THE CAMBRIDGE WEEKLY CHRONICLE, AND FARMER'S REGISTER.

"THE MAIN END OF EVERY GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE, AND THE DIFFUSION OF SOCIAL HAPPINESS."

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DESULTORY SELECTIONS.

From "James' Tales," illustrating the passions.

LOVE.

(Continued from our Last.)

The monarch started on his feet, and made an angry movement with his hand; but the chancellor interposed, and, pointing to the spot whence the sound had proceeded, he said, "Let yon traitor be arrested, who has dared to give the lie to his sovereign's solemn declaration before the States, that Blanche of Navarre has fled with her paramour, the Count de Foix."

"It is false as hell!" thundered the same voice; and a man, covered with one of those wild black robes common from time immemorial in the valley of Bastan, strode forward through the crowd, that yielded to him as he advanced; and, setting his foot upon the steps of the platform, and shaking his clenched hand toward the chancellor, he repeated, while the hood fell back and discovered his whole head and face,—"It is false as hell! Degraded king!—base and profligate churchman!—I tell ye both, it is false as hell! I, Francis of Foix, here give you the lie to your beards, and hurl back against yourselves the base and degrading terms which ye use to the pure, the noble, and the good!"

For a moment there was a pause of solemn silence; while the Count de Foix, with his arm still extended, and his hand clenched, his head thrown back, and his noble countenance flashing with generous indignation, remained sternly gazing on the chancellor and the king, as if seeking for new words in which to pour forth the hate and contempt which swelled within his bosom.

The king shrunk back appalled; and the chancellor, though of a bolder and more fearless nature, surprised and confused, remained in hesitating silence. At length, however, he made a sign to one of the officers, spoke a word in his ear, and then, turning to the Count de Foix again, he said, in a slow and not very distinct voice,—"Sir Count de Foix, your presence here to day may well, and certainly does, surprise us much. We thought, and had good reason to think, that you had long quitted Navarre. We were led to believe, indeed, and, as we shall soon show, had every good reason to believe, that you had left this country, accompanied by the princess who has been so lately named. However, we shall soon invite occasion to hear you at full, in justification of yourself, and in refutation of the charges against you."

As he spoke, his eyes wandered round the hall; and with his last words came a bitter and sneering smile. He then paused a moment, as if about to say something more—suddenly raised his hand, and exclaimed, "Now! now!"

At the word, half a dozen of the arches of the king's guard, who had mingled with the crowd whilst he was speaking, and forced their way forward, threw themselves at once upon Francis of Foix, and bound his arms tightly with a scarf.

"Noble Lord Count," said the chancellor, "you have most opportunely come to receive the just recompense of the great and splendid deeds which you have performed in the kingdom of Navarre.—The subjects of the king slaughtered by your hand; his sister seduced and carried off; his frontier fortresses visited in the habit of a spy: these, and many other acts which can be proved against you, well call for punishment; and, however high your rank, be you sure that neither station, nor renown, nor alliances with kings, shall shield your head from the blow of justice. Take him away."

"King of Navarre!" said the Count de Foix, before they hurried him from the hall,—"King of Navarre! hear me but one word. I am a sovereign prince as well as thou art; thine equal in birth and blood; thy superior in renown. I tell thee, for what thou hast suffered this day, thou art coward as well as liar; and, if thou hast in thy poor heart one drop of generous blood, thou wilt know how to answer this defiance."

* * * * * *

Time passed; hours rolled on; day after day went by; and, chained hand and foot, plunged in a dark & solitary dungeon, denied, the attendance and the care, the luxuries, the comforts of high station, almost the necessaries of existence, Francis of Foix passed the weary time, till he felt that death were preferable to the protracted agony of such a state. The rays of the blessed sun he never saw; the voice of man he never heard; all was silence and darkness, except, when, at a stated hour, some scanty food was brought him, and a lamp to give him light during the meal. He felt all the privations of his situation keenly and bitterly. He felt the privation of wholesome food, pure water, change of raiment, light exercise, and air.—He felt the privation of all the lovely sights and musical sounds which we enjoy in the wide world without knowing we enjoy them. He felt the privation, too, of all communion with his fellow-men, of all reciprocation of feeling; and ideas; and the heavy weight of his own thoughts pressed him down into the earth.

But it was not these, nor any of them, that pained him most. There was a more grievous burden upon his heart than any of these—a more overwhelming lead upon his mind. He thought of Blanche of Navarre; he thought of her uncertain fate, her dangerous situation, the hourly peril to which she might be exposed, the base imputation cast upon her name, the weak violence of her brother, the fiery passions of her brother's wife.

For himself he entertained no fears. The King of Navarre, he thought, dared never raise his hand against a great feudatory of the crown of France; but Blanche of Navarre might be the mark on which all the jealous vengeance of the queen was to be poured. Of her he thought, for her he feared, on her account he entertained these trembling apprehensions which he had never known for himself.

He was soon roused, however, from his dream of security. A court was held within the walls of the prison; an inquisitious tribunal was established to judge him: and he was tried and condemned with that mockery of justice under which the violent passions of a barbarous epoch too often concealed themselves for the attainment of their objects.—Astonished, though not daunted, he was led back to the dungeon in which he had been confined, and told that, with great mercy, the King of Navarre had determined to allow him two whole days to prepare himself for the awful fate to which he was doomed. In that short space of time, the design against his life could not be made known to any of his friends or relations; and, as it was intimated to him that his head was to be struck off within the walls of the prison, his fate might for years remain unknown to all but those who acted a part in the tragedy about to be performed.

Still, with the thought of his own immediate fate, mingled, more painfully, the memory of Blanche of Navarre. Still, he thought of her more than of himself: of her grief, more than his own danger. If in the power of her brother, or her brother's wife, he doubted not that accurate tidings of her lover's sufferings and death would be conveyed, to aggravate all that they inflicted on her; and, oh! the dark uncertainty, the terrible apprehension, the deep sorrow, that he felt for her at that moment, when the last hours of life were ebbing from him fast, showed him, more strongly than ever, how intensely, how truly, how tenderly he loved her.

Still chained, still solitary, he lay in bitter thought, with every feeling that can shake and torture our weak nature, racking his heart by turns. It was night; at least, it seemed to him that he was in that part of his long, dark, uninterrupted night, which, to other men, was covered with shadows, and passed in slumber. It was night, then, but he slept not; and, on a sudden, at that unusual hour, he heard the key turn in the ponderous lock, the huge bolts undrawn, one by one, and the door creak harshly on its hinges. A glare of light streamed into the dungeon; and, to his surprise, he beheld the beautiful, but impassioned and unprincipled Isabel of Valois, bearing a lamp in her hand, and totally alone. She closed the door behind her, and the lock was immediately turned, shewing that some one waited concealed without; but for a moment she did not advance into the dungeon. Gazing on the worn and haggard countenance of Francis of Foix, she stood as if hesitating what course to pursue. But then, after an instant's pause, she took three steps forward, and, in a low, but distinct voice, which trembled with emotion, she said,—

"Sir Count, it is long since we have met; and how differently do we now meet to our meetings long ago!"

"Lady," replied the count, "I am here before you as a dying man. To-morrow, if I am informed rightly of the intention of your husband, or of yourself—for it is you, probably, who rule in Navarre—to-morrow, then, I am to end my days by the sword of an executioner; not the instrument of public equity, but the murderous tool of vengeance and injustice. Lady, I would willingly prepare myself to die; and, though I might hear, with reverence and penitence, my confessor remind me of sins whereof I sought absolution, I would fain not hear them named by her who had a share therein."

The brow of Isabel of Valois grew dark, and her eye flashed; but, after a moment, the frown passed away, the fire of her eye went out, and a look of tenderness and sorrow came over her fine, but stormy countenance, like a sweet gleam of sun-shine breaking across the tempest-cloud. She shook her head somewhat mournfully, and answered.—"Who led me to share in those sins, Count of Foix?"

Francis of Foix felt and knew that her own fiery passions were the evil guides that she had followed; but he was too generous to retort the truth upon her.

'Alas! lady,' he replied, 'let us not think of such things at such a moment, but to regret them. Why you seek me, I do not know; but I beseech thee, in pity, disturb not the thoughts of a man who is preparing himself for death."

'I come, if thou wilt, to save thee from death,' she replied. 'I come to offer thee thy life; but it must be upon conditions.'

The Count of Foix smiled bitterly. 'Lady,' he replied, 'I never yet was found fearful of death, nor weakly clinging to this mortal being: yet I will not lightly cast my life away: but the conditions must not be severe ones, for Francis of Foix holds his life as a jewel pleasant to possess, worthy of defence, and to be valued at a certain price; but that price is clear and ascertained. It is worth so much and no more; and he is not such an idle spendthrift as to give one jot beyond the real value. May I crave to know what are the conditions?'

'These,' answered Isabel, her brow again growing cloudy, at the little esteem in which he seemed to hold her offers. 'Thou shalt renounce Blanche of Navarre; thou shalt never see her more; thou shalt acknowledge publicly——'

'Hold, lady! hold,' exclaimed the count; 'it is needless to add another word; it is needless to shame your lips, by giving them to utter one more unworthy demand. I will not renounce Blanche of Navarre—I will not promise never to see her more. God and my honor forbid! If I live, I will love her; and, dying, I will love her also. Through every hour of existence, from the present moment to the last instant of the doubtful future, I will think of her, I will love her, I will adore her. The memory of her love shall give me consolation and support even in the hour of death; and the moment when thy fell vengeance triumphs over my mortal life, remembrance of her shall enable me to set your injustice at defiance. Her love shall give me strength and courage, her virtue guide me up to heaven!'

Dark and fearful was the expression that came over the features of Isabel of Valois. Her beauty grew like the beauty of the fiend, where loveliness was clouded with hate and with despair. But that countenance, all powerful and expressive as it was, could but little convey all the fiery passions that struggled in her breast; for an instant she gasped for breath; & then, exclaiming,—"Thou hast chosen thy fate! be it as thou hast said!' she struck her hand against the door. It opened: but, before she quitted the dungeon, she once again turned to the Count de Foix, and, setting her white teeth fast together, she muttered,—'Thou scornest my kindness as thou hast scorned my love; but thou shalt know what my hate can do. They have told thee that thou art to die within these prison walls; but I tell thee, no! thou shalt die like a common malefactor, on the public scaffold.—Not one pang shall be spared thee: the grinning populace, the roaring crowd, the tall scaffold, the sword stained with the blood of traitors and of murderers, the hand of the common butcher—all that can make death shameful and terrible, shall fall upon thee; and, if in thine hour of death thou rememberest Blanche of Navarre, Isabel of Valois shall not be forgotten!'

He gazed upon her, as she spoke, calmly and sternly; and, on her part, after having paused for a moment in silence, with her bright eyes flashing, and her whole form enlarged with passion, as if seeking in vain for more words to give utterance to her hatred, she suddenly quitted the dungeon, and the door closed behind her. She stood in the long vaulted passage, where, on either hand, appeared manifold rows of arches, leading to many an abode of misery and horror, with the jailor who had accompanied her to the cell, holding up a torch to light her footsteps, on their way through those damp, mouldy corridors, and with the woman who had followed her thither, gazing up in her face, in order to read from the expression that it bore, what were the emotions which her visit to the prisoner had produced.

Isabel of Valois, however, did not advance upon the path to which the jailor pointed; and over her beautiful countenance she did not even strive to cast that ordinary veil which might shade or soften the picture of the wrought and agitated soul. The passions, the turbulent passions within her bosom, were, at that moment, incapable of concealment or disguise. The moment the door of the dungeon had closed behind her, she paused, and stood as if rooted to the ground, with her eyes bent down upon the damp gray pavement, and the deep lines of intense thought knitting her fair, splendid brow. Her left hand and arm fell dead and motionless by her side; and in the relaxed dropping of each long, slender finger, it appeared as if all power and sensation therein were at an end. But the right hand, which was rather raised, with the fingers, clenched tight, as when she had struck it against the door, remained contrated for several minutes, while the same strong passion which had moved her in the dungeon continued powerful in her heart.

After a time, however, the fingers opened, the hand fell slowly to her side; and, though the eye still remained fixed upon the ground, a change of expression came over the living picture of her face.—The knitted brow again became smooth and sorrowful; the white teeth were no longer firmly pressed together: the proud nostril expanded, the lip quivered, and, clasping her hands together, she burst into a bitter flood of tears, only interrupted by convulsive sobs, which seemed to shake her whole frame.

This state continued for several minutes, while the attendant gazed on her with apprehension and anxiety, and the jailor cast down his eyes in surprise, at a scene of which he felt that he ought not to have been a witness. It next became evident that she struggled against the tears, and strove to master the agitation which produced them; and, as she found all ordinary efforts vain, she worked herself up into fury at herself, for giving way to the weakness that overpowered her, she stamped her foot upon the ground; she struck her hand against her brow; and, exclaiming, "Fool! fool! fool that I am!" she turned violently to the woman, crying, "What stare you at, minion? Dare you comment on the actions of your queen? Follow behind me! Lead on, sir, with the torch, lead on! There is some gold for thee; but thou hadst better tear out for ever from the book of memory what thou hast seen this night—otherwise thou mayest find a surer and more silent dwelling than thine own dungeons. Lead on, I say! lead on!"

The prison and the palace are, in all ages of tyranny and of barbarisin, in near companionship; and from the dungeons which Isabel of Valois had just visited, a long passage beneath the great square of Pampeluna, and a spiral staircase, led her back to the abode of her husband. As she mounted slowly, step by step, the Queen of Navarre had time to recall all her courage; to steel her haughty heart, and to efface the traces of agitation which her strongly excited passions had left behind. She paused for a moment, however, in her own apartments. She carefully washed the marks of tears away; she arranged her dress with studied grace and elegance; she called to her aid every art of fascination; and then proceeded to seek the weak prince who had placed his happiness, his honor, and his fame, in the hands of one so little worthy of the trust. He welcomed her with a glad embrace; for of late she had been rather a niggard of her presence, and had taught her husband to value her smiles, by making them more rare.

"Hast thou heard the tidings, my Isabel?" he said; "hast thou heard the discovery we have made!"

Isabel of Valois—like all human beings when excited by strong passions to pursue evil schemes—felt more than just apprehension at every sound and at every sight around her. Each change, each news, each step that she herself took forward, agitated her whole heart, lest some interposing hand should pluck her back from the course which she was determined to pursue; and the words of her husband instantly excited fear that some unforeseen event might throw a stumbling block in her course.

"No, sir," she replied,—"no; I have heard no news, I have heard no tidings. Keep me not in suspense, my lord; tell me what has occurred."

"Nothing to displease nor harm thee," he replied, marking the change upon her countenance; "it is, merely, that my unhappy sister Blanche, that disgrace to our race and name, was seen yesterday in the neighborhood of Pampeluna by a priest who was passing through a small village not far off. It was said that she had sent a messenger to Don Ferdinand de Leyda; and, not an hour ago, I had him called to my presence, and asked if such tidings were true. He replied, that he had received neither letter nor message from Blanche of Navarre, but that he doubted not the tale of her being in the neighborhood was well founded. He promised, moreover—on my strict injunctions—that, if she sought refuge with him or with his sister, who was ever her dear friend, he would bring her to my presence."

"I love not that Don Ferdinand de Leyda," burst forth Isabel of Valois, vehemently; "I love him not—I doubt his double-dealing promises. Once already he has deceived and disappointed me, and, if you trust to his word you will find that he has some specious under meaningly by which he will break his engagement, yet keep his conscience whole. No, no, my lord: if you love Isabel of Valois, and would remove the stain from your house by punishing properly her who has incurred it, follow my advice."

"What wouldst thou have me do?" demanded the king. "I will do any thing in reason to please thee Isabel."

"Thus, then, act, my lord,' she replied; "and do it, not to please me but for your own honor's sake. Deal not upon this Count of Foix as upon a private enemy whom you remove from your path in secret; but, judged and condemned as he is by public judges appointed to try him, let his execution be public, and in the face of day. Proclaim to all the land around, that on the day after to-morrow, at the hour of noon, Francis of Foix, coudemned to death for having entered your dominions with the semblance of peace; for having gone into your frontier fortresses a spy, and afterward having in arms attacked and slain your subjects in the execution of your orders, will bow his head to the block, and undergo the sentence of his judges. Let this be spread far and wide; and, my life for it, if Blanche of Navarre be within hearing of the tale, she will come forth from her concealment to save her lover from the sword."

"Perhaps it may be so," replied the king.—"But yet, Isabel, I fear to delay the execution, or to make it too public. Many of the nobles already murmur; many affirm that Blanche is innocent; and I fear that, did the French king, who is even now upon our frontier afford them any encouragement to deliver his vassal, the Count of Foix, they might rise in rebellion against their monarch's authority. You know not those proud Navarrese, Isabel; you know them not so well as I do."

"Out upon the king who fears his own subjects!" replied Isabel of Valois: "I trust my husband is not such. Out upon him, I say! Call in your troops, my lord; exert your courage; summon round you those whom you know to be faithful to you; and fear not but that the traitors will fall down and lick the dust beneath your feet. Fie on it! the French king gives them no encouragement. Is not Charles my own cousin, near to me in blood and in affection? and had he been willing to espouse the cause of this Count of Foix, would he not have done it long ago, when all the count's followers and vavasors were clamorous at the gates of Toulouse for assistance? Let it be preclaimed far and near, that the count suffers the day after to-morrow; and, without direct assertion, let it be insinuated, that the only means to save his life is the production of Blanche of Navarre."

"Well, Isabel," replied the king, "doubtless thou judgest wisely. Order all this as thou wouldst wish: but, also, take care; and ever remember that many eyes are fixed upon our actions, and that we must not dare to stretch authority beyond a certain limit."

"Dare!" exclaimed Isabel of Valois,—"dare!" and for a moment she gazed upon him with a glance in which the indignation and contempt of her fiery and haughty spirit struggled with artful wile, customary self-command, soft blandishment, and all the subtle coquetry, with which woman, weak in power, and denied participation of command, so often obtains unseen the authority from which man would exclude her, rules where she is supposed to be ruled, and tramples on the habitual tyrant of her sex. Art, however, conqured even passion. She cast herself upon the bosom of the king. She bade him think of his honor, where she consulted nothing but her own passions; she bade him consider the claims of justice, while she sought nothing but vengeance. She qualified every evil wish by some glorious name, and she persuaded him to what she would, while he fancied that she but strengthened him in his own upright principles. Her schemes were approved of, her wishes granted; her whole step and figure were animated by the thought of having in her power her that she hated with undivided enmity, and him for whom her love struggled with her wrath in such a way as to make that wrath but the more deadly.

The fatal morning arrived. The glorious sunshine of that bright land spread over the whole scene; and the awful scaffold, covered with cloths of crimson and black was raised before the windows of the palace. Guards and attendants took their places round about. The gazing crowd had gathered early, and filled all the square; and on a platform which was raised near the spot prepared for the coming tragedy, was seen a chair of state, destined for the monarch of the land, and already surrounded by various officers of his household. It was some time are the king himself appeared; and when he did so, all eyes were, of course, turned toward that spot; but the dull and heavy frown upon his countenance seemed gathered there expressly to extinguish all hope of mercy from one who had passed his life in idle pursuits, and who had the weakness of a gentle mind without possessing any of the redeeming qualities. The trumpets sounded as he appeared. The heralds summoned the Count of Foix, in a loud voice, as if he had been a free agent, to appear and answer for the crimes laid to his charge; and in a moment after he was led forward to the front of the scaffold, and the accusation and the sentence read before his face.

He was very pale. The rosy hue of health, which he had regained after his wounds, had faded away under long imprisonment; and an ashy shade, different altogether from the pallor of apprehension, remained fixed upon his countenance. His eye was calm and steadfast, his step firm and proud; no quivering of the lip betrayed the smallest agitation, no tremor of the frame showed the slightest touch of fear, at his meeting face to face with The Great Enemy. He stood calmly, with his manacled arms crossed upon his broad bosom, while the charge and the sentence were read; and his eye wandered over the people, as if he listened but lightly to matter unworthy of attention, while the calumnies urged against him were repeated, and the iniquitous sentence which doomed him to the block was re-pronounced. When it was over, and the harsh and dissatisfied murmur had subsided, he addressed the people in a voice, clear put not loud, which penetrated to the utmost extremes of the great square, and was heard almost by every ear in the silent multitude.

"Ye have heard," he said, "charges that are false; and ye have listened to; and sanctioned by your presence, a sentence that is iniquitous, in itself, base in its motives, weak in its pretences, and alike unworthy of the monarch of a generous people, and the judges of a free and warlike land. But I am here, a stranger in the midst of you, with none to plead my cause, with none to defend my right: and, although I might well calculate upon some one from among the renowned nobility of this country standing forth to do justice to the wronged and the oppressed, yet I forgive even those who abandon me, in this my latest hour; and only beseech them to believe, that not only am I innocent of one foul charge brought against me, but that the sweet princess of your native land—the pure, the beautiful, the noble—is believed by the base accusations which have been spoken against her, by the very lips that should have maintained her honour, and have upheld her fame. Oh, Blanche of Navarre!—Blanche of Navarre! that which weighs most heavily upon this heavy heart it that my follies, or my vices—follies which thy wisdom has shown me, vices which thy virtues have done away—should have furnished thine enemies with a pretext for blackening the unspotted purity of thy angelic name. Oh, Blanche of Navarre! Blanche of Navarre! if there be one good and noble soul that hears me, they will tell thee when I am dead, that with my last words, with my latest breath, with the ultimate effort of a spirit born for other words, I did justice to thy, purity, and died defending thee from slander!"——

There was a movement in the crowd beyond; there came loud voices and shouting tongues.—The populace drew back, and opened away toward the scaffold; and a hand-litter moved forward through the midst, preceded by a cavalier in the simple robes of peace, but followed by a long train of men-at-arms. The King of Navarre gazed eagerly upon the sight, with feelings well nigh approaching unto dastard fear; but his apprehensions were instantly relieved, when he recognised in the first of the train the person of *Don* Ferdinand de *Leyda*.

"Where am I?—whither have ye brought me?' said a voice from the litter, as soon as they set it down at the foot of the scaffold; at the same moment, a small fair hand from within drew back the curtains. It was the hand of Blanche of Navarre. Her eye first fell upon the multitude, who, silent as death, watched for some coming event; and, at the sight of the wide sea of human faces that swept around her, she shrunk back again. But, the moment after, the scaffold and its dreadful apparel, the block, the executioner, the guards, met her eyes—with Francis of Foix, chained and bare-headed, in the front.

The multitude was forgotten; deep, overpowering love, was all that she felt; all that she thought of was fear for him she loved. She clasped her hands—she gazed at him one moment in breathless agony; then, darting forward, she passed the guards, who opposed her not, cast herself into his arms, and wept.

A loud shout of pity and sympethy broke from the people; but it was scarcely sufficient to drown a wild and angry cry which came from a tall window above the scaffold, at which, also, a beautiful but fiend-like face was seen glaring for a moment. There were swords drawn among the people also. The men-at-arms who had followed the litter pressed on and surrounded the scaffold; and the king, pale as death faltered forth an order to stay the execution.

"What is the meaning of all this, Don Ferdinand?" he demanded, endeavoring to assume some portion of kingly dignity. "How dare you approach our presence in arms at such a moment!"

Ere Don Fordinand could answer, another actor had appeared on that strange scene. Uveiled, uncovered, with her profuse black hair broken from its gatherings, and floating wild about her shoulders—her eyes flashing living fire, her lips quivering, her small hands clenched—Isabel of Valois rushed from the palace and stood beside her husband. "Give the word, my lord!" she cried,—"give the word! Strike off the traitor's head! What! will ye suffer him to escape, when one word will bring the sword upon his neck? Then I will speake; strike, executioner—strike! Traitor, do you not obey?"

But the king again held up his hand as a sign to forbear, and Don Ferdinand de Leyda answered: "Let me beseech you, sir," he exclaimed, "on no motive whatsoever, to suffer this matter to proceed. Give instant orders, let me entreat you, for the executioner to descend from the scaffold, lest the tumult go on to dangerous results."

The king followed his suggestion at once, and the movements which were taking place among the people subsided; though all pressed forward togather, as far as possible, what was passing between Don Ferdinand and the king.

'You are in error, sire,' continued the former, as soon as the executioner had withdrawn, 'you are in error in regard to my having ventured to come armed in your presence. I am unarmed—I am without followers. These men-at-arms before you are the escort of your sister, the Princess Blanche, sent hither with her by your most noble friend and ally, the King of France. I promised you, sire, that if, on her return, she applied to me, I would bring her to your presence without an instant's delay. I have obeyed you, and have fulfilled my word; but I am charged by the Dauphin Charles, who now holds the valley of Bastan with his forces, to demand at your hands, free and uninjured, his cousin, Francis, Count of Foix. He added, too, a threat, painful for a subject of Navarre to repeat, but it must be told. He says, that if one hair of the count's head has fallen, he will take the crown from off your brow before a month be over: that he will lay the whole land prostrate in blood and ashes, and not leave one stone of your capital city standing upon another.'

The king turned toward Isabel of Valois, with his lip and cheek as sickly as a withering flower. 'Thou hearest, Isabel,' he said,—'thou hearest!'

'Coward!' she burst forth, with frantic vehemence,—'coward and fool! If thou wouldst deserve the name of man, put on thine armor, mount thy horse, and then strike off the head of thine enemy! Put thy light sister in some holy house; set the head of this subtle traitor upon the gates to welcome his French allies; and then lead forth thy barons to fight for their native land!'

'Madam,' interposed Don Ferdinand, before the king could answer, 'the plan is a brave and goodly one; but, I fear me, it would not succed.'

'Why not?' cried Isabel of Valois,—'Traitor! why not? Thou tremblest for thy head,—I see it! Thinkest thou that all the nobles of Navarre are false and subtle as thyself! Traitor! I say, why not?'

(To be continued.)