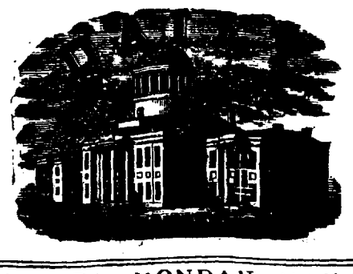
Patriot  Union.

VOL. 5.—NO. 226. HARRISBURG, PA., MONDAY, MAY 25, 1863. PRICE TWO CENTS.

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The Patriot & Union.

MONDAY MORNING, MAY 25, 1863.

THE BOCARME TRAGEDY.

BY MRS. WARD.

The awful interest created several years ago, in England, France and Belgium, by the trial of the Comte and Comtesse Bocarme for the murder of the Comtesses's ill-starred brother, Gustavo Fougnies, cannot be forgotten.

Within the last few weeks, Madame Bocarme has again been brought before the public, by an appeal of Monsieur Baugnies to the Civil Tribune of Tournay, on behalf of this woman's children, who, from the reckless extravagance of their mother, must, in default of such legal help, eventually be left penniless. "Ill-gotten, ill spent," says the old proverb, and, according to Monsieur Baugnies's showing, and some experience which I have to offer of my own, touching Madame Bocarme, the reader may judge how aptly she has illustrated the maxim.

Monsieur Baugnies declared that the "Comtesse had, by her habits of extravagance and luxury, ruined the estate of her husband; and that since she had inherited the property of her murdered brother, putting herself prominently forward, having carriages and valuable horses, extensive apartments, &c., and dissipating the money she had inherited so rapidly that she had raised by mortgage and otherwise, between October, 1851, and 1852, 84,000 francs on the property which came to her by her brother's death. With a view to preserve her children from ruin, Monsieur Baugnies had determined to apply for a civil interdiction, &c.

This suit was now instituted on account of the rumored marriage of the Comtesse with some one bold enough to mate with such a companion. It will be remembered, that by her evidence her husband was guillotined for the murder of his brother-in-law, of which murder she had been the aider and abettor, and, by her own showing, stimulated.

It was during the month of October, 1851, that I happened to be an inhabitant of the same house at Brussels with Madame Bocarme, and, although such propinquity was not of my own choosing, I could not help taking a certain interest in observing, as opportunity offered, the various points in the character of such a person. As notoriety, no matter how glaring, was evidently her passion, I felt no compunction in "taking notes," and since it is not improbable that she may again appear as the heroine of a dark romance, I do not hesitate to "*prent* them."

One morning, then, my landlady professed herself to be somewhat mystified by the visit of a *femme de chambre*, who came to hire the spare apartment of the house for a widow, whose name she hesitated to impart. Next day a hired carriage drove to the door, and there descended from it the "widow," and her female attendant. The "widow's" bonnet was of transparent material, placed far back on the head; bands of brown hair were widely parted off a bold forehead, and a pair of wild eyes flashed from under heavy lids; the nose was nondescript; the wide nostrils indicated scorn; the large mouth was sensual, the chin elevated with an air of vulgar pride, and there was a sneer upon the lips; the throat was long—and the arms were scarcely covered by the loose ruffled sleeves. In a word, the chief characteristic of this woman's *abord* was audacity. She swept into the passage, scanned its lofty altitude with affected disdain, and mounted the stairs in silence. The door of the sitting-room at her disposal was thrown open. The apartments were mere luxuriously, and even more comfortably furnished than those in Brussels lodging-houses generally are—but the "draperies did not please her;" "the sofa was not so soft as she desired;" "the street, though *comme il faut*, was *triste*;" in short, "all was very inferior to what she had been accustomed to in her *chateau*—" and "who were the other inhabitants of the house?"

"An English officer and his wife," was the landlady's reply.

Madame Bocarme turned down her lip.

She descended below; observed that she must send to her chateau for her *batteris de cuisine;* owned to a fancy for taking her lunch and breakfast in her kitchen—but as this is a Belgian fashion, it went for nothing—and proposed adding sundry elegancies to the apartments. She perambulated the whole house, and would have taken her choice of rooms, without reference to our convenience, had she been permitted; and I confess that when, subsequently, we learned who had stalked through our dwelling, I felt very much as if a dark angel had *swooped* down and overshadowed the place with its presence.

In a week her bargain was concluded, and her trunks arrived with no name on the address. "Liege" and "Cologne" indicated their route.

Soon after came an *avocat*, inquiring for Madame Visart.

"Madame Bocarme, you mean, I suppose," said the Belgian lady, with a mischievous smile, for she had discovered the name of her new lodger.

The trial of the Countess and her husband, filling a thick volume, is one of the most extraordinary in the annals of the *Causes Celebres*. It took place at Mons, in Belgium, in 1851, and thousands assembled to judge of the "judicial drama."

For a drama, a tragic one it was. There was a dead silence in the court on the opening of the first scene, as the president desired that "Lydie Faugnies"* should come forward.

"Lydie" appeared alone and unsupported in the doorway; her step was assured, her toilette carefully arranged—black satin (Maria Manning's favorite material) forming her robe—and on her head rested a small black crape bonnet, adorned with a wreath of white roses; her face was veiled.

Then was summoned Hippolite Visart de Bocarme. Husband and wife were desired to seat themselves—a gendarme placed himself between them.

Nothing but the lowered voice and fidgety movement of the well gloved hands with the folds of her embroidered handkerchief betrayed emotion on the part of the Comtesse. The Compte seemed stupified.

The charge against them was read; the names of the *hundred and one* witnesses! were next proclaimed. The examination of Lydie opened the trial.

One or two interrogatories between the president and the prisoner will aford a specimen of the manner in which she was permitted to prejudice the court against her unfortunate husband:

Question.—"What have been Visart de Bocarme's occupations since his marriage?"

Answer.—"He has spent eighteen or twenty thousand francs in experiments in agriculture, in bees, and ——." The end of the sentence is better omitted.

Question.—"He was then a *roue?*"

Answer.—"Yes; he has squandered much money," &c.

Then came questions about poisonous plants; and the wife told how she had been "*made*, by dint of blows and threats," to open a correspondence with a chemist at Ghent, under a false name. Next, she dropped insinuations of quarrels between the old Comte Bocarme and his son, of the sorrowful interpositions by the mother, and finally admitted the share she had had—involuntary she protested—in preparing the nicotine to "settle Gustave," her lame brother.

For months before the murder were the wretched pair engaged in concocting the fatal draught, taking it in turns to rise at night and visit the cauldron in which the potion was transmuting from tobacco to nicotina. The woman had to pass her sleeping children on her fiendish errand, which she accomplished with inconceivable coolness and deliberation, watching the temperature of the contents of the brazen vessel by means of a thermometer.

Now and then a laugh disturbed the evidence—laughter elicited by allusion to poisoned cats and ducks on which Comte Bocarme had experimented for the edification of his wife, before "settling Gustave."

The unfortunate Gustave's heritage of a few thousand francs had long excited the greedy cupidity of the Bocarmes. The comtesse had received her fortune under the will of her father, a retired grocer, but, like all unprincipled and selfish people, the false pride of her husband and herself had led them to expenses beyond their means.

The patrimony of this poor cripple being the thing they coveted, husband and wife went hand-in-hand in bringing their dark design to an issue. As the details were unfolded at the trial, it must have become clear to the audience, that Madame Bocarme was not a person to be swayed by any will but her own. Lady Macbeth might as well attempt to make her audience believe that she was the victim of her husband's ambition, as this comtesse persuade common sense to accept her excuses on this plan. It was shown that she had entered with zeal into the experiments on poisoned animals; had listened with horrid interest to the report made by the medical men, whom the comte had questioned respecting Gustave's health; and that, ere she received her brother at the table, where he was invited to be poisoned, she had made the necessary arrangements for getting her governess and servants out of the house. Then the coachman was sent one way, the children and their nurses another, and the train being made, Madame made her toilette for dinner.

Business had been made the excuse for the invitation. The brother and sister had been at issue for months on the subject of Gustave's intended marriage with a Madomiselle Dudzele, for his chance of an early death would avail the Bocarmes nothing if once married; and, although Madame Bocarme had essayed to defame Mademoiselle Dudzele, Gustave was resolved to espouse her, and by his declaration sealed his doom.

On the 20th of November the victim came to breakfast, and passed the day at the Chateau Bitremont. He sat part of the morning with his sister, wandered into the garden, and watched the children at play, and "seemed gay and happy." One of his little nieces wove him a garland of autumnal flowers!—it was found after the murder, "crushed and faded!" And thus the day wore on till dinner time.

"Infirm of purpose," the wretched comte had been up before dawn, wandering about the old chateau, while Madame was sleeping. She rose at her usual hour, nine o'clock.

After dinner, the three relatives drew round the stove, and "sat chatting amicably together!" When the gloom of an autumn twilight settled on the room, Emerance, the maid, proposed to bring in the lamp, as usual, but was forbidden. It seems the exact moment for the deed had never been fixed on, but the comtesse had set every wheel in motion, and now the sword of fate hung by a slender hair over the victim's head.

Gustave rose to go; the comte went out to order the young man's cabriolet; the coachman was absent, but, contrary to calculation, soon returned. While the comte was in the stable, Madame Bocarme gave her brother a document to read, and he hobbled across the room to the stove, having in vain asked for lights. At this moment the comte entered.

In this part of the evidence the comtessee committed herself by a series of contradictions. The facts at length elicited were, that "as the comte returned from the stables, she went to order lights, and that as she was leaving the room, she heard a fall, and the snapping of a stick—a crutch breaking—and heard Gustave say ——." Alas! almost the last word that passed the wretched victim's lips was an oath! She heard the cry for mercy too—"Pardon, Hippolite, pardon!" But she hurried out of the room as soon as she saw her brother down, with her husband's grasp upon him! There was one more cry of "Oh! save me!"

It rang through the house in its death agony. The servants rushed from the kichen and upper rooms, and saw their mistress stealing along the passage like an evil spirit. Madame Bocarme tried to evade them, but one of them swore to recognizing "the rustle of the satin robe," and exclaimed, "Ah, there is madame!"

By this time the cries in the dining room had become but stifled moans, and, ere long, all was nearly over with Gustave.

Justin, one of the servants, rushed up to the nursery, and told her fears to Emerance. "You are young and fearful," said Emerance, and left the room to fetch the children's supper, which Justine had forgotten in her alarm.

A frightful vision waylaid Emerance. At the door of his chamber stood the comte, pale as death, with great drops of perspiration and gouts of blood pouring down his face, and a wound upon his brow; his trembling hands refused to do their office—he could not open the door—and his knees trembled under him.

Emerance passed on, and met her mistress with a bowl of water in her hand. Madame Bocarme ordered the maid back to the nursery, and began speaking to her husband in a low voice. In five minutes Madame Bocarme followed her servant to the nursery, and sitting calmly down took one of her innocent children in her arms. Her presence of mind never deserted her for a moment. On hearing her husband's agitated voice, she put the child down and hurried to him.

How different was it with the miserable comte! He had given Giles, the coachman, the most incoherent orders about the cabriolet, had sluiced the face of the corpse with vinegar, and was now wandering about the house, asking wildly for "Help for Gustave, who was ill?"

Emerance accompanied her master into the dining-room; Madame Bocarme followed.—The latter had the grace to shrink, or pretend to shrink back on the threshold of the fatal scene. "Heaven!" exclaimed this blasphemer, "what is the matter with my brother?"

The comte was wiping away the vinegar from the dead man's face. The idea of Gustave being in a fit was kept up by the comte. The humane waiting-woman chafed the cold palms—a muscular movement led her to fancy life was returning.

"Yes, yes!" cried Comte Bocarme. "go on, Emerance. See, he comes to himself." So saying, he, as well as the Comtesse, quitted the room.

Emerance must have had good courage.—Left alone with the body, she held the candle over it, and saw the stamp of death at once upon the distorted features. Comte Bocarme, restless and wavering, returned just as she had finished her examination.

"He is quite dead," said Emerance.

"What shall we do with the body?" cried the Comte.

They sent for Giles the coachman, who testified to having found his master pale and wan, and trembling. He could only stammer out, "Take the corpse to Emerance's room."

The guilty pair, leaving the murdered man to the care of the servants, retired to their apartment, and Madame Bocarme, who had never been on happy terms with her husband, now addressed him with the most endearing epithets.

"The Comte," said the witness, "was deadly sick during the night, and madame had a cup of cocoa made, which she took at midnight!"

The bold, bad woman's presence of mind remained unshaken: between her husbend's fits of retching, she sipped her cocoa, and issued her orders "to have the corpse washed with vinegar," and "to put on it a coarse shirt. Be sure," said she to Emerance, "not to take a fine one."

She burnt some of the victim's clothes, too, and his crutches, saying that she could not bear to see them; and, so soon as Monsieur Bocarme revived, took him into the library, and burnt such letters as she thought might commit them. The books of chemistry, too, she destroyed; hid the crucible and remnant of tobacco, and, in the course of the morning, "desired her maid to go and tell those coquines, (rogues) Madame and Mademoiselle Dudzele, that Gustavus was dead!"

She next tried to school the servants as to the testimony they would be called on to give; then the doctor was sent for, who at once pronounced the case to be that of poison; and no sooner were the wretched pair accused of the murder than the Comptesse turned upon her miserable partner. Her brother despatched, she resolved on acquiring his property by offering her evidence and thus condemning her weak-minded husband to death.

The evidence of the trial proved the guilt of both, and the spectators breathlessly awaited the decision of the jury.

The scene will never be forgotten by those who witnessed it. The day had closed in, the Court blazed with gas, and, ranged along the white and lofty walls were the officers of the Court, the gendarmes and the Judge in his scarlet robe, the most conspicuous figure of all; but the eyes of the crowd were fixed on the two beings who were to inscribe, in bloody characters, on the list of criminals an ancient name.

A bell rang; silence fell upon the court.

"Visart Bocarme," said the President.

Hope shone on the Comtesse; many women burst into tears.

"Lydie Fougnies," was the next called.

Not the least emotion was visible on her face. "This stoicism," says the record, "surprised and afflicted the audience."

The fatal "yes" of the jury, failed to shake the calm of the comte's features; but at the "no," which decided the safety of his wife, an expression of happiness gleamed across them, and he cast a glance of unutterable tenderness towards the author of his ruin.

Meanwhile she had sat motionless; not a gesture betrayed anxiety.

"I declare," said the president, "that the accused, by his Emerance, is acquitted of the charge brought against her—Lydia Fougnies"—a dead pause—"you may descend."

And Madame Bocarme did descend, and left the court attended by the directors of the prison.

As she passed out, her husband cast another look of tenderness upon her. "His eye sought hers," but there was no responsive glance; she never even turned towards him.

He had been humanely placed so that she should not pass him by.

Then he was condemned to die!

Count Bocarme appealed, but King Leopold refused to listen. The unhappy man's position was aggravated by suspense, caused by his sovereign's absence from Belgium. His majesty, it will be remembered, was visiting his royal niece during the brilliant and eventful season of 1851.

It was said that an extreme repugnance to execute a woman, had led to the acquittal of Madame Bocarme; but her husband, knowing her guilt, clung to the hope of some amelioration of his own punishment; besides he was a noble and strong interest was used in his favor.

But whatever may have been pleaded, the king was inflexible; the fate of the comtesse had been decided by the law, and the decree went forth that the comte was to pay the penalty for both. King Leopold signed the death-warrant, and the Bishop of Cincinnati, an American prelate, who happened to be at Mons when the document arrived, hastened to the prison to receive the "penitent's confession."

Penitent? Alas! the miserable comte had received the fatal news with rage and despair. No reply to his appeal arriving for some time, he had permitted himself to rest on hope, and and on the eve of the intelligence, passed many hours in calm repose. On the 18th of September, the Procureur-du-Rio accompanied the director of the prison of Mons to the comte's cell, to announce the terrible order for the morrow. The prisoner must have exhibited some signs of a violent disposition during his incarceration; for, before imparting the fatal news, the director signed to the keeper of the cell to invest him with the straight waistcoat. The fearful truth struck the wretched man at once. He burst forth with angry remonstrances and frenzied protestations of innocence, crying aloud with almost incoherent vehemence—"It was not I!—it was not I!—what have I done?—oh, what have I done? No, no, not I!—not I!—but—but—but—it was—it was my wife!"

And then he dwelt upon the pardons he stowed upon many criminals more guilty than he.

In this hour of agony and dismay, the calm and dignified Abbe Descamp, robed in his canonicals, entered the cell. He implored the comte to submit to the laws of his country with resignaton, and succeeded in leading him to gentler thoughts. The wretched creature complained bitterly, however, of the neglect of his freinds. His mother had even passed through Mons on her way to Milan, without seeing him, while his wife had been living at the Hotel de l'Atgle d'Or, and doubtless some busy fiend had told him that on the day after her liberation and his condemnation she had joined in the excitement of the fete of the patron of Mons, St. Wandru. But he had seen her for the last time when she had passed free from the judicial court—free in body, but not in mind!

Has she yet bent under the heavy load of guilt with which she had cumbered herself?

During that dismal day, Comte Bocarme "confessed" several times to the Bishop of Cincinnati, but still clung to the notion that the extreme sentence of the law would not be carried into effect. At times his bitter feelings recurred, and despite his respect or apparent respect for the bishop and dean, he would glare upon the priests that visited him, with a scowl of rage and defiance.

He must have had some woful secrets to disclose, for, ere he made his confession to the Bishop of Cincinnati, he insisted on the Dean of Mons keeping the gaolers apart lest they should overhear him.

At length he was told that the scaffold had been prepared, and he then endeavored to bribe the goalers with a promise of thirty thousand francs, provided they would assist him to escape. Poor wretch! they knew he could never pay them, but they got their credit for devotion to their duty. *

The weary hours passed on, varied by recriminations, prayers, bribes and tears. The compte scarcely slept, and at dawn of day rose to assist at the mass offered up by the bishop; he partook of the sacrament with the Sisters of Charity who attended the prison and then heard low mass.

While this last was going on, a lady entered the porch of the chapel, and the prisoner paused in his devotions to ask if the lady was his wife.

Alas, no! Lydie had no sympathy for her victim, for so we think he may with some justice be called.

These religious ceremonies over, the last scene of the dark drama rose. The officers of the law entered; the Comte shuddered and asked for a moment's leisure. He then expressed his regret for his past vehemence, and submitted quietly to the operation of the "condemned toilet," frequently imploring his assistants to see that everything should be done to prevent unnecessary delay.

A throng lined the streets of the old city as the funeral cortege proceeded to the Grande Place, the principal square of all Belgian towns. "But," says the document from which I take this account, "to the credit of the Montois be it spoken, three fourths of the spectators were strangers; and few laborers laid aside the work of the day to gaze on the disgusting spectacle."

The miserable comte had earnestly thanked all officials, ecclesiastical, civil and military, ere quitting the prison forever, for the kindness he had received during his incarceration; and thus having, as he hoped, made his peace with God and man, he embraced the bishop and the dean, mounted the scaffold with a steady step and resolute countenance, and, unsupported, stood for an instant to take one parting glance upon the world he was about to leave—his eye passing rapidly from the upturned faces before him to the glittering axe which hung above.

They had taken off his tartan dressing-gown, and his bared shoulders bespoke that the hour of doom had come.

It was a bright morning; not a sound stirred the air; the faces were all fixed on one point; the cross was lifted to the lips of the wretched man; the bishop and dean prostrated themselves and prayed aloud for mercy; a sharp noise broke the death like silence; the multitude uttered, as with one voice, a cry of terror; and in a deluge of blood the head of the Comte Bocarme fell into the chasm prepared to receive it.

Then the *grand bourdon* clanged out.†

We think the closing paragraph of the report deeply affecting: "The body of Comte Bocarme not having been claimed by any of his family, has been interred in the cemetery."

So perished the victim of an evil education, and an ill-suited marriage.

Madame Bocarme had the grace to quit her apartments at the Hotel de l'Aigle d'Or in the Grand Place, before the hearse was driven for her husband. From Belgium she retired to a temporary residence on the Rhine, and after passing three months *incognito*, reappeared in Brussels, in a jaunty bonnet and flaunting ruffles!

There is something fearfully interesting in watching the phases through which the mind of such a woman passes in the daily walks of life; and although I did not seek opportunities of meeting Madame Bocarme during our *sejour* under the same roof, there were certain signs and evidences of her humor open to all occupants of our mutual abode.

The first time I saw her was through an open door. A lamp on a table near illuminated her features, and she was smiling on her boy, the little Gonzales, a manly young rebel, who pinched the maids, and even locked them up when he desired to escape from their control.

She had a taste for flowers, and filled the landing-place with fuschias and roses, heliotropes and geraniums; but when "possessed," as we used to term it, the continued peal of her bell, her shrill angry call for her maid, and her mode of slamming the door—that everlasting resource and safety-valve for violent women—announced her mood to her neighbors.

She went to mass daily, attended by her maid, and took an airing every fine afternoon in an open carriage driven by Giles. The two little girls would sometimes cry out, "Giles, Giles!" from the open windows, and by degrees a crowd would gather round to see the exit of the notorious comtesse, whose residence in Brussels soon became well known—a fact which was a serious annoyance to me, since I was occasionally mistaken for her, and one day, if report spoke truth, narrowly escaped being stoned!

Madame Bocarme evidently exulted in the notoriety she had so terribly obtained; ascended the steps of her open carriage leisurely, with an insolent stare at the mob; and would sometimes send for cushions or shawls, as though she desired to give the starers time to gaze, and then drive off with a sneer.

I used to think it fearful at hush of midnight to hear the voice of the comtesse repeating her aves and litanies aloud, her maid joining in from time to time. This over the waiting woman withdrew, and the rush-light, regularly prepared, told of dread, of gloom, and loneliness in those hours when the pulses of the world are still.

During Madame Bocarme's absence from Brussels for some years, I had an opportunity of seeing her apartments, which my landlady was anxious I should recommend to some new applicant. The sitting room was litered with working and writing materials;‡ the bed remained as its tenant had left it; the pillow-case was richly embroidered with the cypher L. B., and the coronet above; and at the side of the bed hung a little shrine, with its tiny fountain of holy water, and the image of the Virgin! It was doubtless before this shrine that the comtesse repeated her aves and litanies which sounded so distinctly through the house at midnight. Her rosary lay near her looking-glass.

Reports were circulated of property left her by an Englishman who had died at Paris, and a crowd of lawyers one day filled Madame Bocarme's drawing room. These must have been the men sent for to arrange the mortgage affair, of which Mons. Baugnies complains, and it is natural to suppose that the tale of the Englishman's will was an invention of the intriguing woman. She had even then a lover in her toils; and her conduct soon became so insolent and reckless that had she not resolved on quitting the house we must have done so.

She hired the apartments formerly occupied by the Spanish Ambassador. On the morning of her departure, as the carriage drove up, the throng gathered to see her issue from the doorway. As she came out, she cast her usual look of defiance around, and, having seated herself, with her two little girls, sent her maid back for something which had probably been left in the house on purpose. On the re-appearance of the servant, some words were whispered to her by Madame Bocarme, upon which the maid, addressing Giles in French, and in a tone that all might hear, desired him "not to hurry, as Madame would be happy to remain as long as the crowd desired to stare at her."

"Drive on, Giles!" exclaimed the landlady, a demi-Italian, with a flashing eye, "if your mistress chooses to be stoned, I don't wish to have my windows broken."

The landlady shut the door in haste, and when evening fell, made the following arrangements in the sitting-room vacated by the comtesse:

In the centre of the apartment she placed a table; on this she laid a fair linen napkin, and on the napkin put a small bronze crucifix, with a lighted taper on either side of it. After these preparations, she threw open the doors and windows, "in order," as she told me, "that the house might be exorcised of the evil spirit."

A strong moral may be drawn from the story of the life of the Comtesse Bocarme, the leading feature of whose character, from her childhood, was ambition. Her play-fellows, in ridicule of the airs she assumed, nick-named her "the little duchess;" and on her return from the Convent of St. Andre, at Tournay, where she had been educated, she passed her time in reading the novels of George Sand and other authors whose productions suited her sensual tastes and indolent habits.

Lydie was superstitious. She dreamed one night that she was a comtesse, and it has been said that she consulted a fortune-teller, who showed her a tall, fair young man, of ancient and noble family, on the sea, and homeward bound.

This was Compte Hippolite Visart de Bocarme, on his way from Sava, where his father had long lived as "Inspecteur General"—agent—on the Marquis de Chateler's estate.

The unfortunate Hippolite was born at sea in a hurricane. From his birth he was feeble, and the privations incidental to the voyage induced convulsions, the effects of which, by the showing of his mother, "hung upon him through life." The sketch given by the old Comtesse Bocarme of her son is too long to quote, but forms a melancholy episode in this romance of real life. It tells of life in exile—for, through pecuniary difficulties, his father had been compelled to retire to South America—of days passed in great solitary forests on sporting expeditions;—of fever and ague accruing from these expeditions, of higher aspirations and study, and of his rejection of the principles of religion; of great suffering and almost death, from successive fits of illness.

The poor lady had tried in vain to unite her son to some virtuous woman; but in an ill-fated moment he met with Lydie, fixed his affections on her, and they were married. They took up their abobe at the ancient family Chateau de Bitremont.

Bitremont was a princely residence in the days of Louis XIV., and had been the scene of many a fray during the Brabantain civil wars. It is a lonely place, moated, and with a drawbridge, which, it is said, the *Bocarmes were wont to raise when creditors were troublesome!*

Ann Radcliffe would have made much of such a locality. A few modern rooms were occupied by the family; the more ancient part is cumbered with defaced sculptures, faded hangings, rickety cabinets and crazy tables. The great billiard-room is void, but the chapel has not been utterly despoiled; emblazoned arms adorn the walls, and the image of the Virgin, richly dight in lace and silver, stands on the altar. No one, however, can tell when the chapel was last used.

All without is still and dreary. Swans sail upon the green bosom of the stagnant moat, but plunge below the waters at the sound of human voices; at night the nightingale pours her wail through the deep woods, and all the day long, a flock of black pigeons wheel round and round the towers that mark the oldest portion of the building. Its distance from any public thoroughfare makes the Chateau Bitremont a truly desolate and silent place. To complete the romance attached to the history of the old chateau, it has its ghostly legend which tells of "one of the lords of Bitremont, who came back from the Holy Land with his head under his arm, like St. Denis, and appeared yearly on All Saints Eve, in an insulated pavilion in the grounds."

I had frequent opportunities of seeing Madame Bocarme, but I own "the rustle of her dress" made me shudder: I never could shake off the idea of the fratricide stealing through the long corridors of the chateau at midnight, to watch the forming decoction in the brazen cauldron.

It is remarkable that the family motto of the Bocarmes is—"I protect the weak!"

On the 8th of December, 1851, the sale of effects took place at the chateau, and great was the surprise of the persons assembled there, to see Madame Bocarme enter undismayed, to "assist at the auction," by bidding for all the best articles of furniture; and at the close of the day she retired to rest in her old apartments.

And now, what may we expect to hear of her next. Will it be matrimony, or murder, or both?

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* It is customary in Belgium for the wife to retain her maiden name.

* It was said, and I have every reason to believe it, that the comtesse had, by bribes, obtained many luxuries for herself while in goal—a good bed, confectionery, pastry and wine. These had been her consolations during the time of the trial; and we were told of the bitter wrath exhibited by the wife of one of the goal functionaries, when, on calling on Madame Bocarme at Brussels, she was told that the comtesse was engaged, and could not see her. I forbear to add all that was mentioned out of this scene.

† The "grand bourdon" is a huge bell in most of the Flemish belfries, which is only struck on peculiar occasions; it is the death-knell of criminals. The moment it booms through the town the inhabitants pause in their walk or occupations, and you may hear voices in the streets and in the houses calling to each other, "Le grand bourdon!" "The great bell! do you hear the great bell?"

‡ Madame Bocarme had essayed authorship, and I am in possession of some extracts from her novel, the scene whereof is laid in England. The work was entitled, "The History of Miss Adeline Helner," but the specimens that fell by accident into my hands are not worthy of transcription—albeit the secretary of the "Societe des Sciences" pronounced a "benevolent judgment upon the MS."

A large box of freight directed to the American Glass Company, Pearl street, New York, was received on board the Ogdensburg boat, at Kingston, C. W., a couple of days ago. It was handled very carefully, but when the boat arrived at Sackett's Harbor, to the great amazement of the passengers, the side of the box flew off, and *out rolled two soldiers*, able bodied men, deserters from the Royal Artillery, Kingston.

MRS. Douglas is again in mourning for her father. She is now left alone to battle with the world as best she can. Her children's Southern estate is now in the hands of the rebels.—One of her sons is upon Gen. Burnside's staff. Mrs Douglas has busied herself for the last two years at the hospitals. There is not a woman in the country who has been more active in doing good than she.

On the 17th inst. 1,226 foreign immigrants arrived at New York.

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