

ARMENIAN HISTORY

Leo I Baron

At Thoros I's death, his brother Leo I (1129-1137) succeeded him as the nearest heir to the principality, his nephew, Constantine, having been poisoned. Upon his accession, Leo followed up his predecessors' aims and descending into the plain took from the Greeks the cities of Mamestia (Missis), Adana, and Tarsus, and pushed on to the Mediterranean seacoast. He needed to possess the coast if he was to establish his power, for through its ports he could maintain profitable connection with Europe, instead of being compelled to resort to the intermediary of the Crusaders, his south-eastern neighbors. The relations of the Franks and the Armenians had become less courteous than formerly. Thoros had to be asked several times before he sent Baldwin his daughter's dowry of 60,000 gold bezants. On one side, the Armenians complained of the demands and exactions of the Crusaders, while on the other, the Franks accused their allies of being always ready to call on the infidels for help whenever they were in any way dissatisfied.

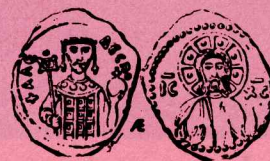
One of the chief causes of dispute between the Armenians and the Latins of Antioch was the latter's possession of the strongholds of the southern Amanus mountains and the coast adjacent to the Gulf of Alexandretta. The barons claimed these fortresses, but the princes of Antioch asserted that they were theirs by virtue of a treaty made in 1097 between Bohemond and Emperor Alexis I Comnenus. At that date the Armenians had not yet penetrated so far southward, and the Crusaders were then in possession of the fortified places in the middle of the Cilician plain.

By his marriage with Constance, the only daughter of Bohemond II, Raymond of Poitiers had become Prince of Antioch (1136). Shortly before his accession (1135), Leo had seized the fortress of Sarovanticar belonging to

the territory of the Crusaders. The Latin nobleman hid his resentment, however, and did not resort to arms on assuming power, but a little later he captured the Armenian baron by stratagem and shut him up in one of his castles.

After two months' captivity, Leo was finally given his freedom, but only on hard terms. He had not only to restore Sarovanticar, but to give up also Mamestia and Adana, and pay 60,000 gold pieces, besides surrendering his son as a hostage. He had to agree likewise to assist the prince against the emperor, John Comnenus.

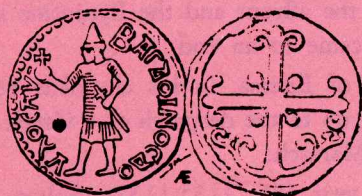
The unjust and rash seizure of Sarovanticar by Leo I was the first serious quarrel between the Armenians and the Crusaders. It seemed likely to have grave consequences, for the Armenian baron deeming himself entitled to disregard promises extracted by ruse or by force, attacked Raymond, recaptured the territories and cities taken from him, and remained under arms against the Prince of Antioch and his ally Fulk of Anjou, king of Jerusalem. This nascent hostility might have become fatal both for the Armenians and the Franks, for the infidels were only waiting for a favorable moment to swoop down on both belligerents. Joscelin II, Count of Edessa, whose father had married Leo's sister, intervened and brought about an honorable agreement for both sides (1137). An alliance was drawn up against Emperor Jean II Comnenus who was then laying claims to Antioch and Cilicia.



Coin of Alexis I. Comnenus

During these disputes between the Latins and Armenians over a few towns in Cilicia, war continued with the Turks. Michael the Syrian wrote: « In the year 584 (1135-1136) Baron Stephen, Baron Thoros' brother, arrived under the walls of Marasch, and his troops effecting an entrance during the night were received in the homes of those of the inhabitants who were Christian. This surprise attack was arranged by a priest of the city with whom Baron Stephen was in collusion. At dawn his soldiers seized the place and massacred the Turks inside the walls. Flushed with their victory, they proceeded to insult those who were inside the citadel and openly dishonored their wives. God in His wrath therefore did not give the citadel into their hands. They then set fire to the town and taking away with them the Christians of the place advanced into the interior ».

Also Abulfaradj, relating the same events, adds: « The Turks on coming back showed some humanity and not only treated peacefully the Christians that remained



Coin of Baldwin of Edessa



Coin of Raymond of Poitiers
Prince of Antioch

but also restored to the Armenian fugitives that returned their houses, vineyards and fields. But a priest of that nation whom they suspected of having been in collusion with his compatriots was flayed alive. After three days they cut off his tongue, hands, and feet, and threw him into the flames. The Armenians incensed at this cruelty put some Turks to death in the same manner ».

Turkish hostility towards the Armenians was more-over paid for in gold by the Byzantine court which, according to Cinnamus, maintained as ever its designs on Cilicia and Antioch. John II Comnenus had purposed leaving the throne of Constantinople to his elder son, and wished to give the younger an appanage consisting of Cilicia, Antioch, Attalia, and Cyprus. But Alexis and his younger brother, Andronicus Sebastocrator, both died and the crown fell to Manuel.

Thoros II (1145-1169)

From 1137 to 1145 the Byzantines ruled all Cilicia, and the princes of Antioch and counts of Edessa had their hands too full meeting the attacks of the infidels to think about restoring the kingdom of their former lies. One of Leo's sons, Thoros, who was a prisoner in Constantinople, was still quite young at the time of his family's disaster, and gave the Byzantine court no apprehension. His gracious manners had even won him favor there. When Manuel I Comnenus (1143) succeeded his father as emperor, the young baron felt the time was ripe to throw off the yoke. He fled, disguised as a merchant on a Genoese or Venetian ship, and reached Cyprus, from where he sailed on to Antioch. There Prince Raymond and the monophysite Patriarch Athanasius VIII provided him with the wherewithal to make the attempt he had long contemplated. Setting out from Antioch with a small escort he reached the Amanus mountains and soon rallied to his standard the malcontents and outlaws like himself, to the number of several thousand, sufficient to carry off a few initial successes, which brought to his standard all the Armenians in his father's former dominion.

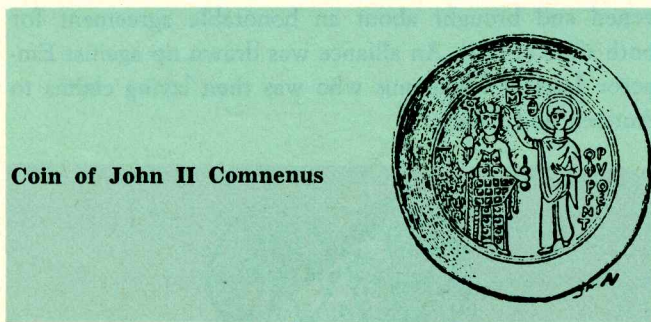
Vahram of Edessa, in his rhymed chronicle, has left us quite a romantic picture of the young baron and his arrival in the land of his fathers:

« The household of the Imperial palace claim that Thoros stayed until a Greek princess fell in love with him and gave him treasures which he took away. (Reaching the mountains of Cilicia, he met a priest to whom he confided the secret that he was Leo's son. The priest welcomed him with joy, and sent him out as a herdsman. The Armenians remaining in the country dwelt in the mountains, and suffering as they were from Greek oppression they earnestly longed for the return of their former rulers. Learning from the priest that their beloved prince had come back, they at once gathered and hailed Thoros as their baron ».

Whilst Emperor John Comnenus was subduing Cilicia and approaching Antioch, the Moslems were devastating the districts adjacent to the Crusaders and threatening the Latins. The Byzantines had joined up with the Turks to overthrow the power of the Westerners, destroy the Armenian baronies, and drive the non-Orthodox Christians out of Asia, so fierce was religious hatred in Constantinople. When the Turks, however, entered the territory of Kescoun within the Empire, the Basileus could not stomach the affront and the Byzantine alliance with the nomads came to an end.

Matthew of Edessa, in his chronicle relates the events leading up to the despatch of a Greek army to the province of Marasch:

« In the year 585 (1135-1137), Sultan Mohammed, the son of Amir-Gazi, the son of Danischmend, arrived with a large army in the region of Marasch near Kescoun



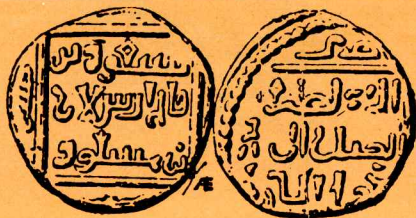
Coin of John II Comnenus

Captivity of Leo I

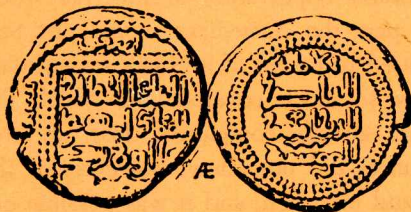
Despite the Armenian army's alliance with the princes of Antioch, the Greeks invaded Cilicia, defeated the Crusaders and Leo, whose vassals gave him little support, and occupied the whole plain adjacent to Adana and the Gulf of Issus. The baron and his family and companions fled into the Taurus mountains. All the Armenian's newly conquered cities and their home centers, Anazarbus and even Vahka, fell to the Emperor. Leo, reduced to the last extremity, had to surrender to the victor with his family, and he was hauled to Constantinople, where he died (1141). The Greeks killed his eldest son, Rupen, after having first blinded him.



Coin of Manuel I Comnenus



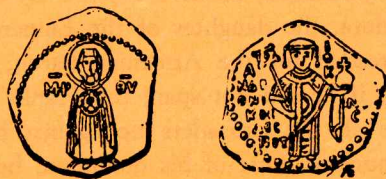
Coin of Rokn-ed-Din Masaoud
Sultan of Iconium



Coin of Eimad-ed-Din Zangui

and there set fire to the villages and monasteries. . . He kept quiet, refrained from attacking the city, and contented himself with cutting off the waters of the river, pillaging gardens, making desultory raids and gathering and safely storing the booty he took. The city's inhabitants, however, who were daily expecting to be attacked, became so grievously discouraged that one night they abandoned the outer rampart. Their leaders and priests succeeded in reviving their courage. . . The infidels received no (divine) command to invest and attack the city, and on the Friday, the day of our Lord's passion, Kescoun was delivered. The enemy burned Garmirvank (the Red Monastery), the chapel and the monks' cells, broke the wooden and stone crosses, and took the iron and brass crosses. He demolished the altars. . . and scattered the remains. He carried off the door with its wonderful spiral carvings, along with other objects, and carted them away to his own country to show them to his concubines and the populace. . . Mohammed beat a sudden retreat when he learned that the Roman Emperor (John Comnenus) was hastening to the relief of besieged Kescoun and to the assistance of our count Baldwin who had implored him on his knees. The Emperor was already nearing Antioch, laying waste the Moslem land. After deposing our prince Leo, he seized Leo's cities and fortresses, and taking him prisoner, carried him off to the Greek lands beyond the sea and the extremity of Asia ».

Whatever the circumstances of Thoros' return to Cilicia, he found his country garrisoned by the Byzantines and his fellow-countrymen subjugated.



Coin of Andronicus I Comnenus

The first city he recaptured was said to be Amuda, followed by Anazarbus, Adana, Sis, Arewdzpert, Parzerpert. Meanwhile, however, on December 23rd, 1144, Edessa was taken by Eimad-ed-Din Zangui, and the princes of Antioch, fully occupied on their eastern borders, could give no assistance to the young Armenian baron. Only his two brothers, Stepanè and Mleh, who before the fall of Edessa had taken refuge with their cousin Joscelin II, came to his side to share his perils and fortune. The new uprising in Cilicia, meanwhile, caused Emperor Manuel some concern and he sent 12,000 men from Constantinople under his cousin Andronicus Comnenus (1152). This army was defeated by Thoros before the walls of Mamestia which he was besieging. Humiliated by this defeat and not daring to take further risks, Emperor Manuel resorted to trickery, and by wily procedure induced the Seljuk Sultan of Iconium, Masaoud I (1116-1156), to attack the Armenians in Cilicia.

In those days, and among these Eastern peoples, compositions of this kind were quite customary. The Seljuks were the enemies of the Greeks, and were planted in the very center of the Empire; they were a threat to the capital itself; they were Moslem and consequently sworn enemies of all Christians, and there was no doubt that the Turks would keep Cilicia if they succeeded in conquering it. Yet none of these considerations, which we today would consider paramount, had any influence with the Greeks. Manuel's only desire was to avenge the disgrace just inflicted on him, and the Moslem Sultan who could but rejoice over the dissensions between the various Christians, invaded Cilicia. Thoros was forced to recognize his suzerainty.



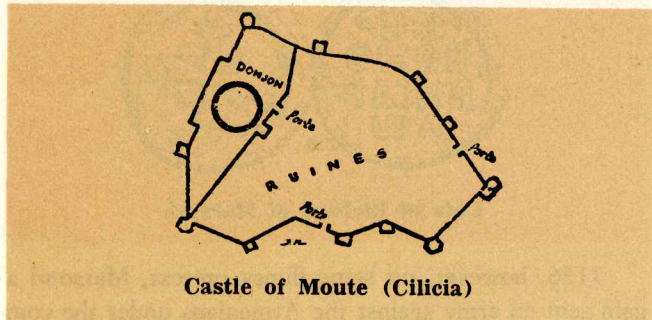
Coin of Richard of Marasch

1156, however, on some flimsy pretext, Masaoud again sent an army against the Armenians under the command of one of his chiefs named Iakoub. This general was defeated by the Crusaders and by Thoros' own army. Taken by surprise in the gorges between the Amanus chain and the sea, the Moslem suffered a bloody reverse. The remnants of this expedition withdrew, but proceeded to ravage the districts of Kharput and Marasch. Then resuming the offensive, they laid siege to the castle of Till of Hamdoun, near Sis, at which point the plague broke out in the Turkish ranks and the Armenians were easily victorious over them. In the meantime, Masaoud died, and his son Aseddin Kilidj-Arslan II (1156-1193) made peace with Thoros, who remained in possession of Cilicia and Isauria.

But a new storm was yet about to break over this war-ravaged country. Raynald of Chatillon, who had become the guardian of the young prince Bohemond III, by reason of his marriage with Constance, the widow of Raymond of Poitiers, — according to Michael the Syrian — attacked Thoros on the ground that the Armenian baron had refused to restore to the Templars the castle of Gastim, formerly taken from the knights by the Greeks and recently captured by Thoros. This castle which commanded the gorges of the Portella, between the Amanus chain and the sea, was of the greatest strategic value both for the Armenians and the princes of Antioch. The Byzantines, moreover, frustrated in their attempts to have New Armenia crushed by the Seljuks, were secretly inciting the Crusaders against Thoros.

Matthew's chronicle continues: « Raynald (of Chatillon) had a dispute with Baron Thoros concerning a fortress (Gastim) which the Greeks had taken from the brethren (the Templars) and had been seized in turn by Thoros from the Greeks. Raynald contended: "The brethren are fighting for our common Christian cause; restore unto them that which is theirs". A battle took place near Iskenderun (Alexandretta), and many perished on both sides. Raynald had to return home feeling disgraced. Later on Thoros himself gave up to the brethren the fortresses on the borders of Antioch, and they promised under oath that they would help the Armenians whenever they needed succor. »

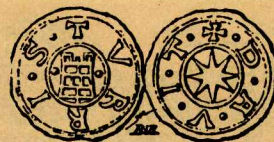
Raynald of Antioch, who had only attacked the Armenians at Byzantium's instigation, felt warranted in asking Emperor Manuel to reimburse him for the expenses of this conflict, but, without repudiating the debt, the Basileus answered the Prince in dilatory language



Castle of Moute (Cilicia)

that exasperated him. He therefore determined to take payment himself by some means, and he bethought himself of the island of Cyprus.

The harbors of Cyprus commanded the coasts of Syria and southern Asia Minor, and the island was consequently a most vital position for the Crusaders. Though conquered A.D. 649 by the Arabs, it had since been regained by the Byzantines. Ousting the Greeks from there would secure both the princes of Antioch and the barons of Cilicia against any further Byzantine offensive on Latin shores, and would give them besides a first-class naval base out of reach of the infidels. The Cyprus expedition should not, therefore, be ascribed to mere



Coin of Amaury I

bad temper on Prince Raynald's part, as most chroniclers of the time picture it, but to a decision that had been long contemplated by the Franks, who were only awaiting a favorable opportunity to undertake the enterprise. On their part the Armenians would not have been at all displeased to be rid of a Greek stronghold facing the shore they so much coveted, and which they had several times already conquered, lost, and reconquered. Circumstances did not allow, however, of the conquest of the island just then, and it was possible only to carry out a quick raid on it, lay it waste, and loot its treasures.

In 1155-1156 the Crusaders' fleet landed on the Cyprus coast a veritable army of Latins and Armenians, and the Greeks who maintained only small numbers of troops on the island were immediately hustled out of their positions. The entire island was overrun by the invaders who behaved with the most frightful cruelty. All possessions were seized by the victors, many of the inhabitants were slaughtered, the Greek women and maidens were the prey of the soldiers, and priests and bishops were massacred. All persons of means were transferred to the continent and only released upon payment of enormous ransom. In short, the Crusaders and Armenians acted towards these Christians exactly as infidels would have done in the circumstance, but it must be remembered that both the Franks and the Armenians had long been weary of Byzantium's treacheries, and their hatred of the Greeks was just as fierce, if not more so, than that of the Moslems.

The war, moreover, was not confined to the island. In 1157, Raynald of Antioch, Count Thierry of Flanders, and Thoros laid siege to Cheizar (Caesarea) on the Orontes. Perfect understanding then reigned between the Armenians and the Franks.

Manuel Comnenus could not reconcile himself to the ravaging of Cyprus and got ready to avenge himself on the Crusaders and Thoros. He himself with 50,000 men invaded Cilicia in 1158, and Anazarbus, Tarsus, and the castle of Lamos fell to the Byzantines. Finding it impossible to defend his realm, Thoros withdrew into the Taurus mountains behind the walls of the castle of Dadjehikhar. Raynald of Antioch and Baldwin III of Jerusalem, Manuel's nephew by his marriage with Theodora, the daughter of the Emperor's brother Isaac, interceded for the Armenian baron, and Manuel feeling that if he did not spare the Franks' protégé he might have all the Crusaders up against him, ratified Thoros' tenure of most of his dominion, but on condition that he recognize him as his suzerain. This feudal tie seems to have been nominal rather than actual al-

though the new Palatine, of the PanSebastos (The Most August), apparently remained a dutiful liegeman, officially.

The fact that Thoros refrained from any further open hostilities against the Greeks did not prevent his brother Stepanë, however, who cared nothing for the Baron's promises, from heading bands of Armenians that laid waste Imperial territory and waged war in the districts of Marasch and Cocus. This prince succumbed to stratagem, for he was invited to a banquet by Andronicus, the governor of Tarsus, and there slain. Thereupon Thoros to avenge his brother ordered the massacre of all Greeks within his borders. War would have broken out afresh between the Armenians and the Byzantines had not Amaury I, king of Jerusalem, intervened. Disheartened by the country's misfortunes, the Armenian baron abdicated.

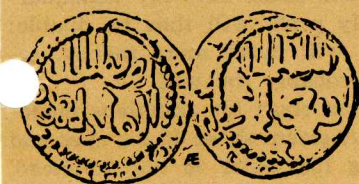
In 1169 « Thoros, prince of Cilicia, died, shortly after becoming a monk. He left an infant son whom he named his successor and whose guardianship he had entrusted to Thomas, the son of his maternal aunt. Mleh, wroth at being passed over from his brother's succession, repaired to Nur-ed-Din, and with a body of Turks the latter gave him he invaded Cilicia. He carried away 16,000 people, boys and girls, men and women, priests, monks, and bishops, all taken to Aleppo, where he sold them to the slave-merchants and distributed the money to the Turkish soldiers. . . He put out the eyes, and cut off hands and feet, of bishops and many notables, besides flaying them, and their bodies were left a prey for wild beast. »

Mleh had already entered the Order of the Knights Templars, but later, after attempting the life of his brother Thoros, he had to flee. He took refuge at the court of the Atabeg of Aleppo, having forsworn his faith. As



King of Jerusalem
Coin of Nur-ed-Din Mahmud

a Moslem he obtained Nur-ed-Din's assistance and overran the greater part of Cilicia. Faced with such disaster, Rupen's guardian offered the usurper a share of his nephew's barony. Mleh accepted this offer under oath, and then proceeded to grasp the whole power. Thomas the Regent fled to Antioch and placed Rupen in the care of the Patriarch Nerses at Roncla, but soon afterwards the young prince was murdered.



Coin of El Salih-Ismail,
Zenguid, Atabeg of
Aleppo (1173-1181)

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IN RETURN FOR

by YEROOKHAN

Hampik was a lively, slightly crazy chap of about eighteen. He had practically grown up in the streets. He was the very embodiment of the future vagabond who would either join the gang of the irregular fire-fighters or sell fish on the streets with a roaring voice. His mother, who was the washerwoman for the porters of the near-by wharf, had nourished him in the washrooms with her, until he was two years old. She would hand him a morsel of bread and he would gnaw it from morn till evening, whimpering and crying. Then, owing to his mother's sudden death from poisonous smoke issuing from some half-burned charcoal, and also because of the death of his father who had been a fisherman until he was drowned at sea, Hampik became a waif, an orphan, and from his sixth year on, he began to roam in the streets, hardly finding a morsel of bread during the day, and a place on which to crouch at night. This miserable life had not killed or deteriorated him; on the contrary, it had given him a sinewy body and an unflinching soul. Having no idea about happiness and ease, his actual life seemed to him the very best in the world. He roamed in the streets from morning till evening, rendering his occasional services: taking water to the houses, loads from here and there and other insignificant jobs. The money he scraped in this way, he used partly for his daily living and the rest he kept, having in prospect the undertaking of a more decent and lucrative job. On account of his daring and smartness, he had won the sympathy of everybody in the quarter. Many a time, when he had no job at hand, he would hasten to the wharf and take the parcels from the hands of the passengers, and carry them to their homes.

The centre of his dealings was a rather well-to-do quarter. In his leisure, like the accomplished scoundrel that he was, he would amuse the neighbours, especially the little school-girls, with the art of imitating birds' or cats' voices. The innocent school folk would gather around him and plead «Come on,

Hampik, imitate for us the cat's squealing!»

The would this scamp begin a real fight of cats which always ended with the tom-mat's, that is, his own escape. The children's great enthusiasm about his doings would please the roguish boy. Having no notion whatsoever about the love of parents, or sister, or any other person close to him, driven from the secret force which lives in the depths of the heart of every person and gushes forth at the proper occasion, Hampik, uncsciously felt a sympathy, a love towards those little and pure creatures, and it had already become an irresistible need for him to hear their loving speech and to content their childish desires.

One day, towards evening, he had gone to the wharf, according to his habit, to carry loads. As soon as the ship approached, a group of bare-foot boys who waited there with haggard looks, darted forth on the passengers, like famished wolves, filching from each other the parcels. On those occasions Hampik had a matchless dexterity in snatching the parcel from the hands of the customer's home. So, that evening, when the ship was about to touch the wharf, the porters were already anxiously waiting.

A young lady was seen among the ship's passengers. She had two big parcels which she handed to Hampik. He took them, looked at the young lady and asked her where he should carry them. The young lady, with a harmonious and vibrating voice in which there was a masterful tone, said: »Follow me».

He placed the parcels under his armpits and followed her, somewhat disturbed by her blooming appearance and the fragrance wafted from her whole person. Until that very moment he had never experienced such a feeling. The rustle of her dress, the proud gait of her tiny feet on the road, the dexterous waving of her umbrella bordered with saffron-coloured embroidery, and particularly the snow-white flesh of her nape which showed off from the triangular opening of her collar, altogether enraptured that street vagabond. So great was his excitement, he wished

the road to be infinitely long in order to enjoy this bliss eternally. Dreams until that instant unknown to him rushed topsyturvy into his mind, caressing his secret feelings, and he followed this elfish being ardently. He seemed to walk automatically in an atmosphere filled with transporting fragrance, fully inhaling the maddening current which inflamed his eager nostrils.

The young lady stopped suddenly in front of a door, and turning to Hampik, «Boy», she said, without even looking at his face, «leave the parcels here and go your way.» And she handed him one piastre. He did not even care to look at the money. He stopped like one bitterly disappointed for a moment, and then, coming to his senses, he went off slowly, murmuring between his teeth, «God! I had never seen such a beauty before, what a wonderful neck she had!»

That evening, for the first time, he did not go to his habitual street to gather around him the small girls who were greatly astonished at the unusual absence and said to each other: «Where is Hampik, he did not appear to-night. He had promised us to bark like a dog.» And the little girls were very sad that evening.

That night he went to bed without eating anything, in order to sink in his dreamworld. So it happens often: a certain sentiment which exists in man but does not make its presence very clear, arises all of a sudden with irascible tremors and shakes one's whole being. Until that day he had never experienced the necessity of sex with that impetus. And the temptation of that evening, had influenced him very deeply. Stretched on his couch, he grumbled: «God! what a wonderful neck she had!»

And when he got up in the morning, his face was gleaming. A mysterious smile played on his lips. He said to himself: «I will leave this street and make hers my headquarters. My profit will thus be double: first, I will make more money, second, probably she will. —

He cut short his ambitious monologue. A gleam shone in his eyes and striking his palm to his forehead,