said Yvette, laughing. "You will find your Camisard a better and more faithful husband, I trow, than any officer of my Lord Marlborough's staff!"

"I have not changed my mind," said Flower-o'-the-Corn, "as you know very well—but—I wish it were over and done with."

"You are not the first in your circumstances who has wished as much!"

"I am the first in my circumstances!" said Frances Wellwood, quietly. "And I hope the last also!"

"But," she said to herself, under her breath, "God, who knows all, will forgive!"

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There was a noise without. Over all arose the keen, far-reaching hillman's shout, halfa Coo-ee, half yodel of the Cevenol.

"He has come!" cried Yvette, suddenly alert and radiant, "at last!" She was all in red, like a maple leaf turned suddenly to a flower by one night of autumn frost, and in her hair, nestled among the weighty black braids, was a single blossom of the pomegranate, the most gorgeous scarlet God has made. Flower-o'-the-Corn was all in white, without color, save a couple of spots the size of a florin which burned steadily on her cheeks, high up, where the heart's blood leaps up under the fine firm skin. Her ripe-wheat hair, which had given the girl her name, rippled and swirled alternately, like honey in the comb or red gold in the bar, as you may see them unloading it from Spanish galeons at the quays in Carthagena.

Yes, Billy Marshall had come at last. He was in waiting, unshaven and unshorn, in front of the pavilion—a strange pivot for all this splendor to turn upon. But the bride had been firm in this, if in nothing else. She would not be married—she would not go to the altar till from the hands of Billy Marshall, the Kirkcudbright gypsy, the letter of Maurice Rath had passed into hers.

She stood up—tall, pale, emotionless, her attitude tense with listening to the tumult without.

Bid him come in," she said, and then as one of the temporary maids of honor went to call the messenger into the lesser of the two tents of festival, she added, "And where is—the man Cavalier?"

It was Yvette who answered her.

"Do you not hear?" she cried, clapping her hands with pleasure. "His people are bringing him up in triumph. Do you hear the hillman's shout?"

And through the gay rataplan of drums and the blare of trumpets there pierced the strange fitful chant of the Camisard psalm. Yvette smiled. She had heard it a thousand times. Night and morning she had been summoned from her most interesting occupations, from books which made the blood flush hot to read, from agreeable company, from the composition of letters by means of which she had lived the dull days by—letters to her maiden aunts—only to take part in that chant. Her father liked her voice, he said. She hummed a bar or two now, accentuating the characteristic grace notes and the nasal whine—and then laughed bitterly.

Except the Lord do build the house,
The builders lose their pain.
Except the Lord the city keep,
The watchers watch in vain.

The words were French, of course, but of a like rude simplicity with the Scots version, and the effect was the same. The tune was the march of Spirit Seguier, to the music of which he went, the soul within him "like a well-watered garden," to the torture and the stake.

As yet Yvette laughed, the flap of the tent lifted, and the girl who had gone out, snatched her skirts and lace-edged draperies out of the way of contagion, let into the marquee a figure at once tremendous in its power and ridiculous by its flapping rags of garments—Billy Marshall, the Scottish gypsy, and promised messenger of Maurice Raith.

Flower-o'-the-Corn set her hand instinctively to her heart, and the red florin pieces on her cheek faded utterly away. She removed the hand that had been pressed upon her breast and held it out. The hand of the gypsy met hers fairly, rested there a long moment and fell again to his side. Yvette would have given half of her kingdom to have made sure what it was that passed between them. But she knew that this Billy Marshall was not a man to trifle with, standing there free, his weapons ready to his finger grip and no other man within calling distance, to coerce him. So she had to be content with promising herself that he should be made to speak—afterward. It did not strike her that it might be somewhat too late—afterward.

The music ceased. There was that waiting hush which is often more trying to the nerves than the wildest excitement that distinctive and peculiar silence that tells that a great multitude is waiting for our appearance. The orator knows it in the last minutes before he faces his audience. The murderer knows it as his last toilet is being made in those slow minutes before he emerges on that grim silhouette of dark beams.

But none of these could be more trying than that hush to the nerves of Flower-o'-the-Corn. True, there was Maurice's letter. She could also feel between her fingers a fine powder, carefully folded, attached according to agreement to the interior page of the letter. After one briefest glance she thrust the whole back into her bosom. She breathed a long sigh. The red flushed up again into her cheek. Her eyes brightened. No, he had not deceived her. All was well.

But Yvette was not by any means so well satisfied. There was something behind—something from which she, who had planned all, was somehow shut out. Well, it did not matter. Tomorrow she (that is, others for her) would make Billy Marshall speak And at any rate Flower-o'-the-Corn would be married as firmly as half a dozen officials and the ministers of two religions could do it.

Also she would be revenged upon Maurice Raith, who was fool enough not to know when he might have been well off. Love him—no, of course not! But all the same had he not kissed her—of his own free will? Well, then, he must pay. Already she had made him pay! She thought of him writing that letter on the deck of that British ship, and laughed. She had not done with Mons Maurice Raith. O, yes—she, Yvette Foy, had a long arm.

The little procession entered the great pavilion about midway its length. On either side, with a clear fairway in the center, were assembled the massed guests of the Marquis and Marquise de Montrevel. Opposite was the door through which at the bride's coming, the marshal himself would lead in the bridegroom.

The time was come. Even the heart of Yvette herself beat a little faster as the trumpets and fifes rang out. The curtain was lifted by a cord from within. A haze of glorious light fronted them, flashing uniforms of blue and scarlet and gold. The massed standards of a score of regiments, the hangings of the state pavilions of the great Maison Rouge, barriered pikes in banks and chevaux-de-frise crossed trophies of swords, silken tassels, the Fleur de Lys everywhere, splashed in gold on creamy white. The trumpets sang out yet louder. All eyes were upon them. Smiling, Yvette led in the bride. Most of the men judged Yvette to be the loveliest. Even the bridegroom with the marshal on his right thought so.

The two parties moved forward to meet each other in that central aisle that had been kept open. The marquis moved back a step. Yvette, with her own smile, expressive of the perfection of triumph, placed the hand of Flower-o'-the-Corn in that of Jean Cavalier.

There was a silence within as the marriage party moved up the aisle, Frances, with her bridegroom, leading—Yvette, upon the arm of her husband, glancing radiant in the rear of the train bearers.

In the interval, and just before they reached the altar, covered simply with its purple cloth, and upon it the great ridged cross of gold, Patrick Wellwood, in his Genevan gown and the book of God in his hand, moved behind it to receive them.

Then as he lifted up his hands in the first solemn benediction of his religion the Camisard chant came from without, weird, fitful, dirgelike, prescient rather of death than of marriage happiness:

Except the Lord the city keep
The watchmen watch in vain.

"For heaven's sake, let that whining be stopped!" said De Montrevel fiercely. "I will go myself and order it."

"Hush!" said his wife, snatching at his sleeve, with a sudden whitening of the face. "I thought I heard a voice—a voice I knew!"

Suddenly, as she looked, the white wall of the tent was slashed with a gleaming knife from top to bottom, and through the aperture through which the black night looked—wild, fierce, tremendous, leaped in the figure of a man. His long gray hair, matted and dank, fell beyond his shoulders. Madness looked out of his eyes. A glairy foam hung about his lips which kept up an uncouth muttering.

"I have found them both," he cried, "he who hath led astray my daughter—he who hath made of her—what she is. You—you—you!" He advanced toward the marechal, who stood unmoved, while all sat paralyzed at the sudden fearful apparition. "I, Martin Foy, will slay you and the harlot together!"

And at the word he precipitated himself upon De Montrevel.

But faster than the flashing of his knife came the cry of Yvette.

"My husband! My husband!"

With a breaking cry she flung herself fiercely between the assassin and his victim. Her breast, white and heaving under its lace and silk, received the madman's stroke fairly. The blood sprang and fell upon the frosted maple of her dress, as scarlet as itself in the shrine of the altar candles.

"He is my husband! I love him!" she cried.

With a hoarse roar the crowd closed in to tear the murderer to pieces, but with an infinitely fiercer brandishing of his knife and an exultant shout of "I have slain her that played the harlot among her people! To her place let her go!" He disappeared into the gash of blackness through which the stars peered, familiar and distant and chill.

Then Nicholas de Baume, the tears running from his eyes that had been dry for forty years, held in his arms the woman who had given her life for his.

Only once did she open her eyes, once so dark and passionate and glorious.

"I am sorry," she said, looking at Cavalier and Flower-o'-the-Corn. "Do not let them marry. It was my fault."

Something unseen was drowning her life deep within, for there was little stain upon the stuff of her dress.

"Be pitiful, Nicholas!" she said, "if you take my father tell him that I am your wife. I loved you, Nicholas. I wish for your sake that I had been—ah, God—God!"

And with that she was gone. At least the leaving of Yvette Foy's life had not misbecome her.

CHAPTER XLVII.

The Hunting of a Man.

"Kill the heretics! Kill! Kill!" cried the men of the Maison rouge, dashing out into the night like a swarm of angry wasps.

And had it not been for the Catholic officers most of Cavalier's new troops might have fallen victims to the opinions which they had forsaken. Nay, Jean Cavalier himself was struck at and wounded in the arm. The marshal in the first moments of his terrible grief hardly noticed anything that went on about him, and it was Colonel Verlat who took Flower-o'-the-Corn and her father back to the chambers of the Marechale's quarters.

The Camisard regiments had withdrawn silently and sullenly to their camp, whence by swimming the Tarn and scattering over the Causses in the darkness but few remained to hold their leader in countenance in the morning.

But through all the tumult of the sudden assassination and the hubbub of the camp there were certain, who from the first followed doggedly the track of the murderer. Prominent among these there was that sergeant major of the Maison Rouge, who had so long admired Yvette afar aff. There was one of the invited guests, Monsieur Bechet of the military prison, to whom she had scarcely spoken save to make of him her tool. There was a captain of artillery, and a young subaltern of foot, to neither of whom had she ever uttered a sentence. Yet they followed Martin Foy relentlessly over the rough scrape and Shaty debris—up—up—towards the wide tableland of the Larzac.

On the way out of camp the fugitive had rushed a deserted guardhouse, holding his great Camisard knife red in his hand. It was night, when a certain slackness of discipline was permissible, and the under officers had most of them gone off to see the sight down at the great pavilion.

The shout of the single, startled, sleepy private left in charge was followed by his instant flight.

Whereupon, (as was known afterward) the madman helped himself liberally to arms and ammunition. The weight made him the easier to come up with, for barefoot, on his native Larzac and carrying no weight, hardly a wolf-dog could have turned him. And indeed it is now none so sure that escape was the man's purpose.

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It was in the plain midst of the limestone desert of the largest Causse in France that they hemmed him in—or, rather, perhaps, that Martin Foy kneeled down, looked over his two muskets, and laid out his ammunition ready to his hand.

He laughed in gurgling murmurs, chuckling to himself as he made his preparations.

"Now," he said, smiling triumphantly, "let them come. It is a fair challenge. I will try my marksmanship against theirs as soon as the light comes."

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At last out of the cloud slid the moon. The madman was kneeling on one knee, his musket to his shoulder. Not in vain had he been accounted the best shot among the men of the Larzac, a company of fighters and hunters, all mighty before the Lord.

"Ah—there! There! Do you see him? There!"

Indeed every man of them saw him clear in the chill moonlight of the Larzac, gray and frost-tempered with the altitude.

But the quarry also saw his hunters, and with a sigh Sergeant Peyrat of the Maison Rouge rolled over and lay still—very still with a bitten bullet in his side.

"One!" said Martin Foy. "No, two!" he corrected himself, not without a certain glee, as he marked the moonlight shine on the blade of his knife.

All the time, up the sides of the Larzac, by the narrow defiles of the Dourbie men were climbing—adventurous men, brave men, all eager to shed the blood of the murderer of their chieftain's wife.

In an hour they had former a circle almost complete, some lying on the scanty juniper, crawling over the dwarf heath, spread abroad upon the lavender and sage—sprawling, clinging, gliding and sliding hither and thither like lizards on hot rocks, all eager for the death of one man—a man who asked no better than to die. While there, out on the open waste, knelt Martin Foy, a figure of fear, hatless, his long gray hair clotted with sweat and blood, his clothing mere rags and tatters, his white teeth showing in the moonlight like those of a trapped wolf, now singing by snatches his Camisard psalms, now yelling in the mere joy of madness and the lust of blood.

Of all that were out upon the face of the Larzac that night he alone made no concealment. He sought no shelter. He disdained alike rock shelter and juniper clump. A grim black figure out on the waste, fear compelling, the spent moon shedding a misty aureole about him, loading and firing as fast as he could send the powder and shot down the barrel, yelling in unison with the ring of his ramrod—that was Martin Foy, the mad Camisard, fighting his last fight—the knife, with his daughter's blood yet red on the haft, displayed on the pallid limestone before him.

And thus the man was hunted—a thousand against one.

And as Martin Foy loaded and fired, and as this one and that other, Captain Peyrat, and young Theo de Banville, and Monsieur Bechet himself—fell over with the groan of the bullock poleaxed between the thills, and died—thinking it a light thing to die for a woman like Yvette, the wife of the Marshal de Montrevel.

And at that moment he saw one come up breathless, having left his dead in other care to be made ready—the old soldier De Montrevel, his sword of vengeance bright in his hand.

And he saw his enemy, black against the illumined mist, loading and firing, with laughter and singing. So, being the husband of the woman slain, and caring naught for the death that sprang toward everyone that advanced, he shouted, "Follow me! I am Nicholas de Baume, the husband of her whom the murderer slew!"

And like a charging bull he rushed full at the single figure out there on the flat grayness of the limestone. Now Martin Foy had a loaded musket in his hand and the Marshal de Montrevel was clear black against the moon as he came toward him. The madman could have shot him dead as he had done so many others that night. But he had heard the word. A new idea flashed across his brain, now crystal clear, anon working like yeast.

"Her husband!" he shouted in a mighty voice. "Then I Martin Foy, have shed innocent blood. It is here upon this blade!"

"Red to the haft!" he cried, as he caught it up. "God of Gods, let me bear the sin!"

And with a hand sure and tried, he plunged the great Camisard knife, yet red with the blood of his daughter, deep into his own heart.

Selah—A Song in Antiphony.

Catinat, the prophet, and one Roland, called the Red were standing at the door of the Protestant temple in the village of La Cavalerie. The daily service was beginning. Within the psalms were being chanted, and without the two leaders, having matters to arrange for the safety of the defences, which were still being held to the death, spoke softly together, understanding each other.

"Jean Cavalier—what of him?" said Roland to the grim-featured prophet.

His reply could not be heard, but from within came the chanting of the Brethren of the Way at their daily song of praise.

Mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted,
Which did eat of my bread,
Hath lifted up his heel against me!

Then, changing to a softer measure, the song went on:

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit—
A broken and a contrite heart,
Thou, O God, wilt not despise!

"I have had a letter from our brother, that true man and father in Israel, Patrick Wellwood. Once more he is divining the way to the soldiers who fight for the truth, even to those once called the regiment of Ardmillan."

Within the psalm was changed. The tune came stronger and more rejoicefully:

He shall be like a Tree planted by the Rivers of Water
That bringeth forth his Fruit in his Season.

"And his daughter?" said Roland, rather more eagerly. "Verily she was a shoot of a goodly tree—an herb of grace."

"She is married happily and her husband is now commandant of the same regiment—which, sayeth Patrick Wellwood, is now no longer called Ardmillan's, but Raith's Foot—a name strange to the ear. They are happy in each other and in their children, but, he adds, the wild man that was with them hath gone to abide at a place called Keltonhill."

And from within came the chorused affirmation, the continuation of the Camisard's song:

His leaf also shall not wither,
And whatever he doeth shall prosper.

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"And still," said Roland, "in spite of Jean Cavalier and his defections, we, the Brethren of the Way, hold our defenced villages. The enemy hath not made an inroad. No, nor ever will!"

"For that give God the glory!" quoth stout Catinat, uncovering devoutly.

And from within that little temple, where of old the templars had held their revels, came the solemn doxology which closed the hill-folks' worship:

As for me, thou upholdest me in thine integrity,
And settest me before thy face forever;
Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
From everlasting and to everlasting!
Amen, and amen!

(THE END.)

Temporary Relief

With a hunted look in his eye the famous American ordered the guide to take him still deeper into the heart of the trackless forest.

"Why do you seek to travel so far away from the haunts of civilization?" asked one of the privileged members of the party.

"I am trying to dodge the college degrees!" he answered, with a dry sob.—Chicago Tribune.