

Now that the heat and excitement of the first attack was over Amelot saw that he had not struck with sufficient precision and that his sword, glancing from Yéres' head, so quickly averted to avoid it, had only lighted upon and laid open the base of the neck behind the collar-bone. But it was enough. If not precise, the blow had been powerful, and Amelot perceived with satisfaction that the gash in Yéres' neck was large enough the let the life out of any man.

It was only a question of time, and so stepping back to avoid Yéres' furious rolling and tumbling, he waited. He had never killed a man before and so the sight of one in his agony of violent death was to his mind a novel and interesting sight. He watched it with great curiosity. When his first arbalist had been put into his boyish hands, his trial exploit had been the killing of the cat belonging to the wife of his father's senechal; death had not been instant and for half an hour the creature howled and writhed. He was reminded of this now as Yéres twisted and rolled back and forth on the ground at his feet, now on his breast, now on his back, now on his hands and knees, scrambling up the fallen forest leaves with his hands and teeth, and stupidly running his head against the boles of the tree roots. He streaked his clothes and face with his own blood, the dead leaves stuck to his wet cheeks, and the underlying dust was churned into ruddy mud by the quick, incessant opening and closing of his fingers. He uttered no cry, but his tongue protruded and his eyes were fixed and staring.

The precise moment of death, Amelot never knew; the spasms and torsions became intermittent, and after a pause longer than usual he concluded life to be extinct, yet he stabbed the body with his "misericordia" to make doubly sure, and stabbed it in a manner peculiarly and significantly his own. He did not strike it into the corpse, lest the haste of the blow should again disturb the correctness of the aim, but calculated with nicety the location of the heart, placed the point of his poniard over it and threw his weight upon the haft; the skin dented beneath the point, then suddenly parted, and the blade sunk in up to the hilt, and Amelot rose again with the assurance that his enemy was, beyond doubt, dead.

His first thought now was to conceal the body. He looked about him. He was in the heart of one of those New Forests which his most dread lord, *Whithelmus Conquestor, Dei Gratia Rex Angliarum*, following in the footsteps of his Norman ancestry, was at that moment planting throughout conquered England. The growth of the great oaks, pines, and sycamores was too slow to suit the royal patience and pleasure, and the commissioners charged with the forest extension had been commanded to take up trees of sufficient size from other parts of the island and to transplant the same to those tracts set aside for the kindly hunting grounds. Not far from the spot on which Amelot stood, one of these trees, a mighty black pine, lay upon rollers where it had been dragged by the foresters, and on account of the lateness of that day left to be erected upon the next. Close to where its roots, like enormous tentacles, writhed themselves helplessly in the air, had been excavated the circular hole which was to receive them. It was a pit; to Amelot's eyes a grave—a grave for Yéres. Beneath that gigantic trunk what possibility of the body's recovery? Never a grave more closely guarded, never a monument more securely immutable.

The shovels and mattocks of the serfs lay about upon the dirt heaps. He swung himself into the hole, and with them dug to the

depth of six or eight feet. "A pit within a pit," he said, smiling, "a secret hid within another."

When he had excavated to what he deemed sufficient extent, he rolled up Yéres in his *chappe*, and slid him into the hole, face downward; but life was not yet wholly quenched; one of those strange after-spasms seized upon the body, a muffled sound came from the folds of the *chaperon*, where the face lay pressed against the earth. The whole form twisted itself over upon its back, the cloak was drawn from the mouth, and, as though terrified at the first touch of the great reclaiming mother, from behind the black lips and clenched teeth their burst a dreadful cry. With a movement quick as the impulse which originated it, Amelot set his foot upon the mouth and shot his glance down the glooming vistas of the forest trunks, and strained his ears to catch any possible answering sigh or sound of sorrow; but the cry was without response, and he finished the interment without further interruption. He stamped the earth down over the new grave, raked into a pile and burnt such leaves as were stained with a red that was not of the autumn, cast his eyes about him, then, in a sudden panic, fled terror-stricken from the spot.

The next day the serfs of Taillebois planted the Black Pine in its destined position, where it grew and thrived for fifteen years.

It was raining in the New Forest.

Rain upon the sea, upon an Irish peat-moor, in a Scotch posting-house, or in a new town in Western Kansas, is bleak and desolate enough, but for the very nadir of depression, the ultimate quintessence of dreariness look to a rainy forest at the close of an autumn afternoon, when the drops drum, drum, drum with incessant monotone upon every shaking leaf, when the green mosses and tree-lichens grow big and spongy with wet, and the thick bark of the larger trunks turns black with the water and swells to the consistency of muck, when every tiny, rattling cataract of rain finds its way into nethermost corners of the under-growth and wakes up the drowsy woodland odors asleep between the layers of dead and fallen leaves; odors which, like heavy incense for dead and dying nature, steam upward into the silent air, when everything is quiet and hushed, when the Robbins sit vocal on each secluded bough, fluffing out their feathers, making themselves larger, dozing with their beaks upon their breasts; when the hart, the boar, and the rabbit, and all the myriad insect life are drowsing in their farthest corners, and all is very quiet, while the drumming of the rain, in endless minor cadence, unceasingly goes on.

So in that dreamy twelfth century forest the gentle rain purred on all day in dull and muffled cadence, and in the falling light of the afternoon the wind came softly stealing up.

But with the latest twilight there came a sudden change. A sharp puff of western wind in an instant dissipated all the lonesome quiet which since dawn had reigned upon the forest. The rain ceased, and a great breeze among the greater foliage, whispering "sh-sh-sh" after which the trees stood upright, silent, and, as it were, expectant, listening for the storm that was to come.

It came. In the utter stillness following upon the first heralding gust could be heard, seemingly unafathomably below the line of the far horizon, the bell-toned ripple of the distant thunder; then the swish and roar of the rain sweeping the uplands, and at intervals, like the opening and closing of a great eye, came the dull and distant glare of the lightning; all as yet so far away.

But it was getting nearer. With a deafening grating, as of the crash and grind of chaotic worlds, the thunder slid upward toward the zenith; like the *zio-zag* course of some Devil-driven spirit, the lightning crossed the gloom, while with a roar, drowned only by the thunder-peals, the rain rushed down upon all frightened nature. The wind lashed across the open spaces between the trees and over their plunging crests, whipping the forest till, as though racked with pain, it groaned and growled again, tearing up the fallen leaves from the ground and sending them whirling and scurrying about like excited rabbits. Simultaneously all the elements were loosed; tortured antics and violent action rudely usurped the so-recent dreamy repose, and the silence and solitude were broken by all the clash and jar of the tempest. A bad night. For those travelers coming eastward from over the old Watling Street, journeying downward to the Surrey lands, a bad night, indeed.

Of such in this wild October storm Amelot found himself the only representative. As he reined in his tired, fretful Flammann upon the broad, grooved flagging of the Watling Street, in which his reversed reflection was beginning to form, he considered that a by-path leading to the castle, or rather manor, of Taillebois was, in those days when he was a guest in it, wont to turn off not far from the spot upon which his Flammann's feet were then so restlessly shifting and stamping. He should know the country well; fifteen years ago, before the extension of the New Forest and the establishment of the forest laws, he had flown his hawk and lain his hounds in these very glades. It was heretofore his early life had been passed; along the path he had ridden in gambison and lorica to meet Norman William and to

fight and flee at Hastings. It was here he had first known Yéres. It was here—by St. Guthlac, enough of that! He crossed himself devoutly. Let the past guard well its own secrets; pilgrimages and offerings would atone.

With little difficulty he found the familiar path, and leading his horse by the bridle entered into the wildly-tossing forest on foot. The storm was now at its height, and it was only by the closest scrutiny and surest footing that he managed to follow the devious windings of the trail. On a sudden the tempest rose to hurricane pitch, crash following flash with the regularity and ferocity of a cannonade, his horse pivoted about on his haunches, and shaking free his head plunged back into the underbrush; hollowest noises raged in the dark upper spaces of the air and were reverberated along the darker, cavernous aisles of the tree-trunks; the rain became a cataract, the wind a tornado. Battered against the quivering trunks and slippery stones, he struggled on until dazed, drenched, and benumbed he stumbled into a roughly circular opening amid the trees, where either by nature or design the brush had been cleared away for a radius of about fifty feet.

By the light afforded by the well-nigh incessant blaze of the lightning the place seemed strangely familiar to him, but the turmoil of external nature had so confused his mind that he could form no particular recollection of it save that its sight brought with it associations of fear, flight, and aversion. Then with the suddenness and vividness of one of the flashes that illumined the spot the tragedy that had been enacted upon it recurred to his mind. He saw Yéres rolling about in his death-throes, saw him suddenly stiffen under his "misericordia" and, as another person, saw him drag the body to the place where the Black Pine was to be erected. Instinctively his eyes followed the direction of his course in his mental vision. Yes, there it stood, the same great forest giant, but now, as he gazed, an inde-

finite cry before? A cry, long, shrill, piercing and fraught with the accents of deadly suffering and despair. Where? O, dreadful thought, where—but upon this very spot. The wild, unearthly sound the filled his ears was but the echo, long delayed, of that voice that fifteen years ago had rung unheeded and unheard through those same wooden solitudes. And even as he listened the blow fell. In an instant he was blinded, crushed, stunned, beaten down to the ground and with Titanic force, driven and dented into the soil, while the roots of the avenging Pine, torn from their earthy bed, heaved themselves high into the air and enfolded in their thousand, hand-like tentacles shook aloft, as though in defiance of mortal precaution, the bleached and mouldering bones of a clattering skeleton!

The next day the Sire de Taillebois, hunting the deer by royal permit, and led by the strange behavior of the pack, which, swerving from the trail of a wounded sounder, had brought up baying and excited about an open space in the forest, found the dead and the dying entangled in the roots and branches of the great Black Pine. The unknown skeleton was interred near by, a cairn and a wooden shrine were shortly after erected over the spot, and the strange incident became one of the family legends of the Taillebois. The broken, yet living body of Amelot, recognized by the Sire de Taillebois, was taken to the Manor. It was remarked by those who removed him from the tangled mass of broken and interlacing boughs, that they exuded a thick and slimy sap, of a peculiar reddish tinge, unpleasant to the touch and particularly horrible to the sight.

Not many days after came woodcutters with axe and ox to the place where the Black Pine had fallen. "Pity," said they "that so fine a tree should be left to rot to powder; trim its spreading branches, saw it into lengths and dispose of them to our no small modicum of profit at the next *Marché de Roydeville*, come next *Candelmas*."

And so the once great Pine, broken to piecemeal, found its devious ways to widely different corners of Europe—there to be devoted to widely different uses. Part, sawn into firm posts and stanchions and fenced with many a bolt and iron plate, went to build the gloomy portcullis at the prison of the *Petit Chatelet* of Paris. Part passed downward to sunny Cremona, where, carefully fashioned into, delicately bowed sounding-boards, polished, carved, and gaily painted it was transformed into many a *vielle*, gittern, or quaintly droning linter-colo. While still another portion, traveling again to feudal Paris, was roughly hewn and squared into a tree whose roots were in law and justice, and which, watered by blood unlawfully spilled, bore an evil and a loathly fruit which men cared not to look upon.

Amelot had been one of those knights so rare as yet in the twelfth century, who, either dissatisfied with the scantiness of their annual rental or having actually lost all their feudal possessions were obliged to live by the sale of their chivalry, whose valor and prowess were marketable articles to be haggled over and bargained for. To him war was a trade, tournaments, occasions where not glory and honor but material benefits, accruing from the sale of the forfeited arms and horses of vanquished knights, were to be won. He lived by his lance, he took life that he might live. Consequently when after many months of suffering and confinement he rose from the Sire de Taillebois' hospitable bed so maimed and shattered as never more to be able to sit a horse or couch a lance, he found his means of livelihood gone. Thus he had been obliged to have recourse to that nomadic, vagabond existence, so romantic in the abstract, so bitter and degrading in the concrete reality, but which, taken altogether, has been of invaluable use to the librettists of the lighter Italian operas. He turned Jougleur, what we to-day so erroneously call troubadour. His early education had in some degree fitted him for this profession, for it had been undertaken in the hall of the Baron of Taillebois, and chivalrous in its character had included something more than the rudiments of *la geyse science*. So he changed the lance for the lute, and carrying it under his arm went to that cradle of song and poetry, where songsters were princes and princes songsters. He went to France, he went to Provence.

There was high revel in Chateau Sainte Edme.

The old Touraine castle fluttered with bandelets and streamers from battlement to base. There had been tourneying in the outer court, hawking upon the *glacis*, archery and yeoman sports in the barbacan, ring-riding and lance practice in the plain just beyond the moat, tennis and *jeux de paume* in the *grande-salle*, and to crown all a monster game of chess in which the pieces were the living men-at-arms of the Court of Sainte Edme, apparelled and mounted as Knight, Bishop, an King and maneuvered by command of the concealing plot, stationed in the flanking towers of the castle wall. And there after the gigantic flash in the banquet hall, where the principal dishes were brought in to the sound of the trumpet by Knights



YÉRES WAS IN THE DEATH AGONY.

nable feeling of awe mingled with dread seized upon him. The Pine seemed as if endowed with some unearthly personality, with something that was almost human, or a great deal more. To his mind, the great black mass of clustering boughs threateningly frowned down upon him so far below them. It alone of all its neighbors seemed to stand upright and immovable amid the surrounding confusion. Its tapering crest pointed Heavenward in silent reproach, and to that Heaven's tribunal the down-reaching branches, crooked and gnarled like fingers, beckoned him. Terrified he turned to fly, but a sight still more terrible, held him to the spot; simultaneous with the flash came the thunder-burst, there was a deafening crack, a spiral of white fire ran down the Pine's trunk, shearing away the branches, whirling off the bark in clouds of scattering fuzz and lint, and with a shower of spattering mud, plunged into the earth at its roots. Then with a speechless terror he saw that the mighty Pine, struck by lightning and propelled by the force of the wind, had begun to sway. Powerless to stir he watched it gradually moving; about its base the earth stirred and cracked open; slowly, slowly the forest monarch, ninety feet from base to crest, commenced to bend, and then, with ever increasing impetus, inclined toward the earth. The gigantic shadow beetled, some sixty feet, directly over his head. He saw it coming, coming with a swiftness and with a force that fed itself upon each lessening second, yet he could not move hand, nor eye, nor foot. Ten feet away lay life and all its possibilities, yet he knew himself as certainly doomed as though the hemp were about his throat. All along the trunk ran a fierce snapping and rending noise, and now as every fiber was strained to its uttermost limit of tension, collectively, like the tightly-drawn cords of some huge viol, they gave forth a strident, high-keyed groan, the death cry of the falling Pine which swelling by quick degrees to a wild monotonous pitch seemed to merge into almost a human intonation. Hark! where had he heard

on horseback and in full caparison, the tables had been drawn and the Jongleurs summoned to display their talents for the pleasure of the assembled company, stimulated by the prize of a perfect Arab, trapped in samite, which an esquire held at the further end of the hall.

Amelet was one of the number of Jongleurs present.

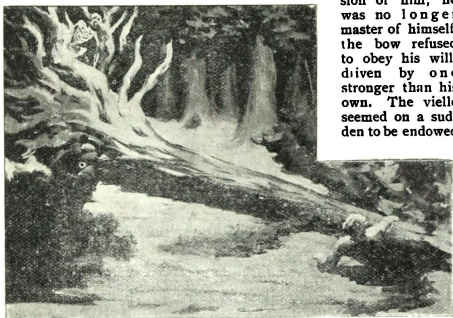
The Arab would bring 2500 *Ivres Parisis* almost any where, and samite was worth 40 golden sous an ell.

He felt sure of success.

By virtue of that royal generosity, which even in the households of the lesser feudatories was exercised in the Jongleurs' behalf, each one of the *amants de la gaye science* was offered the choice and made a present of the instrument with which he was to accompany his song. The methodical calculation of circumstance which his former life as mercenary had rendered so dominant in him was ever present with Amelet, and in consequence he had selected his song in reference to the character of those who were to listen to it. The majority of his audience spoke the liquid and sonorous *langue d'oc*, were dark, and of passionate, sensuous natures; with them love was a theme of never-failing interest; spirited war songs, ballads of the commonplace, or roudeaux and cantilienues with their meaningless repetitions and complex construction were alike of little interest when compared to that passion which moved them so powerfully and which had made their *complantes Pastoureaux* and *Bugerettes*, in which it was outpoured, so justly and so widely famous.

As songs of this character, with their slow movement and sustained notes could best be rendered upon a vielle, Amelet chose such an instrument, of marvelous workmanship, and prepared to sing a *complante* of very recent Italian composition.

But no sooner had he laid his bow to the quivering strings than a strange spirit, seemingly emanating from the richly carved sounding-board took possession of him; he was no longer master of himself, the bow refused to obey his will, driven by one stronger than his own. The vielle seemed on a sudden to be endowed



THE PINK PELL, AND AMELET SAW HIS VICTIM'S SKELETON.

with some strange inhuman life: its sleek, varnished surface glittered, and seemed to swell and contract like the hide of a serpent, and like a serpent's folds, the slack ends of the strings hanging from the pegs coiled themselves about his fingers and drove them along the key-board with resistless force.

The vielle was playing of itself; by it he had become completely mastered, and had been transformed into the mere instrument of the instrument's self. But as the vielle played on and chord after chord was evolved, he felt the hair of his flesh to stand up with an unspeakeable horror for the air was not his chosen composition, but one that had been the favorite of Yeres, and that once heard he could never now forget by virtue of the associations of horror and remorse of a dreadful deed with which its falling rhythm was so nearly connected.

At length the slow, persistent monotone became unbearable; he felt that with its further continuance he should go insane, and though he was powerless to stop, he endeavored by a mighty effort to break into or jar upon it, anything to stop that low-pitched, crawling horror. Setting his teeth he drew the bow violently across the quivering strings with all the energy and power of his arm, simultaneously the vielle responded, but with a chord, a sound, a cry that set his every nerve aprick with deadly horror, for the note evoked was the precise musical imitation of Yeres' death scream.

Then with that sound the spell was broken up. Panting, as though from a death struggle, Amelet sprang to himself once more, dashed the vielle to the ground, set his heel upon it, and trampled it into splinters, but even as he did so, the interior of the sounding-board

was exposed to view, and in its shattered fragments, sticky as they were with a shining, thick, and darkly-ruddy ichor, Amelet recognized the wood of the Black Pine of the Taillebois forest.

And now he looked about him, struggling to regain composure, wondering if it was his voice that but now had been so passionately speaking, and if it had been so, endeavoring, yet fearing to recollect what he had said, or dreadful thought, what he had confessed. But now, dispelling all doubt, the old Comte d'Edme rose from his chair and, since the counts of his name had always possessed magisterial rights upon their estate said: "Sieur Amelet, it is my duty to inform you that all you have said will be used against you at the trial, which, since the crime you speak of was committed upon foreign soil, must be conducted at Paris. Sergeant-at-arms, remove the prisoner."

The trial was over.

The Echevins had pronounced the sentence. Through the throng the archers had forced a passage, and down the narrow Paris streets, down *la Rue St. Honore* and *la Rue St. Martin*, over the island of *La Cité* Amelet had been conducted into the bowels of the *Petit Chatelet*, the guardian of the older city, battered by the then recent attacks of the Northmen. Ancient as the days of Lutetia and the Roman occupation.

He was to be hanged upon the third day after that upon which the four walls of his cells had closed around him. These three days he had passed in bitter repentance over the folly of his confession, and in revolving with all his wonted care and discrimination the various possibilities of escape; but now was come the third day and yet none such had afforded.

The air of the outside world was fresh in his face as they led him up into the *caille* of the *Chatelet*, and the noises that the earth made in its living were pleasant to his ears that for three nights had listened to the waters of the moat licking the green slime on the outside walls of his deep cell.

As he emerged into the *caille* or court, he beheld the mounted guard, which was to escort him to the *Place Trahoir*, drawn up in a hollow square. Some little delay had occurred, the Provost's horse had slipped a shoulder, and Amelet and his escort were obliged to wait until another could be brought from the archer's barracks in the old *Palais* just across the river.

He became very watchful.

The gate of the fortress was up and the drawbridge down; outside he could catch a view of feudal Paris gabled and gabled lying between its strip of blue Seine water and its strip of bluer sky. Straightest and longest of the streets of the mediæval capital, *la Rue St. Jacques* lay open in a long vista directly in his line of vision; at the far end, *la Porte St. Jacques*; beyond it, the open fields and roads of green country, life, liberty, and hope for which men cared to live. He carefully approximated the distance that lay between him and the outer bank of the moat where the discarded horse of the Provost was picketed. In his whilom vigor he could have covered it in a few bounds, the last of which would have set him astride of the horse, yet even now with his feeble bones and cramped muscles, the end was worth the effort. He drew his swordless baldric tighter about his waist and looked about him. Close at his right hand, a yeoman stood leaning upon his falchion, between him and the grate two others, one buckling on the plastron of the second; the usual guard at the portal paced back and forth the length of the narrow passage between the inner and outer gate, nursing his weapon. Upon the prisoner came to put the manacles upon him; Amelet held out his right wrist with his eyes intent upon the watch at the gate, he was slowly approaching that point in his walk where he would turn and with his back to the court recover the distance of his prescribed beat. The bracelet clicked as the Warder locked it about Amelet's wrist. The watch was within a yard of the turning point; as slowly as possible Amelet extended his foot to be locked upon the chain which bound his hand, and as the Warder bent to fetter it, the gate watch paused in his beat and listlessly turned about.

And then came a moment of excited shouting and a sudden outburst of confusion and rapid hurrying to and fro. Stepping upon the bending back of the Warder, Amelet had sprung over him. With two sweeping sidelong blows of his chain, swung as in his old-time knightly days he had swung the "mace-at-arms," he had struck from his path the two yeoman who had attempted to bar it, and with every sinew stretched to its last limit of tension started toward the gate. The soldier on guard warned by the cries in his rear turned and saw him rushing down upon him. Too old in the service to interpose his body between liberty and the man who leaped toward it with such a face, he sprang into the guardhouse and knocked away the catch from the windlass which lowered the grate; the path was clear. *Avi* Amelet answered the shouts of his pursuers by another of triumph and defiance, which in chanting the terrible "Song of Roland" had so often come from his lips. There was nothing to stop him now, and he saw that although the grate was beginning to stir he would, if he

could but maintain his present rate, of speed pass under it long before it fell, and at a flash he saw, too, what before had not occurred to him. The grate once fallen, and fallen behind him, would, with the loss of inestimable time, have to be again raised ere pursuit could be commenced.

Swift as an arrow he sprang forward toward the opening, laboriously, ponderously the huge portcullis momentarily narrowed it, yet he laughed aloud as he ran in the certainty of his triumph.

Hark!

It was not often that occasion rendered necessary the closing of the grate; the slots in which it ran were rusted thick with disuse, and now, as it slid through the reluctant grooves they uttered a shrill and grating remonstrance, as the heavy fabric of wood and iron dropped ever faster. The grating rose to a shrill scream. With that scream Amelot's laugh died upon his lips, and with a bound his heart sprang to his throat, and, like a choking lump, stuck there motionless; one with his heart his limbs moved with it in answering accord, a single leap and they stiffened rigid—locked in horror. For the scream of the *Chatelet's* portcullis was the scream of the *vielle* of Chateau Edme, the scream of the falling Black Pine of the Taillebois forest; the eternal reverberation of the cry of the dying man, echo answering to echo, down all the lapse of fifteen years.

But the callous hardihood of the man averted into obedience for one moment, reasserted itself in another; he paused for an instant, gathered his shaking legs under him and once more sprang forward with all the energy of despair.

Too late.

The few seconds he had lost sufficed to turn the trembling balance on the scale of desperate chance; simultaneous with his onward

friends, extricated from the throng in a fainting and all but suffocating condition.

It was a superstitious age. Those nearest the newly-erected gibbet, in the centre of the square, often pointed to it and crossing themselves said: "What manner of man was this?" For the gibbet seemed very literally to be sweating blood. The heat had started the dormant sap from every pore, and in heavy resinous streams of dark red hue it felt its way downward throughout the whole structure; at a little distance it looked like revolting blood.

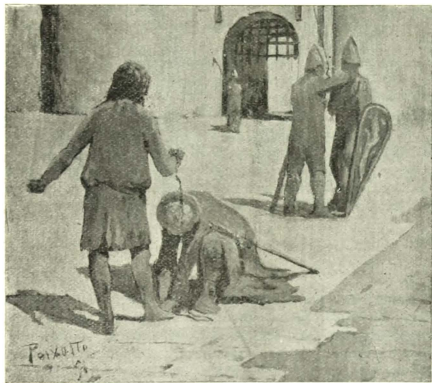
The effect upon such a machine was horrible.

When with the clatter of many hoofs and the jangling of many lances against the steel housing of those that carried them, the prisoner had arrived, such of the mob as had been near enough to note the condition of the gibbet, saw him look upon it, and then with a long sougher turn his eyes away, but the attendant priest, though he understood not their meaning, heard him mutter the words: "Again the Black Pine," and his head rolled forward upon the breast.

He was generally believed by those about him to have died, or at least to have lost consciousness, with this last word. But it was not so. To the last he retained every power of the mind, every sense of the body. He knew and felt when he was lifted out of the cart; he knew and felt when two archers supported him upon the platform; he knew and felt when the cord was adjusted about his neck; he knew and felt, with the recurrence of the old dread of the stormy night in the Taillebois forest, when the gibbet beetled over his head and when its shadow fell coldly across his brow, eye, and to the last he knew and felt even when the jar and wrench of the drop came, he knew and felt, and heard the timbers as they creaked and groaned beneath his weight give forth that dreadful cry which had tracked his own life to its close, ever since he had taken that of his fellow-man in the shadowy forests of far distant England, and that now, as his haunting accents filled the air about him, seem to thrill with ring of triumph and of final exultation.

It was the last sound he ever heard.

FRANK NORRIS.



THE WARDER PUT THE MENACLES ON HIM.

bound, the portcullis, propelled by its own massive weight, gathering impetus from its every downward movement, with a hoarse rattle of chains and clanking iron and with a rasping, grinding, streak of smoking grooves, fell.

Fell with a solid crash just as Amelot, with bowed shoulders, was bursting under its row of pointed teeth and, beneath it, as beneath some mighty guillotine, he was crushed to the pavement bent double and venting low, quick screams.

Writhing in a spasm of pain beneath the fatal engine he tore and bit at it with nails and teeth, great splinters came away in his claw-like fingers, and within he recognized the wood of the Black Pine of Taillebois and saw his own blood mingling with its thick and ruddy sap.

But the end was not far now. The quivering body was heaped into a cart, and, at quick trot, hurried to the *Place Traivoir*.

The day had been very hot.

In the open squares of the city where the sunlight came flooding in like a palpable mass, hunting down and exterminating the timid, shrieking shadows, the heat was almost unbearable.

Altogether unbearable was it in this the *Place Traivoir*, packed to its uttermost with sweating and not too clean humanity, and many a white-lipped woman, eye, and men not a few, had been by officious