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## The Legend of St. Julian the Hospitable\*

By GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

**I**N A castle on a sloping hill, in the midst of a forest, dwelt Julian's father and mother.

The four towers at its corners had pointed roofs, which were covered with leaden tiles, and the base of the walls rested on foundations of rock which descended abruptly to the bottom of the moat.

In the courtyards the pavements were as spotless as the flagged floor of a church. Long spouts, representing dragons with heads downward, conveyed the rain-water in the direction of the cistern; and on the window-sills on every floor of the castle, in pots of painted clay, were sweet basil or heliotrope.

Another enclosure, surrounded by stakes, comprised an orchard, a garden, where flowers were arranged so as to form figures, a trellis, with arbors, where the fresh air might be enjoyed, and a mall, which provided amusement for the pages. On the other side were the kennels, stables, bakery, wine-press, and barns. A meadow surrounded the whole, itself enclosed by a stout fence.

There had been peace for so long that the portcullis was never lowered;

the moats were full of water; swallows built their nests in the crevices of the battlements; and when the sun was too hot the archer who paced back and forth on the curtain all day long returned to the watch-tower and slept without fear.

Inside, the ironwork gleamed everywhere; in the bedrooms, tapestry hangings kept out the cold, the closets overflowed with linen, the casks of wine were plentiful in the cellars, the oaken chests groaned beneath the weight of bags of money.

In the armory, between standards and heads of wild beasts, could be seen arms of all ages and of all nations, from the slings of the Amalekites and the javelins of the Garamantes, to the cutlasses of the Saracens and the coats of mail of the Normans.

The main spit in the kitchen was large enough to hold an ox; the chapel was as magnificent as a king's oratory. There was even a Roman bath, in a convenient corner; but the good seigneur was not partial to it, considering it to be a heathenish custom.

\* Translated from the French.

Always wrapped in a cloak of foxes' skins, he walked about his domain, did justly by his vassals, settled the disputes of his neighbors. During the winter he watched the snowflakes fall, and listened to the reading of histories. But when the first fine days came he would ride his mule along the narrow roads, past the ripening grain, and chat with the peasants, to whom he gave advice. After many adventures he had taken to wife a maiden of high lineage.

She was very fair, rather serious, and disposed to be haughty. The horns of her cap reached the tops of the doors; the train of her dress hung far behind her. She governed her household by rules, as if it were a cloister; each morning she allotted the servants their tasks, overlooked the making of preserves and ointments, sat at the spinning-wheel, or embroidered altar-cloths. After she had prayed much, God gave her a son.

Then there were great rejoicings, and a banquet that lasted three days and four nights, with illuminations and the music of harps. There were the rarest of spices to eat, with chickens as large as sheep; by way of entertainment a dwarf came forth from a pie; and when the bowls were too few—for the crowd grew greater and greater—they were compelled to drink from hunting-horns and helmets.

The new mother was not present at these festivities. She stayed in her bed, resting quietly. One evening she woke and thought she saw beneath a moonbeam that shone in at the window something like a moving shadow. It appeared to be an old man in a sackcloth coat, with a rosary at his side, a wallet over his shoulder, and looking like a hermit. Drawing near her pillow he said, without unclosing his lips:

"Rejoice, O mother! for thy son shall be a saint!"

She was about to cry out; but, glid-

ing along the moonbeam, the old man rose slowly into the air and vanished. The banqueters' songs rang out more loudly. She heard angels' voices, and her head rested back upon her pillow, above which hung a martyr's bone in a frame of carbuncles.

The following morning the servants, being questioned, declared that they had seen no hermit. Dream or reality, it must have been a message from Heaven; but she was careful to say nothing of it, fearing she might be accused of pride.

The guests left at dawn, and Julian's father was standing at the gate, whither he had escorted the last, when suddenly a beggar appeared before him in the mist. He was a Bohemian, with plaited beard, with silver rings on his arms, and burning eyes. He mumbled with a half-inspired air these rambling words:

"Ha! ha! your son! much blood! great glory! always fortunate! an emperor's family!"

And stooping to pick up the alms thrown him, he disappeared in the grass.

The worthy lord looked from right to left and called as loudly as he could. But there was no answer! The wind blew; the morning mist faded away.

He ascribed this vision to the weariness of his brain from having slept too little. "If I mention it, they will laugh at me," he said to himself. But the grandeur that was prophesied for his son dazzled him, although the promise was not clear, and he even doubted that he had heard it.

**T**HE couple kept their secrets hidden from each other. But both dearly loved the child; and thinking of him as one marked of God, they were very careful of his person. His cradle was lined with the finest down; a lamp shaped like a dove burned above it always. Three nurses rocked him night and day, and, lightly

wrapped in his swaddling-clothes, with his rosy face and blue eyes, in his brocade mantle and cap laden with pearls, he looked like a little Jesus. His teeth grew without causing him a single tear.

When he reached seven years his mother taught him to sing. To make him courageous, his father set him upon a great horse. The child smiled with joy and soon knew everything concerning war-horses.

A very ancient and learned monk instructed him in Holy Writ, the Arabic numeration, the Latin letters, and how to make tiny pictures on vellum. They worked together at the top of a tower, away from all noise.

When the lesson was at an end, they would go down into the garden, where, walking slowly along, they studied the flowers.

Sometimes they saw, passing through the valley, a line of beasts of burden, driven by a man on foot dressed after the Eastern fashion. The lord of the estate, recognizing him as a merchant, would send a servant to him. The stranger, taking confidence, would turn aside from his road, and, being welcomed into the castle hall, would take from his chest pieces of silk and velvet, goldsmithry, aromatic herbs and strange things of uses unknown in those parts; and, at last, the good man would go his way, unmolested, and with a handsome profit. At other times a company of pilgrims would knock at the gate. Their rain-soaked garments would be dried before the fire; and when their hunger was satisfied, they would tell of their travels; the wanderings of the ships over the foam-flecked sea, the journeys on foot through burning sands, the ferocity of the pagans, the caverns of Syria, the Manger and the Sepulcher. Then they would present the young heir with shells from their elorks.

Often the lord of the manor feasted his former comrades in arms. Over

the drinks they recalled their battles, the assaults on strongholds, with the crashing of the machines and the shocking wounds. Julian, who listened to them, would cry aloud in exultation; then his father felt sure that one day he would be a conqueror. But in the evening, at the close of the Angelus, when he passed between the rows of poor who bent their heads before him, he would take alms from his purse so modestly and with so noble an air, that his mother was sure he was destined to be an archbishop in due time.

His seat in the chapel was between his parents; and however long the services might last, he remained kneeling on his prie-dieu, his cap on the floor and his hands clasped.

One day, during mass, he saw, as he raised his head, a little white mouse coming out from a hole in the wall. It ran along to the first step of the altar, and after turning twice or thrice to right and left, fled whence it came. On the next Sunday, the thought that he might see it again disturbed him. It returned; and each Sunday he awaited it, was annoyed by it, and at last was seized with such a hatred for it that he determined to rid himself of it.

Having closed the door and strewn the crumbs of a cake on the steps, he placed himself in front of the hole with a stick in his hand.

After a very long time a pink nose appeared, followed by the whole mouse. He struck a light blow and stood thunderstruck before the little body, which was so still. A drop of blood stained the flagstone. He wiped it quickly away with his sleeve, threw the mouse out, and never said a word about it to anybody.

All kinds of little birds picked at the seeds in the garden. It occurred to him to put peas in a hollow reed. When he heard chirping in a tree, he would cautiously draw near, raise his tube, and puffing out his cheeks, blow

the peas at the young birds. When the little creatures would rain down on his shoulders in numbers he could not help laughing, happy in his mischievousness.

One morning, as he was returning across the curtain, he saw on the crest of the rampart a fat pigeon pluming himself in the sun. Julian stopped to look at him; there was a breach in the wall at that spot, and a piece of stone lay ready to his hand. He raised his arm, and the stone struck the bird, which fell from the rock into the moat.

He sprang to the bottom of the moat, tearing himself in the underbrush, searching everywhere, more eager than a young dog.

The pigeon, with broken wings, fluttered in the branches of a privet.

Its persistence in living irritated the child. He set about strangling it; and the bird's writhings caused his heart to beat fast, filling it with a savage and overpowering delight. At the last struggle the boy felt that his senses were leaving him.

That night, during supper, his father declared that at his age he should learn how to hunt; and he went to fetch an old book of manuscript, containing, in the form of questions and answers, all the art of the hunting-field. In it a teacher explained to an imaginary pupil how to train dogs, tame falcons, set snares: how the stag might be recognized by his droppings, the fox and wolf by their footprints; and the proper way to discover their tracks, how to start them, where their lairs are usually to be found, what winds are the most favorable; with a list of the cries and the rules of the quarry.

When Julian could recite all these things by heart, his father gave him a pack of dogs.

There were twenty-four savage greyhounds, swifter than gazelles, but not to be relied on in the matter of temper; then seventeen couples of

Breton dogs, red, with white spots, absolutely faithful, strong-chested, and great howlers. For attacking the wild boar, and for dangerous redoubtings, there were forty boar-hounds, hairy as bears. Mastiffs from Tartary, almost as tall as donkeys, flame-colored, with broad backs and straight legs, were to be used for the chase of the wild bull. The black coats of the spaniels gleamed like satin; the yelping of the talbots equaled the singing of the beagles. In an enclosure by themselves, pulling at their chains, and rolling their eyes, growled eight alan dogs, formidable beasts, that leaped at the throats of horsemen, and had no fear of lions.

All ate wheaten bread, drank from stone troughs, and answered to high-sounding names.

The falconry, perhaps, surpassed the pack; the master, by expending much money, had obtained tercellets from the Caucasus, sakers from Babylon, gerfalcons from Germany, and peregrines, captured on the cliffs of distant lands, by the shores of the frozen seas. They lived in a thatched-covered shed, and, chained to the perch in order of height, they had before them a heap of turf on which from time to time they were allowed to take exercise.

Purse-nets, hooks, caltrops, and all kinds of snares were got ready.

Often they took into the country oysel dogs, who would point almost immediately. Then huntsmen, creeping forward step by step, cautiously stretched over their motionless bodies an enormous net. A word of command caused the dogs to bark; quail flew up; and the ladies of the neighborhood, invited to the sport with their husbands, children, and servants—would pounce upon them, and easily capture them.

At other times, the hares would be started by the beating of a drum; foxes fell into ditches; or a spring-trap, being released, would catch a wolf by the foot.

But Julian despised such unsportsmanlike artifices; he preferred to hunt, with his horse and his falcon, far from the crowd. The bird was almost always a large snow-white Scythian tartaret. His leather hood was surmounted by a plume, gold bells quivered on his blue feet, and he stood erect on his master's arm as they galloped on horseback across the fields. Julian, untying his jesses, would suddenly let him fly; the bold creature would rise straight in the air like an arrow; and one might see two dots of unequal size whirl about, come together, then disappear in the azure heights. Then the falcon would descend, rending some bird, and take his place on his master's gauntlet, with quivering wings.

Thus Julian hunted the heron, the kite, the crow, and the vulture.

He loved to sound the hunting-horn, and follow his dogs as they ran along the slopes of the hills, leaped the brooks, and ascended toward the woods; and when the stag began to groan beneath their teeth, he would quickly kill him, and then gloat over the fury of the mastiffs as they devoured the pieces.

On foggy days, he hid himself in the marshes, to watch for geese, otters, and wild duck.

Three equerries awaited him at daybreak at the foot of the steps; and the old monk, leaning from his round window, would try in vain to call him back; Julian would not return. He cared not for the burning sun, the rain, or the tempest; he drank spring-water from his hand, ate wild berries as he rode, rested beneath an oak if he were fatigued, and returned in the middle of the night, covered with blood and mire, with thorns in his hair, and reeking of the odor of wild beasts. He was becoming like them. When his mother embraced him, he received her affection coldly, seeming to muse upon profound things.

He killed bears with a knife, bulls with an ax, boars with a spear; and one time, having nothing but a stick, defended himself against wolves which were devouring dead bodies at the foot of a gibbet.

ONE winter morning, he left home before dawn, well fitted out, with a crossbow over his shoulder and a quiver of arrows at his saddle-bow.

His Danish jennet, followed by two beagles, could be heard evenly galloping along. Icicles hung from his cloak; a strong wind was blowing. In one direction the horizon began to grow light; and in the white glow of the morning he saw some rabbits leaping about at the mouths of their warrens. The two dogs rushed upon them, and in a moment rapidly broke their backs.

Soon he came to a wood. A heathcock, benumbed by the cold, was hanging, with its head under its wing, at the end of a branch. Julian, with a backward blow of his sword, cut off its two claws, and went his way without stopping to pick it up.

Three hours later he found himself on the peak of a mountain so high that the sky appeared almost black. Right in front of him a cliff sloped down like a long wall, overhanging an abyss; and on the extreme edge two wild deer were standing. As he had not his arrows (for his horse had remained behind), he determined to climb down to them; with bare feet and doubled-up back, he at last reached the first of the bucks, and buried a dagger in his side. The other animal, terror-stricken, leaped into the abyss. Julian, rushing forward to strike him, slipped, falling upon the body of the first one, his face over the precipice and his arms stretched out.

Having descended again into the plain, he followed a river bordered by willows. Cranes flying low passed over his head from time to time. Ju-

lian killed them with his whip, and never missed one.

Meanwhile the frost had melted, bands of vapor were floating in the air, and the sun appeared. Gleaming in the distance he saw a stagnant lake, which looked like lead. In the middle of the lake was a beast which Julian did not recognize, a beaver with a black muzzle. Despite the distance, an arrow brought him down; and Julian was disappointed because he could not carry away the skin.

Then he made his way along an avenue of tall trees, whose tops formed a sort of triumphal arch, at the entrance to a forest. A kid bounded out of the thicket, a deer appeared at a cross-road, a badger came out of his hole, a peacock spread his tail on the grass; and when he had slain them all, other kids appeared, other deer, other badgers, other peacocks, and blackbirds, jays, polecats, porcupines, lynxes, an endless multitude of beasts, increasing in number every moment. They walked about his feet, trembling, with glances full of meekness and appeal. But Julian did not weary of killing—as he stretched his crossbow, unsheathed his sword, thrust with his cutlas, each in turn—he had no thought for anything else. He knew he had been hunting in some region or other, for an indefinite time, simply by reason of his own existence, doing everything with the ease that one experiences in a dream. Suddenly an extraordinary spectacle attracted his attention. Stags filled a valley beneath, which was shaped like a circus; they crowded together, close to one another, warming one another with their breaths, which rose like smoke in the mist.

The anticipation of such carnage suffocated him with joy for several minutes. Then he dismounted, turned back his sleeves, and began to fire. At the whistling of the first arrow, all the stags turned their heads

together. They huddled in a mass; plaintive voices arose, and there was great agitation in the herd.

The slope of the valley was too steep for them to cross. They ran about in the enclosure, trying to escape. Julian continued aiming and firing; and the arrows fell as fast as the drops of a shower of rain. The stags, driven frantic, fought with one another; and their bodies with their mingling antlers made a huge mound, which tumbled to pieces as they changed their position.

At last they were all dead, stretched on the sand, foaming at the nostrils, entrails protruding, and the heaving of their bellies subsiding by degrees. Then everything was still.

Night drew near; and behind the forest, through the spaces between the branches, the sky was as red as a sheet of blood.

Julian leaned against a tree. He gazed with staring eyes at the extent of the slaughter, unable to understand how he had been able to accomplish it.

On the other side of the valley, at the edge of the forest, stood a stag, a doe, and her fawn.

The stag, which was black and unusually tall, bore sixteen antlers and had a white beard. The doe, as light of color as dead leaves, was nibbling the grass; and the spotted fawn, dragging along beside her, tugged at her teats.

Once more the crossbow twanged. The fawn dropped instantly. Thereupon its mother, looking up at the sky, brayed in a deep, heartrending, almost human voice. Julian, exasperated, stretched her on the ground with an arrow sunk fair in the chest.

The huge stag caught sight of him, and gave a leap. Julian discharged his last arrow at him; it struck him in the forehead and remained planted there.

The great stag seemed not to feel it; leaping over the dead bodies, he came steadily forward, seemed about



to leap upon him and rip him open; and Julian retreated in terror. The monstrous beast stopped, and with flaming eyes, as solemn as a patriarch and a judge, repeated three times, while a bell tolled in the distance:

"Accursed! accursed! accursed! Some day, savage soul, thou shalt murder thy father and thy mother!"

Bending his knees, and slowly closing his eyes, he died.

**J**ULIAN was dazed, then overwhelmed by sudden weariness. A feeling of immense disgust and sadness swept over him. With his head in his hands he wept for a long time.

His horse had wandered away; his dogs had abandoned him; the solitude which enveloped him seemed to threaten unknown perils. Impelled by terror, he bent his steps across the country, chose a path at random, and found himself almost immediately at the gate of the castle.

That night he could not sleep. Beneath the flickering light of the hanging lamps, he saw always a vision of the great black stag. Its prophecy haunted him; he struggled against it. "No! no! no! I can not kill them!" Then he thought: "But if I should desire to?" and he feared that the devil might implant the desire within him.

For three months, his anxious mother prayed at his bedside in agony, and his father, groaning bitterly, paced the corridor from morning till night. He summoned the most famous physicians, who ordered quantities of medicine. Julian's disease, they said, was caused by a baleful wind or a desire for love. But the young man, to all their questions, only shook his head.

After a while his strength returned, and he was able to walk in the courtyard, the old monk and his father each holding an arm.

When he was fully recovered, he refused to hunt.

His father, thinking to please him, made him a present of a long Saracen sword. It was hung on the top of a pillar, in a tall stand of arms. To reach it, a ladder was necessary. One day Julian mounted it, but the sword was too heavy and slipped from his fingers, and in falling, grazed his father and cut his coat; Julian, thinking he had killed his father, fainted.

From that time he had a dread of weapons. The sight of a bare sword made him turn pale, and this weakness was a source of great distress to his family.

At last the old monk, in the name of God, of honor, and of his ancestors, ordered him to resume the sports of a gentleman.

The equerries amused themselves every day with the javelins. Julian very soon excelled at that sport. He sent his javelin into the necks of bottles, broke the teeth of the weathercocks, struck the nails in the doors at a hundred paces.

One summer evening, at the hour when dusk makes things indistinct, he was in the arbor in the garden, and fancied he spied at the far end two white wings fluttering at the top of the espalier. Never doubting but that it must be a stork, he hurled his javelin.

A heartrending scream rang out.

It was his mother, whose cap with its long streamers the javelin had nailed against the wall.

Julian fled from the castle and never returned there again.

## 2

**H**E CAST his lot in with a band of adventurers who happened to be passing.

He experienced what it was to suffer thirst, hunger, illness, and vermin. He became used to the noise of battle, and to the sight of the dying. The wind bronzed his skin. His limbs became hardened by the constant wearing of armor; and, as he

was strong, fearless, temperate, and shrewd, he soon obtained the command of a company.

At the outset of a battle he would inspire his soldiers with a mighty wave of his sword. With a knotted cord he would climb the walls of citadels at night, swayed by the storm, while sparks of Greek fire elung to his cuirass, and the boiling pitch and melted lead flowed in streams from the battlements. Sometimes a blow from a stone would break his shield. Bridges too heavily weighted with men gave way beneath him. With a twirl of his mace he rid himself of fourteen horsemen. Once in single combat he defied all those who came forward. More than twenty times it was thought he must be killed.

Thanks to the divine care, however, he always escaped; for he was kind to orphans, widows, and particularly to old men. When he saw one walking before him, he would call to him to show his face, as if he were afraid of killing him by mistake.

Fleeing slaves, rebellious peasants, all sorts of dauntless men assembled beneath his flag, and out of these he organized an army which increased in size and became so famous that his aid was often sought.

At different times he succored the Dauphin of France and the King of England, the Templars of Jerusalem, the Surena of the Parthians, the Negus of Abyssinia, and the Emperor of Calicut. He fought Scandinavians covered with fish scales, negroes armed with round shields of hippopotamus-hide and mounted upon little donkeys, gold-colored Indians, who brandished above their heads shining sabers. He conquered the troglodytes and the anthropophagi. He traversed regions so hot that the burning rays of the sun set fire to the hair; and other countries so cold that the arms fell away from the body; and yet other countries where there

was so much fog that one seemed to be surrounded by phantoms.

Republics in trouble sought his advice. At interviews of ambassadors he obtained un hoped-for concessions. If a monarch behaved unreasonably, he would suddenly arrive and reprove him. He set nations free. He rescued queens confined in towers. It was he, and no other, who killed the serpent of Milan and the dragon of Oberbirbach.

Now, the Emperor of Occitania, having triumphed over the Spanish Mussulmans, had taken as his concubine the sister of the Calif of Cordova; and he had by her a daughter whom he had brought up in the Christian belief. But the calif, on the pretense of desiring to be converted, came to pay him a visit, attended by a numerous escort; he massacred all his garrison, and confined him in an underground dungeon, where he treated him harshly in order that he might obtain his treasures from him.

Julian hastened to his relief, besieged the city, killed the calif, cut off his head, and hurled it like a cannonball over the fortifications. He then rescued the emperor from prison, and restored him to his throne in the presence of his whole court.

The emperor, wishing to reward such a service, offered him much money in baskets. Julian would not accept it. Thinking that he was not satisfied with the amount, he offered him three-fourths of his wealth; after a second refusal, he asked him to share his kingdom; Julian declined with thanks. The emperor was weeping with vexation, at a loss how to manifest his gratitude, when suddenly he struck his forehead and said a word in the ear of a courtier; the curtains of tapestry parted, and in a few moments a maiden entered.

Her great black eyes gleamed like soft lamps. A charming smile was on her lips. The curls of her hair were

entangled in the jewels of her partly open bodice; and beneath her transparent tunic could be partly seen the youthful beauty of her body. She was plump and small, with a slender waist.

Julian was dazzled with her beauty, especially as he had always led a chaste life.

So he took the emperor's daughter in marriage, receiving a castle which had been bequeathed to her by her mother; and the wedding festivities being at an end, he left with his bride, after many courtesies on both sides.

The castle was of white marble, built in the Moorish fashion, and situated on a promontory, in a forest of orange trees. Terraces of flowers descended to the shores of a bay, where pink shells crackled under the feet. Behind the castle stretched a forest shaped like a fan. The sky was always blue, and the trees were swayed by the sea-breeze and the wind blowing in from the mountains which closed the horizon in the distance.

The rooms were lighted as if by twilight through incrustations on the walls. Tall pillars, slender as reeds, upheld the arches of the cupolas, decorated with reliefs in imitation of the stalactites in caverns.

There were fountains in the rooms, mosaic pavements in the courtyard, festooned partitions, many dainty bits of architecture, and everywhere there was such absolute silence that the rustling of a scarf or the echo of a sigh could be distinctly heard.

**J**ULIAN no longer went to war. He rested, surrounded by a peaceful people; and each day his people passed before him with genuflexions and hand-kisses in the Eastern fashion.

Clad in gorgeous raiment, he would gaze out of a window, recalling his triumphs of former days; and he would have been glad to ride over the desert after gazelles and ostriches, to

lie hidden amid the reeds on the watch for leopards, to pass through forests filled with rhinoceroses, to climb to the peaks of the most inaccessible mountains in order to obtain a better aim at the eagles, and to fight the polar bears, on the ice-floes of the northern sea.

Sometimes in dreams he fancied himself like Adam in the midst of Paradise, surrounded by all kinds of animals; by merely stretching out his arms he could kill them; or else they passed before him, two by two, in order of size, from the elephants and lions to the ermines and wild ducks, as on the day when they entered Noah's Ark. From the darkness of the cavern he hurled unerring arrows at them; then others appeared; there was no end; and he would awake, glaring savagely about him.

Princes who were his friends invited him to hunt. He always refused, hoping, by that sort of penance, to avert his evil fate; for it seemed to him that upon the slaughter of animals the fate of his parents depended. But he suffered at not being able to see them, and his other longing became almost unendurable.

His wife, to divert him, sent for jugglers and dancing girls to come to the castle.

She traveled with him, in an open litter, through the country; at other times, reclining in a shallop, they watched the fishes gambol about in the water, which was as transparent as the air; often she threw flowers in his face; seated at his feet, she would play upon a mandolin with three strings; then, placing her clasped hands upon his shoulder, would inquire in a trembling voice: "What aileth thee, my dear lord?"

He would make no reply, or would burst into sobs; but at last, one day, he confessed his terrible fear.

She combated it, reasoning very forcibly: his father and mother were probably dead, or if ever he should

see them again, by what chance, to what purpose, would he perpetrate such an abomination? Therefore, his fear was causeless, and he ought to hunt again.

Julian smiled as he listened to her, but could not determine to gratify her wish.

ONE evening in the month of August, they were in their sleeping-apartment; she had retired and he was kneeling in prayer, when he heard the yelping of a fox, then footsteps under the window; looking out he thought he saw in the darkness what seemed to be the ghosts of animals. The temptation was too strong. He took down his quiver.

His wife expressed surprize.

"I do it to obey thee," he said; "at sunrise I shall return."

However, she dreaded some misadventure.

He reassured her, then went forth, wondering at the inconstancy of her moods.

Not long after his departure, a page appeared and announced that two strangers requested to see her ladyship at once, their lord being absent.

Soon an old man and an old woman entered the room, with bent figures, covered with dust, clad in coarse garments, and each leaning on a stick. Taking courage, they declared that they brought Julian news of his parents.

She leaned from her bed to hear them. But after glancing at each other, they asked her if he still loved them, and if he often spoke of them.

"Oh! yes!" she said.

Then they cried: "Well! We are his parents!" And they sat down, being wearied and fatigued.

But there was nothing to prove to the lady that her husband was their son. They convinced her by describing certain peculiar marks which he had on his body. She jumped out of

bed, called a page, and had food set before them.

Although they were very hungry, they could scarcely eat; and she furtively watched the trembling of their bony hands as they raised their goblets.

They asked a hundred questions about Julian. She answered them all, but was careful to say nothing about the ghastly idea that concerned them.

They told her how, when he failed to return home, they had left their castle; wandering about for several years, following vague clues, without losing hope. It had required so much money to pay toll, to cross the rivers, and to live in inns, so much for the privileges of princes and the exactions of thieves, that their purse was empty and they were forced to beg. But what did it matter, since they would soon embrace their son? They extolled his good fortune in having so sweet a wife, and did not tire of gazing upon her and kissing her.

The gorgeousness of the apartment surprized them greatly; and the old man, having examined the walls, asked why the arms of the Emperor of Occitania hung there.

She replied: "He is my father."

Thereupon he started, recalling the prediction of the Bohemian, while the old woman thought of the words of the hermit. Doubtless the glory of her son was but the dawn of eternal splendor; and both sat, open-mouthed, beneath the radiance of the candles which lighted the table.

They had both been very handsome in their youth. The mother still had all her hair, which surrounded her cheeks in smooth bands of snowy whiteness; and the father, with his tall figure and his long beard, resembled a carved image.

The wife urged them not to wait up for Julian. She herself placed them in her own bed, then closed the window. They fell asleep. The day-

light appeared dimly, and outside the window the little birds began to sing.

**I**N THE meantime Julian had crossed the park, and was striding through the forest with a nervous step, enjoying the elasticity of the turf and the softness of the air.

The shadows of the trees fell across the grass. Here and there the moonlight made white patches in the clearing, and he feared to go forward, thinking that he saw a sheet of water, or else the placid surface of the ponds blended with the color of the grass. Everywhere a profound silence reigned; none of the beasts were visible which a few minutes before had been prowling about the castle.

The forest grew more dense as he advanced, and the darkness became impenetrable. Puffs of hot wind reached him, full of enervating odors. He buried his feet in the dead leaves, and leaned against an oak to rest a moment.

Suddenly, from behind his back, sprang a blacker mass, a wild boar. Julian had not time to seize his bow, and he grieved over it as a dire calamity.

Then, having left the forest, he saw a wolf slinking along a hedge.

Julian discharged an arrow at him. The wolf stopped, turned his head to look at him, and went on. He trotted along, keeping always at the same distance, stopping from time to time, and, as soon as he was aimed at, continuing his flight.

In this way he crossed an interminable plain, then hills of sand, and found himself at last upon a plateau overlooking a vast extent of country. Flat stones were scattered about among ruined caverns. He stumbled over dead men's bones; and here and there, worm-eaten crosses stood desolate. Strange shapes moved about in the vague shadow of the tombs; hyenas appeared, wild-eyed and panting. They came toward him,

and smelt of him, grinning so that they showed their gums. He pulled out his sword, but they darted away at once in all directions, disappearing with their rapid, limping gallop, beneath a cloud of dust.

An hour later he encountered in a ravine a savage bull. With lowered horns, he was digging up the sand with his hoofs. Julian struck him with his lance between his dewlaps. The lance broke as if the animal had been of bronze; he closed his eyes, expecting death. When he opened them the bull had disappeared.

Thereupon he was overcome with shame. A mightier power controlled his strength; and he turned back into the forest, and set out for home. The woods were choked by creeping plants; and he was cutting at them with his sword, when a marten suddenly darted between his legs, a panther leaped over his shoulder, a serpent wound its way around an ash tree. Among its branches was a monstrous jackdaw that stared at Julian; and here and there appeared a vast number of great sparks, as if the firmament had caused all its stars to rain down into the forest. They were the eyes of animals: wildcats, squirrels, owls, parrots, and monkeys.

Julian discharged his arrows at them; but the feathered weapons rested on the leaves like white butterflies. Then he threw stones at them, but they fell to the ground without touching anything. He cursed, uttered imprecations, was suffocated with rage and tried to injure himself.

Then all the animals that he had hunted reappeared, enclosing him within a narrow circle. Some were seated on their haunches, others standing at their full height. He remained in the midst of them, rigid with terror, unable to move. With a supreme effort of will, he stepped forward; those which were perching in the trees opened their wings; those on

the ground moved their limbs; and all went with him.

The hyenas walked ahead of him, the wolf and the wild boar behind. The bull tossed his head at his right, and at his left the serpent glided through the grass; while the panther, arching his back, strode forward with long, velvety strides. Julian walked as slowly as possible in order not to irritate them; while emerging from the dense forest he saw porcupines, foxes, jackals, bears, and vipers.

He began to run; they ran with him. The serpent hissed, the putrid beasts foamed at the mouth. The wild boar touched his heels with his tusks; the wolf rubbed his snout against the palm of his hands. The monkeys pinched him, making horrible grimaces; the marten rolled across his feet. A bear struck off his hat with a blow of his paw, and the panther scornfully dropped an arrow that she was carrying in her mouth.

Their sly maneuvers were instinct with irony. While watching him from the corners of their eyes, they seemed to be planning a scheme of vengeance; and deafened as he was by the buzzing of the insects, beaten by the tails of the birds, suffocated by the breaths of the animals, he walked on with outstretched arms and closed eyes, like a blind man, not having even the strength to cry for mercy.

The crowing of a cock penetrated the air. Others answered; it was day-break; and he recognized above the orange trees the roof of his home.

Then, on the outskirts of a field, he saw some red partridges fluttering amid the stubble. He unbuckled his cloak and threw it over them like a net. When he raised it, he found but a single bird, and that had been dead a long while and was already decayed.

This disappointment exasperated him beyond control. His thirst for

carnage seized him once more; lacking beasts, he desired to slaughter men.

He climbed the three terraces, and burst open the door with a blow of his fist; but at the foot of the staircase the memory of his dear wife softened his heart. She was sleeping, no doubt, and he would go up and surprise her.

Having removed his sandals, he turned the handle softly and entered.

The stained glass of the window dimmed the pale light of dawn. Julian stumbled over clothes upon the floor; a little farther on, he collided with a table on which were dishes.

"Doubtless she has eaten," he said to himself; and he walked toward the bed, which was indistinct in the darkness at the end of the room. When he reached it, intending to kiss his wife, he leaned over the pillow upon which lay the two heads, one beside the other. Then he felt against his lips the touch of a man's beard.

He retreated, thinking that he had gone mad; but he returned to the bed, and with his fingers, feeling about, came in contact with hair which was very long. To convince himself of his mistake he slowly passed his hand over the pillow. But now he was sure it was a beard, and a man! A man in bed beside his wife!

With an outburst of ungovernable fury, he leaped upon them with his dagger, stamping and fuming, roaring like a wild beast. Then he ceased. The dead, pierced to the heart, had not even stirred. He listened attentively to the two almost uniform death-rattles, and as they grew fainter and fainter, another breath, in the distance, seemed to continue them. Indistinct at first, that plaintive, long-drawn voice approached nearer, grew louder, became heartrending, and, terrified beyond measure, he recognized the braying of the great black stag.

As he turned, he fancied that he saw in the doorway the ghost of his wife, with a light in her hand.

The tumult of the murder had awakened her. With one glance she realized everything, and, flying from the room in horror, dropped her torch.

He picked it up.

His father and mother were before him, stretched on their backs, each having a gaping wound in the breast; and their faces, majestic in their gentleness, seemed to guard some eternal secret. Splashes and pools of blood were on their white flesh, on the bedclothes, on the floor and on an ivory Christ hanging in the alcove. The scarlet reflection of the stained glass, just then lit up by the sun, showed up those red spots and scattered others throughout the room. Julian walked toward the corpses, saying to himself, striving to believe, that it was not possible, that he was mistaken, that one sometimes finds incomprehensible resemblances. Finally he stooped to look at the old man more closely, and he saw between his partly closed eyelids a dead eye, which scorched him like fire. Then he went to the other side of the bed, to the other body, whose white hair partly concealed the face. Julian passed his fingers under the hair, raised the head, and gazed at it, holding it at the end of his stiffened arm, while with the other hand he raised the torch. Drops of blood, soaking through the mattress, fell one by one to the floor.

At the close of the day he appeared before his wife, and in a changed voice he bade her, first of all, not to answer him, not to approach him, nor even to look at him, and to follow, under pain of damnation, all his orders, which were irrevocable.

The obsequies were to be carried out in accordance with the instructions which he had left in writing, on a prie-dieu in the death-chamber. He

gave to her his palace, his vassals, all his property, not even retaining the clothes that he was wearing, and his sandals, which she would find at the top of the stairs.

She had obeyed the will of God by making his crime possible, and therefore it was her duty to pray for his soul, since thenceforth he ceased to exist.

The old people were buried magnificently in the chapel of a monastery three days' journey from the castle. A monk with lowered hood followed the procession, far from all the rest, and no one dared to speak to him.

During the mass, he lay prostrate in the center of the doorway, with his arms stretched out like a crucifix, and his face in the dust.

After the burial, he was seen to take the road leading to the mountains. He turned his head to look back several times, and at last disappeared.

### 3

LEAVING the country, he begged his daily bread from place to place.

He held forth his hand to horsemen on the roads, humbly accosted the harvest-makers, or stood motionless by the gates of courtyards; and his face was so sad that no one ever refused him alms.

As a penance, he would tell his story to all; then they would fly from him, making the sign of the cross. In villages through which he had once passed, as soon as he was recognized, the people closed their doors, shrieked threats at him, and threw stones. The more charitable placed a bowl on the window-sill, then closed the shutters in order that they might not see him.

Shunned everywhere, he avoided mankind; and fed himself on roots, plants, tainted fruit, and shell-fish, which he found along the shore.

Sometimes at an angle of the coast

he perceived a medley of crowded roofs, with stone, weathercocks, bridges, towers, and a network of dark streets from which rose to his ears a ceaseless humming. The longing to have a share in the life of men tempted him to go down into the town. But the bestial expression of the faces, the tumult of the different trades, the indifference of men's speech froze his blood. On holidays, when the bells of the cathedral rang at dawn and roused the spirits of the people, he watched them come forth from their houses; the dances on the public squares, the fountains of beer at the street corners, the damask draperies in front of the abodes of princes; and when night had come, he would gaze through the windows at the long family tables where grandfathers held little children on their knees; then sobs suffocated him and he returned to the fields.

He contemplated with yearnings of love the colts playing in the grass, the birds in their nests, the insects on the flowers; at his approach one and all fled, concealing themselves in fright, or flew rapidly away.

He sought solitude. But the wind sounded in his ears like a death-rattle; the dew falling to the ground recalled to his mind other, heavier tears. The sun every evening suffused the clouds with blood, and every night, in his dreams, he relived his paricide.

He made himself a haircloth shirt, with iron spikes. He ascended on his knees every hill which had a chapel at the top. But that pitiless thought spoiled the splendor of tabernacles, and tortured him despite the agony of his penance.

He did not rebel against God, who had inflicted that deed upon him, and yet he was desperate at the thought that he had been capable of committing it.

He had such a horror of his own person that he plunged recklessly

into dangers. He saved paralytics from fire, children from deep ravines. But the abyss spurned him, the flames would have none of him.

Time did not allay his suffering. It became intolerable. He determined to die.

One day as he leaned over a lake to judge the depth of the water, he saw on the opposite side a fleshless old man, with a white beard, and of so piteous an aspect that it moved him to tears. The old man also wept. Without recognizing him, Julian remembered vaguely a face resembling his. He uttered a cry; it was his father; and from that day he ceased to think of killing himself.

Thus, bearing the burden of his memory, he traveled through many countries, and he reached a stream, which it was perilous to cross because of its violence and because of the large tract of miry ground along its banks. For many years no one had dared to attempt it.

An old boat, buried at the stern, raised its bow among the reeds. Julian, on examining it, discovered a pair of oars, and the idea came to him of dedicating his life to the service of others.

He began by constructing on the shore a sort of roadway making it possible to reach the stream; and he broke his nails moving huge stones, which he held against his breast, slipping in the mire, sinking in it, and nearly perishing more than once.

Then he repaired the boat with driftwood, and built himself a hovel with clay and trunks of trees.

When it became known that crossing was possible, travelers appeared. They called him from the other shore by waving flags, and Julian would row over. The boat was very heavy, and they overloaded it with all sorts of baggage and freight, to say nothing of the beasts of burden, which added to the confusion by their terrified plunging. He made no charge



for his labor; some gave him scraps of food which they took from their wallets, or worn-out clothes which they no longer wanted. Brutal men cursed him. Julian gently reproved them and they retorted with insults. He contented himself by blessing them.

A small table, a stool, a bed of dead leaves, and three clay cups constituted his furniture. Two holes in the wall served the purpose of windows. On one side arid plains stretched as far as the eye could see, with stagnant ponds here and there; and before his door rolled the greenish waves of the river. In the spring the damp earth gave forth an odor of corruption. Then a violent wind would raise eddies of dust, which entered everywhere, muddied the water, made the mouth gritty. A little later there were clouds of mosquitoes, whose buzzing and stinging continued day and night. Then came bitter frosts, which gave to everything the rigidity of stone, and aroused a frantic craving for meat.

During months Julian did not see a living soul. Often he closed his eyes, trying to recall his youthful days; and the courtyard of a castle would appear to him, with greyhounds on the porch, footmen in the armory, and beneath an arbor of vines, a fair-haired youth between an old man wrapped in furs and a lady with a huge cap; then of a sudden, the two corpses would appear before him. He would throw himself face downward on his bed, and exclaim, weeping: "Oh! my poor father! my poor mother!" And he would fall into a comatose state, in which the fearful visions continued.

ONE night, when he was asleep, he thought he heard someone call him. He listened intently and could hear only the moaning of the waves.

Presently the same voice repeated: "Julian!"

It came from the opposite shore, which seemed to him most strange, in view of the breadth of the river.

A third time came the call: "Julian!" And that loud voice sounded like the ring of a church bell.

Having lighted his lantern, he came out of the hut. A fierce tempest raged. The darkness was profound, here and there broken by the foamy tops of the surging waves.

After a moment's hesitation, Julian cast off the cable. Instantly the water became smooth, the boat glided across and reached the other bank, where a man was waiting.

He was wrapped in a tattered cloak, his face was like a mask of plaster, and his eyes gleamed redder than coals. When he raised the lantern to his face, Julian saw that it was covered with a hideous leprosy; and yet there was in his attitude a kingly majesty.

When he entered the boat, it sank deep into the water, borne down by his weight; a wave brought it to the surface again and Julian began to row.

At every stroke of the oars, the surf raised the bow. The water, blacker than ink, raced madly on both sides. It dug abysses, it reared mountains, and the frail bark rose upon them, then plunged down into the depths, where it whirled about, tossed to and fro by the tempest.

Julian bent his body, stretched his arms, and, bracing himself with his feet, threw himself back with a sudden wrench of his frame, in order to gain greater strength. The hail stung his hands, the rain poured down his back, the fierce gusts of wind took his breath away. He stopped, and immediately the boat was carried to leeward. But realizing that he had in hand a matter of importance, an order which must be obeyed, he bent to his oars once more, and the rattling

of the thole-pins mingled with the howling of the tempest.

The little lantern burned before him. At intervals birds flying by concealed it. But he could always see the eyes of the leper, who stood at the stern, motionless as a statue.

And the journey lasted a long, long time.

When they entered the hut, Julian closed the door, and the man fell on the stool. The sort of shroud which had covered him fell to his hips; and his shoulders, his breast, his thin arms, were covered by a multitude of scaly pustules. Immense wrinkles plowed his forehead. Like a skeleton, he had a hole in the place of his nose, and his bluish lips gave forth a breath as thick as mist, and nauseating.

"I am hungry!" he said.

Julian gave him all that he had, an old piece of pork and a crust of black bread.

After he had devoured these, the table, the plate, and the knife-hilt bore the same marks that covered his body.

Then he said: "I am thirsty!"

Julian went to fetch his pitcher, and as he took it up, there came from it an aroma which delighted his heart and filled his nostrils. It was wine! What a find! But the leper put out his hand, and emptied the pitcher at a draft.

Then he said: "I am cold!"

Julian, with his candle, lighted a bunch of dried heather in the middle of the cabin.

The leper drew near to warm himself; and cowering before it, he trembled in every limb, and sank to the floor; his eyes no longer gleamed, his ulcers began to burst, and in an almost inaudible voice, he murmured: "Thy bed!"

Julian gently helped him over to it, and stretched the sail of his boat to cover him.

The leper groaned, the corners of his mouth drooped and disclosed his teeth; his breast rose and fell with the quickening of his rattling breath, and his belly sank to his spine with every breath that he drew.

Presently he closed his eyes.

"My bones are like ice! Come and lay thyself beside me!"

And Julian, raising the sail, lay down upon the dead leaves, close beside him.

The leper turned his head.

"Undress thyself, so that I may have the warmth of thy body!"

Julian removed his clothes; then, as naked as the day he was born, he took his place again in the bed; and he felt against his flesh the skin of the leper, colder than a serpent and rough as a file.

He tried to hearten him; and the other replied, panting for breath: "Ah! I am dying! Come nearer, and warm me! Not with thy hands! no! with thy whole body!"

Julian stretched himself upon the leper, mouth to mouth, breast to breast.

Then the leper drew him close, and his eyes suddenly shone with the brilliancy of stars; his hair grew long like the rays of the sun; the breath of his nostrils was as the perfume of roses; a cloud of incense rose from the hearth, and the waves of the river sang. Meanwhile, an ecstasy, a superhuman joy descended like a flood into the soul of the enraptured Julian; and he whose arms were about him grew and grew in stature, until his head and his feet touched the opposite walls of the cabin. The roof disappeared, making visible the heavens; and Julian ascended toward the blue expanse, face to face with our Lord Jesus, who bore him upward to Heaven.

This is the story of Saint Julian the Hospitable, as it may be found written on the stained-glass windows of a church in my birthplace.