?”

“I know nothing about it,” said the cunning wench, “but they evidently wanted to do you harm.”

“But did they not tell you,” asked her husband, “why they wanted me?”

“No,” she replied; “nothing, except that if they laid hands on you, you would not get out of prison for a long time.”

“Thank God they haven’t caught me yet. Good bye, I am going back.”

“Where are you going?” she asked—though she was glad to get rid of him.

“Whence I came,” he replied.

“I will come with you,” she said.

“No, don’t. Stay and take care of the house, and do not tell anyone that I have been here.”

“Since you will return to the country,” she said, “make haste and get away before they close the gates: it is already late.”

“If they should be shut, the gate-keeper will do anything for me and he will open them again.”

With these words he left, and when he came to the gate, he found it closed, and, beg and pray as he might, the gate-keeper would not open it for him.

He was very annoyed that he should have to return to his house, for he feared the sergeants; nevertheless, he was obliged to go back, or sleep in the streets.

He went back, and knocked at the door, and the woman who had again sat down with her lover, was much surprised, but she jumped up, and ran to the door, and called out,

“My husband has not come back; you are wasting your time.”

“Open the door, my dear,” said the good man. “I am here.”

“Alas! alas! the gate was closed: I feared as much,” she said. “You will certainly be arrested; I see no hope for escape, for the sergeants told me, I now remember, that they would return to-night.”

“Oh, well,” he said, “there is no need of a long sermon. Let us consider what is to be done.”

“You must hide somewhere in the house,” she said, “and I do not know of any place where you would be safe.”

“Should I be safe,” he asked, “in our pigeon house? Who would look for me there?”

She was, of course, highly delighted at the suggestion, but pretended not to be, and said; “It is not a very nice place; it stinks too much.”

“I don’t mind that,” he said. “I would rather be there an hour or two, and be safe, than be in a better place and be caught.”

“Oh, well, if you are brave enough to go there, I am of your opinion that it would be a good hiding-place.”

The poor man ascended into the pigeon-house, which fastened outside, and was locked in, and told his wife that if the sergeants did not come soon, that she was to let him out.

She left him to coo with the pigeons all night, which he did not much like, and he was afraid to speak or call, for fear of the sergeants.

At daybreak, which was the time when her lover left the house, the good woman came and called her husband and opened the door; and he asked her why she had left him so long along with the pigeons. And she, having prepared her reply, said that the sergeants had watched round their house all night, and spoken to her several times, and had only just gone, but they said that they would come back at a time when they were likely to find him.

The poor fellow, much wondering what the sergeants could want with him, left at once, and returned to the country, vowing that he would not come back for a long time. God knows how pleased the wench was at this, though she pretended to be grieved. And by this means she enjoyed herself more than ever, for she had no longer any dread of her husband’s return.

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## Story the Eighty-Ninth.

### THE FAULT OF THE ALMANAC

BY

PONCELET.

Of a cure who forgot, either by negligence or ignorance to inform his parishioners that Lent had come until Palm Sunday arrived, as you will hear—and of the manner in which he excused himself to his parishioners.



IN a certain little hamlet or village in this country, far from any good town, there happened an incident, which is worth hearing, my good sirs.

This village or hamlet was inhabited by a handful of rough and simple peasants, who knew nothing except how to gain their livelihood. Rough and ignorant as they were, their curé was not less so, for he did not know things of common knowledge, as I will show you by relating an incident that happened to him.

You must know that this curé was so simple and ignorant that he could not announce the feasts of the saints, which come every year on a fixed day, as every one knows; and when his parishioners asked when such and such a feast would fall, he could not, right off, answer them correctly.

# STORY THE EIGHTY-NINTH — THE FAULT OF THE ALMANAC.

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Amongst other such mistakes, which often occurred, he made one which was by no means slight, for he allowed the five weeks of Lent to slip by without informing his parishioners.

But hear how he discovered his error. On the Saturday which was the eve before Palm Sunday, he had need to go to the nearest town for something that he required. When he had entered the town, and was riding along the streets, he saw that the priests were purchasing palms and other greenstuff, which were being sold at the market for the procession the next day.

If anyone was astonished it was our good curé, though he pretended not to be. He went to the woman who sold the palms and boughs, and bought some—pretending that he had come to town specially for that purpose. Then he hastily mounted his horse, which was loaded with his purchases, galloped to the village, and arrived there as quickly as possible.

As soon as he had dismounted, he met several of his parishioners, whom he commanded to go and ring the bells for every one to come to church at once, for he had certain things necessary for the salvation of their souls to tell them.

A meeting was soon called, and all were assembled in the church, where the curé, booted and spurred, came, much flustered, God knows. He mounted into the pulpit, and said the following words,

“Good sirs, I have to signify and inform you that to-day was the eve of the solemn feast of Palm Sunday, and this day next week will be the eve of Easter Sunday, the day of Our Lord’s Resurrection.”

When these good people heard this news they began to murmur, and were so astonished they did not know what to do.

“Silence!” said the curé, “I will soon satisfy you, and will tell you the true reasons why you have only eight days of Lent in which to perform your penitences this year, and marvel not at what I am about to tell you, as to why Lent came so late. I suppose there is not one amongst you who does not know and remember that the frosts were very long and sharp this year—much worse than ever they were—and that for many weeks it was dangerous to ride, on account of the frost and the snow, which lasted a long time.”

“Every one here knows that is as true as the Gospel, therefore be not astonished that Lent has been so long coming, but rather wonder that it was able to come at all, seeing how long the road is from here to his house. I would ask, and even beg of you, to excuse him, for I dined with him to day” (and he named the place—that is to say the town to which he had been).

“However,” he added, “manage to come and confess this week, and appear to morrow in the procession, as is customary. And have patience this time; the coming year will be milder, please God, and then Lent will come quicker, as it usually does.”

Thus did the curé find means to excuse his simple ignorance. Then he pronounced the benediction saying,

“Pray to God for me, and I will pray to God for you.”

After that he came down out of the pulpit, and went to his house to prepare the boughs and palms which were to be used in the procession the next day.

And that is all.

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La bonne malade







## Story the Ninetieth.

### A GOOD REMEDY

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE BEAUMONT.

Of a good merchant of Brabant whose wife was very ill, and he, supposing that she was about to die, after many remonstrances and exhortations for the salvation of her soul, asked her pardon, and she pardoned him all his misdeeds, excepting that he had not worked her as much as he ought to have done—as will appear more plainly in the said story.



To increase the number of stories that I promised to tell, I will relate a circumstance that occurred lately.

In the fair land of Brabant—the place in the world where adventures most often happen—there lived a good and honest merchant, whose wife was very ill, and had to keep her bed continually because of her disease.

The good man, seeing his wife so ill and weak, led a sad life; he was so vexed and distressed and he much feared she would die. In this state of grief, and believing that he was about to lose her, he came to her bedside,

## STORY THE NINETIETH — A GOOD REMEDY.

90

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Amongst other instances of things which he knew had annoyed her, he mentioned that he had not polished up her armour (that part which is called the *cuirass*) as often as she would have liked, and therefore he humbly begged her pardon.

The poor invalid, as soon as she could speak, pardoned him all his minor offences, but this last she would not willingly pardon without knowing the reasons which had induced her husband to neglect polishing up her armour when he knew well what a pleasure it was to her, and that she asked for nothing better.

“What?” he said; “Will you die without pardoning those who have done you wrong?”

“I do not mind pardoning you,” she said, “but I want to know your reasons—otherwise I will not pardon you.”

The good husband thought he had hit on a good excuse, and one that would obtain his pardon, and replied;

“My dear, you know that very often you were ill and weak—although not so ill as I see you now—and I did not dare to challenge you to combat whilst you were in that condition, fearing that it might make you worse. But be sure that if I refrained from embracing you, it was only out of love and affection to you.”

“Hold your tongue, liar that you are! I was never so ill and weak that I should have refused the battle. You must seek some other reason if you would obtain your pardon, for that one will not help you; and since there is now nothing to be done, I will tell you, wicked and cowardly man that you are, that there is no medicine in the world which will so quickly drive away the maladies of us women as the pleasant and amorous society of men. Do you see me now weakened and dried up with disease? Well! all that I want is your company.”

“Ho, ho!” said the other; “then I will quickly cure you.”

He jumped on the bed and performed as well as he could, and, as soon as he had broken two lances, she rose and stood on her feet.

Half an hour later she was out in the street, and her neighbours, who all looked upon her as almost dead, were much astonished, until she told them by what means she had been cured, when they at once replied that that was the only remedy.

Thus did the good merchant learn how to cure his wife; but it turned out to his disadvantage in the long run, for she often pretended to be sick in order to get her physic.

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## Story the Ninety-First.

### THE OBEDIENT WIFE

BY

THE EDITOR.

Of a man who was married to a woman so lascivious and licentious, that I believe she must have been born in a stove, or half a league from the summer sun, for no man, however well he might work, could satisfy her; and how her husband thought to punish her, and the answer she gave him.

**W**HEN I was lately in Flanders, in one of the largest towns in the province, a jovial fellow told me a good story of a man married to a woman so given to venery and concupiscence that she would have let a man lie with her in the public streets.

Her husband knew well how she misbehaved herself, but he was not clever enough to prevent it, so cunning and depraved was she. He threatened to beat, to leave her, or to kill her, but it was all a waste of words; he might as well have tried to tame a mad dog or some other animal. She was always seeking fresh lovers with whom to fornicate, and there were few men in all the

# STORY THE NINETY-FIRST — THE OBEDIENT WIFE. [91](#)

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Her unfortunate husband, seeing that she still continued this life in spite of all his menaces, tried to hit upon a method to frighten her. When he was alone with her in the house, he said;

“Well, Jehanne (or Beatrix, for so he called her) I see that you are determined to continue this life of vice, and, however much I may threaten to punish you, you take no more heed of me than though I held my tongue.”

“Alas, husband,” she replied, “I am much to be pitied, but there is no help for it, for I was born under a planet which compels me to go with men.”

“Oh, indeed,” said the husband, “is that your destiny? I swear I will soon find a remedy for that.”

“You will kill me then,” she said, “for nothing else will cure me.”

“Never mind,” he said. “I know the best way.”

“What is it?” she asked. “Tell me.”

“Morbleu!” he said, “I will give you such a doing some day, that I will put a quartette of babies in your belly, and then I will leave you to get your own living.”

“You will?” she cried. “Indeed! Well, you have but to begin. Such threats frighten me very little, I do not care a farthing for them. May I have my head shaved if I attempt to run away. (\*) If you think you are capable of making four babies at once, come on, and begin at once—the mould is ready.”

(\*) Long hair was considered honourable, and to have the head shaved or cropped was a mark of disgrace.

“The devil take the woman,” said the husband; “there is no way of punishing her.”

He was obliged to let her fulfil her destiny, for nothing short of splitting her head open would have kept her backside quiet; so he let her run about like a bitch on heat amongst a couple of dozen dogs, and accomplish all her inordinate desires.

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## Story the Ninety-Second.

### WOMEN'S QUARRELS

BY

THE EDITOR.

Of a married woman who was in love with a Canon, and, to avoid suspicion, took with her one of her neighbours when she went to visit the Canon; and of the quarrel that arose between the two women, as you will hear.



IN the noble city of Metz in Lorraine, there lived, some time ago a woman who was married, but also belonged to the confraternity of the *houlette* (<sup>1</sup>); nothing pleased her more than that nice amusement we all know: she was always ready to employ her arms, and prove that she was right valiant, and cared little for blows.

Now hear what happened to her whilst she was exercising her profession. She was enamoured of a fat canon, who had more money than an old dog has fleas. But as he lived in a place where people came at all hours, she did not know how she was to come to her canon unperceived.

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She pondered over the matter, and at last determined to take into her confidence a neighbour of hers, a sister-in-arms also of the *houlette*, for it seemed to her that she might go and see her canon, if accompanied by her neighbour, without causing any suspicion.

As it was devised, so was it done, and she went to see the canon, as though on an affair of great importance, and honourably escorted, as has been said.

To shorten the story, as soon as our *bourgeoises* arrived, after all due salutations, the principal personage shut herself up with her lover, the canon, and he gave her a mount, as he well knew how.

The neighbour, seeing the other have a private audience with the master of the house, had no small envy, and was much displeased that she could not do the same.

When the first-named woman came out of the room, after receiving what she came for, she said to her neighbour;

“Shall We go?”

“Oh, indeed,” said the other, “am I to go away like that? If I do not receive the same courtesy that you did, by God I will reveal everything. I did not come to warm the wax for other people.”

When they saw what she wanted, they offered her the canon’s clerk, who was a stout and strong gallant well suited for the work, but she refused him point blank, saying that she deserved his master and would have none other.

The canon was obliged, to save his honour, to grant her request, and when that was accomplished, she wished to say farewell and leave.

But then the other would not, for she said angrily that it was she who had brought her neighbour, and for whom the meeting was primarily intended, and she ought to have a bigger share than the other, and that she would not leave unless she had another “truss of oats.”

The Canon was much alarmed when he heard this, and, although he begged the woman who wanted the extra turn not to insist, she would not be satisfied.

“Well,” he said, “I am content, since it needs must be; but never come back under similar conditions—I shall be out of town.”

When the battle was over, the damsel who had had an additional turn, when she took leave, asked the canon to give her something as a keepsake.

Without waiting to be too much importuned, and also to get rid of them, the good canon handed them the remainder of a piece of stuff for kerchiefs, which he gave them, and the “principal” received the gift, and they said farewell.

“It is,” he said, “all that I can give you just now; so take it in good part.”

They had not gone very far, and were in the street, when the neighbour, who had had nothing more than one turn, told her companion that she wanted her share of the gift.

“Very well,” said the other, “I have no objection. How much do you want?”

“Need you ask that,” said she. “I am going to have half, and you the same.”

“How dare you ask,” said the other, “more than you have earned? Have you no shame? You know well that you only went once with the canon, and I went twice, and, pardieu, it is not right that you should have as much as I.”

“Pardieu! I will have as much as you,” said the second.

“Did I not do my duty as well as you?”

“What do you mean by that?”

“Is not once as good as ten times? And now that you know my will, instead

of standing here squabbling over a trifle, I recommend you to give me my half, or you will soon see a fight. Do you think you can do as you like with me?"

"Oh, indeed!" said the other, "will you try force? By God's power you shall only have what is right,—that is to say one third part—and I will have the rest. Did I not have twice as much trouble as you?"

With that the other doubled up her fist and landed it in the face of her companion, the one for whom the meeting had been first arranged, who quickly returned the blow. In short they fought as though they would have killed each other, and called one another foul names. When the people in the street saw the fight between the two companions, who a short while previously had been so friendly, they were much astonished, and came and separated the combatants. Then the husbands were called, and each asked his wife the cause of the quarrel. Each tried to make the other in the wrong, without telling the real cause, and set their husbands against each other so that they fought, and the sergeants came and sent them to cool their heels in prison.

Justice intervened, and the two women were compelled to own that the fight was about a piece of stuff for a kerchief. The Council, seeing that the case did not concern them, sent it to the "King of the Bordels", because the women were his subjects. And during the affair the poor husbands remained in gaol awaiting sentence, which, owing to the infinite number of cases, is likely to remain unsettled for a long time.

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## Story the Ninety-Third.

### HOW A GOOD WIFE WENT ON A PILGRIMAGE

BY

MESSIRE TIMOLEON VIGNIER.

Of a good wife who pretended to her husband that she was going on a pilgrimage, in order to find opportunity to be with her lover the parish-clerk—with whom her husband found her; and of what he said and did when he saw them doing you know what.



WHILST I have a good audience, let me relate a funny incident which happened in the district of Hainault.

In a village there, lived a married woman, who loved the parish clerk much more than she did her own husband, and in order to find means to be with the clerk, she feigned to her husband that she owed a pilgrimage to a certain saint, whose shrine was not far from there; which pilgrimage she had vowed to make when she was in travail with her last child, begging the saint that he would be content that she should go on a certain day she named.

The good, simple husband, who suspected nothing,

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She did as he ordered, and prepared a nice chicken and a piece of mutton, and when all these preparations were complete, she told her husband that everything was now ready, and that she was going to get some holy water, and then leave.

She went to church, and the first man she met was the one she sought, that is to say the clerk, to whom she told the news, that is to say how she had been permitted to go on a pilgrimage for the whole day.

“And this is what will occur,” she said. “I am sure that as soon as I am out of the house that he will go to the tavern, and not return until late in the evening, for I know him of old; and so I should prefer to remain in the house, whilst he is away, rather than go somewhere else. Therefore you had better come to our house in half an hour, and I will let you in by the back door, if my husband is not at home, and if he should be, we will set out on our pilgrimage.”

She went home, and there she found her husband, at which she was not best pleased.

“What! are you still here?” he asked.

“I am going to put on my shoes,” she said, “and then I shall not be long before I start.”

She went to the shoemaker, and whilst she was having her shoes put on, her husband passed in front of the cobbler’s house, with another man, a neighbour, with whom he often went to the tavern.

She supposed that because he was accompanied by this neighbour that they were going to the tavern; whereas he had no intention of the kind, but was going to the market to find a comrade or two and bring them back to dine with him, since he had a good dinner to offer them—that is to say the chicken and the mutton.

Let us leave the husband to find his comrades, and return to the woman who was having her shoes put on. As soon as that was completed, she returned home as quickly as she could, where she found the scholar wandering round the house, and said to him;

“My dear, we are the happiest people in the world, for I have seen my husband go to the tavern, I am sure, for one of his neighbours was leading him by the arm, and I know is not likely to let my man come back, and therefore let us be joyful. We have the whole day, till night, to ourselves. I have prepared a chicken, and a good piece of mutton, and we will enjoy ourselves;” and without another word they entered the house, but left the door ajar in order that the neighbours should suspect nothing.

Let us now return to the husband, who had found a couple of boon companions besides the one I have mentioned, and now brought them to his house to devour the chicken, and drink some good Beaune wine—or better, if they could get it.

When he came to the house, he entered first, and immediately saw our two lovers, who were taking a sample of the good work they had to do. And when he saw his wife with her legs in the air, he told her that she need not have troubled to bother the cobbler about her shoes, since she was going to make the pilgrimage in that way.

He called his companions, and said;

“Good sirs, just see how my wife looks after my interests. For fear that she should wear out her new shoes, she is making the journey on her back:—no

other woman would have done that.”

He picked up the remainder of the fowl, and told her that she might finish her pilgrimage; then closed the door and left her with her clerk, without saying another word, and went off to the tavern. He was not scolded when he came back, nor on the other occasions either that he went there, because he had said little or nothing concerning the pilgrimage which his wife had made at home with her lover, the parish clerk.

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## Story the Ninety-Fourth.

### DIFFICULT TO PLEASE. (1)

Of a cure who wore a short gown, like a gallant about to be married, for which cause he was summoned before the Ordinary, and of the sentence which was passed, and the defence he made, and the other tricks he played afterwards—as you will plainly hear.

**I**N Picardy, in the diocese of Therouenne, there lived about a year and a half ago, in one of the large towns, a curé who aped the fashionable youth of the time. He wore a short gown, and high boots, as was the fashion at Court, and, in short, was as great a gallant as you would see,—which gave no small offence to all good Churchmen.

The Ordinary of Therouenne—who is generally known as the “big devil”—was informed of the behaviour of this curé, and cited him to appear to be punished, and ordered to change his method of dressing.

He appeared in his short gown, as though he cared little for the Ordinary, or thinking, perhaps, that he was going to be let off for his good looks, but this did not

(1) There is no author's name to this story in any of the editions.



## STORY THE NINETY-FOURTH — DIFFICULT TO PLEASE.

(\*) There is no author's name to this story in any of the editions.

*Of a curé who wore a short gown, like a gallant about to be married, for which cause he was summoned before the Ordinary, and of the sentence which was passed, and the defence he made, and the other tricks he played afterwards—as you will plainly hear.*

In Picardy, in the diocese of Therouenne, there lived about a year and a half ago, in one of the large towns, a curé who aped the fashionable youth of the time. He wore a short gown, and high boots, as was the fashion at Court, and, in short, was as great a gallant as you would see,—which gave no small offence to all good Churchmen.

The Ordinary of Therouenne—who is generally known as the “big devil”—was informed of the behaviour of this curé, and cited him to appear to be punished, and ordered to change his method of dressing.

He appeared in his short gown, as though he cared little for the Ordinary, or thinking, perhaps, that he was going to be let off for his good looks, but this did not happen, for when he was before the judge, the “promoter” related the case at full length, and demanded that these clothes and other vanities should be forbidden him, and that he should be condemned to pay certain fines.

The judge, seeing at a glance what sort of man our curé was, forbade him, by all the penalties of canon law, to disguise himself in the way he had done, and ordered that he was to wear long gowns and long hair, and moreover, to pay a good sum of money.

The curé promised that he would do so, and never again be summoned for a similar offence. He left the Court and returned to his cure, and as soon as he came there, he called the draper and the tailor, and he had a gown made which trailed three quarters of an ell on the ground; for he told the tailor how he had been reprovved for wearing a short gown, and ordered to wear a long one.

He put on this long robe, and allowed his beard and hair to grow, and in this

habit performed his parochial duties, sang Mass, and did everything that a priest has to do.

The promoter was soon informed that the curé behaved in a way not compatible with good morals, whereupon a fresh summons was issued, and the priest appeared in his long gown.

“What is this?” asked the judge when the curé appeared before him. “It seems that you make fun of the statutes and ordinances of the Church! Why do you not dress like the other priests? If it were not for some of your friends I should send you to prison.”

“What, monseigneur!” said the curé. “Did you not order me to wear a long gown, and long hair? Have I not done as I was commanded? Is not my gown long enough? Is not my hair long? What do you wish me to do?”

“I wish,” said the judge, “and I command that your gown and hair should be half long, neither too much nor too little, and for this great fault that you have committed, I condemn you to pay a fine of ten pounds to the Prosecutor, twenty pounds to the Chapter, and as much to the Bishop of Therouenne for his charities.”

Our curé was much astonished, but there was nothing for it but to comply. He took leave of the judge, and returned to his house, considering how he should attire himself in order to obey the judge’s sentence. He sent for the tailor, whom he ordered to make a gown as long on one side as that we have mentioned, and, as short as the first one on the other side, then he had himself shaved on one side only—that on which the gown was short—and in this guise went about the streets, and performed his sacred duties; and although he was told this was not right of him, he paid no attention.

The Prosecutor was again informed, and cited him to appear a third time. When he appeared, God knows how angry the judge was—he was almost beside himself, and, could scarcely sit on the Bench when he saw the curé dressed like a mummer. If the priest had been mulcted before he was still more so this time, and was condemned to pay very heavy fines.

Then the curé, finding himself thus amerced in fines and amends, said to the judge.

“With all due respect, it seems to me that I have obeyed your orders. Hear what I have to say, and I will prove it.”

Then he covered his long beard with his hand, and said;

“If you like, I have no beard.” Then, covering the shaved side of his face,

he said, "If you like, I have a long beard. Is not that what you ordered?"

The judge, seeing that he had to do with a joker, who was making fun of him, sent for a barber and a tailor, and before all the public, had the cure's hair and beard dressed, and his gown cut to a proper and reasonable length; then he sent him back to his cure where he conducted himself properly—having learned the right manner at the expense of his purse.





## Story the Ninety-Fifth.

### THE SORE FINGER CURED

BY

PHILIPPE DE LAON.

Of a monk who feigned to be very ill and in danger of death, that he might obtain the favours of a certain young woman in the manner which is described hereafter.



It is usually the case, thank God, that in many religious communities there are certain good fellows who can play "base instruments".

Apropos of this, there was formerly in a convent at Paris, a good brother, a preacher, who was accustomed to visit his female neighbours. One day his choice lighted on a very pretty woman, a near neighbour, young, buxom, and spirited, and but recently married to a good fellow.

Master monk fell in love with her, and was always thinking and devising ways and means by which he could compass his desires—which were, in short, to do you know what. Now he decided, "That is what I'll do." Then he changed his mind. So many plans came into his head that he could not decide on any; but of one thing he was sure, and that was that words alone would never seduce

## STORY THE NINETY-FIFTH — THE SORE FINGER CURED. [95](#)

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Master monk fell in love with her, and was always thinking and devising ways and means by which he could compass his desires—which were, in short, to do you know what. Now he decided, “That is what I’ll do.” Then he changed his mind. So many plans came into his head that he could not decide on any; but of one thing he was sure, and that was that words alone would never seduce her from the paths of virtue. “For she is too virtuous, and too prudent. I shall be obliged, if I want to gain my ends, to gain them by cunning and deception.”

Now listen to the plan the rascal devised, and how he dishonestly trapped the poor, little beast, and accomplished his immoral desires, as he proposed.

He pretended one day to have a bad finger—that which is nearest to the thumb, and is the first of the four on the right hand—and he wrapped it in linen bandages, and anointed it with strong-smelling ointments.

He went about with it thus for a day or two, hanging about the church porch, when he thought the aforesaid woman was coming, and God knows what pain he pretended to suffer.

The silly wench looked on him with pity, and seeing by his face that he appeared to be in great pain, she asked him what was the matter; and the cunning fox pitched up a piteous tale.

The day passed, and on the morrow, about the hour of vespers, when the

good woman was at home alone, the patient came and sat by her, and acted the sick man, that anyone who had seen him would have believed that he was in great danger. Sometimes he would walk to the window, then back again to the woman, and put on so many strange tricks that you would have been astonished and deceived if you had seen him. And the poor foolish girl, who pitied him so that the tears almost started from her eyes, comforted him as best she could,

“Alas, Brother Aubrey, have you spoken to such and such physicians?”

“Yes, certainly, my dear,” he replied. “There is not a doctor or surgeon in Paris who has not studied my case.”

“And what do they say? Will you have to suffer this pain for a long time?”

“Alas! yes; until I die, unless God helps me; for there is but one remedy for my complaint, and I would rather die than reveal what that is,—for it is very far from decent, and quite foreign to my holy profession.”

“What?” cried the poor girl. “Then there is a remedy! Then is it not very wrong and sinful of you to allow yourself to suffer thus? Truly it seems so to me, for you are in danger of losing sense and understanding, so sharp and terrible is the pain.”

“By God, very sharp and terrible it is,” said Brother Aubrey, “but there!—God sent it; praised be His name. I willingly suffer and bear all, and patiently await death, for that is the only remedy indeed—excepting one I mentioned to you—which can cure me.”

“But what is that?”

“I told you that I should not dare to say what it is,—and even if I were obliged to reveal what it is, I should never have the will or power to put it in execution.”

“By St. Martin!” said the good woman, “it appears to me that you are very wrong to talk like that. Pardieu! tell me what will cure you, and I assure you that I will do my utmost to help you. Do not wilfully throw away your life when help and succour can be brought. Tell me what it is, and you will see that I will help you—I will, pardieu, though it should cost me more than you imagine.” The monk, finding his neighbour was willing to oblige him, after a great number of refusals and excuses, which, for the sake of brevity, I omit, said in a low voice.

“Since you desire that I should tell you, I will obey. The doctors all agreed that there was but one remedy for my complaint, and that was to put my finger into the secret place of a clean and honest woman, and keep it there for a certain length of time, and afterwards apply a certain ointment of which they gave me

the receipt. You hear what the remedy is, and as I am by disposition naturally modest, I would rather endure and suffer all my ills than breathe a word to a living soul. You alone know of my sad lot, and that in spite of me.”

“Well!” said the good woman, “what I said I would do I will do. I will willingly help to cure you, and am well pleased to be able to relieve you of the terrible pain which torments you, and find you a place in which you can put your sore finger.”

“May God repay you, damsel,” said the monk. “I should never have dared to make the request, but since you are kind enough to help me, I shall not be the cause of my own death. Let us go then, if it please you, to some secret place where no one can see us.”

“It pleases me well,” she replied.

So she led him to a fair chamber, and closed the door, and laid upon the bed, and the monk lifted up her clothes, and instead of the finger of his hand, put something hard and stiff in the place. When he had entered, she feeling that it was very big, said,

“How is it that your finger is so swollen? I never heard of anything like it.”

“Truly,” he replied, “it is the disease which made it like that.”

“It is wonderful,” she said.

Whilst this talk was going on, master monk accomplished that for which he had played the invalid so long. She when she felt—et cetera—asked what that was, and he replied,

“It is the boil on my finger which has burst. I am cured I think—thank God and you.”

“On my word I am pleased to hear it,” said the woman as she rose from the bed. “If you are not quite cured, come back as often as you like;—for to remove your pain there is nothing I would not do. And another time do not be so modest when it is a question of recovering your health.”

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## Story the Nineth-Sixth.

### A GOOD DOG.

Of a foolish and rich village priest who buried his dog in the church-yard ; for which cause he was summoned before his Bishop, and how he gave 50 gold crowns to the Bishop, and what the Bishop said to him— which you will find related here.



LISTEN if you please to what happened the other day to a simple village curé.

This good curé had a dog which he had brought up, and which surpassed every other dog in the country in fetching a stick out of the water, or bringing a hat that his master had forgotten, and many other tricks. In short, this wise and good dog excelled in everything, and his master so loved him that he never tired of singing his praises.

At last, I know not how, whether he ate something that disagreed with him, or whether he was too hot or too cold, the poor dog became very ill, and died, and went straightway to wherever all good dogs do go.

What did the honest curé do? You must know that his vicarage adjoined the church-yard, and when he saw



## STORY THE NINETY-SIXTH — A GOOD DOG. [96](#)

*Of a foolish and rich village curé who buried his dog in the church-yard; for which cause he was summoned before his Bishop, and how he gave 60 gold crowns to the Bishop, and what the Bishop said to him—which you will find related here.*

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What did the honest curé do? You must know that his vicarage adjoined the church-yard, and when he saw his poor dog quit this world, he thought so wise a beast ought not to be without a grave, so he dug a hole near the door of his house, and in the church-yard, and there buried his dog. I do not know if he gave the dog a monument and an epitaph, I only know that the news of the good dog's death spread over the village, and at last reached the ears of the Bishop, together with the report that his master had given him holy burial.

The curé was summoned to appear before the Bishop, who sent a sergent to fetch him.

“Alas!” said the curé, “what have I done, and why have I to appear before the Bishop? I am much surprised at receiving this summons.”

“As for me,” said the sergent, “I do not know what it is for, unless it is because you buried your dog in the holy ground which is reserved for the bodies of Christians.”

“Ah,” thought the curé to himself, “that must be it,” and it occurred to him that he had done wrong, but he knew that he could easily escape being put into prison, by paying a fine, for the Lord Bishop—God be praised—was the most avaricious prelate in the Kingdom, and only kept those about him who knew how to bring grist to the mill.

“At any rate I shall have to pay, and it may as well be soon as late.”

On the appointed day, he appeared before the Bishop, who immediately delivered a long sermon about the sin of burying a dog in consecrated ground, and enlarged on the offence so wonderfully that he made it appear that the curé had done something worse than deny God; and at the end he ordered the curé to be put in prison.

When the curé found that he was to be shut up in the stone box, he demanded permission to be heard, and the Bishop gave him leave to speak.

You must know that there were a number of notable persons at this convocation—the judge, the prosecutor, the secretaries, and notaries, advocates, and procureurs, who were all much amused at this unusual case of the poor curé who had buried his dog in consecrated ground.

The curé spoke briefly in his defence, to this effect.

“Truly, my Lord Bishop, if you had known my poor dog as well as I did, you would not be surprised that I gave him Christian burial, for his like was never seen;” and then he began to recount his doings.

“And as he was so good and wise when he was living, he was still more so at his death; for he made a beautiful will, and, as he knew your poverty and need, he left you fifty golden crowns, which I now bring you.”

So saying, he drew the money from his bosom and gave it to the Bishop, who willingly received it, and greatly praised the good dog, and approved of his will, and was glad to know that he had received honourable sepulture.

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## Story the Ninety-Seventh.

### BIDS AND BIDDINGS

BY

MONSEIGNEUR DE LAUNOY.

Of a number of boon companions making good cheer and drinking at a tavern, and how one of them had a quarrel with his wife when he returned home, as you will hear.

**A** number of good fellows had once assembled to make good cheer at the tavern and drink as much as they could. And when they had eaten and drunk to God's praise and *usque ad Hebreos* <sup>(1)</sup>, and had paid their reckoning, some of them began to say, "How shall we be received by our wives when we return home?" "God knows if we shall be excommunicated." "They will pluck us by the beard." "By Our Lady!" said one, "I am afraid to go home." "God help me! so am I," said another. "I shall be sure to hear a sermon for Passion Sunday." "Would to God that my wife were dumb—I should drink more boldly than I do now."

So spoke all of them with one exception, and that was a good fellow who said,

(1) A pun on the word *ebreos* (drunken).

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(\*) A pun on the word *ebreos* (drunken).

So spoke all of them with one exception, and that was a good fellow who said,

"How now, good sirs? You all seem every miserable, and each has a wife who forbids him to go to the tavern, and is displeased if you drink. Thank God my wife is not one of that sort, for if I drink ten—or even a hundred-times a day that is not enough for her,—in short I never knew an instance in which she did not wish I had drunk as much again. For, when I come back from the tavern she always wishes that I had the rest of the barrel in my belly, and the barrel along with it. Is not that a sign that I do not drink enough to please her?"

When his companions heard this argument they began to laugh, and all praised his wife, and then each one went his own way.

The good fellow we have mentioned, went home, where he found his wife not over friendly, and ready to scold him; and as soon as she saw him she began the usual lecture, and, as usual, she wished the rest of the barrel in his belly.

"Thank you, my dear, you are always much kinder than all the other women in the town for they all get wild if their husbands drink too much, but you—may

God repay you—always wish that I may have a good draught that would last me all my days.”

“I don’t know that I wish that,” she said, “but I pray to God that you may drink such a lot some day that you may burst.”

Whilst they were conversing thus affectionately, the soup-kettle on the fire began to boil over, because the fire was too hot, and the good man, who noticed that his wife did not take it off the fire, said;

“Don’t you see, wife, that the pot is boiling over?”

She was still angry and indignant, and replied;

“Yes, master, I see it.”

“Well then, take it off, confound you! Do as I bid you.”

“I will,” she replied, “I will bid twelve pence.” (\*)

(\*) There is a pun in the French on the two meanings of the verb *hausser*,—“to raise” and to “augment” or “run up.”

“Oh, indeed, dame,” said he, “is that your reply? Take off that pot, in God’s name!”

“Well!” she said. “I will put it at seven *sous*. Is that high enough?”

“Ha, ha!” he said. “By St. John that shall not pass without three blows with a good stick.”

He picked up a thick stick, and laid it with all his might across her back, saying as he did so,

“The lot is knocked down to you.”

She began to cry, and the neighbours all assembled and asked what was the matter? The good man told them and they all laughed—except the woman who had had the lot knocked down to her.

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## Story the Ninety-Eighth.

### THE UNFORTUNATE LOVERS

BY

THE EDITOR.

Of a knight of this kingdom and his wife, who had a fair daughter aged fifteen or sixteen. Her father would have married her to a rich old knight, his neighbour, but she ran away with another knight, a young man who loved her honourably; and, by strange mishap, they both died sad deaths without having ever co-habited,--as you will hear shortly.

**I**N the frontiers of France, there lived, amongst other nobles, a knight who was rich and noble, not only by illustrious descent, but by his own virtuous and honourable deeds, who had, by the wife he had married, an only daughter, a very beautiful virgin, well-educated as her condition required, and aged fifteen or sixteen years, or thereabouts.

This good and noble knight, seeing that his daughter was of a fit and proper age for the holy sacrament of wedlock, much wished to give her in marriage to a knight, his neighbour, who was powerful, not so much

# STORY THE NINETY-EIGHTH — THE UNFORTUNATE LOVERS.

**By The Editor.**

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In the frontiers of France, there lived, amongst other nobles, a knight who was rich and noble, not only by illustrious descent, but by his own virtuous and honourable deeds, who had, by the wife he had married, an only daughter, a very beautiful virgin, well-educated as her condition required, and aged fifteen or sixteen years, or thereabouts.

This good and noble knight, seeing that his daughter was of a fit and proper age for the holy sacrament of wedlock, much wished to give her in marriage to a knight, his neighbour, who was powerful, not so much by noble birth as by great possessions and riches, and was also from 60 to 80 years old, or thereabouts.

This wish so filled the head of the father of whom I spoke, that he would not rest until formal promises were made between him and his wife, the mother of the girl, and the aforesaid old knight, touching his marriage to the girl, who, for her part, knew and suspected nothing of all these arrangements, promises, and treaties.

Not far from the castle of the knight, the father of this damsel, there lived another knight, a young man, valiant and brave, and moderately rich, but not so rich as the old man of whom I spoke, and this youth was greatly in love with the fair damsel. She also was much attached to him, on account of his fame and great renown, and they often spoke to each other, though with much trouble and difficulty, for her father, who suspected their love, tried by all ways and means to prevent their seeing each other. Nevertheless, he could not destroy the great and pure love which united their hearts, and when fortune favoured them with an opportunity, they discussed nothing but the means whereby they might



accomplish their whole and sole desire and marry each other.

The time approached when the damsel was to be given to the old knight, and her father told her of the contract he had made, and named the day on which she was to be married; at which she was greatly angered, but thought to herself that she might find a way out of the difficulty.

She sent a message to her lover, the young knight, to tell him to come to her secretly as soon as he could; and when he came she told him how she was betrothed to the old knight, and asked her lover's advice as to how this marriage was to be broken off, for that she would never have any other man but him.

The knight replied,

“My dearest lady, since of your kindness you offer me that which I should never have dared to ask without great shame, I thank you humbly, and if it be your will, I will tell you what we will do. We will appoint a day for me to come to this town accompanied by many of my friends, and at a given hour you will repair to a certain place, both of which we will arrange now that I am alone with you. You will mount on my horse, and I will conduct you to my castle. And then, if we can manage to pacify your father and mother, we will fulfil our promises of plighted troth.”

She replied that the plan was a good one, and she would carry it out properly. She told him that on such a day, at such an hour, he would find her at a certain place, and that she would do all that he had arranged.

The appointed day arrived, and the young knight appeared at the place mentioned, and there he found the lady, who mounted on his horse, and they rode fast until they were far from there.

The good knight, fearing that he should fatigue his dearly beloved mistress, slackened his speed, and spread his retainers on every road to see that they were not followed, and he rode across the fields, without keeping to any path or road, and as gently as he could, and charged his servants that they should meet at a large village which he named, and where he intended to stop and eat. This village was remote, and away from the high road.

They rode until they came to this village, where the local *fête* was being held, which had brought together all sorts of people. They entered the best tavern in the place, and at once demanded food and drink, for it was late after dinner, and the damsel was much fatigued. A good fire was made, and food prepared for the servants of the knight who had not yet arrived.

Hardly had the knight and the lady entered the tavern than there came four big swashbucklers—waggoners or drovers, or perhaps worse—who noisily

entered the tavern, and demanded where was the *bona roba* that some ruffian had brought there, riding behind him on his horse, for they would drink with her, and amuse themselves with her.

The host who knew the knight well, and was aware that the rascals spake not the truth, told them gently that the girl was not what they imagined.

“Morbleu!” they replied; “if you do not bring her at once, we will batter down the door, and bring her by force in spite of the two of you.”

When the host heard this, and found that his explanation was no use, he named the knight, who was renowned through all that district, but unknown to many of the common people, because he had long been out of the country, acquiring honour and renown in wars in distant countries. The host told them also that the damsel was a young virgin, a relative of the knight, and of noble parentage.

“You can, messieurs,” he said, “without danger to yourself or others, quench your lust with many of the women who have come to the village on the occasion of the *fête* expressly for you and the like of you, and for God’s sake leave in peace this noble damsel, and think of the great danger that you run, the evil that you wish to commit and the small hope that you have of success.”

“Drop your sermons,” shouted the rascals, inflamed with carnal lust, “and bring her to us quietly; or if not we will cause a scandal, for we will bring her down openly, and each of us four will do as he likes with her.”

These speeches being finished, the good host went up to the chamber where the knight and the damsel were, and called the knight apart, and told him this news, which when he had heard, without being troubled in the least, he went down wearing his sword, to talk to the four swashbucklers, and asked them politely what they wanted?

And they, being foul-mouthed and abusive blackguards, replied that they wanted the *bona roba* that he kept shut up in his chamber, and that, if he did not give her up quietly, they would take her from him by force.

“Fair sirs,” said the knight, “if you knew me well you would be aware that I should not take about women of that sort. I have never done such a folly, thank God. And even if I ever did—which God forbid—I should never do it in this district, where I and all my people are well known—my nobility and reputation would not suffer me to do it. This damsel is a young virgin, a near relative, related also to a noble house, and we are travelling for our pleasure, accompanied by my servants, who although they are not here at present, will come directly, and I am waiting for them. Moreover, do not flatter yourselves

that I should be such a coward as to let her be insulted, or suffer injury of any kind; but I would protect and defend her as long as my strength endured, and until I died.”

Before the knight had finished speaking, the villains interrupted him, and in the first place denied that he was the person he said, because he was alone, and that knight never travelled without a great number of servants. Therefore they recommended him, if he were wise, to bring the girl down, otherwise they would take her by force, whatever consequences might ensue.

When this brave and valiant knight found that fair words were of no use, and that force was the only remedy, he summoned up all his courage, and resolved that the villains should not have the damsel, and that he was ready to die in her defence.

At last one of the four advanced to knock with his bludgeon at the door of the chamber, and the others followed him, and were bravely beaten back by the knight. Then began a fight which lasted long, and although the two parties were so unequally matched, the good knight vanquished and repulsed the four villains, and as he pursued them to drive them away, one of them, who had a sword, turned suddenly and plunged it in the body of the knight, and pierced him through, so that he fell dead at once, at which they were very glad. Then they compelled the host to quietly bury the body in the garden of the inn.

When the good knight was dead, the villains came and knocked at the door of the chamber where the damsel was impatiently awaiting the return of her lover, and they pushed open the door.

As soon as she saw the brigands enter, she guessed that the knight was dead, and said;

“Alas, where is my protector? Where is my sole refuge? What has become of him? Why does he thus wound my heart and leave me here alone?”

The scoundrels, seeing that she was much troubled, thought to falsely deceive her by fair words, and told her the knight had gone to another house, and had commanded them to go to her and protect her; but she would not believe them, for her heart told her that they had killed him. She began to lament, and to cry more bitterly than ever.

“What is this?” they said. “Why all these tricks and manners? Do you think we don’t know you? If you imagine your bully is still alive, you are mistaken—we have rid the country of him. Therefore make your mind up that we are all four going to enjoy you.” At these words one of them advanced, and seized her roughly, saying that he would have her company.

When the poor damsel saw herself thus forced, and that she could not soften their hearts, she said;

“Alas! sirs, since you will force me, and my humble prayers cannot soften you, at least have this decency; that if I abandon myself to you it shall be privately, that is to say each separately without the presence of the others.”

They agreed to this, though with a bad grace, and then they made her choose which of the four should first have her company. She chose the one that she fancied was the mildest and best-tempered, but he was the worst of all. The door was closed, and then the poor damsel threw herself at the scoundrel’s feet, and with many piteous appeals, begged that he would have pity on her. But he was obstinate, and declared that he would have his will of her.

When she saw that he was so cruel, and that her prayers could not melt him, she said.

“Well then, since so it must be, I am content; but I beg of you to close the windows that we may be more secret.”

He willingly consented, and whilst he was closing them, she drew a little knife that she wore at her girdle, and uttering one long, piteous cry, she cut her throat, and gave up the ghost.

When the scoundrel saw her lying on the ground, he fled along with his companions, and it is to be supposed that they were afterwards punished according to their deserts.

Thus did these two sweet lovers end their days, one directly after the other, without ever having tasted of the joys and pleasures in which they hoped to have lived together all their days.

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## Story the Nineth-Ninth.

### THE METAMORPHOSIS

BY

THE EDITOR.

Relates how a Spanish Bishop, not being able to procure fish, ate two partridges on a Friday, and how he told his servants that he had converted them by his prayers into fish—as will more plainly be related below.

**I**F you wish, you shall hear now, before it is too late, a little story about a brave Spanish Bishop who went to Rome to transact some business for his master the King of Castille.

This brave prelate, whom I intend to make furnish this last story, arrived one day at a little village in Lombardy, it being then early on a Friday evening, and ordered his steward to have supper early, and to go into the town and buy what he could, for he (the Bishop) was very hungry, not having broken his fast all that day.

His servant obeyed him, and went to the market, and to all the fishmongers in the town, to procure some fish, but, to make the story short, not a single fish, in spite of all the efforts made by the steward, could be found.

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But, on returning to the inn, he met a countryman, who had two fine partridges which he would sell very cheaply. The steward thought he would secure them, and they would serve to make the Bishop a feast on Sunday.

He bought them, a great bargain, and came to his master with the two partridges in his hand, all alive, and fat, and plump, and told him of his failure to get any fish, at which my Lord was not best pleased.

“And what can we have for supper?”

“My Lord,” replied the steward, “I will get them to prepare you eggs in a hundred thousand different ways, and you can have apples and pears. Our host has also some rich cheese. We will do our best; have patience, a supper is soon over, and you shall fare better to-morrow, God willing. We shall be in a town which is much better provided with fish than this, and on Sunday you cannot fail to dine well, for here are two partridges which are plump and succulent.”

The Bishop looked at the two partridges, and found them as the steward said, plump, and in good condition, so he thought they would take the place of the fish which he had lost. So he caused them to be killed and prepared for the spit.

When the steward saw that his master wished to have them roasted, he was astounded, and said to his master;

“My lord, it is well to kill them, but to roast them now for Sunday seems a pity.”

But the steward lost his time, for, in spite of his remonstrances, they were put on the spit and roasted.

The good prelate watched them cooking, and the poor steward was scandalized, and did not know what to make of his master’s ill-ordered appetite.

When the partridges were roasted, the table laid, the wine brought in, eggs cooked in various ways, and served to a turn, the prelate seated himself, said grace, and asked for the partridges, with mustard.

His steward wished to know what his master would do with these birds, and brought them to him fresh from the fire, and emitting an odour enough to make a friar’s mouth water.

The good Bishop attacked the partridges, and began to cut and eat with such haste, that he did not give his squire, who came to carve for him, sufficient time to lay his bread, and sharpen his knife.

When the steward saw his master eating the birds, he was so amazed that he could no longer keep silent, and said to him;

“Oh, my lord, what are you doing? Are you a Jew or a Saracen, that you do not keep Friday? By my faith, I am astonished at such doings.”

“Hold your tongue! Hold your tongue!” said the good prelate, who had his hands and his beard covered with fat and gravy. “You are a fool, and know not what you are saying. I am doing no harm. You know well and believe, that by the words spoken by me and other priests, we make of the host, which is nothing but flour and water, the precious body of Jesus Christ. Can I not by the same means?—I who have seen so many things at the court of Rome and many other places—know by what words I may transform these partridges, which are flesh, into fish, although they still retain the form of partridges? So indeed I have done. I have long known how to do this. They were no sooner put to the fire than by certain words I know, I so charmed them that I converted them into the substance of fish, and you might—all of you who are here—eat, as I do, without

sin. But as you would still believe them to be flesh, they would do you harm, so I alone will commit the sin.”

The steward and the other attendants began to laugh, and pretended to believe the highly-coloured story that their master had told them, and ever after that were up to the trick, and related it joyously in many places.

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Le sage Nicaise ou l'amant vertueux



Ebequa



## Story the Hundredth and Last.

### THE CHASTE LOVER

BY

PHILIPPE DE LAON.

Of a rich merchant of the city of Genoa, who married a fair damsel, who, owing to the absence of her husband, sent for a wise clerk—a young, fit, and proper man—to help her to that of which she had need; and of the fast that he caused her to make—as you will find more plainly below.

**I**N the powerful and well-populated city of Genoa, there, lived some time ago, a merchant who was very rich, and whose business consisted in sending much merchandise by sea to foreign lands, and especially to Alexandria. So occupied was he with the management of his ships, and in heaping up riches, that during all his days, from his tender youth till the time that he was fifty years of age, he never cared or wanted to do anything else.

When he had arrived at this last mentioned age, he began to think about his condition, and to see that he had spent and employed all his days and years in heaping up riches

# STORY THE HUNDREDTH AND LAST — THE CHASTE LOVER.

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When he had arrived at this last mentioned age, he began to think about his condition, and to see that he had spent and employed all his days and years in heaping up riches without ever having for a single minute or moment been inclined to think of marrying and having children, to whom the great wealth, that he had by great diligence and labour amassed and acquired, would succeed. This thought caused him much mental sorrow, and he was greatly vexed that he had thus spent his youth.

This grief and regret lasted many days, during which time it happened that in the above-named city, the young children, after they had solemnized some festival, did as they were accustomed each year, and variously appalled and disguised, some this way and some that, came in great numbers to the place where the public rejoicings of the city are usually held, to play in the presence of their fathers and mothers, and to have their costumes praised and admired.

At this assembly was our merchant, still moody and vexed, and the sight of so many fathers and mothers taking pleasure in watching their children dance and sport, increased the grief that was preying on his mind, and, unable to watch them any longer, he returned to his house, sad and vexed, and retired to his lonely chamber, where he remained some time, uttering complaints of this kind;

“Ah, poor, miserable, old man that I am and always have been, and for whom fate and destiny are hard, bitter, and unpleasant. Oh, wretched man! worn out and weary by watching and work, suffered and borne by land and sea. Your great riches and heaped-up treasures, which with many perilous adventures, hard work, and sweat you have amassed, and for which you have expended all your time, are but vain, for you have never thought who will possess them, and to whom by human law you should leave your memory and your name when you are dead and gone. Oh, wicked man, how could you have been careless of that of which you should have taken most heed? Marriage never pleased you, and you always feared and refused it, and even disliked and scorned the good and just counsels of those who would have found you a wife, in order that you might have offspring who would perpetuate your name, your praise, and your renown. Oh, how happy are those parents who leave good and wise children to succeed them! How many fathers have I seen to-day playing with their children, who would call themselves most happy, and think they had well employed their time, if, after their decease, they could leave their children but one small part of the great wealth that I possess! But what pleasure and solace can I ever have? What name or fame shall I leave after my death? Where is the son who will cherish my memory when I am dead? Blessed be that holy condition of marriage by which the memory and recollection of fathers is preserved, and by which fiefs, possessions, and heritages are permanently secured to their happy children!”

When the good merchant had thus argued to himself for a long time, he suddenly thought of a remedy for his misfortunes, saying;

“Well, I am in future determined, notwithstanding the number of my years, not to trouble or torment myself with grief, or remorse. At the worst I have but been like the birds, which prepare their nests before they begin to lay their eggs. I have, thank God, riches sufficient for myself, wife, and many children, if it should happen that I have any, nor am I so old, or so devoid of natural vigour, as to lose hope of even having any offspring. What I have to do is to watch and work, and use every endeavour to discover where I shall find a wife fit and proper for me.”

Having finished his soliloquy, he left his chamber, and sent for two of his comrades—merchant-mariners like himself,—and to them he plainly stated his case, and requested them to help to find him a wife, for that was the thing he most desired in the world.

The two merchants, having heard what their comrade had to say, much applauded his determination, and undertook to make all possible endeavours to find him a wife.

Whilst they were making enquiries, our merchant,—as hot to get married as he could be—played the gallant, and sought throughout the city all the youngest and prettiest girls—to the others he paid small heed.

He searched so well that he found one such as he required,—born of honest parents, marvellously beautiful, aged only fifteen or thereabouts, gentle, good-tempered, and well brought up in every respect.

As soon as he knew her virtues and good qualities, he felt such affection and desire that she should be his lawful wife, that he asked her hand of her parents and friends; which, after some slight difficulties that were quickly removed, was given, and the same hour they were betrothed, and security given by him for the dower he was to bestow upon her.

If the good merchant had taken pride and pleasure in his merchandise during the time that he was amassing a fortune, he felt still more when he saw himself certain of being married, and that to a wife by whom he could have fine children.

The wedding was honourably celebrated, with all due pomp, and that feast being over and finished, he forgot all about his former life,—that is to say on the sea—but lived happily and in great pleasure with his fair and fond wife.

But this way of life did not last long, for he soon became tired and bored, and before the first year had expired took a dislike to living at home in idleness and a humdrum domestic existence, and pined for his old business of merchant-mariner, which seemed to him easier and more pleasant than that which he had so willingly undertaken to manage night and day.

He did nothing but devise how he could get to Alexandria, as he used in the old days, and it seemed to him that it was not only difficult but impossible for him to abstain from going to sea. Yet though he firmly resolved to return to his old profession, he concealed his intention from his wife, fearing that she might be displeased.

There were also fears and doubts which disturbed him, and prevented him from executing his designs, for he knew the youth and character of his wife, and he felt sure that if he were absent she would not be able to control herself; and he considered also the mutability and variability of the feminine character, and that the young gallants were accustomed to pass in front of his house to see his wife, even when he was at home,—whence he imagined that in his absence they might come closer, and peradventure even take his place.

For a long time he was tormented by these difficulties and suspicions without saying a word but as he knew that he had lived the best part of his life,

he now cared little for wife, marriage, and all that concerned domestic life, and to the arguments and theories which filled his head, provided a speedy solution by saying;—

“It is better to live than to die, and, if I do not quit my household very shortly, it is very certain that I shall not live. But then, shall I leave my fair and affectionate wife? Yes, I will leave her;—she shall henceforth manage for herself as she pleases; it will no longer be incumbent on me. Alas, what shall I do? What a dishonour, what an annoyance it would be for me if she did not continue to guard her chastity. Ah, yes, it is better to live than to die, that I may be able to look after her! But God cannot wish that I should take such care and pains about a woman’s belly without any pay or reward, and receive nothing in return but torture of soul and body. I will not bear all the trouble and anguish of mind that many suffer in living with their wives. It angers me and saddens me to think that God only permits me to live to enjoy the trifling incidents of married life. I want full liberty and freedom to do what I please.”

When the good merchant had finished these sage reflections, he went and found some of his old comrades, and told them that he wished to visit Alexandria with a cargo of merchandise, as he had often previously done in their company,—but he did not tell them of the trouble and anxiety which his married life caused him.

He soon made all arrangements with them, and they told him to be ready to start when the first fair wind came. The sailors and cargo were soon ready, and awaited in a safe place, a fair wind to start.

The good merchant, still firm in his determination, as on the previous days, found his wife alone in her chamber, and that she should not be sad at his departure, addressed her in these words.

“My dearest wife, whom I love better than my life, I beg of you to be of good heart, and show yourself joyful, and be not sad or cast down at what I am about to say to you. I propose—if it be God’s pleasure—to once more visit Alexandria, as I have long been in the habit of doing; and it seems to me that you should not be vexed thereat, seeing that you are aware that that is my business and profession, by which I have acquired riches, houses, name, and fame, and many good friends. The handsome and rich ornaments, rings, garments, and other things with which you are apparelled and ornamented as is no other woman in the city, as you well know, I have acquired by the profit I have made on my merchandise. This journey of mine therefore should not trouble you, for I shall shortly return. And I promise you that if this time,—as I hope,—Fortune should smile upon me, never will I return there again, but this time will take

leave of it for ever. You must therefore be of good courage, and I will leave in your hands the disposition, administration, and management of all the goods which I possess; but before I leave I have some requests to make of you.

“The first is, I beg of you to be happy whilst I am on my voyage, and live comfortably; for if I know that such is the case I shall have greater pleasure in my voyage. For the second, you know that nothing should be hidden or concealed between us two, and all honour, profit, and renown should be—as I know they are—common to both of us, and the praise and honour of the one cannot exist without the glory of the other, and similarly the dishonour of the one would be the shame of us both. I wish you to understand that I am not so devoid of sense that I am not aware that I leave you young, beautiful, kind, fresh, and tender, and without the consolation of a husband; and that many men will desire you. And although I firmly believe that you are now fully resolved, nevertheless, when I think of your age and inclinations and the warmth of your desires, it does not seem possible to me that you should not, out of pure necessity and compulsion, enjoy the company of a man during my absence. It is my will and pleasure therefore to permit you to grant those favours which nature compels you to grant. I would beg of you though to respect our marriage vow unbroken as long as you possibly can. I neither intend nor wish to leave you in the charge of any person, but leave you to be your own guardian. Truly, there is no duenna, however watchful, who can prevent a woman from doing what she wishes. When therefore your desires shall prick and spur you on, I would beg you, my dear wife, to act with such circumspection in their execution that they may not be publicly known,—for if you do otherwise, you, and I, and all our friends will be infamous and dishonoured.

“If then you cannot remain chaste, at least take pains to retain your reputation. I will teach you how that is to be done, if the need should arise. You know that in our good city there are plenty of handsome men. From amongst these choose one only, and be content to do with him whatever nature may incline you to do. At all events, I wish that in making your choice you should take particular care that he is not a vagabond, or dishonest, or disreputable person, for great dangers might arise from your acquaintance with such a person, inasmuch as he would, without doubt publish your secret.

“You will select one therefore who is, you are sure, both wise and prudent, and who will take as much pains to conceal your amour as you do yourself. This I beg of you, and that you will promise me honestly and loyally to remember this lesson. I do not advise you to reply in the way that other women are accustomed to when similar proposals are made to them. I know what they would say, which

would be somewhat to this effect. ‘Oh, husband! what do you mean by speaking like that? How could you have such a cruel, unjust opinion of me? How can you imagine that I should commit such an abominable crime? No! no! God forbid that I should make you such a promise. I will rather wish that the earth may open and swallow me up alive the day and hour—I will not say commit—but even think of committing such a sin.

“My dear wife, I have shown you this way of replying in order that you may not use the same to me. I firmly and truly believe that at the present moment you are fully determined to remain chaste, and I desire you to remain of that opinion as long as nature will permit you. And understand that I do not wish you to break your vows unless you are unable to battle against the appetites of your frail and weak youth.”

When the good merchant had finished his speech, his fair, kind, and gentle wife, her face all suffused with blushes, trembled, and could not for some moments reply to what her husband had said. Soon her blushes vanished, her confidence returned, and calling up all her courage, she replied in these words;

“My kind, and greatly beloved husband, I assure you that never have I been so disturbed and troubled by any speech I have ever heard, as I am now by your words, by which I learn something that I never heard or guessed. You know my simplicity, youth, and innocence, and you say that it is not possible at my age to avoid committing such a fault, and that you are sure and know positively that when you are away I shall not be able to preserve our marriage vow in its integrity. That speech greatly vexed my heart, and made me tremble, and I do not know how I can reply to your arguments. You have deprived me of the reply I should have made, but I can tell you from the bottom of my heart that with joined hands I beg most humbly of God that he may cause an abyss to open in which I may be thrown, that my limbs may be torn off, and that I may suffer a most cruel death, if ever the day comes when I shall not only be disloyal to our marriage vow, but even think for a brief moment of being disloyal. How, and in what manner I could be brought to commit such a crime, I am unable to comprehend. And as you have forbidden me to reply as I should, telling me that women are accustomed to make elusive and false excuses, I will to give you pleasure, and allay your suspicions, and that you may see that I am ready to obey and keep your commands, promise you this moment with firm and immutable faith and constancy, to await the day of your return in true, pure, and entire chastity of body, and may God forbid that the contrary should happen. Be fully assured that I will obey your orders in every respect. If there is anything else you wish or command, I beg of you to inform me, and I will perform your will (I



desire nothing else) and not my own.”

Our merchant, when he heard his wife’s reply, was so overjoyed that he could not refrain from weeping, and said:

“My dearest spouse, since you have of your great kindness given me the promise that I required, I beg of you to keep it.”

The following morning, the good merchant was sent for by his comrades to put to sea. So he took leave of his wife, and commended her to the care of God. Then he put to sea to sail to Alexandria where they arrived in a few days, the wind being favourable, at which place they stayed a long time both to deliver their merchandise and take in fresh cargoes.

During this time the gracious damsel of whom I have spoken remained in the house with, as her only companion, a little girl who served her. As I have said, this fair damsel was but fifteen years of age, therefore any fault that she committed must be imputed, not to a vicious character, but to youth and inexperience.

When the merchant had been absent many days, little by little she began to forget him. As soon as the young men of the city knew of his departure, they came to visit her. At first she would neither leave the house nor show herself, but as they continued to come daily, she, on account of the great pleasure she took in sweet and melodious songs and harmonies of all instruments, which they played outside her door, peeped through the crevices of the windows and the trellis so that she could see the musicians, and they for their part were quite willing to be seen.

In hearing these songs and dances she took so much pleasure, that her mind was filled with love, and the natural warmth of her affections often tempted her to incontinence. So often was she visited in this manner, that in the end her concupiscence and carnal desires conquered, and she was fairly hit by the dart of love. She often thought how easy it was for her to find time and place for any lover, for no one guarded her, and no one could prevent her putting her designs in execution, and she came to the conclusion that her husband was very wise when he said he was positive that she could not preserve continence and chastity, although she wished to keep the promise she had made to him.

“It is right then,” she said to herself, “for me to follow my husband’s advice; by doing which I shall incur no dishonour, since he himself gave me permission, and I shall not violate the promise I made him. I remember rightly that he charged me that if ever I broke my vow of chastity, that I should choose a man who was wise, of good fame, and great virtues, and no other. That is what I

will really do, as I may without disobeying my husband's instructions, and by following his good advice which was ample for my purpose. I suppose that he did not intend that the man should be old, and it seems to me that he should be young, but having as good a reputation for learning and science as any old man. Such was my husband's advice, I remember."

At the same time that the damsel was making these reflections, and was searching for a wise and prudent, young man to cool her bowels, there fortunately arrived in the city a very wise young clerk, who had newly arrived from the university of Bologna, where he had been several years without once returning to his native city. Such attention had he given to his studies that there was not in all the country a clerk who enjoyed such a reputation amongst the learned men of the city, whom he assisted continually.

He was accustomed to go every day to the Town Hall on the market-place, and was obliged to pass before the house of the said damsel, who was much struck by his appearance and pleasant manners. And although he had never filled any clerical office, she came to the conclusion that he was a very learned clerk, and fell deeply in love with him, saying to herself that he would be the man to guard her husband's secret; but how she was to inform him of her great and ardent love, and reveal the secret desires of her mind she knew not,—at which she was much vexed.

She bethought herself that as every day he passed before her house on his way to the market place, that she would be upon her balcony, dressed as handsomely as possible, in order that when he passed he might notice her beauty, and so be led to desire those favours which would not be refused him.

Many times did the damsel so show herself, although that had not previously been her custom, and though she was pleasant to gaze upon, and her youthful mind was filled with thoughts of love, the wise clerk never perceived her, for in walking he glanced neither to the right nor left.

This plan of the damsel's was not as successful as she imagined it would be. She was very sorrowful, and the more she thought of the clerk, the more ardent did her desires become. At last, after a number of plans had suggested themselves to her, and which for the sake of brevity I pass over, she determined to send her little servant-maid to him. So she called her, and ordered her to go and ask for such-an-one,—that is to say, the learned clerk—and when she had found him, to tell him to come in haste to the house of such a damsel, the wife of so-and-so; and if he should ask what the damsel wanted, she was to reply that she knew not, but only knew that he was urgently required to come at once.

The little girl learned her message, and went forth to seek him; and she was soon shown a house where he was at dinner with a great company of his friends, and other people of high degree.

The girl entered the house, and saluting all the company, asked for the clerk, and delivered her message properly. The good clerk, who had been acquainted since his youth with the merchant of whom the girl spoke, and knew his house as he did his own, but was not aware that he was married or who was his wife, imagined that during the husband's absence, the wife had need of advice on some weighty matter, for he knew that the husband was away, and had no suspicion of the cause of his invitation. He said to the girl;

“My dear, go and tell your mistress that as soon as dinner is over I will come to her.”

The messenger duly delivered these words, and God knows how she was received by her mistress. When she heard that the clerk, her lover, would come, she was more joyful than ever woman was, and owing to the great joy she felt at having the clerk in the house, she trembled and did not know what to do. She caused the house to be well swept, and fair herbage to be spread in her chamber, covered the bed and the couch with rich tapestry and embroidery, and dressed and adorned herself with her most precious belongings.

Then she waited a little time, which seemed to her marvellous long on account of the great desire she had, and so impatient was she for his arrival, and that she might perceive him coming afar off, she went up to her chamber and then came down again, and went now hither, now thither, and was so excited that it seemed as though she were out of her senses.

At last she went up to her chamber, and there laid out all the riches and delicacies that she had prepared to feast her lover. She made the little servant-maid stay below to let the clerk in, and conduct him to her mistress.

When he arrived, the servant-maid received him, and let him in and closed the door, leaving his servants outside, whom she told that they were to await their master's return.

The damsel, hearing that her lover had arrived, could not refrain from running down stairs to meet him, and she saluted him politely. Then she took his hand and led him to the chamber which she had prepared. He was much astonished when he arrived there, not only by the diversity of splendours that he saw, but also by the great beauty of the fair girl who conducted him.

As soon as they were in the chamber, she sat down on a stool by the couch, and made him sit on another by her side, and there they both sat for a certain

time, without saying a word, for each waited for the other to speak, though in very different ways, for the clerk imagined that the damsel would consult him on some great and difficult matter, and wished her to begin; whilst she, on the other hand, knowing how wise and prudent he was, believed that he would know why he had been sent for without her telling him.

When she saw that he made no attempt to speak, she began, and said;

“My very dear and true friend, and learned man, I will tell you at once why I have sent for you. I believe that you are well-acquainted and familiar with my husband. He has left me, in the condition you now see me, whilst he goes to Alexandria to bring back merchandise, as he has long been used. Before his departure, he told me that when he was away, he was sure that my weak and fragile nature would cause me to lose my chastity, and that necessity would compel me to have intercourse with a man to quench the natural longings I should be sure to feel after his departure. And truly I deem him a very wise man, for that which I thought impossible I find has happened, for my youth, beauty, and nature rebel against wasting away in vain. That you may understand me plainly I will tell you that my wise and thoughtful husband when he left, knew that as all young and tender plants dry and wither when they cannot fulfil the needs of their nature, so it was likely to be with me. And seeing clearly that my nature and constitution were likely to be controlled by my natural desires, which I could not long resist, he made me swear and promise that, if nature should force me to become unchaste, I would choose a wise man of good position, who would carefully guard our secret. I do not think there is in all the city a man more worthy than yourself, for you are young and very wise. I do not suppose then that you will refuse me or repel me. You see me as I am, and you may, during the absence of my husband, supply his place if you wish, and without the knowledge of any one; place, time, and opportunity all favour us.”

The gentleman was much surprised and moved at what the lady said, but he concealed his emotion. He took her right hand and with a smiling face addressed her in these words:

“I ought to render infinite thanks to Dame Fortune, who has to-day given me so much pleasure, and the attainment of the greatest happiness I could have in this world; never in my life will I call myself unfortunate, since Fortune has granted me this great favour. I may certainly say that I am to-day the happiest of men, for when I consider, my beautiful and kind mistress, how we may joyously pass our days together, without any person’s knowledge or interference, I almost faint with joy. Where is the man more favoured by Fortune than I am? If it were not for one thing which forms a slight obstacle to our love affair, I should be the

luckiest man on earth, and I am greatly vexed and annoyed that I cannot overcome that difficulty.”

When the damsel, who had never imagined that any difficulty could arise, heard that there was an obstacle which would prevent her indulging her passions, she was very sad and sorrowful, and begged him to say what it was, in order that she might find a remedy if possible.

“The obstacle,” he said, “is not so great that it cannot be removed in a little time, and, since you are kind enough to wish to know what it is, I will tell you. When I was studying at the University of Bologna, the people of the city rose in insurrection against their ruler. I was accused, along with some others, my companions, of having stirred up this insurrection, and I was closely imprisoned. When I found myself in prison, and in danger of losing my life, though I knew I was innocent, I made a vow to God, promising that if He would deliver me from prison and restore me to my friends and relations in this city, I would, for love of Him, fast for a whole year on bread and water, and during that fast would not allow my body to sin. Now I have, by His aid, accomplished the greater part of the year and but little remains. I would beg of you therefore, since it is your pleasure to choose me as your lover, not to change again for any man in the world, and not to fret over the little delay that is necessary for me to accomplish my fast, and which is now but a very short time, and would have been long since over if I had dared to confide in some one else who could help me, for any days that others will fast for me are counted as though I fasted myself. And as I perceive the great love and confidence you have for me, I will, if you wish, place a trust in you that I have never put in my brothers, nor my friends, nor relations. I will ask you to help me with the remaining part of the fast to accomplish the year, that I may the sooner aid you in the matter you have desired of me. My kind friend, I have but sixty days to fast, which—if it is your will and pleasure—I will divide in two parts, of which you shall have one and I will have the other, on condition that you promise to perform your part honestly and without fraud, and when all is completed, we will pass our days pleasantly. If therefore, you are willing to help me in the manner I have said, tell me at once.”

It is to be supposed that this long delay was hardly pleasing to the young woman, but as her lover had asked her so kindly, and also because she wished the fast to be finished, that she might accomplish her desires with her lover, and thinking also that thirty days would not much interfere with her intentions, she promised to perform her share without fraud, deception, or imposition.

The good gentleman, seeing that he had won his case and that his affairs were prospering, took leave of the damsel, (who suspected no harm) and told her

that as it was on his road from his home to the market-place to pass by her house, he would, without fail, often come and visit her, and so he departed.

The fair damsel began the next day her fast, making a rule for herself that during all the time of the fast she would eat nothing but bread and water until the sun had set.

When she had fasted three days, the wise clerk, as he was going to the market-place at the accustomed time, called upon the lady, with whom he talked long, and then, as he was saying farewell, asked her if she had commenced the fast? She replied she had.

“Can you continue,” he said, “and keep your promise until all is finished?”

“I can entirely,” she replied; “do not fear.”

He took leave and departed, and she went on from day to day with her fast, and kept her vow as she had promised, such being her good-nature. Before she had fasted eight days, her natural heat began to decrease so much that she was forced to change her clothes and put on furs and thick garments, which are usually only worn in winter, instead of the light robes which she wore before she began the fast.

On the fifteenth day, she received a visit from her lover, who found her so weak that she could hardly move about the house, but the poor simpleton was firmly resolved not to practise any trickery, so deeply in love was she, and so firmly resolved to persevere with this fast, for the sake of the joys and pleasant delights which awaited her at the termination.

The clerk, when he entered the house, and saw her so feeble, said;

“What kind of face is that, and how is your health? Now I see that you are sorry you undertook this long fast! Ah, my sweetest love! have a firm and constant mind. We have to-day achieved the half of our task: if your nature is weak, conquer it by firmness and constancy of heart, and do not break your faithful promise.”

He admonished her so kindly, that she took courage, so that it seemed to her that the remaining fifteen days would hardly be noticed.

The twentieth came, and the poor simpleton had lost all colour and seemed half dead, and felt no more desires of concupiscence than if she had been really dead. She was obliged to take to her bed and continually remain there, and then, it occurred to her mind that the clerk had caused her to fast to punish her carnal appetites, and she came to the conclusion that his methods were ingenious and effective, and would not have been thought of by a less clever and good man.

Nevertheless, she was not less resolved to go on to the end, and thoroughly fulfil her promise.

On the last day but one of the fast, she sent for the clerk, who, when he saw her in bed asked her if she had lost courage now that there was only one day more to run?

But she, interrupting him, replied;

“Ah, my good friend, you loved me with a true and perfect love, and not dishonourably, as I dared to love you. Therefore I shall esteem you, as long as God gives life to me and to you, as my dearest and best friend, who protected, and taught me to protect, my chastity, and the honour and good name, of me, my husband, my relatives, and my friends. Blessed also be my dear husband, whose advice and counsels I have kept, to the great solace of my heart. But for you, my friend, I render you such thanks as I may, for your honourable conduct and your great kindness to me, for which I can never sufficiently requite you, nor can my friends.”

The good and wise clerk, seeing that he had achieved his object, took leave of the fair damsel, and gently admonished her and advised her that she should in future correct her body by abstinence and fasting whenever she felt any prickings of lust. By which means she lived chastely until the return of her husband, who knew nothing of the matter, for she concealed it from him—and so also did the clerk.

THE END.



## NOTES.

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The lady was,—scandal averred—Marianne d'Enghien, the mother of the brave and handsome Comte de Dunois, known in French history as "the bastard of Orléans."

In the M. S. discovered by Mr. Thomas Wright in the Hunterian Library at Glasgow, this story is ascribed to "Monseigneur le Duc," as is also the following one.

III. Taken from the *Facetiae* of Poggio. It has been imitated by Straparolo, Malespini—whom it will be unnecessary to mention each time as he has copied the whole of the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles* with hardly one exception—Estienne (*Apologie pour Hérodote*) La Fontaine (*Contes*, lib II, conte II) and others.

Monseigneur de la Roche, the author of the story, was



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Monseigneur de la Roche, the author of the story, was Chamberlain to the Duke of Burgundy, at a salary of 36 *sols* per month. He was one of the wisest councillors of Philippe le Bel and Charles le Téméraire, and after the death of the latter was created Grand Seneschal of Burgundy. He died about 1498. He was one of the most prolific of all the contributors to the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, and related Nos 3, 8, 10, 12, 15, 18, 36, 37, 41, 44, 45, 47, 48, and 52.]

4 ([return](#))

[ This and the three following stories are all original.]

5 ([return](#))

[ An interesting anecdote of the “warlike and martial Talbot.” Philippe de Laon was “squire of the stables” to the Duke of Burgundy in 1461. He contributed also Nos. 20, 21, 66, 67, 74,

and 76.]

6 ([return](#))

[ Jean de Lanoy (Launoy, in Vérard's 1st ed.) created a knight of the Golden Fleece in 1451; an officer of the household of the D. of Burgundy. Louis XI, on his accession, created him Governor of Lille, and Bailli of Amiens, and sent him on a secret mission to the King of England. Charles le Téméraire, indignant with Lanoy for having gone over to his enemy, confiscated all his possessions in Brabant. After the death of Charles, Lanoy went back to Burgundy, and took an important share in the political events of the time. In some editions stories Nos 82, and 92 are ascribed to him; in others, the one is by Jehan Marten, and the other by "the Editor." ]

8 ([return](#))

[ Taken from Poggio (*Repensa merces*). Has been imitated by La Fontaine (*Contes* lib III, conte V.) ]

9 ([return](#))

[ An old story which forms the subject of a "fable" by Enguerrand d'Oisi (*Le Meunier d'Aleu*) also used by Boccaccio (*Decameron* 8th Day, 4th Story) and Poggio. Has since been imitated by Margaret of Navarre (story VIII) Boucher, Chapuys, and La Fontaine (*les Quiproquos*). ]

10 ([return](#))

[ So far as I am aware, this story first appeared in *Les Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*. It was subsequently imitated by the Author of *Les Joyeuses Aventures*, and La Fontaine (*Contes* lib I. conte XII.) ]

11 ([return](#))

[ Taken from Poggio; afterwards used by Rabelais as "Hans Carvel's Ring", *Pantagruel*, lib 3, chap 28.]

12 ([return](#))

[ The story is found in Poggio and the *Cente Nouvelle Antiche*. There have been many modern imitations, culminating in La Fontaine (*Contes*, lib 2. conte XII.) ]

13 ([return](#))

[ By Jean d'Enghien, Sieur de Kessergat, an official at the Court of Burgundy, and also "Amant" or keeper of the Archives at Brussels. See also No. 53.]

14 ([return](#))

[ Can be traced back to Josephus (*History of the Jews* lib XVIII. chap XIII.) Also found in Boccaccio, La Fontaine, and Marmontel (*La Mari sylphe*).

Jean de Crequy was a knight of the Golden Fleece, and one of the twelve nobles who carried the Duke's body at the funeral of Philippe le Bel. This is the only story he contributed.]

16 ([return](#))

[ A very old story, probably of Eastern origin. It has been used by many story-tellers and is found in Boccaccio (*Dec.* day VII, story VI) the *Gesta Romanorum*, and in several of the collections of *fabliaux*. As for the versions of later date than the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, they are still more numerous. At least four of the followers of Boccaccio, also Marguerite of Navarre (*Heptameron*), Estienne (*Apologie pour Hérodote*) and several others have used it, to my knowledge.]

18 ([return](#))

[ Found in Boccaccio, Poggio, and several of the *fabliaux*. Copied several times during the 17th and 18th centuries, French writers apparently thinking that “the gentleman of Burgundy” acted up to his title, and was not a mean and contemptible scoundrel as most Englishmen would deem him.]

19 ([return](#))

[ An amusing story, borrowed from the troubadours, and since copied by Sansovino, Chapuys, Grécourt, and the author of *Jouesses Adventures*.

Philippe Vignier was *valet de chambre* to the Duke of Burgundy in 1451. No. 86 is also ascribed to him in Mr. Wright’s edition.]

21 ([return](#))

[ From Poggio (*Priapus vis*) and also forms the subject of one of La Fontaine’s *Contes*.]

22 ([return](#))

[ Caron was “clerk of the chapel” to the Duke of Burgundy.]

23 ([return](#))

[ From an old *fabliau*; since copied by several writers, French and Italian.

The author’s name is given as Commesuram by Verard and as de Qucevrain in Mr. Wright’s edition. He is possibly identical with Louis de Luxembourg, Count of St. Pol, whose name appears at the head of story 39. He also contributed Nos. 62 and 72.]

24 ([return](#))

[ Taken from an old English ballad included in Percy’s *Reliques*. It is curious that the author—de Fiennes—bears the same name as an English nobleman—Lord Saye and Sele.

Thebaut de Luxembourg (Monseigneur de Fiennes) after the death of his wife, Phillipine de Melun, turned monk, and lived to be Abbot of Igny and Orcamp, and finally Bishop of Mans. He died in 1477. He also wrote No. 43.]

25 ([return](#))

[ Monseigneur de Saint Yon Was cup-bearer to Philippe le Bel, with a salary of 100 francs a year.]

26 ([return](#))

[ Nothing is known of M. de Foquessoles the writer of this

story.]

27 ([return](#))

[ The name of de Beauvoir attached to this story proves that the tales were not edited till after 1461. For Jean de Montespedan followed Louis when he returned to take the throne, and was created by him seigneur of Beauvoir. He was a faithful follower of Louis, and in 1460 carried a letter from the Dauphin to Charles VII—no pleasant, or even safe, task. He also wrote No. 30.]

28 ([return](#))

[ Michault de Changy was a Privy Councillor, Chamberlain, Chief Carver, and afterwards Steward, to Dukes Philip and Charles. He was the trusty confidant and adviser of the latter, who loaded him with favours. After the death of Charles le Téméraire, Louis XI confirmed de Changy in all the offices which he held in Burgundy. See also Nos. 40, 64, 79, and 80.]

31 ([return](#))

[ An almost identical story is told of Henri de Guise in the *Historiettes* of Tallemant des Réaux.]

Jean d'Estuer, Seigneur de la Barde was a trusty servant of Louis XI and successively Seneschal of Limousin, Ambassador (or rather secret agent) to England, Seneschal of Lyon, and Governor of Perpignan.]

32 ([return](#))

[ Taken from Poggio, and used afterwards by La Fontaine. De Villiers became one of the most trusted servants of Louis XI, and conducted many difficult and delicate negotiations for him.]

34 ([return](#))

[ The original of this story is an old *fabliau*. It has been often imitated in more recent times.]

38 ([return](#))

[ From Boccaccio (*Dec.*, day VII, nov VIII) but is of Eastern origin, and is found in Bidpai. It was probably brought to France by the Crusaders, for it is met with in the *fabliaux*.

Antoine de Chateauneuf, Baron de Lau, was a favourite of Louis XI, who bestowed on him some important offices, and large sums of money. He afterwards fell into disgrace, and was imprisoned in the castle of Usson, in Auvergne, but managed to escape in 1468, retired to Burgundy, and seems to have made his peace with Louis and been restored to favour, for he was Governor of Perpignan in 1472. He died before 1485.]

39 ([return](#))

[ The Comte de Saint Pol has been thought to be identical with M. de Commesuram, the author of several of the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*. Saint Pol occupied an important part in history, and was Constable of France, but he tried to play a double game, and betrayed in turn both Louis and Charles the Bold. At last he was

arrested, condemned, and executed, December, 1475.]

42 ([return](#))

[ Hervé Meriadech, a Breton squire and gallant soldier, who performed several gallant feats of arms. Louis XI named him Governor of Tournay in 1461.]

46 ([return](#))

[ Much resembles No. XII. The author is believed to be Chrestien de Dygoigne, whose name appears at the head of story No. 68.]

47 ([return](#))

[ This is believed to be a true story. The person who got rid of his wife in this cunning way was Caffrey Carles, President of the Parliament of Grenoble. He was skilled in Latin and “the humanities”—in the plural only it would appear—and was chosen by Anne of Brittany, the wife of Louis XII, to teach her daughter, Renée, afterwards Duchess of Ferrara.

The story is so dramatic that it has been often imitated.]

50 ([return](#))

[ By Antoine de la Sale, a short appreciation of whose literary merits appears in the Introduction. He has appended his own name to this story; in other cases he appears as “L’Acteur” that is to say the “Editor.” (See No. 51). The story is taken from Sacchetti or Poggio. The idea has suggested itself to many writers, including Lawrence Sterne, in *Tristram Shandy*.]

52 ([return](#))

[ Taken from Sacchetti.]

59 ([return](#))

[ by Poncelet, or Pourcelet, one of the Council of the Duke of Burgundy.]

60 ([return](#))

[ by Poncelet, or Pourcelet, one of the Council of the Duke of Burgundy. No. 60 is from an old *fabliau*, (*Frère Denise, cordelier*) and is to be found in the *Heptameron*, the *Apologie pour Hérodote* etc.]

61 ([return](#))

[ by Poncelet, or Pourcelet, one of the Council of the Duke of Burgundy. No. 61 is also from an old *fabliau*, (*Les Cheveux coupe’s*). Mr. Wright also credits him with No. 89.]

63 ([return](#))

[ is related by Montbleru himself, according to Mr. Wright’s edition, but in Vêrard there is no author’s name.]

64 ([return](#))

[ From an old *fabliau*, and often imitated.]

69 ([return](#))

[ M. Leroux de Lincy believes that Le Sage took the story of Dona Mencía,—intercalated in *Gil Blas*—from this tale.]

- 75 ([return](#))  
[ Gui, Seigneur de Thalemas died, without issue, in 1463.]
- 76 ([return](#))  
[ Taken from the *Facetiae* of Poggio.]
- 78 ([return](#))  
[ This story is originally found in Boccaccio (*Dec.* day VII, nov V) and in an old *fabliau*. (*Le Chevalier qui fist sa femme confesser*). La Fontaine has imitated it. See note on No. 82.]
- 79 ([return](#))  
[ Taken from the *Facetiae* of Poggio.]
- 80 ([return](#))  
[ Taken from the *Facetiae* of Poggio.]
- 81 ([return](#))  
[ By M. de Waulvrin (Vaurin), Chamberlain to the Duke of Burgundy. He wrote a history of England and France from the earliest times to 1471. Also contributed No. 83.]
- 82 ([return](#))  
[ In the Table of Contents of Vêrard's edition, this story is ascribed to Monseigneur de Lannoy, but at the head of the story itself the name of the author is given as Jean Martin, who also wrote No. 78. Jean Martin was chief *sommelier du corps* to Philippe le Bel. After the death of that Duke he did not remain in the service of Charles le Téméraire, but retired to Dijon, where he died, 28th Nov. 1475.]
- 84 ([return](#))  
[ In the Table of Contents this story is ascribed to the Marquis de Rothelin. He was Marquis de Hocheberg, Comte de Neufchâtel (Switzerland) Seigneur de Rothelin etc. Marshal of Burgundy, and Grand Seneschal of Provence. In 1491, he was appointed Grand Chamberlain of France. He died in 1503.]
- 85 ([return](#))  
[ The story is taken from an old *fabliau* (*Le Forgeron de Creil*) and has been used also by Sachetti, Des Periers and others. No author's name is given in Vêrard, but in the M.S. from which Mr. Wright worked, the name of M. de Santilly is found at the head of this tale.]
- 88 ([return](#))  
[ Found also in Boccaccio (*Dec.* day VIII, nov. VII). Poggio (*Fraus mulieris*) and in several of the collections of *fabliaux* (*La Bourgeoise d'Orléans*).

Mr. Wright gives Alardin (who also contributed No. 77) as the author. An Alardin Bournel returned to France with Louis XI in 1461.]

- 90 ([return](#))  
[ Taken from the *Facetiae* of Poggio.]
- 91 ([return](#))  
[ Taken from the *Facetiae* of Poggio.]

93 ([return](#))

[ Taken from the *Facetiae* of Poggio. According to Mr. Wright, by Timoléon Vignier, possibly a brother of Philippe Vignier.]

95 ([return](#))

[ Taken from the *Facetiae* of Poggio.]

96 ([return](#))

[ An exceedingly old story, found in a *fabliau* by Rutebeuf, Poggio's *Facetiae* (*Canis testamentum*) etc. It also occurs in a collection of Russian folk-lore tales.]

99 ([return](#))

[ Also from Poggio's *Facetiae* (*Sacerdotis virtus*). Several of the saints have performed the same miracle in order to avoid the terrible sin of eating meat on a Friday. It was amongst the meritorious acts of one—St. Johannes Crucis—who was canonized as recently as 1840.]







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