

Siege

NATURAL HISTORY

Montfouy-68

15

Park de Bereit = Bereit M^{tas}.

15
by Joan Perucho

translator: David H. Rosenthal

TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

Joan Perucho has long been considered one of Catalonia's most engaging and original novelists. Born in Barcelona in 1920, he spent his formative years under the Spanish Republic. During this period (from 1931 to 1939), Catalonia was autonomous and its citizens free to speak, write, and study their own language. With Franco's victory in 1939, however, the public world of Catalan letters collapsed. Books were burned and their publishers shut down, while offices were hung with signs reading No lades; habla el idioma del imperio (Don't bark; speak the imperial language--i.e. Spanish).

As a consequence, Perucho's first book (Beneath Blood, 1947) was printed secretly, as was the literary magazine (Ariel) that he helped to edit between 1946 and 1951. Not only the Catalan language but all experimental literature was illegal in postwar Spain. At the same time, Perucho entered the judiciary, where he remained until his recent retirement. At first obliged to keep his literary activities under his hat, he was gradually able, with the softening of the fascists' oppressive policies, to claim his rightful place as a public figure. Perucho's writings include verse (his Collected Poems appeared in 1984), ~~essays~~ ~~on the history of the novel~~ art criticism (e.g. Culture and the Visual Arts and Joan Miró and Catalonia), essays on the pleasures of the table (he is a member in good standing of the National Academy of Gastronomy), and--especially--novels. Among these, perhaps the most popular is Natural History.

Natural History recounts the adventures of a dashing and aristocratic young naturalist, Antoni de Montpalau. We first meet Antoni in a Barcelona convulsed--like all Spain in the 1830's--by the First Carlist

War, a struggle between liberals and constitutionalists, on the one hand, and Catholic reactionaries and absolutists devoted to the pretender Charles V on the other. In Catalonia, the liberals' center of power was the coast, including Barcelona, while the Carlists (those favoring Charles V) were strongest in the mountainous interior, for example around Berga in the north and Morella in the south. Antoni, whose sympathies as a man of science lie with the liberals, soon finds himself traveling deep into Carlist territory in search of a vampire who has terrorized the village of Pratdip. He frees the village, seals the vampire's tomb, and is betrothed to Agnès, a local damsel as valiant as she is fair. But the vampire himself eludes our hero and journeys north, disguised as a Carlist guerrilla leader known as the Owl. Antoni, his coachman Amadeu and his cousin Isidre de Novau then set out in search of the Owl. Before they can venture very far, however, they are captured by Carlist troops under General Cabrera, who turns out himself to be among the vampire's victims.

Despite their opposing political views, Montpalau and Cabrera become close friends. While the constitutionalist forces (under the ~~com-~~
~~mand of~~ General Espartero) close in on Cabrera, he and Montpalau try to track down the Owl. Their search is urgent, for only if the vampire dies in Cabrera's lifetime can he ~~avoid also becoming a vampire~~. After several near-misses, they finally locate and ~~annihilate~~ annihilate their foe. Simultaneously, ~~the Carlists~~ ^{Cabrera & his troops} are defeated by Espartero's troops and forced into exile. Antoni and his beloved Agnès are reunited upon his return to Barcelona.

Natural History is partly the chronicle of Antoni de Montpalau's education. Beginning as a facile positivist, he discovers (as Perucho notes in his index) "poetry through three things: love, mystery, and

adventure." His appreciate^{ion} of adventure comes partly ~~from~~^{through} his intimacy with Cabrera, who, while Montpalau uses his scientific skills to heal him, schools his young friend in such millennial virtues as dignity and nobility. Their parting at the end of the war is one of the book's high points:

"I can never repay you!" Cabrera exclaimed. "I know neither what fate holds in store for me nor where I shall be tomorrow, nor do I know what will become of this wretched land of ours. But whatever happens and wherever I may go, do not forget that I consider you my brother."

Then he removed his saber and handed it to Montpalau, who remained silent.

"Take this saber as a token of my esteem. As you can see, I have nothing else to offer and it is my most prized possession. Take it."

"Thank you, general," Montpalau replied, looking away to hide his tears.

Gripping the young naturalist's arm, Cabrera muttered: "You're a damn good liberal." And smiling, he added: "The only one I ever met."

As in Perucho's other novels, myth, history, and the ~~author's~~ author's exuberant~~ly~~ ~~and evocative~~ fantasies constantly color each other in Natural History. For example, King James I of Aragon really did take Princess Violant of Hungary as his second wife, but the Duchess of Meczyr ^{& Gracia Castle in} is the author's invention. Together, these elements draw us into Perucho's vision of a Catalonia deep in ~~vivid~~ memories, alive with the resonances of past eras and personalities conjured into being by his ^{poetic} imagination.

To see Natural History and its author in proper perspective, the American reader may find some historical background useful. Catalan is spoken by approximately seven million people, some of whom live in the Balearic Islands, others in a small strip of southern France that includes Perpinyà (Perpignan), and others in Spain proper, from Alacant (Alicante) to the French border and between the Mediterranean Sea and Aragon. A Romance tongue, Catalan is closer to Provençal and Italian

than to Castilian (the language usually called "Spanish").

The most interesting Catalan literature is of two periods: from the late Middle Ages through the early Renaissance, and from around 1870 to the present. The first era produced such outstanding writers as the Valencian lyric poet Ausiàs March (c. 1397-1459) and the novelist Joanot Martorell (c. 1410-1468), whose masterpiece Tirant lo Blanc was praised ^{of its kind} ~~described~~ by Cervantes as "the best book in the world." During the past hundred years, Catalonia has produced an astonishing body of artistic work. In the visual arts, the genius of figures like Salvador Dalí, Antoni Gaudí, Juli González, Arístides Maillol, Joan Miró and Antoni Tàpies is universally recognized. Catalan writing is of equally high quality, but the world has been slower to become aware of its virtues-- partly because of a lack of good translations, and partly because of the Franco government's deliberate suppression.

Since Franco's death, Catalans have moved steadily toward self-government. They now have their own chief executive and Statute of Autonomy. ~~Spanish~~ Catalan predominates in the schools, and Catalan daily newspapers, television channels, and radio stations are free to ~~operate~~ operate. Thanks to novelists like Peruchó and Mercè Rodoreda and poets like J.V. Foix and Salvador Espriu, Catalan literature remains as vital as ever. Its vitality has everything to do with the mixture of ^{sensuality} whimsy and inspired yarn-spinning, of artistic experimentation and love for the Mediterranean's past and people that we find so brilliantly realized in ~~the~~ Natural History.

David H. Rosenthal

Having contemplated this phenomenon, I must confess that although I deem myself brave, before facing such a being I would commend my soul to God.

--In Praise of Thrashings, Bartolomé José Gallardo

But now that our noble Queen Isabella II has come of age, a new era has dawned, relegating our past to the realm of History.

--Memoirs, Don Manuel Llauder, Marquis of the Valle de Ribas

"One day in a café in London," said Monsieur Decremps, "I ran into a short Breton ~~named~~ ^K Ruffel whom I had known at school. After exchanging the usual pleasant-ries, I asked what he was doing in that country. He replied that he spent almost all his time at the Academy. "My warmest congratulations!" I exclaimed. "How I wish I were ^{so} ~~as~~ lucky ~~as~~ ^I you!"

--Encyclopedia on Method

I: The Naturalist

The light streaming through the panes took on the purple, blue, yellow and red hues of the geometric forms filtering it. It cut obliquely through the air till it glittered in the eye of a monstrous scolopendra martirialis. Outside, the ~~gambanys~~ courtyard's slender columns rose, nearly strangled by thick vines and framing a botanical garden whose every plant and bush was neatly labeled. Sometimes, when a cool breeze arose, you could hear a vegetative rustle, gentle and suggestive, mixed with the sound of pieces of ~~plywood~~ ^{cardboard} flapping against each other. Then the robot, animated by some suddenly-released spring, vainly sought to strum its guitar and silently moved its lips. They had left it on the gallery some time ago, when the craze for recreational contraptions had ended, and they had replaced it with a new machine for stamping calico.

The eye bulged ~~from~~ ⁱⁿ its socket. The iris glowed in the penumbra, but every day, at the same time when the light struck it, that glass ball became hard and precise, taking on a malignant and obsessive significance. It reflected the silk tapestries covering the gold damask on the walls, with their damp spots, a bit mildewed through the passage to time, and the carpet from Bangkok, a present from the Archduke of Austria, just as he fled Barcelona, shortly before the great catastrophe. Further away, the eye struggled to follow the graceful frozen flight of an aurea picuda, gallantly adorned with flashing colors. Or it pondered the moth-eaten fur on a simius saltarinus ~~had~~ bought from Yehuda, a Jew in the ghetto, by Jaume Salvador, the great ~~botanist~~ ^{naturalist} who ~~was~~ ^{had begun} beginning, moved by his love of learning, to cunningly circumvent the Holy Office's restrictions.

The eye paid special attention to the ^{en 7} "otorrinus fantasticus," a small yet ferocious beast that ~~from a distance~~ shot lethal quills like poisoned ~~parts~~. It came from Asia. Far beyond ^e the eye, out of its range, there were cabinets labeld ^e "macabre" with shrunk~~en~~ human ~~hand~~ remains: heads, ears, lips bizarrely ~~disassociated~~ disassociated from any facial structure, vague suggestions of phallic protruberances, all with the repulsive feeling of a living organism. They came from the jungles of South America. The eye grew still more savage as it lit upon the limp ^T tenies intestinalis, ^T which, submerged in an indefinable yellowish liquid that filled some glass jars, swayed calmly and rhythmically at the slightest trepidation. When there was a full moon, a shadow fell upon the gallery's panes and, inexplicably, ^{entered} ~~penetrated~~ the museum's great hall, moving toward those visceral shapes.

Almost weightless, a delicate ~~bandelier~~ chandelier hung from the ceiling. On the walls, one could see portraits by unknown artists of Linnaeus, Arnau de Vilanova, Jaume Salvador in his youth, Sir Lamarck-Bouchera~~n~~ ^{and} ^{Antoni} et de la Truanderie, also his relative ~~de~~ de Montpalau, a Barcelonan nobleman, the owner of an excellent natural history collection and the palace in which it was ~~stored~~ ^{housed}. Montpalau's arrogance, position, and sweet words troubled the dreams of the city's marriageable aristocratic damsels. In one corner of the room, right above a little bookcase stuffed with folios and ~~man~~ manuscripts, the Chamber of Commerce declared Antoni de Montpalau i de la Truanderie an honored member of that worthy and learned society.

He coughed discreetly, as though excusing himself. Then, with graceful steps, he strolled amid the ^{specimens} ~~corpses~~, stopping to observe some detail. He made for the door and stepped out into the ^{entrance hall} ~~vestibule~~. Having reached the ~~steps~~, he glanced at the Courreur des Sciences

and also looked through the window at a fragment of the graceful "aurea picuda." The grooms, having turned the carriage around, had hitched up the horses ^{Amadeu} and the coachman waited respectfully beside its open door. It had been a splendid idea, very much in keeping with his notion of progress, to install that platform ^{so} to the carriage, freed of its horses, could be turned in the small ^{yard} ~~entrance~~ and thus be ready to depart immediately.

He thanked Amadeu and said: "No, I'd rather stretch my legs a bit."

At that moment, he was puzzling over whether the "avutarda geminis" should be classified as a mammal. Jaume Salvador, in his wisdom, had left the matter unresolved, and ~~when~~ ^{at} the committee ~~had met~~ ^{meeting} last Wednesday there had been a notable lack of consensus. Perhaps he should consult Madoz y Fontaneda in Seville, who was in touch with American naturalists. Who knows? Only experimentation could settle the matter. Without a real "avutarda geminis" on hand, nothing could be determined. Otherwise, only hypotheses or--as his elderly colleagues put it--fantasies were possible. One had to use reason and scientific observation. Yes, that evening he would write to Madoz y Fontaneda, known as "The Divine."

Crossing Lledó Street and Saint Just Square, he plunged into a labyrinth of capriciously twisting lanes. From time to time he had to flatten himself against a wall to let a carriage pass or avoid dripping baskets carried by fishmongers, who threaded their way through the crowd balancing their wares on their heads.

He continued till he reached the site of the new street Count Charles of Spain had dedicated years before to the foul memory of King Ferdinand VII. He stood there for a while, looking at the houses

being torn down while others rose ^{in their places} ~~simultaneously~~. He thought that, in the future, he should consider possible advances in construction, for it was obvious that the builders' routines and especially their methods had not changed since the Roman Empire.

He ^{emerged in} ~~came out~~ into the Pla del Teatre, where clusters of peasants and shopkeepers discussed new developments in the Carlist War. There were blind men selling broadsides while women with breasts ^{bursting} ~~bulging~~ from their ^{bodices} ~~blouses~~ offered cheap portraits of General Mina and colored lithographs of his stomach devoured by cancer.

It was almost midday. The sun caressed the facades and the cobbles on the Rambla de Santa Mònica. The sky was a limpid, transparent blue. Making a supreme effort, the ⁹ ~~"aurea picuda"~~ ⁹ struggled to intone its [†] ~~enchanting~~ song in homage to Montpau, but the acoustics were unfavorable and the townsfolk, apart from popular political ditties, wished only to hear airs from La Fattucchiera by Vicenç Cuyàs, a lad of twenty-one who had breathed his last just as his opera was being wildly applauded at the Teatre Principal.

He stood there for a moment, gloomily pondering. He recalled reading somewhere that those ^{favored by} ~~whom~~ the gods ⁹ ~~favor~~ always die young. But the spectacle, even in mente, of a composer ~~cut~~ ^{down} in his youth depressed him. He managed to steer his thought ⁹ ~~toward~~ the subject he loved best and decided that a long and arduous ^{path} ~~road~~ lay ahead before that species could be satisfactorily classified. If the country at least had a stable government and if partisans of the old régime weren't still battling to impose reaction and intolerance! He was overcome by a sudden wave of liberal enthusiasm.

He had reached the "Flea Bastion." Outside the Customhouse Barracks, across the street, troops maneuvered and he could see from their aspect and the heavy guard around them that something was amiss.

~~in Barcelona~~. The soliers' uniforms were ~~blue~~^{red} and ~~red~~^{blue}, with white bandoleers and ~~extremely~~ tall hats. Every other day there was some revolt or disturbance, execution or assassination. The country was in an uproar. There were still ruins and charred buildings from the last riot. The rabble sang:

Six bulls were in the bullring.

None was any good.

That's why they burned the convents
in my neighborhood.

He leaned against the rail and gazed out at the calm sea. There were six vessels, one of which flew the Union Jack. A screeching "gavinis communis" cut across his field of vision. ~~Utter~~ silence fell. Up above him on Montjuïc, the Spanish flag fluttered. Some riveting but inaudible, entirely non-existent chords sounded. Colonel Riego's image appeared, his anthem, the 1812 Constitution. You could see Carlists, the Citadel, and ~~Colonel~~^{Coronel} O'Donnell falling upon the flagstones, bleeding slowly and absurdly. ~~The~~^{His} blood oozed onto the stones. Militiamen passed, singing patriotic songs, and people shouted "Long live the queen!" A "gavinis comunis" and an "avutarda geminis" flew by ~~him~~, in the latter case of undetermined species, screeching and flapping above Xifré's new city gates. You could smell salt spray, and delirious optimism alternated with the ~~most somber pessimism~~^{gloomiest despair}. Everyone flapped and ~~shouted~~^{screamed}. Only science remained impassive, beyond good and evil. Only science, exorcising shadows and ignorance, reducing them to light and progress. Some shadows, however, seemed irreducible: shadows from mountain gorges, still unformed but awaiting a propitious moment to materialize. At times, livid and spectral, they flickered beyond the panes or took the forms of fluttering bats.

He turned and brushed the elbows on his frock coat. Then he set off toward the Pla del Palau. Shots occasionally could be heard far away. Up in Gràcia, a thick, black column of smoke rose, a prelude to liberty or ignominy. A volley rang out a moment later.

A finch flew by and landed on the rim of a fountain. It drank rapidly, with ^{amusing} ~~funny~~ little pecks. Then it took a few ~~many~~ hops and preened its feathers with its beak. He noticed it staring at him.

At that moment, he only had ears for the ⁹ aurea picuda ⁹ 's song. It was harmonious and ineffable, something like human brotherhood or love of knowledge, and it came from the ^{heavenly} ~~sky~~ or the Enchanted Isles.

When he opened his eyes, the finch had disappeared.

II: The Carnivore

The masks ~~can be~~ ^{are either} black or red. The waists are pinched by corsets, though sometimes ~~they~~ ^{there} are unnecessary. A smile appears behind an opaline goblet. The walls are lined with huge mirrors, mirrors that let you glimpse a terrified neck's ~~morning~~ ^{youthful} elegance, a head bending over a "billet d'amour," or a waxed mustache. The grand duet is just beginning, a great, passionate scene of hopeless love, with Italian ruins as a backdrop, stolen kisses, languid gazes, gloves forgotten in stage boxes. It could end in pistol shots and red roses on starched shirt fronts. But that's uncommon. Barcelona's high society, though aristocratic, is provincial. Better to think about vessels, ship chandlers on the Ribera, gold from the Indies and the first mechanized factories. There's a long tradition of captains and pilots. Four hundred nautical days, ~~not one~~ ^{neither} more ~~or~~ ^{nor} less. On the facades, you can see multicolored signal flags, forming a rosy cloud around a compass, salt hardtack, rigging, ~~named~~ ^{salt} cod, names of ships like "The Polar Star," brand-new logs and letters home. Workers arrive at five A.M., bringing their lunches with them and tromping through the deserted streets. Apprentices sleep on counters and slave away, taking measurements and talking up the merchandise. They only go out on Sundays, each with a penny in his pocket, and they have to be back in time for evening prayers. It's true that there are also clergy, officers, and men of learning. Majestically, they play the cathedral organ and organized slow processions with burning candles, brass bands and associations, including the Academy of Science and the university, recently ~~moved~~ ^{returned} ~~back~~ from Cervera.

The air shuddered. A burst of devilish laughter and sulfurous

^{Breath}
~~exhalations~~ shattered the caleidoscope brought especially from Palermo, ^{the}
land of optics. Tiny ghostly figures danced among the splintered ~~and~~
glass, leapt over obstacles and vanished in the distance. The alpha
and omega sign appeared.

Antoni de Montpalau did up a button on his silk vest from Lyon,
a present from a cousin on his mother's side, the Baroness of Niziers.
Picking up a piece of rock crystal between two fingers and peering at
it against the light, he told Novau: "Really, I'm tremendously in-
terested in whether the "ayutarda geminis" is a mammal. It's ~~certainly~~
a strange phenomenon. There is a precedent, of course, in the "vampiris
diminutus", commonly known as the bat. There are many curious and
notable legends about this little beast, especially in the Balkans,
concerning its ~~imagined~~ and unproven ability to suck human blood.

Novau, a seasoned sea captain, felt a trifle uneasy. He was
still aware of the immobility, quite impertinent and disconcerting,
of that "scolopendra martirialis"'s eye. It was as though within its
retina a dreadful jungle scene shuddered. He spat.

They were sitting in the botanical garden. The air smelled fresh
and sweet, and the light was pale green. From that corner they could
see the robot, frozen in some inexplicable gesticulation, and also
the textile machine, a little rusted by the rains.

The "ayutarda geminis" comes from South America," Antoni de Mont-
palau continued. According to our not entirely reliable information,
it has remarkable curative powers in cases of gallstones, ~~gallstones~~
diarrhea, and enlarged spleen. The second vertebra in its tail, counting
down from the appendix, when soaked in reduce ^{red} mandrake juice also
possesses virtues that I am obliged to doubt without experimental
^{evidence}
~~proof~~. A Valencian uncle of my friend Arnulf de Viladode, once claimed

that, being in Pernambuco on Maundy Thursday and with the bishop's permission, he witnessed a mass cure of certain blacks suffering from malaria, which would not be especially interesting were it not for the fact that the local medicine man also made use of ^{the} avutarda gemánis's curative powers. Naturally, as you will understand, I have no faith in such wives' tales and my purpose is to disprove these fantastic legends."

At this moment, they felt a strange vibration that seemed to come from a nearby tree whose foliage was exceptionally dense and luxuriant. Its branches began to sway and droop as the vibration grew more violent. Novau leapt from his cane chair.

"It's feeding time," our gentleman calmly announced. "It's an unusual species of carnivorous tree. Don't be alarmed. It was a great effort to acclimatize it here. Winckelmann, one of Germany's outstanding naturalists, wrote me a while ago that His Majesty's Royal Academy would pay ten ounces of gold for a small cutting."

As he uttered these words, Antoni de Montpalau gracefully clapped his hands and Silveri, the footman in charge of the plants, appeared. He was carrying a big cage full of sewer rats, all squeaking furiously.

Silveri opened the cage at a slight distance from the trunk and cautiously stepped back. The rats staggered forth, stupified by the vibrations, and the voracious branches immediately closed over them. Not one escaped. The tree slowly resumed its original posture and, having digested the rats, opened its leaves, from which some small skeletons the color of old ivory tumbled.

Silence fell. Pavanes could be heard, coming from the Bonaplata's palace next door and delicately played by Ramonet, their eldest son.

who had gotten the chambermaid Pepeta pregnant. She had been packed off to their farm in Sarrià, where she had died giving birth.

It was an atmosphere of perfect beatitude. The carnivore let it itself be soothed by the breeze and the gentle melodies. Everything took on a timeless air.

Novau tried to rouse himself and yawned. Isidre Novau i Campalans was, as we have mentioned, a highly competent sea captain, though rather taciturn. Related to the Montpalaus, he came from an illustrious lineage that, like our hero's, had sided in those troubled times with the archduke's party. As a child, he had lived for long periods with his great-aunt in Lloret, where his love of seafaring had been born. He had studied navigation in Barcelona and Cadiz and had often sailed the Caribbean. Before winning the title and post of captain, he had survived three shipwrecks in which he had been on the point of bidding his great-aunt farewell forever. As he stood watch one day ~~on a run~~ during a run to Malta, he ^{caught} had a glimpse--not granted to many--of Niccolò, the ~~famous~~ ^{so} pesce cola dreaded by the Genoese. Upon rising the next morning and looking in the mirror, he saw that at least half his hair had turned white as snow, greatly improving his appearance. He was now staying at his cousin's Antoni de Montpalau's home in Barcelona, ^{where he hoped} ~~in an attempt~~ to cure himself of a disease caused by protracted lack of fresh food.

"Tomorrow, dear cousin," said Antoni de Montpalau, "we'll visit our farm in Gràcia. And in passing, we'll determine the state of liberal opinion and see how they fare in that celebrated town."

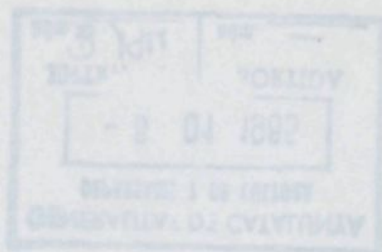
He seemed about to add something, but he uttered not another word. Beyond the carnivore, amid the ~~gamb~~ courtyard's arches, a shadow slowly moved. He thought ^this eyesight must not be quite right. Now it

had disappeared.

The two gentlemen strolled among the phanerogams. From time to time, they plucked a sweet pea and sniffed its fragrance. It was almost time for lunch.

When they left the botanical garden and entered the dining room, they were struck by an intense sulfurous smell. Antoni de Montpalau saw the fragments of his kaleidoscope on the carpet. He stood there for a moment, lost in thought.

Behind its mask, black or red, the shadow let out a macabre laugh that slowly dissipated in the air.



III: The Liberty Café

Gràcia is a town with an intensely democratic tradition that, years later, would be symbolically embodied in its famous ~~bell~~^{bell} tower and the weekly that bore its name. The Marquis of Sallent, in his memoirs, describes the progressive, hard-working town as an unbreachable bastion of liberty. "One native of Gràcia," he declared, "inflamed by his convictions, with a weapon in his hand and his back to the wall, ~~mm~~ will suffice to rout all the sinister forces of reaction and their loathsome ~~hords~~^{hordes}." The Marquis of Sallent died in a Carlist ambush near Campdevàrol, battling like a lion. The Young Observer, a ~~newspaper~~ published by the Junta of Berga, declared that with his death, the constitutionalists had lost one of their fiercest and most vicious captains and congratulated both ~~mmmm~~^{itself} and ~~His Majesty~~^{Charles V} on their ~~splendid~~^{glorious} victory.

It was a ~~glorious~~^{splendid} day. Montpalau and his cousin set out from Barcelona that morning. The air was ~~smooth~~^{wild} as silk, and everything ~~looked~~^{looked} clear and crisp.

They had settled into the carriage. Novau held a polished mahogany box ~~adorned~~^{inscribed} with gold initials ~~under his arm~~. He deposited it carefully on the luggage rack.

"Pistols," he declared. Montpalau said nothing and merely nodded. Nonetheless, he thought ~~his~~^{was} cousin overdoing it.

They rode through ~~the~~ New Gate, driving among irrigated fields. The horses ~~gabmmmmgammhmm~~ broke into a cheerful trot and Amadeu, the coachman, felt so gay that he couldn't ~~resist~~^{keep from} humming something under his breath.

The fields stretched away on both sides, and an occasional golden farmhouse rose up before them, large and majestic, with geraniums ~~in it~~.

in ~~its~~ windows. They breathed in the ~~peaceful~~ ^{sweet} country air; everyone felt happy.

As they neared Gràcia, they saw some militiamen breakfasting beneath an arbor beside the road. A large bottle of wine with a long spout sat before them on the table. One of them motioned Amadeu to halt. He examined the captain general's safe-conduct and then let them pass.

They reached Gràcia without further incident. Swept along by the horses, they rumbled through the town, making a terrific racket, and emerged on the other side, heading for ~~the~~ ^a hill where the ~~Mont-~~ ^g Montpalaus had for many generations owned a farm called Partridge House. The house itself was large, with drawings incised in its facade and a huge sun dial at the top with a large but pedestrian motto: "I live ^{with} ~~by~~ the sun."

They were welcomed by the peasant's wife, who came out wiping her hands on her apron and acting delighted to see them. A few dogs sniffed at the gentlemen's feet and then indifferently retired.

Montpalau invited his cousin into the house. The inside was cool, and everything was submerged in a pleasant penumbra. The woman opened the windows and drew back the heavy old drapes. Some immense rooms then appeared, with console tables and bureaus upon which belljars rested, full of coral, ~~many~~ tiny seashells, and faded ribbons. Time had settled, with a gentle ~~muffling~~ ^{sound} like impalpable ash, upon the furniture, upon portraits of uncles and cousins smiling frozenly through the years, recalling hunts and lost shotguns, disconcerting stares and yellowed letters, the birth of an ~~an~~ ^g heir and the fires of civil war in rustic hamlets. Time settled there in tenuous ~~layers~~ ^{strata}, silently superimposed, turning colors and winter evenings gray. It

swept through the empty rooms, sedimenting every surface, countless cracks and crevices in furniture and curtains, with memory's ashes.

After taking a turn through the deserted chambers, Montpalau spoke to Isidre, the peasant, about changes in his crops and handed him some instructions the ^{chamber of commerce} ~~Ministry~~ had printed concerning the introduction of new agricultural methods. They argued over every item and observation ^{but} ~~till~~ at last our gentleman ^{brilliant} ~~brilliant~~ vanquished the peasant's irrational resistance, attached as he was to outmoded and uneconomical practices. The ~~Chamber of Commerce's~~ pamphlet bore the title? Historical-Critical-Practical Instructions or Memorandum to Encourage Agricultural Progress through Fertilization.

Meanwhile, Novau ^{had tried} ~~was trying~~ out some methodical-ambulatory exercises in the fields and now gazed pensively at a large holding tank overflowing with little frogs. When his cousin called him, he put his pipe in his pocket and waved. He felt inexplicably happy and free.

Then the two gentlemen, in shirtsleeves ^g and aided by Isidre and six farmhands, energetically harvested half a ton of medicinal plants ^g specially grown on the property, ^{including} citron, sorrel, cardamom ^{and} cloves ^{and} ~~others~~ ^{planned} ~~planned~~ to send them as a gift to his friend, Doctor Samsó Corbella, in the hope that they might prove useful in his efforts to find a cure for Pott's disease.

They lunched in the large dining room, where they enjoyed some excellent dishes: meatball soup, thrushes with olive sauce, hare "aux fines herbes," and pig's feet with young turnips. For dessert, they barely touched a basket of delicious ^g ~~green~~ plums and, after lighting two Cuban cigars of deep and velvety aroma, they looked out at Barcelona and the sea.

They said goodbye to Isidre and his wife. Montpalau told Amadeu

to take them back to Gràcia, to the Liberty Café. Once again, they clattered through the streets and stopped outside number four, El Carrer de la Virtut.

The Liberty Café was a slightly dingy establishment. The town's most exalted elements could usually be found there, making speeches and signing passionate manifestos. The walls were painted dark red, and, ^{of three of them} right in the middle, framed by ~~an~~ oval garlands, ^{representations} in tempera colors, allegorical scenes of industry, commerce, and navigation were painted, personified by ladies whose soft, rosy flesh was modestly draped in fluttering veils. All of them rendered homage to a still more august lady who smiled at ^{them from the} the opposite wall: Liberty. Pondered, uttered, chewed over, belched and quaffed, ^{she} this damsel tightrope-walked above the customers' heads. She cheerfully greeted them. With a delicate hand, she ^{inscribed} wrote her high-sounding, heroic name: Liberty.

The place was crammed to the rafters. Blue cigar smoke rose, ^{leaving} giving the room a dive-like aspect. Among the newspapers devoured and discussed were The Steamship, The National Guard, Uproar and The Constitutionalist. This last periodical's masthead was graced by the following verses:

I'm a democrat through and through
with nothing left to lose.
When I can raise my head again
I'll take no more abuse.

The two cousins ordered coffee. Montpalau glanced about him and ^{eyes dropped on} listened to the conversations. From time to time, however, his thoughts wandered to the ^{aurea picauda} "ayutarda geminis" and the mystery of that rare and wonderful bird. He struggled to hear its elusive song.

A man wrapped in a long, black cape entered. He stood by the bar,

downing a few brandies. Then he turned and took a few steps toward Antoni de Montpalau. It all happened in a flash. He flung open his cape and fired a pistol. Our hero barely had time to instinctively duck.

Chaos ensued. Fright occasioned by the shot gave way to ~~furiously~~ ^{righteous} indignation. Novau leapt at the ~~aggressor~~ ^{assailant}, who, taking advantage of the pandemonium, swiftly dodged between the tables. By the time Novau reached the door, the assassin had vanished.

Montpalau stood up, pale as a ~~marble~~ corpse. He was immediately surrounded by a solicitous, ~~indignant~~ ^{angry} crowd.

An ethereal lady approached him. Transparent, winged, pondered, uttered, written and dreamt, she stood at the victim's side with a voice like an ~~avutarda geminis~~ ⁷, ~~soft~~ ^{9 soothing} as a baby mammal's. She spun through space, through the universe in Liberty's and Justice's state of grace. They were Progress's two cogged wheels, striking fear into the hearts of livid, spectral shadows with fanatical eyes and scarred, unshaven faces--especially malignant mountain shadows that descended toward visceral forms.

Fortunately, the attack had failed. Montpalau, helped by his cousin and Amadeu, climbed ~~in his~~ ^{into the} carriage. On the streets, groups of curious bystanders railed against the reactionaries. A poultry-seller offered Montpalau, with maternal insistence, a tender chicken from Prat that would make a comforting soup.

"Poor guy," she said. "They scared him half to death." And her face twisted in a grimace meant to be dreadful and condemning.

Anxious and shaken, they set off for home. The sun hung low in the red, translucent, terrifyingly unreal sky. You could hear distant croaking that seemed to ~~flat~~ ^{Roar} in the air.

From time to time they drove through a cloud of mosquitoes.
High grass grew by the roadside. Some mules ambled slowly, with tink-
ling bells, *around their necks.*

Novau silently lit his pipe. Antoni de Montpalau sat lost in
thought. A pothole made the carriage tilt perilously. Silence fell.
Turning a corner, they ~~suddenly~~ spied Barcelona's lights.

FROM HOLSTEDEN (1893-10) IN ORLE COMPTON II' B' 363

ELIOT: MONTGOMERY B. 2010
ALBERT: MONTGOMERY B. 2010

ELIOT: MONTGOMERY B. 2010
ALBERT: MONTGOMERY B. 2010
ELIOT: MONTGOMERY B. 2010
ALBERT: MONTGOMERY B. 2010

ELIOT: MONTGOMERY B. 2010
ALBERT: MONTGOMERY B. 2010
ELIOT: MONTGOMERY B. 2010
ALBERT: MONTGOMERY B. 2010

ELIOT: MONTGOMERY B. 2010
ALBERT: MONTGOMERY B. 2010
ELIOT: MONTGOMERY B. 2010
ALBERT: MONTGOMERY B. 2010

ELIOT: MONTGOMERY B. 2010

ELIOT: MONTGOMERY B. 2010
ALBERT: MONTGOMERY B. 2010
ELIOT: MONTGOMERY B. 2010
ALBERT: MONTGOMERY B. 2010

HOLSTEDEN: XTAI

IV: Theory of the Dip

On his doctor Samsó Corbella's orders, Antoni de Montpalau spent the next day in bed. It was a preventive measure. Corbella recommended moral and physical rest during exactly twenty-four hours. Propped up against some pillows, our gentleman could contemplate the botanical garden, since his bedroom on the second floor looked out upon the courtyard. The day was wet and overcast, with intermittent thunderstorms. Water trickled down the walls along the gallery, whose small red floor tiles, which glistened as though someone had just waxed them, looked as though they had just waxed them.

Faithful Novau kept him company and, at his request, read from various books. In order to see the expression on his face, Montpalau asked him to ~~read~~ ^{fetch} some non-nautical treatise--for example, the mysterious, anonymous medieval Treatise on Geniture that our hero had discovered quite by accident in a peasant's attic. Following Montpalau's instructions, the intrepid captain looked for the manuscript, and after carefully but ~~forcefully~~ ^{vigorously} dusting it off, he began to ~~read~~ ^{read} at random:

"The Dip hath a ~~man~~ malevolent nature and containeth many natures and loveth ~~death~~ ^{death}, from which he liveth. And when ~~he~~ ^{he} wisheth to enter some playce to ~~work~~ ^{make} hys will, he treadeth very lightly and cunningly, and if he heareth his feet ~~making~~ ^{make} a noise he raiseth them off the ground by enchauntment. And he hath another quality: that if he spyeth a ~~man~~ ^{manne} before the ~~man~~ ^{manne} spyeth him, that ~~man~~ ^{manne} loseth all his pow'r and he goeth ~~straight~~ ^{strait} for hys blood. And he hath ~~still~~ ^{yet} another quality: that hys neck hath such strength that he cannot turn but turning his entyr bodie as well. He liveth only from blood and cannot abide the sight of garlick, parslee, purslayne, crosses ~~or~~ ^{nor} mirrors. And he hath yet another quality: that as he willeth, he ~~can~~ ^{change} into an ant,

a bee, a spider, a rooster, a wolf, a wildcat, a lobster, a dog, a
viper, a swan, a lion, a weasel, a lark, a cloud of damp night air,
a tiger, a unicorn, a panther, a hyena, a peacock, a swift, a hedge-
hog, a crocodile, a viper, a pelican, a beaver, a woodpecker,
a stork, a falcon, a vulture, an eagle, a horse, a whale, a fox,
a phoenix, an elephant, ~~an elephant~~ or a parrot."

Novau stopped and looked inquiringly at his cousin. Montpalau
remained silent, as though struggling ~~to resolve~~ ^{with} some enigma.

The rain had slackened. The wind, however, howled ominously down
chimneys and around weathervanes on the towers. It stripped the leaves
from the trees, whisking them over convent walls toward deserted
squares and narrow lanes with ~~delightfully~~ evocative names. It beat
against doors and windows with a clatter of broken panes, and whipped
the hats off members of the National Militia. At times it ~~stopped~~ ^{halted}
couriers and caused stagecoaches to delay their departures with a
thousand excuses. Such was the case outside the Four Nations Inn,
where Ferdinand de Lesseps waited impatiently to set out for Manresa,
in which city Baron de Meer ~~had~~ ^{maintained} his headquarters. The French consul
in Barcelona and a great friend of Montpalau's, Lesseps had begun to
hatch a grand but hopelessly chimerical engineering project. He loved
prints and voyages, and hanging on his bedroom wall he had six en-
gravings much envied by Montpalau and bearing the following titles:
Marché aux poissons à Rotterdam, Vue du lac de Bienne, Intérieur
de la cathédrale de Moscou, Monuments égyptiens, Vue du chemin de
fer de Little Falls à Utica, and Eglise de Froitsky sur le canal
Fontonka à Saint Pétersbourg.

Meanwhile, the shadow on the landing had shifted to the right.
Impalpable and deformed, it struggled to open the door to the natural
^{room} ~~with~~ ^{the}

upon the knowne remedees that muste be swiftlee employed, I ^{see} ~~say~~ that
at the tyme of infectioun, being the ascendant attacked by the afore-
sayd through witchcrafte and succeeded by the moone's quadriture
and Venus's influence will befall him ~~annihilate~~ nor wille he quickly
escape therefrom certaine directiones of greate importaunce, though
in the seconde yeare he will go ^{straight} ~~strate~~ for hys blood."

There was a knock at the door. A servant entered, carefully
balancing a large tray bearing hot chocolate and wafers. He set ^{it} ~~every-~~
~~thing~~ down on a three-legged ~~an~~ table decorated with marquetry and
paintings of bucolic scenes. First, however, he had to remove some
~~pile~~ of books and precision scales, ^{which} ~~that~~ he deposited on top of a
chest of drawers. He did everything with great delicacy and emphatic
gestures. He was from Lleida, and his name was Ramon.

The two cousins dipped their wafers in the chocolate as the
afternoon waned. Ramon lit some Saxon oil lamps and drew the heavy
curtains.

After wiping his lips on a napkin, Antoni de Montpau said:
"As you will understand, dear cousin, ^{such descriptions are} ~~all this is~~ mere wives' tales.
What you have read refers to a strange being known as the ~~Dip~~ Dip.
But what is a dip? [?] you may ask. Has anyone ~~by any chance~~ [?] ever seen
one? A supposed being who changes into a spider, a bumblebee, a vulture,
a horse, and then an elephant?"

He paused. He drank a sip of water ~~that~~ ^{he} had poured from a
crystal decanter.

"No, dear friend. Today science ^{still} ~~strives~~ ^{dispel} ~~to~~ ^{superstitions} disprove such legends,
born in a time of ignorance and error. The scientific method is in-
exorable. I admit that there are certain ~~still~~ ^{still} inexplicable phenomena
that one ~~struggles~~ ^{tries} to ~~resolve~~ ^{explain}. But science, based on reason and ex-

perimentation, will have the last word, I assure you."

Our hero spoke with great vehemence. Novau thought he detected a note of self-doubt.

"I believe you," he replied. "I believe you, ~~beloved~~ ^{dear} cousin. Nonetheless, do not forget that you are ~~speaking~~ ^{talking} to a man who, among other things, has seen Niccolò, the pesce cola."

The young naturalists ~~made~~ ^{response} a gesture that seemed to imply that he considered his cousin's ~~reply~~ ^{response} inopportune.

"Bah, Novau! Don't make me laugh! What you saw was nothing more than an hallucination caused by excessive ingestion of canned food. We've discussed your condition ~~and its ins and outs~~ ^{an open and shut} with Doctor Samsó Corbella. It's ~~an obvious~~ ^{an obvious} case."

The cousins went on talking. Meanwhile, with feline deftness, night descended on ~~the city~~ ^{Barcelona}.

The city was dark. Only an occasional lantern shed its feeble light.

The silence grew dense and opaque. Occasionally, you could hear the vague rumble of National Militia patrols, a deep, far-off blast from some detonation. Then calm returned.

The shadow made an effort and contracted, taking shape and growing denser. It was like an unfocused, blurry vision. For a few moments, one could feel ~~a~~ ^{the} malevolent, obsessive vibration ~~swirling~~ ^{swirling} around ~~something~~ ^{around} invisible ~~and~~ ^{and} slowly turning into tenuously illumined mist. This continued briefly and then dissipated.

Shortly thereafter, ~~an~~ ⁱⁿ inexplicably swift and ~~certain~~ ^{sure} flight, a bat or possibly an "avutarda geminis" ^{it} sped into the night's vastness.

V: The Diabolical Bull

Prince Felix Maria ~~Vicenc Andreu~~ Lichnowsky, Count of Werden-
berg and ^{absolutist} Lord of Woschutz, whose heart beat, at the age of twenty-
three, with all the fervor of the ~~Carlist~~ ^{an ~~un~~ ~~estimated~~} cause and who was ~~an~~ ^{NA} officer
in Prussia's proud army, hastened to offer his sword to the Spanish
pretender Charles V when he rose in the Basque provinces against Ma-
drid's freethinking government. ^{Raised} ~~Brought up~~ in the cultured atmosphere
of Graetz Castle, near ~~M~~ Troppau, and the Palace of Kryzanowitz at
Ratibor, heir to one of the largest fortunes in Germany, the prince
adored belles-lettres. He also played the piccolo, an instrument much
in vogue at ^{that} ~~the~~ time in royal courts, with consummate delicacy and
exquisite taste. He took part in several Carlist campaigns and val-
iantly distinguished himself in King Charles's expedition to Cata-
lonia--which circumstance enabled him to meet and befriend the famous
Ramon Cabrera, later Count of Morella. After the above-mentioned ex-
pedition's failure, Lichnowsky joined Count Charles of Spain's general
staff and served as liason between him and Cabrera, who operated on
the other side of the Ebre. This gave him a chance to explore the
country inch by inch and ^{to} ~~to~~ learn the Catalan language, habitually
spoken by the era's two tigers: the one in Berga and the other in the
Maestrat. Lichnowsky, after the executions at Estella and Maroto's
treachery, remained loyal to the Carlist cause and continued the hope-
less struggle, sullied though it often was by Pep de l'Oli's and Llarga
de Capons's guerrilla ^{bands} ~~bandits~~. The prince, when not leading his cav-
alry squadron, in which case he donned a blue jacket and red beret
and trousers, disguised himself in innumerable fashions--as a wagoner,
a smuggler, a Ribera peasant, etc. His fame quickly spread and people

compared him--though their views were quite opposed--to the cunning liberal conspirator and man of action Aviraneta.

These events were broadcast and ~~profusely~~ ^{exhaustively} discussed both in liberal newspapers and in The Young Observer of Berga, though naturally in ~~entirely opposite~~ ^{quite contrary} terms. That morning, Antoni de Montpalau had perused The Constitutionalist, ^{which} ~~where~~, after a violent attack on Prince Lichnowsky, ~~they~~ ^{it} had printed a patriotic ode by Joaquim Rubió i Ors, who signed his work "The Piper of the Llobregat." One stanza read: ~~thus~~

Of an ancient bard the long-muted lyre
I shall snatch from his clammy tomb,
And the muse who wanders sad by his grave

I shall now with my song invoke,
Awakening those who kindled glory's fire,
Holy shades, valiant knighthood's perfume,
Counts and ~~ancient~~ ^{monarchs} kings in battle brave

I shall ~~now~~ in fame and beauty cloak.

Upon reading these verses, Montpalau nostalgically recalled his teenage friend and mentor, the poet ~~Ed~~ Eudald de Puig, whose career had been cut short by his tragic ~~demise~~ ^{death}. ~~He~~ ^{They} had met ~~him~~ ^{one} day at a literary gathering at Cordelles School, ~~shortly~~ before it was shut down and when the poet was at the height of his powers. The headmaster, Father Narcís Riera, had introduced them. Montpalau remembered Riera's generous praise of the Noble Royal and Imperial School of Cordelles: "The gentlemen who attend this school will enjoy not only its ~~praise~~ ^{support} and protection but also its example, ~~which will stir~~ ^{stirring} their gallant hearts to spurn idleness and childish pastimes unworthy of their

births, and to heroically embark on the study of great words and deeds, lest they sully the ~~hmmmm~~ radiant honor of ~~the homes where they were raised.~~ ^{their alma mater,} I shall ~~never resign myself~~ ^{consign myself} to the shadows some desire for their work, for there are none in this luminous and resplendent house whose arms include the sun's inextinguishable rays. Promise me, above all, much light, much favor and the refuge and protection that all men require."

~~After this evocation,~~ ^{then retired} ~~our young naturalist~~ ^{set aside} ~~his memories~~ ^{these} and went to his study, where he was preparing a catalogue of his herbarium with pen and ink drawings. He worked at it all morning, and felt positively satisfied.

That afternoon, since it was Sunday, the two cousins decided to ~~make~~ ^{head} for the bullring, where the Italian Captain Cantalupo was going to ascend in an aerostat. Leaving their carriage near the customhouse, they made their way on foot through Barceloneta's thronged streets. People squeezed together on rooftops and beaches, hoping ~~to thus~~ to behold the spectacle for free.

There were signs at the entrance ~~to the bullring~~ announcing the program and prices: two ~~many~~ pennies for seats in the sun; three for seats in the shade. In the middle of the ring, some men inflated the balloon while Captain Cantalupo, in a dress suit, strutted about giving orders. ~~Our friends made themselves comfortable in their first-~~ ^{front-} row seats ~~after paying something extra to the chief guard.~~ ^{tipping} The place was jammed ~~with~~ ^{with} spectators.

At five o'clock sharp, to ascertain which way the wind was blowing, Cantalupo released some small balloons of assorted shapes and colors--fish, human ^{beings} dolls, frogs, etc.--and once the aerostat was full, he bowed to the ~~mob~~ ^{public} and leapt into its wicker car. The crowd's

excitement was at its peak.

A brass band struck up a jaunty march. The aerostat slowly rose, while the spectators ~~yelled~~ ^{screamed} and clapped. Some ~~bags~~ ^{sandbags} of sand hung from the sides of the car, which they ballasted. When Captain Cantalupp had risen some fifty yards, he untied a few of them and flung a cloud of red, yellow, and blue leaflets down onto the ring. They landed everywhere, ~~and people~~ ^{as the crowd} ran to grab them. Montpalau stood up and caught a red one in his hat. The title read: "To Barcelona," and beneath it were these verses:

Swiftly galloping, our wind-blown aeronaut

A lovely city beneath him ~~doth~~ ^{doth} chart.

A divine excitement ~~is kindled~~ ^{he kindleth} in his heart

Lending impetuous wings to his thought.

Blessed aspirations, happiness sweet

Exalt and ~~excite~~ ^{inspire} him as he ~~gaily recognizes~~ ^{recognizeth}

The florid aroma that gently ~~rises~~ ^{riseth}

From a fragrant garden, love's very seat.

To swim amid light and, since God willed it so,

To see above you the sky, with Paradise below.

The aerostat went on rising, growing smaller and drifting toward Horta. ~~Everyone expressed his admiration,~~ ^{The crowd gaped in astonishment,} and bets were placed on where it would land.

The second part of the program included an unwonted event that made a lasting impression upon our hero.

Three bulls had been announced and were eagerly awaited, since they would provide a perfect conclusion, giving the setting. As Antoni de Montpalau felt not ^{of} attraction whatever to such grisly sports, he wished to leave but was won over by ~~his cousin's supplications,~~ ^{for}

^{who} Novau wished to watch the corrida and observe the mob's reactions. Being a good naturalist, Montpalau was repelled by gratuitous bloodshed.

The first bull came forth and, after the customary rites, it was slain and dragged from the arena amid contradictory exclamations. The sky had gradually clouded over and assumed a menacing aspect. Suddenly, a mysterious shadow appeared above the ring and descended in a bizarrely oscillating movement.

Then a bull black as night charged furiously into the ring. It stood there for a moment, panting before the spectators' fascinated ^{stares} gaze. Then it turned, as though seeking someone or something. It took a few steps and, unexpectedly, ran toward our friends, leapt over the wooden barrier, and, rearing up on its hind legs, ^{glared} stared straight at Antoni de Montpalau. Two fiery eyes were fixed upon our hero's

Everyone held his breath. The mysterious shadow thickened. One could hear the bull's heavy panting. The devil's dark presence was obvious to all. Then ^g alpha and omega sign appeared.

Suddenly the diabolical beast took a leap and disappeared. No one knew how or whether it had fled. Breathless, ^g red-faced guards combed every passageway. A great uproar arose, and people feared a repetition of the regrettable events of 1835.

These inexplicable occurrences were attributed to bad organization. On the morrow, The Commercial Echo published a harsh attack on the authorities, asking how, in an era of progress, such catastrophes could take place. It was truly lamentable.

VI: Parisian Airs

The theory of perfumes is ~~complicated~~ ^{vast} and ~~vast~~ ^{complex - To master it}. It requires, ~~moreover~~ ^{one needs}, long experience and a certain voluptuous sensuality. A good perfumer ~~must~~ ^{one needs} possess--among other things--taste, cultural refinement, agile intelligence, an elegant and assiduous manner with ladies, lively instincts and a well-bred and ~~precise~~ ^{attempt one's hand to} sense of smell. With such baggage, one may ~~try one's luck at~~ ^{attempt one's hand to} discriminating among perfumes, grasping their ~~exact~~ ^{exact} and elusive nuances and noting their defects and impurities. As everyone knows, rare is the perfume whose nature is simple and straightforward. A few, it is true, ~~are~~ ^{are} direct and can quickly be identified; but others, after a delicate sniff, require ^{a degree of} a spiritual concentration that ~~cannot be attained or~~ ^{at any rate} is attained with difficulty and then ~~only~~ ^{only} by blocking out the world and closing one's eyes. These, the most problematical, are infinitely varied. One could, however, divide them into two broad categories: ~~chilly~~ ^{chilly} and warm. Among the former, suggestive of shade and ~~coolness~~ ^{freshness}, one will happily recall those that embody--if it may be expressed thus--the sea or mountains, a ~~certain~~ ^{certain} grove, or simple ~~bushes~~ ^{soft trees and bushes} with intimate connotations: lavender, rosemary or ~~even~~ ^{even} pine. ~~all mixed together~~ ^{associated}. The warm ones are ~~identified~~ ^{identified} with certain persons, especially females, and are condemned to preachers and ecclesiastics in general, who find them overly erotic and ~~exciting~~ ^{stimulating}. One drop of such a perfume on a lace handkerchief can provoke devastating ~~tempests~~ ^{tempests} in the hearts of the lovelorn. Like a butterfly, this drop flies through the air, ~~unreachable~~ ^{unattainable} and cruel, swiftly precipitating misfortune and tears.

Misfortune and tears. Prince Lichnowsky, bivouacked on the out-

skirts of Vimbodí, sniffed the ~~fragrance~~ ^{perfumed} on a silk handkerchief and abandoned himself to a state of emotional disorder brought on by the thought of a certain fair lady. She was framed by an oval medallion that also held a lock of her hair. From time to time a horse whinnied, and the prince stopped to listen. Then the lady returned, like a delicately floating pavane, like ~~her that~~ ^{perfume} or a tear on a handkerchief. "La belle nuit d'amour." This suggestive name had been devised by Monsieur de Vendres, the Baron of Nézières's perfumer, and the lady had acquired it with demure ~~reluctance~~ ^{hesitation} that ~~all the same~~ ^{only} had been vanquished ^{by the sight of} when she saw another lady, elegant and fair, purchasing ~~another~~ ^a bottle without the slightest embarrassment. As a result of this encounter, they became close friends, but the lady framed by the medallion ~~remained anonymous~~ ^{was trapped} in Paris, subject to her brutal husband's tyranny, while the other ~~one~~ ^{to} set out for Barcelona, where she and a famous musician planned to embark for the enchanted isle of Majorca. Her name was Aurora Dupin, but she signed her books--for she was a well-known authoress--with the refined ~~but~~ ^{though} ambiguous pseudonym ^q "George Sand." The famous musician, who composed extraordinarily sensitive sonatas, was called, as everyone knows, Frederic Chopin.

Antoni de Montpalau ~~learned~~ ^{read} all this two days before their arrival ~~through a letter from his relative~~ ^{from in secret with his cousin}, the Baroness of Nézières. He repeated ~~it~~ ^{the news} at one of the Marquis de la Gralla's get-togethers, where it caused a sensation. After extensive debate, they resolved not to be overly scandalized by the couple's unusual situation, since Barcelona rarely harbored such illustrious guests. They all agreed, therefore, ^q to welcome the travelers with all the honors they deserved. The Marquis de la Gralla informed his friends that he would ~~organize~~ ^{hold} a scientific-artistic gathering at his palace, where he

hoped he could rely on their brilliant participation and especially that of his son Josep Ignasi, who would unveil his latest disconcerting invention: the pneumatic harp.

Everyone applauded enthusiastically. Antoni de Montpalau was chosen to reserve a hotel room, since, inasmuch as ^{the visitors} ~~they~~ were unmarried, no one could lodge them at his home or lend an official character to the event. He thought the Four Nations Inn ~~was~~ the most suitable and ^{up-to-date} ~~modern~~, though Barcelona's hotels in general were rather unsatisfactory at that time. ^T and Francesc Avinyó i Barba, the medical scholar who also manufactured ~~in~~ calico prints in Poble Nou, said he would pay for some refreshments at the Peru Café.

Antoni de Montpalau, after consulting Ferdinand de Lesseps, who because of his position preferred to remain on the sidelines, reserved a room and also arranged certain exquisite details that would surely please the two travelers' delicate sensibilities. With Novau's help, he visited all the ships that sailed for Majorca and made a list of those that seemed most comfortable and seaworthy.

Mademoiselle Dupin and Frederic Chopin arrived in Barcelona amid a cloud of dust, having caught the Mataró ^{stagecoach} ~~coach~~ at Arenys de Mar. Meanwhile, Prince Lichnowsky, with his cavalry squadron, plotted an especially dastardly and dangerous attack on one of the government's convoys to the besieged town of Solsona; and the ⁹ "aurea picuda," ⁹ of ineffable song, found a grove of cork trees that made a perfect nesting-place, far from men's prying and treacherous eyes. There it ^{its} ~~in-~~toned [^]inaudible melodies.

Antoni de Montpalau stepped forward and bowed deeply. Bells tinkled in the distance, along with Pyrenean chamois and lights flickering like lost moths, all spinning to the rhythm of a pianola.

The eagerly awaited couple had descended ~~from the stagecoach~~, showing their pleasure at the unexpected welcome. They were immediately ^{taken} escorted to the Four Nations Inn.

The Baroness of Néziars, in the cloud-enveloped villa she had named La Rochelle, smiled happily. Some salmon-colored clouds had appeared, ^{blown} pushed southward by the mistral. She sniffed a rose's fragrance and summoned Dentelle, her cocker spaniel, who was cynically raising a hind leg above a flower bed.

Hours later, in the Peru Café, the promised refreshment was served. Plates of ~~Catalan~~ ^{caramel} custard were accompanied by ladyfingers, almond cakes from Vendrell, cookies from Tortosa and Valencian orgeat. Only Mademoiselle Dupin attended, for Chopin--she said--was a trifle indisposed. She was charmed by the group's ~~friendliness~~ and cordiality and ~~she~~ showed her appreciation of the ~~Valencian~~ orgeat.

"C'est foutrement bon," she declared.

Her hosts froze, with their ladyfingers halfway to their lips. If they had understood her correctly, she had said something similar to the extremely unladylike Catalan word "fotre."

Aurora Dupin was neither fair nor ugly, but she was certainly both chic and fascinating. Highly intelligent. Despite her unconventional vocabulary, she spoke with great refinement. Chopin, on the other hand, was tall, melancholy and virtually silent. He greeted people, however, with great ceremony. They made a strange couple.

That evening, Antoni de Montpalau took a turn after supper to enjoy the cool night air. He wandered solitary through his aristocratic neighborhood's streets ^{which though aristocratic always} that smelled of damp and filth. He could hear his footsteps echoing dully on the pavement.

He walked along, lost in thought. He felt slightly sad. A bronze

bell solemnly tolled in a nearby steeple. He gazed at the sky and, after buttoning his frock coat, returned home.

A cat meowed despairingly.

1. 25. The quotation marks help point out that the poem, consisting of one extended statement by a single person, need not be regarded as autobiographical. As seen for example in "Notebook for Anna," Estel·les is given to describing imaginary love situations. See also the companion poem "No escric eglogues," which begins: "In Valencia there weren't legs like yours."
2. Josep Maria López Picó (Barcelona, 1886-1959), lyric poet, prose writer, editor, translator, public official. From 1910 on, a founder and adherent of the formalist and neoclassical noucentisme movement. His preciosity, artificiality, and Catholic bent stand at the opposite pole to the present poem.
3. Francisco Petrarca (1304-74), poet of courtly love par excellence.
4. Carlos Riba (Barcelona, 1893-1959), of classical and humanistic background, lyric poet, essayist, translator, teacher, lexicographer. His *Estel·les* (stanzas formed by a variable combination of hendecasyllables and hexasyllables), published in 1913-19 and a second volume in 1930, show a great concern for precise diction under the influence of French symbolism.
5. Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, Spanish Romantic poet (1836-70).

VII: The Pneumatic Harp

The Marquis de la Gralla threw a party worthy of his distinguished name. Apart from our hero and ~~these~~ ^{participants in} special guests, the ~~nucleus of~~ ^{were} his weekly gatherings ~~was~~ ^{There included} also present. ~~There was~~ Bartomeu Garriga, a sickly grammarian who had once met Jovellanos and who was currently working on toponymy. Because of some deformity, he always laughed out of one corner of his mouth. He usually smelled like apothecary's ointment and was not easy to get along with. Then came Segimon Ferrer, a remarkable mathematician who was writing a book entitled Mathematical Origins of the World and Its Creatures. He was ~~always~~ ^{constantly} quarreling with another regular, Father Pasqual Matons, author of a liberal book of sermons that had caused him considerable difficulties with the reactionary Catholic censorship. Out of gratitude for his services to the liberal ~~cause~~, the government had recently put forward his name for the bishopric of Murcia. The Young Restorer, ~~another~~ ^a periodical published by the Junta of Berga (and manipulated by his arch-enemy, Father Torredadella) fiercely and pitilessly attacked Matons. Also ~~among those~~ present was Doctor Samsó Corbella, an eminent and highly erudite gentleman whose sole weakness ^{chasing} was skirts--a fact that ^{gave rise to} ~~caused~~ ^{him} some hair-raising ~~domestic~~ and conjugal scenes. Then there was Francesc Avinyó, one of Poble Nou's captains of industry, who had paid for their refreshments at the Peru Café. Avinyó was decisive, efficient, and innovative. And finally, one should ^{mention} ~~add~~ Josep Ignasi, the marquis's eldest son, who at first glance appeared a bit mentally retarded but who had shown signs of uncommon mechanical and musical ingenuity. His latest invention was the pneumatic harp.

All these worthy members of the Marquis de la Gralla's circle

cavernous
found themselves gathered in his ~~large~~ reception room, which was only opened on special occasions--for example, when General Llauder had summoned the city's leading lights to the marquis's house (a meeting that ~~g~~ exasperated ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~more~~ ^{more} extremist elements and was one reason for the assassination of General Bassa and Llauder's subsequent flight). The walls were adorned with gold damask, and large mirrors hung above big marble fireplaces. In a corner near ~~the~~ ^a broad balcony that looked out ~~on~~ ^{upon} the street, one could admire the moment's supreme musical novelty: the pianoforte, which was well on its way to supplanting the clavichord. At Josep Ignasi's suggestion, it had been ordered from Paris, specially packed, and the Pleyel company had sent a tuner to assemble it in Barcelona, wielding his fork in the palace for an entire agonizing week.

Seated on a sofa facing the pianoforte were the guests of honor, the marquis, Antoni de Montpalau, and Father Matons, who pretended he hadn't heard the story of Mademoiselle Dupin and Monsieur Chopin. The others sat in a circle around Doctor Samsó Corbella or stood about in small groups. From time to time, they approached the sofa and ~~politely complimented them and~~ made polite conversation with the lady and her companion. After an animated discussion, and profiting from a moment's calm, the marquis signaled to ~~his son~~ ^{José Ignasi} while announcing that in honor of such a distinguished gathering and especially in homage to the famous artists he had the pleasure of seeing among them, his son, as he had already indicated, would play a few tunes on a pneumatic harp of his own invention, as he hoped to benefit from ~~the responses of those illustrious friends.~~

Some wigged footmen immediately entered bearing a litter on which, protected by a sheet, a large, deformed object could be seen.

Sweating and straining, they ^{lifted it up} ~~lifted it off the litter~~ placed it in the middle of the room, and stood there awaiting further orders. Then Josep Ignasi clapped his hands. The footmen, as though they had rehearsed the entire skit, unveiled the glittering pneumatic harp. In its basic structure, the machine resembled a normal harp, but with the difference that it was built into a large mahogany box equipped with some pedals from which a pipe of considerable dimensions rose. This pipe, in turn, branched out into smaller ones that vaguely recalled an organ. Each string on the harp corresponded to one of the pipes. All together, it was a most bizarre-looking contraption.

After bowing to the group, Josep Ignasi seated himself on a stool and placed his feet on the pedals. He began to pump them furiously, saying his first task was to expel the old air. And indeed, one heard a phenomenal sound of wind escaping through a thousand and one holes. Having concluded this operation, the Marquis de la Gralla's heir, still pumping, delicately positioned his hands on each side of the harp, gracefully leaned forward and, at the right moment, began an inspired rendering of Bellini's aria "Casta diva"--without the chorus, naturally.

It was a solemn ^{occasion} ~~moment~~. The machine produced a striking simultaneous double sound. Along with a kind of metallic vibration, one could make out the organ's somber and velvety tones. It was extraordinary.

The applause lasted a long time. Josep Ignasi modestly accepted Monsieur Chopin's ~~sm~~ congratulations and urged him to play one of his own compositions on the pianoforte. Chopin finally agreed--but not right away, as Segimon Ferrer was about to discourse on "The Mathematical Principle of ^{Coagulation} ~~Condensation~~ in the Origins of the Universe and the Earth in Particular." In a finely timbred voice and with great

conviction, Ferrer examined the various ~~existing~~ ^{coagulations} existant mathematical ~~congelations~~ ^{coagulation}, starting naturally with water and ending with an analysis of what he proposed to call "transmutational ~~congelation~~ ^{coagulation}." Finally, to crown his argument about the mathematical principle of ~~con-~~ ^{coagulation's} generative action, he produced a learned citation from Job: "Instar lactis me mulxisti, et instar casei coagulari permisisti."

This quotation sparked off a theological-scientific response from Father Matons, who inquired about the exact meaning, in regard to the generative principle, of mathematical ~~congelation~~ ^{coagulation} and thus turned the discussion toward strictly ~~theological~~ ^{religious} issues, on which he could discourse with great brilliance and logic.

Meanwhile, the guests frequently visited the buffet, though on tiptoe lest they disturb the fascinating dialogue. They repeatedly expressed their admiring approval, while also chewing as quietly as the could.

The controversy ended happily, in that neither party entirely bested the other. The most varied and stimulating laudatory pyrotechnics then burst forth. Mademoiselle Dupin declared that the marquis had no cause to envy the salons of Paris, and she would even go so far as to say that they lacked the élan of his gathering. She spoke excitedly, especially with Samsó Corbella and Antoni de Montpalau, and was shocked when she heard of the latter's strange adventures: that is, the attempted murder in Gràcia and the diabolical bull's inexplicable behavior.

Antoni de Montpalau calmed the refined authoress, attributing his unusual experiences to the turmoil in the land. This seemed to cover the first incident; in regard to the second, Montpalau explained, ~~the~~ Abbot Poncet's theory of the influence of thunder and other atmos-

pheric phenomena upon animals' nervous systems.

Someone called for silence. Finally, at the insistence of those present, Monsieur Chopin seated himself at the pianoforte.

He appeared pale and absorbed. He hesitated ~~for~~ ^I a few seconds. Then he began to play, seeming to caress the keys. An extraordinary music poured forth, whose existence no one had suspected until then. There was something poignant and light, with a deep, delicate, sublime melancholy. It was music of genius.

No one ~~present~~ ever forgot the impression made by that music, so intimate and yet so grand. It was a seed, silently sprouting in their hearts. It conjured into ~~existence everything that~~ ^{being a world of} latent ~~that now~~ ^{within the emotions} ~~feelings that only now~~ ^{into conscious awareness} broke through ~~to the surface of their feelings.~~

On the morrow, Aurora Dupin and Frederic Chopin set sail for Palma de Majorca aboard ~~The~~ ^A Majorcan, which belonged to Trullols.

They left behind some true friends who would ~~never forget~~ ^{always remember} them, ~~and~~ ^{as} ~~well as~~ ^{also} a touch of sadness. It was inevitable.

VIII: Natural History of Catalonia

Father Pere Gil of Reus, who entered the Society of Jesus at the age of twenty-three, wrote a monumental Treatise on the History or Natural Description of Those Things Native to Catalonia that remained in manuscript for a ~~very long time~~ ^{many years}. At the request of the ~~Royal~~ ^{Royal} Academy of Natural Sciences, Montpalau was preparing an annotated edition. Aware of this circumstance, Baron de Meer ^{asked} our hero for a petro-graphic report (~~as he planned to construct several fortresses~~ ^{who}), consisting of those parts referring to stones and minerals. Montpalau sent him chapter six, entitled "On the Variety, Nobility, Excellence and Value of Catalonia's Stone, ^{for} Both for Construction and for Other Services and Effects; and on Certain Precious Stones Found in Catalonia:"

"Since Catalonia, as was mentioned in the preceding chapter, is almost entirely or in its majority mountainous, it follows that it offers abundant stone for building, and certain plains like ~~those of~~ Urgell, Penedès, Vic, Cerdanya, etc., where no mountains can be found, possess excellent soil for making tiles and are provided with stone from nearby mountains, whereby handsome churches, public buildings, houses and towers are commonly found in Catalonia. So much so that all the cities, of which there are eleven, and all towns in which magistrates reside and all coastal towns and most or virtually all Mediterranean villages and many other places great and small possess splendid stone or brick walls with watchtowers, as will be discussed below in the second book. And since from a certain species ^{of} of heated stone lime and plaster are made, and this type of stone abounds throughout Catalonia, ^{also} since Catalonia has much sand because of its rivers ^{and} and streams, ~~as well as from the seashore~~, it follows that buildings are

~~constructed~~ ^{more solidly} both ~~better~~ and more easily ^{constructed} in Catalonia than in many other Spanish and European provinces and kingdoms. Catalonia should thank God for its stones, as He created them, ^{and since} ~~for~~ despite the fact that the countryside around Tarragona and in other parts of Catalonia provides extremely hard stone for building, there is also sandstone so soft that it can be cut with a metal saw and can be worked and smoothed so easily that stonecutters need only polish it."

At that moment, Antoni Montpalau rose from his seat and, finding himself alone, furiously scratched his crotch. Then he continued: "In Montserrat, Girona, and many other spots, one finds very hard stone that can easily be polished and used in building. Girona in particular possesses abundant stone that resembles marble but is slightly darker. It can be polished very smooth and may be used in fonts, large and handsome altars, and other ^{items} ~~things~~ of this sort."

"The stone quarried ^{from} ~~on Montjuïc~~ Montjuïc, a mountain near Barcelona, is famed throughout Catalonia. So much has been extracted without diminishing the mountain's size that many affirm that the stone grows, for otherwise ^{this} ~~the~~ mountain would have either disappeared or shrunk. Montjuïc offers various ~~and~~ grades of stone: some are so soft that they could almost be sawed, but other varieties range from hard to extremely hard. All of it, however, can be cut and worked fairly easily. It is well suited to every sort of structure, such as ^{battlements,} ~~towered~~ city walls, bastions, churches, palaces and private homes ^{made} ~~made~~ of rough stone ^{by} ~~but~~ whose windows, arches, and corners are of cut stone."

Our hero took the liberty of adding a critical note here, denying that Montjuïc could grow, at least in the manner implied by Gil, and citing the work of other eminent experts.

Then he continued his transcription: "A rock called "blackstone,"

found in the mountains around Tarragona, is very hard but easy to cut and polish and is far superior to black stone from Girona. Except for its color ~~which resembles marble~~ ^{it resembles marble} ~~is black rather than white~~. Much of the floor in Tarragona's cathedral is paved with this stone, which is also found in ~~parts of~~ certain chapels in the same cathedral: particularly those of Don Antoni Agustí and Don Joan Teres, Archbishop of Tarragona.

"Girona, as we have mentioned, possesses a sort of white marble, but it is darker than the marble cut and polished ~~around~~ ^{near} Genoa. In the mountains ~~near~~ ^{by} the monastery of Poblet, however, extremely fine white marble is quarried ~~which is little or hardly at all inferior~~ ^{that} to the Genoese.

"Jasper of assorted colors is quarried in the mountains around Tarragona. And said jasper can be seen in certain columns in Don Antoni Agustí's aforesaid chapel.

"But better jasper is quarried in the mountains ~~around~~ ^{near} Tortosa; such jasper is called brocaselle because it is streaked like brocatelle. Many handsome columns and other objects have been fashioned from this jasper, including a table and other ~~things~~ ^{items} at the Catalan Deputation's offices and in Don Antoni's chapel. Fine altar stones are made from this jasper and shipped to many parts of Catalonia, Spain, and Italy."

In the margin, Montpalau added another note on brocatelle, the Catalan Deputation, and Don Antoni Agustí, who was related to Baron de Meer on his mother's side. This also gave ~~the~~ ^{our} commentator a chance to praise the deputation's patriotism. It was all mixed up with a ~~strange~~ ^{episode involving} story about Philip IV, his ~~defenders~~ ^{partisans} and his ~~opponents~~ ^{enemies}. Montpalau lit a cigar and continued.

"Alabaster is a white, translucent stone quarried in many parts of Catalonia, especially in the mountains around Montblanc and Poblet,

though this variety is rather soft compared to the alabaster near Sant Magí. This excellent stone is used in chapel cornices and certain handsome sculpted images. It is also used in windows, for carefully selected alabaster, cut very thin, admits much light. Though the amount of light is not equal to what one could obtain with glass, alabaster is safer and less costly, and thus in the Reus Church and others in Tarragona and Catalonia one finds elegant alabaster windows, both painted and unpainted, that admit much light and keep out more cold and wind than glass. Altar stones for very fine altars are made from alabaster. They have only one defect: hard blows can more easily crack them than altar stones of jasper or marble, which are stronger."

This passage was followed by a description and study of rock crystals and precious stones like diamonds, emeralds, rubies, ~~pearls~~, turquoises, amethysts, agates, etc. that Montpalau omitted in the belief that it would not interest Baron de Meer. ~~Nonetheless~~, as he approached the end of this ~~section~~ section, his eye fell upon a passage that made him start. It was about ~~red agate~~ ^{read} "Red agates, which in Italian are called Mcorneline, ~~are~~ commonly known in Catalonia as "staunchbloods" because they will stop bleeding from the nose, mouth, or private parts. Splendid red agates are found in Catalonia near La Pobleta. One of their virtues is that they ~~will~~ ^{put} put vampires to flight."

A wicked cackle was heard. It was, as always, a sinister omen.

IX: A Mysterious Letter

The next day, Antoni de Montpalau received a hastily ~~written~~ ^{scribbled} ~~message~~ ^{note} from the Marquis de la Gralla ~~begging~~ ^{urging} him to come as soon as he could. It was a matter of great importance.

Our hero found the marquis in an extremely agitated state. He paced to and fro in his study. He was ~~wrapped in~~ ^{wearing} a striped silk dressing gown the color of tobacco. ~~Upon seeing~~ ^{Beholding} Montpalau, he opened his arms and exclaimed: "At last, my dear friend! Please sit down, and thank you for coming so promptly! Something truly extraordinary has occurred. I've also summoned Samsó Corbella, Father Matons, the ~~philologist~~ ^{Bartomeu} Garriga and ~~Segimon~~ ^{Segimon} Ferrer. If you don't mind, I'll wait till they arrive to tell you what it's all about. I think I'll feel a bit more comfortable that way."

Though his curiosity had been roused, Montpalau obeyed. Soon Ferrer, Garriga and Corbella appeared. The last to arrive was the majestic priest, whom the marquis seated at his desk so he could preside over the ~~meeting~~ ^{Proceedings}. He was half-hidden, however, by a magnificent Koeleria vilosa pers, a species named after the eighteenth-century German botanist Georg Ludwig Koeler, author of Descriptio Graminum Galliae et Germaniae. The canon moved his chair a little to the right and, with a clear view, sat back and prepared to listen. In fact, they were all on tenterhooks. The marquis, who had remained standing, enjoyed prolonging their anticipation. Finally he said:

"Dear friends, you all know ^{that} I have a sister, Baron d'Urpí's widow, who lives with her daughter in an isolated mountain village ~~on~~ ^{surrounded} my former brother-in-law's vast estate. ^{Because of her widowhood and} ~~the great love they bore each other~~ ^{After his death the barren death} my sister, in a fit of mystical

devotion to his memory, broke off all social relations and, ~~living~~ ^{leading} the life of a recluse, ~~has~~ ^I spent nearly fifteen years, to the virtual exclusion of all other matters, performing works of charity and managing ~~her~~ ^{her properties} lands. Indeed, for some time she had scarcely written to me, so distant had she grown from the world and its concerns. Before I forget, I should add that my sister lives in a village called Pratdip, not far from Mola de Falset."

Montpalau started. He asked: "What did you ~~just~~ ^I say?"

"Pratdip," replied the marquis, fixing Montpalau with a glance somewhere between severe and puzzled. Then he continued: "My sister had not written for over two years. Yesterday I received a missive that was no simple family letter full of ~~these~~ ^{the} minor domestic details and allusions that such letters normally contain but rather, dear gentlemen, a cry of anguish from a poor woman pleading for help, humbly and fearfully, against a peril both mysterious and--I would venture to add--supernatural, though my scientific convictions (begging Father Matons's pardon) forbid me to employ this adjective before conducting an investigation of the phenomenon in situ. Obviously, this letter greatly interests us as scientists, and I can ~~declare~~ ^{affirm} without the slightest ~~hesitation~~ ^{reservation} that if the facts ~~there~~ ^{recounted} ~~presented~~ ^{therein} are true, then, beloved friends, Providence has deposited the affair of the century in our ~~hands~~ ^{laps} to the perpetual glory of Catalan ~~learning~~ ^{scholarship}."

Having spoken thus, the marquis picked up a letter that lay among ~~the~~ ^{some} papers on ~~the~~ ^{the} table. He cleared his throat and read it slowly and emphatically:

"To Josep Martí i Llubra, Marquis de la Gralla

"Dear brother,

"I know that, upon receiving this letter, you will wonder what

leads me to write after such ⁹ a long silence and that, although your heart is generous and loving, you may well and ~~am~~ deservedly reproach me before opening it. I apologize, beloved brother, and, setting aside the reasons I might adduce but lack the strength to enumerate, I beg you to heed the voice of a poor tormented woman who~~k~~ together with her daughter and this village's inhabitants, beseeches you, as a representative of Science and learning--since the governmental authorities have proven utterly unavailing--as desperately as I may to succor those menaced by a dreadful danger.

"For nearly a month now, we have lived in terror and apprehension. The villagers had always whispered about the Dip; but it was something so illogical, monstrous, and improbable that neither I nor my husband (may he rest in peace) ever paid ^{them} any notice. This strange being's origins are lost in the mists of time, and everyone speaks of ^{him} it, at least to outsiders, as an evil legend. In people's minds, however, the true lord of this land was and ~~still is~~ ^{remains} the Dip, endowed with the capacity to survive the passing centuries and who, from time to time, appeared ³ out of nowhere to claim his blood rights. He only sallies forth by night because people say he is a corpse by day. No one knows, however, who or what the Dip is, for he is ~~also~~ ^{possesses} endowed with many natures: wolf, bat, scorpion and God knows how many more. The sole remedy known hereabouts is purslane, but purslane quickly wilts and our supply is soon exhausted.

↓ Excuse the incoherence of this letter. I truly fear that I shall go mad, for the Dip--or whoever he may be--has returned. Every morning we find a dead villager with ~~all~~ ¹ the blood drained from his body and two small holes in his neck. Everyone, including the mayor, the constable, and Father Anton, lives in fear. 'Whose turn will ~~be~~ it be

tonight?' we ^{wonder} ~~ask~~ despairingly. When I ask myself this question, as you may imagine, beloved brother, I ^{think of} ~~especially look at~~ my daughter, the niece whom you so often dandled upon your knee.

"For the sake of your sister, who ~~looked after~~ ^{thought of} you when you were young, for the memory of this child of whom you once were so fond, and above all for the love of Almighty God, come as quickly as you can, that the ~~brilliant~~ light of your intellect may ^{illumine} ~~clarify~~ this mystery and deliver us therefrom.

"Your sister who implores you,

"Remei

"Baroness d'Urpí ✓

Having completed his reading, with tears in his eyes, the Marquis de la Gralla gazed around at his stunned and ~~motionless~~ ^{silent frozen} listeners. He said: "Well, gentlemen. I believe it's time to offer our opinions."

Segimon Ferrer, who greatly admired Voltaire, was surely about to make some impertinent remark to Matons, whom he glanced at nastily, but the philologist Bartomeu Garriga took the floor first.

"Hust a moment," he said. "Before any of our illustrious colleagues offers his views on such ~~an~~ exceptionally singular events, I believe that, possessing a certain knowledge of etymology and toponymy, I should first clarify the significance of this wicked personage's name. In fact, the term "Dip" comes from Arabic, where it means "savage being" and is frequently used in the sense of jackal, greedy for blood. The correct etymology of the name "Pratdip," therefore, would be "Prat del Dip"--in other words, ~~the~~ "glen inhabited by the being whom we all seek to identify."

Breaking the ice of their initial astonishment, the philologist's statement ^{set off} ~~provoked~~ a tumultuous controversy. Everyone trembled with

emotion. They weighed the situation's ins and outs, speaking with grandiose gestures.

Antoni de Montpalau remained silent and thoughtful, seated in his chair. Suddenly he rose and called for silence: "Calm yourselves, gentlemen. As a naturalist, I cannot accept the existence of such diabolical beings, nor does the Church ^{acknowledge} ~~admit~~ them. But we find ourselves faced with a case that science must clarify. Let us behave, therefore, ^{like} ~~as~~ scientists ^{should}. We must not be carried away by our emotions and preconceptions. We must investigate, as always. We must coolly investigate. God has given us a potent ^{and} matchless weapon: reason. We must use it to explain what at first ^{seems} ~~appears~~ inexplicable. But that this may occur, reason--or more exactly, science--must directly illumine the phenomenon. ~~immediately~~ We must go that strange village and ^{carefully} ~~closely~~ examine the evidence so dramatically ^{described} ~~recounted~~. We must go to Pratdip."

Everyone applauded our hero's ~~word~~ wise words. He was warmly congratula^d. The marquis said that, in reality, it was the only sensible course of action and, since they could not all go as a group, they ^{should} appoint someone ~~whom~~ ^{they} trusted. And as he himself could not ~~go~~, being related to the ^{afflicted} ~~affected~~ parties, and virtually all the others were too old and infirm, they must ask the only person in good health and also endowed with youth and wisdom ^{to} ~~undertake the honorable task~~.

As the marquis spoke these words, ~~all~~ ^{those} present fixed their eyes upon Antoni de Montpalau. He again rose and, placing his hand upon his heart, solemnly said: "I shall go to Pratdip."

Then our hero was embraced by his companions. A great love of science and progress united them. Matons blessed him with all the Church's paternal solicitude. ~~Everyone~~ felt satisfied.

In a grove of cork trees, the Aurea picuda again intoned its

silent and exquisite song.

DISSEMINATION

All plans made (or contemplated) for the eventual publication of the proposed translation should be noted.

TRANSLATIONS ELIGIBLE FOR EXCESS CURRENCY (PL-480) FUNDS

Applications involving travel to and work in India should also be sent to the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIES), 1130 East 58th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

Applicants with proposals involving travel to and work in Pakistan should obtain separate application materials from the Office of Fellowships and Grants, Smithsonian Institution, L'Enfant Plaza 3300, Washington, D.C. 20560, Mail Stop 217.

These offices consider requests for Excess Currency (PL-480) funds.

anticipated quality of the completed project. A photocopy of the original text from which the sample was taken should also be submitted. If these copies are not completely legible—as is often the case of photocopies of a holograph—transcription should be included. The annotation will be evaluated on the basis of its accuracy, coherence, and appropriateness.

Note: Applications submitted without such samples of translation and original text will not be accepted for evaluation.

GRANT PERIOD

Applicants should plan to complete a translation by the end of the grant period, which may be up to three years. Where the work is of unusual length, or where an edition must also be produced, applicants should give an estimate of the total time needed for completion.

PLAN OF WORK

Applicants must provide specific descriptions of the responsibilities of all professional personnel, including those of consultants, and their current work should be attached to the application.

For a multi-year proposal, applicants should provide a schedule of work for each year.

READER FOR TRANSLATION

Where applicants judge that a reader for the completed translation is necessary, they may select a competent scholar to act in this capacity. The name and qualifications of this reader should be submitted and a curriculum vitae included.

X: Botany, Zoology, History

This ~~mandate~~^{heightened} from the Marquis de la Grallàs circle ~~sharpened~~^{sharpened} Antoni de Montpalau's naturally acute sense of responsibility. Intending to carefully prepare for his expedition, he first tried to discover that mysterious village's exact ~~location~~^{whereabouts}. He consulted ~~extremely~~^{wounded} detailed maps whose routes ~~seemed to wend their way~~^{wended} among high mountains and gorges and whose subreptitious rivers, of bizarre aufractuosity, flowed between banks ~~covered~~^{He} with slippery lichen. ~~One~~^{He} saw miniature nativity scenes and shadowy ravines, as through a telescope, and imagined a sylvan beauty that seemed to have ~~escaped~~^{escaped} from a book of prints.

He studied the native flora and fauna. He carried out deep and carefully ~~considered~~^{pondered} geological research. He learned about underground streams of sulfurous waters, ~~and calculated~~^{calculating} the quantity of ~~their~~^{their} malign vapors ~~they implied~~^{they implied} and what influence they might have upon the inhabitants' psyches.

Beneath a bell jar, he slowed the flight of a Vampiris diminutus and ~~scrutinized~~^{scrutinized} the geometry of its circular trajectory as he could not have done, owing to its rapidity, in the open air. He was especially intrigued by this mammal, as it was linked in popular mythology with the final object of his study. Montpalau knew that folk beliefs, stripped of ~~their~~^{legend} and fantasy, always had a solid basis. For this reason--though retaining his critical spirit--he prepared himself for every eventuality, poring over not only the famous Treatise on Geniture but Collin de Plancy's Philinion and Friar Calmet's Dissertation sur les apparitions des anges, des démons et des esprits et sur les revenants et vampires, published by the Sorbonne.

He analyzed the Balkan legend according to which, just as underground streams influence the living, likewise buried corpses remain active in the outer world. Remnants of life keep the blood from coagulating and make the cheeks stay rosy, like two ^{deathly} flowers ~~of death~~. In regard to ~~the~~ effects upon the living, the defunct's capillary vessels develop an excess of energy. Life, which seemed to vegetate, reappears in all its vigor. The corpse, however, once in touch with its victim, produces a contrary effect just as a magnet polarizes iron. A nervous relationship is established at a distance. Since the vampire has not yet begun to decompose, the virus seeks an organism in harmonious correlation to which it may transmit its contagion. Just as buried metal and underground streams seek the light, so the undead ⁹ seeks, above all, to reestablish links with the living. Thus is a living man possessed by death.

Montpalau researched all these matters, racing against the clock since his intention was to set out immediately. He flung himself into a frenzy of activity, checking and piling up the most outlandish hypotheses as points of reference. Novau, who was very excited, told his cousin that he wished to join him in this adventure. The mountain air would do him good. Amadeu, the coachman, whom Montpalau had often forced to be a captive audience for his monologues and in whom he had inculcated a religious love of science, also showed his enthusiasm. He immediately told the cook ^{that he would accompany his master} ~~about it~~, and she told all the other servants. That evening, as he picked at a chicken thigh she had delicately offered him, he ~~man~~ delightedly saw the deferential and admiring respect in their eyes. He had risen several steps in the social hierarchy.

Last of all, our hero visited his friend Baron de Meer, the cap-

tain general. The baron, who had been apprised of the affair, gave him a special safe-conduct for all Catalonia. They had a long private chat in the captain's office. ^{When} ~~As~~ they parted, de Meer wished his friend good luck.

As Montpalau left, he beheld a strange spectacle. Some Hungarian gypsies, dressed in ~~brightly-colored~~ ^{gaily} and picturesque rags, were making a black bear ~~dance~~ and a goat with enormous twisted horns dance to the beat of a tambourine. The monotonous percussion had an enervating effect. A circle of onlookers watched the plantigrade's slow and graceless ^gyrations. Montpalau didn't know why, but he sensed ^gthat the fantastic goat was staring at him intently. It was a look he recognized.

Montpalau decided to set out as soon as possible--that is, the following morning--for Pratdip.

présentent mateix qui en presenta la realitat. S'escala ara
 un d'aquells moments en què hom mateix fa seva importan-
 cia, trio, domos, amb elegància, una part d'aquell vol i no
 l'expresso sense dir res, miren a la llum. Després de
 la paraula indigestible, allà el general, m'acosta de la

PART TWO

Però mentre en retro reviu l'escena, amb tot el que
 té de grotesc, i no n'overgeyelo, en tres un profund
 diàmetre. I és que l'home realitat tot el que li atorga
 la veritat. M'he d'aplicar a l'origen de la despullar-me'n
 com d'una escassa despulla, per aproximar-me al fons de
 les coses, segur que hores amb tal purificació en serà
 donat d'entrevista-les. Encara no he arribat al peu de
 l'escala que ja he concebut un pla decòrit de reforme.
 Pràcticament els exercicis clàssics: domini poc i lliure-se
 amb l'alba, pensar constantment en una mateixa cosa, molt
 simple, privar-se de menjar i de tot refinament, castigar
 el cos, posant-se al cal pedres a les espatles, o punxes a
 la cama, s'afegir-se sempre poc, o massa, menjar fat o
 salat, no sucre, estar-se amb els ulls tancats o sobre un
 sol peu, acostumar-se els dits amb espelmes, tota aquesta
 violència a un instant de mol-llista es ven aviat compensada
 quan, de tant aïllar un peu, els dos deixen alguns moments

I: Monsieur Laborde's Itinerary

"One leaves Barcelona through Saint Anthony's Gate. After ~~passing~~ ^{traversing} through some tilled fields, one turns inland, with the sea on the left, and sets out along a broad, straight highway lined by leafy trees through which one can glimpse various towns on either side: Sants, Sant Boi, Sarrià, Sant Just and Esplugues. The traveler quickly passes through Hospitalet and reached Sant Feliu, a ~~large~~ and populous town ~~flanked by handsome dwellings~~ ^{where the main street is} flanked by handsome dwellings. Shortly after leaving Sant Feliu, one sights Molins de Rei on the right and arrives at an inn of the same name. Then one follows a short avenue lined ~~with~~ ^{by} poplars till one reaches a bridge over the Llobregat. This recently built bridge is very solid, though a bit inelegant, and has a pedestrian walk on either side. ~~The traveler~~ ^{the traveler} ~~continues~~ ^{continues} down the avenue till it ends, ~~and on the left, one sees~~ ^{he the traveler will} the road to Tarragona and Valencia ^{on his left}."

This description of the outskirts of Barcelona is taken from that great voyager Alexandre de Laborde's Itinéraire descriptif d'Espagne, a work in which, after offering the reader a vision of the kingdom's ^g various industries, the author makes a special recommendation. "Il est nécessaire cependant, ~~he says~~ ^{he says}, "d'être bien armé en voyageant en Espagne." The book ^{enjoyed} ~~was a~~ great success among Europe's educated classes, and in 1809 a second edition ^{was} ~~had to be~~ printed.

The dust was of the highest quality. It filtered through every crack and crevice and stuck in our friends' throats. The young naturalist, accompanied by his cousin the frigate captain Isidre de Novau, was driven along at a terrific clip by his coachman Amadeu. This had only one drawback: that given the road's lamentable state,

it made the coach rattle and jolt in a most disagreeable fashion. The travelers could scarcely speak because the shaking affected even their vocal chords and jaws, producing a temporary stutters that ^{frequently} made their words ~~frequently~~ unintelligible. Novau, who had assumed the role of quartermaster for the expedition, had followed Laborde's advice and packed, ~~along with their usual luggage,~~ not only the two customary pistols but also three magnificent, well-oiled, brand-new English rifles. Moreover, impressed by those Balkan legends about vampires, he had bought ten gross of small mirrors and ^{pectoral} crosses ~~to wear around their necks.~~ He also planned, as soon as they reached Vilafranca, to purchase as much garlic as he could find, since that town, together with Banyoles, was the ^{lilaceous} main market ~~for the lilacea.~~

They drove through ~~mm~~ a large piney wood on the way to Ordal. The air was perfumed. The dark green trees clustered on the ^{hill} ~~mountain~~ sides. Occasionally they would glimpse a bare rock or a landslide that had occurred who knows how long ago, probably in ancient times, occasioned by remote geological factors. Not long ago they had enjoyed the company, seen from various angles, of Montserrat's imposing bulk, described by Laborde, invoking Humboldt, as remarkable for "la composition, la conformation, l'arrangement et la position des rochers dont elle est couverte. C'est un composé de pierres calcaires, de sable, et d'autres cailloux unis ensemble avec un mortier, et formant l'espèce d'agglomération connue des naturalistes sous le nom de pouding."

They had passed the hamlet of Palma and the Xipreret and Lledoner Inns and were heading toward Ordal, still at a furious pace. Novau, who always felt happy in the open air, waved his handkerchief every time they passed a farmhouse or saw people on the road.

"Nature's wonderful!" he exclaimed. "Hurrah for nature!"

Their pace had now slackened. The road twisted and turned, clinging to the sheer and stony mountainside. Rocks of granitic aspect loomed up, along with dangerously steep cliffs. The horses sweated beneath the sun, their ~~mm~~ sleek hides glistening. Montpalau rested his silver-headed walking stick on the carriage floor and contemplated the district's strange configuration. A jumble of disconnected thoughts went through his head, upon which the Avutarda geminis superimposed itself, unknown and undetermined, confused with a certain bizarre, deformed, and monstrous presence. He carefully avoided formulating its disagreeable name.

At last they reached the mountain's crest. Through the shimmering heat, they spied Barcelona in the distance. They stopped at the New Inn, where their horses drank while they dipped almond cookies in sweet wine. A few wagoners were there, all cursing uproariously.

The road became smoother and the landscape softened. In Vilafranca, Novau bought a huge quantity of braided garlic that they loaded on top of the carriage. ~~Something strange~~ Something strange then occurred, utterly indefinable, a kind of dazzling, blinding tension, as the liliaceae's sharp odor spread through the air. While his cousin was shopping, Antoni de Montpalau took a stroll through the walled town, which contained a military governor, a mayor, eight aldermen, a big parish church, three monasteries and one convent. He visited the Virgin of Sorrows' Chapel, famed throughout the ~~district~~^{area}. He counted twelve distilleries devoted to the production of brandy. Monsieur Laborde believed the town had been founded by General Hamilcar Barca, who had named it Cartago Vetus because it was the first Carthaginian colony on the peninsula.

They dined sumptuously at Beco's Inn and continued on their way. A great drowsiness stole over them as they slowly digested their

meal, and they dozed off until late in the afternoon.

They drove through vast vineyards. The setting sun's oblique rays illumined the graceful leaves; the grapes turned golden in the soft ~~evening~~ evening light. They were small, polished beads, distilling all the earth's sweetness. Twisted vines laden with fruit stretched away to the horizon. From time to time, a cart would emerge from a lane or smoke would rise, vague, distant, and weightless. Peace floated in the air and gently enfolded the landscape. The road was protected by a double row of huge plane trees whose foliage was so thick that it formed a kind of long, vaulted tunnel. Occasionally, they passed an irrigation ditch full of pitch-black water on whose surface ^{they saw} ~~floated~~ a leaf or ~~some of~~ those waterbugs peasants call "weavers." Then the frogs would suddenly fall silent, and when the ~~noisy~~ horses approached would swiftly leap into the water with unexpected little splashes.

As they rounded a bend, they caught sight of Arboç's rooftops and steeple. Night was falling. Antoni de Montpalau thought it imprudent to venture further and decided to end their first lap in that town.

They entered Arboç through the Barcelona Gate. At the inn, they were most favorably impressed by the cleanliness that the mistress, a pretty girl named Pepeta Freixes, had imposed. They chose their rooms and spoke for a while with Pepeta, who was friendly and hospitable. Pepeta saw to all their needs and served them a cordial, very stimulating and efficacious after a day on the road. She said it was made ^{from} ~~with~~ a secret recipe she'd inherited from her mother, may she rest in peace.

To pass the time and whet their appetites, the two young relatives went out to stretch their legs and stroll about. It was a very neat town, with all its houses brightly whitewashed. They were surprised to see such an abundance of women. The girls, all of them lovely, sat

^{the} in doorways ~~weaving lace~~ ^{making} Wherever the two friends went, they could hear bobbins clicking. Everyone was ~~wearing~~ ^{wearing} lace. The lacemakers chatted with each other across the streets and smiled, ~~staring~~ saucily at our two young and handsome gentlemen. A little embarrassed, they wandered among all those women, stealing shy glances at the prettiest hands and faces. They agreed that, though Monsieur Laborde had scarcely mentioned it, the town of Arboc should be known far and wide as ~~among~~ ^{one of} Catalonia's most ~~delightful~~ and charming spots and, moreover, highly suitable for a relaxed vacation.

Unfortunately, our friends lacked time for such peaceful repose, since in truth, it was urgent that they quickly reach their destination. Lamenting this regrettable circumstance, ~~the two gentlemen~~ ^{they} returned to the inn with those bobbins still ^{gaily} clicking in their ears.

II: Bandits

Just before daybreak, Novau and Montpalau set out again on their journey. ~~Despite~~ ^{Though} the ~~cool~~ ^{was cool} morning air, they had been ~~warmed~~ by some big mugs of steaming milk and enormous slices of buttered toast.

~~Not~~ Far away, Lichnowsky, who was suffering from insomnia, also ~~awoke~~ rose. That morning he felt especially jumpy. He meticulously folded his blanket and, leaning against an oak, lit a cigar while he ~~stared~~ contemplated the rising sun. One of his men, who had stood watch on a ^{high} moss-covered boulder, came and whispered something in his ear. The ~~prince~~ sheathed his saber and, followed by his man, entered the woods, where they crouched down and waited. A lark sang.

Everything was quiet. The horses, however, whinnied nervously. Amadeu did his best to control them. Montpalau opened ^a the window, leaned out, and asked if anything was amiss. ~~One~~ ^{They} could ~~scarcely~~ ^{hardly} see, ^{they} for the morning light had just begun to dispel the darkness. All ~~one~~ could hear was the horses' whinnies and their uneasy trot. Novau loaded the pistols.

They had crossed the Gornal, beneath the picturesque Maidens' House, and were halfway to Bellvei. The landscape was so deserted ~~at that hour~~ ^{It} that it seemed uninhabited. They ~~could~~ ^{began} to make out the outlines of things, which came forth slowly and uncertainly, as from an underground ~~cave~~ ^{burrow}. Suddenly a cry rang out, followed by some shots that flashed from a grove of stunted trees.

~~Without thinking~~ Amadeu whipped the steeds, which broke into a gallop. There was no doubt that someone was after them, for soon they spied ten or twelve riders in hot pursuit. Then day broke and they could clearly see a disorderly band ~~of armed men~~. Since they wore no uniforms, one thing was certain: they were not government

troops and at best might be Carlists, though their appearance suggested ~~common bandits~~ ^{ordinary brigands}. Antoni de Montpalau and his ~~valiant~~ ^{brave} cousin hesitated not an instant. They started firing alternately through the two windows, producing a certain ~~confusion~~ ^{disarray} among the attackers, who had not anticipated such a ~~determined~~ ^{resolute} response.

Man is forged in battle and in love. The battle must be just; the love must be pure. Otherwise virility will foundered on the rocks of abjection and remorse. Meditating on these exalted and noble themes, Prince Lichnowsky watched clouds scurry across well-known ~~skies~~ ^{landscapes} above ~~lands~~ ^{dear} close to his heart, but in fact, they were absurdly distant and unreal. The prince felt a vague ~~certainty~~ ^{premonition} that something was occurring somewhere, something his chivalrous soul reproved. Lichnowsky had been raised according to harshly ~~inflexible~~ ^{rigid} military ideals in ~~his~~ ^{the} princely ~~Castell de Sant Joan~~ ^{Graetz} Castle.

The carriage ~~rolled~~ ^{tore} along at a furious clip. Unexpectedly, a wagon ~~overflowing~~ ^{piled high} with hay appeared, blocking their ~~way~~ ^{path}. Amadeu calmly maneuvered the horses off the road and set out across the fields. Montpalau, between shots, ordered him to drive the carriage onto a hill to their right. There they would defend themselves properly.

And indeed, once they had reached the indicated ~~position~~ ^{spot} and were armed with those high-precision English rifles, they decided to follow Marshal Vauban's rules. Amadeu climbed onto the roof ~~behind~~ ^{amid} the garlic, Novau crept between the wheels, and our hero remained at the window. Once three lines of fire had been established, the attackers' situation became a trifle uncomfortable, since this tactic proved to be highly efficacious.

After a fruitless charge, beaten back by our friends' marksmanship, the unknown pursuers changed their ~~own~~ ² tactics. They dis-

mounted and took up positions all around the carriage, though at a prudent distance from it.

This ^{was not at all to} pleased Antoni de Montpalau ^{liking,} ~~not one jot~~, for he calculated that ~~in this fashion~~ they might spend ten days as ~~measly~~ as ten minutes trapped there--a thought that had little appeal, given the circumstances. Ideally, faced with such well-organized resistance, ~~the enemy~~ ^{their foes} would have beat a retreat--an orderly one if you like--and abandoned ~~its~~ ^{their} initial plan ~~to capture them~~ ^{of attack}. ~~Anything~~ else seemed to place ~~them~~ ^{our friends} in grave jeopardy.

As ~~our hero~~ ^{Montpalau} had foreseen, six hours later the situation remained unchanged. That is ~~to say~~, it had worsened. Amadeu shouted that he was running out of ammunition. Novau cursed, lamenting his awkward position between the wheels, which caused him cramps and other, ~~less important~~ ^{more trivial} inconveniences. Montpalau wondered whether a desperate sally would not be ~~best~~ ^{better}. ~~Anything~~ rather than be trapped like rats.

Just when fortune seemed to forsake our friends, a bugle sounded. Almost simultaneously, a volley startled the besiegers of that improvised fortress. Behind them, ~~coming from the road~~, a battalion of the queen's infantry advanced in formation, commanded by a valiant ~~brigadier~~ brigadier. The besiegers found themselves in a tight spot, and though at first they prepared to resist, they soon abandoned the effort, ~~for~~ the officer, showing his skill and courage in a calm but devastating maneuver, was about to cut off their only ^{means} escape ~~route~~. In view of this development, the unknown attackers mounted their steeds, which they had left behind ~~the shelter~~ ^{a barrier} of calcarious nature, and fled in shameful disarray.

Montpalau and his friends stood up, cheered the victorious

troops, and ran to embrace the valiant captain who had saved their lives. From a nearby ridge, a solitary horseman contemplated the scene.

A sigh of relief, like a butterfly, like a disintegrating wisp, took flight. The prince mounted his steed. Once again, he felt sure of himself. A pine branch trembled imperceptibly, while a squirrel, with nervous movements, gnawed a cone. A strong smell of wet earth rose.

Our friends were taken to the walled town of Vendrell, where they slept ^{at} in the National Militia's headquarters. Everyone treated them with great solicitude, and the mayor delivered a passionate ^{liberal} speech. Antoni de Montpalau said he had no ^g idea whether their ^{mysterious} attackers were affiliated with any group. He felt ^{there} ~~they~~ was a certain resemblance, however, to that unexpected assault in Gràcia.

Speaking with the brigadier who had rescued them, Montpalau asked if he thought the assailants were Carlists.

"Never!" he replied. "I fight the Carlists ^{not only} ~~both~~ out of conviction ^{but} and by profession. An attack on civilians is, according to the Eliot Convention, an act of brigandage. Don't forget, however, that there are bandits who disguise themselves as Carlists."

They went on conversing for a while. ^g The day's emotions, however, had been exhausting, and since on the morrow they had to continue their journey, Montpalau decided to retire to bed.

He said goodbye to the valiant brigadier, who was setting off that evening to relieve the ^{siege} ~~siege~~ of Ripoll. Suddenly, Montpalau resolved to write to Baron de Meer, describing the officer's brave conduct and urging his promotion.

"Your name?" inquired Montpalau. "I ask, of course, in order to

remembers it
~~recall~~ in forever in undying gratitude."

"Joan Prim i Prats," the brigadier replied, snapping to attention and saluting.

That night, Montpau and his friends *nostalgically recalled* the wonderful cordial made by Pepeta Freixes in Arboç.

III: On the Path to Adventure

The sun shone brilliantly. The Young Observer, however, published this somber note:

"Catalans: The ^{infamous} usurpers, ^{conscious} ~~convinced~~ ^{aware} of their impotence and impending destruction, ~~infamous from the start~~, vile and cowardly by nature, instead of begging our beloved sovereign for mercy have ~~stopped~~ to absurd intrigues in order to sow ~~despair~~ and uncertainty among us.

"This royal junta has brought to light the bizarre ^{machinations} ~~behavior~~ of a certain self-styled naturalist, well known for his nefarious liberal views, who, for unknown but dubious scientific reasons, ^{seeks} ~~is trying~~ to infiltrate our ranks in the company of another personage and a servant. This publication, which proudly deems itself your leading organ, ^{filled with admiration for} ~~admiring~~ your heroic virtues and unsullied loyalty, will confound such wicked schemers, proving that your breasts harbor but two sentiments: love of God and love of king. The junta, therefore, will take all necessary ^{precautions} ~~measures~~. Catalans: ~~in~~ its members, proud to be sons of this country, where laurel ^{bushes} sprouts everywhere, watered by your ardent blood, determined to triumph or perish in your company, certain that you will justify its sentiments, will ^{keep you informed of all further} ~~inform you of all such~~ ^{any other} ~~any further~~ ~~treachery~~ ~~desperate maneuvers~~. Our noble Catalan spirit scorns such lowly intensions--Royal Junta of Berga."

^{wicked plots} ~~Immediately following~~, ^{astute} ~~to~~ compensate for Antoni de Montpalau's evil intentions--since as the ^{then} ~~curious~~ reader will have surmised, this article was about him--The Young Observer printed an impassioned sonnet:

Salve, salve, o beloved ^{monarch} ~~king~~!

Long live ^{King} Charles, ^{victorious} ~~both glorious~~ and great!

minions
Thy valiant ~~minions~~, filled with righteous hate
Have spilled their pure blood, to thy banner rallying.

The ~~perfidious~~ traitor brazenly tried
To rise up against ~~you~~, ^{these} haughty and proud;
But on this day, with martial clamor loud
We ~~have~~ bested our foes with ardor and pride.

Engrave ⁱⁿ on marble and bronze the story:

Unforgettable deeds of combat and war
That ~~have decided~~ ^{will soon determine} the fate of Spain

And donning the laurels of victory's glory,

^{Hasten} Fly to Madrid, o worthy conqueror,

Preceded by the love of a people free again.

Unaware of the Junta of Berga's diatribe against himself and his companions, Antoni de Montpalau, having recovered ~~in Vendrell~~ from

the previous day's mishaps, ^{now} strolled with Novau through the streets

of Tarragona. They wished to visit, ~~though~~ ^{however} briefly, the famous cathed-

^{-- though only briefly} dral, since their battle had already ~~lost~~ ^{cost} them a day and ~~time~~ ^{they were eager} was

^{to move on -} flying. Moreover, as they had passed through Altafulla, Montpalau

had spent a few minutes rendering homage to the memory of Martí

Ardenya, one of the town's most illustrious sons and an outstanding scientist.

Monsieur Alexandre de Laborde ~~was not~~ ^{must have been} particularly sensitive to the beauties of Tarragona and its cathedral, since his respected guide-book only mentioned the city's negative aspects: narrow streets; filth, a total absense of broad avenues; bad inns; ugly, crumbling houses,

etc. He even considered the cathedral crass, characterless, and quite laughable if ~~one~~ compared with those in France.

His views were not shared by our young naturalist, who stared in ~~amazement~~ ^{wonder} at the cathedral's filigreed beautif~~ess~~ and ~~an~~ unique adornments. They strolled through the vast naves and marveled at Saint Thecla's grandiose alabaster altarpiece. Montpalaum also registered, with an expert eye, the splendid tomb of that ~~archbishop~~ ^{whom} Father Pere Gil had mentioned: Don Antoni Agustí, the papal legate. As they were leaving the cloister, they heard a strange noise: Whoomsh! Whoosh! Turning around, they beheld an enormous owl perched on a cornice beneath the dome, staring ~~out~~ at them blankly.

Deeply moved by the grandeur of their ^{nation's} ~~own~~ history, they left the cathedral. Montpalau ~~thoughtfully~~ copied an inscription on a memorial tablet embedded in a wall and that he ~~later~~ ^{planned to send} sent to Bartomeu Garriga:

C. AEMILIO. C.F.

GAL. ANTONIANO

AEDIL. II. VIRO

FLAMINI

AEMILIAE. C.F.

OPTATAE. AN. XVI

The sun brought out the stones' honey color. Pilate's House stood majestically by the sea. The marble and cypresses, as always, lent classical breadth and scale. Montpalau ~~pondered our~~ ^{thought about Catalunians} eighteenth-century thinkers.

They left imperial Tarraco and set out on the road to Reus. Alexandre de Labordé, whose itinerary headed south toward Valencia, took his leave of our gentlemen. Soon he would reach Cambrils and l'Hospitalet de l'Infant, whose inns he would revile with great gusto.

With its delightful smell of ~~roasted~~ ^{ed} hazelnuts, Reus pleased

them even before they reached it. They passed Saint Peter's Church and observed the grain merchants' stalls. Montpalau had a close friend in Reus: Josep Veciana i Sardà, member of the Academy of Science, some sixty years old, a widower with two daughters. He owned a ^{beautiful} ~~lovely~~ house furnished in exquisite taste. He invited ~~the~~ ^{our} two gentlemen to lunch.

When it was time for dessert--that is, at one o'clock on the dot--Veciana's daughters sang two duets--Il bacio furtivo and La lacrima grossa--in pathetic tones and with sweetly modulated voices. Ursula, the ~~eldest~~ ^{elder}, was engaged to a captain of the chasseurs stationed in Reus. Carmeta, ~~the~~ ^{her} younger ^{sister}, was still unbetrothed.

The two gentlemen praised the damsel's beauty and good manners and congratulated Veciana on being so favored by Providence. After chatting awhile, they asked about the best route to Pratdip.

"Pratdip, I've been told, is amply endowed with Aconitum lycococtum, commonly known as wolfsbane," Veciana replied. "The shortest route is through Mont-Roig, but I wouldn't recommend it, since that scoundrel Llarg de Copons operates in the area."

"My God!" Montpalau exclaimed. "Then which way should we go?"

"Via Falset. Given the conditions around here, you should move from one military post to another. Otherwise you'll be risking your lives. It'll take you a bit out of your way, but you'll be safer."

Montpalau accepted Veciana's prudent ^{suggestion} ~~itinerary~~. He still felt shaken by their last scrape.

They stayed a while longer, ~~chatting~~ with the Academy's distinguished member. He was a genuinely charming man. Finally they set out for Falset.

Falset is the capital of the Priorat. Surrounded by rugged mountains, it was a ~~strategic~~ stronghold of the first order. Forti-

fied and manned by a battle-hardened garrison, it was considered safe from Carlist guerrillas.

Dusk was already ~~enveloping~~ ^{falling on} Falset ~~the~~ ^{impregnable} the invincible, its noble edifices and taverns thronged with wine and brandy drinkers, its noisy forges, when our friends entered its narrow, ill-lit lanes. As required, they called upon the head of the garrison, presented their safe-conduct, and were about to rest their weary bones in the first inn they found when a messenger from the Baroness ~~d'Urpí~~ ^{d'Urpí} appeared.

The baroness, informed by her brother of Montpalau's departure and his plans ^{to} to investigate the strange events in Pratdip, had sent her overseer to await ~~them~~ ^{him} in Falset. She assumed they would pass that way since, as Veciana had pointed out, it was the safest route.

The overseer was a tall, gaunt, taciturn ~~man~~ gentleman. ~~He~~ dressed in black ~~and had a lugubrious air about him.~~ He explained that, if they set out that night, they could reach Pratdip by daybreak. The baroness ~~urgently~~ ^{wait} needed them and would ~~sit~~ ^{wait} up ~~till~~ ^{until} they arrived.

Resigned, Montpalau acquiesced. He thought it would be indelicate to ~~an~~ deny the wishes of an anxious and imperilled baroness.

IV: Pratedip

Pratedip is a village in an area dominated by high, craggy mountains ~~covered~~ ^{filled} with ~~rust~~ ^{aromatic} pines groves and swift, icy streams. Huge granite boulders contrast with occasional strips of red and fertile soil tilled by industrious peasants. The area's greatest riches, however, are its sturdy goats, which, dauntless ~~and de-~~ ^{persistent} ~~terminated~~, seek out their own food.

A curious naturalist from Tortosa, Sir Cristòfor Despuig, listed Pratedip's graces in 1557: "First of all, you will find the world's loveliest springs, cold and clear, and in particular one should mention Ashy Spring of fearsome strangeness, for every Friday or Saturday its waters turn ashy as though they had been poured from a pot of cinders, while on other days they are clear and sparkling. There one can find most plants needed by apothecaries, along with fragrant mountain flowers in infinite abundance and wild fruits and nuts, including chestnuts.

"These mountains are also endowed with a marvelous variety of trees: common pine, aleppo pine, oak, kermes oak, maple, pomegranate, these last two especially good for making chairs--fir, yew, beech, elder, buckthorn, honeysuckle, juniper, hawthorn, hazelnut, holly, from which birdlime is made, ash, juniper and savin. The mountains offer us countless gifts, especially wild mushrooms in such abundance and of so many types that one can scarcely believe one's eyes. A great many of these are good to eat, while others are inedible but ~~are~~ ^{are} useful for other purposes, and there are also truffles, along with superb jet, quicksilver, and iron ~~mines~~ ^{ore}.

"You may well believe ^{that} these mountains harbor far more wild-

Before they left Falset, Novau had peeled an entire braid of

garlic and, after assuring hi self of the cloves' ^{potency} ~~stench~~, had strung them around the carriage for protection. Whether for this reason or by mere chance, a dozen ^{large} ~~big~~ bats fluttered nervously about, keeping out of range of the garlic, uttering shrill satanic cries and stubbornly escorting our friends till the early morning, when they finally sighted Pratdip.

They drove through the walled and despairing town. Groups of women in mourning prayed aloud in the streets. In the windows, one saw bouquets of wilted purslane. A procession with lit candles slowly wound past the church. Black crape fluttered on doorknockers. Death ruled that mass of living corpses, that land soaked in tears.

^{stopped outside} ~~They entered~~ a ^{large} ~~stone~~ doorway. The gloomy overseer leapt down and led them up a broad staircase flanked by polished wooden banisters. A handful of servant girls came out to welcome them with sad smiles. At last they entered a ^{spacious} ~~large~~ room where, exhausted, they collapsed on a sofa.

Novau couldn't stop yawning. Soon a door opened and the baroness ^{appeared} ~~entered~~, followed by her daughter.

The two gentlemen kissed the baroness's hand. She was a lady of aristocratic features, some fifty years old, most courteous. She spoke with great ^{vigor} ~~forcefulness~~. Her daughter was extraordinarily beautiful, dark-skinned and vivacious, and her air of energetic ~~and~~ authority suggested that she was her mother's ^{second-in-command} ~~right-hand woman~~.

"Dear gentlemen," said the baroness, "I would like to introduce my daughter Agnès. I am both pleased and grateful that you have shown such interest in this regrettable state of affairs. Please excuse my impatience to see you, but I was anxious to consult such a notable man of science. Later we shall speak of these matters. Now you must rest. My daughter will show you to your rooms."

The two cousins bowed before their hostess.

Agnès led them to the quarters that had been prepared. They walked down long, wide corridors flanked by ^{na} hope chests, climbed some stairs, and left Novau in his comfortable chamber. They continued down the hallway, turned right and descended three steps. Bright ⁷ sunlight streamed through the windows. A child's voice drifted in:

Damsel Agnès

would you fain be robbed?

Yes, if the gallant

← makes my heart throb.

Montpalau pretended he hadn't heard. Agnès looked at him ^{intently} ~~curious~~ly. Her gaze was ^{keen} ~~penetrating~~ and ^{tenderly} ~~caressing~~; ^{soft} ~~sweet~~ and ^{but} ~~steady~~. Montpalau felt slightly awkward.

The Aurea picuda barely commenced its ineffable song. It sang in a register inaudible to human ears. Nonetheless, the reminiscence of a shadow, impalpable and attenuated, caught the silent melody and shuddered. Finally, it disintegrated in the morning ² ~~air's~~ cool woodsy scent.

"Sleep well," Agnès said. After closing the door, our naturalist stood pensively for a few minutes.

V: The Tactical-Scientific Defense

The Marquis de la Gralla felt most impatient. He eagerly awaited news from Pratdip, from his sister and Montpalau. He weighed various hypotheses about ^{that} the bizarre occurrence, feeling a morbid ^{preference} attraction ^{for} to the most fantastic ones. One might say it was a private preference, since in public he was constrained to defend rational explanations in accord with his position as a scientist and his ^{learned} ~~minor~~ colleagues' views. Occasionally he had called them together to discuss risky theories about non-experimental physics, but, as is customary in such cases, the discussions ^{had} turned into veritable battles in which Bartomeu Garriga's irascible character and Segimon Ferrer's perpetual ill-humor were amply displayed. The Marquis de la Gralla's little group was like a ticking bomb whose fuse had been lit amid sulfurous ^{fumes} clouds by Pratdip's unknown vampire. This bomb, if not ~~neutralized~~, would burst ^g into a multitude of deadly mathematical-botanical, theological-physical, and medical-musical fragments, destroying the ^{harmonious} ~~monio~~ equilibrium maintained for so many ~~my~~ years by the marquis's aristocratic authority and Antoni de Montpalau's tactful moderation. Such was the situation in Barcelona. In Pratdip, our hero threw himself into his activities. After resting all morning and eating lunch, he summoned the town's ^{leading} ~~foremost~~ ^{lights} citizens in the baroness's name and explained, with ^{profuse} ~~prolific~~ details, the scientifically unproven possibility that ~~mm~~ a vampire was at work. He noted the strange anomaly represented by the presence (albeit only in legend) of such a being in Catalonia, since vampires (and one had to conclude that a vampire and the Dip were one and the same, given their ^{identical} ~~similar~~ activities) had seemed to ^{pertain} ~~belong~~ exclusively to the Balkans. In fact, this was the first known case not only in Catalonia but in all of

Spain. He declared that, although science had found no plausible explanation for vampires' disconcerting existence--for the simple reason that, ~~until the present~~, no scientist had ever ~~seen~~ ^{looked} one--now he, Antoni de Montpalau, the Academy of Science's most modest member, was prepared, if the Dip really existed, to seize the unique opportunity it offered to trap, study, and destroy it using the scientific method, or, ~~if~~ should the opposite be the case, to proclaim its non-existence to the four winds as a figment of the popular imagination and to explain its deadly effects in a rational fashion, tying them to some empirical cause ~~which~~ ^{that} naturally escaped him at the moment. He went on to say that reason obliged them, in the present circumstances, to accept, a priori, the Dip's hypothetical ~~existence~~ ^{reality} and take appropriate precautions. To protect themselves from that singular being's activities, they must consult the works of ~~authors~~ ^{experts} specializing in demonology, fortifying their spirits in the belief that such a state of affairs ~~would~~ ^{must} soon cease. To ensure such an outcome, he had forged a plan that, for the moment, he preferred to keep secret, and until the time came to put it into practice, they should employ garlic, pectoral crosses, parsley and mirrors in addition to purslane, which he saw was already widely used in Pratdip. These measures would serve, ~~for the moment~~, to hold the vampire ^{temporarily} at bay. He and his cousin and assistant Isidre de Novau would later show the townsfolk exactly how to use these antidotes. He concluded his ~~talk~~ ^{talk} by exhorting those present to trust in the efficacy of science and to spread the principles of tactical-scientific defense among the ~~inhabitants~~ of Pratdip.

He was warmly congratulated. Montpalau drank a glass of water that Agnès brought him after his speech and, contemplating his listeners' faces, he had the impression that he had managed to raise

their morale.

The mayor, who ~~here~~ the curious name Magi Peuderrata, asked Montpalau if he thought it opportune to post a ban giving instructions.

"An excellent idea," replied Montpalau. "Draw up a ban summarizing what I have said and announcing that tomorrow before sundown I shall inspect all the houses to ensure that they are properly protected. At the same time, I shall distribute whatever antidotes ~~the people~~ ^{the villagers} lack."

Having spoken, Montpalau ~~inhaled~~ ^{inhaled} a little of the snuff he ~~carried~~ ^{from him} in a ~~tiny~~ ^{tiny} and handsome box. At that moment, in some ~~undetermined~~ ^{indeterminate} place outside the baroness's house, an inexplicable contorsion occurred, a sheaf of wrathfully compressed air that sent out impalpable ripples, like incipient sighs or lamentations, snuffed out before they began to take shape. A diffuse tremolo fluttered in an ideal sphere with no concrete existence, propagating itself and, as always, swiftly disappearing.

Later that afternoon, our celebrated naturalist shut himself in his room to pore over thick volumes and papers yellowed with age. He found some interesting observations about the subject of his research in a monograph entitled Memorandum on Pholades or Mitylus Lithofagus (sea worms), which cast light on secret relations and the nature of latent life. Above all, however, he was intrigued by a paper whose author, the distinguished Basque naturalist Juan Manuel de Ferrery, had been a member of the Philosophical Academy and the French Scientific Institute. This sage had led an ~~intense~~ ^{intense} and exciting life, and his name was closely linked to that of Saint Faustina. A great traveler, he had been very active politically. In recognition of his many investigations and discoveries, Pope Leo XII

had granted him Saint Faustina's body, ~~still~~ intact and uncorrupted. With the Holy Father's blessing, he transferred her remains from the Roman catacombs to his native village of Pasajes de San Juan. After an undetermined period in which he respectfully experimented with the holy relic, Ferrery, seeing that he was old and would shortly undertake that voyage from which no man returns, donated Saint Faustina ~~to~~ to his parish church. For this reason, he is still revered as its greatest benefactor and his name is associated, as we have mentioned, with the saint's. Juan Manuel de Ferrery died in the year 1818 in Bayonne, France and was ^{laid to rest} ~~buried~~ in the church at Pasajes de San Juan, only a few feet from the ^{tomb} ~~urn~~ in which the venerable damsel Saint Faustina's remains lie, still intact.

It must have been about six o'clock when a steward interrupted our young and illustrious botanist's ruminations, announcing that the baroness, who had a visitor--a learned Dominican friar--wished to introduce them and, if it was not too much trouble, she hoped he would join them in the drawing room.

Montpalau didn't wait to be asked twice. He found the baroness and charming Agnès seated on the sofa, conversing with a monk of gentle and intelligent aspect. A Valencian named Jaime Villanueva, he was on his way to the monastery of Scala Dei, where he planned to copy some documents referring to that glorious edifice. He said he was publishing, volume by volume, an ecclesiastical history of the Catalan-speaking areas that would expand, in a certain sense, the work of the eminent Father Florez. The friar was clearly a remarkable man.

Villanueva and Montpalau felt an immediate and intense mutual attraction. Montpalau told the historian, who already knew about the baroness's difficulties, why he had come to Pradip.

His interest piqued by Montpalau's explanation, the ecclesias-

tical scholar offered to collaborate, within his own field, in resolving the enigma. Their methods were different but might complement each other. Perhaps some explanation would come to light, hidden among the archives' dusty documents.

"Precisely," replied Montpalau. "As you put it so aptly, our methods are different. Scholarship operates through accumulation; science through synthesis. We must therefore seek their point of convergence."

The conversation lasted a while longer. Agnès kept her eyes fixed upon Montpalau. Her steady gaze disconcerted him. He stumbled over his words—he, who was usually so sure of himself. Antoni de Montpalau tried to focus on the Dip, on that unfathomable mystery. He wasn't certain he ^{could} manage it.

Evening fell. Pincers gripped their anxious hearts. In its daily defeat, the sun ~~surrendered~~ ^{yielded} to the realm of darkness. Willanueva recited Saint Ambrose's hymn:

Aeterne rerum conditor,
noctem diemque qui regis
et temporum das tempora
ut elleres fastidium,

praeco dici jam sonat
noctis profundas pervigil,
nocturna lux viantibus,
a nocte noctem segregans.

Hoc excitatus Lucifer
salvit polum caligne,
hoc omnis errorum chorus

Hope was focused on the star that gives us ~~light~~ daylight.
Aurelius Ambrosius's sepulchered voice, in noble competition with
that of Saint Hilary of Poitiers, entoned the church's ~~most~~ ^{loftiest} perfect
hymn.

Phallus impudicus
VI: The "~~Brazen Phallus~~"

That night, the ^{Dip}vampire claimed six souls. The townspeople were ~~desperate~~ ^{despair}. It was the ^ahigh point in that invisible marauder's ~~maniac~~ wicked career. Peret Mimosca, the cutler; Leopoldo ~~Sancho~~ ^{Sancho} Núñez, the bailiff; Pauleta Vinyes, the sandal-maker's wife; and Enriqueta Moles, a ~~seven year old year~~ ^{girl}, the tax collector's ^{seven-year-old} daughter were all victims of ~~that~~ ^{The Dip's insatiable vampire's} unbridled thirst for human blood.

Antoni de Montpalau examined the corpses. They ~~all~~ ² seemed drained, dry as bones, as though someone had emptied them out. It was a grim spectacle. Montpalau winced at ~~their~~ ^{the} families' ~~immense~~ ² despair, their sobs and anguished imprecations. Nonetheless, his scientific attention focused upon two fateful little holes of perfect roundness in the neck of each corpse. ~~So~~ ^{For} there was no doubt. The vital fluid had been extracted by suction through those two perforations. ~~There was no question that~~ ³ these had been produced by two sharpened canine teeth of a sort found in no known species of animal. The vampire, ~~of~~ ^{or} whoever ~~had~~ ² committed that abomination, had operated with meticulous precision. There was no time to lose.

Montpalau decided to inspect ~~in~~ the area around Pratdip, since the village itself seemed to offer ~~little~~ ^{few clues} hope. He ordered Amadeu to fetch ~~the~~ ^{his} carriage, and at eight that morning, he rode forth with his faithful cousin Novau. Naturally, his first thought was to visit the ~~cemetery~~ ⁴, which lay about a ~~rifle-shot~~ ^{not far} from the village. High weeds ran riot within its crumbling walls. Incised in stone, one could read names and professions. There were faded wreaths, dull black ribbons, and all the iron crosses, without exception, had been eaten away by rust. Novau tried to open the gate to a moss-covered mausoleum and

was surprised by a sinister creak. One by one, Montpalau scrutinized the tombs, all of which seemed perfectly sealed and intact. They found nothing ^{out of the ordinary} ~~abnormal~~ in a village graveyard. A lark sang, perched in a carob tree.

The air was clean, freshly washed. The trees were sharply outlined against the sky, as after a rain. A big locust ^{hopped about} ~~jumped~~ near a ^{patch} ~~clump~~ of fennel. A woodpecker on a blackberry bush eyed it attentively.

They followed their noses. Amadeu set out down lanes they abandoned when more promising ones appeared. ~~Am~~ Occasionally, with lit torches, they entered dark caves. Montpalau scrutinized the most trivial anomalies: a fox's tracks, a fallen leaf, a slug's slimy trail. They wandered deep into the woods, far from the village. They felt they were seeing ^{places} ~~spots~~ no man had ever laid eyes upon. Amadeu, suddenly gripped by an intense colic, asked Montpalau's permission to retire for a moment.

The two relatives waited. Seated upon a fallen tree trunk, they smoked peacefully ^{amid} ~~among~~ the sounds of innumerable birds.

"Sometimes I wonder if I'm dreaming," said Montpalau. "It's all so absurd, so utterly chimerical."

A few pine needles cracked. Novau spat upon a clump of thyme. Then he stared curiously into his cousin's face.

"There are things your mentality cannot fathom. Because there are clearly things that are beyond science. In the end you'll be forced to admit it."

Suddenly they heard screams and saw something crashing through the woods. Amadeu emerged, his face contorted with horror. He was stumbling, and his ^{brow} ~~forehead~~ was beaded with sweat. He managed to stammer that, seeking a suitable spot in which to satisfy his needs, he had come across a monument erected by the Devil. He couldn't describe it. It was something monstrous--and indecent, too.

The two gentlemen decided to see what this was all about. They calmly followed Amadeu, and when they had gone about two hundred paces their eyes widened in amazement at the sight of an enormous mushroom, more than two yards high, shaped exactly and shamelessly like a male genital organ.

"A ~~"Brazen Phallus"~~ ^{Phallus impudicus}!" Montpalau exclaimed in wonder. "And what an extraordinary specimen! In the last century, Francesc Castelló i de Malla found one two feet ^{high} long near Vic. One this large, however, is totally unheard of."

Amadeu calmed down. Montpalau took off his frock coat and, in shirtsleeves, measured that terrifying mushroom's length and diameter. He ~~him~~ felt feverish, inspired. He, Amadeu, and Novau began to dig away at the dirt around its base with flint rocks, which abounded in the area. He urged them to exercise extreme ^{caution} and delicacy lest they damage the extraordinary specimen. He had decided to uproot the mushroom and send it to the Academy of Science in Barcelona. There they could replant it or petrify it through a hydrolytic process of his own invention.

Suddenly it occurred to him that he couldn't show up at the baroness's house with that compromising piece of sculpture. This thought worried him so much that he broke into a sweat.

He quickly began to search for a solution. They had to find a way ^{to hide} of hiding the mushroom's brazen shape. Their frock coats weren't big enough to cover that gigantic affront to morality. Finally he decided to send Amadeu on whatever pretext he could think of to fetch two double sheets from the baroness's house.

Meanwhile, he and Novau ^{to dig} continued their task. When Amadeu returned an hour later, Montpalau had achieved his goal. Despite its size, the mushroom weighed very little, since its basic element was cellulose. They gently wrapped it and, cushioned by armfuls of soft young grass,

tied it to the carriage roof.

Returning to Pratdip shortly before lunchtime, they hastened to the carpenter's shop and ordered a wooden crate seventy-eight inches long and eighteen inches wide, to be ready by late afternoon. They'd pay whatever it cost. They left the ~~Brazen Phallus's~~ ^{Phallus impudicus's} veiled form at the carpenter's shop, warning him neither to approach nor touch it lest he suffer a grave misfortune. These words made a deep impression upon the ~~honorable workman.~~ ^{worthy tradesman}

Lunch at the baroness's house was sad and silent. The Dip's six victims seemed to hover about them. Montpalau caught an imploring look from Agnès.

Late that afternoon, having written a report to the Academy of Science, Montpalau showed up at the carpenter's house with Novau and Amadeu. They carefully place the ~~Brazen Phallus~~ ^{Phallus impudicus} in a magnificent crate with reinforced corners. The mushroom looked like a mummy wrapped in ~~its~~ ^a shroud. As soon as the crate was nailed shut, they bore it to the carrier's office, where they instructed him to ship the shameless fungus to the academy's representative in Reus--Josep Veciana i Sardà--who in turn would see that it reached Barcelona.

Evening was ~~coming~~ ^{dawning} on. As they went out into the street, they spied the mayor, Magí Peuderrata. Together they formed a committee to inspect the houses and ensure that they were well ~~defended~~ ^{protected}. First, however, they went to collect the antidotes ~~which~~ stored at the Urpi residence.

Montpalau told the mayor that the most effective preventive measure was the ~~stench~~ ^{raw} of peeled garlic, ~~The smell from the~~ ^{which} garlic would hold the vampire at bay. Purslane and parsley were less potent. Pectoral crosses ~~thwarted~~ ^{kept off} the vampire's attacks but not his presence. ~~In regard~~ ^{As far as}

^g to the mirrors, ^{were concerned} they served to identify him, for no mirror would reflect a vampire's image. If anyone could pass in front of a mirror without being reflected, that person was a vampire.

Astonished by these revelations, the mayor summoned the mailman and night watchman ^{to peel} ~~to peel~~ ^{The two municipal employees} ~~garlic~~ ^{peeling garlic}. They immediately set to work and soon ^{had} filled a bucket. Following Montpalau's instructions, they then ^{fashioned wire} ~~made~~ hooks ^{and speared} ~~out of wire~~ a clove on each one.

With these ingredients in hand, the committee went through the village house by house. Montpalau entered every room, counting the windows and other openings. Then the committee members hung a clove of garlic in each one. Afterward, Montpalau distributed as many crosses as there were people in each house. As they left, he hung mirrors outside the doorways, repeating his explanations and warnings.

They finished just as night fell. As they stepped into a street, a huge, diabolical cat crossed their path, glaring ^{balefully} ~~wrathfully~~ at Montpalau. Our hero, however, had grown used to such apparitions and gave the matter no further thought.

When they reached the Urpi residence, the committee disbanded. They all wished each other good luck and good night.

VII: The Souls of Plants

The Junta of Berga, in an urgent communiqué bearing the same date as the previously related incidents, informed Prince Lichnowsky that ~~the~~ ^{it} ~~said~~ ^{it} ~~junta~~ had received a request from ~~an unknown~~ ⁱⁿ royalist guerrilla, known by the name of "Owl," who acted, according to his own declarations, absolutely alone and at night in an unusual but ~~more~~ ^{must} efficacious fashion in the deep ~~forests~~ ^{woods} around Pratdip. The above-mentioned guerrilla, wishing to normalize his ~~position~~ ^{situation} by joining His Paternal Majesty's forces, asked the Royal Junta ~~of Berga~~, while respecting his independence and ~~peculiar~~ ^{particular} mode of action, to appoint him colonel in the regular army, for such was the rank that, ~~according to his understanding~~ ^{he believed}, he had won through his victories to the greater glory of ~~invincible~~ Charles V. Uncertain of the truth or falsehood of such affirmations but considering that, if true, it would be a great help to know that the traditionalist cause could rely on an ally in that ~~unknown~~ area, and wishing, on the other hand, to avoid any false step that might cover ~~them~~ ^{it} with opprobrium, the junta asked Prince Lichnowsky, as the commander closest to Pratdip, to conduct as thorough an investigation as he could of the aforesaid allegations, operating with his customary wisdom and ~~man~~ discretion, prudence and speed.

A cock crowed. It was six in the morning. Prince Lichnowsky finished reading the communiqué and scratched his head. The special courier who had brought ~~the~~ ^{it} ~~missive~~ sipped rum from a cup near ~~the~~ campfire. His uniform was dirty, and he had a six-day beard. He held his horse's reins with one hand. Suddenly a carob tree's branches, controlled by some peculiar contraption, hid the scene from view. Only the trembling leaves remained, along with a distant vision of Vimodí's steeple.

At the same time Pratdip's townsfolk, swept along by a wave of

delirious rejoicing, toasted Montpalau's victory, for his tactical-scientific defenses had worked and the Dip, for the first time, had ~~claimed not one victim~~ ^{been foiled}. The baroness warmly congratulated Montpalau on his brilliant success, while Agnès gazed at him with intense and ~~significant~~ ^{meaningful} gratitude. Montpalau, as usual, felt ~~something~~ ^{odd} in the pit of his stomach.

Several days passed in this fashion. Every evening, the committee replaced the cloves of garlic, ensuring that no opening had been left unattended.

After a week, Montpalau convened the town's ~~foremost citizens~~ ^{leading lights} again in the baroness's name and, taking the floor, expressed himself in the following terms:

"As you have observed, the defenses I proposed have been effective. I congratulate both ~~myself~~ ^{myself} and all of you on the exactitude with which you interpreted my ~~thoughts~~ ^{instructions}. The Dip--or whoever he ~~might~~ ^{may} be--has been reduced to impotence. But he continues to exist. The cause remains, my friends. Until now, all our measures have been preventive. Yet we cannot spend our lives hanging garlic cloves in windows and ~~constantly~~ ^{continuously} glancing into mirrors. We must enter a second phase and eliminate the cause. We must destroy the Dip."

At this point, the listeners' applause and frantic shouts of approval forced Montpalau to stop. Once they had calmed themselves, he continued: "Some days ago, I mentioned a plan of attack that I wished to keep secret. The time has ^{now} come to ~~reveal~~ ^{unveil} and apply it. Because of his prolonged fast, the Dip must ~~now~~ ^{now} find himself in a state not entirely conducive to clear thinking. Enraged, I should say, against a well-protected village. Therefore, I suggest that, precisely now, when the vampire is blinded by his delirium, a window should be left open, un-

protected by pestilential garlic and revealing a propitiatory victim within. He will surely appear. And be trapped! For hidden behind the victim, I and my assistants ^{shall} will stand, holding all our most redoubtable means of defense. It will only last a moment--just long enough to see his face. He will quickly be driven off. Then the third phase will begin: his pursuit and destruction. This plan is scientifically perfect, but it requires a victim--an apparent victim, of course. I myself would like to be ^{that} the ~~victim~~ victim, but as you will understand, I cannot be both victim and pursuer, for I require freedom of movement and an intense state of concentration. Therefore, I need a volunteer. A volunteer I promise will come to no harm."

A sepuchral silence greeted our hero's last words. Long faces and hostile looks swirled around Montpalau. Someone whistled under his breath. The mayor, Magí Peuderrata, who counted himself among Montpalau's assistants, roundly attacked those present, accusing them all--females excepted--of womanly cowardice and ~~am~~ declaring them a most ^{undistinguished} unworthy group of notables. All in vain. Panic, displacing ^{the} their initial euphoria, seized the audience, holding it in humiliating bondage. Neither taunts nor sarcasm had the slightest effect. Montpalau felt deep disappointment, a sadness arising from that spectacle of human weakness. Then Agnès rose. Valiant, strong, determined, ^{again} staring into Montpalau's eyes, she said: "I shall be the victim. I formally offer to submit, under your protection, to the Dip's malevolent fury. I know I shall be safe in your hands, and that you will protect my ^{life} person as you would ^{your own} yourself."

Simultaneous shock and relief greeted this sensational ^{outburst} statement. The baroness, pale as a sheet, desperately and obstinately opposed Agnès's ⁺ disinterested offer. Sacrifice her daughter: never! Agnès remained unperturbed, her gaze fixed upon Montpalau, the incarnation of dignity and nobility. The audience, after a totally hypocritical show of resist-

ance, praised Agnès's generosity and accepted her offer. Amid the tumult, Agnès stood like a rock ~~against~~ ⁱⁿ the wind, a heroic figure of exalted womanhood. The baroness tearfully bowed to the inevitable. ~~Speechless~~ with admiration, Montpalau ~~stared~~ ^{looked} at Agnès. He could feel waves of tenderness, deep and hidden resonances stir within his breast. He had to control himself, to brake that impulse drawing him toward ~~Agnès's~~ ^{her} romantic ~~charm~~ charm.

Hours later, in the old and majestic mansion's garden, Montpalau, having cut some sweet-smelling red roses, offered them to her with these words: "I am proud of you, dear Agnès, of your firmness and ~~resolution~~ ^{resolve}. I was moved by your faith in this humble servant of science--and of yourself ~~as well~~ from this moment on."

Montpalau was indeed moved. Agnès smiled, suddenly ~~grown~~ ^g pale, small, and helpless. She bent over the bouquet our gentleman had offered her. Faint, enchanted music could be heard, like a delicate remembrance of the souls of plants.

VIII: The Vampire

Pratdip's castle was a smallish construction, part Romanesque and part Gothic. Hard to get to, perched at the top of the village, it looked out over a ^{wide} large area. Abandoned since the sixteenth century, its towers and walls still conveyed a strange ^{impression} sense of force and power. Nature had invaded the castle, and bizarre weeds grew between its ancient ~~shagstones~~; hawks and other birds of prey roosted among crumbling battlements ~~and fallen keystones~~. A vast melancholy emanated from those silent halls, abandoned to time's slow but inexorable devastation. On moonlit nights, the castle's aspect was still more fantastic.

Villanueva was ^{greatly intrigued} ~~much concerned~~ by the castle. He scarcely left the Urpis' library, where he sought information about the village's past and its ancient lords, the castle's masters. He felt certain that he would discover some explanation that fit in with our hero's scientific research. Using all his knowledge of paleography, he deciphered disturbing documents and constructed complicated family trees. Sometimes, he thought he spied a phosphorescent glow among those worm-eaten documents, and he set off eagerly on some diabolical trail.

Montpalau, meanwhile, had prepared a perfect trap for the vampire. No detail was neglected or left to chance. Agnès's bedroom was, so to speak, reduced, for Montpalau, needing space for himself and his assistants, divided it in two with some long curtains that hung from the ceiling. They placed the damsel's bed against these curtains, facing the balcony, while Montpalau and his assistants prepared to watch and wait. He divided his men into two groups: he Novau, and Amadeu would remain near Agnès; Magí Peuderrata, the mailman, ~~and~~ the night watchman and four others who knew the countryside well would stand guard ~~mmmmmm~~

inside the mansion's front door, ready to sally forth in pursuit of the vampire.

The fateful hour struck. Agnès embraced her mother. Montpalau kissed the damsel's hand and assured her that he would be ~~behind the headboard~~^I, separated from her only by the curtain. If possible, she should sleep; in any case, she should pretend to sleep. The vampire on the balcony had to behold a sleeping body, breathing regularly.

At the last ~~minute~~^{moment} they hung a big gilt-framed mirror on the wall where it could be clearly seen from behind the curtain. Everyone felt jumpy except Agnès and Montpalau, the ~~two main characters~~^{protagonists heroes of} in the drama.

The clock struck twelve. Agnès slipped into bed. Montpalau, his cousin, and Amadeu sat down on some stools and modestly gazed through slits they had cut in the curtain. On ~~their~~ knees, Novau and Amadeu held hermetically sealed pots of garlic cloves. Montpalau had proven to his satisfaction that, once they were ~~unsealed~~^{opened}, the stench from the garlic would suffice to drive off a dozen vampires.

The ~~hourse~~^{hour} crept by. The moonlight's ~~unreal~~^I and phantasmagoric glow reached the middle of the chamber. There was a dense, ~~anguished~~^{tormented}, ill-omened silence. ~~And~~ Agnès lay ~~quietly~~^{still}, as though she were sound asleep. Montpalau and his ~~companions~~ sat still, scarcely breathing. Amadeu stifled a yawn, provoking an aggrry glance from Montpalau, who, as he had promised, was stationed right behind the headboard.

~~One~~^{They} could hear a termite gnawing at some piece of furniture. An instant later, without making the slightest sound, a shadow alighted on the balcony, partly blocking the moonlight. The shadow swayed like the wings of an enormous bat. Then ~~one saw~~^{they spied} the figure of a tall man in a long cape. He stood there for a moment, immobile. Our friends' hands gripped the lids on their pots, their bodies ready to leap into

ae

action. Stiffly, the figure slide toward the bed. It passed the mirror, which, as expected, failed to reflect its image. Suddenly, moonlight illuminated the vampire's cadaverous face--the same ~~face~~ ^{gentle-goatish} as ~~on~~ ^{of} our hero's would-be murderer in the far-off town of Gràcia. A white face, stretched taut toward two pointed ears ~~as on a he-goat.~~

The figure bent over Agnès's peacefully sleeping form. Then suddenly, our three ambushers leapt forth with uncovered pots. Agnès screamed hysterically. Montpalau held up a crucifix.

The vampire swiftly retreated. His face contorted with dreadful pain ~~at~~ ^{in a flash} the garlic's revolting stench, his entire body began to glow. Everything happened quickly. The shadows deepened, welcoming the phosphorescent vampire, who tried to take flight from the balcony. The garlic, however, ~~had~~ ^{must have} weakened him ~~and~~ ^{or} damaged something in his organism, for, ~~waving~~ ^{flapping} his arms, he fell through the air and fled down the street.

Magí Peuderrata and his men immediately ran forth with ~~burning~~ lanterns and raced after the hated vampire. After securing the balcony with an appropriate antidote and followed by his assistants, Montpalau joined them and together they pursued the fiend, clearly distinguishable because of his phosphorescence. They crossed tilled fields, leapt over hedges, plunged into ~~thick~~ ^{dark} woods. It was a desperate race. The vampire traced a wide semi-circle around the village, as though trapped within some imaginary boundary; then he turned back again toward his point of departure. Dawn began to break, and, to their amazement, he suddenly headed for the castle, outlined against the light of the rising sun. Closely followed by his ~~many~~ pursuers, the vampire entered its walls.

The pursuers burst into the castle. Montpalau, as though certain of the vampire's whereabouts, sought the steps leading down to the crypt. They found them near the highest tower, and the entire troop

noisily descended. They entered the crypt, full of tombs and gigantic ~~spiderwebs~~ ^{cobwebs}. A herd of rats scurried into the corners.

In the middle of the crypt, glowing feebly, they beheld an open tomb. They approached it, but ~~there was no one inside~~ ^{all they found were}. Only the vampire's cape and shoes.

A sinister laugh, satanic and mocking, echoed through the crypt. Simultaneously, a beating of wings made them ~~raise their heads~~ ^{look up}. A huge eagle had just taken flight through a broad window near the ceiling.

"Too late!" cried Montpalau. "But victory is ours! We've found the Dip's tomb; he will never return. Pratedip is free. First, though, ~~we must dissipate~~ ^{break} the spell."

Having spoken, Montpalau pulled a large, brilliant rock crystal heart from the pocket of his frock coat. Bending over the tomb, he placed it on the cape in the spot where the vampire's true heart would have rested. Then Amadeu and Novau poured in the pots' contents, and they sealed the tomb.

Pratedip's slavery had ended. The lilaceaes' sweet scent floated in the air.

IX: Love

Pratdip rejoiced at its liberation in a procession honoring Saint Marina, that most efficacious virgin and the village's patroness:

If God's divine grace
~~thou wouldest~~ ^{thou wouldest}
you wish to obtain
~~copy~~
copy blessed Marina,
gentle and humane.

In the city of Antioch
our protectress was born,
sent by Jesus Christ
to comfort the forlorn,
to love God and Our Lady,
twin suns of her morn.

The virgin's shrine is eight miles from Pratdip. There are springs with icy water, hard and clear as crystal. Thick woods surround the shrine.

Antoni de Montpalau was ^{declared} ~~considered~~ Pratdip's ~~hero~~ ^{savior} and savior, through Saint Marina's intercession. At Magí Peuderrata's suggestion, the town council voted unanimously to erect a monument in the main square to his perpetual memory. He declined this honor and instead suggested that they honor ^{their} ~~the~~ virgin, of such aristocratic origins:

Her rich ancestors ^{saint} ~~were~~
of most noble stock
but proudly ^{told their stand} ~~standing~~
^{upon the (church's) rock,}
faithful members
of God's ^{obedient} ~~holy~~ flock.

#

From her earliest youth
~~Despised and shunned~~
she ~~fled from~~ vice
deeming fasting and prayer
the paths to Paradise
and a nun's devotions
salvation's blessed price.

The villagers intoned their hymns with ~~unwavering~~ steadfast
faith and tearful gratitude. The ceremony was solemn, and their chants
~~swirled~~ ^{rose} upward toward Marina's image, at whose feet lay the deformed
and defeated Dip. The altar's base was ~~adorned~~ adorned with glazed
tiles naively depicting local artisans at work, or--in dark green--
certain plants from the area: purslane, anise, millet . . . and in the
center, scenes from Saint Marina's life:

Outside the church door,
as in her life we read,
suffering inclement weather
during five years of need,
accused of murder by a daughter
of ~~an~~ Pandoquius's vicious breed.

When Jesus beheld
this humble damsel's ways
He ^{asked to dwell in} ~~bore~~ her Heaven
^{for the rest of} ~~to finish~~ her days
amid the host that to Our Lord
continually prays.

Great and glorious miracles
this lady ^{hath} ~~has~~ done,
the feverish through her graces
recovery have won,

ws #5

and for restoring eyesight
she is equalled by none.

Nor was there any better medicine for the Marquis de la Gralla's uneasy circle than the extraordinary mushroom that arrived one day. They all hastened to ^{his} that house ^{of learning}, where ^{examining} ~~having examined it~~ amid ^{astounded} exclamations, they measured the fungus, determined its specific gravity, and, after an effort to transplant it in black earth from the Pyrenees, ^{they} decided that petrification would be the wisest course. Montpalau's report was published in the ~~monday~~ academy's bulletin and extracts were reprinted, with appropriate sketches, in all the leading European and American scientific journals. ^{Father} ~~Pasqual~~ Matons and Segimon Ferrer ^{quarrelled} ~~had a quarrel~~ about the celebrated mushroom's etymology--finally resolved by Bartomeu Garriga's irascible erudition. The Marquis de la Gralla took charge of the petrification, applying Montpalau's formula with unprecedented success. Once the process had been completed, the mushroom was placed in the academy's garden as a monument, beneath which a marble plaque bore its discoverer's name, the date of his find, and the name of its illustrious petrifier. These were unique moments for the marquis, filling his usually calm and contemplative life with ^{joyful excitement} ~~true happiness~~.

In Pratdip, people continued to sing their virgin's praises. Sometimes the lumps in their throats made their chants a ^{bit} ~~big~~ unharmonious. Kneeling, young and old sang as one:

Those lost at sea
have at last reached salvation.
Fires have been quenched
through her intervention
and from life's perils we are saved
through her adoration.

Those who humbly beg
for this lady's aid
with miraculous cures
for their ills are paid
and thus do her worshippers
feel unafraid.

Upon reaching the ^{shrine} hermitage, they began to dance under the willow trees to bagpipe music. The celebration ^{remained} would remain etched in everyone's memory forever. ~~Amg~~ Agnès and Montpalau wandered through the woods, ^{amid} ~~among~~ exquisite, swift, ^{flowing} ~~flowing~~ streams, hearing music in the distance. A poetic halo encircled the couple. His heart pounding, Montpalau uttered the eagerly awaited words. No reply was ^{needed} ~~required~~. An ardent look from Agnès, and their lips met in a ~~passion~~ passionate kiss. Rapture filled those two noble and generous hearts. The souls of plants swooned in sympathy and delicately entwined lianas formed the two lovers' initials. The Aurea picuda--his favorite, shy and gentle--intoned, in a joyous finale, a thrilling and unusually audible solo.

The baroness was especially pleased when, a few minutes later, the couple ^{she} told her of their decision. Actually, she said she had rather expected it, for love cannot be hidden from the eyes of the experienced, and especially from a mother. She felt very happy. She congratulated herself on her connection with the family of a gentleman who, apart from his sterling qualities, belonged to one of Catalonia's ~~best~~ ^{best} and noblest houses. She solemnly gave them her blessing.

That afternoon, they again paid homage to the virgin. Agnès and Montpalau squeezed each other's hands. Everyone sang:

Our patroness and protector
~~thou shalt~~ always be,

no #

answering the prayers

we address unto thee,

showering us with blessings

for all to see.

If ^{thou wouldst} ~~you wish to~~ turn illness

into joy and health,

emulate Marina,

our glory and wealth.

The afternoon slowly faed, freed forever from infernal presences.

X: A Carpathian Tale

Father Villanueva's research revealed a great deal about the Dip's nature and origins. The baroness, Agnès, ~~the pious Dominican~~, Isidre de Novau and our hero were all seated in the old mansion's dining room when the illustrious historian recounted his fabulous tale.

Some caged goldfinches sang loudly in the courtyard. Everyone held his breath.

In the thirteenth century, during the reign of James I, King of Aragon and conqueror of Valencian and Majorca, Prat's castle had been ruled by Onofre de Dip. Onofre, while possessing a modest fortune of Mozarabic origin, ~~had distinguished himself in particular~~ by the favor and respect he ~~had~~ won through loyalty to his monarch and bravery in battle. When the widowed king celebrated his betrothal to Yolande of Hungary, the king was naturally obliged to send ambassadors to that distant land, along with a retinue that, despite Catalans' proverbial stinginess, was a sumptuous attempt to impress ~~that~~ ^{the} ~~negulous~~ ^{Hungarian} court, of which no one had a very clear idea. One of these ambassadors was Onofre de Dip. The documents don't describe his mission, since the chancellery was very discreet about political-sentimental affairs. Nonetheless, we know that Onofre suffered one of the most dreadful experiences that can befall any mortal--a thousand times worse than death and Hell. Onofre de Dip, ^{on} ~~in~~ his long journey toward the Hungarian court, was crossing the Carpathians, where on Saint George's Eve all the world's evil spirits gather, and spent a night in the beautiful Duchess Meczzyr's castle. Peasants in the area--though Onofre of course was unaware of this fact--crossed themselves whenever the duchess's name was mentioned and kept as far away from her castle as they could. They said she was a vrolak or vlkoslak--that is, a vampire.

Onofre de Dip fell in love with the duchess. Or more precisely, the duchess seduced him. On Saint George's Eve, with reprehensible lasciviousness but to some degree ^{comprehensible} excusable intentions, he believed he had induced her to do his will. But when he bent over her ivory face, his ^{ardent} greedy lust suddenly vanished in the revolting corpse-like stench that issued from her mouth. It was too late, ~~in~~ alas. Two sharp teeth pierced his neck, while children of the night howled outside. Onofre did not die; his fate was far worse. He turned into a vampire himself.

The documents then describe a most interesting series of liturgical exorcist exercises. In any case, Onofre disappeared from the King of Aragon's court. His inheritance was given to his nearest relatives--the Urpis--who, some generations later, abandoned the castle and moved to the mansion where they currently reside. Since then, however, Onofre, a living corpse, has returned periodically from Cracow to reassert his rights to his village, which from that date ~~on~~ ^T has been called Pratdip. When this occurs, the results are dreadful, as we have seen to our dismay.

Here the information becomes difficult to ^{grasp} grasp, because the documents offer a series of cabalistic prophesies--in part already fulfilled. They say the vampire will be driven from Pratdip by a "new force," then they vaguely mention an owl. It seems to ~~me~~ ^T that they also refer to a fratricidal war in ~~our~~ ^{Spain} country. The owl will serve ~~the~~ ^a king; this "new force" will pursue ~~him~~ and defeat ~~it~~ ^{him}. The force will already be known ~~him~~ to the owl, who will urge him, through premonitions, to desist from his task. At last, the vampire will find peace.

A long silence followed Father Villanueva's speech. Everyone ~~felt~~ ^{astonished} amazed ~~ghostlike~~ ^{ghostlike} ~~surprised~~ ^{surprised} by his grisly tale. Many previously impenetrable mysteries had now become clear.

and took ~~to take~~ his leave
Father Villanueva rose and said goodbye to those present. He had to continue his work on the volume about Scala Dei, and therefore he planned to set out for the monastery. Turning to Montpalau, he remarked that, as he had foreseen, their respective sciences had complemented each other. He solemnly blessed the betrothed couple. Everyone kissed his hand. The sun was setting.

Hours later, furious galloping was heard in the street, followed by a great tumult downstairs in the entrance hall. It was the baroness's overseer, covered with dust, his clothes torn. When he could finally speak, he said:

"The liberal forces were ambushed last night near Cardó. The attacker was a previously unknown guerrilla leader named the Owl. Afterward, he beheaded half the population of Tivissa. It makes your hair stand on end! I saw it as I was coming from Tortosa. He was shouting: 'Make way for the Owl! Make way for the Owl!'"

Montpalau silently and significantly looked at those present. Then, clasping ~~and~~ Agnès's delicate hand between his own, he sadly said: "My work is not over, for I am bound to science, to humanity, and in a sense to the prophesy. Tomorrow I shall set out in search of the Owl."

PART THREE

1323
Happen to take off the day
the unexpectedly sudden of someone who realizes he has for-
given to him in the future. He can't really go to the future with
the present. He's a

I: The Count of Morella

^{That}
The most distinguished and excellent gentleman, Ramon Cabrera i Grinyó, commander of the Carlist armies of Aragon, Valencia and Murcia and Count of Morella by decree of His Paternal Majesty Charles V, was a dashing figure. In lithographs illustrating the works of such ~~contemporary~~ ^{contemporaries} authors as ~~Buena~~ Buenaventura de Córdoba or Antoni Pirala, he appeared in arrogant poses, nobly idealistic, in full military regalia. His face, ~~roughened~~ ^{heroically} whipped by all the winds of lower Aragon and the Maestrat, retained its lively and energetic aspect, and his words, inflamed by a ~~heroic~~ ^{heroically} and nomadic life, were grandiose and stirring when he addressed his troops or the inhabitants of conquered towns.

The Count of Morella had always enjoyed excellent health. He had taken part, on foot and horseback, in a thousand campaigns and had never complained of the slightest indisposition. For the last few days, however, he had been feeling slightly out of sorts. Not that any particular organ bothered him; it was more a lack of initiative, a strange volitionless lethargy. This sensation began at night and rose like the tide. In the morning he awoke feeling feeble and worn. His doctors Joan Martí and Carles Arrissó, perplexed, attributed it to dyspepsia or simple ill humor, since things had not gone entirely smoothly for the Carlist cause of late. That morning Cabrera and his aides, Generals Forcadell and Llagostera, were ~~pondering~~ ^{poring} over a map at their headquarters. Cabrera, who felt a trifle hazy, was sitting in a comfortable leather armchair.

"Gandesa, gentlemen!" he exclaimed. "Gandesa is the key to three kingdoms. I shall never tire of repeating it. Whoever rules Gandesa ~~controls~~ ^{rules} Catalonia, Aragon, and Valencia. This map tells the whole story."

Forcadell, who was nearsighted, peered at the map. ~~was clearly~~ An extremely complicated orographic system nervously criss-crossed the paper. Amid the spurs of an escarpment, a black dot, miniscule and intense, indicated the liberal town, six times besieged.

"~~The operation~~ ^{Your plan} seems ^{a bit} risky," Forcadell ventured, "especially considering the inhabitants' ~~resistance~~ ^{intransigence} and the proximity of General Noguera's army."

"~~I insist that~~ ^{I order you} you not ^{to} mention that savage wolf who slew my mother!" cried Cabrera. "I shall strangle him with my bare hands. He and his wretched rabble will end up in my power!"

Cabrera spoke with terrible grandeur. He had risen painfully to his feet and now ~~shook himself~~ trembled with rage and bitter hatred. His two assistants kept their silence, not daring to contradict him.

Wearily, making a great effort of will, Cabrera regained his composure. He heard something like the beating of bat's wings in his ears, as though they had sprouted on the back of his neck. He ~~had~~ ^{had} gotten too excited. From now on, he would have to ~~try to~~ control his temper.

They went back to the map. Lack of roads was the main obstacle. In such circumstances, it was useless to even think about artillery. At most, a couple of small-caliber guns dragged on logs. In any case, those cannons ^{from} the forges at Cantavieja were of little use. Last time one had exploded, killing ^{both} the gunners ~~manning it~~. Their plan of attack was ~~to~~ surround Gandesa ^{again} and bombard it from Calvari as best they could. Cabrera, descending from Horta de Sant Joan like a whirlwind, would try to storm the town. Forcadell would command the army's two wings, while Llagostera, with three battalions of reinforcements, would guard the pass through which the Ebre flowed, keeping an eye on the road from Tortosa lest Noguera's troops surprise them.

On the military map, their plan looked feasible. ^{No detail} Everything had been ^{neglected} ~~foreseen~~. They couldn't fail. Gandesa would fall ~~mm~~ to the Carlist forces.

Sunlight streamed through the window. They ~~could~~ hear swallows' cries outside, and looking down, they saw horses crossing the ashy fields with provisions for ~~Mormella~~ ^{Morella}. Cabera liked to describe Morella as an eagle's aerie, and indeed, the famous general, safe in his imposing fortress, seemed like a bird of prey peering out into the distance.

Llagostera took a few steps toward a table ^{littered} ^{cluttered} ~~covered~~ with field glasses, ^{canned food jars} cans, and other insignificant objects, and filled a pipe for his commander. He brushed a few bits of tobacco off his jacket and handed the pipe to Cabrera.

An orderly entered, wearing a Basque beret. He bore a communiqué from Solaní, who operated on the coast near Móra and Flix. The count read it, first with indifference but then with ^{careful} ~~scrupulous~~ attention.

"This is rich!" Cabera exclaimed. "If I felt in a better mood, I'd burst out laughing! It seems we've got a competitor. Solaní says an unknown ~~mymmh~~ Carlist general, known as the ~~mmh~~ Owl and operating only by night, has crossed the Ebre from Catalonia and, after entering our jurisdiction, has begun to exterminate entire villages. Solaní says the fields are red with blood."

The Count of Morella was ~~asm~~ about to utter one of his famous quips when he noticed ~~that~~ he was feeling a little woozy. He fell silent.

The wings of some fantastic ~~mmmmmm~~ nocturnal beast beat in his ears.

II: Gandesa, the World's Flower

It had been raining for a few days, and the Ebre was full, swift, and majestic, overflowing with reddish water and perilous eddies. At one bend, a bizarre raft struggled to reach the other shore without being spotted from Miravet Castle, ^{since} ~~as~~ no one knew if it was controlled by Carlists or liberals.

The raft bore a carriage, and a rudimentary sail fluttered ^{on} ~~from~~ its mast. The crew consisted of three personages, two of whom manned the sail while the third manipulated a broad oar that served as their rudder. As the reader has surely guessed, they were our three friends in search of the Owl. Montpalau and Amadeu struggled with the sail, executing Novau's orders as best they could. Novau himself handled the rudder with great skill, for, as we know, he was an experienced seaman. Thanks to their prudence and Novau's navigational skills, the raft reached its destination without excessive difficulties.

Montpalau immediately took their bearings with a compass. They had to find the road they had abandoned because the bridge was down. In their crossing, they had drifted ^{south} toward Tortosa.

There were big, thatched sheds for drying fruit and lush fields stretching away into the distance. The soil was ~~excellent~~ ^{very} fertile. From the top of a hill, they spotted Móra, Benisset and Miravet, as though set in a flowering garden. On the other side of the river were Cardó and Tivissa, ravaged by the Owl, and nestled among the rugged mountains beyond them, Pratdip.

Montpalau remembered bidding Agnès farewell. He saw her, graceful and strong, sweet and fresh as a peach, standing in the doorway with ^{glistening} ~~shining~~ eyes. The baroness had given him an old silver rosary. Agnès,

his beloved, had added a handkerchief ~~that~~ she had embroidered especially and some perfumed locks of her hair. As they were about to set out, he had kissed her soft lips.

They found the road again. As they left Móra, they heard some frightened peasants talking about how ^{the night before,} twelve liberal families had been drained of blood through some mysterious procedure ~~last night~~ in El Pinell del Brai, near Gandesa. Everyone assumed it had been the Owl. The peasants crossed themselves.

Upon hearing this, Montpalau ordered Amadeu to head for Gandesa, a town that, while not quite a stronghold, ~~in his mind~~ was a bastion of liberalism.

When they reached the inn at Composines, our friends had to ~~gretfully~~ ^{luctantly} abandon their carriage, as from then on there were only trails fit for horses. They left their tilbury at the inn, whose owner pocketed sixteen rales for storage and maintenance, and prepared to continue their pursuit of the vampiress disguised as a guerrilla leader. First, however, they dined at the inn ~~on~~ on a sensational roast with aïoli, washed down with wine so strong it brought tears to their eyes. Amadeu took the liberty of remarking that, with the stench of garlic on their breath, they had nothing to fear from vampires. Montpalau, however, found ~~his~~ ^{this} observations in bad taste and shot him a glance that made him quickly fall silent.

Mounted on three powerful and vigorous steeds, the travelers reached Corbera, which the popular muse had dubbed "the windowed". People said "Corbera the windowed" or "I'm off to Corbera the windowed." There was a charming song that went:

Corbera the windowed,

Gandesa, the world's flower.

no #

The slopes ^{around} of Fontcalda
aren't getting any lower.

Fontcalda is a shrine a stone's throw from Gandesa, where homage is paid to the Virgin Mary. Just as Pratedip had Saint Marina, so Gandesa took pride in the Virgin of Fontcalda, worshipped ⁱⁿ by all the neighboring villages.

Our friends had scarcely left Corbera when, ~~a~~ rounding a bend, they beheld Gandesa's steeple. After its sixth siege, the town's status was changed by the Spanish Parliament, which declared it the LOYAL, HEROIC, AND IMMORTAL CITY OF GANDESA and ~~exempted~~ its inhabitants from taxes and military service for ten years.

Gandesa lived in a state of constant vigilance. Around it, the townsfolk had dug a ditch six yards wide and four yards deep. It had no walls, but all the entrances and exits had been ~~walled up~~ ^{barricaded} and equipped with loopholes. ^{On} the steeple, a watchman from the national militia kept an eye on the ^{trails} paths leading ^{up} to the town.

There was only one way ^{left} to enter Gandesa: through the Corbera gate. The head guard examined Montpalau's papers and, seeing that he was an important personage, immediately took him to ~~meet~~ the mayor, Josep Alcoverro. Alcoverro, commonly known as "Pep Kettledrums," occupied a grandiose, labyrinthine, baroque house directly across from the church's famous Romanesque colonnade. Montpalau told Alcoverro--who was a distinguished trial lawyer--why he had undertaken such a dangerous journey and saw his jaw drop when he learned what a threat the Owl posed ~~to Gandesa~~. Since naturally Josep Alcoverro knew ~~nothing~~ about the efficacy of garlic as a defensive measure, he urged Montpalau to give a talk that evening at the Recreational Society, provided the speaker was not too exhausted, and thus both inform ~~and~~ ^{alert} prepare the population.

Montpalau and his cousin were ~~also~~ ^{also then} welcomed with exquisite courtesy by Antoni Galvan, the village doctor, a well-read gourmet of a rather Voltairian ~~temperament~~ ^{views}. Also present were Oriol Mani and Josep Maria Pasqual, two jurists who wore dark glasses; Francesc Escoda, the postmaster, a great huntsman and singer of jotás; Josep Sol, a rich wholesaler and brilliant mathematician; and Pablo Ruiz, an apothecary and amateur philosopher, one hundred percent Aragonese, who knew the recipe for one of Spain's most ~~dainty~~ ^{refined} dishes: espedo. And finally, the notary Manuel Ocaña appeared: a liberal ~~sympathizer~~ ^{sympathizer}, freemason, and ~~euphoric~~ ^{rapturous} polka dancer.

They took a stroll through the village, they warmed themselves with more strong wine, and they gazed at the starry sky.

After supper, Antoni de Montpalau mounted the podium facing the Recreational Society's auditorium, which also served as a ~~an~~ ^a dance hall. He was introduced by the mayor, who took the opportunity to pronounce some harsh judgments on Carlism. Then Montpalau, carefully weighing his words before his hushed listeners, explained his objective: to learn as much as he could about the Owl, that dreadful vampire disguised as a guerrilla.

As usual, Montpalau was received with ~~rapturous~~ ^{enthusiastic} applause and was warmly congratulated by Gandesa's notables. Before he left, the local glee club performed Rafael de Riego's liberal anthem.

The notables accompanied Montpalau to his inn, where a hard and creaky bed awaited him. Then, still marveling at our young scientist's wisdom, they returned to play cards at the Recreational Society.

III: A Bill

At six-thirty the next morning, a terrific rumbling woke our friends. It could only be the sound of a ^{bursting shell} cannon. Silence followed. Then another explosion, closer. And still another. The walls shook and windows shattered, as though a giant diplodocus were beneath the inn. One could also hear the dry, repetitious sound of volleys. Someone cursed furiously in the ^{next} room ~~next door~~. The rumble returned, along with the shaking walls.

Montpalau dressed quickly. In the street, he saw Alcoverror, armed to the teeth, running toward the barricades with a handful of followers. All the authorities and notables he had met the day before hastened past, each leading his band toward some previously assigned position. Montpalau had no trouble ^{grasping} ~~understanding~~ that the town was under attack by Carlists.

Still lacing up his breeches, Amadeu ran out of the inn. Silent and intrepid, his top hat perched on his head, Isidre de Novau smoked one of his strong cigars in the square and observed the shells' trajectories. He informed his cousin that, as far as he could make out, the Carlists had tried to take the town by surprise just before dawn and ^{now} were bombarding it from Calvari.

The shells arched elliptically. When they landed, some of them bounced high in the air, giving the inhabitants time to flee their deadly effects. The Gandesians displayed remarkable courage. One heard cries of "Long live the constitution!" and "Liberty or death!" Women brought ammunition and brandy to their fathers and husbands, ^{and many took} ~~or took~~ part in the defense themselves.

Doctor Galvan hurried through the streets, ringing a copper bell.

Behind him, a dozen men bore stretchers for the wounded. As soon as they saw a casualty, they lifted him onto a stretcher, covered him with a sheet, and continued their rounds. Galvan had stuck two big pistols through his belt. Whenever he passed a barricade, he made his medical corps halt while, swept away by exalted ~~and~~ constitutionalist sentiments, he furiously fired at their perfidious attackers.

The noise was deafening. Prince Lichnowsky couldn't abide thunder, for nature unbridled filled him with dread. He was a lion in battle, but the sight of storms made his blood run cold. A classical spirit, he greatly admired his compatriot Goethe. This storm was tremendous; the smell of gunpowder filled the air. It was strange. Basically, Lichnowsky felt very disheartened, for he had accomplished neither of the missions entrusted to him. Unfortunately, he had lost track of that mysterious scientist's ~~ceaseless~~ ^{restless} wanderings, and no one seemed to know anything definite about the Owl, their nocturnal guerrilla. The junta had told him, in this latter instance, to consider the case closed, since the ~~safest~~ ^{safest but} way to avoid ridicule was to deem the Owl non-existent and therefore refuse ~~him~~ him the rank of colonel.

A shell burst. Montpalau, Amadeu, and Novau continued their stroll through the streets and squares. Buildings often collapsed, covering the Barcelonans' impeccable garments with dust. Amadeu carefully brushed off their frock coats.

Over a wall hung a splendid and truly interesting Solidago virga aurea and a Petasites fragans whose evocative aroma brought to mind that of a heliotrope. Montpalau plucked a blossom and voluptuously ~~inhaled~~ ^{sniffed} its scent.

Another shell burst, this ~~time~~ ^{one barely} only two steps from the strollers. They emerged on a steeply inclined street at whose end stood what Gandesians called "the Castle." In reality, it was a ruined building

holding two cannon General Borso di Carminati had given them during previous sieges. These cannon were manned by two sensational gunners: Matias Sabater and Rafael Navarro. Both were court officers, and wherever their gaze alighted, so did their shells. Don Antoni de Magrinyà i de Sunyer, ex-president of the Deputation of Tarragona, recounts an incident in his history of the sieges of Gandesa in which the gunners' proverbial skill achieved an amazing result: one of their shells landed in the mouth of a Carlist cannon. Naturally, the two colliding shells produced a dreadful and demoralizing explosion.

After chatting with the gunners and ^{inquiring} asking about their techniques, Montpalau cordially congratulated them on their skill.

Then our friends returned to their inn in search of those extremely up-to-date long-range English rifles. Montpalau decided to station himself in the church's steeple, from which he would have a clear view of the Carlist lines. It was an excellent idea. The panorama was splendid, and he saw a profusion of red berets, offering an exciting target. Nonetheless, Montpalau's tactic was to concentrate his fire on the enemy artillery. His marksmanship was so perfect that the Carlists had to repeatedly replace their gunners till, weary of such slaughter, they decided to move their cannon. This was a great victory, since the Carlist guns' ^{range} ~~range~~ was shorter than our friends' rifles. They had rendered their foes' artillery ^{impotent} ~~useless~~.

At midday, the innkeeper sent a ^{sprightly} ~~bright~~ lad to take them lunch and also tell them that the inhabitants, ^{deeply} ~~deeply~~ moved by their bravery, ^{tearfully} ~~tearfully~~ thanked them for their invaluable help.

To celebrate the artillery's neutralization and to infuriate Cabrera, who was watching the battle from a hill near Puiggcavaller, the glee club ~~rommed~~ ^{paraded} the streets and squares, performing various selections.

Rumor had it that Cabrera was ~~unwell~~. ~~He had been badly wounded in the battle of Morella~~

In fact, the Count of Morella bravely led the battle from an arm-chair, occasionally feeling a strange sensation at the back of his neck, as though two membranous wings had sprouted there. Moreover, his subordinates had organized the assault with nauseating incompetence. He decided to shoot a few of them.

The Carlist troops achieved none of their goals. The Gandesians' courage was not so much courage as temerity. The two jurists ~~bravely~~ bravely sallied forth and returned leading ~~four~~ ^{pack} horses loaded with feed. They were the toast of the town.

When the sun began to set, the mayor, Josep Alcoverro, a man who never minced ~~his~~ words, stationed himself at the Corbera gate behind some wine casks. There he delivered a violent diatribe against reactionaries ~~in general~~, prophesying a series of ~~dreadful misfortunes~~ ^{dire disasters} that would befall their attackers.

Night fell, and with it silence. The shots gradually died away till everything was still. Militia volunteers, however, stood guard in the darkness.

With the dawn's uncertain light, they saw that the Carlists had abandoned their positions and returned to their mountain lairs.

This heroic action, along with so many others, caused the following bill to be introduced in parliament:

BILL

- 1: When the state of the treasury permits, the city of Gandes shall be rebuilt in the name of the Nation and at its expense, bearing henceforth the title IMMORTAL GANDESA.
- 2: In the city's main square, a column or pyramid shall be erected bearing the inscription: GANDESA REBUILT BY GRATEFUL SPAIN.
- 2: All militiamen and citizens who have defended their city shall be

deemed mobilized for the war's duration and shall be paid for their service.

This bill may be found in the parliamentary records for 1840, second volume, first appendix to number 98, page 1289. Rubric: Congress of Deputies. The commission was headed by Catalonia's great friend, ^{that} the distinguished gentleman ^{Don} Pascual Madoz.

IV: The Land of Fleas

Montpalau and his assistants spent a few more days in Gandesa, basking in the populace's grateful affection. The apothecary and philosopher Pablo Ruiz organized an espedo outside ~~the~~ town in a delightful spot called "the springs." This dainty dish, invented by Lower Aragon's transhumant shepherds, consisted of lamb tripe wound around oak branches and ~~gr~~oasted over an open fire. Part of its excellence derived from the way it crunched between one's teeth, ~~but~~ its most exquisite and refined peculiarity was that it still contained the beast's excrement.

There were hogsheads of new wine and abundant ~~many~~ cherry cakes, moist and sweet, of great evocative powers. Everyone felt in an expansive mood.

Doctor Galvan, who was an amateur poet, dedicated an ode to Montpalau's immortal deeds. The wine had gone to their heads. One of the poem's most lyrically effusive passages, inspired by a certain Latin author, read:

In oblivions's stream
my fame shall not die
but rather soar with my praises on high.

A few days later, learning that the Owl had resumed his activities between Arnes and Vall-de-Boures, our two gentlemen, followed by Amadeu, set out on his bloody trail.

In Horta de Sant Joan, they visited the arcaded Gothic square and the Holy Savior's Monastery, above which black ravens circled. The air was chilly, and they had to fasten the top buttons on their frock coats. The landscape had changed. It was wilder and more grandiose, with the Maestrat's peaks in the background.

They passed through Arnes, stopping to admire its town hall, and ~~Nonetheless, a little old lady, knitting in a doorway, recited the following riddle:~~ through Vall-de-Roures, ~~Nonetheless, a little old lady, knitting in a doorway, recited the following riddle:~~ where they visited the Gothic church and the castle. They found no trace of the Owl.

Nonetheless, a little old lady, knitting in a doorway, recited the following riddle:

The Owl doth sleep.

To the mountain the snail ~~will~~ ^{doth} creep.

Go by night to the forest deep.

She had them stumped. All their efforts to coax more information out of ~~that little old lady~~ ^{her} were in vain. After pondering her words, they concluded that ~~what she meant was that~~ the Owl was resting by day, as is customary with the undead, and that they would find him after dark in the mountains. It was perfectly logical.

They set out as hastily as they could for ~~Besait Pass~~ ^{the Besait Mountain}. The landscape was breathtaking. As they climbed, the air grew ~~clearer~~ ^{crisper} and ~~chillier~~ ^{cooler}, while the scents of woodland plants and wild animals mixed in their nostrils. Soon clumps of Asplenium trichomanes appeared--commonly known as ferns and used to cure alopecia.

They passed beneath mighty and deafening waterfalls ~~plunging~~ ^{from} into abysses; they found huge gurgling caverns like enchanted palaces; deep gorges yawned beneath kermes oak and scrub, and only their horses' sure instincts ~~kept them from falling in~~ ^{tumbling plunging}. In the ~~meadows'~~ ^{valleys'} violet solitude, they sighted graceful deer, which Montpalau identified as rare examples of Capra hispanica.

Amadeu found a very strange spring. After a frugal meal, as Montpalau's lackey began to wash their silverware, he saw to his horror that the blade of the first knife had been eaten away by the water, leaving only the wooden handle. Montpalau forbade his companions to

drink such high-proof water, which might affect the mineral substances in their bodies.

At ^{thin} that point, Amadeu began to feel uneasy. The Maestrat was a most bizarre and ~~surprising~~ ^{distressing} area. Montpalau, on the other hand, ~~delight-~~ ^{cheerfully} edly collected herbs. The mountains suited Isidre de Novau, their brave and taciturn sea captain, to a tee. He found himself finally cured of ^{that} his disease caused by ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ canned food.

They hadn't seen a soul in the Maestrat. Evening ~~was~~ approaching. They spied a half-ruined farmhouse. A man with feverish eyes came forth to ~~greet them~~ when they knocked at the door.

They decided to spend the night in that wretched farmhouse. They supped miserably. Montpalau advised them to sleep with crosses around their necks. They hung ~~some~~ ⁹ garlic cloves in the windows. They fell into a deep and refreshing sleep.

When the cocks crowed, they again set out on their quest. In vain they sought some village, some sign of the Owl. The odd man with feverish eyes had spoken very little.

Now they crossed a plain strewn with rocks. At first they were smallish, but they saw much larger ones ahead.

They started ~~scatching~~ themselves. First their thighs and then their entire bodies. There were thousands of fleas. They came out from among the rocks, attacking first the horses and then the men. Soon their skin looked raw and purulent.

Suddenly, among those ~~huge~~ distant boulders, they spied some black forms leaping high in the air.

"Giant fleas!" Novau exclaimed. "We're done for. One bite means certain death."

Montpalau anxiously glanced about, as though searching for something. Their situation was desperate. He hastily dismounted. He cut

three pine branches with copious needles and, holding them like torches, lit the needles, from which thick and balsamic smoke began to billow.

Those monstrous fleas kept their distance. They were hideous, awful beasts. They greedily eyed the travelers. Awaiting their chance, they leapt about, reaching incredible heights.

~~Thammbhrammndana~~ Holding their fumigating torches aloft, the three riders made their way through that veritable host of giant fleas. Stragely enough, no flea tried to pursue them. When they crossed a stream of clear and limpid waters, the fleas remained on the other side, watching them closely but ~~inexpressively~~ ^{imperviously}. After a while, they returned to the region of cyclopean rocks, still leaping as was their wont.

Our three friends breathed a sigh of relief. They had clearly escaped ~~from~~ ^{an} ~~unpleasant~~ a close brush with death.

V: The Capture

"Atoms, which are tiny, imperceptible and nearly invisible entities that can only be seen in rays of sunlight entering a room, bear the Plague's contagion from one body or place to another. For this reason they are called seminaries, as their malignant and pestiferous nature multiplies whatever is borne upon the air like an evil seed. Otherwise the contagion could not spread from one place to another, for air can neither decay nor change its nature and substance. And as the aforesaid air is uncorruptable, whereas atoms, being mixed bodies, are subject to corruption, they rot and, using the air as their medium, enter us through respiration, infecting bodies and hearts with the ills they bear."

It kept on raining. The three Barcelonans were obliged to remain in Salsera, a dusty and decrepit hamlet they reached three hours after their adventure with the fleas. It rained cats and dogs, opening enormous craters in the ashy soil. These craters became ponds, breeding grounds for putrefaction and death. Swarms of larvae^{would} emerged, pullulating at sunrise^{and} and in their nuptial flights^{and}, their biological metamorphoses, infecting the very air they breathed. Montpalau amused himself by reading Brief, Highly Useful and Profitable Regimen for Preventing and Curing the Plague. Written by Bernat Mas, Doctor of Arts and Medicine, Native of the City of Manresa. Dedicated to Our Lady of Good Health in the Year 1625. Under Royal License. In Barcelona by Esteve Liberós.

The primary recommendations^{were} are: "First, ensure that the surrounding air~~and~~ is pure, clean, and purged of all corruption,~~and~~ superfluity, and evil presences. Second, ensure that your body is clean

and purged of all excess and ill humors. Third, your body should be fortified through preservative, ~~medicines~~ and cordials against pestilent air. Fourth, flee any occasion that might rot or corrupt your bodily humors. And finally, resist sadness, melancholy, fear and other passions of the soul.

"Bonfires should be lit around the city and in its streets and squares, using those things that most wonderfully purify the air, producing a ~~clear~~, ^{bright} ~~bright~~, ^{clear} and sweet-smelling blaze, like pine, laurel, olive wood, juniper, fir, oak, cypress, myrtle, savin, ~~hay~~, beech, orangewood, rosemary, thyme, lavender, sage, ~~worm~~ wormwood, southernwood and other similar plants and trees.

"The city should be ~~clean~~ and purged of rot, bad smells and other indecent or discarded things such as dead beasts blocking the flow of sewers, pools of stagnant water, dung heaps, hides, ~~soaking~~ ^{soaked} hemp and tanneries if possible. The water in pools, irrigation tanks, ponds and moats is most harmful; such recipients should be emptied and filled with earth lest foul odors infect the air. Dancing, merrymaking, and fencing tournaments should be forbidden, along with ball playing and other forms of bodily exercise, especially during the summer."

In the same spirit of scientific precaution, the Marquis de la Gralla and his colleagues crossed themselves in Barcelona after reading Montpalau's report on the vampire. The marquis felt that his theories had been vindicated and eagerly awaited further news about the mysterious being. Segimon Ferrer, the mathematician, maintained his scepticism, claiming that no conclusions could be drawn until Montpalau had examined the cause of those disasters. He had established the manner in which they took place, but it remained to be seen whether they were produced by some supernatural, legendary being. Personally, he doubted it. ~~He~~

He was immediately rebutted by Father Matons, ^{who, using} ~~who~~, ~~using~~ rhetorical skills honed during ten years in the pulpit and through ^{I dare} ~~his careful~~ readings of Gregori Mayans i Siscars and Antoni de Campmany, turned the conversation to ^{matters} ~~questions~~ of dogma and ~~exorcism~~ exorcism. Did his mathematical colleague mean to deny the Devil's existence?

Segimon Ferrer glared at Matons ~~angrily~~. Two opposing camps quickly formed. Bartomeu Garriga and Francesc Avinyó took Ferrer's side; the marquis and Samsó Corbella defended Matons. Josep Ignasi, the marquis's heir, followed the debate with the look of a man recently hit on the head with the club. That is, he had a most unworldly expression on his face.

Montpalau had often imagined the effect his report would have upon the marquis's circle. He smiled ruefully.

It had stopped raining. As Montpalau read and pondered, a Carlist cavalry patrol quietly surrounded Salsera. An officer with twenty men entered and forced our friends to surrender. Resistance would have been suicidal.

The officer treated them with great consideration. He was a gentleman. His name was Tomàs d'Orga, and he hailed from Xàtiva. He had fought in the Carlist armies since Baron de Hervás's time, when the rebellion had first flared up in the Kingdom of Valencia.

The patrol set out for Morèlla, Cabrera's craggy ^g ~~aerie~~ aerie. The sun slowly set. Wearily, a Scaraboeus cervarius ventured forth from its lair.

VI: The Abominable Contamination

General Ramon Cabrera was ~~truly~~ very ill. His doctors despaired; they had no idea what was the matter. Rumors circulated among the troops, who ~~said~~ ^{suspected that} some traitor was poisoning their commander. In effect, the command had passed to Forcadell and Llagostera, who sweated blood trying to fashion a viable plan of defense. Ever since Maroto's shameful surrender at Vergara, the situation in the Maestrat had been precarious. Between Espartero in Saragossa and O'Donnell in Valencia, Cabrera's aides lived in a state of constant apprehension. After their ill-fated attack on Gandesa, in which the general had still played a role, they had suffered a string of ~~contratemps~~ ^{setbacks} and ~~misfortunes~~ ^{reversals}. Yes, life was grim in Carlist territory.

The Count of Morella, at that moment, sat pale and bloodless in his office, resting his head against a pillow. He suffered periodic and mysterious losses of blood. That much was clear. What his doctors could not fathom, however, was how he lost it. To counteract his anemia, they made him drink kid's blood and eat raw chopped meat. It did little good. He revived for a while, but on the morrow one could see that he had suffered another mysterious loss of blood, and he again heard--as is usual in cases of anemia--the sound of bat's wings in his ears. Lately, two small sores had appeared on his neck, which the doctors attributed to an incipient case of furunculosis.

He also complained of somnambulism. At any rate, he remembered absurd and confused scenes that took place during the night and were devoid of any logical meaning. Perhaps they were hallucinations caused by anemia and loss of blood. ~~In any case~~ ⁹, it was very strange. He recalled two fiery eyes, a jagged scar on a chin. One ~~day~~ ^{morning}, as he was

shaving, the ~~drained~~ and weary general thought he saw his image become ^{so} translucent in the mirror ~~and that,~~ through it, he could see the furniture behind him. He was gripped by terror.

Now Ramon Cabrera, with visible disgust, was eating some sheep's lungs, while Forcadell carefully went over their payments for cannon forged at Cantavieja, which were a source of constant worry to the general. Then they discussed Espartero's movements, closer and more threatening with every passing day. Forcadell didn't dare to mention ~~the general~~ ^{their foe} by name in front of Cabrera, and much less his recent title: Duke of Victory. Cabrera's ~~bitter~~ ^{shaken} fury would have ~~rocked~~ the castle's foundations. They also reviewed the hair-raising exploits of General Owl, who, as we know, had the insolence to operate not far from Morella, exterminating families of liberal views. Cabrera believed that the Owl-- ~~who, on the other hand,~~ ^{whom, however,} no one had ever seen--hoped to profit from his illness, supplant him, and become the hero of the Maestrat. There seemed to be no other explanation. Cabrera trembled at this hypothesis, seeking with indignation and eagerly awaiting the day when he would ~~recover~~ ^{regain} his good health and slowly strangle his rival with his bare hands.

He had just ~~drunk~~ ^{downed} a ~~dose~~ ^{glass} of kid's blood. He wiped his lips on a coarse napkin, leaving a red ~~blotch~~ ^{stain}. Forcadell asked if he would like his habitual pipe.

"No," replied Cabrera, emitting a staccato burp. Pointing to the door, he said: "Bring in the prisoners."

Antoni de Montpalau appeared, top hat in hand. He was followed by Isidre and Amadeu. Cabrera ~~shuffled~~ leafed through some papers.

Our hero immediately fixed his perspicacious gaze upon Cabrera's strikingly white face. He noticed the two small sores on his neck.

The Count of Morella, ~~once he had~~ ^{after reading} read Baron de Meer's safe-con-

duct, courteously addressed Montpalau: "I see that you are a distinguished man of science, but, at the same time, you are an enemy of our glorious King Charles V. The fact that we found you ~~infiltrating~~ⁱⁿ our territory leads us to draw some ominous conclusions. Think carefully before you ^{answer} ~~reply~~: What were you doing in Salsera?"

Montpalau remained silent for a few moments, attentively but discreetly examining Cabrera's furuncles. Then he gravely and laconically ~~replied~~^{said}: "I'm searching for a vampire, one of the undead."

Cabrera started in his armchair. He felt those sheep's lungs turn to stone in his stomach. He asked: "What did you say? A vampire? ~~I~~^I must be ~~getting~~^{going} deaf."

"No, general; I'm stalking a vampire. His name is Onofre de Dip, ~~but he's~~ also known as the Owl in his macabre disguise as a guerrilla leader. This dreadful being is devastating the countryside, butchering parents and children alike and poisoning damsels' blood."

Staring intently at Cabrera, he added in a slightly lower voice: "The same being who, with diabolical persistence, has brought you to your present state. If God does not aid us, he will soon achieve his goal: to turn you into another vampire. Those two sores on your neck leave no doubt; they are his mark. Divine Providence, however, ~~ignoring~~ our ideological differences, has summoned me to your side."

An anguished scream greeted our hero's words. Clasp^{ing} his neck as though he were choking, Cabrera sat bold upright in his chair. He moved his lips, trying to speak. Then he slumped forward onto the desk.

Montpalau anxiously rushed toward him. Forcadell, who had followed the conversation with feelings that would be hard to describe, stood there in a state of shock. With Isidre's and Amadeu's help, Montpalau carried the Count of Morella to a ~~couch~~^{couch} and began to carefully examine

his inanimate body. Then, addressing Forcadell--who was on his knees reciting a Paternoster--he ordered in a voice that brooked neither delay nor ^{argument} ^{Put} reply: "Place two dozen garlic cloves in half a pot of water and let them simmer for twenty minutes. Then remove the cloves and bring me the water. One of my assistants will accompany you."

Forcadell left, still looking stunned and followed by Amadeu, who had become an expert in garlic-related matters. Montpalau, meanwhile, completed his painstaking examination of the general's body. Then he pulled a cross from his vest pocket and dangled it before the Carlist's face.

"No doubt about it," he said. "The blood is extracted by suction, as in the other cases. We'll have to act swiftly and decisively."

At that moment, Forcadell and Amadeu entered with a large steaming ^{caldron} pot. They poured some of its contents into a cup. Six or seven Carlist officers peeked through the door, afraid to enter.

Montpalau, forcing Cabera's lips apart, fed him a spoonful of the garlic water. He patiently repeated the ^{process} operation nearly a ~~hundred~~ hundred times. When he finished, the sick man was certainly calmer. He had fallen into a deep sleep.

Then they bore the general to his chamber, undressed him, and put him to bed. There was a large window at one end of the room. The walls had been whitewashed, and ^{their} the sole decoration was a framed letter from Charles V naming him Count of Morella. Beneath it hung two crossed sabers.

^{the medic} "We were lucky," our hero told Forcadell, who ~~had~~ finally regained his voice. "We were nearly too late. I trust that, with a little luck, I shall be able to save your general."

"I thank you in the name of His Majesty and our entire army," replied Forcadell, visibly moved and clasping Montpalau's hand. "Thank

you, gentlemen. I don't know how to express my gratitude."

"The general must never be left along^e," Montpalau continued, "and especially at night. Trustworthy men must stand ^{watch} guard at all times. Every half hour, he should be fed three teaspoons of garlic water. This evening I and my assistants shall take all necessary precautions against another attack. Later we shall explain our techniques. Meanwhile, let the general rest."

At a sign from Montpalau, his cousin, ~~the~~ valiant ~~sea~~ captain Isidre de Novau who had once sighted the dreaded pesce cola, sat down ^{beside} at the bedside and lit his pipe.

Everyone else left. Montpalau softly closed the door behind him.

Outside, there was a kind of silent detonation. A gust of hot air wrathfully beat against the windowpanes. Nature's countless invisible tiny creatures froze for a moment. Something writhed in pain and desperation. A perverse shadowy form ^{climbed} a wooden fence, leapt over a stone wall, and fled through the fields.

Then a leaf, yellow and forlorn, ^{fluttered down} slowly fell from a branch.

VII: The Army Receives Its Orders

Morella is a striking city. Seen from the ^{road} highway that links it with Montroig--~~Called~~ Monroyo in Aragonese--it looks like something from the times of King Arthur and his knights, a most appropriate setting for the Holy Grail. The unsuspecting traveler, rounding the last bend in the highway, seems to behold a kind of landlocked Mont Saint-Michel, rising from the ochre soil complete with watchtowers, Gothic spires and a lofty castle. Only the sea is missing. The sea, with its ghost-ships and Breton wayside crosses.

Morella is encircled by walls whose gates open onto the surrounding fields. Defended by huge towers, marvels of medieval military architecture, they lead into the city's tortuous streets. One immediately spies crumbling palaces, now silent, and illustrious ruins ^{filled with} ~~amid which~~ children ^{at} play. Morella's backbone is the long Carrer Major, a street flanked by arcades that keep off the sun in summer and the snow in winter. Halfway to the castle, one beholds Saint Francis's Convent and an extraordinary cathedral, both dating from the era of Catalonia's greatness. The cathedral is a jewel, profusely carved and with an ingeniously fashioned choir raised above the nave. Choleric priests with deep voices keep watch over its frozen glory.

The castle is perched on top of the mountain. In reality, the entire mountain is a castle, since military fortifications gird it in a spiraling pattern. Protected by ~~the~~ powerful ~~Carlist~~ artillery, this ~~exceptional~~ fortress was deemed impregnable. It was Caglera's headquarters. On windy days, one could see Charles V's banner fluttering on the highest tower.

Our beloved Barcelonans felt as ~~at home~~ ^{free} in Morella as three fish

in the water. They were treated with great consideration and accorded all the honors reserved for science, but their legal status was a bit ^{fuzzy} ~~unclear~~ since, as prisoners and ^{foes} ~~opponents~~ of Carlism, there were theoretical limits upon their ^{movement} ~~freedom~~. In fact, however, they did as they pleased and won the hearts of both officers and common soldiers.

Montpalau, through his energetic protective measures, achieved positive results. Cabrera's room was carefully sealed with braids of garlic, and the water prescribed by Montpalau--together with copious and delicious food--revived the Carlist commander ^T who, with the good cheer that always accompanies returning health, frequently invited our naturalist to share his table. The count's cooks joyously set about their task, preparing capons, hares, partridges and roast suckling pigs.

Cabrera, as was natural, showed his affection and eternal gratitude to Montpalau, whose side he never left. Every day after lunch, they would take a ^{turn stroll} ~~stroll~~ together.

Nonetheless, Montpalau was worried, for those two sores had not ^{healed} ~~disappeared~~ from ^{Cabrera's} ~~Cabera's~~ neck. There was something in the ^{Cabrera's} ~~general's~~ face that was not to his liking. He gave him a string of wild garlic to ~~always~~ wear around his neck. Montpalau's concern could be read in his gaze.

One afternoon, as they were drinking coffee on one of the castle's terraces ^T ~~and~~ ^{looking} ~~looking~~ out over the city ~~below~~ ^{them}, Montpalau said: "I'm going to tell you something that will require great fortitude on your part. Were it merely a question of your health, I would not say it; but it is also a matter that affects your very soul. Courage, general. The vampire's ⁱⁿ ~~innoculative~~ process, as you know, has been halted. All the same, anyone ~~infected~~ by the undead is himself a potential vampire. ^T ~~If~~

^{Should have} you ~~had~~ the misfortune to die before we destroyed the Owl, your death would only be apparent, for you would then join the ranks of the undead. Only if we neutralize the Owl in your lifetime will you be freed from his curse. Your soul's salvation depends upon it."

~~His manly courage and resolution~~ Cabrera listened calmly to these words. His manly courage and ^{resolve} resolution could be seen in his face.

"I suspected as much, dear Montpalau," he replied. "In a sense, I even knew it. I ^{can} see what the Owl wants and how few scruples he has. As soon as I realized that these sores would not disappear, I understood the full horror of my predicament. He wants to ^{replace} supplant me. God help me! I trust, however, in His infinite mercy and your skill. In you the Owl has found an implacable foe, for, though his powers are dreadful, you possess potent weapons: intelligence, valor, and learning. Moreover, you no longer fight alone. For the sake of humanity and to free myself ^{from} of his curse, I place all my military, political and economic ^{means} powers at your disposal. If the Owl wants war, let him have it. I shall rely on God and yourself."

That same afternoon, Morella's ^{new} junta, both to raise the citizens' morale and to avoid malicious rumors ^{about} about Cabrera, published the following ban:

"God Almighty, who decided all wars and who especially cherishes this faithful army and province, has restored the Count of Morella to health, curing the illness that for so long was the ~~main~~ ^{sole} exclusive object of our thoughts and your concern."

"Immortal Cabrera, our century's greatest hero, has recovered. These comforting words echo sweetly in the souls of those he commands, from high-ranking officers to the humblest soldier. All were ^{weighed down} oppressed by grief and mourning as long as our commander's life was imperilled. Clerics, men of the sword, civilians, rich and poor, aristocrats, ple-

biens--all felt that terror which afflicts a son who dreads ~~the death~~
 of his father's death.

"Now our weeping has ended, and we fear no longer. Let us turn ~~our~~
 sorrow into ^{good} cheer and, thanking Almighty God for our beloved general's
 recovery, when he appeared to have one foot in the grave, let us rejoice
 and celebrate his return to good health.

"Your junta, unsurpassed in love for our most excellent lord the
 Count of Morella, and in conjunction with the ecclesiastical authorities,
 invites those who dwell in towns ~~an~~ paternally ruled by His Majesty King
 Charles V (may God preserve him) to attend a solemn Mass of thanksgiving..
 The service will be followed by two days of feasting, of whose exact
 nature we shall say nothing, for we trust that you ~~yourselves~~ will make
 this celebration ~~them~~ far more glorious than anything we could devise.

"Sons of the revolution, hideous monsters out of Hell whose deeds
 defile Spain, liberals of all stripes: you treacherously slay your best
 generals, while those who fight for God and our king's sacred cause
 weep, tremble, and ceaselessly pray for our commander's life. Herein
 you may behold your party's infamy and our honor and justice. Long ^{live} ~~life~~
 the Church, our absolute monarch, and the Count of Morella.--Jaume Mur--
 Manuel Garzon--Josep Maria Villalonga--Josep Bru--Lluc Domènec--Vicenç
 Herrero--Joan Baptista Pellicer--Francesc Bonfin--P.A.D.R.J.--Marià
 de Godoy, secretary."

Cabrera then dicatated the following order: "Wanted dead or alive:
 a self-appointed general who goes by the name of Owl. This common crimi-
 nal, pretending to represent our noble ~~case~~ ^{cause}, has committed the most
 heinous and atrocious murders. His Paternal Majesty's government cannot
 tolerate the disrepute his deeds have brought upon us, as we know the
 aforesaid Owl is an agent of freemasonry whom the illegitimate govern-
 ment in Madrid has sent to infiltrate our ranks in order to discredit

us in the eyes of foreign powers.

"Consequently, I, Ramon Cabrera i Grinyó, Count of Morella and commander of the army of Aragon, Valencia, and Murcia, representing His Majesty Charles V, order all my troops to search for the Owl's present or former hiding places, paying special attention to cemeteries, crypts in abandoned churches, ruined castles, deep caves and other places the common folk shun. Likewise, they should be forewarned that they will probably not find the Owl in person. All information on this particular should be transmitted to our headquarters. Morella. Count of Morella." The seal read: "Urgent."

VIII: The Cave~~n~~

Prince Lichnowsky decided that prolonged residence in Vimbodi had dulled his investig~~g~~tive skills and that it was time for a change. Since his spider-like strategy had brought him no success, he would now adopt--metaphorically speaking--an opposite tack and imitate ~~the~~ locust's ^{busy flight.} ~~nervous activity~~. He must find these spies who, under the pretext of a scientific expedition, were trying to infiltrate the ~~royalist~~ ^{absolutist} camp. How? By going to Morella. Now he could see it all clearly. Their objective was the headquarters of Ramon Cabrera, Carlism's victorious eagle. He had been a fool not to see it sooner. He wo~~u~~ld set out im~~me~~diately, disguised as a melon vendor. All he needed was a cart and some merchandise. Everything would go smoothly. Prince Lichnowsky smiled ^{to himself} ~~craftily~~.

Just as Prince Lichnowsky made ~~t~~his momentous decision, the invincible Ramon Cabrera, commander of the army of Aragon, Valencia, and Murcia, resolved--perhaps influenced by some telepathic signal--to ~~abandon~~ the city of Morella, leaving barely enough soldiers to defend it, and move his headquarters to Xerta. It was a bitter pill ~~to~~ swallow. Black clouds menaced the ~~abandonment~~ Carlist cause. Cantavieja and its excellent forges had fallen--alas!--to Espartero, the queen's fatuous general. O'Donnell was advancing up the coast. Count Charles of Spain had been assassinated under mysterious circumstances. Was the vampire a double agent? Had Providence forsaken their triumphant leader Charles V?

Cabrera and his army set out at daybreak. It was bitterly bold, and all the officers wore mufflers. They had to get out of the Maestrat, to reach the Ebre's warm banks as fast as they could. The long column

carefully ~~avoided~~ ^{skirted} the area inhabited by the fleas, though one could see their prodigious leaps in the distance.

The guides decided that the best spot to camp was Enchanted Valley, where they would find plentiful stores of firewood. Streams of icy water flowed from unscaleable peaks ~~amid woods~~ ^{through groves} of fragrant fir trees.

Antoni de Montpalau decided to explore a cavern whose terrifying mouth had caused it to be named Dead Man's Cave. The name seemed very suggestive, and it might easily be that the Owl, carried away by his peculiar inclinations, had chosen it as his daytime residence. It was a solitary spot. The cavern opened in the middle of a ~~slightly sloping~~ ^{slightly sloping} plain. The troops pitched their tents around it so they could help if they were needed.

As usual, Amadeu and Isidre accompanied Montpalau. At the last moment, valiant Forcadell also joined them.

After studying the cavern's black mouth for a few minutes, Montpalau pulled down his top hat, ~~made~~ indispensable by the ~~cavern's~~ ^{with} humidity, and, with a stout rope around his waist, cautiously descended ~~holding~~ ^{with} a miner's ~~lamp~~ ^{lantern}.

The descent was slow and laborious. Finally they reached a kind of tunnel that, after a steep incline, led them to a chamber full of stalactites. The silence was awesome.

Having crossed this chamber, they entered another one, far bigger and straight out of The Arabian Nights. In the glow from their lantern, it looked like a casket lined with silk and glittering with rich colors: pale pink, emerald green, mother-of-pearl, coralline red . . . At that moment, they began to hear extremely delicate music.

It was a kind of melodious, seductive breathing, frozen in time. They didn't quite ~~understand~~ ^{understand} what was occurring, but they felt a

great desire to sink to the ground. It was like a distant choir of female voices, lost in the memory of things long forgotten.

Suddenly, they were gripped by terror and the certainty that something strange ~~was~~^{there} behind them. They whirled around. A giant spider stood ten feet away, as though it had been turned to stone. That spider had no eyes.

They cautiously backed into another passageway whose walls were transparent ~~like~~^{as} glass. It led ~~them~~^{to} to a third chamber through which a black and silent stream flowed. There they were met by another surprise, very interesting to Montpalau from a professional standpoint: a huge white worm, also eyeless, stupidly curled and uncurled in a corner.

On the far side of the stream they saw two more passageways, one beside the other. They leapt across where the ~~silent~~^{dark} waters were narrowest and decided to enter one. The next chamber they reached was smaller and more intimate than the other. The scene that greeted them made their jaws drop ~~in~~^{with} amazement.

Human figures turned to stone, frozen in varying postures, filled the cavern. Some were sitting or standing, while others lay on the ground as though asleep. There were mothers with children, as well as a dog furiously scratching for a flea. Montpalau concluded that some geological cataclysm had surprised that group of cave-dwellers thousands of years ago, and he saw with satisfaction that nature's results closely resembled those he himself obtained through petrification.

Since no passageway led out of that chamber, they returned to the stream, and, after discussing what they had seen, ~~they~~^{he} entered the other passageway. Montpalau's heart was pounding.

The passageway led to a small chamber whose walls were black marble. On the right they spotted an old empty coffin that showed signs

of recent occupancy. Nearby, on a raw pine table, they saw a sheaf of documents, an inkwell, and a pen. A pair of abandoned blunderbusses leaned against the wall.

As always, the vampire had eluded them. By the light from the lantern, Montpalau read the papers. There were deeds to various estates and farms around Pratedip in the name of Onofre de Dip, along with some documents in Hungarian, incomprehensible to Montpalau, and Carlist propaganda from the Junta of Berga. He spied an envelope addressed in Gothic script, along with the beginning of a letter announcing someone's arrival and lamenting the fact that the writer had not yet been appointed colonel. ^{at} He said, however, that in any case his deeds had now earned him the rank of general. These protestations, however, had been rudely interrupted.

Everything conveyed an impression of disorder and precipitous flight. Montpalau turned to his companions and said: "I'm convinced that the vampire feels trapped. These papers indicate that, in a last desperate attempt, he'd ^{heading} headed for Berga, but step by step, the prophesy is being fulfilled. Victory will be ours in the end, gentlemen!"

Once Montpalau had collected all the vampire's papers, they carefully retraced their steps.

As they passed through the chamber with the enchanted music, they saw the spider in the same position. Perhaps it had budged an inch.

Montpalau explained that the horrible monster was suffering the effects of petrification. They had to get away quickly because the petrifying agent was precisely that ~~delightfully~~ enchanted music.

No sooner had these words been spoken than they heard sweet mineral arpeggios.

IX: ^{What} ~~That Which~~ Is Written

After a skirmish with O'Donnell's troops at Sènia, where Cabrera had the ^{bad} ~~back~~ luck to fall from his horse, they reached Xerta before dawn. The Count of Morella again saw his native region, the Ebre's rich and irrigated ^{lands} ~~lands~~, those farmhouses with a few palm trees ^{clustered} ~~beside~~ them. They advanced slowly, stirring up clouds of dust, for apart from the troops and cavalry, there were wagons loaded with supplies and others bearing Brightened Carlist families who preferred to share their idol's fate.

A messenger arrived [✓] ~~arried~~ bearing bad news. Morella, after a few days' resistance, had fallen to the forced [✓] ~~commanded~~ by Espartero, who saw his title, "Duke of Victory" embellished with the word [✓] ~~and~~ "and of Morella." Cabrera was so overcome by fury that, had Montpalau not reminded him ~~of~~ that his soul was in jeopardy, he would have returned to make a last stand--a heroic gesture, certainly, but one that sorted ill with his pre-vampire condition. Cabrera had no business risking his life until Montpalau ^{had} ~~destroyed~~ the Owl. What ~~was~~ ^{was} more, they had to bend every effort to capture him. They knew he was in Berga. No great subtlety was required to understand [✓] ~~what~~ must be done.

Cabrera's sores began to bleed: a bad sign. He sweated with terror and impotent rage. Montpalau had to double the dose of anti-vampire tonic. The commander had grown horribly pale.

Another disastrous piece of news: [✓] ~~General~~ Zurbano had made his way through the Beseit Mountains and was swiftly advancing toward the Ebre. One could see a pincer movement taking shape, tightening the noose around the Carlist forces.

Beside himself, the commander of the armies of Aragon, Valencia, and Murcia called a meeting of his high-ranking officers and explained

their predicament, while keeping quiet about his own personal troubles. They had to ^{reach} make a decision, but which one? The officers remained silent. Their commander's attitude was sublimely heroic. Should they retreat toward Berga or stand their ground? The officers replied that Cabrera ~~him~~ had their entire trust. They were ready to die for him. Therefore, he should decide; they would obey his orders.

The ~~air~~ ^{was} was cool by the river. Big stone ^{poles} tanks stood beneath vine-covered trellises. Sometimes the waters overflowed and the peasants used them to irrigate their ~~fields~~. Children played ^{by} along the ~~river~~ ^{water} with wooden swords and paper hats. They also shot marbles and spun tops. They ran free ^{along} on the banks and already knew the names of the different herbs in each village. Then they would grow up, become men, die and turn into ^{hardy weeds} ~~tough herbs~~ growing amid the scrub, beneath the burning sun. If they raised their ^{eyes} ~~hands~~, they beheld the ~~firmament~~ ^{that} and everything dark and difficult, along with ~~the~~ bright and shining things no man could ^{fathom} understand.

The breeze was gentle and warm, rustling the flowering broom and ^{beaving} ~~bringing~~ the scent of ^{cherry} ~~cherry~~ trees. A wagon slowly passed in the afternoon light. A peasant burned some stubble.

Soon another messenger appeared, informing Cabrera that he had been named commander of Catalonia and head of the Junta of Berga.

What is written is written. Montpalau breathed a sigh of relief. The Count of Morella wept.

A mineral silence could be heard, a strange but agreeable metallic vibration. Suddenly, blending into the setting sun, a bolt of lightning could be seen across the river. Their ^g horses grew silent.

Turning to his officers, Cabrera cried: "Tomorrow we shall cross the Ebre to Catalonia. Long live the king!"

Montpalaum helped the ^egenral to dismount. Night was swiftly falling.

[Faint, mirrored text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. The text is mostly illegible due to fading and orientation.]

[Handwritten scribbles and marks are visible over the faint text.]

PART FOUR

- 21 -

from 9th May

lei mui duc xre mui
 hciw jo duc eaducal aducan que
 isoiuue wucur
 canuueu coue e qeue' bei ur mouet
 qeshui ei qeue' i eie uue uuee
 qei sei' uuee eaducet
 ieiue qei uo i iueue
 i euee uuee i uuee
 uueuee que' -Cue i uuee

ESBKV

Subm

(N)

I: Crossing the Ebre

Signora Matilde,

Io le avevo scritto un'altra volta. Le avevo scritto lungo perchè il mio ~~cuore~~ cuore ~~non~~ nuotava nell'affetto e io non avevo un'anima in cui versarlo. Il mio pensiero era allora apresso in preda alla più terribile angoscia e io non sapevo che fare per alleggerirgliel el peso.

Ho sperato che Ella si muoverebbe a compassione se non di me, ~~han~~ almeno di lui, Dio volle che l'affetto non corrispondesse al mio voto e Dio solo ne sa il perchè. Ma sei io mi volgevo a Lei nel patimento perchè non potrò parlarle quanto vivo nella fiduccia e nel contento . . . Oh ch'io mi ricordi sempre del primo giorno che la vidi! ch'io mi ricordi sempre quel momento celeste in cui l'occhio mio affaticato si riposò sulla sua fronte.

Matilde, Matilde, oh! lascia ch'io t'ami sempre! deh! non ~~non~~ distruggere questa illusione beata che si è incarnata in me! Lascia ch'io spero di vedere un ~~giorno~~ giorno i nostri destini baciarse insieme e confondersi in uno solo. Dimmi una sola parola di speranza, scrivimi una riga di conforto e l'anima mia si farà più leggere e l'amore più caldo.

--Felix Vincenzo

Prince Lichnowsky, after a last glance at the portrait in his medallion, addressed the envelope: Madame Matilde Leblanc, formerly Matilde de Ferrari; rue Saint Germain l'Auxerrois 15; Paris. He was writing by flickering candlelight, ~~filled with~~ filled with longing and despair, at ^{an} the inn in Granadella. My God, when would this war be over? He had met Matilde on his last trip to Italy, at the house

of Prince Colonna d'Este. His hopeless love dated from that visit-- hopeless because the lady was married to a rich French wine merchant with interests in Burgundy.

Lichnowsky hitched his horse to its wagon and decided to cross the Ebre at Riba-Roja, an ~~unexpected~~ ^{unusual} spot. He had followed a tortuous route ^{passing through} ~~and knew~~ villages whose existence was unnoted on any map. With special affection he recalled Poble de Cérvoles, set in its lunar landscape, just the place to evoke his romantic love. La mia vita, Matilde!

At exactly the same time, our friends forded the Ebre in the opposite direction at Flix, a stone's throw from Riba-Roja. Novau again displayed his magnificent navigational skills, but only in aid of the civilians accompanying Cabrera, for, being a prisoner of war, he could not be forced to act against his convictions and the queen. The ~~British~~ ^{British} Eliot Convention was categorical on this point.

Cabrera ordered his cavalry across first, ^{as} ~~for~~ the horses were unafraid of water and naturally good swimmers. Each rider bore an infantryman behind him. The operation was risky, but they had no other choice and ~~they~~ ² had to act with dispatch and determination. Once they reached the other ^{bank} ~~shore~~, those riders with sufficient strength returned and repeated the operation for love of the Cause. Many steeds ^{were overcome} ~~could not bear~~ the strain and their riders drowned. The current swiftly bore their bodies downstream. Nonetheless, a not insignificant ^{percentage} ~~part~~ of the army got across ~~in this fashion~~ ^{in this fashion}.

The bulk of the troops were transported on three barges that the Count of Morella had filled with stones and sunk near Flix many years before. It had been a good hunch, given that at the time he had no idea whether they would come in handy again. The work went slowly, and Cabrera grew impatient. Six first-class swimmers took turns diving.

~~They had then removed the rocks~~ Finally, when they had removed all the rocks, they fastened ropes around the barges, hitched them to the horses, and dragged them onto the muddy bank.

Halfway through, ^{this operation} they were attacked by O'Donnell's van, for most of his forces had reached Móra de l'Ebre. Llagostera, with the first battalion of chasseurs from Tortosa, took up defensive positions to protect the Carlist ^{troop} army and, in a valiant and obstinate counterattack, ^{drove} repelled the enemy, which had to ^{back toward} retreat to the village of Ascó. Those gugged, ochre hills and dales were dotted with varicolored Isabelline uniforms and ~~the~~ red Carlist berets.

Cabrera had to lie on a stretcher, from which he ^{ordered} directed his ^{new about} troops' movements. Though exhausted, he felt hopeful that he would soon bring an end to that ^{apocalyptic} hurricane that had disrupted his life. Though he had never seen such a place, he dreamt of ^{lush} green meadows like those in Surrey, a peaceful bourgeois existence surrounded by setters, freed at last from the terrible undead.

"Courage, general," Montpalau said. "This is the beginning of the end. Fear not, for science is on your side. You still have your whole life ahead of you,"

Cabrera smiled. He liked Montpalau. What a pity that he was a liberal.

Lichnowsky smiled too. Hidden behind some thyme bushes, he heard rifle shots and happily imagined a Carlist ambush of the queen's unwary troops. Beside him on ~~the~~ a smooth rock, a small, ^{dry} chameleon inched forward. From time to time it stuck out its incredibly long protractile tongue and caught an insect. It evolved with infinite caution.

Nowau transported the ~~many~~ Carlist families fleeing possible reprisals. There were gentlemen ^{with noble faces} whose nobility ~~shone in their faces and~~

who sadly contemplated, perhaps for the last time, their native land. Young mothers wept in resigned silence, with infants at their breasts. Amadeu helped ^{Novau}him, manning the sail the intrepid ^{captain}navigator had hoisted. The two men's humanitarian conduct won the Count of Morella's fervent praise.

"A truly heroic gesture," Cabrera mumbled, weakly and wearily. We shall record it in gold letters, and ^{you}they will be thanked by our king."

Now they ferried the supply wagons and their few pieces of artillery across. It was hard getting everything ~~only~~ the barges. One of the cannons forged in Cantavieja sank into the mud, and all their efforts to dislodge it were in vain. They abandoned it after carefully ^{spoiling}~~mangling~~ the breech and pushing it even deeper into the slime. It was the only item of Carlist gear that fell into liberal hands.

Montpalau admired the courage and--why not say it?--the discipline of those much-reviled troops. The military life shone ^{it}with all ^{the}the grandeur and self-sacrifice ^{of which it was capable.}

The last one to cross the Ebre's broad waters was Cabrera, protected by his trusty Tortosan chasseurs. Scattered gunfire could be heard. A dozen seagulls from the delta soared above the river, alien and indifferent ^{to everything.}

The afternoon grew mild. In the distance they could see Montsant covered by clouds. A soldier from Rasquera, gazing at the village, uttered the following adage:

If Montsant wears a bonnet
rain's ^{sure to}gonna fall upon it.

II: The Route

The Duke of Morella and Victory suffered an unpleasant surprise when he learned that Cabrera's forces had entered Catalonia and were heading north. He had counted ^q on trapping them between O'Donnell's and Zurbano's armies. Nonetheless, everyone was certain of the Carlists' impending defeat. Their Majesties, the ^{queen and prince consort} ~~king and queen~~ had set out from Madrid on a triumphant trip to Barcelona, where they planned to ^{bathe in} ~~enjoy~~ the sea waters, uniting medicine and politics. Espartero, always astute and ^{provident} ~~full of foresight~~, published the following ban:

✓ Bardomer Espartero, grandee, Duke of Victory and Morella, Count of Luchana, His Majesty's chamberlain, Knight of the Order of the Golden Fleece, of the Distinguished Order of Charles III and of Queen Isabella I's Order of the Americas, as well as of the military orders of Saint Ferdinand and Saint Hermenegild, holder of the Grand Ribbon of the Royal Legion of Honor, frequently decorated for his actions in ^{battles} ~~warfare~~, commander-in-chief of the national armies and colonel of honor in the princess's hussars, etc., etc.:

✓ When the pretender, as ^{hunted} ~~a result of our actions~~ at ~~Urdax~~ ^{captured} Urdax, was forced to flee ~~Spain~~ and seek refuge in France, those who served his unjust cause should have lain down their arms in ^{acknowledgement} ~~recognition~~ of their errors. But accustomed as their generals were to profanation, theft, arson and murder, neither the ~~complete~~ pacification of the Basque provinces nor the amnesty I proclaimed upon my arrival in Aragon ^I ~~with~~ the large army that accompanied me from the north of the peninsula induced them to desist from their criminal activities.

✓ Only Catalonia still harbors enemies of our legitimate queen Isabella II of of those institutions recognized by the nation. But

soon these foes shall be routed by the armies I command, and with pleasure I shall hear, in every corner of our kingdom, hymns of peace that shall supplant war's ^{noisy} ~~grisly~~ cries. That this peace, the object of my unstinting efforts, may extend to Catalonia, undisturbed by rebels, murderers and thieves who, ^{descend from their mountain lairs to} ~~taking advantage of the terrain~~, spread fear and calamity among its villages, I deem it necessary to order, from this moment on and by means of this ban, the following:

1st article: Should any village council, upon sighting rebel troops or guerrillas, fail to notify our army's fortresses, columns, or divisions immediately, one of its members, chosen by lot, shall be executed and the rest sentenced to two years' imprisonment. Moreover, for each hundred inhabitants a fine of ~~mm~~ twenty thousand rales shall be levied to defray the costs ~~mmmm~~ of the present war.

2nd article: The authorities of any village in which one or more rebels are sheltered shall be held responsible, together with all inhabitants, under the terms of the preceding article. Moreover, the heads of all households in which they are hidden shall be subject to the death penalty.

3rd article: All rebels not in uniform shall be summarily shot.

4th article: All civilians bearing arms, separately or in bands, shall be liable to the punishment specified in the preceding article, as well as guerrillas and individuals who, separated from regular army forces, intercept mail, steal or commit brigandage behind the lines of the armies I command.

5th article: All inhabitants not enrolled in the national militia shall surrender their arms to our governors or commanders. Anyone failing to obey this order shall be shot, these being understood as the heads of households ^{concealing} ~~containing~~ arms. Moreover, the offending village

shall pay a fine of one thousand rales for every weapon seized.

✓ 6th article: Guerrillas surrendering to our governors or officers shall be given safe-conducts allowing them to settle in villages of their choice.

✓ 7th article: Any officer who fails to enforce this ban shall lose both rank and liberty. These orders shall be law from this day onward in regard to our foes, while all village authorities shall be held ~~himself~~ responsible for their implementation from the time they receive them, to which end the military authorities shall demand dated receipts.

↓ Dictated at my headquarters in Manresa.

--Duke of Victory ✓

These regulations had a depressing impact on Catalonia's Carlists, who, with the exception of a few fanatics, saw that their days were numbered. In Barcelona, the imminent arrival of Maria Cristina, known to favor the moderate party, provoked riots and demonstrations on the Rambles against the proposed Law of Municipalities.

Shots rang out. Speeches were made. The Marquis de la Gralla and Father Matons pored over treatises on telepathy and vampirism. The still-^{unclassified} ~~unclarified~~ Avutarda geminis sat forgotten in its corner, ^{glum} ~~sad~~ and disconsolate, along with a letter from the "divine" Madoz y Fontaneda, ^{that lay} ~~lying~~ ^{on} ~~unopened~~ upon Montpalau's desk.

Josep Ignasi, the marquis's heir, had recently invented the "liberal flute," a pocket-sized instrument that, when blown, automatically played Riego's ~~liberal~~ ^{flautists} anthem. The instrument ensured that whole orchestras of ~~piccolo-players~~ ^{both} would attend all political demonstrations, indoors and out. ~~It~~ Josep Ignasi expected it to enjoy brisk sales.

Meanwhile, the Count of Morella's army crossed Catalonia, making straight for Berga and encountering no resistance. When they were five

miles from Granadella, they veered toward Pobla de Cérvoles, skirting Montsant beneath a driving rain, and continued through the Llena Mountains to ~~the~~ Albi, where they spent the night.

In these mysterious landscapes, scarcely known to a soul, Montpalau discovered a flying reptile--a survivor of the Quaternary Era--that possessed the rare virtue of also talking like a parrot. A Basque volunteer from Fuenterrabia, whose name was Arpiazu and who cooked for one of the battalions, took such a liking to the oratorical reptile that he offered to ~~carry~~ its cage and feed it. During their marches and counter-marches it could be heard, amid pots and pans, singing an incomprehensible Basque ditty:

Aztu, aztu gernikako
arrigola guetairá.

One day Amadeu, sick of its Carlist chatter, took it into the woods behind Arpiazu's back and taught it another ditty, this one brazenly liberal:

To the constitution good luck,
and to ~~Hell~~ ^{a put on} with that stupid fuck.

The couplet referred, of course, to the pretender, ^{Charles II} but Cabrera, who happened to hear it, thought it alluded to him and decreed, in a tumultuous fit of gage, that the bird would either be reeducated or forfeit its life. All their efforts to identify the culprit proved fruitless. Fortunately, the reptile went back to singing its Basque ditty.

On the morrow, the Carlist columns continued their march toward Vallbona de les Monges, where Montpalau had a rare opportunity to admire the tomb of Queen Yolande of Hungary in that celebrated and ~~ruined~~ convent, so rich in archeological wonders. The nuns, who led a strictly cloistered life, offered the Count of Morella and his officers sweet

wine and cookies they had baked themselves and ^{that} ~~which~~ they passed through a little window. The poor sisters, whose economic situation was highly precarious, lamented their misfortunes at great length to Cabrera in the hope that he would plead their case before His August Majesty Charles V. After the Carlist officers had risen to their feet and sung a credo, ^{caps} ~~Her Ladyship~~ ^{the} abbess bade them godspeed and wished them every sort of success and prosperity.

Montpalau and his cousin, Isidre de Novau, ^gpolitely remained aloof from these political exchanges so contrary to their convictions.

Having rested, the Carlist army continued its northward march at a quicker pace, crossing the Barcelona ^{highroad} ~~road~~ at Hostalets, three hours east of Cervera. They pitched camp near Calaf, where they requisitioned a great number of chickens and rope-soled sandals. When the sun rose, with beating hearts and new footwear, the ghost-army again set out for Berga.

III: Berga

^A~~The~~ shadow ^{stole}~~erupt~~ across the rooftops, wound around a chimney that couldn't be seen from Santa Maria de Queralt, and took shape in the ^{chilly}~~cold~~ morning air. It preferred garrets with sloping roofs, and the old cracked wood of dovecotes. Animals backed away, seeking some nook ^{to}~~where they~~ could cower ⁱⁿ~~until~~ it passed. Wearily, it unwound and in a wisp of fog or smoke, flew almost invisibly to a better ~~more~~ observation post. Then it began to wind around another corporeal protuberance, its muscles tired and defeated. The city ^{huddled}~~clustered~~ beneath it, gray and compact around the steeples on Saint John's and Saint Eulalia's Churches. Outside the fortified lines, beyond Metge's Brook, spread rippling fields, freedom, birds chased by ^{brisk}~~gusty~~ northwinds.

Cautiously and slowly, the shadow slid down an old cracked facade. It halted at a window, gripping a half-closed shutter. Making a great effort, it slowly eased ^{itself}~~into~~ the room and hung, scarcely visible, from the hem ^{of}~~on~~ a curtain.

The room was almost square. Its walls were whitewashed ^{and} and at the far end hung a portrait of the pretender. Six or seven men sat ^{and waited}~~smoking~~ cigarettes. They all had long faces and were dressed in black. Beneath the portrait stood a table with a ^{pile of}~~tray of~~ documents and a small bell. Behind it was an empty chair upholstered in red velvet. Everything had a musty and disordered air.

A guard ^{entered the room}~~entered~~ wearing the Carlist badge and ~~announced~~: "His Reverence Father Torrebaddella, ^{president}~~president~~ of this junta."

A robust and balding priest immediately appeared. Those present rose to their feet. Without a word, the priest strode over to the chair behind the table and sat down. Then, glowering at the opposite wall as

though no one else were present, he said: "Gentlemen, Cabrera is at the gates of Berga. This is a matter we have discussed a thousand times. Had we sufficient forces, we would welcome him, as you know, with ~~little artillery~~ ^{artillery} ~~cannonades~~. But Cabrera leads an army, and we have only Pep de l'Oli to defend us. Therefore, we must make the best of a bad situation."

"But General Segarra . . ." one of the councilors timidly interjected.

"General ~~Segarra~~ Segarra has told me not to ~~rely~~ ^{count} on his aid," the priest curtly replied. "He is busy in Campdevàrol, preparing an action against Ripoll."

The priest drew forth a tiny box and calmly took a bit of snuff.

"Count Charles of Spain's unfortunate demise," he continued, "let us admit it, has left us in an awkward position. But we only dismissed the ~~count~~. In any case, responsibility rests with Segarra, to whose forces he was entrusted. We have nothing to hide, so let us show our faces. Segarra's strange behavior, however, will surely not pass unnoticed."

Hope lit up the faces of those present. With renewed cheer, they all ~~praised~~ ^{addressed} the priest's ~~astuteness~~. He rang ~~his~~ ^{the} little bell.

"Order, gentlemen, order. We must ~~process~~ ^{proceed} ~~diplomatically~~ ^{with tact and caution}. We must be wise as serpents and gentle as lambs. Let us not be carried away by our impulses. First, we must assure that the Tiger of the Maestrat is in our pocket."

Everyone approved. Torrebadella pulled out a handkerchief of ~~questionable~~ ^{doubtful} cleanliness and, after a phenomenal sneeze that cleared his respiratory passages, added: "Relying on this junta's approval, I have given instructions that, as soon as Cabrera is spotted, a volley shall be fired from the fort at La Petita. That will be the signal. All the churchbells will then ring. And we, ~~lined up~~ ^{assembled} amid the populace's

cries of joy (I should add that I have prepared the ground through my sermons) will throw open ~~our~~ ^{the} gates to the invincible Count of Morella."

He paused. A bee beat against the window panes. There was also a wisp of smoke. He continued: "The general will be pleased by our humble welcome, our respectful deference, and above all by our serenity. He will also see (and this is important, gentlemen) that one of us is absent. A strange absence, to be sure, unjustified despite some vague preparations for a siege. He will ask, he will inquire. Doubts will be sown in his mind."

Father Torrebadella laughed that grating laugh of his. At the same moment, a guard served the councilors some glasses of sugar water, a sad but healthful and soothing beverage.

A volley rang out. All those present, as though impelled by springs, leapt to their feet. The sinister priest, who had been stirring his sugar water with a spoon, greedily drank the last drops. He held out his arm ^{so}

"One moment, gentlemen. I must tell you that I have received another letter from that bizarre guerrilla named the Owl, offering his services ^{again} and promising to rid us of Cabrera. His ^{request} ~~letter~~ has a curiously pathetic tone. All he ^{asks for in return} ~~requests~~ is a crypt in an abandoned church. As you will understand, we are dealing with a lunatic. I ^{filed} ~~kept~~ his letter but did not reply."

Everyone approved. They were feeling very impatient.

"And now, gentlemen," Torrebadella declared, "the hour has struck. Let us welcome immortal Cabrera."

Having spoken, he made for the door ^{through} through which he had entered. The members of the junta ^{noisily} followed him. Soon the room was ^{empty} ~~de-~~serted.

Then something quite unexpected occurred. The fine, ~~misty~~ wisps adhering to the curtain became a coil of black smoke, spinning dizzily and turning into a blurred human form. Incoherent words of blasphemous intent could be heard. The bee was superimposed upon and finally melted into the human head, and two terrifying, incandescent, satanic eyes glared forth. The swaying figure contracted, as though ~~pressed~~ ^{compressed} by some ~~uncontrollable~~ ^{inconceivable} grief. Then it slowly dissolved till not a trace remained.

Meanwhile, the junta's members, led by their president Father Torrebaddella, formed two lines in the street amid the clamoring bells. ~~All the townspeople~~ ^{Canals for} ~~stood on their balconies.~~ ^{canals}

They marched to the main square. There Pep de l'Oli awaited them with his ragged irregulars in red berets. The populace felt little love for them, as they were known to steal and commit all sorts of crimes.

Pep de l'Oli, a squat, red-faced, foul-mouthed gentleman, wore a dark purple beret. He raised his saber in salute when he saw the junta. He looked like a sans-culotte from the French Revolution.

From the roof of a building overflowing with excited spectators hung several fine damask bedspreads stitched together and adorned with big ~~paper~~ letters:

FROM BERGA
TO ITS GLORIOUS COMMANDER
RAMON CABRERA
LONG LIVE OUR ABSOLUTE MONARCH

The bedspreads' creases showed how long they had been neatly stored in linen closets. They were hung ~~on~~ ^{with} elaborately and artistically tied ribbons. From the balconies, the populace saluted the junta's members.

The bailiff hurried up, bearing an^g embroidered cushion ~~on~~ upon which a symbolic key to the city rested. He stationed himself on Torredadella's left, two paces away.

At that very moment, a military band struck up a ponderous march. Clanging bells, martial music, screaming children, excited townsfolk and bursting cannonades combined in enervating pandemonium.

They solemnly began to ~~march~~^{walk}, as in a procession. The musicians led the way, followed by the entire junta and then Pep de l'Oli's battalion of undesirables. Last of all came the populace.

The gates were flung open.

Before them, in battle formation, terrible in their silence, Cabrera's army appeared. A group of officers came forth, led by the ~~terrifying~~^{fearsome} commander covered with medals.

Everyone's blood froze. Then Cabrera wordlessly led his men into Berga.

sonno pe qeiz an en un rodnat qe; cur-
taboru en de pe jnu; eucupno le pe un
oupiro; eucupno e; bat qe; uen cur-
u; qe; ane qe; ane qe; ane qe; ane qe;
q; ane qe; ane qe; ane qe; ane qe;
q; ane qe; ane qe; ane qe; ane qe;
q; ane qe; ane qe; ane qe; ane qe;
q; ane qe; ane qe; ane qe; ane qe;

IV: The Pathos of Horses

Cabrera's first action as captain general of Catalonia, taken two days after he entered Berga, was to imprison the entire junta for the murder of his ~~successor~~^{predecessor}--that is, Count Chaires of Spain. The case against them was painstakingly prepared, and the councilors, plunged into the black pit of despair, were locked in the basement beneath Saint Francis's monastery, whose first floor was normally occupied by the royal ~~am~~ armorers, some irascible Basque volunteers.

Cabrera reappointed the previous quartermaster general, Gaspar Díaz de Labandero, who had been deposed by the junta, and reorganized the administration from top to bottom. His overall situation, however, was rapidly deteriorating, for Cabrera found himself in a threadbare and penniless Carlist capital. There were no arms or munitions; there was scarcely an army. Above all, there was no money. General Segarra, provisional commander of Catalonia's Carlist forces, had foreseen Cabrera's animosity and deserted to the enemy a few days before his arrival in Berga.

Catastrophe was inevitable. Espartero, ensconced in his new headquarters in Manresa, collected a formidable army that included the finest liberal generals and ~~was waiting for~~^{awaited} a propitious moment to attack. Berga could not possibly resist such an onslaught. Those civilians who were politically compromised began their exodus toward the frontier--some for supposed reasons of health, others on ~~some~~^{of} fictitious errands. Cabrera, who harbored no illusions about the real situation, recognized that only those useful in war should remain in Carlist territory and, wishing to save his sisters from the perils of captivity, had them ~~taken~~ in disguise to Perpinyà.

The Count of Morella had not worsened physically, but he suffered from acute depression. Before disaster struck, he told himself, he must find the Owl. This thought both fortified and dismayed him. To hide the vampire's marks, he wore a white silk kerchief around his neck.

Antoni de Montpalau, with Cabrera's approval, set up an office on Holy Christ Street and tried to locate the undead. He organized a network of spies throughout the district, offering a highly-publicized reward of fifty rals in cash to anyone ~~who could~~ ^{who led} lead them to the Owl. Among the dissolved junta's papers, he found a letter that caught his ~~attention~~ ^{eye} and clarified several points. It was obviously from the Owl, since it was signed with his name, and the geographical details in ~~a~~ ^{his} mysterious plan ~~he offered~~ ^{to} annihilate Cabrera led Montpalau to conclude that he was near Berga. But where? That is what our naturalist, with scientific precision, sought to ascertain.

In the margin, in ~~the~~ Torrebadellàs's hand, our hero read: "Refused," and beneath it, underlined in the same red pencil: "Mad!" This plunged him into thought, for the Owl, rebuffed on all sides, while ~~his~~ ^{his} enemies--to coin a phrase--were treading on his heels, might be desperate enough to commit ~~some~~ ^{some} rash act that would ~~then~~ ^{then} lead to his discovery. It all seemed quite plausible.

He decided to wait. One day, as he was recalling his beloved Agnès, Josep Solanes, the veterinarian in charge of the Carlist cavalry, entered his office and said: "I don't know what to do! Some mysterious illness has infected our horses. I can't ~~figure out~~ ^{understand} what's wrong with them. They just lie there, slowly dying."

Montpalau replied that it wasn't his specialty and ~~that~~ ^{that} he was sorry to say he could be of no use. That night, however, he consulted a celebrated treatise on horses that he found in the junta's library and that

began in this curious fashion:

"The ^{presente} ~~present~~ book ^{treateth} ~~treats~~ of the ways to break horses and ^{reys} ~~raise~~ colts and how said colts should be trained in their first five years and how a knight should accustom them to spurs and how he should sit in the saddle and hold his legs, feet and body, and likewise this book discusses horses' coats, tails and mouths and the bridges they require in warfare and the ^{maladies} ~~ills~~ and sicknesses that befall them and causes of the same and what a knight should give his horse to eat and drink and how ^{fishes} ~~veterinarians~~ should treat their illnesses. This book ^{was} ~~is~~ written by Bernat de Cases, domiciled in the city of Girona, in the service of His Most Excellent and Christian Majesty King Ferdinand, ~~mohammed~~ of blessed reign and immortal fame, ruler of Aragon, Castile, ~~and~~ the Balearics, the two Sicilies and Jerusalem. And the aforesaid Bernat de Cases, seeing the King of France begin to make war upon our king and the peace and prosperity that derive from a ~~well~~ ^{skillful} cavalry, has begun the present book in the month of April, one thousand four hundred and ninety-six, in which a royal parliament met in Tortosa. I ask all who read this book and understand it to correct any errors they find herein ^{regarding} ~~concerning~~ horses, warfare, and the curing of ^{ailments} ~~diseases~~."

In regard to the illnesses that afflict horses, ^{Cases} ~~he~~ offered an infallible remedy: "You ^{Thou} ~~will~~ ^{with shalt} ~~seize~~ the horse's right ear and make the sign of the cross ^{thrice} ~~three~~ times, saying: 'Quando xpus natus fuit omnis dolor fugatus fuit, fuge dolor, fuge langor quia xpus te persequitur.' This ^{thou} ~~you~~ must repeat ^{times} ~~three~~ times, making the sign of the cross thrice in honor of the Holy Trinity, and the horse will surely be cured."

Montpalau laughed at such pseudo-scientific quackery, whose origin lay in the superstitious ignorance that rational spirits ~~energetically~~ and ~~aidainfully~~ rejected, and he puzzled over the horses' mysterious ^{illness} ~~disease~~.

On the morrow he went to inspect them, accompanied by the gloomy chief veterinarian. As they entered the stables, he was startled by a strong smell of sulfur.

Montpalau pulled a cross from his shirt pocket and opened a small box of garlic cloves that he always carried. Brandishing these arms and followed by the astonished veterinarian, he penetrated the stables' lugubrious darkness.

"Be careful," Montpalau said. "Stick close by my side."

Good advice, for a ~~dreadful~~ scream greeted our hero's words. It was at once a howl of rage and a ~~despairing~~ lament. Something exploded at the back of the stable, and an entire wall noisily collapsed. The two men were literally buried in dust. They couldn't see a thing.

The explosion brought Isidre de Novau and Amadeu running, along with two guards who, with great efforts, extracted Montpalau and the veterinarian, half unconscious, from the rubble.

After ~~slowly~~ sipping a highly efficacious cordial, Montpalau, followed by his friends and ~~helpers~~ ^{assistants}, again entered the stable. The dust had settled, and ~~one~~ ^{they} could again see clearly.

Just as he had feared! The horses lay there, sadly staring into space, with two tiny holes in each bloodless neck.

Montpalau immediately initiated his Balkan treatment. They had to ensure that those horses did not become vampires. They would try the garlic method, which ~~had often~~ ^{had often} worked so well.

Isidre de Novau, who had been examining the horses, took his pipe ~~out of~~ ^{from} his mouth and said: "Too late. They've just died."

And in fact, they had all passed away at the same moment. Montpalau was horrified by the prospect of two hundred vampire-horses galloping apocalyptically through the night. How tragic and grotesque!

But such an abomination would not occur! They had one recourse ~~left~~^{to}:
destruction! Destruction, which would also be [^]liberation.

There was no alternative. That afternoon, before the sun set, they decapitated the horses one by one and filled their mouths with liliaceae. Then they drove wooden stakes through their hearts. The spell was broken.

Montpalau, ever tactful, made those present swear not to breathe a word of what they had seen to Cabrera. It would have been a fatal blow.

The chief veterinarian reported an epidemic of galloping diarrhea.

penetration the great and sacred
the place, good, joyful, hence
enjoying me
that I don't know how, after many
times, a little
of the things and the sea. I don't know
between ancient, romantic
time and again
the only word I can hear
power in the world
power, power, power

XXVII

SHIRAZI CENELENA

V: THE Final Investigation

The soil, intensely ochre, without a blade of grass, parched and desolate, formed a ~~ma~~ nightmarish landscape of slopes eroded by wind and rain. The route was safe, however, as long as he avoided all settlements. He left Calaceit and Alcanyis behind him and near Codonyeda, heading south, he veered ~~right~~ left. It was a ~~hideous~~ ^{bleak} area. He found an isolated hermitage with a kind of courtyard ~~inside~~ it, dedicated to the Virgin of Montserrat, and there he ate a ~~crust~~ ^{piece} of bread. Then he headed south again.

Prince Lichnowsky spent the night in ~~an~~ shed. Before daybreak, he set out with his wagon. When the sun rose, he spied Morella ~~in~~ ^{prags} in the distance. He donned his red beret and uniform covered with glittering medals. He mounted his steed, leaving his wagon in a hollow, and set off at a trot for Morella. A few peasants stared at him in surprise.

The road swerved sharply, passed beneath one of the aqueduct's arches, and then made straight for a big fortified gate. Ah, Cabrera, dear old friend! He recalled their advance on Madrid ~~with~~ ^{under} Charles V, their adventures and the day he had saved his life.

Suddenly he noticed clumps of dirt flying up ahead of him. He had no time to think. He heard dull, quick ~~shots~~ ^{shots} just as he instinctively hunched over and turned his horse. He took cover behind one of the aqueduct's columns while a bullet ~~minished~~ ⁹ ricocheted off the stone, a foot from his head. Then he peered out cautiously.

The queen's flag fluttered on the castle's highest tower. He heard a bugle and saw ~~these~~ government uniforms. God in Heaven! What had happened? But there was no time to inquire. He had to escape before a patrol came after him.

On his right, there was a gully full of flowering heather. He spurred his ~~horse~~. ^{mount and leapt, keeping} During that desperate leap he ~~kept~~ ^{and} his eyes shut, feeling Death right behind him. The sky, however, was a bright, indifferent blue. He landed safely.

Beyond the fields, across the plain, Lichnowsky galloped furiously. The sky was like a mirror absurdly shattered into a thousand pieces. Everything, including life itself, was absurd. Unexpectedly, a frog croaked.

While the prince fled like a stag toward Catalonia, our hero Antoni de Montpalau, one day after the Owl's assault on the Carlist stables, led his inseparable assistants ^a on the tour of the district.

~~They visited~~ ^{stopped at} Their first stop was ^a a shrine called Santa Maria de Queralt, from which they contemplated a marvelous panorama below them. On their descent, they passed through a ~~half-wild forest~~ ^{grove} where without searching, they found a multitude of delicious ~~m~~ wild mushrooms.

In Pedret, still seeking an abandoned crypt, they ~~found~~ ^{discovered} a most interesting but almost ruined village church. They ~~light~~ ^{from} of their candles revealed ~~some~~ ^a enigmatic, fascinating but ~~sometimes~~ ^a terrifying primitive paintings in the apse. The hands on the cross-eyed figures dressed in tunics seemed disjointed. It was a strange ~~discovery~~ ^{find}. As far as Montpalau could recall, no one--not even Father Caresmar--had ever mentioned the place. He would tell the priest and ~~the~~ ^a philologist in the marquis's discussion group about it.

Still pursuing their goal, they visited the monastery at Sant Salvador de la Bellera, where they learned that Espartero was leading a large army toward Berga. They dined on chicken with peppers, onions, and tomatoes--a sensational dish--at a farmhouse. Rising to their feet, they toasted the Owl's capture and the liberals' final victory.

At the monastery, Montpalau ~~had the opportunity~~ ^{chanced} to meet a young, enormously erudite student from Barcelona who was collecting material--undaunted by the perils of war--for a book ~~he was writing~~ ^{he} about folk legends. His name was Milà i Fontanals, and he told them some extraordinary tales. He didn't know much about vampires, but he was an expert on normal ghosts, of ~~whom~~ ^w there were many with sharply defined personalities in Catalan folklore. He was especially brilliant in his comments on the Evil Hunter and his pack of dogs ranging defiantly over the rooftops. He also mentioned the Devil's appearances in the form of a he-goat with blazing eyes.

The young student told one particularly intriguing ~~story~~ about a ghost, Count Arnau, whose area of ~~operations~~ ^{of} included Ripoll, Sant Joan de les Abadesses and Castellar de N'Hug, with incursions into ~~other~~ ^{such} districts ~~like~~ ^{as} Prades and Siurana. Illustrious and magically suggestive names appeared, like Mataplana--the little troubadour court--or Gombèn, with its ruined castles ^g and abandoned crypts.

Montpalau pondered this information. He seemed to perceive a certain vampire-like ~~analogy~~ in those ghosts the young student had mentioned. The abandoned crypts interested him ~~greatly~~ ^{in particular}.

Milà i Fontanals also said that past Culobre, on the way from Montgrony to Camps, in a cave called The Slit, he had found a vertical stone a yard high bearing the imprints of a horse's hoof and a lady's shoe: the former from Count Arnau's steed and the latter from Adalaisa, the abbess.

In Banyuts Gorge, he had jotted down the following verses:

Had Count Arnau not renounced Our Lord

The Llobregat's waters we still would ford.

The meaning was obscure, probably because the lines formed part

of some long-lost ballad. In any case, someone should attempt to re-construct the text.

After taking their leave of young Milà i Fontanals, our friends returned to Berga, where sensational news awaited them: the Duke of Victory and his hosts had moved their headquarters to Casserres, and an attack on the Carlist ^{Town} city was imminent. Montpalau realized that the war was virtually over.

Berga was in an uproar. ^{Soldiers} Troops rushed to and fro, preparing de-constructing fenses and ~~building~~ new ~~for~~ outworks. Cabrera, very excited, paced about like a caged tiger. He told Montpalau: "It's over. All that remains is our honor, but if you bear me any affection, don't ^{not} forget ^{about} the Owl."

Montpalau assured the general that the evidence he had gathered made the vampire's capture ^{inevitable} ~~probable~~. It was a matter of hours.

As he left the Count of Morella, an orderly handed him a letter. He thanked him and slipped it into his pocket.

VI: The Letter

Once Montpalau was in his room, he took off his frock coat, carefully hung it in a wardrobe, filled a ~~wash~~ basin with water and ~~soaped~~ ^{scrubbed} his hands. Then he rinsed his face and, once it was dry, rubbed his hair vigorously with cologne.

It was hot. Some bottles stood on his chest of drawers. He poured himself a glass of ~~comforting~~ ^{sheerry} and lit a cigar. Then he pulled the letter from his pocket and, sitting near the oil lamp, opened the envelope. It read:

"Dear Sir:

"I trust that your powers of deduction will quickly lead you to ~~recognize~~ ^{identify} the author of this letter. Alas, you are not mistaken. I am the sadly déclassé Onofre de Dip, commonly known by a dreadful name ~~that~~ I refuse to utter.

"I know my hour ~~has come~~ ^{is drawing nigh}, though I suppose that I could forestall the end and I certainly possess the means to do so. I trust that, being a gentleman, you will believe me. I cannot escape my fate, but by means of my magical powers I could, if I wished, prolong this grisly game of cat and mouse. But I have no ~~wish~~ ^{desire} to do so.

"My sole purpose in writing this letter is to make you see beyond that abominable and diabolical being created by the popular ~~imagination~~ ^{superstition}. I am like a horse hitched to a wagon, longing for a freedom it can scarcely recall. I ~~travel~~ ^{wander} through the world weeping bitter tears.

"You know my story, but only the part found in official documents-- accurate, to be sure, but by no means complete, as it ignores the man who still resides ~~inside~~ ^{within} me. Beneath the satanic appearance ~~circumstances~~ often force me to adopt, in a hidden corner of my soul, I, Onofre

de Dip, still persist--the same as before, the same as ever, filled with love for my country and its people, breathing this land's pure air, tearful when I hear some ^{song} remembered ~~song~~ from my childhood.

"What did you expect? Things are never as simple as they seem. When the cunning and beautiful Duchess Meczyr, taking advantage of my shameless lust, turned me into a cursed being, my feelings, once the first shock had passed, were resigned if not joyful. I confess my error. To be able to fly, to turn into any one of a large though limited number of beasts, the incomparable sensation of conjuring up the weather, the thousand and one small and terrifying benefits of my new state, dazzled one as young and inexperienced as I. No mortal can know the exquisite pleasure that tingles in the blood when one turns into an elephant, for example, or--in the opposite direction--an ant.

"For seven hundred years I was a corpse's illegitimate consort. Perhaps happily, as I said, at the start, forgetting that I myself was a corpse. I interrupted my long stays in the Carpathians with fleeting visits to Pratedip, where I was born and have--or had--my estates. I believe my intermittent sojourns proved memorable. People still fear me.

"But as ~~the~~ years ~~passed~~, something occurred in the depths of my being. The excitement of discovery and the lustful possession of the duchess's eternally young body ^{dissipated} ~~wore off~~. I began to long for my former human state and to weary of this hideous existence. I nearly went mad.

"Then the torments began, nor have they yet ceased. Though I still appear young, in reality I am seven hundred years old, disillusioned and bored, craving peace and peace alone. I am horrified by my constant need for blood and can never forget the indescribable looks in my victims' eyes. How cruel is my predicament! For despite everything, I am cursed with a need that I can neither deny nor resist.

"The duchess died. Really and truly. She was beheaded and mutilated in a quaint--shall we say--rite. The prophesy's fulfillment began, for once ~~when~~ Meczysr Castle had been ransacked, burnt, and purged, my sole haven was Prasdip. I therefore returned--definitively this time--to my native land, knowing full well what awaited me. ~~Compelled~~ ^{Impelled} by the instinct of self-preservation, I managed to stave off the annihilation of my malevolent nature. This explains the diabolical beasts you have constantly seen, as well as ~~a number of~~ ^{several} other refinements. Likewise, it explains my adoption of a new personality designed to throw you off the scent. I refer, of course, to the Carlist guerrilla known as the Owl, a tragic and terrible masquerade. Given that I needed some disguise, I chose one that was both heroic and in keeping with my authoritarian and monarchist beliefs.

"Of course it was all in vain. What is written is written. Now ~~that~~ ^{surely & that} my final hour has struck, I wish only to rest. ~~I believe I~~ ^{deserve it} after living seven hundred years without living: that is, without sleeping normally, without catching ^a cold, without ^{tasting} eating a delicate morsel of food, without fondling a baby. At least now I can hope for eternal peace and God's forgiveness.

"To this end and in order to spare you further efforts, I solemnly promise that tomorrow, from dawn to dusk, I shall rest in the crypt beneath the castle at Mataplana, whose former owner was a close friend of mine. Have no fear but rather persist in your ~~scientific~~ endeavors. Give me the peace I so desire. No man can escape his fate; what is written is written.

"I ask only one favor: do not subject me to the hideous butchery prescribed by legend. It would be too much for me to bear at my advanced age. Instead, I beg you to employ another formula, less well

known, perhaps, but as effective and far more humane: exorcism. Accompanied by the song:

With sun and moon he doth sleep.
Into his shroud he shall creep,
In his grave 'neath the earth so deep
it will put an end to my abominable existence.

"I should only like to add, before closing this missive, that surprisingly enough, I bear you great good will. I comprehend your motives, ^{deem} ~~consider~~ them justified, and admire the love of science that has brought you such honor. May you enjoy the happiness you so richly deserve.

"Your obedient servant,

"Onofre de Dip."

Deeply ^{stirred} ~~moved~~ by this letter, Antoni de Montpalau sensed the vampire's human presence for the first time. He felt compassion for that miserable and tragic being, Onofre de Dip. He sat there for a moment, thinking.

Several hours later, he met secretly with Cabrera. The two of them ~~stayed together~~ ^{spoke together} for a long time, locked in the commander's office. The orderlies looked very crestfallen. At times they were startled by the sound of bells ringing. When the two men emerged, Cabrera ~~beamed~~ beamed with optimism, though his face had not lost its vampire-like pallor. He adjusted the kerchief around his neck and inhaled the fragrance of a wild garlic flower.

The sound of rustling leaves ^{could be} ~~was~~ heard. The Aurea picuda--so gentle, ^{unnoticed} ~~neglected~~, and ^{shy} ~~timid~~--emerged from its hiding place beyond the reach of crass and treacherous humanity. It preened its new and shiny feathers. Then it began ^{to sing} ~~its song~~, an inaudible song of peace, love, and

justice.

Montpalau penned a long letter to Father Matons--a letter filled not only with scientific enthusiasm but with ~~profound~~ meditations on charity and love for one's neighbor. That is, he wrote with both his heart and his mind. He asked a great favor, not devoid of risks but urgent and noble in its purposes. There was no time to spare. He was certain that he needed to say no more.

Amadeu set out that evening--disguised as a peasant woman to avoid ~~bothersome~~ ^{Troublesome} questions--for Barcelona with Antoni de Montpalau's letter. He rode on the crupper of a notion peddler's horse. The man had been well paid for his services. The night was dark and ominous.

VII: The Fall of Berga

This was a fateful day for what remained of the Carlist forces. The liberal troops began to take up positions around the city. Their triumph was nearly complete. Cabrera officially freed Antoni de Montpalau, trusting, however, that he would ~~mm~~ not desist until he had completed the task before him, ~~which concerned the Count of Morella so directly.~~ Montpalau, followed by his cousin Isidre de Novau, left Berga and set out for Pobla de Lillet. When they had gone several miles, they stopped in a place that offered an excellent view of the battle.

The clash was epic in its grandeur. To better inform our readers, we shall copy the description of this remarkable event from Espartero's Life and Times, which, despite its violent attacks on the Count of Morella--quite natural, to be sure, in an anti-Carlist work--gives ~~many~~ ^{four} more details ~~than~~ Cabrera's Life and Times, which--as is also quite natural--tries to gloss over his defeat:

"Once our troops had completed their preparations, they set out, led by the Duke of Victory, from their headquarters in Casserres on July fourth. Seeing the ~~number~~ ^{cover} numerous bastions behind which the Carlists had taken ~~shelter~~, prepared to resist to the ~~mm~~ bitter end and egged on by their commander Cabrera with pleas, threats, and exhortations, the Duke of Victory summoned the Count of Besascoain, whose courage he valued highly, and ordered him to lead the attack with the first division, while the brigade of ~~Royal~~ ~~Provincial~~ ~~Guards~~ remained in reserve. Undaunted by the foe's strong positions and the obstacles in his path, the intrepid count prepared to carry out ~~his~~ ^{Espartero's} orders, but as he did so, the Carlists opened fire from Nuet Hill, causing some

~~casualties among~~
~~losses in~~ the constitutionalist ranks. The count and his troops had reached a farmhouse called Creu de la Peña. ~~There~~ ⁹ he marshaled his forces, ~~and ordered~~ the first brigade to ~~press forward~~ ^{and the} leading ~~the~~ hussars ^{to press forward,} and keeping a close watch on ~~the~~ ^{an} enemy squadron to their left. One need scarcely add that the count was in ~~a~~ ^{an} awkward ~~spot~~ ^{position}, exposed as he was to enemy fire. Unafraid, the valiant ~~general~~ ^{commander} who directed this perilous maneuver told his troops to energetically return the Carlists' fire, protecting those who struggled to mount their artillery on the hillside. The Carlists' efforts proved vain, for once the guns were ready they began to fire, permitting the queen's forces to swiftly and enthusiastically advance to our foes' first line of defense. The Carlists, obliged to flee this valiant onslaught, took refuge behind their second line of defense. Here too, however, they were boldly attacked and a struggle began that, though short, was bloody and violent.

"The queen's battalions bravely advanced under their general, while the dreaded Cabrera, not wishing to be outdone by his heroic adversary, roared like a lion and ran to and fro, urging his men to return our fire, ^{I to I} and sowing death among the attackers. Both sides fought furiously, but the ~~count~~ ^{Count of Besençon}, feeling that this stalemate had lasted long enough, led some of his officers, his personal guard and a few of Espartero's cavalry ^{men} in a desperate assault on Nuet Hill. They thus decided the battle with their bayonets, forcing the Carlists to abandon their positions. Most of those he led were killed or wounded, and he had to abandon his steed, which had been struck by four bullets, nor was it the first he had mounted in that ~~dreadful~~ ^{gay} battle. Cabrera, despairing at this setback and ~~certain~~ ^{aware} that all was lost, dashed about like a raging beast, throwing himself into the ~~battle~~ ^{fray} wherever it was

thickest, seeking victims upon whom he might vent his fury or a bullet that would end his life and ^{same his honor} ~~the shame that~~ tormented him ^{note:} (this, however, is untrue, for there was still the vampire to attend to). Forgetting his illness in a fit of feverish activity, he stiffened the Carlists' resolve, thus making ^{the liberals'} ~~them~~ triumph all the more remarkable and adding ~~an~~ luster to the glory with which they covered themselves ~~on~~ that day.

"Thanks to the Count of Besascoain's brilliance, not only were the three above-mentioned redoubts occupied but also all the other defenses around Berga and finally the city itself, ^{from} which Cabrera, still unbowed, ordered his men to ^{the plan retreat} ~~evacuate~~. Two Carlist companies, however, disobeyed his orders and continued to fire upon our men from some fields outside the walls. Then the battle-hardened Count of Besascoain, vexed by their audacity, sallied forth with his cavalry and, covered by our marksmen, charged the two companies, which, when they sought to ~~retreat~~ ^{retreat} ~~escape~~ found themselves surrounded and were quickly captured. Masters of Berga, its castle and its defences, the queen's soldiers discovered huge supplies of ammunition, rifles, ^{and} gunpowder, ^{as well as} ~~an~~ armory, a depot, a forge and sixteen guns of varying calibers that Cabrera had been unable to remove or ^{spoil} ~~render~~ useless. In his flight from Berga, the last bastion of Carlism, Cabrera was followed by many of the city's inhabitants--some out of sympathy and others moved by fear of the conquering army and no doubt troubled by their consciences, which warned them that retribution was at hand for the disasters they had ~~caused~~ ^{caused} through their ^{criminal} ~~aid~~ and connivance.

"Undaunted by this battle, in which apart from the dead and wounded, they had lost two of their best companies, the Carlists continued to fire ^{as though} ~~so furiously~~ that it seemed they still hoped to retake the

city. In vain their bugles sounded the retreat, for those fanatics persisted until Cabrera himself addressed his troops, saying: 'Come on boys, it's time to go.' They withdrew at nightfall. The cursed star that for so long had ~~protected~~ ^{favoured} Cabrera ~~waned~~ ^{set} at last, and he ~~set out~~ ^{retreated} with two battalions from Tortosa, three from Móra, five from Aragon and some Catalan forces led by Father Tristany, including Pep de l'Oli's battalion. Those defending the shrine at L'Hort, armed with six cannon, continued to fire, seeking to cover their retreating comrades and distract the queen's troops, but upon beholding the Count of Besascoain's dreaded lance, they abandoned their positions, which he occupied without resistance. Cabrera's army had been ~~both~~ ^T routed and demoralized. Desertions, which had been numerous for ~~some~~ time, now multiplied, while the officers turned a blind eye to their fleeing men, knowing as they did that Carlism ^m could not long endure. What remained of the army dispersed that evening to various villages in the Pyrenees, four or five leagues ^u from Berga."

Charles V's partisans had reached the end of the line. Antoni de Montpalau and his cousin, who ~~had~~ ^{having} watched the battle, spurred their ~~horses~~ ^{mounts} and set out for Castellar de N'Hug, where they had arranged to meet the defeated general. As soon as day broke and Amadeu returned with his message, they would head for Mataplana, free Cabrera, and bring peace to the Dip.

Evening thickened about our friends. A real ^g owl hooted, perched in a leafy oak tree. They heard some brook's invisible and crystalline waters. A breeze from the Pyrenees cooled the Barcelonans' feverish brows. The earth stirred with a thousand mysterious rustlings.

Meanwhile Prince Lichnowsky, galloping through a cloud of dust . two hours from Cervera, tried to catch ^c up with the Carlist forces he

expected to find at Berga. His heart pounded as he rode, still marvel-
ing at his narrow escape.

From time to time, as he ^{skirted} ~~passed~~ a village, he heard gunfire be-
hind him. Seeking a safe haven, Prince Lichnowsky galloped like the
wind. He was filthy and would have given anything for a glass of water.
Naturally, he had no notion of what had occurred in Berga.

the afternoon before
the day of the battle
the day of the battle
the day of the battle

YA

LIBRARY CENSURE

VIII: Onofre de Dip Finds Peace

Dawn broke amid somber, low-lying clouds, A strong north wind blew, forcing the defeated troops, camped near Castellar de N'Hug, to ~~draw~~ ^{pull} their capes tightly around them. The village's rustic inhabitants stared fearfully at those soldiers in search of ~~any~~ ^T shelter. There were long faces all around, and a ~~sad~~ ^g ~~infinite~~ ^{an} weariness ~~weighed~~ ^{sadness} upon them. The army's discipline had ~~disintegrated~~ ^{fallen apart}, and the men mingled with their officers, wandering idly here and there.

Seated around a crude table at an inn, the Count of Morella, Montpalau, ^g and Isidre drank hot coffee. Cabrera looked exhausted; the previous day's events had left their mark on him. Feeling a chill, he clutched the top of his cape. It was clear that the Count of Morella was consumed by fever.

Later that morning, Amadeu and Father Matons arrived. They also looked ~~worn out~~ ^{exhausted} and especially Amadeu--after traveling for two days without pause. Montpalau and Matons embraced. The priest spoke with great tact and ~~delicacy~~ ^g, and his face beamed with an innate goodness that ~~always~~ ^T soothed and cheered his listeners. Montpalau introduced him to those present. Cabrera could scarcely conceal his emotion. Everyone felt a bit feverish in that atmosphere of alert, expectant tension. They were all thinking of what they were about to do and the unique ~~experience~~ ^g that awaited them. The spell would at last be broken. At midday they rode forth in single file from Castellar de N'Hug: Cabrera, Father Matons, Montpalau, Isidre and Amadeu. The only paths leading to Mataplana were ~~primarily~~ ^{trails} used by goats. The landscape, stark and wild, abounded in mountain flora. Montpalau discreetly collected a few herbs, including an extremely rare specimen of Matricaria

chamomilla.

The path climbed to great heights and then descended through dark valleys shaded by fir trees. They ~~found~~^{spied} small, icy waterfalls and deep, sinister gorges. Though it was summer, their ears reddened in the chilly air. They followed the path, occasionally spying herds of sheep cropping the ~~stunted~~^{gray}, ~~gray~~^{gray} weeds. A few ravens circled ~~above their heads~~^{overhead}.

They reached Maians, a farmhouse on the ~~plateau~~^{plateau} known as La Pera or L'Espluga. Here they began ~~a~~^{another} steep descent along a wooded slope that ended in a majestic hollow. At one end of the hollow, perched on a craggy hill, stood the famous Mataplana Castle, not far from Banyuts Gorge.

As they started down, Amadeu and Novau had to cross their arms to make a seat for Cabrera, who nearly fainted when he beheld the castle. Between his exhaustion and the sight of that cursed spot, the Count of Morella, whose nerves ~~usually~~^{were} so steely, felt that he could go no further and had to ask the Barcelonans for help. He was ~~white~~^{white} as a sheet, and his ~~face~~^{brow} was beaded with sweat.

Ahead of them loomed the ruined castle and the silhouetted chapel of ~~Saint Joan de Mata~~^{Saint Joan de Mata}. Lightning snaked across the sky, followed by a mighty clap of thunder.

Father Matons drew forth his ~~own~~^{own} breviary and ~~placed~~^{wrapped} his stole around his neck. His companions fingered their crosses and ~~felt for~~^{felt for} the garlic in their pockets. Cabrera had aged considerably.

Darkness began to fall as the sun sank behind the mountains. The long-awaited moment was at hand. It was now or never. Montpalau pointed to the castle's ~~door~~^{door}, and our friends silently made their way thither. As they entered, they heard a long, grief-stricken howl, as though a wolf were lost in the woods behind them. Their hair stood on end and

they halted, terrified, gazing at each other questioningly.

It only lasted a moment, for Montpalau, knowing that night would ^{soon} ~~shortly~~ fall, took a few steps forward by himself. This broke the spell, and ^{the others followed suit.} ~~they all advanced together.~~

Lighting their oil lamps, they ^{went down} ~~descended~~ the steps leading to the crypt. Stone tombs lined the walls, resting on ancient sculpted corbels. Everywhere there were inscriptions in indecipherable Latin. Huge cobwebs covered the crypt's arching vault.

As they had expected, a large open tomb stood in the middle. Prepared for anything, they approached it, holding their garlic ~~claves~~ aloft. In the tomb, their astonished eyes beheld the huge and vigorous body of His Majesty's former ambassador, Onofre de Dip. He was wrapped in a cape, and his face was ruddy. His expression was severe, curiously noble, and tinged with grief.

The sun was about to set. Matons stepped forward and solemnly recited his prayers. A strange sound issued from that prostrate body. When the priest had finished, Montpalau ^{uttered} ~~repeated~~ the magic formula:

With sun and moon he doth sleep.

Into his shroud he shall creep,

In his grave 'neath the earth so deep.

Then something truly amazing occurred. A great peace transfigured the vampire's face, and his lips parted in a smile. His skin slowly wrinkled and lost its freshness, darkening and becoming like that of a mummy. It was a horrible but reassuring sight. Bone and cartilage appeared. Everything gradually withered away till only ^{dust} ~~ashes~~ remained.

Simultaneously, they all turned toward the Count of Morea ^{ella} ~~a~~. As though by enchantment--and indeed, that's what it was--he felt his vitality return and his face regained its color. Upon examining him, Mont-

palau saw that those two sores had disappeared.

Falling to their knees, they uttered heartfelt prayers for the soul of the deceased and in thanks for the favors God had granted them. Their previous tension had given way to a miraculous serenity. Everything was different^{nt}, and their hearts pounded with joy.

^A ~~The~~ cool ^{breeze} ~~air~~ caressed their faces as they emerged from the crypt after sealing Onofre de Dip's last resting place. Those threatening clouds had vanished, and the setting sun tinted the bluish horizon.

Banyuts Gorge glowed with ^a ~~phosphorescent~~ light that slowly faded away.

Unexpectedly, in a strange vision outlined against the sky, they saw Prince Lichnowsky, galloping away from Berga. His face reflected ^{horror} ~~terror~~ and consternation. He rode toward Casteller de N'Hug, with the Furies close behind him.

IT WILL BE A NEW QUAL-
APPROX 11.450000 08.11.11
IN THE 11.11.11 IN THE 11.11.11
THE 11.11.11 11.11.11

THE 11.11.11 11.11.11
11.11.11 11.11.11

THE 11.11.11 11.11.11
THE 11.11.11 11.11.11

XI

11.11.11 11.11.11

IX: An End to Heroism

When the Count of Morella returned to Castllar de N'Hug, he was met by his officers Ferran Pineda and Lluís Adell, who had gone to negotiate with ~~gana~~ General Castellane at the French border. They would be admitted to France under the following conditions: first, all generals, officers, and troops would be initially transported to places chosen by the French government, which would ~~offer~~ ^{grant} them the same ~~as-~~ ^{asylum?} ~~sistance given to other political emigrés;~~ second, they would be welcomed, treated, and respected as refugees; third, they would have the right to ~~beside~~ in France or continue on to other destinations of their choosing; fourth, the troops would surrender their arms and horses, except those personally owned by the generals and officers.

Having considered these points, Cabrera summoned his officers and said: "Comrades in arms, I began this war with fifteen men, only half of whom possessed rifles. Now, however, I see no further hope of ~~success.~~ ^{victory.} Given the circumstances, I believe that continuing the struggle would only cause useless bloodshed. I am convinced that my duty is to lead you safely to France, as the king has not authorized me to negotiate with our enemies. I thank you, in his name and still more in my own, for your loyalty and courage throughout this campaign. If anyone thinks that the battle is not yet lost, I give him leave to continue in whatever fashion he desires. I feel that I have done my duty; should you wish to condemn me, now is the time. Here I stand; we still are on Catalan soil. I want to be judged not as a general ^{but} as a simple volunteer, for I prefer death to ignominy."

Silence greeted the ~~commander's~~ ^{first few} words. ~~When he~~ ^{By the time he had} finished, all his officers were weeping. Faithful Forcadell and Llagostera were the most

deeply affected, as they had fought in all their heroic leader's campaigns.

Montpalau witnessed this ^{pathetic} pitiful scene and, despite his liberal ~~sentiments~~ and convictions, he was filled with sadness. He stepped out into the cold night air. The stars shone brilliantly overhead. Soon Novau joined him, silently ~~smoking~~ his pipe.

"It's over; everything must come to an end. There are no more mysteries to unravel. You, Novau, will ~~remain~~ ^{set} again sail ~~the~~ ^{for} to Malta, while I return to my ~~pan~~ plants and Leyden jars. Ten years from now, we shall vaguely recall this adventure, but never again shall we ~~see~~ ^{live through} another like it."

Montpalau spoke bitterly. A shooting star plummeted earthward. Novau replied: "People will think we're crazy if we tell them the truth. You, in particular, will have to lie to maintain your scientific reputation. A priest's corroboration won't do you much good."

He chortled and ~~then~~ spat into a clump of gorse.

"Such is life," he added.

They had been leaning against a wall. Someone emerged and emptied a bucket of dirty water. They returned to the inn, where everyone was preparing to set out. The floor was strewn with pieces of paper and ^{tin} cans. The ~~main~~ hall was deserted.

A few ~~minutes~~ later, they were riding toward France. Montpalau had decided to go as far as the border, where the three inseparable friends and Father Matons would take their leave of Cabrera.

It was three o'clock in the morning. The army followed behind them, except for Tristany's guerrillas, who had ~~decided~~ to fight on in Catalonia. Their footsteps ^{echoed} ~~resounded~~ in the icy night. The trek seemed interminable. The French town of Palau's lights twinkled in the dist-

ance.

As dawn began to break, they spied a battalion of mounted gendarmes awaiting them in accord with their ~~previous arrangements~~^{agreements}. Everything was diffuse and unreal, as though glimpsed in a dream, and the lightly slowly took on a grainy and nacreous texture. The gendarmes waited, sol~~men~~^{men} and still.

Montpalau rode beside the Count of Morella. As they approached, they saw the commissary tugging at his horse's reins. He asked: "Which of you in General Cabrera?"

"At your service," Cabrera replied as he dismounted. Then he turned to Montpalau with tears streaming down his ~~face~~^{cheeks}. The two men embraced.

"I can never repay you!" Cabrera exclaimed. "I know neither what fate holds in store for me nor where I shall be tomorrow, nor do I know what will become of this wretched ~~country~~^{land} of ours. But whatever happens and wherever I may ~~be~~^{be}, do not forget that I consider ~~myself~~^{you} ~~your~~^{my} brother."

Then he removed his saber and handed it to Montpalau, who remained silent.

"Take this saber as a token of my esteem. As you can see, I have nothing else to offer and it is my most prized possession. Take it."

"Thank you, general," Montpalau replied, ~~turning~~^{looking} away to hide his tears.

Gripping the young naturalist's arm, Cabrera muttered: "You're a damn good liberal." And smiling, he added: "The only one I ever met."

Then he looked at the French commissary and said: "I'm ready."

At that moment, they heard hoofbeats swiftly approaching. They all turned around. Half fainting, Prince Lichnowsky appeared with barely enough strength to halt just before he reached the border. Then

he slipped from his saddle, while the men rushed to aid him.

The sun had risen. Wisps of smoke rose from Palau's chimneys.
The Carlist army entered France.

Very slowly, Montpalau mounted his steed. He glanced at the general's saber. Then he and his friends, who were waiting ahead, turned back into Spain.

of children.
"I am," I said, "a man
who has been the witness
of a great war, a war
which has been the cause
of the end of the world
as we know it."
I said, "I am a man
who has been the witness
of a great war, a war
which has been the cause
of the end of the world
as we know it."

AI

STINEY CEMETERIA

X: Return to Love

Barcelona was in a festive mood. News had ^{arrived} ~~come~~ that the war at last was over. Five days earlier, the city had fêted the queen mother and Isabella II. A week later, they would welcome the Duke of ~~Victory~~ ^{Victory}. Flowers and violins were the order of the day. The press described these glorious events in the following terms:

"Their Majesties' entrance, together with their retinue, was at once solemn and joyous. Many factors combined to create an atmosphere of grandeur and magnificence--most importantly, our desire to see the young princess occupying Saint Ferdinand's throne, whose preservation had cost the nation so many hard sacrifices, as well as the pomp and circumstance that always attend a mighty court. Catalonia's capital welcomed the illustrious travelers at seven in the evening ~~on~~ ^{at} June 30th with rapturous applause. Soldiers and militiamen lined the ~~royal~~ ^{route} path, awaiting ~~the~~ ^a cannonade that would announce the princess's and queen's arrival, while crowds gathered around the gate through which they would pass. Before entering the city, however, Their Majesties ~~descended from their carriage~~ ^{stopped} ~~in~~ ^{at} a place called La Creu Coberta and rested for a few minutes in a pavilion erected in their honor. There they were congratulated by the authorities and notables who had come to greet them, kissing their hands and offering them refreshments, which they sipped as they wandered about the pavilion, accompanied by a lady-in-waiting and their chief steward. As they left, the city fathers offered, and Their Majesties accepted, a luxurious and elegant triumphal coach drawn by eight richly caparisoned horses and driven by eight splendidly attired coachmen. The royal party was preceded by a squadron of lancers from the national militia, who later

joined the royal horse guards in protecting our guests. Her Grace the Duchess of Victory, the Count of Santa Coloma, and Catalonia's ~~Captain~~ general Antoni Van-Halen also accompanied the royal ladies in open carriages.

"Upon reaching ^a~~the~~ triumphal arch erected at the Boqueria Gate, Their Majesties spied various Barcelonan maidens^T dressed as nymphs. The procession halted for a moment while the maids sang in chorus, recited poetry and offered floral wreaths. Doves[|] adorned with multi-colored ribbons flew through the air, and shouts of joy sped the royal travelers on their way to the palace, where they watched the troops and national militiamen pass in review. Barcelona's happiness was complete; private citizens vied with one another in ^{bedecking} ~~adorning~~ their houses."

Meanwhile, Father Matons, Montpalau, and their friends returned to Barcelona, following the safest and shortest route: the one starting from Ripoll. Field Marshal Jaume Carbó, who commanded Espartero's third army, ^{gave} ~~had given~~ them a tilbury that, while not as elegant as the one they had left at the inn in Camposines, was quite solid and comfortable. General Carbó, who had attended school with Montpalau's father, threw a small party to celebrate their victory. Bottles of French champagne were uncorked amid toasts to the queen's health.

After belching, General Carbó expounded his belief that the ^{queen's} ~~reactionary ministers around the queen~~ must be done away with. Above all, ^{they} ~~he and his friends~~ had to protect the constitution, enlighten the populace, and raise Spain to the level of other European nations. In brief, they must pay tribute to Progress.

Father Matons courteously but sternly replied: "You will permit me to observe that, as history has amply shown, the Church has never faltered in its pastoral mission, and the ills that hang like a curse over our country derive from an unhealthy weakening of faith among the

^{ruling}
~~upper~~ classes."

Insisting that ^{he} couldn't agree more, General Carbó ushered ~~him~~ his guests into the fumoir, where they lit some Cuban cigars. Cordiality reigned supreme, aided by the champagne's gaseous vapors. General Carbó displayed a handsome pistol from his collection. Montpalau's mind was elsewhere, for he was dreaming of his Agnès.

General Carbó said goodbye to Antoni Montpalau and his companions by the side of the road to Sant Joan de les Abadesses. They set off toward Vic, the land of aromatic ~~llonganissa~~ ^{inscribed} sausages. At the entrance to each village they saw a triumphal arch with the words "Long live the queen!" and "Long live the consistution!"

Amadeu, so long ~~separated~~ ^{parted} from his profession, excitedly drove the tilbury at top speed. Observing Montpalau's sad ~~countenance~~, the priest ~~thought~~ it wise to tell ~~the~~ ^{their} coachman to show more serenity and composure.

They had nearly reached Barcelona. Winking at Novau, Matons told the melancholy naturalist: "First let's go the Marquis de la Gralla's house. He has a surprise ~~in store~~ for you."

These words were accompanied by a mighty crack of the whip, gracefully executed ^{by} Amadeu, who was grinning from ear to ear.

As they passed Marcus's Chapel on Carders Street, they noticed how festively ~~the~~ ^{had been decorated} the shops ~~were adorned~~. Their owners strolled about as though it were Sunday, wearing silk hats and smoking cigarettes. To distract ~~Montpalau~~ ^{our hero}, the sage priest ~~said~~ ^{reminded}: "Watch your ~~step~~ with Segimon Ferrer, Montpalau. He's a dangerous skeptic."

This observation was quickly embellished by intrepid Amadeu, who, perhaps influenced by the vocabulary of those soldiers they had left at the border, turned around and said: "Mr. Ferrer is a nincompoop."

They all roared with laughter--except Montpalau, who ~~glanced~~ ^{glowered} angrily at his coachman. Amadeu, however, knew how far he could go with his master.

They halted outside the gates to the Marquis de la Gralla's palace. Footmen ~~wearing~~ ⁱⁿ wigs and white gloves stood at the entrance. They opened the carriage door, bowed, and helped the travelers out.

At the top of the ~~stairs~~ ^{steps} ~~in the front hall~~, artistically arranged in order of importance, stood the smiling and excited members of their ~~scientific~~ circle: the marquis, Samsó Corbella, Bartomeu Garriga, Josep Ignasi and Francesc Avinyó. All except Segimon Ferrer, the skeptic.

Montpalau opened his arms. He held ~~his~~ top hat in one hand.

"My friends," he exclaimed in a trembling voice. "My dear friends."

They surrounded him in a lively demonstration of joy. Everyone spoke at once. They had been informed, yes, they had heard all about it. Amazing, the discovery of the century, incredible, ~~what~~ ^a bombshell! What acumen! What a glorious day for Catalan science!"

They escorted him to the reception room, where the divine Chopin had once played the piano. Upon one of the ~~tables~~ ^{tables}, stood a ~~solid~~ gold statue of a Vampiris diminutus on a polished mahogany base--a free interpretation of an allegorical bat, executed, with his usual good taste, by Gumersind Cortès ~~on~~ ^{of} Ferran Street.

"My son," said the marquis, "here you see a small token of our enthusiastic admiration. All our names are on the pedestal. It's ~~pure~~ ^{solid} gold."

Bartomeu Garriga, the philologist, eager to hear more about Montpalau's exploits, shifted impatiently from one foot to the other. He tried to interrupt the marquis.

"The etymological origin of . . ."

"Just a second, Garriga. Don't break my train of thought. All in

good time." Then the marquis continued: "And now, my son, we have a special surprise, one I am sure our ⁹ friend Father Matons has already mentioned."

So saying, the marquis smiled and gestured toward a door. All eyes were fixed upon Montpalau.

"Go ahead. Open it."

With beating heart, Montpalau obeyed him. He took a few steps into the next room.

Agnès stood by the window, inhaling a rose's fragrance.

"Agnès," Montpalau whispered, choking on his words.

"Darling Antoni," she tearfully replied.

Our naturalist threw himself at his beloved's feet and kissed her hand.

Agnès smiled.

Far away, the Aurea picuda intoned its perfect and inaudible song.

Then there was silence, like the world's noiseless throbbing ^{the} ~~moment~~ ^{just} before its creation. Nothingness.

Aurora = Dupin

Index of Proper Names

~~Aggès~~: The Baroness d'Upri's daughter. Her delicate presence stirred the souls of plants. She ~~spent her childhood~~ ^{grew up} in Pratdip, married Antoni de Montpalau, a celebrated ~~early~~ nineteenth-century naturalist, and died in 1874.

Alcoverro, Josep: Gandesa's liberal mayor. Unafraid to speak his mind.

Amadeu: Antoni de Montpalau's coachman. Entered ~~his~~ ^{the} family's service at the age of eight. He was exceptionally loyal to his master, with whom he reminisced, when they were both well into their sixties and ~~troubled~~ ^{suffering} ~~from~~ by insomnia, about their past adventures. He died, leaving several children, at the age of ninety in a house in Sant Cugat del Vallès that his former master had willed to him.

Ambrose, Saint: Fourth-century saint. Formidable Latinist. Composed "Aeterne rerum Conditor" ("Framer of the Earth and Sky").

Ardenya, Martí d': Illustrious naturalist born in Altafulla in the province of Tarragona. ~~Corrected~~ ⁺ several of Lavoisier's errors.

Arissó, Carles. One of Ramon Cabrera's doctors. Dismissed for faulty diagnosis of his commander's ~~an illness~~ ^{illness}. He died consumed by jealousy of Antoni de Montpalau's ~~scientific reputation~~ ^{successes}.

Arnes: The last village in Tarragona before entering Aragon. Its town hall resembles a Florentine palace.

Arpiazu the cook: Carlist volunteer who taught a flying reptile to ~~talk~~ ^{talk}. He went mad and died in the town of Zarauz during ~~the~~ ^a thunderstorm.

Aurea picuda: Winged creature of undetermined species. Its song was a pure and inaudible melody. Shy. Strangely devoted to Antoni de Montpalau.

Avinyó i Barba, Francesc: Medical scholar and member of the Marquis

de la Gralla's circle. Paid for some refreshments at the Peru Café. Owned a textile mill. Ruined by strikes and conflicts over the introduction of self-acting mules.

Avutarda geminis: A mysterious beast that fascinated and perplexed naturalists for many years. Then it suddenly disappeared from the face of the ~~the~~ earth.

Banyuts Gorge: ~~Focus~~ ^{focus} of several legends. It seems that Count Arnau and Adalaisa took refuge there during their idyll. It glowed for a few seconds ^{after} upon Onofre de Dip's death.

Baroness d'Urpí: Agnès's mother and the Marquis de la Gralla's sister. Antoni de Montpalau's mother-in-law. Passed away in 1840.

Baroness of Nèziers: Related to Antoni de Montpalau on his mother's side and very close to Aurora Dupin, ^{commonly} ~~universally~~ known as George Sand. She enjoyed reading pornographic ~~eighteenth-century~~ eighteenth-century French novels. Mistress of the painter Josep Maria de Martin, a Carlist exile ^{living} ~~demanded~~ in Paris.

Baron de Meer: Barcelonan. As captain general of Catalonia, he distinguished himself in the struggle against Count Charles of Spain. A ^{cultivated} ~~sensitive~~ man.

Bassa, General: General Llauder's second-in-command. He died tragically, thrown from a window ^{above} ~~about~~ the Pla del Palau.

Bonaplata, Ramonet: A cretin born into a good family. Had an illegitimate son by Pepeta, the chambermaid.

Borso di Carminati, General: A liberal officer of Italian extraction, as his name suggests. Fought bravely during a siege of Gandesa.

Cabrera, Ramon: Commander of the Carlist armies of Aragon, Valencia, Murcia and later Catalonia as well. Famed throughout the world for his courage and cunning. Toward the end of the campaign he contracted a

strange malady cured by the ^{timely} opportune intervention of his friend Antoni de Montpalau. ^{Cabrera} In the ^{later} end ~~he~~ married and settled in London, where he lived surrounded by pedigreed setters.

Calmet, Friar: Specialist in demonology and vampirism. He died in Brittany, kneeling before a wayside cross. His works were published by the Sorbonne.

Cantaluppo, Captain: Aeronaut. Made a trip around the world in eighty days, inspiring Jules Verne's novel of that name.

Carbó, Jaume: A liberal general, envied for his collection of antique weapons. Played an active role in the First Carlist War.

Chamber of Commerce: ^{e)} Barcelonan institution, highly influential in the city's intellectual life.

Charles V: The Carlist pretender.

Colonna d'Este, Prince: A Roman aristocrat. He wore flowered robes ^{and} ~~was an art-lover~~ ^{adored}. Famed for his seductions. One day, a Japanese friend presented him with a geisha. Close friend of Prince Lichnowsky, ^{to} whom he introduced fair ^{de} Matilde ~~di~~ Ferrari. Bored with life, he committed suicide in the early hours of November 7, 1847.

Corbella, Samsó: Doctor. Lived on Regomir Square. Member of the Marquis de la Gralla's circle. His wife ^{refused to accept} ~~did not understand~~ his romantic escapades. He fled to Naples with the singer Teodora Lazzi and wound up as the Grand Turk's physician in Constantinople. He was famed throughout the world for his Treatise on the Role of Flies in Spreading Disease.

^{newspaper} ^{stet} ^{→ Cordeller} Courreur des Sciences: Widely read scientific publication. ^{college: A school in Barcelona}

Despuig, Cristòfor: Published a curious work entitled Talks Given in the Illustrious City of Tortosa by Sir Cristòfor Despuig. Contains many observations of great interest to naturalists.

~~Dead~~ Dead Man's Cave: A cave in the Maestrat. One reaches it by turning ^{south} ~~left~~ after the Beseit Mountains. The site of some of Antoni de Montpalau's most extraordinary discoveries, including petrifying music, ~~in~~ a phenomenon ~~what~~ unfortunately has ~~not~~ been studied further. Despuig, Cristòfor: Published a curious work entitled Talks Given in the Illustrious City of Tortosa by Sir Cristòfor Despuig. Contains many observations of great interest to naturalists.

Dip, Onofre de: The vampire. During the Carlist Wars he was also known as ~~the~~ the Owl. Knighted by King James I, he fell in love with Duchess Meczyr, herself a vampire who infected him with her dreadful condition. Lord of Pratedip. Found peace at last, through Antoni de Montpalau's efforts, after the many vicissitudes recounted in this novel.

⑥ The Young Observer

④ The Steamship

③ The National Guard

⑤ Uproar

② The Constitutionalist

① The Commercial Echo

Barcelonan ^{newspapers} ~~political journals~~ of the era. They may be consulted in the Municipal Historical Archives

Escoda, Francesc: One of Gandesa's most distinguished liberals.

Espartero ^{General}: Responsible for the defeat of Carlism. He was named ~~the~~ Duke of Victory, and later of Morella as well. Rather vain. Had some serious ~~disagreements~~ ^{conflicts} with the regent Maria Cristina. Played a major role in Spanish politics.

Ferrari, Matilde de: Her married name was Matilde de Leblanc. Lichnowsky's grand and hopeless passion. A friend of George Sand's.

Ferrer, Segimon: Discoverer of ~~Mathematical~~ ^{mathematical} coagulation. A skeptic with no taste for poetry. He took a dislike to Antoni de Montpalau, of whom he often made light. Died in Seville of an overdose of gazpacho. His enemies were many and well deserved.

Ferrery, Juan Manuel: Eminent scientist born in Pasajes de San Juan. Donated Saint Faustina's body, intact and uncorrupted, to his parish church. One day, at a reception held by the King of Bavaria, he uttered the celebrated phrase: "Everything is nothing." Died in Bayonne, France. Flying Reptile, the: Survivor of prehistoric times. Talked like a parrot. Slow and dreamy, it frightened the dogs.

Forcadell, General: Cabrera's second-in-command. Considered his right-hand man.

Four Nations Inn: Frederic Chopin and George Sand stayed there.

Galvan, Antoni: Liberal physician in Gandesa. Rang a copper bell as he collected the wounded.

Gandesa: Liberal Catalan town. Figures in Galdós's Episodios nacionales. Its inhabitants are hot-blooded and hard-working.

Garlic: A highly effective protection against vampires. Of the liliaceae family. A bulbous plant. Strong flavor.

Garriga, Bartomeu: Member of the Marquis de la Gralla's circle. Philologist. On a youthful trip to Asturias, he met Jovellanos. Peculiar laugh. In his old age he ~~became~~ ^{grew} slightly deaf and used an ear trumpet. Passed away in 1858.

Gil, Pere: Jesuit and naturalist born in Reus. Author of a famous Natural History of Catalonia.

Gombrèn: Village near Ripoll. Frequent sightings of Count Arnau. Old people still recite the ~~ancient~~ ^{ancient} lines: "Had Count Arnau not renounced Our Lord/ the Llobregat's waters we still would ford."

Hilary of Poitiers, Saint: Wrote ~~Latin~~ ^{in Latin} poetry.

Horta de Sant Joan: An extremely picturesque village not far from Gandesa. Immortalized in our time by Picasso's Cubist paintings c.a. 1906. After the liberals' victory, it was renamed Horta de l'Ebre.

Josep Ignasi: The Marquis de la Gralla's heir. Inventor of the ~~pan~~ pneumatic harp (see below) and the liberal flute. Gifted musician. ^{After} ~~Upon~~ coming into his title and inheritance, he moved to Montmartre, where he staged enthusiastically received scientific-musical shows.

Junta of Berga: Catalonia's Carlist junta, headquartered in Berga. Believed responsible for Count Charles of Spain's death at Coll de Nargó. Issued pompous proclamations.

Laborde, Alexandre de: French traveler who wrote Voyage pittoresque d'Espagne and Itinéraire descriptif d'Espagne. ~~Thorough~~ ^{Thorough} Thorough in his research. Blue-eyed. A great lover of mayonaise.

La Gralla, Marquis de: Barcelonan aristocrat. Member of the Academy of Science. A distinguished scientific circle gathered ^{regularly} at his house. A man of good will and great authority. He was ^{researching} ~~preparing~~ a study to determine the feasibility of acclimatizing and raising ostriches in Prat de Llobregat. The Baroness d'Urpí's brother, and therefore Agnès's uncle. Lammarck-Boucheret et de la Truanderie, Sir: Related to Antoni de Montpalau on his mother's side. Famous botanist. Owned coffee ~~plantations~~ plantations in Haiti. Widowed in 1813.

Leblanc: See Ferrari.

Lesseps, Ferdinand: French consul in Barcelona. Solid scientific background. Great future ahead of him.

Liberty Café: In Gràcia. A gathering place for progressives. The owner, Vicentet, hailed from Sant ~~ad~~ Sadurní and had ^a ~~the~~ strange and nefarious ~~tendency to water~~ habit of watering the wine.

Lichnowsky, Prince: ~~an~~ Carlist volunteer related to the German imperial family. Very crafty. Hopelessly in love with Matilde de Ferrari. Played the piccolo with great delicacy. A tremendous success with women, he possessed a most refined sensibility. Came to a tragic end.

Llagostera, General: Another of Cabrera's aides. Valiant. ^{Knew how} ~~able~~ to endure hardship.

Madoz y Fontaneda: Naturalist [&] residing in Seville. Consulted frequently with American naturalists. An authority on flying mammals, he found-- after a laborious search--an amphibious lizard's egg. One night, when he was staying at an inn in Madrid, a valuable talking watch was stolen from his room. This event in turn led to a bitter ^{dispute} ~~argument~~ with the Minister of Justice.

Magrinyà i de Sunyer, Antoni: Ex-president of Tarragona's provincial deputation. ~~High~~ Polymath. Wrote a history of the sieges of Gandesa, ^{which} ~~that~~ the city council resolved to publish. Decision ^{postponed indefinitely} ~~never carried out~~ ^{due} owing to lack of funds.

Majorcan, the: Vessel on which George Sand and Chopin sailed to Majorca.

Mani, Oriol: Gandesan liberal volunteer.

Martí, ~~Antoni~~ Joan: One of Cabrera's incompetent doctors.

Marina, Saint: Shrine near Pratdip. Scenes of great devotion. Multitudinous processions.

Mas, Bernat: Eminent botanist.

Mataplana Castle: Hug de Mataplana's old troubadour court. Onofre de Dip, the undead, found peace in its crypt. Currently in ruins. Picturesque spot.

Matons, Pasqual: Liberal priest and member of the Marquis de la Gralla's circle. ^{composed} ~~wrote~~ poetry in his spare time and ^{compiled} ~~prepared~~ a bibliography of ancient Catalan authors. He ended his life as Bishop of Murcia. Wrote an ode to progress in Latin, published in The Steamship.

Meczyr, Duchess: Undead. A Hungarian beauty. Beheaded and quartered. Transmitted her condition to Onofre de Dip.

Milà i Fontanals, Manuel: Scholar who later taught Menéndez y Pelayo. Strong influence on the ^{nineteenth-century} Catalan revival.

Minosca, Peret: Inhabitant of Pratedip. One of the vampire's victims.

Moles, Enriqueta: ^{Another} ~~Young~~ victim of the vampire.

Montpalau, Antoni de: Exceptionally brilliant scientist. Member of the Academy of Science. A ~~n~~ationalist in his youth, he later declared that he had discovered ~~him~~ poetry through three things: love, mystery, and adventure. Hero of this novel. Died of a heart attack in Amsterdam.

Morella: Capital of the Maestrat. Magnificent cathedral guarded by choleric priests.

Navarro, Rafael: Gunner. Liberal defender of Gandesa.

Niccolò: A hair-raising fish, the Genoese pesce cola.

Novau, Isidre de: Sea captain. Antoni de Montpalau's cousin and inseparable companion ^{on} ~~in~~ many an adventure. Came to a strange end: as ^{in vessel} ~~he~~ approached Malta, he sighted the terrifying pesce cola for the second time. After locking himself in his cabin, he vanished without a trace, obliging his first mate to take charge of the ^{ship} ~~vessel~~. He willed his fortune to Antoni de Montpalau.

Núñez, Leopoldo: Another of the vampire's victims. Castilian, Bailiff by trade.

Ocaña, Manuel: Notary. Liberal defender of Gandesa. Fond of Bolkas.

O'Donnell, General: One of the queen's best. Related to the Carlist Colonel O'Donnell, ^{slain} ~~murdered~~ by the mob in Barcelona.

Otorrinus fantasticus: An ~~amorphous~~ indescribable beast.

Owl, the: See Onofre de Dip.

Pascual, Josep Maria: ~~Embarcament~~ Jurist. Liberal defender of Gandesa.

Peuderrata, Magí: Mayor of Pratedip. With ^{Extremely quick to} ~~one glance~~ he spotted traces of hares and partridges. ^{After} ~~Upon~~ his wife's death he moved to Barcelona, where he managed a brothel. Sentenced to the galleys, he died at the

entrance to Maó's harbor.

Pep de l'Oli: Carlist guerrilla. Did the best he could.

Peru Café: A Barcelonanan café. George Sand and Chopin enjoyed some refreshments there in the company of the Marquis de la Gralla's circle.

Piper of the Llobregat: Pen-name of Joaquim Rubió i Ors, ~~one of the~~ ^{g leading figures in highly influential in} fathers of the nineteenth-century Catalan literary renaissance. His verses were famed throughout the land. Founded a dynasty of literary giants.

Plancy, Collin de: Author of treatises on demonology and vampirism.

Fond of blonds and brocade. Active ~~role~~ ^{invented} in the Inquisition ~~in~~ ^{at} Cahors.

Pneumatic harp: A musical artifact ~~contrived~~ ^{invented} by Josep Ignasi, the Marquis de la Gralla's son. It made a great impression on Chopin during his brief stay in Barcelona.

Pratdip: Village in the province of Tarragona, ~~Tyrannized~~ ^{by} the Dip. See this novel.

Prim i Prats, Joan: Captain in the queen's army. Played a major role in Spanish politics once he became a general. ~~Brought King~~ ^{Crowned King} Amadeo of Savoy ~~to~~ ^{Kings of} Spain. Born in Reus. Assassinated on Turk Street, Madrid, December 30, 1870.

Riera, Narcís: Head of Cordelles School. Delivered speeches in formal Castilian.

Sabater, Matias: Liberal defender of Gandesa.

Sallent, Marquis de: Liberal extremist. Died battling like a lion in a Carlist ambush outside Campdevàrol.

Salvador, Jaume: One of Catalan science's founding fathers. Superb botanist. His herbarium is still famous ~~today~~ ^{today}.

Sand, George: Pseudonym of Aurora ~~e~~ Dupin. Dressed like a man. Celebrated author~~ess~~. Scandalized the Majorcans.

Scolopendra martirialis: Monstrous and horrifying insect. A born killer. Looks like a giant centipede.

Segarra, General: Carlist commander of Catalonia. Member of the Junta of Berga. Deserted to the enemy and issued a famous proclamation in Ripoll, urging his colleagues to surrender.

Simius saltarinus: Leaping monkey. Its fur is preserved with naphtaline.

Sol, Josep: Gandesan merchant. Played an active role in the city's defense.

Solaní: Carlist guerrilla leader who operated along the Ebre.

Solanes, Josep: Cabrera's chief veterinarian. Reported the demise of all his commander's horses due to an epidemic of galloping diarrhea.

Tenies intestinalis: Intestinal parasites in the form of long worms.

Blind. Produce a general feeling of malaise in their victims.

Torrebadella, Father: ^{reactionary} Machievellian priest. ^{Briefly headed} Temporary head of the Junta of Berga. ~~He was deposed by Cabrera~~ Personal enemy of Father Matons.

He was deposed by Cabrera and found himself obliged to give lessons in applied Machievellianism during his exile in Grenoble.

Vallbona de les Monges, Abbess of: Worried about ^{the convent's finances} money. Restored Yolande of Hungary's tomb. Was addressed as "my lady" and knew a delicious recipe for cookies.

Veciana i Sardà, Josep: Born in Reus. Member of the Academy of Science. The father of two marriageable daughters who sang Il bacio furtivo and La lacrima grossa with great delicacy.

Villanueva, Jaume: Scholarly friar. Wrote Viaje literario a las iglesias de España.

Zurbano: One of the queen's most valiant generals. He and his two sons were shot without trial on January 21, 1845. One of the saddest episodes in nineteenth-century Spanish politics.