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Surfaja Royal. 1831
RENEGADE,

487
TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

OF

M. LE VICOMTE D'ARLINCOURT.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

LONDON:

J. ROBINS AND CO. IVY LANE,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1822.



487

THE RENEGADE.

BOOK VI.

ALAB finished his recital. The daughter of Theobert had sighed, wept, and shuddered by turns, while she had listened to him. Up to this time, the Renegade, while occupying all her thoughts, and exciting her whole soul, had dismayed her. Now he appeared totally different in her eyes, and had inspired her with the warmest interest. Who could refuse to pity the Prince Clodomir? Who could fail to love the shepherd, Astolpho? Her heart, pleading for the son of Thierry, palliated the crimes of his stormy passionate soul, which excess of misery had driven to distraction.

Agobar, exalted above the human understanding, was one of those strange spirits

who command admiration, and whose journey through life is marked by the most violent storms;—who present themselves upon earth with a splendor which only enlighthens their calamities, and who erect monuments only to be buried beneath their ruins. Shame and contempt befall those who hold lightly such men as raise themselves above their fellows, and stamp ages with the glory of their names! There are few such indeed to be found among the present race. It almost always happens, that men's good, as well as bad qualities, are proportioned to the elements of their existence; great men have great faults, nothing do they possess but in extremes. More to be pitied than condemned, the gigantic spirits of the world, wretched in their sublimity, tormented by their pre-eminence, are like blazing stars, which are enwrapped in their own flames. Often while their brilliancy dazzles the earth, they consume their own bosoms, and fall destroyed by themselves.

More pensive, and more anxious than ever, the Virgin of the Cevennes, surround-

ed by honours and glory, walked with downcast eye, and smiled rarely. Agobar's name was mingled with her every thought. A grand design was maturing in her mind by day and by night. Feasts, revels, and acclamations, courted and pursued her in vain; she was abstracted, and scarcely remarked them. The astonished people, who could not comprehend her, gave a loose to their joy. They seemed to rejoice more at her success and happiness, than she did herself. They did not know that those persons alone enjoy the pleasures of this world, whose hearts are cold, and whose imagination is deadened.

Important news had arrived. Charles Martel was at the French camp. The first check to the Saracens had filled his troops with confidence. They advanced, by forced marches, on that quarter of the Rhone, where Scipio had formerly opposed Hannibal.* A part of his army was directed towards the Mediterranean, the other towards the Cevennes. The French hero had already, in partial combats, gained some ad-

* In the year 536. U. C. See Sil. Ital. l. 3. p. 139.

vantages ; he came to finish the work which Ezilda had begun ; to rescue Gaul from the infidels.

The Mayor of the Palace availed himself of the report which had been spread among the soldiery, that a virgin, sent from Heaven, had triumphed over the Saracens, and would deliver the Christian land from the impious yoke of the Mussulmans ; but an insurmountable anxiety troubled him ; he knew well that the betrothed of Clodomir hated all usurpation. He learned that a numerous army was under her command. Ezilda's power terrified him. The daughter of Theobert, whose courage and firmness he knew, appeared to him in the light of an ambitious Princess, whose only aim, in repulsing the infidels, was to create for herself an independent kingdom in Septimania. Charles, accustomed to owe his former conquests to his own arm, felt degraded in recognising the glory of a woman, and in being indebted to her for a triumph. He secretly resolved to extinguish the beams of this rising star—to break the wondrous sceptre of the inspired, and to annihilate her renown.

A courier from the royal camp brought a pressing message to Leodat. Charles Martel commanded the noble chief to quit Segorum without delay, and to join the French army. Indignant at the imperious tone of the message, Leodat instantly answered it, and his reply was a formal refusal. He immediately repaired to Ezilda.

"Princess," said the young hero, "a frightful danger threatens you, as the reward of the miraculous achievements with which you have begun to work the safety of Europe. The Duke of France has written, and without once deigning to mention her who opened to him the road to victory, he orders me, as well as all the chiefs of your troops, to join his royal camp. The perfidious Charles is known to me. He has alone hitherto filled the Christian universe with his renown. All rival glory is hateful to him; he regards you with rage. The despot would rather see France reduced to the lowest humiliation, than that it should be rescued by any other hand than his own.

"Believe me, Princess, your splendid triumphs are, in the eyes of the usurper, like

monstrous crimes. He thinks that he alone, of all Frenchmen, has a right to conquer, and to be flattered; you have, in some degree, usurped his power; you have had the audacity, like him, to triumph; and, which is worse, without his help. Guilty of your glory, prepare for his vengeance."

"Charles Martel," replied Ezilda, "will not dare, however great his jealous rage may be, to aim his blows at me. Tottering as he is upon the steps of the throne, if he seeks to attack me, he will fall utterly. Mere policy standing between us will shield me from his attempts. To protect me from his malice, I have more than the power of arms, I have the influence of a spotless fame, I have the pre-eminence of virtue."

"And the love of your country," cried Leodat, emphatically. "It is possible that the ambitious Mayor, deserted by a large number of the noble vassals of the crown, may fear to alienate the rest of Gaul, by listening to the councils of his hate; but even then I can foresee what his conduct will be. He will feign the highest admiration for you, and will cunningly lay a

snare for you ; he will dig pits beneath your feet. Already he has attempted to deprive you of the valorous chiefs who surround you ; he waits but until you shall be alone, and unprotected, when you will not be able either to combat or to conquer. He would rejoice if the noble Virgin of Segorum had fallen defenceless into the power of the Saracens, and delivered to their outrageous vengeance, should expiate her glory by disgrace.

“ Illustrious heroine, you have taken up arms against dejected France, and to give an enthusiastic impulse to the nation ; your purpose is accomplished ; rest content with your success. Gaul has again assumed a victorious position ;—that is enough for her safety—enough for your glory. Think, now, only of your own affairs ; retired within your own mountains, secure to yourself peaceable and happy days. Camps, and their warriors, the earth, and its kings, are not worthy of Ezilda.”

“ And after the hateful picture you have drawn of Charles Martel,” said the Princess, “ do you think that when his power shall be

once established, he will respect my solitude."

"The Cevennes are invincible," replied the Prince of the Avernus, "if your mountaineers defend you. After the service you have rendered to the kingdom, what French Prince would presume to declare war against you; and which of the Suzerains of Gaul would not muster to your assistance. We are alone," continued he, passionately.—"Perhaps I may never find a more favourable occasion for opening my soul to you; perhaps, to-morrow, or this night, by the chance of battles, I may have ceased to exist—but I will not die without imparting the secrets of my soul to you, angelic Princess! On the day when I first saw you in the convent of St. Amalberge, I swore a boundless and entire devotion to you, a sincere and eternal love.

"Turn not away from me!—do not leave me. Is our union impossible? The sovereign Prince of the Avernus, I can, by uniting my territory to yours, form an independent state, which no potentate of Europe will ever dare to attack. Adorable,

matchless woman, is this too small a kingdom for you? Do you aspire to an empire? I am descended from the famous Avitus,* who, from a simple mountaineer of Gergovia, became the arbiter of all Gaul, the master of Germany, and the Emperor of the West. My ancestor wore the Roman purple, and may I not follow his example? To overcome every obstacle, I have his strength,—his courage,—and more than all, I am incited by love. Ezilda, pronounce but the word, and to share your heart, I feel that I could conquer the whole world!"

Ezilda replied to him in a firm and severe tone: "I value neither kingdoms nor empires;—Leodat, I thought you had known me better. The language of ambition is painful to me, and that of love is offensive." Listen to my unchangeable and solemn declaration; the betrothed of the son of Thierry will not be the wife of any other but Clodomir."

"Death, cruel death!" interrupted Leodat,

* See, respecting the celebrated Avitus, Greg. Tur. l. 2, c. 2. Mar. Avent. Chron.;—Idat, p. 307.—Jorn c. 44. Sidon, paneg. Avit. carmi. 7. l. 1. c. 3.

"has broken that tie, the son of the kings exists no longer."

"But if all France were mistaken, if Clodomir should still live?"

As she spoke, she paused, and gazed intently upon Leodat. The warrior, devoted to the ancient monarchs, would have sacrificed his life a thousand times for his legitimate sovereign. He remained dumb with astonishment. The heroine of Lutevia could not have pronounced the last words without some meaning; if by some miracle, known only to herself, the heir of the throne still lived! Ah! Clodomir's unexpected return would deprive him of Ezilda for ever. But his soul was too great, too noble, to pause at such an idea. "If Clodomir still lives," he cried, impetuously, "let him display himself, let him appear! and I will cast my fortune, my estate, my heart, my hopes, my very life, at his feet!"

The conversation was interrupted by another messenger from Charles Martel to Ezilda. The reigning duke expressed his gratitude; he did justice to her great achievements, but he censured the inexplic-

cable motive which had induced her to break the chains of Agobar. He mentioned the injurious suspicions which this action had created, and ardently hoped she would justify it.

Having heard that Agobar's dearest friend was in the Castle of Segorum, he required that this important prisoner should be delivered up to him, and ordered the Princess of the Cevennes to convey Alaor, immediately, to the royal camp of Umbrani.

Ezilda hesitated not a moment in her reply, and a scroll, containing the following, was returned to the Mayor of the Palace.

"Charles. My prisoners belong to me, and I have the sole right of disposing of them. It is impossible for me to accede to your request, for I have promised the young Alaor his liberty, and my promises are sacred. By to-morrow, the friend of the Mussulman chief will have rejoined his standard. As to the inglorious suspicions to which your letter alludes, I have given sufficient proofs of the love I bear my country, not to be under the necessity of justifying my actions. I reply not to calumnies."

The heroine sent for Alaor. The young Mussulman had recovered his strength, from the moment he entertained the hope of joining Agobar. "To-morrow," said Ezilda to him, "you shall be restored to your friend."

"Ah!" replied Alaor, wild with joy, "to-morrow I shall describe the most admirable of women, to the most magnanimous of men."

"Tell him," replied Ezilda, "that the Princess of the Cevennes, at this moment, more than ever, bewails the son of Thierri."

"I will tell him," cried the Saracen, with vehemence, "that Ezilda is the most perfect work of the Creation."

"Alaor," interrupted the daughter of Theobert, "a mighty project, to the success of which are linked Agobar's destiny and mine, now alone occupies my soul. You can further its accomplishment; may I rely upon your assistance?"

"Command me, dispose of me, entirely," replied Agobar's soldier.

"On the shores of the Mediterranean," continued she, "near the plain of Angostura, and not far from the temple of Calmor,

the pyramid of Fabius* is reared amid the rocks. When the chief of the Roman legions had conquered Septimania, he erected this monument, upon the theatre of his valour, for the purpose of eternizing his fame. In that spot, secretly, I wish to converse with Agobar. Alaor, say to your chief, that, confiding in his honour, I will await him, in three days from this time, at the pyramid of Fabius.

“ Read !” pursued she, shewing the young warrior the despatch of the Duke of France : “ Charles orders me to deliver up my prisoner; I reply by loosening your fetters.

“ Begone ! you are free.—I care little for the storm which lowers over my head. Tomorrow I shall quit Segorum, and shall repair to the royal camp. The Duke of France shall see, and, at last, he must be acquainted

* Fabius Maximus, Consul, had conquered Narbonne Gaul, and subjected it to the Romans. The honours of a triumph were decreed to him at Rome, and monuments erected to his fame in Septimania, on the spots where he had obtained his most glorious victories. As these monuments are no longer in existence, historians do not agree upon the spots they occupied. (C. Flor. liv. 3. c. 2. Strabon, l. 4. p. 185, et seq. Ortel, briet. cellavius.)

with me; Heaven has deigned to trace the road which I am destined to follow.

“After my interview with Charles Martel, that with Agobar will fix my fate on earth. I now quit you; in three days I shall probably see you also at the pyramid of Fabius. Preserve, sometimes, the memory of the daughter of St. Amalberge, of the virgin of Segorum.”

She withdrew, as she spoke, without giving the Mussulman time to reply to her, and to express anew his gratitude. Alaor, at the end of the following day, had rejoined his regiment.

The Prince of Avernes had been acquainted with the heroine's resolution to repair to the royal camp. Anxious, disturbed, and not comprehending her purpose, he exerted all his eloquence to oppose her departure; nothing, however, could move her. “Permit me, at least,” said Leodat, “to accompany you; if any peril should threaten you, who more proper than I to protect you from it!”

“Who?” replied the Princess, “Heaven! Prince, fear nothing on my account. Ca-

lunny has dared to attack me; it is my duty to trample upon it. When Charles hears me, he will be silent. I go, less to justify myself, than to point out his duty; that man who thought to intimidate me, shall tremble before me. I have answers prepared for the insidious questions which perfidy may propose to me. Alone with Charles Martel, when I shall converse with him under his own tent, if any eyes are cast down, they will not be mine."

"But," returned the warrior, "what will become of the mountaineers, deprived of their protectress? Their enthusiasm will be extinguished, when the inspiring beacon shall no longer shine for them; you will take away with you your spells and victory. Segorum, while you dwell in it, is a temple of glory; when you quit it, it will be only a mountain fortress."

"I quit you but for three days; peace reigns in Segorum; you shall fill the place of Ezilda, you shall watch over my legions, you shall conceal my departure."

"Three days!" said Leodat; "and, while you are absent, three days of peace! Ah, with how heavy a weight will those three

days be loaded; how dull, uniform, and spiritless, will their long hours pass. To support them without repining, I shall wish they were charged with tempests; in the midst of battle, strife, and carnage, existence might be horrible, but still it would be existence."

"Prince!" said the daughter of Theobert, with a grave and solemn voice, "spare me these useless complaints. It was neither to tread the flowery path of pleasure, nor to listen to the language of love, that I was called into existence. The urn in which my destiny is contained, is not a vase of perfumes, it is a cup of woe; it is not surrounded by flowery garlands, but shrouded in funeral weeds." As she spoke she withdrew. "One question more," he cried. "You yesterday interposed between us the potent name of the son of Thierry. Is it possible that the betrothed of Clodomir may yet become his wife?" "Noble prince," said the heroine, "on my return I will answer you."

The preparations for Ezilda's journey were secretly finished. The Old Man of the Black Rock, and three faithful esquires,

alone accompanied her. Before her departure, she thought of Lutevia, the castle of her infancy, which Ostalric nobly defended, and which was surrounded by the Saracens. A supply of provision, arms, and troops, marched towards the blockaded fortress. A strong force escorted it, and before the three days of her absence had expired, another success had astonished the mountaineers; the supplies, the escort, and the warriors, had victoriously entered the walls of Lutevia.

Ezilda quitted Segorum upon an Andalusian courser; the dark night concealed her departure from the sentinels. Gondair guided her path, and avoided the frequented roads; there was not in the whole province a way he was not acquainted with, or a village which he had not visited.

The Mountain Prophet lightened the tediousness of the journey by his local knowledge and historical recollections; the day had reappeared. "Princess," said the seer, "behold yon little hill, there it was that, beneath a splendid tent, Pompey, returning from Spain, the conqueror of Ser-

torius, stopped to receive the congratulations of the deputies of Massilia.*

“Look at yonder uninhabited ruin, shaded by that aged oak; it is a sacred asylum. Thither all the villagers of the province repair in pilgrimage at the new moon of February. At that period of the year, and in that place, it is said that the Apostle St. Paul, while traversing Septimania alone, rested for some hours.†

“Yon distant Cathedral, whose numerous summits meet your eye towards the East, was built by Constantine. It contains the sacred vases which adorned the temple of the Son of David at Jerusalem.‡

* Marseilles, in the year 681, U. C.

† Septimania was the first Gaulish province in which Christianity was preached. According to an ancient tradition, St. Paul repaired thither himself, and left several Apostles, among whom was St. Paul, the first Bishop of Narbonne. (*Hist. Gen. de Languedoc*, by the Monks of St. Maur, tom. 1. liv. 3.)

‡ According to several authors, the vases of Solomon's temple carried to Rome by the Romans, were retaken by Alaric I. and the Wisigoth Kings who succeeded him adorned their most beautiful temples in Septimania with them. (See *Greg. Tur.* l. 3. *Proc. Hist.* l. 1. c. 12. *Aim.* *ibid.*)

The Princess lent an attentive ear to Gondair's relations. Almost all the great men of antiquity had visited Narbonne Gaul, where they had left recollections, traces, or monuments.*

Marius and Sylla, Sertorius, Cæsar, Pompey, Scipio, Hannibal, Augustus, Hadrian, Tiberius, Nero, Antonius, the Antonini, Trajan, Vespasian, Alaric, Constantine, and Clovis, had, in turn, traversed these provinces.†

Septimania had been famous throughout the universe; and Rome had chosen some of her emperors from among its citizens.‡

* Nîmes, Avignon, Narbonne, &c. with all the ancient towns of Narbonne Gaul, contain a number of old monuments, some of which, like the Amphitheatre and the *Maison Carrée* at Nîmes, are in fine preservation.

† See the Hist. du Languedoc, tom. 1.

‡ Antonius the First, born in Septimania, one of Vespasian's Generals, got possession of Rome, and was appointed Consul. (Tacit.) Fulvius Aurelius, born at Nîmes, was twice Consul under Domitian, the successor of Titus. (Capitol. vit. Anton. Pri. p. 17. Fast Consul.) Magnus Felix, born at Narbonne, was first Prefect of Gaul, and afterwards appointed Consul (An. 460, U. C.) under the Emperor Majorian.

Gondair, sometimes by direct roads, sometimes through by-ways, had managed materially to shorten the journey. The Princess arrived without obstacle at the wide plains of Umbrani.

The Old Man of the Black Rock repaired to the tent of Charles Martel. He announced the Heroine of Segorum to the haughty conqueror. Surprised and confused, "Ezilda here!" cried the Prince, "may I believe it? What! without guards, without escort!—Is Ezilda alone in my camp?"

The Old Man was indignant at these expressions. "And what do you see astonishing in that?" said he, with his usual frankness and vivacity. "Is not the inspired of the Cevennes in the French camp? What can she receive, but laurels; what can she expect, but incense? She has awaked the country by splendid victories; is the renowned hero of this nation without grati-
(Sid. paneg. major. vers. 552. *ibid.* l. 1. c. 2.) Other members of the family of the same Felix were elevated to the same dignity. Lastly, Carus, Numerius, natives of Narbonne, and Carin, were all three Emperors. (Vopis. p. 249, Eutrop. l. 9. Aurel. Vict. Epit.;—Sid. Apol. carm. 23.)

tude, or am I, by some fatal mistake, among the Saracens ?”

Charles Martel was silent for a moment at this speech. He sought to conceal his rage, which, in spite of his efforts, glowed upon his angry brow. “Well,” cried he, suddenly, “what would you—where is she? Knights, Bards, Paladins, the Princess of Lutevia advances, and can you remain beneath your tents? Where are the gallantry and courtesy of Frenchmen? Fly to Ezilda. Let all pay homage; let all celebrate her beauty.”

“Her beauty!” repeated Gondair, casting an ironical glance upon Charles, Duke of France, “you meant to say her glory!”

To the sound of warlike instruments, surrounded by the chiefs of the royal army, and accompanied by the shouts of the soldiery, the noble virgin of the Cevennes reached Charles’s tent. An enthusiastic crowd constantly interrupted her progress. Every one was desirous of seeing the inspired maid; and bursts of admiration and gratitude issued from all quarters. These cries reached the conqueror, and increased his malice against her whom they greeted.

The incomparable beauty of Ezilda touched not the heart of the despot. Her enchanting form, which was among the powers that had rendered her invincible, dazzled not his senses ; he could not bear that a woman should divide the honours of his fame. The sublimity of her glance, the soft magic of her voice, seemed to him enemies, whose power was to be feared. He regarded the charms of the virgin as he would have considered obstacles which he must surmount in the field ; he studied her like an enigma ; he hated her like an adversary.

Ezilda wished to converse with Charles, uninterrupted. He dismissed his warriors. They were alone beneath the royal tent. The Princess spoke thus :

“ Duke of France, when, rescuing the people of the Cevennes from their disgraceful slavery, I called out my countrymen, my resolution was not formed upon any vain desire of glory or renown. To abase the standard of the false prophet, to defend the temples of the true God, and to arouse the energy of France, were my sole objects. Nor laurels, nor crowns, nor human rewards,

were the end of my labours. I looked but to the Chistian faith, I thought but of my country. Heaven has aided my efforts; the exertions of some of the Gaulish provinces, replying to the example of the Cevennes, promises to the people of God the freedom of Europe. Finish the work which has been begun; illustrious conqueror of the North, be the deliverer of the South. Far be from me the honours of war; laurels should alone be placed upon a hero's brow. For me, my mission is fulfilled, I ask only of the Almighty to return pure and peaceably to my pristine obscurity."

"Princess," replied Charles Martel, "the gratitude of all Christians is secured to you. The taking of Segorum is one of those bold exploits which history preserves. You have done much for France, but you might have done much more. The fate of the universe was for a moment within your hands; you might have terminated our woes and wars. The hateful chief of the Saracens, Agobar, was your captive. What strange pity could have pleaded for him with you? What interest caused you to serve him for a shield,

to defend his life yourself? By what secret treaty did you bind yourself to restore to him your prisoners? What inexplicable compact exists between you? Daughter of Theobert, why does your glory not appear spotless to our armies? How can I believe that your zeal for the cause of God is sincere, when you have broken with your own hands the chains of his most implacable enemy?"

"The army of the Cevennes is mine," replied Ezilda. "It fights for France, only under my orders, upon my domain, and at my bidding: why has not a feudal lord, victorious on his own domain, the full right to dispose of his prisoners upon the field of battle. I have served my country, I have fought for our holy religion, I have triumphed over that of the Prophet; and if by a circumstance, not yet explained, I have thought fit to loosen the bonds of the Saracen hero, Heaven and France gave the authority for what I did. Before the taking of Segorum, Agobar had, at my entreaty, preserved a whole convent. I had fallen into the power of the Mussulmans, and without the suc-

cour of their hero I should have perished. Gratitude and honour prescribed what I have done. Let Charles repeat his accusation, and all Europe shall judge between us. Let my whole life be scrutinized, I have nothing to fear; I have never betrayed my oaths; I have never coveted an empire; I have never usurped power."

As she spoke, the nobility of her speech subdued the haughty despot. At her last words Charles had turned away his eyes with confusion. He endeavoured to force a smile, and recovering his confidence by degrees, he said, "Have I heard rightly, does a fanatic Christian give the appellation of hero, to the most impious of miscreants?"

"Duke of France," interrupted the heroine, "it is time to explain to you that the chief of the hostile troops is no Mussulman."

"Who, then, is Agobar?"

"A Frenchman!"

"He a Frenchman!"

"Hear me! This solemn moment may decide the fate of the world. The valiant Agobar, the terror of Europe, the exterminator of Christians, has seemed a demon

from hell; perhaps it depends upon you, whether he shall become a child of God."

"Upon me!" said Charles, in the greatest surprise.

"Upon yourself," replied Ezilda. "Prince, a few days of success have restored hope to your knights, have re-animated their sunken courage, but a new defeat would plunge Gaul again into slavery and debasement; this check is unhappily too much to be feared; the Mussulman forces are innumerable, and the most perfect concord unites their intrepid chiefs. As to us—Charles, look at the state of France.—Since the helm of the state has been without a legitimate prince, a legion of sovereigns have been spread over the dismembered kingdom. Monarchy has become a mere dream. Disorder, insubordination, and anarchy, reign on all sides. Incongruous laws govern the divided principalities: the astonished people are by turns bought, sold, or conquered; they are not without governors, but without government. A nation thus degraded is half conquered. The land is without defence, and patriotism without

strength. The ambitious seek for power; the factious destroy each other; and in our remote provinces, revolution and bloody rage, under the pretence of liberty, roam blazing over the ruins of the country; succeeding and devouring each other.*

“Charles, dare I tell you the truth; the cup of flattery has too long held its poison to your lips. The only means of restoring the kingdom, of conciliating all opinions, of uniting the army, and of preserving the country, is to restore the royal sceptre to the lawful sovereign.”

“Gaul is not in the situation you have represented,” replied Charles Martel. “There are, among us, unquestionably, factious and ambitious men; but the Saracens threaten, and all the various opinions are giving way, for the purpose of uniting against the common enemy. Whatever disasters may have befallen the country, no true Frenchman can despair of France.”

“The victories of Segorum and Labrod,” pursued the Princess, “have, it is true, raised up in support of our holy cause several

* See the History of the Times.

provinces of the South, but all have not followed this example. Eudes, Duke of Aquitaine, has made an alliance with the infidels, and has given his daughter in marriage to to the African, Mugnoz,* Prince of Cerdagne. Moronte, Duke of Provence, † by a secret convention, abandons to the Mussulmans the shores of the Mediterranean, from Arletes‡ to Antipolis.§ The Duke of the Allobroges betrays you.|| Agobar is treating with the Cavares.¶ All the Suzerains of Lyonnais‡‡ have deserted your banners.

* This determined him to declare war against Charles Martel. (See Roderic, *Hist. Arabe*, c. 13.)

† Moronte, at the head of the Suzerains of the South, raised the standard of revolt against Charles Martel, and treated with the Saracens, in order to establish an independent kingdom. (*Annales Métenses*, ad an. 736. Daniel and Anquetil, &c.)

‡ Arles.

§ Antibes.

|| The North of Dauphiné.

¶ Southern Dauphiné.

‡‡ This rebellion was nearly the destruction of Charles Martel. He was obliged to make war upon the factions, and to take their cities. (See all the historians.)

Prince, open your eyes: the cause of the usurper is desperate. The chief vassals of the nation prefer being conquered by Agobar, to being governed by Charles. Display to terrified Europe, what an immense distance there is between you. What is a sceptre to a hero? After the wonderful exploits which have adorned your life, the title of monarch is to you but an empty sound. Do not descend to the throne from that eminence to which your glory has raised you. Be satisfied with occupying the temple of fame, and leave palaces to kings."

Her last words made a great impression upon Charles. The force of her reasoning, and the truth of the picture she had drawn, struck him powerfully.

"But who," said the disturbed conqueror, can be offered as the king at Lutetia, the Merovingian race is extinct. Thierri has left no successor."

"Clodomir!" replied Ezilda, has not gone down to the grave. The heir of Clovis still lives."

"What say you!—Oh, Heavens, do you believe?"

"Clodomir has presented himself to me;

his proofs are irrefragable; and his wife has recognised him."

"Where can he be?" replied the ambitious Mayor, and where have you met with him?"

"In these provinces," said the heroine. "And under what obscure name does he conceal himself?"

"So far from concealing himself under an obscure name, he bears too celebrated a title."

"What do I hear?—Explain this mystery to me."

"I came here expressly to reveal it to you.—Clodomir, whom you persecuted, when, under the name of Astolpho, he besought you to hear him; whom you vanquished, when he took arms against you; Clodomir, rejected by his country—"

"Finish your speech!"

"Is Agobar."

"Is Agobar!" repeated Charles, with horror. Then, after a long silence, he continued:—"But even granting that Astolpho is Clodomir, have you dared to conceive the idea of placing the crown of France upon the brow of a Renegade?"

“ Upon the brows of the son of Thierry,” cried Ezilda, with energy. “ Cruel Prince, is it for you, who have plunged Clodomir into the most fearful depths of misery;—who have driven him to the last excesses of despair; it is for you to condemn him? Whatever name he may have borne,—in whatever nation he may have lived,—whatever fault he may have committed, he has not abrogated his birthright. He is still the son of Thierry.”

Then, with all the loftiness of her pure feelings, in few words, but with powerful eloquence, she related the circumstances of Agobar’s life to the warrior chief.

During the heroine’s recital, Charles Martel, filled with conflicting emotions, could not bring the tumult of his mind to any settled determination. He had never doubted that Astolpho was Clodomir, but he believed he was in his grave. Even when he triumphed over Faldis’ troops, he was convinced of his lawful rights, whom he characterised as an impostor. At that fatal period, if he had rejected the advice of those base courtiers who offered him the

purple ; if he had obeyed the internal voice of his conscience, and the wish of his own heart, Astolpho had been recognised.

“ I repeat,” said the Princess, when she had finished her tale, “ that perhaps it depends upon you at this moment, whether Agobar, the child of Hell, shall become once more Clodomir, and the servant of God. Restore to him his inheritance, and the Church will open its bosom to him ; by sacrificing a title far beneath your glory, free your country in one word, and restore peace to Europe. He who disposes of sceptres is in some sort a King of Kings, and placed far above thrones, he approaches God himself.”

“ In recalling Clodomir to the throne of his fathers, you restore to France a redoubtable warrior for a monarch ; in the present critical circumstances of the nation, you will give it a powerful master, and will, at the same time, deprive the Saracens of their genius, their power, their renown, and their conquests.”

“ But,” cried Charles, “ Agobar, the Renegade, who has borne arms against his

country can never inspire it with respect or confidence."

"Agobar," replied Ezilda, "has been exasperated by misfortunes, and France, who proscribed him, is as culpable towards him as he can have been to her; in justice she can never be his judge, and in justice he is her monarch. Those who drove him into crime are as guilty as the criminal himself; Lutetia and her chiefs, then, should pardon his wanderings, for they stand in need of his forgiveness: a mutual oblivion of error should be the general law. Clodomir must banish from his mind the recollections of Astolpho, and the preserved country must blot from her memory the fatal name of Agobar."

"No," interrupted the enraged Prince, "I will never consent to it; it would degrade the French throne, to place upon it a Saracen chief; I should dishonour myself by crowning a Renegade. Clodomir has become unworthy of the diadem; his crimes have forfeited his title."

"I understand you," said Ezilda, rising, with dignity. "Neither the happiness of

the nation, nor the safety of mankind, occupy your thoughts. So power be within your grasp, you care little for the rest. I see plainly reason cannot shake your resolves. Charles's eyes are only open to the sceptre ; he can see nought but the purple.

" Well, Mayor of the Palace, pursue your perilous career. Usurping Prince, mount the throne ! but remember the tragic end of all those ambitious Mayors who have preceded you. Say, what became of Ebroin,* and Leger,† and Grimoald,‡ and Bertaire.§ Tremble, lest your inconstant fortune shall make the winter of your life as she made its spring.||

" For me, my path is marked out ; I shall

* Ebroin was assassinated by a lord named Ermanfroi.

† Leger had his eyes torn out, his lips cut off, and perished under the torture.

‡ Grimoald died in a dungeon.

§ Bertaire was slain in battle by his own soldiers. (See all the historians.)

|| Charles Martel's first years were very unfortunate. He was the natural son of Pepin Heristal, and was cruelly persecuted by his father's wife, Plectrude. After the death of Pepin, she shut him up in a castle.

see Agobar to-morrow: to-morrow I shall try to snatch your victim from the Mussulmans; and if Heaven seconds my attempt, if I restore to his duty the august descendant of Clovis, beneath the walls of Segorum, in a few days, the wife of Clodomir shall proclaim him King of France. Then we shall see under whose banner the sons of Gaul, and the great vassals of the kingdom, will enrol themselves."

Charles turned pale at this unexpected menace. He sought in vain to control his fury; it appeared not in his speech, but it shone in his eyes. "Is it possible," cried he, "that you will see Agobar to-morrow?"

"He awaits me," replied Ezilda.

Charles was silent: aware of the character of the heroine, he felt that, under the present circumstances, she could reverse his power, and ruin him. He therefore but feebly combated her hopes and her intentions. He seemed to be gradually convinced, and at length changed his tone altogether.

Charles succeeded in escaping, placed himself at the head of an army, but lost his first battle. (See Daniel's *Hist. de France*, and other historians.)

“ Princess,” he cried, “ you have prevailed. Heaven, doubtless, inspires you, and I comply with your desire. Go, seek Agobar. In the name of the chief of the nation, offer him the crown ; let him abandon the Saracens ; all France shall be his, and Charles will be his first vassal.”

As he spoke, the daughter of Theobert perceived that fear and necessity were the sole causes which determined the despot ; but the cause mattered little to her, provided the effect were produced.

It was arranged between them, that Clodomir’s existence should not be disclosed to the people until after the interview between Agobar and Ezilda. They then separated. Charles surrounded the noble Virgin of the Cevennes with the most brilliant homage, and the inspired of Heaven was hailed by the whole camp.

END OF THE SIXTH BOOK.

BOOK VII.

At length the day dawned which had been so impatiently awaited, on which the interview between the Princess and Agobar was to take place at the pyramid of Fabius. At the first beam of the morning, Ezilda mounted her courser, and quitted the camp of Umbrani. One person alone followed her; it was the Old Man of the Black Rock. The three esquires who had attended her from Segorum were acquainted with her destination, but remained at the camp. Gondair knew not her secret designs, nor did he seek to penetrate them; he was convinced that none but heroic sentiments occupied her bosom, and he followed her without asking any questions.

After a long ride, they perceived the temple of Calmor upon the plain of Angostura. This building, of an irregular form, and strange aspect, was one of the works of Augustus. He had built it at the period

of his voyage to Narbonne, in the eighth century of Rome. The idea with which it had been planned must seem as strange to posterity as the style of its architecture. Augustus had raised and consecrated it to the north-east wind.*

Ezilda stopped under the walls of the temple. The building had five fronts, and was surrounded by wreathed columns, of a middling height, surmounted by a square pavillion, on which stood a tower. From this last platform was seen, at a distance, the Mediterranean rolling its azure waves, and lost in the horizon like thought in infinity.†

In the midst of the rocks which bordered the sea, Ezilda perceived the top of the pyramid of Fabius. It seemed to her as if a black flag floated on it. She doubted not that Agobar was there. Already the Rene-

* Some historians say that it was in fulfilment of a vow; others assert that it was to appease this wind, which desolated the province. In every way the idea, and the execution, are very extraordinary. (See Senec. natural quæst. lib. 5;—Lips. in Senec.)

† No traces can now be seen of this monument.

gade awaited her. That ominous banner announced the presence of the Exterminator.

The Mountain Prophet alighted from his courser. The daughter of Theobert ordered him to remain at the temple. She wished to discourse with Agobar alone. But, from the summit of the tower of Calmor, Gondair followed her with his eyes, and still watched over her.

In a few minutes the Virgin of the Cevennes reached the pyramid of Fabius. This monument, the first which Gaul owed to the Romans, was covered with trophies, inscriptions, and sculptures. It was of striking beauty, but, standing in an arid region, surrounded by desert rocks, was sombre in appearance, and wild in its majesty.

This pyramid, like that of Cestius,* presented in its interior an enormous arch, covered with white marble. Bas-reliefs and statues decorated it; but humid, dark, and funereal, it inspired more terror than admiration, notwithstanding its figures, pictures, and rich ornaments.

* This pyramid is to be seen at Rome. In 1673 it was restored by Alexander VII

Similar to the monument of Porsenna,* that of Fabius had, at its summit, a bronze circle, to which was fastened an iron chain. From this chain hung small balls, which were shaken by the gentlest winds, and which, by their melancholy sounds, recalled to mind the noise of the brass-cauldrons in the sacred forest of Dodona.

The heroine of Segorum entered the pyramid; the vaulted enclosure was deserted. Neither its remarkable statues, nor its Roman inscriptions, attracted her. She did not see Agobar; and all that surrounded her was of no interest.

He whom she sought was not there; but an undefined emotion which she experienced, convinced her that he was near her. She felt the necessity of imploring the assistance of the Eternal, and yet could not divert her thoughts from Agobar. Amazed at her agitation, Ezilda began to fear that some other feeling than divine love had entered her soul. Wrapped in the dangerous meditations of sentiment, she returned to the

* This was, according to Varro, the tomb of Porsenna; it is in Etruria, near the city of Clusium.

gate of the pyramid. "O God !" cried she, "do not forsake me in the hour of trial. I am about to see him, to speak to him, to hear him ; inspire my heart with fortitude, my tongue with eloquence."

As she spoke thus, a warrior precipitately descended from the neighbouring rock—it was Agobar. He was without helmet or cuirass : a rich garment, of purple and golden tissue, crossed his defenceless breast. A belt, ornamented with precious stones, encircled his majestic body, and supported his warlike scimitar. A valuable chain was at his side, from which hung a horn of the most pure ivory. The graceful folds of his dress fell round him like the royal tunic of the sovereigns of Propontis. His head was bare, his thick clustering locks, blown aside by the breeze, discovered his manly and warlike forehead. Leaning on an African sword, and beautiful as the immortal genii, sung by the Arabian poets, he seemed, as he appeared from the rock, which was lightened by the bright rays of the sun, a splendid envoy from the Oriental Elysium. He advanced to Ezilda. His look, though sad, was calm, affectionate, and almost caressing ; for the

first time, an unaccountable embarrassment confounded the Princess's thoughts. The project which led her, the hope she had entertained, the speech she had prepared, all passed from her memory. Unable to recover her senses, ignorant of what she did, and not knowing what she said, Ezilda held out her trembling hand to the chief of the Saracens.

"Agobar," said she, "it is I."

"What are your wishes?" replied he, with a trembling voice. "Ezilda, what do you desire of me?"

He retained and pressed her hand almost involuntarily. He viewed with admiration, mingled with regret, the confiding and innocent beauty who had twice saved his life, and who had restored Alaor to him. Ezilda, the daughter of miracles, heavenly from her charms, still more so from her virtues, appeared to him an angel, unfit to mingle with the rest of mankind. He listened to her accents, as the exile in some foreign land hears the songs of his native country, while his mournful thoughts stray to the past days of his youth.

"Your misfortunes have been revealed to me," continued she; "I am informed of

your whole life ; the most powerful interests which I can feel upon earth, your happiness and safety, have induced me to take this step, which men may condemn, but which Heaven must approve."

She paused, alarmed at the effect which her words had produced in the inexplicable soul of the warrior. A gloomy and wild expression was in his eye. A sardonic smile upon his lip, seemed like a mute blasphemy. He dropped the hand of the Princess. "My happiness and safety," repeated he, "what does this language mean? The Heavens!—what are they to me?"

He was passing on.—"Clodomir," cried Ezilda, in a soft and plaintive tone, "if you quit me thus, we shall never meet again. I speak to you, perhaps, for the last time. Will you, then, refuse to listen to her who was your liberator, is even still your friend, and who should have been your wife?"

"My wife!" said the hero: that word disarmed his rage. The Virgin of the Cevennes, with her eye timidly resting on him, seemed an angel of prayer. The contrast which her powerful beauty presented to her

suppliant countenance, amazed and subdued his soul. He felt a strange softness. Something greater than admiration, more powerful than love, more engrossing than voluptuousness, seized his enervated senses. He again approached her, he could not comprehend the new impressions which overpowered him, but he abandoned himself to them without resistance, and submitted, as if to his fate. His thick eyebrows were contracted. His sharp and burning eye viewed her with a mixture of tenderness and despair. "My whole life is known to you," said he; "then I must appear a monster! Can you regret Agobar? Ezilda, could you still love me?"

"Do you wish it, Clodomir?"

At this question, uttered in the most tender tone, Agobar turned aside his eyes. For the first time since the death of Anatilda, he felt his heart beat. He would have expressed what he felt, but his lips, accustomed too long to nothing but expressions of rage and blasphemy, had lost the remembrance of tender expressions. "Yes, Clodomir," pursued Ezilda, "I ought, and I dare

to confess, that neither the name nor the sight of a mortal ever disturbed this heart, entirely devoted to God. Thou first, and alone, hast placed an idea of humanity between Heaven and me. God, who has power to order me to fly you, has not forbidden my loving you."

The name of the All-powerful had twice escaped her lips, and yet the Renegade had not interrupted her. He had been able to restrain his blasphemy; but, sullen and silent, he could do no more.

"Then I might still love," murmured he, in a low tone, speaking to himself; "she might still be mine." Then, after a long pause, "No," cried he, suddenly, "no—neither I, nor any other. Ezilda, no man is worthy of your love, no man ought to aspire to your hand. Accomplished being! in seeing thee, I shall finish by believing in Heaven; for you are not of earth."

"Yes," replied the daughter of prodigies, with energy, "you will finish by believing in Heaven, the ardent soul of Clodomir is no longer of the earth. If it strays for some moments, it is from excess, and not from

want of feeling. The most sublime works of the Creator are always the most tried. What beings should suppose themselves secured from falling, when the archangels have sunk? More happy than the first rebels, guilty man preserves near the Eternal throne two powerful intercessors, who are constantly extending their hands, repentance and hope. Fallen man! be yourself once more."

While she spoke, a radiant sublimity shone over her enchanting countenance. A pure and passionate feeling, combining at once love and religion, gave to her accents an inexpressible eloquence, an irresistible power. All that revealed an inspired genius, was in harmony with the sonorous, but savage chords, of the unruly soul of Agobar; Ezilda had not yet staggered him, but she had made him listen to her.

The Renegade, as if starting from sleep, roused himself suddenly from the unknown charm which had captivated him. The last words of Ezilda still rung upon his ear, "Fallen man, recover yourself!" A perfidious genius inwardly echoed and inter-

preted them. His hurt pride revolted at the idea that a woman should think herself authorized to reproach him with his faults; that she had a mission to call him to repentance; that she had the power to lead him back to his God. He retired a few steps. Like the meteor, whose fiery tresses throw terror and revolution through the world, Agobar, rejecting the blessed light, drying up the soft dews of Heaven, invoked the tempest of his soul.

"Daughter of the Christians," said he, with a sullen and forced voice, "what is the object of this interview?"

Astonished at the sudden change which was manifested in him, the Princess uttered a deep sigh. Her heart was mournfully depressed, but not discouraged. "Your misfortunes approach their close," replied she; "the day of trial is past; that of justice is about to dawn. Learn that I am here, in the name of your country, to demand from the chief of the Mussulmans the King of France."

"What do I hear; will Lutetia acknowledge the Son of Thierri?"

"I have myself discovered to the Mayor of the Palace the existence of Clodomir. Heaven, seconding my efforts, has deigned to enlighten and touch his soul. Charles Martel is ready to proclaim his Prince, and, in his name, I offer you the crown. Come, then, noble son of France, come and recall your people. Recover your legitimate rights; mount the throne of your ancestors; give happiness to your country; and, by your virtuous conduct, acknowledge the Divine justice, and become the restorer of peace to the earth."

"He deceives you," cried Agobar; Charles's offer is but a snare. The traitor only wants to draw me to his camp. Were I to place myself in his hands, my throne would be the scaffold—Can you have believed him? The perfidious Prince is well known to me; he will never yield the purple. Ezilda, say to the Mayor of the Palace, that his proposals excite in me fresh horror, by proving his treachery anew; and that, even were he sincere, I would prefer an abyss which would swallow him with me, to a throne on which I must be raised by his means."

"Times are changed," said the heroine. Charles has not now, as formerly, that sovereign power which permitted him to sin with impunity. Gaul and her armies are weary of the tyrant. He has trifled with them too long. The powerful Suzerains betray him; numerous plots menace him; in crowning you, he will save himself. It is only by an apparently generous and magnanimous action, an entire renunciation of the crown, that, concealing himself from his enemies, he can escape their vengeance.

"Besides, if you fear treason at the camp of Umbrani, come to that of Segorum. When Clodomir shall have been proclaimed there, that will be the national camp, where the French army will be united; all hatred will be extinguished; all ills will have an end, and the country will be restored to prosperity."

"And I shall betray Spain," said Agobar, greatly agitated.

"You will cease to betray France."

"I shall abandon my standard!"

"No! you will regain your own banner."

He reflected some minutes. His brow

was dark and threatening. Alas ! the power of evil still held dominion over his thoughts. "No," continued he, with impetuosity, "I will not receive this contemptible crown, which shamefully offered, and cowardly accepted, would be to me but the price of a new treason. I have renounced for ever this odious native land, where my first looks met only with perfidy, assassination, and usurpation. The throne of Lutevia, is now but a royal bier. Driven from the palace of my ancestors, I have sworn to be but the engine of extermination for France and Charles Martel. I must perform my vow ; and what are diadems to me ? I did not take up arms to recover my crown, but to glut my vengeance. The sovereign purple which I desire is the blood-stained robe of carnage ; that Gaul may be ravaged, that she may be erased from the list of nations ; such are my plans, my hopes, my final resolves. The grave-cloth of the nation shall be my only royal robe.

"After these horrible imprecations, he paused. The Princess suffered him to express his implacable resentment without

interruption. "If the desire of reigning entered my mind," continued the Renegade, in a bitter and savage tone, "should I have occasion for Charles, or you, to place upon my brow the diadem which belongs to me? I have but to pronounce a word, and my faithful Saracens will elevate me to the pavice; yes, I have but to express my wish, and even to-morrow this miserable France, accustomed to hail as saviour each rash adventurer, will range under my iron sceptre with transports of joy. This France, which flatters in the morning those whom it destroys at night, that changes sovereigns and laws as nature changes the seasons, and which traverses shameful events as carelessly as she passes over days of glory."

He spoke, and as the winds of the desert that consume the young herb, and dry up the rising brook, his words destroyed all hope in Ezilda's breast. "Adieu then, Adieu for ever," said she, checking her tears, "Cruel Prince, fill up the measure of your crime, reject at once and for ever, your country, your wife, and your God."

“Your God!” repeated Agobar, with a satanic smile, “What madman would believe in him—your God? Suppose that he exists, behold him, such as he presents himself to us, I will trace his figure, then dare to say—adore him.

“An unpitying tyrant, he appears but an eternal destroyer in the midst of his ephemeral worlds, which, like rolling tombs, he throws into space. What has he created, that he has not destroyed? what has he raised, that he has not thrown down again? Sporting with his works, with the barbarity of the tiger that devours his victim piecemeal, that he may view his agonies, he has only made man the king of animals, that he may be the monarch of miseries.

“His gifts, even, are terrible, as well as his chastisements. What is thought, this pretended divine breath that the abused mortal receives as a celestial gift! a continued chain of sufferings; the power, or rather the command, to add to present torments past and future evils; in short, to accumulate by remembrance and presentiment, all the horrors of that dreadful punishment which he has called life.

“Not content to roll over his trembling creatures like a desolating star, shedding death and vengeance, he would deprive the innumerable victims with whom he has sown the earth of all repose; he would impose upon them a worship contrary to nature; laws, which they cannot understand; burthens, which they cannot bear. Thus wrestling with humanity, advancing from his wretched cradle towards his dark tomb, the Christian is escorted in his march by the afflictions and pangs with which his religion surrounds him, and by the fear of a resurrection more terrible than annihilation.

“Nature, a desert plain, a perfidious step-mother, has nothing real but our miseries; nothing immutable but death. Undoubtedly, if the God of Christians exists, it was in a transport of sudden rage that he dishonoured himself by this monstrous creation of mankind, a small portion of which is to be saved. A small portion! What father but he, able to look into the future, and even to regulate it, would think of creating a living and miserable species, the majority of which he must eternally torture? No, it cannot

be; this God cannot exist, who protects crime, forsakes virtue, delights in disorder, reigns only over a kingdom of tombs, and permits those impotent curses, which an insulting raillery calls sacred dogmas, to be launched forth under his name."

An expression of indignation and despair interrupted the Renegade. The terrified Princess moved from the infidel. Her sight was dimmed, her limbs trembled; it seemed to her as if a breath of reprobation, passing between her and the Renegade, separated them for ever. A mournful accent proceeded from the virtuous heart, which sought to make itself heard by the lost one. The son of Thierry started—he saw Ezilda, whose forehead was covered with a mortal paleness, totter; he ran to her, he would have supported her, but the Virgin of the Cevennes repulsed him, with a firm hand, and cried, with a solemn voice—"Renegade, approach me not; we have no longer any thing in common."

A new fury seized the Mussulman chief—Woman! do you presume to brave me—think you to insult Agobar with impunity?

—Rash, Ezilda, behind these rocks my soldiers, as numerous as the sands of the shore, wait but for one word to carry you off, and to exterminate your partisans. You banish me from your presence !—I command you to follow me.”

He approached to seize Ezilda, the Virgin did not attempt to fly—“ Such dishonour,” said she, “ cannot enter the mind of him who was formerly Astolpho. Ferocious prince, I have received the most dreadful blow ; it is not in your power to increase my sufferings.”

She sank, quite overcome, against one of the seats which surrounded the exterior of the pyramid. Her fine dark tresses were loosened, and fell in curls upon her shoulders ; her tears, long restrained, at last found vent, and silently bathed her countenance ; she made no resistance to Agobar’s rash attempt, but her touching sorrow, her angelic features, her moving look, her extreme weakness, contrasted with his mortal energy, averted the storm which menaced her. Her veil fell round her like the drapery of an inviolable altar ; such a ravishing form had never met mortal eyes, exposed as she was

to frightful dangers, surrounded by savage enemies. Ezilda preserved her calmness like the fountain of Sinai, which flows ever pure and gentle in the midst of burning sands.

The Renegade, prepared to carry off his victim, stood immovable before her—a long silence followed the last words she uttered. All nature was mute, and seemed, as if astonished, to suspend its motion for the purpose of contemplating this scene.

Agobar had reflected on the horror of the action which he had been about to commit. “Ezilda,” said he, in an altered tone, “return to the camp of Umbrani—fear nothing, you are free.”

“Ah!” replied the Virgin in tears, “nothing remains for me to fear—I lose Clodomir for ever.”

“Unfortunate,” said the Renegade, greatly moved, “I have troubled the peace of your life. Curse the day on which you first saw me—fly this place—leave me.”

“Alas! it is you that leave me,” said the daughter of Theobert, “to reject Heaven and France, is to repulse Ezilda.”

The chief of the Saracens moved on. He

supported himself against the pyramid, and with his head concealed in his hands, sought to hide from himself. Suddenly a plaintive voice broke silence.

"Oh, God!" cried Ezilda, "give me Clodomir. I have no power over his mind; my husband is deaf to my voice. Merciful God, speak to him."

All the love on earth, all the piety in Heaven, blazed in her ardent prayer. Agobar could not resist her angelic accents. What he felt was undefinable, he returned to her, and words which he had never before pronounced, escaped his lips.

"Why, Ezilda, address yourself to the Heavens?—There can no where exist so great a power over my heart, as in your own. I am not deaf to your voice.—Oh, speak, enchanting being! I will listen to you. Thy unshaken confidence, thy faith, thy sublime virtues and incomparable beauty, in showing me perfection, make me believe in the All-powerful. He must be a God, who could create you."

The heroine of the Cevennes rose; "Clodomir," cried she, with the enthusiasm of a

strong faith, " the believing soul shall answer to the imprecations of the incredulous. Blind man, where do you see disorder and dread—in the boundless space ? Immensity, that azure volume upon which millions of globes seem to trace, in characters of fire, the name of the All-powerful ; immensity, which your voice insults, a vast assemblage of master-pieces is in its sublime harmony a perpetual miracle. Mortal, surrounded by resplendent lights and wonderful works, where do you see darkness and chaos ? Can your eye be fixed on Heaven, and your soul not feel God ?

" You see nothing but death every where ; I do not perceive that it exists. Everything changes form or place, but nothing in the universe perishes.

" Oh man, an imperceptible atom in the midst of incalculable worlds, you have dared to cite your Creator to the weak tribunal of your reason, and to demand of Him an account of His works ! The virtuous heart that adores Him is the wise one that knows Him ; humble love alone penetrates Him, whom superb reason cannot touch.

“ Reproaching the Supreme Being, even for His most divine gifts, you have said—to think is to suffer. This suffering of which you complain, this discontent which unceasingly preys upon you, even in the day of triumph and of pleasure, is the instinct of your immortality; it is a voice which cries and repeats to you, that this earth is not your everlasting home.

“ You reproach Heaven with the misfortunes which desolate humanity—and without misfortune, how would virtue shine! God places adversity among men as a monarch opens a tournament; laborious combats are presented, in order that He may bestow glorious rewards.

“ You say the dogmas of the Christian worship inspire terror. The just are never frightened at these dogmas. Rebellious pride, hardened atheism, perverseness and hypocrisy, can alone experience this fright; for crime, which every thing alarms, is, above all, terrified at whatever is holy. The Gospel, a monument of peace, happiness, and compassion, which prescribes no laws but those of love, is like a hea-

venly gate, from which sublime voices alone proceed, and which only opens on palaces of glory.

“And what is there to convince you that the great majority of mankind will be condemned?—neither holy book, nor evidence; but, on the contrary, the Saviour of nations has said, ‘I am come for your salvation.’ Since, then, a God has deigned to come among us, to save us, is it possible that his mission can fail?

“Clodomir, to the faithful every thought of God should be replete with faith, hope, safety, and confidence. The human heart, tormented with its greatness, is always empty, unless the mysteries, the wonders, the promises of Heaven and eternity, find a place there.”

Ezilda ceased to speak—the Renegade still listened to her. Miraculous effect; the name of the God of Christians, which, not long since excited his rage, does not even now move him; the accents of the Princess, like the sounds of the harp of the Prophet-King, restored peace to his soul. In a sort of extacy, he contemplated that adorable

being whose beauty and virtue, whose love and enthusiasm seemed of a heavenly region. The heroine pursued her triumph—"Clodomir," continued she, falling on her knees before him, "your soul is softened and awakened—suffer yourself to be convinced, and submit. Your country, in the person of your wife, demands you, calls upon you, prostrates herself at your feet, and implores you."

Beautiful did she look in this touching posture! What magnanimity was there in her abasement, what love in her prayer, what exaltation in her humility. Heaven's own voice spoke to the Renegade. The son of Thierry had no longer power to defend himself against the suppliant enchantress. Transported beyond himself, he raised her, and unable to restrain his passionate transports, he pressed her to his bosom. The fire which ran through his veins was not the flame of the voluptuary: no impure taint could exist near the spotless Virgin, it was not a solicitation of love, but a return to virtue.—"My wife! my Ezilda!" cried he, "the All-powerful is with you;

you have prevailed.—I feel it—I love you. Ah, since you have found a place in my heart, the Eternal must dwell there also.”

A cloud of dust was now seen on the side towards the temple of Calmor. Three armed soldiers, mounted on swift coursers, made towards the pyramid of Fabius. They reached Ezilda; they were those faithful men who had accompanied her from the fort of Segorum to the plains of Umbrani. “Princess,” said one of them, “the perfidious Charles Martel has reached the summit of his crimes; he has proclaimed, that, conspiring with the infidel chief, whom you have already saved, your purpose is to betray France and Europe, and that even now, on the sea shore, you are concerting together the entire ruin of the country.

“Orders have been given to the whole army to arrest you in whatever place you may be found. Several squadrons, devoted to the Mayor of the Palace, have been commanded to cut off all communication between you and the troops of Segorum. Your life is menaced, your death is certain, if you fall into the hands of your enemies. Charles,

attributing your victories only to magic artifices, accuses you of sorcery, and has condemned you to the flames.

“We have escaped from the soldiers of the tyrant. August Princess, if Heaven, which inspires you, does not still watch over you, both you and France are destroyed.”

This was a dreadful event for Ezilda!—The unexpected blow which struck her, at the moment when Heaven seemed to favour all her wishes, amazed and troubled her great soul. The terror which seized her did not proceed from the dreadful news which she had just learnt, but from the shocking effect it would produce on Agobar.

After a short silence, the Princess turned her trembling eyes towards the Saracen chief. Alas! all her fears were realized, all her enchantments were destroyed, all her happy presages had disappeared. Agobar observed her attentively, but the expression of love and enthusiasm no longer animated his countenance; and that pure and shining ray, which but a moment before beamed in his looks, like the forerunner of returning virtue, had vanished as the cha-

racters imprinted on the sands are effaced by the next wild billow.

While the daughter of Theobert submitted with resignation to the sublime will—"Christian," said the gloomy Agobar, "with savage irony, behold the loyalty of your prince, the gratitude of your people, and the justice of your God."

"Behold," replied the heroine, "the trials of Providence! the fires in which virtue is purified! the steps leading to Heaven."

"Insensate!" answered the Renegade, "ever surrounded by illusions."

"Blind man!" cried the Princess, "still enveloped in darkness."

At this answer the Renegade seized the ivory horn which hung at his side, and thrice drew from it a stunning sound, which was repeated by the echoes of the shore. The rocks were immediately covered with Musulmans. The infidel troops ran with haste to answer the hero's call, and African legions, led by Alaor, surrounded the Virgin of Gaul.

"Speak," cried the son of Thierry, ad-

dressing himself to the heroine, in a stern but still affectionate tone, "command me—what are your wishes? This army you see is yours, these shores are yours too. Would you revenge yourself on Charles? He shall be delivered to you loaded with chains. An asylum, a palace, a kingdom, in the lands I govern, are offered you."

"An escort to conduct me to Segorum," said Ezilda. "This is the only wish I can have. The assistance of your soldiers is necessary, to enable me to join my mountaineers, and to protect me from the enemies who have closed my road to the Cevennes."

"This, then, is your final resolve?"

"Any other would dishonour me."

"Alaor," cried the hero, "you and your battalion must follow the Princess of Lutetia. Obey her as you would me. Restore this heroine to her army; you shall answer to me for her life."

Alaor, bowed respectfully. The daughter of Theobert was going to leave Agobar, perhaps for ever. Holding out her hand to him—"Adieu," cried she, in a broken voice.

"And do you say farewell, with sorrow," replied the warrior, in a low tone.

"With sorrow," repeated the Virgin, "my future life will be one eternal sorrow."

He pressed the hand of Ezilda between his own.

"Adieu, then," said he, in his turn;—"you will endeavour to forget me—perhaps to hate me."

"Never!" interrupted Ezilda, withdrawing her hand, and placing it on her heart; "God, my country, and Clodomir, will reign here until death."

She walked on swiftly. The Renegade long followed her with his eyes, from a rock which he had climbed; then suddenly turning to his warriors, "Saracens," cried he, "to arms! I perceive the Christian standard floating over the plain. March; and let a memorable battle at once annihilate the odious Charles Martel, and his disloyal army. Let France belong to Iberia, and the law of Mahomet be that of the whole of Europe."

He ranged his troops in battle array; he dispatched messengers, upon different sides,

to the principal Mussulman chiefs, to summon them to march and join him; he prepared plans of attack and defence. His heroic genius ensured all chances of victory, and the fields of Calmor were about to witness the most dreadful slaughter.

Ezilda saw her progress impeded. A line of French soldiers appeared in the distance, on the side to which she directed her steps. Unable to escape from the coast, she took refuge in the temple of Calmor. From the height of this isolated monument, which surrounded and concealed the troops of Alaor, she was able, without danger, to behold the battle at a distance. The Old Man of the Black Rock was near her; he remarked, and often explained to her, the different motions of the rival armies. The Bard and the Princess were animated with the same patriotism, and yet how different were the sensations they felt. Gondair entertained but one wish—the complete triumph of Charles Martel. Ezilda, too, wished for the success of the French cohorts; but their chief was her enemy, and Clodomir was her husband.

END OF THE SEVENTH BOOK.

BOOK VIII.

THE Christian army, in three divisions, covered the plain of Angostura. Ezilda was at too great a distance from the royal troops to distinguish their evolutions, whilst the Mussulman legions, much nearer, performed their skilful manœuvres almost under her eyes. To conceive, resolve, undertake, and succeed, was, with the triumphant Saracen, but the work of a moment. He discerned, at a glance, the possible from the impracticable; and his genius knew at once how to raise obstacles to his enemies, and to overcome those which were opposed to himself.

The signal for battle was given. Mounting an Arabian courser, Agobar flew to the field of honour; his terrible black flag preceded and floated before him like the banner of slaughter, which, from its ample folds, shook terror and death. His brave cohorts followed him with pride and confi-

dence. In the golden rays of the declining sun shone the moveable forest of lances and shields, which, traversing the plain, traced upon it furrows of light. The tumultuous and discordant sounds of the neighing of coursers, the noise of clarions, the cry of combatants, and shock of meeting arms, forming an ominous noise, seemed the horrible voice of desolation.

“Have pity on me,” cried Alaor, addressing himself to the Princess, at the top of the tower of Calmor. “Agobar is in the battle, and I remain inactive! He is in the midst of his enemies, and I am not at his side! If some javelin or sword is directed against the hero, who will step between him and the weapon? Who will be his shield; who will watch over and defend him; who will perish to save him? I am forbidden to leave you; but I am ordered to obey you: command me then to join Agobar. I alone will leave this temple; my troops shall remain under your orders. Although distant from the field of battle, this monument is not a sufficient shelter from danger; I must, for your safety, inform the Saracen

chief that you are within this tower ; no foe, however powerful, will then be able to approach it.

“ I implore you to let me fly to my brother in arms, to aid him with my duty, and to cover him with my own body. Oh, if you have ever loved, Princess, in the name of all that is most dear to you, grant the prayer of Alaor.”

There was something contagious in the grief, the tenderness, and enthusiasm of the young Saracen. The exalted sentiments of Alaor entered Ezilda’s heart. Almost as much moved as himself—“ Go,” said she, “ defend him, save his life—I grant you permission.”

Alaor was soon at a distance, clouds of dust covered the theatre of the fight, and only at intervals could the scenes of slaughter be perceived, which succeeded each other rapidly. The sun was hid, the heavens were darkened, on the heights of the clouds infernal powers invisibly hovered over these continual massacres ; they disputed about their victims, and whilst the two rival nations sought to exterminate each other, the air,

charged with bloody vapours, and echoing with dreadful cries, was the scene of a conflict of demons hanging over that of men.

But who was the Mussulman, the hero, the demi-god? who threw himself into the French ranks like thunder? Before him was terror, behind him was a void. A funeral banner accompanied him—it was Agobar.

The conflicting battalions, like waves, dashed against each other by adverse winds, met with force, mingled and repulsed each other, and the snowy plumes of the knights were seen in the midst of the combatants, like the white foam floating on the agitated bosom of the ocean.

Unwearied in his course, the hero of the Saracens, burning with vengeance, sought Charles Martel every where. Rage was constantly his guide, and yet blinded him not. Whilst his scimitar dealt death among the Christians, he issued his orders with calmness. There was no evolution among his enemies which he did not observe, no manœuvre he did not counteract, and no error by which he did not profit. He knew

how, at the same time, to deliberate, and to fight; to strike, and to command; to foresee, and to triumph.

Alaor did not quit him, and the Prince often turned his eyes to the temple of Calmor, the avenues to which he defended, and the approach to which he rendered impossible. Ezilda, at a distance, remarked his immortal exploits, distinguished his brilliant plume, and followed his invincible standard. The irresistible Agobar cut into the centre of the French army where Charles Martel commanded, and his sword spread devastation among their ranks; as the flame of an incendiary destroys the stubble, every thing yielded to the efforts of his genius, as well as to the strength of his arm. When he invoked on victory, she flew to his arms. The French fled on all sides. The Saracens triumphed.

What a sight was this for the Princess! the Christians repulsed and pursued, France on the brink of an abyss, and the Moors victorious. Despair overwhelmed her. Had Charles Martel conquered the son of Thierry, she would have seen in this favour of for-

tune, the success of a traitor. Charles had fled before Agobar, and, in this chance of war, she saw the abandonment of Heaven.

The Renegade, now regarded as the author of all the misfortunes that had befallen her wretched country, had become hateful to her: Clodomir was forgotten. In expiation of those feelings, which Agobar had for a moment inspired her with, she would have heartily granted the diadem of Clovis to any chief who would save his country, and was almost about to pray for Charles Martel as King.

The hero of Iberia pursued his scattered enemies; suddenly he stopped; he raised his eyes to the side where the tower stood from whence Ezilda observed him. To the great surprise of his warriors he suspended the pursuit, and stopped the slaughter; then no longer spurring his courser towards the flying standards, he approached Calmor with slow and almost involuntary steps.

The Virgin of the Cevennes, although resolved no longer to regard the Saracen chief, had not lost one of his movements. She heard the secret voice which, speaking to the

heart of the son of Thierry, had suddenly interrupted his course, and changed his design. She had appreciated the generous thought which disarmed his rage. Though at too great a distance to hear and see each other, a sympathetic communication seemed to exist between them. Agobar, ready to destroy the Christian army, felt the despair of the heroine of Lutevia, while Ezilda, seeing the victory of the infidels unfinished, appreciated the magnanimity of the conqueror.

The Mussulmans surrounded the hero of Angostura with the most stunning acclamations. Whilst several African legions pursued the royal army at a distance, cries of victory, regard, and admiration, celebrated the immortal Agobar near the temple of Calmor. His eyes, lighted up with valour and glory, were fixed on the warlike crowd, whose idol he was, and he thanked them with a gracious smile. His majestic figure towered above those of all his companions in arms. Like the sun, breaking through the clouds which had obscured him, when Agobar was seen, all other glory disappeared. The great star covered all with its

splendour, and every lesser light was merged in its rays.

The Renegade alighted from his noble courser. He wished to steal from his triumph; and, mingling with his warriors, he tried to lose himself among their ranks. Vain wish! one of the most powerful of the Moorish chiefs broke through the enthusiastic crowd, placed a crown upon the conqueror's head, then prostrated himself, and cried, "Long live Agobar, our hero and our king." Immediately the whole army bowed before him to the sound of trumpets and clarions. And the triumphant Saracen, alone, standing on the plain, and having the whole people at his feet, seemed the arbiter of the earth.

This sight, it might have been thought, would have flattered the pride of the conqueror. The unexpected offer of the crown violently agitated his mind; but, recovering himself, he tore the sovereign diadem from his brow, and threw it at his feet with disdain. Ezilda could not hear what he said, but it mattered not; the action spoke more than words—Agobar refused the purple.

Notwithstanding his answer and his refusal, the Mussulmans persisted in proclaiming him their monarch. A kind of royal seat, made with arms and boughs, surmounted by a verdant canopy, was formed upon the plain. Agobar, forced to place himself in it, and carried by his fanatic adorers, returned, with the redoubled cries of his legions, towards the camp of the children of Allah. The air was filled with laurel, which the multitude threw on him; the earth was strewed with crowns, and oriental music, accompanying the war songs at a distance, made the plain re-echo.

The Princess, from the temple of Calmor, saw distinctly this triumphal solemnity, this unexpected coronation. In leaving Angostura, the glorious retinue had passed before her, like the brilliant pageants represented on a theatre. Already the brilliant sight was effaced from her eyes. The warlike sounds only reached her ears like distant sighs. The day advanced; Ezilda, with an oppressed heart, seeing only the dark horizon, from which the sun had disappeared, hearing only the stifled roaring of

the sea, asked herself whether what she had just seen and heard was illusion or reality.

“Unhappy Clodomir,” said she, “is this indeed a triumph for you—what are you about to become; into what a path are you driven. Alas! glory, honours, and fortune fly from mortals as quickly as your retinue from this tower. Agobar this moment offers to me a view of the future—what in my eyes remains of this splendour which surrounded you, and covered the arena of the battle. Nothing but advancing shadows; death, which will alone replace you; and the cries of the carrion bird which comes to claim his prey.

Alaor, returning to her, interrupted her gloomy thoughts—“Princess,” said he, “whither would you go?”

“To Segorum,” she replied.

The heroine of Lutevia, preparing to quit the platform of the tower, saw on the sea numerous vessels approaching the coasts with a brisk wind. Their Mahometan flag was proudly displayed in the air. This squadron came from Spain, and was undoubtedly a reinforcement of new troops,

which the powerful caliph, Abderaman, had sent to the chief of his armies.

Ezilda pointed out the fleet to the young Alaor; the Saracen became pale, and terror was displayed in his features. "I recognise the flag of Athime," cried he, "Some fatal design can alone draw that traitor, the mortal enemy of Agobar, to these shores."

The daughter of Theobert left the temple; the spouse of Erebus had commenced her nightly career: Ezilda traversed the plain of Calmor, and took the road to the Cevennes. She proceeded in profound silence. The dreadful agony which possessed her mind did not allow her either to meditate, or to form future plans. Melancholy and depressed, she had lost that fiery energy which heretofore had helped her to overcome every obstacle. Overwhelmed by bitter remembrances, ominous thoughts, and dark presentiments, her heart seemed dried up like a seed full of germ and of life, which the flying bird has carried off, and dropt upon a desert rock. Alas! whatever be the rank, or name of mortals, whatever genius Heaven may have con-

ferred on them, suffering is always the lot of life; it is like a funeral pall, which endeavours, under its glittering decorations, to conceal its black texture.

The Darkness thickened. The Virgin of Lutevia proceeded without regarding the places through which she went; without observing that she passed over a field of battle, covered with the dying and the dead. To her mournful meditations, to the questions which she asked herself, sorrowful cries answered. Almost mad, thinking that a supernatural power muttered stifled and menacing murmurs over the darkened plain, she took them for the funeral cries of another world, and sometimes answered, in incoherent phrases, to these last sighs;—a fearful dialogue between distraction and death.

Ezilda pursued her route during the whole night. With the first ray of the morn, she found herself at the foot of the Cevennes, at the entrance of the wood. The pure air of the mountains refreshed her. Exterior objects began to divert her spirits. She breathed more freely. Luminous tints

gilded the tops of the rocks ; the morning breeze sported through the trees ; the foam of the torrents rolled, murmuring, beneath their secret caverns. The Princess, listening to these sounds of wild nature, thought she heard the dear voices of that paternal abode which had held her at her birth.

The day was rising brilliantly ; peaceable and pure as Ezilda's youth, no cloud was seen on the azure vault ; the daughter of Theobert offered her morning prayer to the Creator, and peace entered her soul. Nature and religion, equally sublime, both powerful comforters, possess a secret balm for the heaviest sorrows.

Ezilda saw the fort of Segorum in the distance. "Alaor," said she, "I am now secure from danger ; return to Agobar."

The friend of the Saracen hero bowed respectfully. The Princess was struck with his extreme paleness, and the disturbed expression of his countenance ; but she feared to question him, she had penetrated the cause of his disquiet ; it was the unexpected arrival of Athime which terrified the young Alaor.

The heroine of Labrod, and the Old Man of the Black Rock, remained alone. At the temple of Calmor, and during the course of the night, Gondair had continually kept his eyes upon Ezilda. Respecting her grief and her silence, he had not dared to interrupt her profound reveries; but experienced in the ways of the human heart, he was convinced that the Princess's feelings had received a violent shock; he perceived that she was abstracted, and that she sought to conceal her emotion, under an impenetrable mystery.

They reached the end of their journey. Ezilda, who was aware that her appearance would excite a general enthusiasm, a tumultuous joy among the mountaineers, sought every means of avoiding the transports which would be displayed at the fortress. All warlike applause, the mere appearance of triumphal pomp, would be painful to her in her present situation. The intoxicating rewards of that fatal glory which had been the cause of attaching the Renegade more strongly than ever to his army, had become hateful to her.

She pursued the same covert way, which, at the taking of Segorum, had conducted her to the Eastern Tower. By this solitary road, she approached, unperceived, the rock of the citadel, and reached the platform which had been lately called *the invincible*. Discovering herself to the sentinel, and restraining his exclamations of joy, she forbade him to make her return known, and having entered, and shut herself up in her tower, she sent a secret message, summoning Leodat to her presence.

Nothing could exceed the astonishment which the Prince of the Avernes felt at the sight of the heroine. Charles Martel's infamous proclamation, declaring the daughter of Theobert guilty of treason and sorcery, had been sent to Segorum ; at the same time an order of the Duke of France had been issued to the troops of Leodat, to join the main army at the field of battle at Angostura, under pain of being treated as rebels. At the receipt of these papers, a general feeling of indignation had been expressed. The chieftains of the citadel had torn the royal mandate with rage. On the morning of Ezilda's

return, it had been resolved by every knight, and every soldier, to quit Segorum, to fly to the succour of the Princess, at the monument of Fabius; and, if she should be in the power of Charles, to rescue her by force.

On beholding the inspired of Gaul once more, Leodat, wild with joy, after the first explanation, could not refrain from uttering some expressions of admiration and love, mingled with the devotion he professed. The heroine interrupted him with a grave and serious accent. "How," said she, "have you refused to join the Christian army which was fighting for the preservation of the country? With your assistance, perhaps, Charles had not lost the battle of Angostura. Thus have I been made one cause of the triumph of the infidels, when I thought I had inspired your souls with a patriotic and religious fire. Knight of France, is it thus you have observed the councils and the voice of Ezilda; is it thus you have comprehended them? I could not have believed, Leodat, that you and your warriors would have preferred a woman to Heaven."

“Sublime creature!” replied Leodat;—
“upon the fate of such a woman, depends
the fate of the whole nation. Without you,
all is disaster and defeat; with your assist-
ance, all is possible, all is victory.—Come
and shew yourself to the army.”

“No,” returned Ezilda; “my presence
among the French troops would not be ad-
visable at this moment. Charles Martel
must treat the woman he has slandered, as
the enemy of the soldiers and the govern-
ment. My soldiers, on the other hand,
would view with animosity that royal army
which has called me traitress and rebel.
Instead of being a protecting light, I should
become a torch of discord; and, to com-
plete my misery, I should add the horrors
of a civil war to the calamity of a foreign
foe.”

“And will you quit your victorious
ranks?” cried Leodat. “Ah, if this is in-
deed your resolve, France is lost for ever;
I will throw down my arms if you do so.”

As he spoke, he drew his sword from the
scabbard, and broke it furiously.

“Yourself,” added the Princess, coun-

selling me, a few days back, to quit the field and the army. Leodat," she pursued, seeing the uselessness of reason upon his fiery and passionate soul, "leave me to some hours of repose. Before I adopt my final resolve, I have need of reflection and solitude."

The Prince of Avernes, consoled by the sweet expression of the heroine's countenance, humbly begged her forgiveness of his passion. He could not believe that she would give force to the decrees of Charles Martel, by quitting, as if proscribed, the legions of Labrod. He was withdrawing, delighted at having again beheld her whom he adored.

"Prince," said Ezilda, "for three days longer conceal my return from the army. I wish quietly to reflect upon the course I am to take, and to be entirely alone—to receive no one."

"You shall be obeyed," said Leodat. Then, with a faltering voice, he added, "May I remind you of your promise? at your return to Segorum, you were to speak to me of the son of Thierry."

"Within three days," replied the Virgin.

They then separated. At the beginning of the conversation, the Prince had resolved to learn from her the motive which had led her to Agobar, at the pyramid of Fabius; and yet, after her answers, he did not know the cause. He was nevertheless convinced that reasons of the soundest policy, and the hope of rendering a service to France, had induced her, though unfortunately without success, to this mysterious procedure.

Retired within her tower, the Princess passed the day and the following night alone. Her pious and heroic heart was a prey to varying contests. Before a narrow barred window, whence she could behold the chapel of Segorum, she knelt in prayer. She besought the Supreme Arbiter to enlighten and direct her, and, in all her prayers, she included Clodomir. Towards the end of the second day she came to a final resolve, and wrote the following letter to the Prince of Avernes, which she sent to him on the morrow.

"Noble and potent Knight! Heaven impels me, and I depart. In my absence, I

confide to you the legions of Segorum; and I conjure you, by your honour, by your virtue, and by your love, to show yourself worthy of Ezilda. If you were ever attached to the daughter of Theobert, if her esteem is precious to you, if you have ever loved, bear her standard to victory, and sacrifice, like her, your life for your country.

“ You have questioned me upon the fate of the son of Thiérri. Clodomir exists; I can say no more. To proclaim him aloud, is not permitted me; to restore him to the throne, at this time, is impossible. Let this secret rest buried in your bosom.

“ For my own part, I repeat to you, that while the war continues, at least until Charles sees his error, and ceases to persecute me, my duty, and the safety of France, enjoin me to fly from the field of battle. I entered it, not for my own glory; I quit it, to secure yours. From the asylum to which I mean to retire for a short time, I shall continue to watch over you. I will never abandon you; my heart and my thoughts will ever be with my friends; my temporary absence may prove my regard for them. Let all par-

ties, all opinions, unite against the common enemy. The sooner you conquer the infidels, the sooner you will behold Ezilda. Let the conduct of my mountaineers be the justification of their sovereign. By expelling the Saracens, alone can you recall me from exile."

The Old Man of the Black Rock repaired, at the request of the Princess, to the eastern tower. When she was alone with this faithful friend, she explained her purpose to him.

"Will you, then, quit your mountaineers?" cried Gondair; "will you destroy our sacred cause? will you be our total ruin?"

"I seek nothing but your safety," replied the Princess, presenting the letter she had written to Leodat; "read and judge me."

The bard was affected at the heroine's touching adieu to the Suzerain of Avernes. The reasons which compelled her to banish herself, seemed to him invincible. It was with difficulty that he restrained his tears, as he returned her the letter. The greatness of her soul seemed, to him, above humanity; and, fearing to profane the sensations

which she had excited in his bosom, he did not endeavour to express them.

"Gondair," said the daughter of Theobert, "it is in you that I place all my hope; it is to you, alone, that I confide the secret of my fate. I do not require you to swear never to reveal the retreat to which you must conduct me; I know your soul too well to fear the necessity of binding it by solemn promises. You will help my designs, and I am sure you will never betray your friend."

"Never," cried the Old Man, raising the Princess's hand to his lips; "command me, and I will obey; my whole life shall be devoted to you."

"'Tis well," replied she. "Bard of the Torrent and Prophet of the Mountain; you have passed the least accessible rocks, and explored the most remote solitudes. Conduct me to some impenetrable asylum, where I shall dwell unknown to all the world. Lead me to some distant, lone retreat, which may afford me a shelter from all peril."

After a moment's reflection—"Princess,"

said Gondair, "I will perform your bidding. To-morrow I will lead you to an enchanting retreat, the abode of peace; in a valley of delight, you shall be in a mysterious place, unknown to France and to Europe."

The Virgin of the Cevennes, not knowing what to think of this strange answer, looked at the Old Man with surprise; he smiled, and continued as follows:—

"Not far from Segorum, towards the West, rises the burning peak of Fontanias, so famous throughout our provinces. From the top of this celebrated volcano burning vapours arise, which render a near approach to it impracticable. The fire is not apparent by day; but the crevices of the mountain, presenting white calcined stones, grey vitrifications, and red-burnt earth, display at a distance the appearance of a vast and bloody wound. The spectacle by night is horrid.

"From the volcanic holes of Fontanias issue sheets of flame, which often discharge cinders and firestones. If by chance the hardy traveller approaches near the cavities of the rock, braving the ardent

heat which burns his feet, he hears the earth tremble under him, and his eyes meet gulfs of fire, the intensity of which is dazzling, and from which bursts of flame are constantly emitted.

“For ages no stranger has dared to climb this mountain; but behind it, Princess, there is a delightful valley, inhabited by some patriarchs and their families. Volcanic rocks surround with a triple girdle this unknown Eden; the gulfs, which, like a crown of fire, enclose it, shut out all access. There are two roads alone which conduct thither; one, extremely perilous, is that by which I first passed; it leads through the craters of Fontanias, and can only be trod by a mortal who holds life of little value. The other is the bed of an ancient torrent, which crosses the mountain, and whose waters, having passed a long shadowy track, water the *Happy Valley*.”

“Is this torrent navigable?” interrupted Ezilda.

“Yes,” replied the Old Man. “I have passed the subterranean stream in a narrow boat, which I constructed for this purpose,

and which will hold but two persons. By this terrific and unknown route I often repair secretly to the mysterious valley."

"And have you never disclosed its situation to any one?"

"When a curiosity, which might have been fatal, had discovered to me, beyond the burning rocks of Fontanias, a country altogether unknown, I thanked Heaven who had led me to this land of bliss. I remained there some weeks, and contracted a firm friendship with the patriarchs of the valley. Some of them, revered like the oracles of former times, knew of the dangerous outlets from their solitude; they knew that there were other countries than their own, but having educated their children in the belief that the passages out of the valley were the entrances to Hell, they willingly chose to think themselves isolated in the universe.

"I obtained the confidence and affection of the sages of this solitude, who, perhaps, formerly had known the world, and man, and misery. They shewed me their fertile land, protected by Heaven, whence they

gathered annually all that is necessary to human wants. I admired their industry, their laws, and their manners. I saw that their arts and labours produced them, without the help of any other inhabitants of the globe, all the delights of life; and loving them too well to destroy their repose and happiness, I observed the most profound secrecy respecting the discovery I had made.

“The presence of a stranger had surprised the young shepherds of the province. The patriarchs were compelled to let them know that there were other villages than Fontanias, and other people beside their own families. But they presented at the same time so frightful a picture of the rest of the world, to the simple and pure minds of their children, that they easily obtained from them an oath that they would never seek to quit the *Happy Valley*.—May they ever keep their oath inviolate.

“At different times I have returned among them. One of the patriarchs taught me the watery and subterranean course by which a boat might pass; I adopted this road, and when my mind, tired of civilized men, longed

for the pure children of nature, I flew to the Happy Valley."

"The night is dark," said Ezilda, "and favours our flight. Where is your bark?"

"At the foot of the rocks of Fontanias, moored beneath a grotto, which borders the torrent."

"Gondair, let us depart instantly."

She covered her head as she spoke with a thick veil, and descended the stairs of the tower with a light step, followed by the Prophet of the Mountain, she secretly quitted the fortress.

They left Segorum, and penetrated the rocks, woods, and precipices. Gondair preceded Ezilda. The numerous folds of the Old Man's robe, like wreaths of snow floating through the trees, was to the Virgin of Lutevia like the white cloud of Israel, pointing the way to the promised land. The Bard of Gaul bore his faithful harp in his hand, and as he journeyed, the straggling branches of the forest swept the strings, and drew forth harmonious sounds. Thus did Ossian lead Malvina by the torrents of Morven.

At the top of a rock, whence the lofty towers she had abandoned were visible, the Princess stayed her steps; she turned her face towards the embattled turrets of the castle, the brilliant scene of her glory, and sighed involuntarily. "Ramparts of Segorum," said she, "preserve my banner spotless; and ye winds who sport with it, thou night, who coverest it with thy shades, efface not my name from the walls over which thy sable wings extend."

She pursued her journey.—A fountain which supplied a narrow channel met her eye. She wished to cool her parched lips with its limpid waters. Gondair perceived, and hastening to prevent her, "What would you do?" said he, "this canal is calcareous; the water drawn from the basin changes to stone; if poured into a vase, it will burst it and assume its shape; it petrifies all objects which are steeped in it; a fruit becomes a stalactite; it forms rocks, and has produced that mineral bridge which crosses its bed. The wretch who drinks of it dies on the instant. The tempting and fatal draught becomes,

when swallowed, a solid and massive substance."*

* There are more than one fountain and canal in the mountains of Auvergne and the Cevennes, which have formed stalactite bridges, to the height of six feet above their banks, and made a bed of stone. (See Legrand's Travels in Auvergne, vol. 1 ; La Martiniere's Dict. Geog. ; Dict. Geog. de la France par Expilly, &c.) We may be allowed to doubt that quality in the water, which, according to Gondair, produces death. These ferruginous streams have, it is true, been the terror of an ignorant and superstitious people. They are impregnated with that gas, that invisible mortal fluid, known commonly under the name of Mephitic. Legrand, tom. 1. p. 155.

It is besides not surprising, that Gondair should, in a time of ignorance have exaggerated a little, when, in a more enlightened age, the celebrated Kircher described one of the fountains of the South of France in these words: " It issues from a rock, and produces by its own strength, rocks, white stones, and bridges, for the passage of the inhabitants. As this water does not differ from that of any other brooks, either by its taste or colour, animals sometimes drink it, but they die instantly, and on opening their stomachs, instead of water, a mass of stone is found. When the people of the country would display to strangers the effect of the petrifying quality of this water, they fill a glass with it, which breaks instantly, and the water, changed to stone, presents the shape of the glass,

"Thus does man deceive," said Ezilda, rejecting the treacherous water.—"Often does the unfortunate, who thinks he appeals to a feeling soul, dash his own heart against a rock."

She quitted the fatal fountain :—but soon her tender feet, cut by the rocky path, and torn by the rugged thorns, could scarcely support her—she tottered.

"You suffer pain," said the Old Man, anxiously.

"To live, is to suffer pain," replied the heroine; "and the hour is not yet come when I may quit life and suffering together."

"Shall we continue our journey?" pursued Gondair.

"What should prevent us?" said Ezilda, surprised.

"Your weakness!" replied the Bard.

as if it had been cast in its mould. The same effect is produced, whatever vessel may be used; it always condenses and congeals under the eyes of the spectators. Some ingenious persons, availing themselves of this quality, fill the mould of a statue with this water, and afterwards breaking the mould, they find the statue perfectly formed." *Mundus subterraneus*, l. 5, sect. 3.

"My weakness!" interrupted the Virgin, and, smiling sweetly, she said—"I thought not of it;—you have not seen me stop?"

"Pardon me," cried Gondair; "I thought I was with a mere woman. But why should I conduct you? it is for me to follow your steps; angels should guide men."

A distant sound, like that of a trumpet, awoke the echoes. The Princess listened; a dull silence succeeded.

"Such is fame!" cried she; "the fleeting sound of a moment."

The dawn had lightened the horizon.—
"We are now," said the Bard, "at only a short distance from the bark which awaits us. The Saracen posts have reached the distant rock from which these glens separate us; I know their warlike trumpet, and their accustomed signals."

"What!" said the heroine, alarmed, "do you suppose that even here, Agobar——?"

"I did not speak of Agobar," interrupted the Seer of the Cevennes; and his harp, struck by the branch of a cypress, emitted a mournful sound.

The Bard stopped; he trembled.—His

senses seemed to be wandering, and he appeared to give himself up involuntarily to the inspirations of his genius.

At this moment, from a high mountain towards the East, his eye commanded a wide plain, which was covered by a stagnant vapour, and seemed an ocean without shores, where scattered hills, like promontories, raised their heads. The vapours, dispersed by the dawning of the day, arose, and, tossed by the winds, repulsed and struggled with each other. This sea, at first so calm, became stormy and enraged. The clouds, in thick clusters, rolled upon each other, encountered, divided, opened, and mingled tumultuously. In these mountains, in these atmospherical vortices, the winds, the thunder, and the tempest, struggling at the feet of the Monarch of Nature, presented one of those sublime scenes which impel the enraptured soul to soar beyond the created worlds.*

This enchanting spectacle completed the

* Every person travelling in the Alps, the Pyrenees, or the Cevennes, at the dawning of the day, must have witnessed these wonderful effects.

excitement of the Bard's imagination ; as if he was raised above the tempests, and floating over the conflicting elements, he felt himself seized with that prophetic spirit which, among his countrymen, had established his power, and rendered his predictions famous.

He struck the cords of his harp violently. Thrice he pronounced the name of Agobar in a kind of frenzy, which he accompanied with broken strains and frightful discords ; he then descended the mountain rapidly.

He stopped at the bottom of the descent, and leaned upon a solitary rock. A ray of the dawn fell upon his bald brow and thick beard, and reflected on his golden harp the purple fires of the horizon. His eyes, raised to Heaven, shed an extraordinary light. His long robe, of a dazzling whiteness, floating around him, seemed like the garment of a transfiguration. Like the inflexible fate pronouncing her stern edicts, the Old Man of the Black Rock gave himself up to his inspirations.

“ The milky way is red with blood—trea-

son commands—murder arises—who is it that approaches? The Renegade! What do I see about him? Serpents, poisons, poignards, and flames. What tortures! What a grave!”

He paused—then striking his harp, “Hear his funeral dirge,” cried he, and the Bard repeated the verses he had formerly uttered in the presence of the Chief of the Mussulmans:

— Hope, and safety, he must mourn,
When once his doom shall be pronounced.

Ah, let him shudder, for e’en now,
While victory sits upon his blade,
The carrion bird, with croakings low,
Claims for his prey *the Renegade*.

The brilliant sonorous voice of Gondair was heard all around. On a sudden, the Virgin of the Cevennes uttered a sad shriek of horror—her whole frame shuddered. She thought she heard a stifled groan, like the last sigh of an expiring man, issue from the thick shades of the forest, and reply to the funeral song of the Old Man. Her strongly excited imagination fancied that in the low groan she heard the voice of Clodomir; and

the Princess rushed towards the bank of the dark stream whence the fatal sound issued.

“ Oh, pure, and happy days !” continued the Bard of Gaul, wrapt in his prophetic visions ; “ hail, brilliant dawn ! Heaven fights for the Christians ; France, like a young Phœnix, issues, renewed, from its ashes. Agobar has disappeared—but who is that warrior upon whom a compassionate glance is cast ?—He bears the name of Clodomir. Thanks to the Most High, the two nuptial rings are again united.

END OF THE EIGHTH BOOK.

BOOK IX.

WHEN men are in peril, or essay some glorious enterprize, they call to their aid men of powerful genius, and while the thunder rolls above them, they bow themselves humbly before the star of safety. But when a bold and strong arm has mastered the storm, and restored calmer days, the idol inspires as much terror as did the tempest he has dispersed ; and persons of less exalted talent are surprised that the star of wondrous destinies does not fall at their bidding, from the height of its sublime sphere, to the limited circle of ordinary powers. It should seem that a great man is only in his proper rank when surrounded by disorder and chaos, like the meteor which shines only in the midst of darkness. When a genius is required, they wish it to be gigantic ; when it has ceased to be useful, they would reduce it to a pigmy.

While the warlike impetuosity of Agobar

had furthered the design of conquering Iberia, Abderaman had loaded him with honours and glory : but Southern France was subjected ; his prayers had been heard ; and now the colossal fame of the hero terrified him.

Athime, Agobar's mortal enemy, had long continued to spread the blackest poison of calumny against his fortunate rival, at the Court of the Calif. Every day the report gained strength in Spain, that that Saracen victor was ready to shake off his allegiance to his Prince, and to procure himself crowned King of France. These treacherous tales added, that the Mussulman army had offered the sceptre to their chief, who, not finding the moment favourable, had refused it, that he might be the better able to secure it, and that he pursued the course of his conquests, in order that he might the better create a still vaster empire.

Abderaman believed that he had obtained sufficient proof of the treason of the Renegade, and while the son of Thierry, in the field of honour at Angostura, believed he

had reached the pinnacle of glory, his sentence of death, pronounced by the Calif, was rapidly traversing the ocean, borne by Athime himself.

The fleet, arriving from Iberia, went into the port nearest to the camp of the infidels. A numerous army was landed. The African who commanded, dreading Agobar's influence over his troops, felt that very considerable force would alone ensure the success of his mission.

To the shore, where his tent had been pitched, Athime summoned Agobar and his principal officers; he informed them, that, by order of the Calif, he brought reinforcements, and came to communicate to them the secret orders of Abderaman. The Renegade, suspecting no treachery, and followed only by his most distinguished chiefs, would have repaired to the tent of his Sovereign's messenger. But Alaor begged him, with great anxiety, to permit him to escort and watch over his safety with a part of his guard. Moved by the strong solicitude which his brother in arms displayed, the hero, reluctant to give him pain by refusing his request, although he felt no

alarm on his own account, permitted him to bear him company with a part of his Janissaries.

The Muezzin,* from the lofty minarets, had long summoned the infidels to the evening prayers, when Agobar, separated from his army, and surrounded by a host of enemies, reached the tent of Athime. While he was received there with great pomp, messengers were despatched to the camp at Angostura, who read the Calif's decree, and proclaimed his sentence of death.

All communication was immediately cut off between the two armies. The triumph of Iberia, like all other conquerors, like all great men, idolized by the million when fortune was smiling upon him, was deserted by them when adversity befell him. His soldiers, desperate at first, shed tears over his fate—then submitted to the Calif's will—then sought the life of their chief—and, finally, insulted his memory.

Agobar stood in the presence of Athime.

* The Muezzin is that man whose function it is, among the Mahometans, to convoke, from the tops of Mosques, the Mahometans to prayer; they have no bells.

In a magnificent tent, lighted by numerous flambeaux, the emissary of Abderaman, seated upon purple cushions, and surrounded by royal pomp, held the fatal sentence which he was about to read. The hero approached him. His masculine beauty, his majestic port, and his settled countenance, intimidated the base African. The hand which held the Calif's writing trembled; Athime hesitated and stammered. "Agobar," cried he, at length, "sooner or later, Heaven punishes treason. Your conspiracies are discovered; Asrael* has weighed thy life in his immortal balance; and the weight of thy crimes has prevailed; the other scale ascends empty. The scythe of Nekir† is raised—Allah condemns—Abderaman smites thee."—Then reading the sentence of death, "Guards!" pursued he, "let the Calif's sentence be this moment executed."

"Soldiers!" cried Alaor, rushing into the tent with his Janissaries, "save the hero of Europe! save the immortal Agobar!"

* Asrael is the angel of death and of final judgment.

† Nekir, an infernal genius, armed with a scythe.—
(See the Notes to Lord Byron's *Giaour*, 35.)

The young Saracen had foreseen the perfidious intention, and watching over his benefactor, he had kept close to his side, in spite of all obstacles. No precaution had been adopted against his bold attack, which was not less surprising than unexpected.

At the voice of his brother in arms, the Prince drew his scimitar; the executioners, who advanced with the fatal axe, soon fell beneath his blows. Alaor and his faithful guard surrounded them; they fought; and hatred, rage, and vengeance, directed the powerful arm of the Renegade. The dastardly African escaped, and, without his tent, called around him the assistance of a whole army.

The legions of Athime soon surrounded the tent. The Janissaries of Agobar fought within, and all round it. The shades of night fell upon the camp; horrible cries pierced the air; the blood flowed on all sides. The furious Mussulmans fought on, enraged; and not recognising each other in the conflict, struck, at random, their friends and foes.

Lighted torches, which the atrocious

enemy cast against the tent, kindled a vast fire, by the light of which the Saracens continued their horrible butchery. The massacre was redoubled. Athime's tent fell a heap of ashes, and in the midst of the smoking ruins was seen the invulnerable Renegade, covered with blood, blackened by smoke, and, as if flashing fire around him, he stood like the chief of the Titans, contending at once with the thunder, the earth, and the Heavens.

Agobar hewed a passage through the fighting crowd. His sword was like a flaming rod, before which every thing recoiled, fell, and perished. Followed by Alaor, and the few of his guard who had escaped the frightful carnage, he directed his impetuous course towards the rocks which bordered the sea, without Athime's being able to prevent his flight: the conflagration had ceased to lighten the shore: favoured by the darkness, they passed between the cliffs of the Mediterranean, and beneath their inaccessible caves, disappeared from human eyes.

A thick fog arose. The night was profoundly dark. Agobar, and his faithful com-

panions, fled from cavern to cavern. At the end of some hours they stopped. They were altogether alone. The remainder of their defenders had perished, or were lost. They heard no longer the shouts of the pursuing Mussulmans. Escaped, almost miraculously, from the ferocious Athime, they threw themselves, exhausted by fatigue and wounds, at the foot of a desert rock.

After some hours of an almost lethargic slumber, the son of Thierry, raising his pale and woe-worn face from the stone on which it had rested, cast a haggard eye about him. He could scarcely recollect the events which had so lately befallen him. The present and the past were confusedly represented to his imagination, like the fantastic images of a frightful dream. The blood flowed from his wounds, which were not deep, though numerous. Soon his corporeal sufferings woke him, recalled him to himself, or rather to a sense of his mental pangs. The conqueror of Iberia, the favourite of victory, was now no more than a proscribed Renegade.

A mournful sigh roused him from the re-

flections of despair, it was the dying Alaor who called him. He rushed hastily towards him. The stiffened limbs of the young Saracen had no motion, he seemed about to expire. Agobar felt that the cup of his misery was not yet emptied, since his beloved brother might be torn from him. Kneeling upon the wild rock, he pressed him in his arms, and the head of the beautiful and affectionate Alaor, pale as the autumnal narcissus which has been mowed down by the side of the meadow's brook, rested softly upon his bosom.

Entirely occupied with his friend, the Prince had no other thought than that of saving him. He warmed him in his arms, he spoke to him, implored him still to live, as if it were in the power of the expiring warrior to change the order of destiny.

"Alaor," my dear Alaor, cried he, "do not die, and I may still live. Let Agobar recover only his brother, and he will have lost nothing."

These words, like a cordial balm, reanimated the Mussulman. His wounds were not dangerous, and it was only by violent

bruises, and the freezing air of the night, that he had been deprived of animation. Alaor slowly raised himself; his blood resumed its course, he looked upon the surrounding objects. Masses of granite, confusedly grouped, and covered with a thick fog, surrounded the unfortunate friends. In the middle of the rocks, some trees of a dark verdure raised their long pyramidal stems; the monstrous roaring of a stormy swelling sea, like that noise which, on the shores of the damned, succeeds the dreadful punishments, alone interrupted the silence of this tomb.

“The monsters!” cried Alaor, then pressing the hand of his friend, he said, “their triumph is not complete; there is some hope, some joy, for us yet, even here; you live, and we are still together.”

They proceeded to seek a safe retreat. The blood of the Renegade still continued to flow, but his comrade alone occupied his thoughts. They proceeded along the seashore, by the side of precipices which the thick fog concealed. Agobar suffered extremely from his wounds, but not a word

escaped from him. He preserved within himself that creative force, that vigorous pith, that energy of great minds, which calmly mocks peril, and rises more proudly from reverses ; which is capable of displaying new energies even when it seems extinct.

With considerable difficulty they succeeded in making themselves heard by the fishermen, and dissipating their alarm. Some pieces of gold satisfied the wretched family ; they brought succour to the warriors, relieved their exhausted bodies of the burthen of their arms, gave them coarse but strengthening food, staunched the wounds of Agobar, and towards the middle of the night, by the side of their restoring hearth, Alaor had recovered his strength.

It would, however, have been dangerous to remain long in this humble refuge. At the approaching dawn, Athime and his troops would doubtless pursue their victims. The two friends arose ; and again thought of flight. They left their armour and turbans beneath the hospitable roof, and habiting themselves in the clothes of the fishers, they preserved only their swords. Alaor,

with his eyes sadly fixed upon the proscribed Agobar, concealed beneath the garb of a poor man, and in a miserable hut, recalled to his memory the magnificent Asiatic palaces, where his prince, seated upon a throne resplendent with jewels and glory, pronounced his decrees. "Oh, destruction of human grandeur," said he, with a low voice; and, with a broken heart, he turned from the cottage and wept.

Alaor's thoughts did not escape the penetration of the Renegade, he scrutinized and read his very soul. To have excited compassion was to be outraged; to pity was to insult him. Rejoining the Saracen, and casting an indignant glance upon him, "Timid boy!" said he, "if the mere sight of another's sufferings terrify you like the first howlings of the storm, how will you support your own when you shall be at the mercy of the tempest?"

"Agobar," cried Alaor, "do not gaze upon me thus, do not speak to me in such a tone; I can support human agony, but I cannot bear your anger."

"I," said Agobar, "have been so long ac-

customed to misery, that it has nothing new for me. Cease, then, to pity my fate, consider rather your own. Why do you follow me? Go, return to the camp of the Africans; believe me, they will see you return joyfully, for you have not been guilty of any crime, you are not born to be miserable."

The sobs of the young soldier interrupted the Prince. "I abandon you!" said Alaor, in a tone of despair, "I return among your enemies! and can you speak to me thus? Oh! you do not love me, you do not understand my heart."

His grief interrupted him,—he covered his eyes with his hand. "No!" pursued he, with a broken voice, "until this moment I never knew real misfortune, I had been struck only by external misfortunes.—This," cried he, pointing to his bosom, "this had been spared."

"Dear Alaor," cried Agobar, "I was wrong; pardon me."

Overjoyed at these kind words, at this unexpected reparation, the faithful soldier raised his dejected head. His sufferings

were past, joy beamed through his tears, like the morning's ray through a crystal fountain, and the expression of his face was devotion and gratitude.

They resolved to proceed towards the plain of Angostura. Agobar was persuaded that if he could rejoin his troops, he could recover his power. Notwithstanding the decree of Abderaman, and the proclamations of Athime, he hoped, by showing himself to his soldiers, to awake their enthusiasm for the chief who had so often led them to victory. He did not doubt that his appearance and his eloquence would reanimate all hearts. If he should succeed in gaining his troops to his cause, he would throw off the yoke of the Calif, get his rival into his hands, and signalize his return to the army by the most memorable vengeance. Filled with these warlike thoughts and audacious projects, the son of Thierrî marched with hasty steps; but the obscurity of the night, and the thickness of the fog, which favoured their flight, prevented them from keeping the right track. Sometimes by the side of torrents, in the

midst of thick woods, or between rocks, they wandered for five hours, without light, and without guide. The more they advanced, the wider they were from their destination; and at the break of day, when the dispersed vapours suffered them to behold the objects around them, they discovered that they were in unknown mountains; doubtless in the midst of the Cevennes, far from the plain of Angostura.

The Heavens were loaded with clouds, the wind arose violently, the rain fell in torrents, and the waters poured down, at the feet of the travellers, from the top of the rocks, which reared their sterile crests on all sides; these streams, carrying with them a red earth, which abounds in these mountains, rolled along, in little brooks of the colour of blood. The son of Thierry reached an eminence, on the top of which was an old oak, the only shelter of the desert. From this aged tree he observed the land of the Cevennes, every where bearing marks of volcanic convulsions; disfigured in every part by fire, it presented the appearance of a furious sea, the waves of which at first burning, and

then suddenly petrified, had remained suspended.* Monuments of a mighty conflagration, remains of an immense ruin, rivers of lava, colonnades of basaltic prisms, heaps of scoriæ, and of subterranean productions, presented, all around, the images of chaos.

Buffeted by the elements, and torn by his own thoughts, Agobar felt a degree of pleasure in the midst of this confusion. The scene of desolation on which he gazed, created in him a lively emotion—that delicious terror which charms ardent imaginations, by exciting them powerfully. This wildness of Nature, with its disorders; this spot and its wonderful horrors, were in accord with his great soul, at once sublime and perturbed.

The winds blowing fiercely against his uncovered head, dispersed his thick tresses. His eyes glistened with a strange lustre, proceeding from the inward fire which consumed him, the repressed rage which was devouring him, and the vengeance he meditated. “Spirits of these mountains, desolating hurricanes,” cried he, with that bit-

* Voyage de Legrand, Tom. III p: 78, and following.

ter irony which had become the habitual expression of his rebellious pride, "unchain your powers, too, against a mortal. To terrify Agobar, join yourselves with the other monsters of the creation who pursue him with their hatred; dastards, favour the happy—Fortune deserts me, therefore strike. What are your vain attacks to me? He who can brave the rage of mortals, may laugh at the fury of tempests."

The friends pursued their journey, but their clothes were steeped with rain, and their limbs stiffened.

No place of repose was to be found, no mountaineer who would guide them to the plain of Angostura. Every where was silence and desert. They journeyed, painfully, across the numerous ravines which crossed their road, and occasionally almost impeded their path. At length, towards the twelfth hour of the day, they perceived a roof on the side of a mountain, and taking courage at this welcome sight, they reached a large isolated building.

Agobar paused beneath the walls of this old edifice. Religious songs were heard

within. The place was doubtless a holy one; he approached and listened. They were celebrating the office for the dead within. The sound which met his ear was a funeral dirge; and the earth he trod, was that of the last slumber.

The Renegade sate down upon a small hillock, which was simply surmounted with two sticks, in the form of a cross. Opposite the hero was a grave recently dug, which was, doubtless, awaiting death's new guest. His head sunk, and mournful, and silent, the son of Thierry seemed to be sinking under fatigue; but this momentary stupor was rather the prostration of his soul, than the exhaustion of his body.

A young woman issued from the sacred edifice. Her exterior announced comfort, and her appearance was not common. A child ran before her;—she had come to weep and pray at the grave of some one whom she loved. At the sudden sight of the stranger the child recoiled, and uttered a cry. "What are you frightened at?" said the young stranger; "one might think you had seen Agobar."

The Renegade raised his dejected head. A feeling of pride excited his strength. Even to these deserts, the terror of his lofty deeds had rendered his name known. He arose, and approaching the child of the mountains, "I am a bewildered traveller," said he, "pray tell me in what place I am; what is this religious building, and whose funeral is now performing?"

"This is Loragniat," said the young woman, "and is near the castle of Segorum. When the Nuns of Amalberge were driven from their monastery by the troops of Agobar, they took shelter in these solitudes, protected by the French troops. They made a convent of this large building, and here daily do they pray to the Supreme Arbiter to deliver Christian Europe from the Mussulmans and from Agobar."

Every word was a poignard, which struck him deeply. The Renegade could not reply. The names of Amalberge and Segorum, and above all, that of Ezilda, rent his heart. These names, so far from raising his anger, subdued him like a spell; but it was a charm of bitterness. Changing the

course of his thought, he only varied his torment. The stranger continued her recital. "One of the Nuns of Loragniat died yesterday, and to-day they will commit her remains to the earth. The unfortunate maiden was in the very spring of her life, and never were there a more cruel or a more singular destiny than her's. Almost as fair as the sovereign of these mountains, she was one of the victims of the pitiless Agobar. She was a native of Arabia, and the daughter of a king ; her name was Zarela.

"Zarela!" interrupted the Prince.

"Her wonderful history," continued the young woman of Loragniat, "is known to all the country." Who would have believed that the unhappy Zarela was infatuated with the monster who commands the Saracens. She had been sold as his slave ; not being at that time a Christian, and under the power of the infernal spirits, her heart fell a prey to that impious and delirious passion which has hurried her to the tomb. Repulsed with contempt by the haughty warrior, at whose feet she had thrown herself, and afterwards delivered by the barbarian

to the Chief of the Janissaries. Zarela was preserved from slavery and disgrace by our celebrated inspired maiden, by our immortal Ezilda."

"Ezilda!" repeated Agobar.

"Even when surrounded by the holy sisters of Amalberge, as well as in the house of the Lord, Zarela could not banish from her mind the fatal image of the Mussulman chief. Heaven, doubtless to punish the errors of her former life, suffered love to consume her by degrees. In vain, after she had been converted, and was a Christian, did she, by day and by night, bathe the marble altars with her tears, and supplicate the All-powerful to efface the impious Renegade from her memory; his image remained in her heart, imprinted in characters of fire, and was the unceasing torture of his victim. At length Heaven had pity on her, and she died. The beautiful Virgin of Arabia, in the latter days of her misery, was a mere spectre. Benevolent as the morning's dew, and pious as her patron saint, she saw death approach like a messenger from Heaven. And yet, you may conceive the excess of her passion, the last word

her expiring lips uttered, was the name of the odious Agobar."

"Let us depart," cried Agobar, interrupting this torturing recital, and seizing his friend's arm,—“this is the road to Angostura.”

At this moment the funeral train of Zarela advanced slowly towards the last resting place. “Leave me!” said the Renegade, repulsing his brother in arms, and then added, in a low and mournful voice—“I would see her remains pass by.”

He cast a terrifying glance upon the coffin, and the Nuns who followed it. They were the same Nuns of Amalberge, before whom his barbarous troop had shrunk back. His memory retraced that wondrous vision of luminous cloud, of triumphant apotheosis, which Ezilda had presented to him. Then at the height of his power, and glittering in his glory, he held the fate of France in his hands. The wretched Agobar hid his face in the skirt of his cloak; and leaning against the angle of the holy building, he uttered a groan of agony. It was a last adieu to Zarela.

Alaor, in spite of his resistance, withdrew

him from this spectacle of woe. They were at the foot of the mountain. The Heavens were cloudless; Agobar, in deep thought, suffered himself to be led mechanically. In vain did his devoted companion talk to him of his army, of the love it bore to the conqueror of Angostura, of the enthusiasm with which his return would be greeted: the Prince remained dumb and immoveable. This apathy, so foreign to his character, terrified the faithful young Saracen: he spoke to him, by turns, of hope and triumph, of vengeance and tenderness. Useless attempts; the son of Thierry preserved his dreadful calm. His intellectual faculties seemed annihilated, and the young Alaor, like the wave which breaks, complaining, against the rude rock, vainly addressed the unshakeable soul which adversity had withered.

At the turn of a steep path, cut in the rocks, they met a traveller who had alighted from his horse, and was repairing to Lorrainat. His dress bespoke him a goatherd of the Cevennes, and yet, by his manners and his language, he seemed of a more dis-

tinguished class: perhaps he was a warrior of Segorum, returning disguised from some secret mission. Alaor accosted him, and inquired the road to Segorum.

"Follow this road," replied the mountaineer, "and within a few hours you will arrive at Mount Relia, whence you will perceive, at a distance, that celebrated, but fatal plain, which I traversed this morning at day-break."

"Do you come from Angostura?" said Agobar, suddenly rousing from his ominous stupor. "What has happened there?"

"Great events: God protects France; the ferocious Agobar is no more. Yesterday, by order of the Calif, Abderaman, Athime sacrificed his rival on the seashore.

"And the troops of the slaughtered chief;—what do they say of this murder?" asked Alaor.

"This night," said the traveller, "from a mountain which commands the tents of the infidels, I remained watching for a long time, and in the morning I learnt these particulars:—The news of Agobar's fate had at first

thrown grief and dismay among his troops, but this general affliction did not last long. Messengers from Athime, preceded by trumpeters, went throughout the camp, proclaiming, with a loud voice, the crimes and treasons of Agobar. Those Mussulmans who had been most devoted to their chief, upon learning what they had previously been ignorant of, that he, whom they believed a model of virtue and of loyalty, was only a vile French Renegade, an ambitious Christian, a traitor to his God, and to his country, spontaneously approved of the sanguinary sentence pronounced by Abderaman. The plans of conquest and revolt, laid by this impious chief, were explained to them, and his enemies, citing many circumstances in support of Athime's accusations, filled the air with their vociferous acclamations. Even the partisans of the Renegade found his punishment just, and not a single voice was raised to defend his memory. Sums of money had been distributed to the soldiers to rejoice at the happy event; bonfires were lighted on all sides, and the miscreants celebrated with songs of merriment, sports, and banquets,

the night of a bloody execution, as if it had been the epoch of a deliverance."

"Infamous people!" cried Alaor, indignantly.

"I do not so much blame the Saracens upon this occasion," said the traveller; "in devoting the memory of the Renegade to eternal execration, they have only obeyed the internal voice of conscience, and the laws of eternal justice. Whatever ill may befall a traitor to his religion, his colours, and his country, is an equitable decree pronounced by Heaven itself to the earth. What people, what country, what soldiers, could trust so base a wretch, who had been guilty of desertion and apostacy? He who has taken arms against his country, and abjured his God, is among those abject wretches which are rejected by every nation and every faith. No excuse can be made for his errors, no pardon extended to his crimes. The Apostate, an outcast from humanity, is a reptile which should be crushed in all places, and it matters little by what means."

The wretched Agobar, leaning against a fir tree, listened—he did not interrupt these

wounding expressions. The traveller having finished his speech, resumed his journey. All was lost, then; all the Prince's hopes were destroyed. His army abandoned him. He was rejected by the whole world. Not even a plank in his shipwreck, not an asylum upon the face of the whole earth was offered to him. He had become the detestation of humanity, and compelled to fly from his fellows, his fate would not inspire pity among any people.

The Renegade turned towards Alaor; his ferocious glance terrified the young Saracen. It was not the calm of insensibility, but the delirium of rage, which was expressed in his features. The volcano was on the point of bursting forth. A burning sigh escaped him; a bloody veil seemed to cover his sight; his head swam;—his imagination pictured to him Athime and his Janissaries in the desert rocks which surrounded him; he spoke to them, answered them, and his incoherent words, his confused imprecations, sounded like the threats of a whirlwind. In misery as in glory, in the inspirations of genius, as in the transports of frenzy,

Agobar, among other mortals, was still the extraordinary man, the superb giant.

Suddenly he drew his sword. Alaor, terrified, rushed upon him, and wrested it from his hands.

"Who art thou?" said the distracted Renegade. "Boy! fly this place! Do you see that bloody body near the slaughtered Faldis? 'tis Turial. That dead maiden, tossing upon the billows, is Anatilda. This is the end of all who love me. If this fate has charms for you, follow their example—love me."

He accompanied these words with a horrid laugh.

"Agobar, you make me tremble," cried the terrified Alaor.

"Tremble," repeated the Renegade, "comrade of Agobar, listen. This hour cannot be your's; your turn is not yet come."

"My brother, my friend," said the despairing Saracen; "ah, does your heart not tell you that Alaor is by your side—and can you thus repulse me—have you no pity for me?"

"Who speaks to me of pity?" interrupted

the son of Thierri ; “ pity—this is my answer ;” and, seizing the faithful warrior, whom he no longer recognised, he dashed him violently against the rock.

The young Mussulman’s head came in contact with a corner of the stone, and the blood gushed from his forehead. This sight restored Agobar to himself. The moment of his frenzy had passed away. He raised his dear Alaor, called him by the most tender names ; but, alas, deaf to his voice, Alaor returned him no answer.

Believing that he had ceased to exist, “ I have killed him,” cried the Renegade. “ After apostacy comes murder—this route has been prescribed for me : after murder, suicide, and then my course will have been accomplished.

He then furiously tore away the bandages which covered his numerous wounds ; his blood, boiling in his veins, gushed out with impetuosity ; his failing limbs no longer supported him ; he fell by the side of his faithful friend, and his eye closed to the light of day.

At the eighth hour of the evening, he

awoke again to existence; he opened his eyes, and gazed around him. He found himself in the cottage of a wood-cutter, stretched upon a miserable pallet: he uttered a loud cry of joy,—for Alaor was watching beside him.

In the wild mountain, the Saracen had first recovered his senses. Beholding his friend, apparently at his last gasp, he had filled the air with his cries. A wood-cutter had run to his assistance, and pitying his condition, had offered him his neighbouring cottage as an asylum. Agobar had been borne thither between them, and their assiduous cares had brought him back to life.

The Prince was excessively weak, the quantity of blood which he had lost had entirely deprived him of his strength. Alaor dreaded the return of his recollection, and the violence of his thoughts. He denied that the repenting and sorrowful Prince had thrown him against the rock; he attributed the accident to his own carelessness, and ended by convincing his friend: he then sought to destroy the impression

which the mountaineer's tale had made upon him ; he threw doubt upon all that he had related. He endeavoured to persuade the Prince that he had been abused by a false report, and at length succeeded in giving him some hope for the present, and some happy prospect for the future.

But Agobar's stormy imagination, tossed between fear and doubt, could take no repose. Compelled to remain inactive, when he wished to be with his army, he tortured himself while he despaired. His brain was on fire, and the irritation of his mind rendered his cure impossible. Alaor saw but one means of restoring tranquillity to his mind, and thereby, to save his life ; it was by going to the plain of Angostura, to ascertain the temper of the army, and to excite the devoted troops of Agobar against Athime.

He imparted his design to the Prince, and prevailed on him to adopt it by the force of his reasoning. It was arranged between them, that Agobar should remain concealed in the cottage of the wood-cutter until the following day ; that Alaor should

procure a swift courser, and set off on that same night to the camp of the Saracens; that he should go in disguise to the tent of those warriors, whose fidelity was known to him; and that, returning by day-break, on the following morning, he should inform his brother in arms of what should appear the best to be done.

The night spread its black wings. The young Mussulman had departed; having earnestly recommended his friend to the care of the wood-cutter, he speeded to the plain of Angostura.

The Prince, tossing upon his painful bed, as if it were formed of living coals, invoked sleep in vain. In an adjoining stable, upon a bed of heath, the cottager slumbered peacefully; near the hearth, a lamp, hanging from the roof, lighted the dusky dwelling, the sole refuge which remained to the man of victories—the august descendant of Clovis—the son of heroes and of kings.

Casting his eyes around, “Horrible solitude!” cried he; “nothing is here—nothing but Agobar and despair!”

His heaving head sunk down again upon

his pallet. "Alaor!" pursued he, in a woful tone, "my brother, my friend, return!—Vengeance, glory, and grandeur, I renounce every thing but thee. Quit me no more, Alaor. I cannot live away from thee."

A slumber, more fatiguing than want of sleep, at length came to torture the unfortunate with terrible visions; he only lost the sense of real torments, to contend with imaginary ones, when a sudden noise awakened him. A strange spectacle presented itself to his view.

Within the cabin, and near the hearth, where they were endeavouring to kindle the embers, two Mussulman soldiers had sought a shelter. Chilled by the cold night-air, they were warming their stiffened limbs; the wood-cutter, trembling near them, was anxiously disarming and attending them; the hoarse voices of the soldiers, and their continual threats, added to his terror. These ferocious bandits of the infidel army, stole secretly by night from the regiment to which they belonged, and went to pillage the defenceless villages and isolated cottages. They had deposited their booty upon the

table of the wood-cutter; it consisted of some money and provisions of various kinds. They laid aside their poignards and scimitars, and were preparing their repast: in violation of the law of the Prophet, they indulged in deep draughts of wine and strong liquors, of which they had made an ample provision.

The brigands had not perceived the Renegade: the lamp scarcely illumined the recess in which his miserable bed was placed. Excited by hunger, they greedily devoured the provisions which were set before them. Debauchery was marked upon their features; soon their inebriety was complete, and their brutal joy displayed itself in discordant ferocious songs. Their regale was finished. "Comrade," said one of them, "do you know that Agobar has not perished, as was at first given out? The Renegade escaped his enemies, and ten thousand sequins are promised to whoever will bring him alive to the noble and generous Athime."

"I know it," replied the other; "and would I were the happy mortal for whom that sum shall be counted out."

“What a monster is that Agobar,” continued the first; “he has betrayed his country—deserted his flag—has carried fire and sword among his own countrymen—and, worse than all, he has renounced his God. Not content with these crimes, he endeavoured to betray our Calif; he had a secret intelligence with the Princess of the Cevennes, whose arms he favoured, and was privately treating with our enemies. In short, he proposed to found a kingdom in France; and, to procure his country’s pardon, would have delivered up the faithful warriors of the Prophet, to the rage of the soldiers of Christ.”

“Infamous monster!” replied the other Mussulman. “But how could the Calif give the command of his armies to a vile, proscribed Frenchman? Could he believe that a man who had acted perfidiously to his own countrymen, would be faithful to strangers? Did he flatter himself, that virtue ever finds a place in the heart of a Renegade? What was Agobar’s valour? a mere instinctive ferocity. What was his boasted genius? an

infernal activity—a matchless temerity—a barbarous atrocity. His only art was imposture: circumstances happened to be favorable to him; and his officers were all great men. For my own part, I regard him only as a deserter, a renegade, a reprobate.”

A stifled exclamation interrupted the discourse of the miscreants. One of them arose, and advancing towards the dusky nook, whence the groan had issued, discovered the bed of Agobar.

That he might not see the atrocious faces of the brigands, the Prince had covered his eyes with the rags which served him for sheets. The anguish of his sufferings, and the raging of his fever, had entirely destroyed his reason.

“Who is this man?” said the Saracen, addressing the terrified host.

“One of the workmen of the forest,” replied the wood-cutter; “he has been cruelly stabbed by the banditti of our mountains, and has come here to die.”

The ferocious soldier, without replying,

tore away the rags which covered the dying man, and asked, in a stern voice—" Miserable Christian, who are you ?"

Agobar, with his eyes glaring, rose in the bed; his livid and distorted features added the frightful appearance of madness to the hue of death. Though he was on the point of expiring with agony, the forcible muscles of his chest and his naked arms, the energetic expression of his masculine figure, presented the appearance of a powerful giant. One part of his person was in the dark, the lamp but dimly lighted his pale face and threatening brow. His body, formerly strong as iron, preserved the appearance of vigour. His hand, stained with blood, was raised to repulse his foes. The brigand drew back in terror. "No," cried he, "this man is no wood-cutter."

Then advancing again, "Once more," said he, "who are you?"

"Who am I!" replied the distracted Prince. "You know me well; you have named me. I am Agobar, the Renegade."

The Mussulman uttered a cry of terror

and surprise ; he recognised his commander. The rival of Athime, and who had been proscribed by the Calif, was in his hands, and defenceless. His most ardent wishes had been accomplished. But the power of a great name prevailed : the first movement of the barbarian had been a respectful gesture, an involuntary homage. Admiration held him, in spite of himself, near his victim ; and confused and disturbed, he was surprised at finding himself standing in the presence of one, whom he had never before approached without prostration. " Let us seize him," cried the other Saracen, " and ten thousand sequins will be ours."

These words excited the sordid avarice of the intimidated soldier. The dastards rushed upon their prey. In vain did Agobar contend with them ; in spite of his convulsive struggles, they succeeded in binding his hands and feet with cords, which they found in the cottage. The old forester would have assisted the wretched fugitive, but the poignards of the infidels glittered before him ; and he felt, beside, that it

was not the duty of a Frenchman and a Christian to defend a Mussulman chief and a Renegade.

The brigands, whose senses were disturbed by the wine they had drunk, wished immediately to carry Agobar to their camp. Without reflecting upon the weight of their burthen, or the distance they were from Angostura, they hastily constructed a sort of litter, upon which they bound their victim. Then quitting the wood-cutter's cottage, they descended the mountain, where, after a few paces, they lost their road, and stopped, worn out with fatigue, by the side of the torrent of Fontanias.

At this place, not able to proceed further, they renounced the impracticable project of carrying the Renegade by themselves to the plain where Athime commanded. A horn was hung at the breast of one of them. By the sound of this warlike instrument, he could discover whether he was near a Mussulman outpost. If any of the Saracens were within the mountains, they would reply to his call.

The soldier sounded his horn, and found he had not been deceived. To the signal, established among the infidels, a trumpet had answered. The mountains had echoed to its loud notes, and this was the sound which had fallen upon the ear of Ezilda.

“Stay here,” said the unbeliever, who was now satisfied, to his companion. “Do you watch the Renegade, while I seek assistance; and in a short time I will rejoin you, with some of our comrades.”

As he spoke, he went off hastily in that direction where the trumpet had sounded. The other soldier sat down upon the grass, and soon lost sight of his companion.

The Prince was inanimate: the time passed on. Fatigue and drunkenness weighed down the eyelids of his guard, and he was soon in a profound sleep.

The coolness of the night had restored the Renegade to his senses. The force of the fever had been weakened. He came to himself. But in what a horrible situation! he doubted whether he still lived; when, to

increase his astonishment, he heard the notes of a harp near him; a voice ensued; it was that of Gondair. He remembered the Bard's song.

The carrion bird, with croakings low,
Claims for his prey the *Renegade*.

He uttered a deep sigh. Ezilda was not deceived; it was the voice of Agobar which her heart had recognised.

END OF THE NINTH BOOK.

BOOK X.

THE Virgin of the Cevennes was now within a short distance of the torrent of Fontanias; directing her steps towards the place from which the plaintive sigh that followed the song of the Prophet had seemed to issue, she hastily separated the branches which obstructed her path, and soon reached the bank.

There, beneath an aged willow, she saw a Saracen soldier sleeping. Bound upon a litter, at a short distance, was a bloody object which seemed to be a human body. Ezilda approached it, and bending over it, distinguished the features of the victim, and recognised the—Renegade.

In the meantime, Gondair, ceasing from his prophetic inspirations, followed the steps of the Princess; he rejoined her, he was beside her. Ezilda, leaning over the body of the Mussulman chief, raised her clasped and trembling hands to Heaven.

‘O God!’ cried she, “is there yet time to save him.”

She placed her hand upon the hero’s heart. “Agobar, cried she, “dost thou still live, or have I lost thee for ever?”

It is impossible to describe the astonishment of the Old Man, at these exclamations of despair and love. Could he believe the evidence of his senses! Did the Christian heroine love the Renegade?

Great characters display themselves upon great occasions. The moment of extreme peril, is that of bold resolution. The daughter of Theobert had found that Agobar still lived, and that it was possible to save him.. She lost not the precious moments in imprudent explanation, or in useless lamentations: she rose, and addressing the astonished Bard, whose thoughts she had guessed, “Gondair,” said she, “my life and my heart are both known to you. Never, you know, has a falsehood escaped my lips. This man, is my husband.”

“He your husband?—The Renegade!”

“You must never reveal the secret I am about to repose in your bosom. Learn that

Clodomir is before you, and that an inconceivable fatality has made the son of Thierry the commander of the infidel army."

"Great God, is it possible!"

"He is your monarch, and my husband; and our duty is to save him. But let us not waste time in words. Your boat is beneath the neighbouring grotto. It will contain, you told me, two persons; I will alone conduct it to the place where we may conceal the Prince. You are compelled to quit me, but fear nothing on my account. In this event the hand of Providence is visible; his order and his designs are evident; my conduct is pointed out by it, and it will direct your bark. Let us take Agobar hence, the Almighty will do the rest.

When the inspired of the Gauls had spoken, the Old Man of the Black Rock, who had been long accustomed to consider his sovereign in the light of an envoy from Heaven, thought he should almost commit a sacrilege by doubting her divine mission. He prostrated himself humbly before those mysteries which she had only half revealed; and submitted to her bidding, as to the will of the Eternal.

He was about to go to the grotto, in which the bark was moored, but pausing, he said, "if the guard should awake, during my absence—"

"Go, and return without fear," said the daughter of prodigies. "A secret voice assures me that he will not awake."

While Gondair fetched the bark to the bank, Ezilda sprinkled some of the water of the torrent upon the brow of Agobar; she cut the cords which bound him to the fatal litter, and pronounced his name in a plaintive tone.

The son of Thierry woke to the light of day; he lifted up his head, and his first glance met Ezilda's eyes. For some moments he was without remembrance, without woe; his sufferings had momentarily ceased, and the most delightful calm succeeded to the most horrible agony. The Princess, like the gracious angel of ineffable visions, seemed, while supporting him, to shed around him the favouring airs of a new atmosphere, of a purified region. All was enchantment about her. Her voice was the harmonious sigh of heavenly love; and her

breath, infusing life, was the perfume of a new Paradise.

"Where am I?" said the hero confused; "have I quitted the infernal abodes?—What do I see—Ezilda near me! am I at the gates of the palace of glory?"

"Do you deserve that they should be opened to you?" answered a beloved voice.

"Where you are, Heaven is," interrupted the Prince; "if you knock for me, I shall be admitted."

"May God hear and receive us," cried the heroine fervently. "Supreme Disposer of destiny, let it be as he has prophecied."

Gondair now returned, and the boat awaited them. "Fly," said the Old Man of the Mountains, "I hear a noise of confused voices. The enemy, perhaps, approaches."

Among the provisions which he had procured for Ezilda's voyage, was a strengthening cordial, which revived the spirits of Agobar. With Gondair's assistance he crawled to the bark. The Princess was seated in it, by his side. She grasped the oar, and loosening the cord which held

them to the shore, the Old Man bade them farewell.

“Aged man,” cried the Prince, suddenly, “stay—in the name of her who has taken pity upon my destiny, listen to my prayer. Condemned to death by Abderaman, and pursued by the rage of Athime, I am proscribed, and treason has wrested my power from me; but my devoted friend, my brother in arms, Alaor, has not forsaken me. This night he quitted me only to provide for my safety; this morning he will come to seek me in the woodcutter’s cottage, which you may perceive yonder, through the trees. Go and await him beneath that rustic hovel, and tell him how Ezilda has preserved me. Let him know to what retreat this bark is about to conduct me; and let him rejoin me there. Will you comply with my request—Do you promise me to do so?”

“Gondair hesitated to reply. His silence amounted to a refusal. The hero seeking, by the force of his mind, to supply the sunken strength of his body, would have quitted the boat, but his effort was powerless. “No,” he replied, “with a tone of

despair, I will not thus desert my faithful Alaor. I would rather place myself in the hands of Athime, rather cast myself to the bottom of this torrent, than abandon him with such base indifference. Take me out of this boat—leave me, cruel people!—leave me!”

“He is your king! he is my husband!” said the Princess, in a low tone, to the Old Man of the Black Rock, and looked at him with an imploring glance.

“I have not another boat,” said the Old Man, still hesitating, “and where shall I rejoin you?”

“By the peak of Fontanias; between the gulphs of the mountain there is a practicable path; shew the young Alaor the road you have formerly taken.”

Gondair could not resist the heroine’s request. “Depart!” said he, to the son of Thierry; “I swear that Alaor shall know the place of your retreat.”

As he spoke, the bark, borne upon the current, quitted the shore rapidly, and disappeared behind the rocks. Then recommending the lovers to Providence, Gondair

took the path to the mountain, and repaired, according to his promise, to the woodcutter's cottage.

Guided by Ezilda, and protected by the Eternal, the frail canoe followed the course of the stream. It floated lightly over the waters, and glided between the willows on the bank. At the foot of one of the mountains of Fontanias, the torrent grew narrower, and the cave into which it precipitated itself, opened its gloomy arch before the voyagers.

It had worked for itself a narrow dark passage beneath the mountain, and rolled, murmuring, along the damp and hollow vault. The passage was short; the current had few windings, was not rapid, and, as the Bard of the Cevennes had said, was not very dangerous. Nevertheless, the Princess could not look at the obscure gulf, into which the bark was about to be cast, without terror.

The subterranean cavities of Fontanias, like the grottoes of Antiparos, are studded with cut stalactites and fantastic congelations.* Colossal figures, little pyramids,

* See, on the subject of these wonderful grottoes,

columns half cut, caryatides rudely marked, decorated these spacious caves, which, if lighted by torches, would shine with a thousand fires, and would seem the abode of fairies.

The bark of Gondair floated in the midst of these natural phenomena, without Ezilda being able to look upon them. A doubtful light, an obscure reflection, pierced alone, and with difficulty, the cold vapour of the caverns, where swarms of night birds swept along with their wide black wings.

The son of Thierry was silent. So many strange events had successively befallen him, that he believed himself the sport of incoherent dreams. Not knowing where he was, or whither he was going, comprehending nothing of his new situation, he could neither think nor reflect. Calm, notwithstanding his bodily sufferings, he seemed

Legrand, previously quoted. Faujas de St. Fond; Gensanne, *Hist. du Languedoc*;—Giraud Soulavie, *Hist. natur. des prov. merid. françaises*; Delille de Salles *Hist. du monde primitif*; Montlosier *Essai sur la théorie des Volcans d'Auvergne*. Depping *merveilles et beautés de la Nature en France*;—Bory de Saint Vincent, *Annales de Voyages*;—*Journal des Savans*, 9 Sept. 1684.

resolved to struggle no longer with grief, or with his fate. It mattered little to him, whether they were visions or realities which surrounded him. A secret voice told him that this moment must be favourable, because Ezilda formed a part of this dream, or this existence. At length, a distant light appeared. A softer air spread through the crystal vault. The atmosphere was purified; the current flowed more strongly; the stream grew wider. The boat glided rapidly from the bowels of the cavern, like a captive from his opened dungeon; and the persecuted pair, beholding once more the vault of Heaven, found themselves upon an enchanting land.

Surrounded by a crown of rocks, the valley of Fontanias, like a work of love and secrecy, seemed half-veiled by luxuriant shades. The azure of a pure and serene sky was reflected from the bosom of a clear lake, peopled with swans, and surrounded by flowering shrubs. Formerly temples of marble and porphyry had been built to the divinities of Greece;* but volcanic erup-

* The Roman emperors, consuls, and generals,

tions, or earthquakes, had, in some places, overturned these elegant structures; and, mingling rocks with ruins, had formed picturesque combinations, which, magically grouped around the basin, exposed a strangely confused mixture of the works of nature and art.

In one place, prismatic columns of black basalt, veined with white crystals,* arose in regular order, like the pipes of an organ; and, in another, fragments of altars, and the remains of statues, half buried by the course of the lava, stood out amidst the foam of a cataract.

The mild warmth of the air, tempered by a refreshing breeze, breathed its harmony and perfume over this delicious region. From the summit of the red and calcareous rocks, which surrounded the valley, fell a covered Septimania with temples. Fabius, who first conquered it, built two, one to Mars, and the other to Hercules. Augustus built one to himself, as well as to his wife, and they sacrificed victims upon the same altars where they burnt incense. (See Grassier et Guiran *Antiqu. nemau*;—Andoque Béziers, p. 9, et seq.—Hard oper. p. 704. Gratter, p. 231.)

* Faujas de St. Foud *Mémoire sur le basalt*.

line of cascades, like the streaming mane of the white coursers of a Roman car; in many places their waters, lighted by the first beams of the day, and sparkling like artificial fires, sometimes resembled a torrent of light, and sometimes a rain of diamonds.

Several brooks, dividing the enamelled turf, rolled their crystal waves over a sand, studded with glittering particles. Trees of the growth of ages, planted in long avenues, and bearing their summits to the clouds, surrounded the valley, and their pointed groves, like the Gothic ailes of the sacred monuments in the first age, appeared, to pious mortals, like the cathedrals of Nature.

In a grove of jasmines and citron trees, upon a marble pedestal, was a brazen lion, which, perhaps, had formerly adorned the palace of the Cæsars at Rome. A pure and sparkling fountain gushed from his wide throat, into a spacious basin of granite. Here the shepherds and the peasants of the valley were assembled. A bride and bridegroom had just been to the church of Fontanias, the spire of which appeared in the distance. Their relations had met to celebrate the

nuptial feast, and the happy pair were greeted with songs, dances, and sports.

The white tunics of the virgins of Fontanias, falling to their feet in the manner of those of the daughters of Sion, hung gracefully around them. Simple field flowers, placed in careless clusters between the curls of their tresses, crowned their calm and beautiful brows. With faces at once smiling and severe, gracious and solemn, they resembled the vestals of ancient Rome, or the priestesses of Amathontis.

The mountaineers, who were both herdsmen and hunters, wore a vestment composed of the skins of wild beasts, ingeniously joined, and were, like the Scythians, armed with bows and quivers. Their robust limbs announced great muscular vigor, and their courage equalled their strength. Their countenances expressed a mixture of that tenderness and wildness, that modesty and audacity, which astonishes without alarming, and charms without being understood. Intrepid hunters and industrious labourers, they knew no other laws than the wills of the aged men in the solitude; no other lux-

ury than that of nature; no other joys than the transports of love.

Ezilda gazed with astonishment at the picturesque habitations, scattered in the midst of the groves, the distant dances of the shepherds, and the cross rising from the top of a pious hermit's abode. The dawning day, like the protecting Deity of the inhabitants of Fontanias, seemed to regard them with love, and shedding from the mountain tops, long rays of gold and purple through the foliage, reflected its glorious rising upon the lake in the valley.

An old man slowly advanced to the bank where Eliza's bark had stopped. The Princess had tied her boat to a neighbouring tree. She flew to meet the unknown: "Venerable stranger," said she, "pity two unfortunates; two proscribed fugitives who implore your aid. Do not refuse us an asylum in this abode of peace and delight. Gondair has revealed your country to us, for the purpose of saving us."

At the name of the Mountain Prophet, a benevolent smile overspread the face of the seer. "Fear nothing," replied he,

every house will here be open to unfortunates who seek a refuge in the name of Gondair."

As Ezilda was expressing her gratitude to him, he approached the boat, and, with an arm which was still vigorous, assisted Agobar to land. Then calling some herdsmen to his assistance, he made them carry the fainting hero to his neighbouring dwelling.

The quantity of blood which the Prince had lost, the excess of his suffering, and the want of medical assistance, had worn him to the brink of the grave. The aged man of Fontanias, the compassionate Roderic, bestowed the most anxious care upon him. He placed him on his own bed, prepared a salutary potion for him, dressed his wounds with his own hands, applied to them the expressed juices of simple herbs, whose virtues he knew, and shortly, the son of Thierry fell into a tranquil slumber.

After a long and refreshing sleep, the noble exile awoke. The Princess was near him; Agobar had a confused recollection of past events, but he recognised her whom he loved; collecting his thoughts, by degrees,

he began to put them into order. "What a pure air," he murmured, "and how calm a day; Ezilda, whither have you led me?"

"Far from the land of the infidels; far from war and vengeance; to a land of peace and love."

"Shall we remain here, together?—shall nothing separate us again?"

"Nothing," said the Princess—"but your heart."

"My heart!" repeated the hero; "ah! it is thine for ever."

Fearing the effect of any violent emotion upon Agobar, the heroine of Lútevia dared not prolong this interview; she insisted upon his silence, and withdrew.

The kind words of Ezilda, the anxious care of Roderic, the salubrious air of Fontanias, restored the Prince to life. His wounds healed, his limbs recovered their strength, his physical ills had been mitigated, but his soul yet remained to be cured.

One morning, when alone with his deliverer, he said, "Let us never part again; as soon as my recovery is complete, promise, Ezilda, to be my wife."

"Yes, if you will promise to return to God. Let love be your guide to virtue and to happiness."

"How?" replied the warrior, "is there still a fatal obstacle. Your barbarous deity—"

"Clodomir," interrupted the Virgin, in a doleful accent, "still the same language—Ah, in pity for me, at least——"

"Pardon me," cried the Prince, affected; "this shall be the last time. I swear that henceforth I will respect your faith. I will listen to your Christian exhortations. Alas, to fulfil your wishes, why can I not speak a language as divine as your voice, as pure as your hopes, as sublime as your soul."

These words deeply moved the heart of the Princess. Her pains had not been bestowed in vain; each hour she was bringing Agobar nearer to his God. She hoped that, at Fontanias, he might become the Astolpho of Polméran.

Many weeks had elapsed. The son of Thierry had quitted his bed of pain, his expressive eyes had recovered their brilliancy. The Hercules* had regained his martial vigor and his manly beauty. But fre-

quently, even in Ezilda's presence, he sighed bitterly. He had not seen Alaor. Fearing to give pain to his beloved, he concealed from her his secret torments. But he was yet far from happiness.

Fallen from his power, he felt within himself that a Renegade is, in the eyes of the world, a being degraded for ever. Humiliated as he was by his present degradation, he was still more so by his past grandeurs. When he thought of the periods of his glory, despair weighed him down; when he returned to virtue, remorse seized him. Affliction surrounded him on all sides, and, however he regarded his situation, his heart was constantly torn.

The powers of evil pursued him, and combated with Ezilda in his soul. If his army still remained faithful to him—if false reports had abused him—if the Mussulman cohorts, by Alaor's exertions, should loudly call for their chief?—His blood boiled at these thoughts. Alas! Agobar, who for so many years had been the man of war and carnage; who, having had no guides but vengeance and fury, had given them a home in his heart; had made cruel sentiments so

much the habit of his life, that he could not immediately weed them from his soul.

During the first days after the arrival of Agobar and Ezilda, the villagers of Fontanias, anxious to behold the two strangers, had manifested great surprise; but the simple and rational explanations of the sages who governed them, had entirely satisfied their curiosity, and dissipated their astonishment. The accustomed joy and tranquillity reigned through the *Happy Valley*.

Pictures of innocence and love, objects of joy and peace, continually met the eyes of Agobar. The patriarchal manners of the country recalled to him those ideas of the golden age, which had warmed his youthful fancy with enthusiasm. Sometimes, plunged in an ineffable reverie, it appeared to him that some miraculous power had turned his existence back to the fabulous days of antiquity—had cast him upon a still pure and virgin country. At other moments he would fancy that he passed through the fatal scenes of his glory only in a dream, and that, still a pastor and hunter of the Ardenes, he had never quitted Polméran.

The sports of the shepherds of Fontanias,

displaying in the meadows their strength, agility, and address, reminded him of the early joys of his life; he took a part in their ingenuous delights, and was interested with their pleasures. The friend of the children of nature could be no longer the man of vengeance.

While the constant view of immorality familiarizes with crime, and corrupts the being to whom it is presented; virtue, in like manner, purifies the mortal who approaches it. Agobar drew daily nearer to the thoughts of his youth. His movements were less impetuous; his remembrances were less bitter; his language less passionate; his reflections less deep. He, however, still complained; but it was because he suffered less.

Ezilda observed him attentively. An angel of consolation and peace, without Agobar's having communicated to her his evils, she sate about curing them; for all the wounds of the spirit, she had efficacious remedies; for all irritations of the mind, she had consoling words: she took away the agony of remorse, by presenting virtue

clothed in all its charms. Where disputes were about to arise, she interposed sentiments. Nothing was impossible to the inspired. Agobar forgot his miseries; peace entered his soul, and at Fontanias, nothing was wanting to his happiness but Alaor.

The volcanoes, by which Fontanias was surrounded, had not for ages emitted those flames which had formerly rent the mountains and desolated the plains. Their craters, half extinct, which now only threw up light clouds of ashes, were far distant from the valley, and hidden by an amphitheatre of fir and chesnut trees. Against the door of the cabin, seated by the side of Roderic, Ezilda drew the hero's attention to the enchanting spectacle of the setting sun; his last rays threw a golden veil over the tapering stems, and pointed leaves, with which the mountains were clothed. At this moment the happy pair, whose union had been blessed on the day of the Princess's arrival, advanced from their dwelling. Their arms linked together, wholly abandoned to love and happiness, they seemed hardly conscious that other persons than themselves inhabited

Fontanias. Yielding themselves, without constraint, to their innocent joy—to their passionate tenderness—they were, though wedded, still lovers. Simple, natural, and sincere, they openly displayed their affection. They were not aware of the cold, but, perhaps, necessary customs, which are imposed by civilization, where, as if jealous of the appearance of happiness, conventional forms have been adopted for restraining feeling, and the rules of etiquette have superseded the dictates of the heart.

At the sight of Roderic and the two strangers, the couple retired within the grove. Shunning the curious gaze, they fled—like a gracious and smiling dream of the age of illusion.

Agobar felt strongly moved: a picture of true human felicity had passed before him. His tender and melancholy glance fell upon Ezilda. The evening tints covered the horizon; but no cold or humid wind rose from the meadow; warm and beneficent airs exhaled, during the day, from the volcanic mountains; and the night spread a soft and grateful atmosphere over the valley. A mild and perfumed temperature succeeded to the

heat of the day. It seemed as if tender sighs burst from the mysterious shades of the valley ; or that words of innocence and love, murmured in the solitude, were harmonized with the distant rolling of the cascades, the light whispering of the willow leaves, and the joyous concert of the birds.

This secret voluptuousness of nature, so dangerous to the senses, was felt all around. The air, filled with intoxicating melodies, was an excitement to passion. The soft shadows of Heaven cast upon the half-veiled groves indistinct and vaporous colours, silent appeals to pleasure ; and nature herself, in a sort of languishing delirium, seemed to present, on all sides, sanctuaries for love.

Agobar rose suddenly. Seizing Ezilda's hand, " Come," cried he, " Clodomir calls you ;" and, drawing her forcibly towards the balmy banks of the lake, they crossed the meadow. Roderic observed them until they disappeared.

The son of Thierry stopped at the side of a limpid basin, beneath a grove of myrtles and orange trees, near the brazen lion of the fountain ; two swans, whiter than the snowy covering of the glaciers, sported quietly

upon the surface of the basin, and the light flapping of their wings alone agitated the crystal bosom of the waters. Their caresses and joys were full of love; images of pleasure were repeated and multiplied every where.

The Heavens, studded with brilliant stars, crowned the *Happy Valley* with its azure canopy, like a luminous tent. Distant sounds of woodland music, suddenly charmed the grove; a flexible and sonorous voice sung the following :

Happy the swain who here can find
A heart as loving as his own ;
No joys without a mistress kind,
And without love no bliss is known.

Man was not born to live alone,
As all the gods' creations prove ;
Here his existence is begun,
That all his days may pass in love.

Exile, deserts, slavery,
Are evils which man's heart may bear ;
But Heaven's own best delights must be
Where love has link'd a happy pair.

Can monarch's power here below
Compare with love's pure joys ?—ah, never !
The only Heaven earth can know
Is that fond love which lasts for ever.

The song ceased, but the air remained as it were impregnated with harmony and sentiment. Agobar still held Ezilda's hand. He gazed passionately upon his deliverer, his mistress, and his wife. In this night of tenderness and melancholy, in this abode of delight and softness, he was alone with her—and the Virgin of the Cevennes breathed and lived for him alone.

"Ezilda, dear Ezilda," cried he, with transport; "Yes—

Heaven's own best delight must be
Where love has link'd a happy pair.

My best beloved! in my life's journey I have long wandered over burning sands and deserted plains—but, at length, I have met you; I have found the enchanted Oasis: I will never again quit it, and I will forget the fiery pillars of the desert."

A tear of tenderness stole from the long eyelashes of the Princess. She smiled; her bosom was oppressed; she dared not reply. Her heart told her that she loved too intensely to weaken her passion by words at this moment.

Pointing to the swans, sporting on the lake, "Look!" continued the hero, "all

around us is love. The sounds you have just heard, this serene and favouring sky, these mysterious solitudes, do they not speak to your soul?"

"Where you are," replied Ezilda, "can I think of what surrounds me? I see nothing in the creation but Clodomir."

"Well!" replied the Prince, with his accustomed impetuosity, as he fell on his knees, "know then, at length, your power. Behold the stern Agobar—that untamed tyger—that ruthless being—behold him, trembling and submissive, prostrate before a woman!"

The colour flew into the cheeks of the Virgin. Happy and yet alarmed, "Rise!" said she, "what would you?"

"What would I?" repeated Agobar, passionately; "you alone, you entirely—nothing but you. Adorable creature, come to my heart! Your husband calls. The voice of love pleads all around for Clodomir: make him happy! Let him taste all the delights of existence: Ezilda, dearest Ezilda, will you be mine?"

The warrior clasped her in his arms.—

"O, Clodomir!" said the Princess, "I can sacrifice to you every thing on earth—but virtue. You are not yet my husband."

"I am!" interrupted the Prince, impetuously: "Our fathers united our hands, and I led you to the altar. Cruel! in vain do you resist; the whole world, crumbling around me, should not restrain my transports. You must—you shall be mine!"

His language was that of delirium. He could no longer command his intoxicated senses. He pressed Ezilda to his bosom; their sighs mingled, voluptuousness reigned about them.

The Princess recovered herself, and the yielding lover became again the heroine. A rosary was round her neck, and a golden crucifix fell from it upon her bosom. She disengaged herself from the hero's arms, and retired a few paces.—Then seizing the cross as a shield of defence with one hand, and repulsing Agobar with the other, "Rash man!" said she, "pause! Warrior of the Saracen camp, do you take me for a Harem girl?"

Ezilda's stern gesture, her unexpected

change, her firm and solemn tone, and her imposing attitude, confounded the Prince : they chilled his senses, and dissipated the delirium of his passion. The power of virtue prevailed ; Ezilda's single glance, falling upon Agobar, like the touch of a talisman, triumphed over all the spells of sensual love, and broke the enchantments of voluptuousness.

But the son of Thierri, the creature of extremes, could only pass rapidly from one excess to another ; a blind rage succeeded to his delirious tenderness. A dark cloud lowered upon his brow. The Virgin of the Cevennes observed it, and love again asserted his rights. She anxiously approached him ; her voice reassumed its fond tone, its heavenly sweetness. " Clodomir," said she, do you love me ?"

The astonished Prince raised his eyes, and could not again take his gaze from her whom, in his turn, he was about to repulse. Wrapped in her white veil, as with a robe of innocence, Ezilda, in this delightful grove, extended her hand to him. Beneath the foliage, and in the evening shadows, her figure seemed almost aerial, her beauty

more than mortal. An atmosphere of such purity surrounded her, as if, in the depths of ethereal space, the spirits of bliss had opened the Heavens to salute her with their glances.

“Do I love you!” cried Agobar,—“as much as man can love!”

“Do you observe the cross of that hermitage?” said Ezilda. “If I really possess your heart, then, to-morrow I may become your’s for ever.”

“Have I not received your ring?” replied the warrior, “at the royal chapel of Lutetia; did I not plight to you my faith. What is wanting to our marriage?”

“The nuptial benediction.”

“And who will pronounce it?”

“The Priest of Fontanias.”

“The Priest of Fontanias?” repeated Agobar, with irritation. “And can certain mysterious words, scarcely heard, still less understood, and uttered by a stranger, appear to you sacred ties? Neither the oaths of fidelity nor the contracts of honor seem to you bonds as indissoluble as absurd rites and ridiculous ceremonies.”

“What do you dare to say?” interrupted

the Virgin, "do you call those august ceremonies absurd rites, where men come, accompanied by their fellows, to pledge their oaths, and to choose God and his holy temple as the most worthy witnesses? Do the hearts of a happy pair become less affectionate for the pure benediction of Heaven by the mouth of a holy minister? And what is there ridiculous in purifying themselves by prayer, and placing even their loves beneath the Divine protection?"

Agobar, with difficulty, suffered her to proceed. His soul was hesitating, but some remains of his old hate against the Christian worship still remained. "Priests!" cried he, "I was once the victim of those monsters who are called holy ministers. Astolpho, shut up within their monastery, has reason to know them, and to abhor them. Never shall my knee be bowed before a priest."

"Some unworthy ministers have been known to you," said the Princess, "and you load them all with the same detestation, as if they were all alike. Why, since Charles Martel and his soldiers have persecuted you, do you not hate all warriors? Why do

you not reject all the flowers of the valley, because some poisonous plants blossom amongst them? Son of Thierry, it is not before the priest at the altar that your knee will be bent, but before the Supreme Being. We implore the benediction, not of man, but of Heaven. O, my beloved, as in all nature I see nought but Clodomir, so in the holy temple of Christians, I see nothing but the Omnipotent."

As she spoke, a sweet calm succeeded to the dark storm in the soul of Agobar. He listened to her in a mute extacy, and, without being fully persuaded, the haughty chief was subdued. Ezilda seemed to him so grand, so pure, so sublime, that he dared not, by sacrilegious sentiments, begin a contest which might lower her from her lofty purity to his own condition. "Ah," said he, internally, "if her faith be an error, and my incredulity be reason, her brilliant error elevates her, while my dull reason debases me. Child of marvellous works, what a space is there between us? I shall linger alone upon the dark shore, while you inhabit the ethereal plains."

He was no longer the haughty Renegade.

he was no longer the man of blasphemy; he had not totally quitted that impious path which he had lately traversed, but, at least, he had paused, and, ready to abandon it, he now sought the ways of the Lord.

"Clodomir, what do you decide?" said the Virgin of the Cevennes, "shall I accompany you to the chapel, or shall I restore your ring?" and, with a trembling hand, she offered him their nuptial pledge.

"Consent to relinquish our ties; to take back your ring!—Never."

"Come with me, then, to the foot of the altar."

"Agobar was about to comply; "but, the priest of Fontanias," said he, "will he receive me in his church;—can he admit to his altar, and to his blessing, a Renegade?"

"When you have entered the temple of God," replied the heroine, with energy, "you will no longer be a *Renegade*. The injurious epithet falls; the stain is wiped away; the odious mark is effaced; the church is closed against impiety; but it ever opens its sacred portals to repentance. One word,—one contrite sigh is sufficient, and you will again become the child of

Heaven. And what have you to fear from a priest? Like the father of the prodigal son, when you come again to him, he will sing a holy exultation on your reformation; and in the sacred cloisters, a true representative of the Lord, he will share in those holy joys, which, according to the scripture, celebrate the return of a sinner."

Agobar's soul was moved!—"Now," continued the Princess, with increased fervour, "I offer my hand and my faith, not to the son of Thierry, not to the heir of the kings of France; it is to Clodomir, dead to the throne, to Astolpho of the Ardennes. Your sceptre is lost for ever; no ambitious thoughts can influence me. But with you I shall have acquired more than the monarchy; I shall possess the man of my heart.

"Are, then, the empty grandeurs of the earth to be regretted? Do you believe that, decked with a diadem, and surrounded by its inseparable accompaniments of plots and conspiracies, you would find repose and happiness? Do you think in the midst of camps, and seeking inconstant victory, a conqueror is blest? Near thrones are abysses, and disasters follow closely upon

uccess. What weight is more heavy than a crown when it is honourably worn; and what more disgraceful when it is used only as a vain decoration? Glory is an enchanted light which dazzles the warrior, but whither does the deceitful light lead? Let the history of great men reply. Granting, even, that a succession of triumphs, and no misfortunes are his lot, his days are worn out in filling the earth with his fame. "*And is this all,*" cried Cæsar, the master of conquered Europe. The life of the great Roman had passed away, almost without perception, and his soul, filled with glory, was void of happiness.

"Clodomir, look upon this valley, the abode of innocence, tenderness, and peace; is it not better than those stormy gulfs which are called royal dwellings; are these regions not better than those bloody plains styled fields of honour? Ah, let us stay in these solitudes; I can convey hither, secretly, all that will be necessary for our happiness. Far from the policy of courts, the envenomed tongue of slander, and the perfidy of men, we will forget the tempestuous past in the

hours of love ; and while the tumultuous world rolls on a confused and artificial mass of woe, we alone shall possess true felicity, real benefits, for we shall live to love alone."

Ezilda paused ; her heroism, and her beauty, her eloquence, and her virtues, beyond those of humanity, made her appear to the son of Thierry like a superior intelligence, like an intermediate work between mortals and angels.

" Ezilda ! incomparable maid," cried he, " whither do you transport me ? Are these the words of the Eternal ? To what a new world do you open my eyes. Angel, who hast raised me from the earth, I can resist no longer—I abjure my past existence—I am thine and God's alone."

Inexpressible joy, the Virgin of the Cevennes had triumphed. She had vanquished the Renegade ; she had found Clodomir once more. Resting tenderly upon him, she testified her happiness, her unutterable joy. When devoting herself entirely to him she loved, she had renounced the world for his sake ; when, to wed an outcast, flying grandeur and glory, she relinquished all, she

seemed to have acquired every thing. This sublime delicacy of woman's love, this magnanimous self-devotion, produces the most noble sacrifices; it is doubly blessed in the giving and in the receiving.

They returned to Roderic's cottage. Like the blessed pair they had seen some time before they abandoned themselves to their mutual passion. The time glided on deliciously. They walked without following any precise path, they had but one thought: and the past and the future disappeared from their minds which were filled alone with the blissful present.

Agobar had promised his beloved to repair to the Priest of Fontanias, and to prepare all for their nuptials. Their destiny seemed now to be fixed. Fate appeared propitious to their vows, and beneath her rustic dwelling the daughter of Theobert offered up to Heaven her grateful thanks.

Alas ! how often do the moments of purest happiness precede those of the heaviest woe. The Virgin of the Cevennes slept in the hope of joy, and was to awake to all the bitterness of grief.

At the dawning of the day, the sonorous blast of a trumpet, until then unknown to the meadows of Fontanias, was echoed through the valley. Roused from his slumbers by the blasts of glory, Agobar rose greatly astonished. He felt his heart beat at the martial sound. His military ardour, which had been dead for a short time, revived with fresh violence. He seemed to hear the voice of victory reproaching him with his sluggish life. He had not been Astolpho long enough to have forgotten Agobar.

The door opened, and he viewed with transport his brother in arms restored to him. It was no longer Alaor, proscribed and despairing, but Alaor, glowing with triumph. What a delightful moment was this for the Renegade. His friend came a secret messenger from the Saracen camp, to call him to glory and vengeance.

"Athime governs still," said Alaor, "but the Mussulmans and their chieftains regard him with horror, and are ready to revolt against him. They call loudly for Agobar ; as soon as he shall appear at their

head, the thunder will burst upon Athime, and the conqueror of Angostura, avenged by his faithful legions, will be more dreaded, more powerful, and more celebrated than ever."

The Prince listened eagerly. The papers which Alaor bore, proved the authenticity of his news; they were signed by the principal Saracen chiefs, and assured his triumph. A vast and secret plot, which had been organized by his friend, and the success of which appeared certain, would re-establish his dignity and glory. The Musulman army awaited him, to give him just and exemplary vengeance upon Athime in the eyes of Europe. His name, now loaded with shame, and basely degraded, to-morrow might rise immortal. The throne would be at his refusal. His extraordinary fall, his eclipse from the field of honour, and his return to his army, might furnish less victories to the history of his life, but many more wonders. The ill-fortune of his abasement would only add to his renown; and the days of his banishment would have increased his power.

It was done ! The valley of Fontanias had lost its power of enchantment. Battle, fury, and vengeance, were the thoughts of Agobar. Breathing, once more, stormy and warlike passions, he threw himself again frantically into that element which was peculiarly his own.

Ezilda, pale and trembling, came before him. He cast down his eyes with confusion ; love again spoke to his soul.

“ Clodomir,” cried she, and for the first time her tears interrupted her speech. She knew the soul of the son of Thierry, she divined what he was about to say ; she foresaw his intentions. In the mournful tone of her voice was volumes of reproach.—Eloquence was in her utterance of the simple word, Clodomir. Without daring to look upon her, the Prince answered—“ I go—honour calls me.”

“ Honour,” repeated the heroine, “ cruel man ; there is no more honour in this action, than there is love in your heart.”

The hero quitted Alaor, and was alone with his mistress. “ Dear Ezilda,” said he, with a faltering voice, “ listen, and you must

pardon me. At this moment, dishonoured in the eyes of Europe, proscribed, and loaded with ignominy, I am unworthy to be your husband. Suffer me to regain my fame, and recover my lost glory; I will atone for all my crimes, and shall deserve to be yours. My stay at Fontanias has changed my soul for ever. I am no longer a Renegade; if once revenged of my enemies, I shall recover my power, I will no longer ravage this realm; and instead of persecuting the Christians, I will end their miseries.

“ I cannot now unfold to you the vast design I have formed; but confide in your husband, and believe that its object is the pardon of my crimes, the freedom of my country, and the peace of the whole universe.

“ Farewell, but for a short time, angelic creature! Remain in this peaceful retreat, the remembrance of which will hold the first place in my bosom, and which I quit a purified man. As soon as my plans are accomplished, I will return to you and Astolpho once more. I will devote my whole life to you. My return to the Saracen camp will

be an epoch in history. I will prove to the world, that even when at the height of human glory, I can abandon them all without regret."

His words bore the stamp of truth: God might perhaps intend the salvation of France by the hands of him who would have destroyed it. "Speak, then," cried Agobar, passionately, "if you permit me, I will depart; if you forbid me, I shall remain here."

The Princess would have answered him, and perhaps have changed his resolves, when the Janissaries, sent from the Saracen camp, who had not yet been able to throw themselves at the feet of their chief, rushed tumultuously under the rustic dwelling, where the hero was waiting Ezilda's determination. She had prepared a triumphant fête; and their immoderate joy could be no longer restrained. They surrounded him, and tore him, in his own despite, from Roderic's cottage.

Touched by this proof of his soldiers love, loaded with their acclamations, and led by his own heart, Agobar suffered himself to be borne in triumph from the

Happy Valley. Ezilda rushed from the cabin, she raised her voice to Clodomir, but the trumpets and the shouts drowned the voice of the Virgin.

Surprised at the strange pomp, the warlike escort, the loud music, the inhabitants of Fontanias pressed round Agobar; they followed, with delight and admiration, the march of the warriors, glittering in armour, lovely in youth and heroism, in valour and enthusiasm. Unhappy people! their days of peace had fled for ever: their retreat, once discovered, would no longer be called the *Happy Valley*.

Alaor had feared Ezilda's influence upon Agobar; he dreaded that the inspired of France would retain the descendant of Clovis at Fontanias: he had therefore resolved, with his Janissaries, to tear him from the enchantress by stratagem or by force. The success of their enterprise had surpassed their expectations.

Glittering scimitars, and lofty crests, hid Agobar from the Heroine of the Cevennes. Scarcely could she catch the words of tenderness and consolation which the Prince

addressed to her on his departure. Scarcely could she see the farewell signals by which he seemed to promise a speedy and happy return. He fled—he traversed the valley—he passed the rocks of Fontanias, and disappeared among the trees. The heart of Ezilda scarcely beat; she quitted the cottage. The whole world had disappeared with her beloved hero; a cloud obscured her sight, and she sank, deserted, upon a solitary hillock, at the foot of an aged oak.

END OF THE TENTH BOOK.

BOOK XI.

OH, treason! daughter of Hell, how deceptive are thy snares, how deep are thy abysses! Queen of base minds rejoice, for thy victim draws nigh! Agobar believes he is marching to triumph, but he goes to his fate!

On the night Alaor had quitted the wood-cutter's cottage, he repaired to Angostura, and had scarcely reached the Saracen camp, when he was recognised, arrested, and dragged, loaded with chains, before Athime. When questioned by the ferocious African, as to the asylum of the illustrious exile, he did not deign to reply; and neither the sight of the prepared tortures, nor the most seductive offers, nor the most terrible threats, could shake, for a moment, the firm purpose of his soul.

Athime understood mankind, and he soon formed a correct opinion upon the devoted soldier, who offered to brave death and

torture for his chief. He soon saw the uselessness of his efforts to tear from him his secret; and the dastard, resolving to gain possession of his enemy, had recourse to artifice, and arranged the most nefarious plot for this purpose.

Alaor was cast, by the order of Athime, into a dismal dungeon. There his sentence of death was read to him. Bound, naked, to a post in his dungeon, he was to be shot with arrows, unless he would deliver up Agobar to the Calif's representative. Alaor was confined in a strong castle, called Mil-taid, between the Cevennes and Angostura. The Moorish chief who occupied it, was one of the most potent chiefs in the army; his name was Mohamud: he was at the head of one of the strongest divisions of the camp, and his soul was as barbarous and as perfidious as that of Athime.

The friend of the son of Thierry was expecting his fate, when Mohamud appeared mysteriously in his dungeon. After many treacherous precautions, lest an intelligence between them should be suspected,—after feigned measures of secrecy, the designing

coward said, "Noble Saracen, your heroic firmness, your sublime devotion, have gained my heart for ever. I have observed and admired you, and I am going to confide in you.

"Worthy comrade of a hero, know that I hate Athime as much as you can do, that the army abhors him, and that all our chiefs await only a favourable opportunity for throwing off the monster's yoke, and calling the immortal conqueror of Angostura to the supreme power. I have a numerous force under my command, and I hold this strong castle. The base emissary of the Calif has put your fate into my hands, and believes that his orders are executed; but I am not content with having saved you, I would rid the earth of Athime, I would avenge the son of glory, I would restore Agobar."

He then spoke with enthusiasm of the hero of Iberia; he pretended to shed tears over the evils which he had suffered, and uttered imprecations and hatred against his rival.

Mohamud, who had been nursed in treason, and was an adept in the art of deceit,

had little difficulty in convincing his captive. For some time they secretly, and by night, arranged together a plot, by which Agobar was to be restored to the army. Other chiefs, as treacherous as Mohamud, met in the prison. After long deliberations, and the most solemn vows, the plan of the conspiracy was agreed on. Alaor, whom Athime believed to be dead, was to escape from his dungeon, and repair to the place of Agobar's retreat, with the authentic writing by which the chiefs bound themselves to support him, and, accompanied by some of his faithful Janissaries, to escort him to Militaid. There, recognised by the division of Mohamud, the hero was to raise the standard of revolt. The other Mussulman battalions, under those chiefs whose pledges Alaor had received, were immediately to hasten to him. The whole army would salute him with their unanimous acclamations, and Agobar, in possession of his enemy, triumphant and avenged, would recover his rank and glory.

How was it possible not to have been deceived by such perfidious manœuvres ! In

this well-contrived plot all was seduction, and all appeared like truth. The most refined art, the most skilful stratagem, concealed the treachery. The heroic and magnanimous soul of Alaor could not even have admitted the possibility of such faithlessness. Mohamud had broken his chains, and had let him escape from the castle; to obtain the confidence of his victims, he had chosen from among his Janissaries soldiers who, he knew, were devoted to their old commander, and these enthusiastic warriors, deceived, like the pupil of Agobar, were made the instruments of crime.

On leaving Miltaid with his troop, Alaor flew to the dwelling of the wood-cutter; he did not doubt that he should there find his friend, or, at least, learn where he was. He reached the cottage, and, leaving his soldiers, he entered alone. The son of Thierry was not there, but, faithful to his promise, the Old Man of the Black Rock remained.

Informed by Gondair of the retreat of Agobar, Alaor, without revealing any of his secrets, learnt minutely the perilous road

which would conduct him through the gulf of the volcanic mountains to Fontanias, and then rejoined his companions.

Alas! he followed, but too successfully, the road traced by the Bard; he surmounted all obstacles, and, to Agobar's misfortune, discovered the Happy Valley.

The Prince and his faithful guard were soon far from Fontanias. They had attained the summit of the terrific mountain. From this place a scene of disorder and desolation met their eyes:—there was neither tree, plant, or vegetation; every step presented an abyss, and every abyss a furnace. Formerly cascades of lava had rolled confusedly from rock to rock. Long prismatic columns of basalt, were heaped on all sides, resembling the ruins of towers, obelisks, buildings, and spires. An infectious and red vapour exhaled through the crevices of the scorched earth:—in this desert of fire, ashes, and scorïæ, the hero, struck with horror, thought he saw an infernal abode, evacuated by its demons.*

* Concerning these sublime horrors, see all the authors before mentioned.

Suffocated by the sulphurous vapours of this accursed land, he proceeded, guided by Alaor. The earth shook around them, and the lava, though cooled, burnt their feet as they trode on it. The craters of these numerous volcanoes had not, for a long period, thrown forth their sweeping flames; there were now no explosions or flames, but the subterranean fire still burnt, the storm roared beneath the rocks, and death, still threatening, reigned there in its silent kingdom, far from all existence.

The warlike travellers, after a thousand dangers, escaped the burning gulfs along which they had passed;—two soldiers, however, perished, stifled by the volcanic exhalations; and their fate filled the Janissaries with consternation. They at last descended the mountains, and reposed for some hours under the shade of the forests, on the bank of a clear stream.

Agobar continued his journey. Fearing unpleasant encounters, and therefore avoiding the beaten roads, they advanced but slowly; Alaor observed his chief, and hardly recognised him. The son of Thierry, for-

merly impatient and furious, was now pensive and cold, and seemed not to think of his troops. As he proceeded farther from Fontanias, his grief increased; he felt that he had left virtue, peace, and existence. The image of the Virgin of the Cevennes was every moment present to him, like the agonizing remembrance of lost happiness. Glory, to which they dragged him, seemed but to him a phantom dressed in the cold habits of the grave. He struggled with himself, the lover of Ezilda combated the chief of the Saracens:—his sorrows and his hopes, his actions and his sentiments, formed a wild discord within him.

His brother in arms endeavoured to divert his thoughts, and to rouse him from his reflections; he reminded him of his victories; he promised him new laurels: the Prince heard him not. The young Mussulman soldier changed the subject; he spoke of his own zeal and affection: Agobar made no answer. His inward sufferings may be imagined, when the soft voice of Alaor spoke in vain to his heart.

However, Alaor, gratified at being the

support of the hero of Iberia, thought, with pride, that the conqueror of Angostura, the man admired by the whole universe, was about, by his assistance, to remount to the highest step of glory; and, but for his chief's sorrow, his joy and enthusiasm would have equalled his devotion.

At the setting of the sun the travellers perceived, on the eastern side, the towers of Miltaid. The Heavens were full of vapours, and the last rays of the sun, broken by rainy clouds, raised an arch of light above the dark castle. The Prince looked and trembled. He remembered the convent from which, crowned with divine fires, came the daughter of wonders. His ardent imagination was troubled; he thought he still saw the inspired maiden advance towards him, from the midst of the meteor, and it seemed to him that, opposing herself to his passage, she again cried—"Agobar, go no farther."

The son of Thierry stopped. "The night approaches," said Alaor; "let us hasten on: behold Miltaid! He seized the hand of the hero, and dragged him forward, in spite

of his resistance. "Unfortunate Clodomir, why did you not listen to the secret voice which bade you remain? there was still time."—Ezilda had whispered to his soul—the invisible protectress had cried—"Agobar, go no farther."

Vain hope; a fatality carries him on. The Prince and his Janissaries were soon under the walls of Miltaid. Darkness had rapidly replaced the light. Near the castle, on an immense plain, was seen the camp of Mohamud, the light of the fires from which rose in volumes to the clouds. The cries of the sentinels, the confused motion of the battalions, and the rolling of the war-chariots, mingling with the neighing of the coursers, and the sharp notes of the trumpet, formed a nocturnal and savage harmony, which Agobar had formerly listened to with joy, but in which he now only found terror. The peopled darkness astonished and dismayed him. The disorder of these fields, filled with troops, the clouds of flame which covered the air, the hoarse and discordant orders, which had nothing human but the sound, this assembly of men of blood,

sharpening their murderous weapons, all appeared to him barbarous, and of fatal import. And yet these images were not new to him; these objects were not changed: it was his own heart which was no longer the same.

According to the plan agreed upon, the chief and his escort passed the outposts rapidly, as a detached troop, arriving from a secret expedition. Arrived at the drawbridge, they blew the horn; the gates were immediately opened; the drawbridge was let down; the Prince was under the perfidious roof where treason had called him. He advanced, with confident steps, through a line of pikes and lances; the portcullis fell behind him with a loud noise, like the axe on a scaffold; Agobar, the celebrated hero, the descendant of Merovée, had delivered himself up, and his safety was now no more.

He demanded of the guards of the fort to be conducted to Mohamud. Through passages, badly lighted, through narrow corridors, and innumerable turnings, they conducted him, mysteriously, to the great gallery

of the castle. At the entrance to the trophied hall, the Prince, turning towards Alaor, perceived that he had been separated from his faithful Janissaries ; his friend did not seem astonished at it, for youth, like virtue, is full of hope and confidence.

The immense room in which Agobar now found himself, was full of fierce warriors, grouped without order, and all armed. Their ferocious and tawny countenances wore the most sinister aspect. Around the columns which supported the vault, they muttered, in a low voice, words of ominous meaning, which they accompanied with frightful laughs. Some standing against a chafing-dish at the bottom of the hall, stirred the fire, which was nearly extinguished, with the iron heads of their pikes. Others, leaning against iron candelabras which hung from the pillars, revived the light of the torches with the points of their poignards. Their naked and raised scimitars, like a moving forest, projected along the walls of the gallery. By the light of the resinous flambeaux and the sparkling chafingdish, their red turbans, their livid figures, their black beards,

and their girdles, filled with weapons, gave them the appearance of the monstrous personages of some infernal scene, or of phantoms conjured by the magicians of the abyss.

"It is he, it is Agobar!" cried a voice suddenly; it was that of Mohamud. A ferocious cry, sent out from all the extremities of the hall, answered the monster's signal. The sentence was already executed; the satellites of crime threw themselves upon Agobar and his friend, who, disarmed and defenceless, were thrown down at the same instant, and without the opportunity of resistance. Heavy chains were put upon their hands and feet; they were loaded with insult; and Mohamud, addressing himself to the Prince,—
"Your career is at last at an end," said he, to him. "Heaven, weary of your crimes, revenges Abderaman, and smites you in this place; and, by my hands, the earth shall be delivered from a monster whom it groans under."

"Mohamud," cried Alaor, with an accent of the most dreadful despair, "can you mean this?"

"Weak and credulous youth," answered the African, disdainfully, "your simplicity has been imposed upon. You thought yourself the chief of a league, while you were but the instrument of treachery. What, presumptuous boy, did you suppose you could direct men according to your wishes? Your enthusiastic admiration of Agobar, has caused you to deliver up your friend in this fort to the axe of the executioner."

The young Saracen uttered a shriek, and fell against a pillar. He seemed struck with death, but that the convulsive movements of his limbs proved he still existed.

The inexpressible agony of Alaor restored an apparent calm in the mind of the son of Thierri; the grief of his brother in arms affected him more severely than the treachery of Mohamud. "Traitor," said he, to the Moorish chief, casting on him an indignant look—

"It becomes you well," interrupted the agent of Athime, "to give that name to others: who has so well deserved it as yourself? Vile Renegade, Heaven is just,

He who has betrayed his God, ought to be betrayed by men. Guards, drag him to his dungeon."

The Janissaries of Mohamud seized their victims. The Prince and his friend were dragged from the hall. They descended the winding steps which led to the subterranean parts of the castle. They traversed dark caverned passages; unwholesome vapours suffocated the air, and the green walls were covered with venomous reptiles. An iron door rolled on its hinges, and they found themselves in a large dungeon, the roof of which, supported by several pillars, was only lighted by sepulchral lamps, at a great distance from each other.

The door was shut again. Before the two captives were left alone—"Saracen," said one of the agents of Mohamud, to the pupil of Agobar, "prepare for death. The sentence of Athime, pronounced against you long since, will be executed this very night, in this place, and before the eyes of your friend."

The Janissaries departed. Dumb, and seized with horror, Agobar sat in silence

upon a stone in the dungeon. His sufferings were at their height, and yet he no longer felt in his formerly revolting heart that fury against fate which made him, in adversity, blaspheme the Eternal. He resigned himself to his destiny: nor did it again rouse the Renegade in him.

Alaor, the author of all these evils which pressed upon the noble outlaw, feared to meet his look, and even to speak. He was about to quit life, but this idea did not occupy him; it was the thought that he had lost the heart of his friend which overwhelmed him.

The unfortunate youth fell on his knees at some distance from Agobar. He could no longer restrain the expressions of his despair. He wanted to hear one word from his brother in arms; he solicited his reproaches as if he were beseeching pity. Nothing that his Prince could say would be so cruel as the reproaches of his own heart.

"Agobar," cried he, extending his arms towards him, "in pity look on me; utter one word before I die."

He spoke thus, his hands loaded with

chains, his face bathed in tears, his attitude humble and submissive; his youth and beauty, his repentance and sufferings, presented the most affecting picture. "Approach, thy brother calls thee," answered the son of Thierry, "we have need of each other in these dreadful last moments."

Alaor, at these words, drew towards him. Hiding his head with humbled shame in his friend's cloak—"I, your brother," said the unfortunate youth, "am I worthy of that name?—I have drawn you from the Happy Valley to precipitate you into an abyss, and I have accomplished the designs of your assassins."

His sighs suffocated him—he could not proceed. "Do not rend my heart thus," said Agobar, "I can resist my own misfortunes, but I shall sink under your grief. Do not let us give this new triumph to our enemies. We must preserve our fortitude."

Comforted by this affectionate language, Alaor raised his face, still bathed in tears. "May my fate," continued he, "mitigate the fury of Athime! Monsters, will they dare to sacrifice the greatest conqueror? If they spare you, I shall die happy."

"Oh, my friend!" pursued he, "forgive the credulous Alaor his fatal error. Preserve his memory in your heart; do not forget how much he loved you; and, sometimes calling to mind his life, that life which he entirely consecrated to you, forget those last days——"

"No," replied Agobar, "if, unfortunately, I should be doomed to survive you, I neither can nor will banish from my remembrance a single instant we have spent together upon earth; they were all as pure as you, I have never known any sweeter."

"Can you speak to me of your affection," cried the young Saracen, "and think where you are? I deserve nothing but your hate, load me with your reproaches."

"Reproaches! oh, never," interrupted the illustrious captive. "You, whose friendship cast such glowing rays over my life—charm of my glorious days, consolation of my mournful hours, come to my arms, to my heart. Instead of addressing you with reproach, I have to express to you my gratitude."

"Generous man," said Alaor, in a stifled voice, "magnanimous chief, I have spent

but few days here below, and yet they have been worthily filled. I followed you, and and you have loved me."

"Rise, then," said Agobar; and, for the first time since the days of innocence, tears flowed from his eyes.

"Alaor was in his arms. "Then you have pardoned me?"

"Pardoned!" repeated the Prince. "Do not again use that word. Young and unfortunate warrior, alas! you have too much reason to accuse me. Have I not caused your destruction? If you had not devoted your life to me, would you have found your grave here?"

Distant steps were heard; they drew nearer; Alaor was, perhaps, to die. "Farewell," cried he, falling again on the breast of his brother in arms, "farewell; they come, I am ready. Let them hide your sufferings from me, and I will cheerfully face the punishment they have prepared for me! I see nothing horrible in death but our separation."

The door opened. The murderers advanced, armed with pointed javelins, and.

surrounded their victim. They stripped off his clothes, and fastened him against a post, which might serve for a butt to their arrows. The victim, mild and resigned, offered no resistance ; and, thinking only of Agobar, did not suffer a sigh to escape him.

The hero was frantic. Alaor's hour was about to sound ; he trembled at surviving him. At first, conquering his pride, he essayed for his friend what he had never done for himself—Agobar implored and supplicated. But, soon perceiving that his prayers met only with ironical disdain, that no pity could speak to the hearts of the ferocious soldiers, he ceased ; his blood boiled. With the hope of meeting his end, he threw himself in the midst of the executioners, and, putting out the whole force of his athletic strength, collecting that fierce energy which had rendered him so redoubtable, he raised his arms, loaded with heavy chains, and cast sudden death among the vile assassins.

The Mussulmans fell around him, under his multiplied and vigorous blows ; he threw them down, and furiously sacrificed them at his feet. But soon the prison was filled

with new troops, who ran thither on hearing the noise of the fight. Without any arms but his fetters, he could no longer resist the cohorts that surrounded him. But he defied them; he threatened them; he regarded not their numbers, and still struck at them. He would, at this moment, have braved all the legions of Mohamud, all the thunders of the earth.

His eyes sparkling like two burning meteors, his colossal size, his heroic valour, and his unexampled audacity, still imposed upon the barbarians. They fell before him. Mohamud presented himself, he commanded his Janissaries, reproached them with cowardice, and the horrible contest began anew in the prison.

Agobar drew back against the wall; overwhelmed with blows, exhausted with such great efforts, he felt his strength forsake him. His feet caught in his chains—he tottered, they were enabled to seize him, and they bound him by the middle of his body to the iron rings which were at the side of the dungeon.

Horrible barbarity!—Mohamud immedi-

ately ordered the execution of Alaor. The son of Thierri, without being able to make a single movement, saw by the sepulchral light of the lamps, the atrocious execution. Alaor was at the fatal post. The whiteness of his body, stripped of his clothing, shone in the surrounding gloom. The perfection of his form, the beauty of his features, his resignation, his youth, nothing could soften the stern murderers, they stood at a short distance from the victim, and hurled their javelins.

Agobar uttered a cry which seemed to shake the walls and roof of the prison; he heard a frightful shriek, and the body of the unfortunate youth was suddenly presented to his eyes, pierced with bleeding arrows. One of them had struck the heart of Alaor; that heart so pure and devoted. The head of the young soldier had fallen on his breast:—when his eye no longer met that of his brother in arms, Alaor had ceased to exist.

The door was re-opened—Mohamud and his Janissaries left the dungeon. By an odious refinement in their vengeance, they

had left the corpse of his friend before the eyes of Agobar.

There are no words in human language strong enough to express the despair of the hero, he was alone and unable to die. In a frantic delirium, and by a supernatural effort, he tore away the rivetted iron which bound him to the wall, and advanced towards Alaor; then drawing out the javelins with which his body was covered, he clasped him once again in his arms, but, alas, it was death that he held to his bosom. "Oh, my brother!" cried he, "thou, in whom were united all that is most magnanimous in man, and most tender in woman; the trembling voice of friendship is near you, and yet your heart answers not."

Before the bleeding remains of this companion of his past glory, he remained for some minutes standing motionless with a fixed and haggard eye. "Behold, then," pursued he, with a heart-breaking and mournful voice, "the most noble and sensible being, the bravest warrior, Alaor, who loved me so well."

His voice expired, his blood froze, and he

fell upon the ensanguined floor without motion.

According to the express commands of Athime, who no doubt reserved Agobar for an ignominious punishment, Mohamud respected the life of the hero. During the fight in the prison, even, he ordered the soldiers not to attempt his life, and the unhappy Prince still lived.

A week rolled away. Mohamud waited for new orders from his chief to decide the fate of his captive. At last a messenger from the camp of Athime brought him this scroll—"To-morrow a decisive engagement will take place; I intend to carry the Renegade into Iberia, loaded with chains, and meant to leave him at Miltaid, till the day of my departure; but it is possible that the warriors of Segorum, with whom Agobar always had secret correspondence, may endeavour to deliver him as well as other French prisoners confined in the dungeons of your castle. Therefore, on receiving this dispatch, send Agobar and all the Christians who are in your power to the pyramid of Fabius. If victory crowns our

banners, take them back to Miltaid; but should fortune betray us, let them all be put to death. Prisoners incumber a march, and in a disastrous retreat would perhaps escape. Thus, then, in case of a reverse, let them expire under the poignard, and give their bodies to the sea.

END OF THE ELEVENTH BOOK.

BOOK XII.

How is man to be pitied—born in the midst of the vast tomb which is called nature; destined to meet with nothing but sufferings in the road which leads to death; to lament at first for others, then to be lamented himself, such is the fate of humanity.

Ezilda, delivered up to her overwhelming thoughts, wandered alone at Fontanias, like a silent shadow. She had lost her sublime energy; no illusion charmed her senses; a part of her existence had forsaken her with the son of Thierry. The terrestrial future is without hope for her human life, without motion, and without end. She saw only in the fate of Agobar a frightful drama, the catastrophe of which approached the idea to which all her thoughts were directed, and was all of bitterness and terror. Overwhelmed and discouraged, she endeavoured to forget every thing. A melancholy apathy, a som-

bre languor, weakened by degrees her physical and moral energies. Her days passed in a death-like silence, as monotonously as an immoveable and tideless sea, as mournfully as the horizon of the desert. They succeeded and effaced each other, like the waves of a stagnant lake; which a cold and wintry wind beats against a sterile shore.

The enchantments of the valley had vanished. The mountains, rocks, groves, the water and the swans, now offered only to the eyes of Ezilda mournful images and heart-rending recollections. Often alone, standing against one of the elms of the meadows, melancholy as a thought of false love, she passed whole hours in contemplative reveries. She seemed to be admiring the country, but, alas, she neither observed or saw any thing. Sometimes its smiling fields obtained a casual glance. "Peaceable and pure solitudes," said she, inwardly, "I admired you when he thought you beautiful,—you were once to me the Happy Valley, but it was when he was there.

"Zarela," continued the unhappy maiden, "pity me in your turn; formerly I blamed your passion, and now I love as you loved."

One evening she drew near the fountain of the brazen lion; leaning against a willow, she saw her face in the natural mirror. Surprised at the change in her features, "Can this be so, said — all then has quitted me — but what matters it? he sees me no longer."

Her face was bathed with her grief. Alas! the cruel fires of love are nourished by tears. Those passionate sentiments which the boisterous pleasures and the joys of the world destroy, grow in solitude, and are exalted by misfortune. Grief is their element, and their atmosphere is the storm.

When two tender, enthusiastic, and faithful hearts, are tied by misfortune, the more they suffer, the more they love. When they have no more wishes to form, the charm flies. The happiness they are about to reach dies at that instant. The present is nothing to man; every thing tends to prove to him that he is formed for futurity. Here, below, nothing is fixed—nothing contents him—nothing suffices him; he is constantly as-

piring to something beyond the earth. Take hope and expectation from the course of human life, and what remains?

Ezilda quitted the fountain. She passed the orange grove, where, on the night of Alaor's arrival, the haughty Agobar had fallen at her feet. That night of love and delirium came again to her memory, loaded with enchantment, glowing with images of fervent passion. But they had fled for ever; those moments of tender transport, which, purely and chastely, had passed beneath that voluptuous grove. "He loves me still," said she; "'twas here that his voice—— Ah, Zarela, you said to me, beware how you listen to it."

She returned to the cottage; soft voices were heard near the solitary roof. The newly wedded pair of Fontanias were descending a flowery bank: joy was in their countenances. She listened to their song. It was the favourite air of the Valley:

"Heaven's own best delights must be

Where love has link'd a happy pair."

These words smote upon her heart. By an involuntary sigh she replied to them,

and hastened from the blest couple. "Let me not," said the daughter of Theobert, "disturb their joy by my wo-worn aspect. They must have discovered that I love, and at the sight of my tears they may tremble for themselves. I can now only seem to happy lovers like a fatal presage."

The Virgin of the Cevennes paused upon the bank of the stream where her boat was moored. Her eyes were fixed upon the cavern whence the troubled waters issued, and through which she had arrived at Fontanias, when, to her surprise, she saw a light bark issue from the dark depths of the rock. An old man guided it, and, as he approached, she recognised the Mountain Bard.

She welcomed him with a joyous exclamation; Gondair landed, and was immediately at Ezilda's feet. "Do I behold you once more; have I again found you?" cried he, with enthusiasm.—"God of Heaven, I thank thee! You are restored to us, and France will be saved."

"What mean these transports; what news do you bring me?"

“Child of the Gauls! inspired Virgin! Charles Martel sends me to you. To-morrow a general engagement will decide the fate of the Christians and the world. Notwithstanding the order and entreaties of Leodat, the warriors of Segorum refuse to join the enemy of Ezilda, even against the Saracens; thus, dispirited and distracted, the defenders of the country cannot hope for victory; you, alone, by re-appearing to the army, can terminate the dissensions, restore patriotism to all hearts, and triumph over the infidels.”

“And the sentence which the Mayor of the Palace pronounced against me—”

“Has been publicly revoked. Charles has proclaimed, on all sides, your innocence, and his own error. He felt that by this means alone he could regain the confidence of the troops, and he publicly announced that Ezilda, the Heroine of France, was a model of virtue; that nothing had sullied her glory; and he supplicates her, in the name of the country, again to take the command of the legions of Segorum.”

A slight colour tinged the pale cheeks of

the Virgin, and reanimated her enchanting countenance. She called to mind the trophies of Segorum and of Labrod; and at the last words of Gondair, her heart beat as in her first days of enthusiasm and glory.

But her eyes fell upon the chapel of Fontanias and the valley she was about to quit. Would the tumult of camps and warlike pomps be in unison with the state of her mind? How many cruel remembrances were contained in this idea; but the fleeting illusion was dissipated, and the new triumphs to which her destiny called her, were fresh trials to which she was condemned by the Almighty.

Ah! the variations of the human heart. Uncertain of his fugitive sensations, and seeking to betray even his own felicity, man frequently nourishes an ideal happiness, which he quits not until it has become a painful reality.

Ezilda looked back upon her past life. It was during her career of glory that Agobar had presented himself to her, to poison her repose for ever. In aspiring to glory, the son of Thierry had quitted the

paths of virtue ; and again, in the valley of Fontanias, he had rejected happiness for the same fatal phantom.

She uttered a loud sigh, " I will accompany you to Segorum," said she, in a plaintive tone. " I will fulfil my destiny. These torments of my soul alarm you, I perceive. Fear nothing, I can vanquish my griefs, they shall fall on me alone. They must not injure our holy cause. I will go—I will join the children of our country—I will recall them to their duties. If they will listen to me, it matters little what may press upon my heart."

" Astonishing maid," cried Gondair, in admiration ; " the eyes of Europe are upon you. Charles Martel, humbling his pride, implores your succour. Never did a more wondrous triumph crown a virgin's brow ; and yet not one word of vanity, nor feeling of proud joy in your magnanimous heart, has betrayed the weakness of humanity. But," he continued, " while mournfully regretting this peaceful solitude, you will march to the temple of victory, as sad as the exile turns to the land of his banish-

ment. Ah, how can you revive the ardent flame of glory in the hearts of others, if it is extinct in your own."

"Be satisfied," said the Princess, "if God has really destined me to preserve Christian Europe, by freeing my own nation, he will still preserve me. Although I am now the fading flower of Fontanias, tomorrow I shall be the glowing star of Segorum. The dead flame may blaze again. The last protecting beam of an expiring beacon, is sometimes the most brilliant.

"Gondair,—I will once more head the children of the Cevennes. I have not forgotten how to revive their warlike ardour; I know their noble aspirations; I know how to speak to their souls; France calls me, and I obey. I shall pursue my stormy career; I will accomplish the decree of Heaven, whether it may lead to defeat, or conduct me to crowns. I see in the future nothing but suffering—still I am resigned to all."

Her torn heart expected nothing from existence; in sacrificing herself to her country she every way commanded the admira-

tion of the world. Her grief was magnanimous; her devotion was divine; her very weakness was exalted, and her humiliation sublime.

"Let us quit this place to-day," said the Old Man of the Black Rock, "by tomorrow's dawn we may reach Segorum."

"Who commands in the Saracen camp," said the Virgin, with a trembling voice, "Must we fight with Agobar?"

Gondair had expected this question, which seemed almost too much for her, and which she scarcely dared to put. He knew too well the shock which his answer must convey; he knew the fate of the son of Thierry, and Ezilda's secret love for him.

"You will not have to combat Agobar," he replied, with an air of distress, "but you will have to preserve him. Basely betrayed by his troops to the power of the ferocious Athime, he is at this moment a captive in the dungeons of Miltaid."

The Bard of the Mountain then related all the events which had preceded and followed the capture of the famous prisoner. Excepting the terrific death of Alaor, of

which he knew nothing, he faithfully related to the Virgin of the Ceyennes the late disasters of Agobar.

During this long narration, the Princess, struck to the earth, had not been able to utter a single word. Quitting at once this apparent insensibility, "Let us depart," said she, in a solemn and prophetic tone, "since Agobar no longer commands the legions of Iberia, the days of the children of Allah are done. The traitors have destroyed themselves—their reign in France is over. Mahomet's bloody banner will recoil to Asia—from this day Europe is Christian. The Virgin's dejected countenance had again assumed the expression of the inspired heroine—joy, and despair, which at once occupied her soul, imprinted a sort of sacred wildness upon her features, which no description could explain, no expressions could convey.

She bade adieu to Roderic. Her plans were immediately resolved on. At the head of her legions, in repairing to Charles Martel's camp, she proposed to fall suddenly upon the troops of Mohamud. She

would precede the grand victory which Europe was awaiting by the capture of Mil-taid, when many noble knights were the prisoners of the Mussulmans, and the deliverance of Agobar should be the prelude to that of France.

Sadness and discouragement gave place in her bosom to the most active energy. It was not for her country alone she was about to combat, it was to rescue her husband from Mohamud and death. Despair became a new power in her, which lent enthusiasm to her thoughts, and inspiration to her genius.

The last rays of the sun covered the mountain tops with a purple veil. Ezilda quitted Roderic's cottage ; she was about to leave Fontanias. Before she entered Gondair's bark, she cast a look upon the Happy Valley. There it was that the heir of Clovis, returning to the God of his fathers, was about to have led her to the altar. Her eye sought, upon the bank of the lake, the very spot where alone they had both — Ah, perhaps, never again may she behold the abode of peace and love, where Clo-

domir was all to her, and where he had called her his best beloved.—

She saluted the enchanting scene which she was quitting, perhaps for ever, with an involuntary movement, a gesture, expressive of grief. In abandoning it, what regret did she feel — And yet, alas, here it was that she herself had been abandoned.

“Adieu,” said the Virgin, in a low tone, “peaceful retreats, Happy Valley; for a moment I thought this was the haven where happiness on earth awaited me. Cruel abode; you have deceived me like all in this world beside.” She was in the boat:—the Bard of the Cevennes guided it; the current was strong; Gondair rowed vigorously, and the bark entered the gloomy excavation.

During their long journey beneath the spacious grotts, while her pilot went slowly on, the noble daughter of Lutevia remained silent and motionless. Her thoughts were at Segorum; her heart was at Miltaid; she impatiently counted the hours. At length the boat issued from the dark side of the mountain, and the Princess landed.

The moon lighted the Heavens and guided the travellers. They quitted the bank of the stream; they proceeded rapidly, and approached Segorum. Ezilda saw again the paths, the rocks, and the forests, through which, shortly before, she had passed to her banishment. Now she trode them again, summoned to victory. Alas, her heart suffered as much agony on the day of her triumphant return, as on the sad night of her departure.

The car of the god of light shone in the horizon; the fortress of Segorum, in the distance, appeared to the heroine as if surmounted with a crown of gold. A thought of glory rose, at this sight, in the magnanimous heart of Ezilda, as if a dawn in her soul had clothed every dark and gloomy image with radiant glory.

The morning wind sported on the tops of the ramparts with the waving folds of her spotless banner. The warlike instruments sounded; it was the morning call; the same sound which, in ancient times, celebrated the divine huntress, the lover of Eudimion, and which, perpetuating itself through ages, is still called the Diana.

"Shall we enter the fort secretly?" said Gondair; "shall we proceed by the covert way which leads to the tower of the East?"

"No," replied the inspired; "this is no longer a time for mystery. However reluctant I may be to meet the applauses of men, yet, as this sacrifice of my own feelings may be useful, the whole army shall behold me."

The village of Segorum was at a short distance; she thought they were making preparations to celebrate some festival with religious solemnity.

"This day," said the Mountain Prophet, "is of a favourable omen; it is the 8th of September, the nativity of the Virgin. You re-appear on the theatre of glory on the same day that she, who brought salvation to man, entered into existence."

Ezilda had been perceived from the battlements of the castle. She had scarcely arrived at the grand entrance to Segorum when the sentinels perceived her. Immediately shouts of joy and triumph ran from post to post. The happy news was communicated to all the troops of the fortress. The drums and trumpets sounded from all quarters. The great gates were opened with

a loud noise, and the Prince of Avernes, followed by his troops, advanced to the heroine, at the head of his knights. Every banner and every lance was lowered before the child of prodigies. The soldiers, with one knee on the earth, bent their victorious brows. "Blessed be the envoy of Heaven," cried Leodat, with transport; "blessed be the Virgin warrior, who comes in the name of the Almighty."

At these words, the air was shadowed by the flowering palm branches which the mountaineers cast about; the earth was strewn with boughs; the deliveress of the Gauls stepped upon verdant crowns. Leodat could, with difficulty, restrain the bursts of the multitude; each soldier wished to see the inspired, each knight was desirous of approaching her; disorder was in all the ranks, as enthusiasm was in every heart.

A calm, at once solemn and benevolent, overspread the face of Ezilda. She pursued her way to the citadel, amid the sound of trumpets, and the warlike songs of the increasing multitudes of her enthusiastic admirers. A disorderly joy shone in the figures

of the bold warriors of Segorum ; and the tranquil and heavenly expression of the Princess's gaze, the melancholy cast of her countenance, which seemed still more sublime in the midst of the public transports, presented an angelic contrast to the wondering soldiers ; their acclamations increased with her calmness. The heroine appeared rather the spectatress of another's triumph—a stranger at the festival. She was, as it were, divided from herself ; but of the two beings which composed her, neither was sensible of glory. The wife of Clodomir was occupied with the grief which haunted her, and the delivering Virgin was devoted to the Almighty who inspired her.

Ezilda was, however, not insensible to the brilliant reception with which she was greeted by her army ; more than once did tears of tenderness steal from her eyes. Beneath the walls of Segorum, she was, for a moment, about to yield to the involuntary emotion of her soul, when the wreaths of the palm branches and garlands, which were showered around her, brought to her memory the victor of Angostura. Thus, near

the temple of Calmor, had the enthusiasm of his soldiers crowned the hero ; and now where were his crowns ; what had become of that enthusiasm ? Ezilda's heart closed : and while the shouts around her were redoubled, " Pompous illusions of glory !" said she, internally, " I can now regard you without danger ; Clodomir has shewn ye to me ; I see ye as ye really are."

At this moment a courier from the camp of Charles Martel arrived at Segorum. His pressing dispatches were delivered to Leodat. The triumphant march was interrupted. The trumpets were silent. The Prince of Avernus learnt that a battle was about to ensue between the French and Saracens, on the plain of Namorel, not far from the sea-shore, and near Calmor. The Mussulman troops were very numerous. Charles called to his aid the warriors of Segorum, without whom, France, he saw, would be destroyed.

When this news was spread among the troops, " Let the usurper perish," said the chiefs of the fortress. " Has the traitor deserved that the Cevennes should defend him ? No ; let his pride be lowered, let

him lose his throne, and let him be defeated."

"Valiant people, soldiers of France," cried the Princess, with energy, "what language is this you hold? In this day of peril, it matters not to the country who commands; our duty is to preserve it. Charles Martel is no more to us than a battle cry, than a watchword. The man is naught to us, but all France is at stake. The Mayor of the Palace, in falling, would involve the people in his ruin. If we do not support the pillars of the temple, its crumbling ruins may crush us. When the freedom of the Christian universe is the contest, can your minds be occupied with personal injuries and private animosities? Noble knights, follow my example. I remember no longer any past insults. I do not know hatred. I have no enemy on earth but the Saracens, who are also the enemies of God. Let us fly to the succour of the Christians. To arms! holy soldiers! The hopes of all Europe are fixed on you, and at this moment we make common cause with Heaven."

Unanimous cries of valour and war, an-

swered Ezilda's appeal. Her words seemed dictated by the Deity himself. The chiefs obeyed her voice; her wish became that of her troops, and her triumph was again complete.

The heroine entered the fortress, and reposed for a short time; she gave orders for her departure, and, upon a white courser, brought from the vallies of Yemen, whose housings of purple and gold glittered in the rays of the morning, Ezilda hastened to the combat.

She repaired to Namorel, by the way of Miltaid: she communicated her plans to the knights of Leodat, and they all approved of them. One of the mountaineers, who had been sent forward to observe the enemy, returned to her in great haste—he brought ill news. Mohamud, by order of Athime, had just evacuated Miltaid. His division was to rejoin that of Abderaman's representative before day-break. The African chief had collected all his forces at Namorel. Agobar and the French prisoners had been conveyed towards the coast of the Mediterranean, escorted by the Mussulman troops,

and the deserted castle, set on fire by the Saracens, was a heap of ashes and ruins.

At this news the hope of saving Agobar was extinguished in the soul of Ezilda. A mortal paleness covered her face; an icy chill shot through her frame. But all eyes were upon her—the fate of the earth, perhaps, depended upon her in this fatal hour. The Virgin of the Cevennes felt that she owed the entire sacrifice of herself, of her griefs, as well as of her repose, to her expecting country. Restraining her tears, controlling her bitter grief, forbidding the complaints of her heart, she compelled herself to appear calm and confiding. While the destinies of Europe were in the balance, her own was but a feeble weight.

Her face resumed its divine sublimity: it was not a haughty power, but a total abnegation. A victim, voluntarily offered for her country, she marched to the field of glory, like the daughter of Jephtha, to the mountain pile. Strange condition; at the highest step of honour, she was at the summit of misfortune, and deploring her eminence, she looked upon herself with compassion.

While enthusiasm and admiration escorted her, consoling pity should alone have been her companion.

She left Miltaid: she took the road to Namorel, and from the last rock of the Cevennes, at the third hour of the noon, she came in sight of the immense plain on which the battle was fighting. The heroine ordered a halt; and while reposing her troops for a short time, she observed the combat. Charles Martel, an indefatigable soldier, displayed a bold genius and an admirable valour. She looked upon his mighty deeds. "Intrepid hero," said she, with a mournful sigh; "he who can thus defend his country, is worthy to govern it. Man of glory, go on; you must be the ruler of France." Yet the numbers were overpowering.—The infidel army received constant re-inforcements, and the Frenchmen were discouraged. Mahomet's standard was triumphant; the Christian troops were broken, and Charles was compelled to retreat.

At the top of the rock Ezilda fell upon her knees. "God of mercy," said she,

"this day gave birth to the mother of the Redeemer, and is reckoned in the Christian annals as a day of safety. On this happy anniversary, then, come to the succour of thy people. Lend thy thunders to my arm, and thy strength to my weakness ;—then if, as in the early days of the world, an expiatory victim is necessary to the grand solemnity, Arbiter of the world, behold me prepared."

"She rose, glowing with enthusiasm. She seized her standard, where an azure cross shone in the midst of a cloud of gold. She remounted her courser, and addressing her troops, "March," cried the inspired Virgin, "Heaven is my guide, follow me.—Frenchmen ! the invincible Agobar is no longer at the head of the enemy. Iberia has her hero no more. Christians, in the name of the Almighty, I promise you the victory."

Charles Martel no longer expected succours from Segorum. He was preparing slowly, and in good order, to fall back upon the Cevennes, when suddenly there was a tumultuous cry: to his great surprise a maiden was seen descending the mountain at the

head of a numerous army, like a celestial messenger issuing from the clouds. She was clad in white; the banner of Christ was in her hand; and Charles, with his eyes fixed upon her, thought, like Constantine, that he saw the assurance of victory written in the sky, with the symbol of protection.

“Ezilda! victory and miracles!” cried the troops of Segorum. “Ezilda, victory and miracles!” was repeated by the royal legions. At these ardent acclamations, at the unexpected sight of the daughter of miracles, the Mussulman army was seized with a surprise, somewhat allied to dismay. Taking advantage of the general terror, the heroine fell upon the Saracens; followed closely by her warlike guard, she bore disorder into their ranks. The floating banner of Ezilda shone in the rays of the declining sun. The winds blew round, and waved it aloft,—it seemed to assume a human form. The Saracens fancied they beheld over the head of the inspired a phantom-warrior, who, formed of vapour and flame, scattered death into the midst of them.

At this moment the fortune of the day

changed. The royal army rallied ; believing that Heaven would annihilate the unbelievers, by the Angel of Segorum, they again rushed to the attack, and, with the impetuosity of rage and the certainty of triumph, fell upon the terrified Moors. The Saracens fled in their turn. The shock of arms, the groans of the dying, the blasphemies of the infidels, and the triumphant shouts of the Christians, mingled in a savage clamour. Streams of blood ran over the plain, which was strewed with glaves and scimitars, casques and turbans, axes and bucklers, lances and javelins. Athime fell in the midst of the contest, smitten by the strong arm of Charles Martel.

Alas, he perished too late. The perfidious African, on the appearance of Ezilda, foresaw his defeat, and feared to die without being revenged on Agobar. Mohamud was at the pyramid of Fabius. Athime sent him an order to embark his prisoners, in all haste, on board a ship which he had sent for this purpose to the coast. Mohamud was to conduct all his prisoners into Iberia, with the exception of Agobar,

whom he was to poignard with his own hands, and to leave his body upon the shore.

The fate of the sons of Allah was sealed. Their principal chieftains had fallen; the rout became general; the deliveress of the Gauls, exciting the courage of her troops, confronted every danger, and seemed to woo death as a young hero would court his mistress; but the hand of God was over the Virgin of Lutevia. The arrows passed without wounding her; the swords struck at without reaching her.

The most brilliant and decisive victory crowned the French arms. Christian Europe was saved.* The infidel army was annihilated, and the false prophet would never more raise his standard in Gaul.

* It is almost certain that the Arabs, who had now spread over the whole earth, would have conquered Europe, if the valour of France had not opposed a powerful barrier to them. The French and Charles Martel may therefore be considered as the preservers of the Continent; even strangers are agreed on this point. (See the Essay on the Crusade, by Heevin, a learned professor of Gottingen.)

The brilliant star, the king of the Heavens, was at the end of his course. Shouts of enthusiasm issued from the ranks of the triumphant commander. Charles, crowned with laurel, immortalized the happy day which had seen the infidels driven for ever from the kingdom of Clovis. The hero pursued the remains of those troops, lately so terrible—those conquering Arabs, masters of half the world—those redoubtable Africans, before whom, without Ezilda's assistance, he would himself have retreated, and given up the field.

Ezilda directed her course to the shore. She knew that Mohamud had conducted his captives thither, but she knew not to what spot. Her Arab courser, terrified by a bloody standard, in which his feet had got entangled, dashed off at full speed. As rapidly as the unbound winds, he covered an immense space before the heroine could control his impetuous course. Neither the rein, nor the bit, nor her voice, could keep in the unconquerable animal. He bounded along, terrified and untired, as if he had been impelled by some invisible spirit. He

passed like the thunder, unseen and unapproachable.

The knights of the Princess endeavoured, in vain, to follow her: the disobedient animal passed through almost impracticable paths, between perilous rocks, and disappeared from all eyes. The daughter of Theobert, in her own despite, was carried off from her army. In this supernatural course, in this inconceivable adventure, she thought she saw the execution of some superior order, the command of some invincible power, and the fates who were fulfilling it. She ceased to oppose the fiery will of the courser, and, resigned to every event, she abandoned herself to Providence.

Now the shouts of war and victory were lost in the distance, and no longer reached her ear. Far from the scene of the fight, her horse sank exhausted, the blood gushed from his foaming mouth, he shook his stiffened mane, convulsively dropped his head upon the sand, endeavoured to raise it again, opened his stretched nostrils, breathed aloud, trembled, and died.

The heroine, who had not been hurt by

her fall, arose ; standing alone in this unknown place, and not knowing whither to direct her steps, she looked with surprise upon the objects which surrounded her.

The Heavens were covered with thick clouds ; some of a dull copper colour, motionless, towards the west, cast a cadaverous light upon the desert shore. Others, of an olive colour, rapidly crossed the zenith, under a thousand various and frightful forms ; and the sea, ready to rage, but calm towards the horizon, reflecting the livid tints of the firmament, seemed to present the united threatenings of the Heavens and the ocean.

A wild shore, girt with rocks, an arid burning sand, where vegetation languished, some dwarf briars dispersed here and there ; and nature, as if in a state of sickness, alone struck the sight of Ezilda. Hoarse and ominous sounds, the precursors of a tempest, inexplicable to human intellect, issued from the neighbouring caverns ; not a single bird was heard ; the solemn stillness of the tomb presented itself.

Disturbed and confused, the heroine pro-

ceeded at hazard. The red sand upon which she trode, of a bloody hue, the African blast, the Simoom,* arose with violence, and its stormy whirlwinds filled the heated atmosphere with that dust of Sehara, those devouring atoms which roll on the plains of the desert, in destructive waves. The sea was agitated and swelled, while its waves lashed furiously the bodies of those Saracens, who, flying from the sword, had perished in the ocean. The earth exhaled a deathly scent, and seemed, beneath the offended sky, to be impressed with a mark of reprobation. Was the last trumpet about to sound? was the seventh vial to be poured down? Ezilda, like a

* "He came, he went, like the Simoom,
That harbinger of fate and gloom ;
Beneath whose widely wasting breath,
The very cypress droops to death."

THE GIAOUR.

This wind, which is called *shume* by the Arabs, is so burning, that it evaporates the water. It is said, that if tents were to be raised in the desert while it continues, they would soon disappear beneath a mountain of sand. (Montbron's *Voyage dans l'Oasis lointaine*.)

living being, forgotten upon the dispeopled globe, like a wreck of humanity, wandered alone in the disastrous solitude, filled with horror.

As the heroine suddenly turned an angle of the rock, she saw the monument of Fabius before her; she then knew where she was, and her alarm was dissipated; the whirlwind roared at this moment with its utmost fury. Ezilda sought a momentary shelter beneath the pyramid. She entered.—But what an object met her sight!—stretched on the earth, and bathed in his own blood, lay the inanimate corpse of Agobar!

She rushed towards him; his eyes were shut, but he still existed. The prisoners of Mohamud, who had been confined here, were now tossing on the wide ocean, and the unhappy Agobar, poignarded by the monster, alone, and far from all human help, lay expiring and abandoned by the whole world.

Kneeling by the hero, she raised his once beautiful and martial head. Alas! the shadows of death covered that haughty brow before which the nobles of the earth

had so often prostrated themselves. "Clodomir," cried she, "dearest Clodomir, hear my voice."

She tore her dress and the banner, which she still held, to staunch his gaping wounds; useless cares! he remained without motion. Mournful and dismayed, with her eyes fixed upon her victim—"there!" cried Ezilda, "behold the descendant of Clovis, the heir of the French throne, and the conqueror of Angostura. Pride of conquest! human glory! come and read on this fatal spot a horrible lesson!"

Some provisions, left by Mohamud, remained in the gloomy abode: Ezilda discovered among them a flask of rare wine, with some drops of which she succeeded in recovering the son of Thierry from his swoon. He opened his eyelids with difficulty; and resuming the last thought which had occupied him when he had closed them, as he thought for ever, he murmured, with a low voice,

"The carrion bird, with croakings low,
Claims for his prey the *Renegade*."

Ezilda uttered a shriek of horror, but the

hero heard her not, and his spirits were wandering. "Alaor, my brother, I follow thee," he said; "but she, I must see her; Heaven will inspire her—she will come. Angel of Fontanias, where art thou.——"

"Almighty God, preserve my husband," said the heroine, in despair.

Agobar shuddered at these words; he recognised that adored voice, he saw her whom he loved. "Ezilda," cried he, "dearest Ezilda, I have expected you."

"You have expected me?" replied the Princess.

"Yes;" replied the unhappy man, "not to live, but that I might die."

He raised his faded brow. His strength returned for an instant, and his eyes were fixed upon his beloved with that agonizing expression, which, more eloquent than words, pronounced an eternal adieu.

His eyes, once so brilliant, were lighted up again, and were never more tender. On his face, beauty seemed to contend with his sufferings; love struggled with death. "My beloved Ezilda," he said, "regret not my frightful destiny. I have deserved these

frightful rocks, for having quitted the Happy Valley."

Ezilda rose wildly. "Your wounds," said she, "are, perhaps, not mortal; if the immediate help of art—I will fly—and my cries ——"

"Stay," interrupted Agobar—"who will hear them in this desert? By quitting me, you will hasten my fate. Thrice did Mohamud's blade pierce my bosom; I know well how deeply it penetrated. Nothing can save my life, but I may still see you, speak to you, hear your voice. Do not take from me this last happiness: my wife, my dearest Ezilda, let me die in your arms; remain with me, and your presence will strip death of all its horrors."

With dishevelled hair, and torn garments, the Virgin fell again on her knees; she saw too plainly that he had not many moments to live. She chafed his frozen hands in her own; rested his head upon her bosom, and with a plaintive but energetic voice, said—"Oh, my God, let me not be his sole thought in this last terrible hour; turn his heart from the world, enable him to speak

and return to Thee. He has been guilty, but he has been unhappy, also."

Her tears, her terror, and her anguish, stifled her mournful accents; her prayer was continued inwardly.

The threatening blasts had passed away and swept over other shores; no rain had fallen, and the impetuous hurricane had brought no storms, but had purified the atmosphere, and driven away the black clouds; the Heavens had recovered their azure, and the sun, in his decline, cast a pure and mild light; one of his luminous rays fell against the walls of the pyramid in a purple stream.

"Ezilda!" cried Agobar, "turn my sinking head towards the setting sun, and let it recall to my mind one of the evenings of Fontanias."

Agobar could not rise, but he could see the vault of Heaven from the door of the monument. Two swans were before him upon a neighbouring rock. Tired with a long flight, and beaten by the tempest, they had fallen there exhausted, and were uttering plaintive cries. They reminded the

son of Thierri of that night, when at Fontanias, beneath love's own shades, and near the lake of the valley, he had tasted of the bliss of Heaven.

"Listen to their dying groans," said the Prince, pointing to the swans; "foolish birds, like me, perhaps, they have quitted Fontanias."

Ezilda, whose agony was at its height, collected all her strength, and said, falteringly—"Oh, my husband—my beloved! If your heart is really mine, if it still loves Ezilda, hear my last request. Clodomir, let us not be separated for ever; do not compel me to veil my eyes from you at the last fatal judgment. We have been parted in this vale of misery: raise your prayers to Heaven, and God may unite us in his immortal realms. Pardon, Sovereign Disposer, the wildness of my griefs. But, devoted to Clodomir, I feel that eternal happiness cannot be mine, if misery be his fate: the man, whom alone I love, is so near to Thee in my heart, that to renounce him for Thee, or Thee for him, would be impossible; and I cannot imagine a Heaven where Clodomir is not."

Agobar was softened at her affecting prayer. He could not resist the divine accents of the Virgin. "Sublime soul," cried he, "why have you not always been my guide—but now it is too late, the divine vengeance has smitten me, the Almighty rejects me."

"No;" replied the Virgin, with animation, "Heaven has not rejected you. God knows not vengeance; he calls you to him by these repeated chastenings. If he had willed your destruction, he would have abandoned the Renegade to worldly prosperity. Your very misfortunes prove his goodness; it is by those that crimes are expiated, and they will plead your cause if you wish it at the tribunal of mercy. Oh, return; return to your father; he awaits his strayed son. Clodomir, I feel that he inspires me—I hear him—he speaks to you by my mouth. He says, 'Come unhappy descendant of the first Christian King of Gaul; one word of repentance, one tear, and I pardon you.'"

"Ezilda," replied Agobar, "the Eternal is, doubtless, merciful, but I have been guilty."

“He who acknowledges his guilt, atones for it. The Redeemer of the world came not upon the earth for the just, He descended only for the guilty.”

“Heavenly lights surround me!” cried the son of Thierrî, “divine faith of my ancestors, which, at my entrance into life I knew, and yet abandoned, it is upon the brink of the grave that I find thee again. Ah, why did I lose thee.”

The rosary, hanging from Ezilda’s neck, was loosened at this moment; and her golden cross, the same cross, which in the groves of Fontanias was raised between love and passion, fell upon Agobar’s breast. The hero seized it, and bore it to his lips by a mingled emotion of love and piety.

“Clodomir,” cried the inspired, in the most solemn tone, “the miraculous event which has led me to you, displays the purposes of the Lord; it is a new call to his grace. His thunder is yet suspended; I am his messenger. Alas, he knows how I love, and his choice of me, to bear to you the hope of salvation, is a presage of his protection.

“ Lift, with me, your trembling hands to the vault of Heaven. Let us pray together to the merciful God, and I promise you that hope will alight upon your heart, that the Heavens will be opened to you.

The Virgin of the Cevennes triumphed. A pious tear stood in Agobar’s eyes; he joined their hands, and together they invoked the Supreme Judge. “ Oh, thou, whom I have so much offended, behold the repentance which weighs me down, and cast upon me an eye of pity; I implore thy mercy.”

“ Oh, my Ezilda,” pursued he, with weak and dying voice, “ pray for your lover! Your supplications in Heaven will be as powerful as they are upon earth. I feel the thunder passes away—yes, the Eternal has pardoned me, since he has suffered Ezilda, my guardian angel upon earth, to purify my last moments, and to receive my last sigh.”

A deep groan escaped involuntarily from his bosom. Death claimed his victim. The noble son of Thierry beheld his beloved no longer. His eye was dimmed, his bosom heaved. Drawing his ring from his finger,

"Dearest Ezilda," he said, "take back your ring—our ties here are severed."

"No," replied the despairing Virgin, "nothing can sever them. You die, and I renounce the earth : God will not keep us long asunder. Go, and await me in the realms of glory—be happy without me for a short time. Ah ! what do I say ? I will never quit you ; my life shall be where thou art."

"I can no longer feel your hands in mine," said the hero, "and the mortal chill which freezes them, will soon have reached my heart. Come nearer, let me behold you once more. My arms can strain you no longer. Grant, now, to your dying husband, a first, a last kiss."

Ezilda turned towards him. For the first time their lips were pressed together. "To thee, adored Virgin," said Clodomir, with difficulty—"and now, my God, to you." The unhappy man had ceased to breathe.

The Princess rose ; she shed no tear. The most agonizing grief, and the most entire resignation, were painted upon her countenance. Her regard was fixed upon the

warrior, whom she had loved so well. Suddenly she tottered; almost bewildered, she fell near the inanimate body; thrice did she call Clodomir, and thrice did she listen if he answered. Then, in a heart-rending tone, she said, "Adieu, most unfortunate Prince! your reign would have graced your country, if your country had recognised you. Where you were entitled to a throne, you have scarcely a grave. Magnanimous, but too lofty heart, I alone have appreciated you. You are no more, and all is dead to me. Glory, power, country, adieu; my destiny is fulfilled."

Her sight grew dim, her voice died away; her agony overpowered human utterance. She leaned her head against the funereal wall of the monument of Fabius. The blood stopped in her veins. Her eyes closed for a moment;—~~and they~~ never again be opened!

END OF THE TWELFTH BOOK.

EPILOGUE.

SEVERAL months had elapsed since the victory of Namorel. The Saracens, expelled from France, had repassed the Pyrenees. Charles reigned at Lutetia, and enjoyed his triumph. The people regaled the victor with public rejoicings: joy shone on all sides. One province, alone, in Gaul, forbade all demonstrations of satisfaction; the Cevennes wept for Ezilda.

An impenetrable mystery was wrapped around her fate. On the day of the decisive battle, several of the chieftains of Segorum had followed the impetuous courser which had carried off the heroine; and when, in the midst of the rocks, she had disappeared from their sight, they wandered along the unknown shore, and when the shades of night succeeded to the day, they returned to the French camp.

Victory, like defeat, sometimes produces confusion; while the Duke of France pur-

sued the remaining troops of Athime, disorder reigned in his rear-guard. Hoping that Ezilda had rejoined the royal army, Leodat and his knights followed the steps of Charles Martel on the following day. —After painful efforts, and long forced marches, they rejoined the squadrons of the preserving hero of Europe. To their surprise and dismay, they learnt that Charles had not seen the heroine, and that he supposed she was at Namorel, with the chiefs of Segorum.

Fresh search was made, but in vain. Alas, the Virgin of Lutevia had disappeared for ever. The conqueror affected deep grief, while he secretly endeavoured to make the heroine forgotten.

The disconsolate Leodat returned to the Avernes, but did not appear again in the camp; and the Old Man of the Black Rock died at Fontanias, bewailing his adored sovereign.

The temples of the Lord were rebuilt in all parts of Narbonne Gaul; the deserted monasteries had again opened their holy gates. And as frail mortals forget the past

thunder, as soon as its bolts are scattered, already the terrible name of Agobar was effaced from the recollection of the people.

An unusual noise was heard one evening at the gate of the convent of St. Amalberge. A female stranger demanded an interview with the superior: she was alone, sinking under fatigue, and demanded assistance. She was led into the cloister.

New sisters occupied the pious retreat. The former abbess and the nuns had remained at Loragniat. The stranger was regarded with great interest. She was clothed in long black robes; a thick veil of the same colour concealed her face. She held in her arms a bronze urn, covered with a funeral pall. She seemed sinking under a weight of woe, but her dejection had an air of nobility; her very humiliation was imposing.

The elegance of her figure, the nobility of her gait, and the dignity of her deportment, pronounced her to be a person of importance. The sadness of her entreaty, her choice of expressions, and, above all, the magic of her voice, penetrated the feeling heart of the abbess with compassion and respect. The

unknown desired to be admitted among the sisters of Amalberge, and proposed to take the vows as soon as the year should have expired. She placed jewels of an immense value in the hands of the abbess, with which she endowed the convent where she wished to be received.

The abbess consented to her request. She appeared to her the victim of misfortune, a lady of illustrious rank, who was renouncing the world for ever, and who, the more effectually to forget it, had chosen the most solitary convent in the province of the Cevennes.

The mysterious stranger obtained all she desired. During the whole year she appeared only among her companions at the hour of prayer, and in the chapel. She stipulated that no question should be put to her relative to her past life. The thick veil which covered her face was to be constantly down until the end of her noviciate ; and the tomb to which she was hastening, must also contain the beloved urn, from which she would never be separated.

She was placed in her new abode, and the promises which had been made to her were

scrupulously observed. She passed all her days either alone in her cell, or upon her knees in the chapel. Never were any complaints heard from her; and scarcely a word issued from her lips. The sisters of Amalberge, who beheld her estrangement from all the things of the earth, never approached her but with a holy respect; charmed with her sweetness and piety, they regarded her with increasing admiration. She seemed to them the perfection of religious virtue in the form of a mortal. Their new companion, silent and veiled, seemed a divine model of evangelical perfection, sent from Heaven to their cloister.

The abbess was the daughter of a Suzerain of Aquitaine, and had dwelt in courts during her earlier years. As enlightened as she was charitable, she knew the human heart, and readily concluded that some irreparable misfortune had wounded the stranger's soul. Often, without being observed, she watched her; she followed her steps; and, beholding her leaning at the foot of the altar upon her funeral urn, she admired her resignation, and compassionated her woes.

Sometimes forgetting herself and the world, the pious novice passed whole nights in the presence of the Eternal, and did not retire to her cell until the first rays of the morning. She had, doubtless, bathed with her tears the sacred urn which she had pressed to her bosom. But this was a mere conjecture. Her face was still carefully concealed. Her very tears were mysterious. Devoted wholly to Heaven, who saw her griefs, she confided nothing to the world. She seemed hardly to belong to humanity. Rising by the exaltation of her faith to the celestial regions, it was only by her griefs that she was called back to life.

Weeks and months fled away. Weakened by long sufferings, she walked with difficulty, and already her grave seemed to be opened; her weakness appeared daily to increase. Tottering, and often ready to sink, she dragged herself, painfully, to the holy chapel—she approached rapidly the happy moment of her deliverance.

The morning was fine, the Heavens were pure and serene; the stranger seemed to have recovered her strength. Alone, and clad in her dark weeds, she stood at the

portal of the abbey : there, motionless as death, she seemed overwhelmed with the most mournful recollections. The superior accosted her ; she seldom spoke to her, for she feared to add to her grief ; however, moved by compassion, she ventured upon the following words : “ Sister, perhaps you do not know that the stones upon which you stand, are an immortal monument to the glory of the holy cloister of Amalberge.”

The unknown raised her head, and, to the surprise of the abbess, seemed to listen. Pleased with so encouraging a sign, the abbess proceeded thus :

“ Upon this marble, and in this place, the deliverer of Gaul, the Heroine of Segorum, saved the temple of the Lord from the Saracen fury. There, leaning upon her banner, dazzling in beauty, youth, and inspiration, Ezilda, the child of miracles, said to the haughty chieftain—‘ Stay ! ’”

The superior paused.—She saw her companion totter ; she approached and supported her. “ Sister, you are in pain,” said she. “ No,” replied the unknown, more calmly, “ proceed with your tale.”

“To the foot of these stairs, Agobar, the exterminator of the Christians, had advanced: that is the memorable place where the stern Renegade recoiled, struck with admiration, before the Virgin of the Cevennes, the happy and illustrious Ezilda.”

“The happy Ezilda,” repeated the stranger, in a mournful tone, and her tears flowed; for she raised her hand to her eyes, and pressed the folds of her veil to her face.

Not having remarked her distress, the abbess continued. “And who ever better deserved the name of happy? Who among mortals ever appeared more favoured by Heaven than the Princess of Lutevia. Ezilda, guided by God himself, freed Gaul and Europe. Her life was a course of triumph; her heart was the temple of virtue. Above human weakness she knew none but sublime sentiments; she was altogether divine, and therefore she must have been most happy.”

A heart-rending sigh escaped from the bosom of the unknown, and her head sunk languishingly upon the abbess's bosom.

The superior, who was delighted at having

elicited some tokens of sensibility from her companion, and, by drawing her to earthly remembrances, to have overcome her habitual apathy, went on—"I did not know Ezilda, but I beheld her once, and her enchanting figure is still present to my sight. As wondrous in her death as in her life, she disappeared after her last victory; not being of this earth, she did not even leave here her mortal remains. France holds nothing of her but the recollection of her glory."

"And what was the fate of Agobar?" asked the stranger.

"What matters the fate of such a monster," replied the abbess. "Ah, when we pronounce the name of the inspired of Gaul, it would be to sully our lips to speak of the *Renegade*."

The stranger disengaged herself from the arms of the abbess, and gently repulsing her, she silently entered the church.

The next day she directed her steps towards the gardens of the cloisters, but her strength failed, and she sank, fainting, in a solitary bower. The abbess, who now incessantly watched her, ran to her assist-

ance. Leading her back to the convent, she sought to divert her thoughts, and, in the hope of interesting her, she resumed the conversation of the preceding evening.

"The Duke of France," said she, "has nobly renounced the crown of France since the victory of Namorel. He seeks, at this moment, among the Princes of the blood of Thierry, the nearest heir to the throne.* He is making inquiries on all sides, if the last king has not left some unknown son. Were he even illegitimate, he would restore the crown to him.—Ah, why has the nation lost Clodomir?"

* He died, however, without having restored the crown to the heir of Thierry. His sons, Carloman and Pepin, compelled by the voice of the people to renounce the supreme power, thought it necessary to place some other phantom on the throne. After a long search, they crowned a Childeric III. called *the Idiot*, whose birth was uncertain. There is so much obscurity in this period of the French history, that the authors have not been able to give the precise genealogy of those monarchs who were called *the Sluggish*. Some of them make this Childeric the son of Thierry II.; others of Thierry III.; others of Childeric II.; and still others of Clotaire, king of Austrasia.

At this word the unknown shuddered—"Clodomir," said she, and her voice regained some strength. Then pausing, and clasping her hands, she said to the abbess, "Oh, for pity's sake pronounce those names no more! You know not, you cannot know the pain they give me; utter them no more I beseech you."

The superior remained distressed and confounded. In her turn she besought the stranger. "Sister, repose your griefs in my bosom; I am worthy of your confidence; let me weep with you over your past misfortunes."

The stranger appeared moved, and her companion again urged her. "Ah, why?" said the unhappy lady, "should I join you in my woe—one heart is enough to suffer. I have but few days to live, my end approaches; I feel it. To-morrow, perhaps, my sister, I shall not be able to descend to the church."

"To-morrow!" interrupted the abbess. "What, will you not assist at our grand solemnity? To-morrow will be the eighth of September, the anniversary of Namorel."

The unknown uttered a deep sigh—her agitation became extreme. “Leave me, I entreat you,” said she. “To-morrow, at the setting of the sun, be at the foot of the altar, in your holy temple, there you will meet your sister.”

Clothed in their most beautiful robes, the sisters of St. Amalberge began to celebrate the nativity of the Holy Virgin with the first dawn. The perfumed incense burnt around; large carpets were spread upon the sacred pavement, the altar was decorated with the richest ornaments, and the ministers of the Lord celebrated the holy office.

But the stranger appeared not among the nuns. Almost dying, she found it impossible to reach the temple; the exertion of the preceding evening had been nearly fatal to her; her limbs were scarcely animated, and every thing seemed to announce that her last hour had arrived. The abbess at the close of the day had returned to the church. On the steps of the altar a female was prostrated; it could not be the unknown, for clad in white, she seemed rather like a virgin waiting the nuptial ceremony,

than a victim of misery about to sink into the tomb. A cross of gold hung from her bosom by a chain of pearls. She held in her hands a veiled funeral urn; there was no longer room for doubt—it was the stranger.

“Approach,” said she, “I fulfil my promise; I have been expecting you.”

The superior pressed her against her bosom. “Will you, then, at length,” said she, “pour your griefs into my bosom?”

“Yes; but in the name of the Eternal, swear that you will ever keep them secret.”

“In the name of the Eternal, I do swear.”

“It is enough,” replied the stranger. “My sister, you have formerly seen the sovereign of Lutevia; her figure, you said, is still present to your eyes. Well, try now if you can recollect her whom you saw dazzling in youth and beauty, and inspiration!”

She raised her veil—“I am Ezilda!” and then added, with a bitter smile, “*The illustrious, the happy Ezilda!*”

At this great name, the abbess, seized with astonishment and respect, drew back some paces; and recognising, notwithstanding—

ing their melancholy change, the features of the august Princess, she was about to prostrate herself, when, extending her hand, "Holy sister, said Ezilda, "I am no longer the inspired of Segorum, I am the nun of St. Amalberge."

As she spoke the superior regarded her with mingled feelings of veneration, terror, enthusiasm, and compassion. The enchanting visage of Ezilda, entirely without colour, was like those models of alabaster which would present the very perfection of beauty, but that they are void of life. Her eyes, formerly so brilliant, were cast down and dimmed; her luxuriant tresses had been cut off: of all those gifts which nature had heaped upon her, nothing remained but her harmonious voice, and her enchanting grace. Still her divine charms had not totally disappeared; their partial effacement had yet left some faint traces. She appeared like a melancholy vision, or like the indistinct form of an angel, veiled in a vaporous cloud; she was now but a shadow, yet she was a heavenly one.

"Ah," cried the abbess, "inspired of

Gaul, "Heroine of Lutevia, before whom the Christian armies devotedly prostrated themselves, you are here dying forgotten, in the most complete abandonment, in an obscure convent, without rank, without honour, and without name. Ah, why, when the whole world weeps for you, why, in this solitude, have you condemned yourself to banishment, and devoted yourself to suffering."

"How," interrupted the Virgin, "is it to condemn myself to exile, to have preferred a peaceful retreat to the tempestuous abodes. Is it to be devoted to suffering, to be consecrated to God!"

The superior blushed.—

"While my life was useful," continued the daughter of Theobert, "I sacrificed it to my country. From the day on which I became no longer necessary to France, I was restored to myself; it was with regret, and against my own inclination, that I appeared upon the theatre of glory. Heaven willed it, and I obeyed. But it was from a feeling of duty that I received the applauses of men; it is from inclination that I have renounced

the vanities of the earth. Believe me, holy sister, that if, after the victory of Namorel, I had been still condemned to remain in the midst of pomp and grandeur, existence would have been to me a frightful punishment beyond human strength; while, in this cloister, I have passed peaceable days, and have been enabled to support life."

"But your sufferings, even here, have withered your beauty and destroyed your youth."

"You lately," pursued the Princess, "represented Ezilda as above all human weakness; I should have been culpable in suffering you to think so still. No feeling of pride shall sully my last moments. Your words have determined me to reveal to you my secret; she, whom you believed exempt from human passions, consecrated to God alone, was the devoted ardent lover of a mortal——"

"You have loved, then," said the abbess.

"And here," replied Ezilda, raising the funeral urn, "here is all that remains of the only being on earth who ever caused my heart to beat.

“Do not ask me his name, nor his fate,” added she, in a faltering tone; “but let his ashes, as you have promised, repose in the tomb with me.”

“He was your husband, perhaps,” said the superior, with emotion; “in the hour of his death you were at his side, and closed his eyes.”

“My mission was more sublime,” replied the Virgin of the Cevennes; “in the dark day of death I opened his eyes to the light. This,” she continued, “was, of all the triumphs of my life, the most gratifying. It was on the eighth of September that I obtained it, and, in these white robes, in this solemn garb, I celebrate the anniversary. And may this day, of which I feel a happy presage, lead me to my husband in the mansion of eternal bliss.”

Her voice gradually weakened: pressing the hand of the abbess, “I am grateful to you,” she said, “for the tranquil days which I have passed in this convent. As my body has grown weaker, my soul has grown stronger, and I dare hope that I have made myself worthy to appear before the

Heavenly tribunal. The sight of my suffering has, perhaps, been distressing to you, my sister, but you will pardon me. Holy sister, farewell ; again I thank you."

A sweet smile accompanied her last words, but as faint as her still lovely face ; it, however, animated her features :—it was a sad and vague remembrance of the happy days of her life, an angelic farewell to the world.

Her friend wept, and could not reply. A ray of the setting sun fell at this moment upon the altar. Ezilda turned her eyes towards the opened portal. The eternal vault, spread with golden clouds, was pure and resplendent. The air was soft and soothing. She perceived the star of Heaven declining in the horizon.—“ *It is an evening of Fontanias,*” cried she, in a plaintive voice.

The abbess could not comprehend what heart-rending recollections this expression had awakened. “ He expired,” continued the Virgin, “ at this hour, under such a setting sun. This cross was pressed to his lips.—My God, do you not call me ?”

As she spoke, she seemed to hear a voice

from Heaven; she extended her ailing and languid arms towards the declining fires of the West. "Ah!" cried she, "I see him in the clouds—he beckons me—it is himself—he dwells in the true Fontanias.—Almighty God, my wishes are accomplished."

All kinds of assistance were immediately rendered her, but in vain—she never more opened her eyes, and in the course of the night she expired.

Her body was placed in a leaden coffin, and deposited in the vault of St. Amalberge. As the abbess, according to her promise, was placing the mysterious urn beside her mortal remains, the covering came off, and two rings were presented to her sight. They were placed together upon a piece of black woollen cloth, which, doubtless, contained the remains of the unhappy husband. She took them, opened them, examined them with great care, and found, to her utter astonishment, that they contained the names of Clodomir and Ezilda united!

The two rings were restored to their place, and, with her own hand, the abbess

shut up the mortal urn. No splendid pomp followed, to their last abode, the most valiant of men and the most sublime of women; a simple, modest stone, without name and without inscription, covered their unknown tomb. The abbess of St. Amalberge, alone, came every day to weep and pray over the silent monument.

THE END.