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THE

FALSE CHEVALIER

OR

The Lifeguard of Marie Antoinette

BY

W. D. LIGHTHALL

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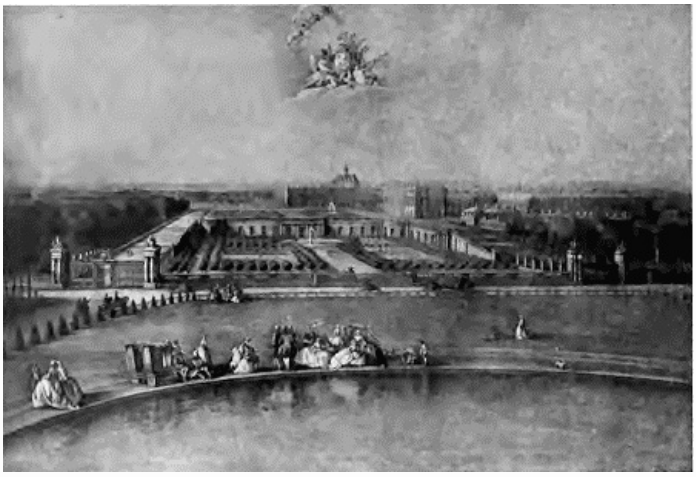

THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES.
After the contemporary acquarelle by Portail.

F. E. GRAFTON & SONS

MONTREAL

1898

To
CYBEL, MY WIFE,
THE SWEET COMPANION AND CRITIC
OF MY LABOURS ON
THIS BOOK

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PREFATORY NOTE

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This story is founded on a packet of worm-eaten letters and documents found in an old French-Canadian house on the banks of the St. Lawrence. The romance they rudely outline, its intrigues, its brilliancy of surroundings, its intensity of feelings, when given the necessary touches of history and imagination, so fascinated the writer that the result was the present book. A packet of documents of course is not a novel, and the reader may be able to guess what is mine and what is likely to have been the scanty limit of the original hint.

The student of history will recognise my debt to many authorities; among whom the chief are Paul Lacroix and Taine. I wish it distinctly understood that the person attacked in the documents in question is not the hero of this narrative.

W. D. L.

THE FALSE CHEVALIER

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CHAPTER I

The son of the merchant Lecour was a handsome youth, and there was great joy in the family at his coming home to St. Elphège. For he was going to France on the morrow; it was with that object that his father had sent to town for him—the little walled town of Montreal.

It was evening, early in May, of the year 1786. According to an old custom of the French-Canadians, the merchant, surrounded by his family, was bestowing upon his son the paternal blessing. It was a touching sight—the patriarchal ceremony of benediction.

The father was a fine type of the peasant. His features might, in the strong chiaroscuro of the candle-light, have stood as model for some church fresco of a St. Peter. His dress was of grey country homespun, cut in a long coat, and girded by a many-coloured arrow-pattern sash, and on his feet he wore a pair of well-worn beef-skin mocassins.

The son was some twenty years of age, and his mien and dress told of the better social advantages of the town. Indeed, his costume, though somewhat worn, had marks of good fashion.

His younger sister (for he had two, of whom one was absent), and his mother, a lively, black-eyed woman, who dressed and bore herself ambitiously for her station, gazed on him in fond pride as he knelt.

"My son," the merchant said reverently, his hands outstretched over his boy, "the Almighty keep and guard thee; may the blessing of thy father and thy mother follow thee wherever thou goest."

"Amen," the son responded.

He rose and stood before his parent with bent head.

The old man exhorted him gravely on the dangers before him—on the ruffians and lures of Paris, and the excitements of youth. He warned him to attend to his religious duties, and to do credit to his family and their condition in life by respectful and irreproachable conduct. "Never forget," he concluded, in words which the young man remembered in after years, "that the Eternal Justice follows us everywhere, and calls us to exact account, either on earth or in the after life, for all our acts."

But here Lecour's solemn tone ceased, and he continued—"Now, Germain, I must explain to you more closely the business on which I have sent for you so suddenly. The North-West Company, who, as you know, command the fur-trade of Canada, have word that a new fashion just introduced into Paris has doubled the demand for beaver and tripled the price. They are hurrying over all their skins by their ship which sails in ten days to London from Quebec. I have space on a vessel which goes direct to Dieppe the day after to-morrow, and can therefore forestall them by about two weeks. I have gathered my winter stock into the boats you will see at our landing; and your mother, who has always been so eager to send you to France, has persuaded me to have you as my supercargo. Go, my boy; it is a great opportunity to see the world."

"Yes, my Germain, at last," wife Lecour exclaimed joyfully, throwing her arms around his neck, "at last you will set eyes on Versailles, and my dreams about you will come true!"

The youth himself was in a daze of smiles and tears.

The chamber in which they were was the living-room of the house. Its low ceiling of heavy beams, its spotlessly sanded floor, carpeted with striped *catalogne*, its pine table, and home-made chairs of elm, were common sights in the country. But a tall, brass-faced London clock in one corner, a cupboard fuller than usual of blue-pattern stone-ware in another, a large copper-plate of the "Descent from the Cross," and an ebony and ivory crucifix on the walls, were indications of more than average prosperity.

So thin was population throughout Canada in those days that to leave the banks of the St. Lawrence almost anywhere was to leave human habitation. The hamlet of St. Elphège was part of the half-wild parish of Répentigny. The cause of its existence was its position some miles up the Assumption, as a gateway of many smaller rivers

tributary to the latter, which itself was tributary to the River of Jesus; and that in turn, less than a mile further on, to the vast St Lawrence. It flourished on the trade of wandering tribes from up the Achigan, the Lac-Ouareau, the St Esprit, and the Rouge, and on the sale of supplies to rude settlers above and the farmers below. It flourished by the energy of one man—this man, its founder, the Merchant Lecour. He had started life with small prospects; his ideas were of the simplest, and he was at first even a complete stranger to writing and figures. In his youth a common soldier in the levies of the Marquis de Montcalm on the campaigns towards lake Champlain, he had acquired favour with his colonel by his steadiness, had been given charge of a canteen, and in dispensing brandy to his comrades had found it possible to sell a few small articles. The defence of New France against the British collapsed on the investiture of Montreal by Sir Jeffrey Amherst in 1760. The French army surrendered, and part of it was shipped back to the motherland. Lecour remained, and shouldering a pedlar's pack, plodded about the country selling red handkerchiefs, sashes, and jack-knives to the peasantry. Being attracted by the convenience of the portage for dealings with the Indians of the north, he selected a spot in the forest and built a little log dwelling. Success followed from the first. Beaver-skins rose into fabulous demand in Europe for cocked hats, and made the fortunes of all who supplied them. The streams behind Lecour's post were teeming with beaver-dams. He easily kept his monopoly of the trade, and several times a year would send a fleet of boats down to Quebec, which returned with goods imported from Europe. Finally he extended his dealings throughout the Province into varied branches of business, and "the Merchant of St. Elphège" became a household name with the French-Canadians. The home of the Lecours—half dwelling, half vaulted warehouse—was one of four capacious provincial stone cottage buildings, standing about a quadrangular yard, each bearing high up on its peak a date and brief inscription, one of which read "À Dieu la Gloire!"—"To God the Glory."

Just at the end of the family scene previously described, a noise was heard without, the latch was lifted, and a troop of Lecour's neighbours and dependants pushed in, an old fiddler at their head, who, clattering forward in *sabots*, removed his blue *tuque* from his head, and politely bowed to Lecour.

"Father," he said, "these young people ask your permission to give a dance in honour of Monsieur Germain."

The Lecours appreciated the honour; the room was cleared, music struck up, and festivity was soon in progress. What a display of neat ankles and deft feet in mocassins! What a clattering of *sabots* and shuffling of "beefs"! The perspiration rolled off the brow of the musician, and young Lecour was whirling round like a madcap with the daughter of the ferryman of Répentigny, when the latch was again lifted, and the door silently opened.

Every woman set up a shriek. The threshold was crowded with Indians in warpaint!

All the settlers knew that paint and its dangers.

The dancers drew back to one side of the room, and some opened the door of the warehouse adjoining and took refuge in its vaulted shadows. But Lecour himself, the former soldier, was no man to tremble. "Come in," he said, without betraying a trace of any feeling.

Seven chiefs stalked grimly across the floor in single file, carrying their tomahawks and knives in their hands, their great silver treaty medals hanging from their necks, and their brightly dyed eagle feathers quivering above their heads, and six sat down opposite Lecour on the floor. Their leader, Atotarho, Grand Chief of Oka, stood erect and silent, an expression of warlike fierceness on his face.

"Atotarho!" exclaimed the merchant.

"It is I," the Grand Chief answered. "Where is the young man?"

"Here," replied Germain, stepping forward with a sangfroid which pleased his father. He faced the powerful Indian.

Atotarho shook his tomahawk towards the ceiling, uttered a piercing war-whoop, and commenced to execute the war-dance, chanting this song in his native Six-Nation tongue—

"Our forefathers made the rule and said: 'Here they are to kindle a fire; here at the edge of the woods.'"

One of the chiefs drummed on a small tom-tom. The chant continued—

"Show me the man!

"Hail, my grandsires; now hearken while your grand-children cry unto you, you who established the Great League. Come back, ye warriors, and help us.

"Come back, ye warriors, and sit about our Council. Lend us your magic tomahawks. Lend us your arrows of flint. Lend us your knives of jade. I am the Great Chief, but ye are greater chiefs than I.

"Of old time the nations wandered and warred.

"Ye were wonderful who established the Great Peace.

"Assuredly six generations before the pale-faces appeared, ye smoked the redstone pipe together, giving white wampum to show that war would cease.

"Thenceforth ye bound the nations with a Silver Chain; ye built the Long House; ye established the Great League.

"First Hiawatha of the Onondaga nation proposed it; then Dekanawidah of the Mohawks joined him; then Atotarho, my mighty ancestor.

"First the Mohawks; then their younger brothers, the Oneidas, joined them; then the Cayugas; then the Onondagas, then the Senecas; and then the Tuscaroras were added. Victorious were the SIX NATIONS!"

With a piercing cry of triumph the chiefs sprang up and brandished their tomahawks.

"Then we took the sons of the Wyandots, the Eries, the Algonquins. Wherever we found the son of a brave man we adopted him. Wherever we found a brave man we made him a chief.

"Here is the son of a brave man, our friend. Let us adopt him. Be ye his grandsires, oh ye chiefs of old!

"He is a brave man; let us make him a chief. Our forefathers said: 'Thither shall he be led by the hand, and shall be placed on the principal seat.'

"Smoke the peace-pipe with us, chiefs of old, Hiawatha, Dekanawidah, Atotarho, us who bear your names, to-day, being descended of your blood through the line of the mother."

"Brighten the Silver Chain, extend the Long House, smoke the magic pipe, sharpen his tomahawk, for he is a son of your League, and shall sit with you in the Council for ever, bearing the name of Arahseh, 'Our Cousin,' and the totem of the Wolf.

"Smoke the peace-pipe, Arahseh, 'Our Cousin.'"

The tom-tom beat furiously and the six chiefs leaping up and circling round Germain, struck the air with their tomahawks and cried together—

"Continue to listen
Ye who are braves;
Ye who established the Great League,
Continue to listen."

They gave the peace-pipe to Germain, and again seating themselves in semicircle, gravely passed it from lip to lip.

Gradually the settlers during these rites began to learn by those who understood Iroquois, the friendly nature of the fierce-looking actions of the savages and gazed with delight while the merchant's son was made a chief.

Thus out of a semi-savage corner of the world Germain Lecour was launched on his voyage to Europe, which commenced at the head of the boats of his father next

morning when the dawn first carmined the sky through the forests.

CHAPTER II

GERMAIN IN FRANCE

Along the highway through the ancient Forest of Fontainebleau, the coach of the Chevalier de Bailleul, carven and gilt in elegant forms of the reign of Louis XVI., and driven with the spirit that belonged to the service of a grand seigneur, sped forward.

Within, the frank old soldier sat, fresh from the royal hunt at the Palace; and on his breast coruscated the crimson heart and white rays of the Great Star of St. Louis, the reward of distinguished service.

Suddenly the horses wheeled round and stopped to drink at a small stream, which gushed into a natural basin by the roadside. A mounted young man was about to water his animal at the basin, but noticing the equipage stopping, he backed out and gave up his place, at the same time raising his hat.

The Chevalier never ignored a politeness. Laying his hand on the window frame he saluted the rider, and it was in this glance that his eye caught sight of the sword-strap of the rapier at the rider's side. For—strangely out of place in that longitude—this was a piece of snow-white fawn-skin; embroidered in fantastic colours, woven with porcupine quills; and adorned with a clan totem, known only in the region of the River St. Lawrence.

He looked up promptly to the bearer's face. So bright was the expression of the youth, so fine was his make, so lissome his seat on his chafing horse, that the old man thought he had never seen a picture more martial or handsome. A portrait of the rider would have represented a countenance full of intelligence, a manly bearing, dark eyes, hair jet black, and the complexion clear. He wore a dark red coat and a black hat bordered with silver.

De Bailleul spoke.

"May I ask," said he, with the charming manners of the courtier, "Monsieur's name and country, so that I may link them with the service just done me?"

"The trifle merits no notice, sir," the youth answered respectfully. "My name is Germain Lecour, of Répentigny, in Canada."

"Canada!" exclaimed the Chevalier warmly. "This is good fortune, indeed. It was my lot to have once done service for the king in that country, since which time every Canadian is my brother. And you live in Répentigny? That is near Montreal?"

"Eight leagues below, on the River of L'Assomption, Monsieur."

"Nearly thirty years ago I left your land. To hear fresh news of it would give me the greatest satisfaction of my life. Are you at one of the inns here at Fontainebleau? Yes? Let me offer you the shelter of my house, Eaux Tranquilles, which is less that a league forward. My name is the Chevalier de Bailleul, sir. If you permit it I shall send immediately for your luggage."

The horseman, blushing, protested that the honour was too great.

"The honour and favour are to me," replied the Chevalier.

Lecour gave in with visible joy and named his inn. The two lifted their hats and parted with the profoundest bows. The Chevalier, as his carriage once more sped forward, found himself no less pleased than the other. The embroidered sword-strap and overshadowing trees conjure up for him an hour of the past where he, a young lieutenant, is leading a little column of white-coats through a forest defile in America. The Indian scouts suddenly come gliding in, the fire of an enemy is heard, little spots of smoke burst on the mountain side and dissolve again. Shrill yells resound on every hand, brown arms brandish flashes of brightness. The young commander rises to the

emergency. His white-coats are rapidly placed in position behind trees, and a battle is proceeding.

CHAPTER III

THE INNKEEPER'S LESSON

The chief inn of Fontainebleau town was a rambling galleried quadrangle of semi-deserted buildings situated on the Rue Basse, and bearing the sign of "The Holy Ghost."

This town, in the heart of the woods, had no other sources of livelihood than a vegetable market for the Palace, the small wants of the wooden-shoed foresters and of the workmen employed by the Master of Woods and Waters in planting new trees, and those of the crowd of strangers who flocked to the place during five or six weeks in the autumn of each year, when the king and Court arrived for the pleasures of the hunt.

The host of the inn—formerly an assistant butler in Madame du Barry's hotel at Versailles, was a sharp, sour-natured old fellow, truculent and avaricious. The spine of this man was a sort of social barometer; by its exact degree of curvature or stiffness in the presence of a guest the stable-boys and housemaids knew whether his rank was great or small, and whether, to please their cantankerous master, they were to fly or walk at his beck, or in the case of a mere bourgeois, to drink his wine on the way to his room.

Germain, on first arriving a few days previously, found himself in an atmosphere of Oriental abjectness; for when the Rouen diligence drove through the inn gateway, and mine host at his pot-room window remarked his smart belongings, his landlord soul settled him as a person of quality. But when the innkeeper had thought it out for an hour over his wine, his attitude became one of doubt.

"No valet, no people," he muttered, "this fish then is no noble, and yet, by his mien, no bourgeois. Luggage scanty, dress fine. What is he? Gambler of Paris? Swiss? Italian? No, he speaks French, but without the Court accent. By that he is none of *our* people—that is one point fixed. A prodigal son, then? Parbleu, I must make him pay in advance."

"Sir," said the landlord, knocking at the door of Germain's room, and then stepping in rather freely, "I regret to tell you that it is the rule in Fontainebleau for travellers to pay in advance."

"How much?" replied Germain, pulling out a purse full of pistoles.

The rascal was taken aback.

"I was about to say," said he, retreating, "that though such is the rule, I am making of your honour an exception."

And he disappeared to further correct his speculations upon the visitor. "Some little spendthrift of the provinces, I wager," was his next conclusion. He instructed the senior stable-boy to go in and light three candles, and chalked up the guest for nine. He also began to concoct his bill. The household thenceforth took small liberties with Lecour's orders.

Next day the landlord, when Monsieur was about to mount the handsomest horse which could be hired in the town, again quitted his post of observation at the pot-room window and advanced. He knew the animal and its saddlery; his suave smile reappeared, and his back bent a little as he noticed with the eye of an expert Germain's ease in his seat.

"Monsieur desires to see the Court, no doubt? He knows, perhaps, that it does not arrive till Thursday?"

"Indeed. Tell me about the doings of the Court. I have never heard about it."

A triumphant, hard expression came over Boniface's visage. He looked up at his guest, straightened himself, turned his back, and went into the house.

"What," he muttered, "I, the entertainer of counts of twenty quarterings and the neighbour of a king—am I to have a plebeian in my house so peasant that he ignores the topic of *all* society? He shall feel that he does not impose on Fontainebleau."

Germain's apartment, situated in front of the house, consisted of two rooms fitted up with some elegance, and both looking out upon the market-place and church. He was now told that these quarters were engaged by "persons of quality to whom Monsieur would doubtless give place in the usual manner." He submitted without protest, and accepted uncomplainingly the inferior chamber assigned to him on the courtyard in the rear.

The little town shortly began to fill with liveliness and tradesmen. A fine carriage drove up before the inn, its horses ridden by postillions, and followed by two mounted grooms. Three young noblemen, brothers, of an exceedingly handsome type, alighted. The keeper of the "Holy Ghost" and his two rows of servants grovelled before them in a body and conducted them to the best suites within, including that taken from Germain.

It was next morning that the latter met de Bailleul.

His host now placed the final insult upon him. At dinner he motioned him roughly to sit at the table of the rustics.

Germain refused; he was paying for better.

The landlord angrily resisted. The Canadian, now aroused, for he saw at last the intention to slight him, stopped, laid his hand significantly on the hilt of his sword, and looked at the man. That motion in those days had but one meaning. He was let alone.

Within an hour the coach of the Chevalier drove in for him and his baggage. The sycophant recognised the arms on the panel and collapsed. Yet that hour's reflection on the innkeeper's conduct woke Lecour to the power of rank in old Europe.

CHAPTER IV

THE CASTLE OF QUIET WATERS

Having added to his toilet the special elegance of powdering his hair, arrayed himself in his finest flowered waistcoat, and critically disposed his laces, Germain took seat in de Bailleul's coach and was driven away.

As the horses flew along another new feeling came to him. The distinction of a familiar visit with a real "great lord" elated him as *débutantes* are elated by their first ball. He was no snob, only a very natural young man entering life. He dreamt that he was transferred from the ignoble class to the noble, and in the fancy felt himself lifted to some inconceivable level above the people who passed by. Half a dozen peasants, bronzed and sweaty and trudging in a group, meeting him, took off their hats. One of them said in his hearing: "Baptiste, there is one of the white-wigs."

The carriage rolled through the forest, then out into the open country, and shortly after turned under a stately gate of gilded ironwork, and the grounds of Eaux Tranquilles were entered. The château was a mansion of smooth, light sandstone, having four towers at the corners. A turreted side-wing, bridging over water, united it with a more ancient castle which stood, walled in white and capped in black, in the midst of a small lake. In front were gardens; in rear a terrace, and below it a lawn bordered on one side by the lake, on the opposite shore of which a park of poplars, birches, and elms extended, producing, by shading the water, a serenity which doubtless had given the estate its name.

The last light of afternoon, that most beautiful of all lights, fell upon the towers, and long shadows swept across the gardens.

Lecour thought it glorious.

In a few moments he and his host were seated at tea. The lofty window-doors stood open to let in the June zephyrs. With the two wigged and liveried servants attending, the scene to Lecour seemed the acting of a beautiful charade, the introduction to an unreal existence.

De Bailleul noted the delicacy of his hand and the tastefulness of his violet-tinted coat.

"Let us talk of Canada," said he. "I have no friends yet to offer you, though you shall have some young dogs like yourself very soon. What do you like?—riding, hunting, a quiet minuet on the terrace, eh? Ah me, the coquettes of Quebec! I well remember them."

Germain expressed gratitude for the amusements offered.

"I will tell you why I love Canada," continued the Chevalier. "It was there that I passed my military youth. Have you ever eaten Indian bean-cake?"

"I have tasted it."

"And that was enough, eh? But I have lived on it for eight weeks in an Iroquois village. Yes, eight weeks bean-cake was the most horrible of my experiences, except when I saw the hand of an unfortunate Potawatomie turn up in an Abenaki broth-pot. Do you remember General Montcalm?"

"I was not born in his time."

"I saw him die, and heard him refuse to let the women of Quebec weep for him. Montcalm, sir, was the last hero of France. They glorify Lafayette, but between ourselves Lafayette is more the drum-major than the general."

"The lost children of France do not forget the defender of Quebec."

"But who now passes from there to here? The *noblesse* of the colony sank embracing each other on the luckless ship *Auguste* in which they fled to France. Alas, my friends so brave and so lovely! Ah, Varennes and La Vérandrye, and you my poor Lady de Mezière! Senneville also, my dearest friend," he murmured, speaking to the spirits. "La Corne alone escaped. Pardon me, Monsieur. Who is now Seigneur of Berthier?"

"Captain Cuthbert."

"In place of the Courthillaux! And of Répentigny?"

"General Christie."

"In place of Le Gardeurs! And of Longueuil?"

"Captain Grant."

"In the stead of the Le Moynes!"

"He married one of them and calls himself Baron de Longueuil."

"An Englishman Baron of Longueuil! Shades of Le Moyne d'Iberville! And what of La Corne, who used to put on warpaint and dance around the council fires waving a tomahawk against the English?"

"Good old Colonel La Corne! He is now a loyal subject of the king of Great Britain, and very distinguished in the late American war."

"My God, what impossibilities within thirty years!"

Lecour, finding that the Chevalier was eager for a general account of all Canadian beaux and dames, did his best to respond. De Bailleul's cup ran over.

"Do you know," he exclaimed, "I have never met any people like the Canadians. When Montcalm was general, I commanded a certain detachment towards Lake Champlain. Through how many leagues of forest, over how many cedar swamps and rocky hills, across how many icy torrents did my bronzed woodmen not toil! We made beds from boughs of spruce, our walls were the forest, our roofs were the skies. Many a day we fasted the twenty-four hours. More than once we ate our mocassins. 'Twas all

for France. Ah, if our young men at Versailles had that to do, they would have to be different persons. I have no respect for these warriors of hair-powder and lace, who wear stays and learn to march from the dancing-master. Give me a people bred in the lap of wild nature and among whom the paths to reputation are courage and intelligence! Give me——"

Lecour saw that the Canada of the good man was an idealised picture, but he admired his affection and asked permission to drink his health. They touched glasses.

"Tell me about your own people, my young friend. Who is your father?"

"A country merchant, sir."

"A well-to-do one, then, I judge."

"He has prospered so well as to be reputed rich for a colony."

"And you live at St. Elphège? In my time it was only a carrying-place for canoes, to avoid the rapid."

"My father is the founder of the little place. He is known throughout our Province as 'The Merchant of St. Elphège.'"

"An honourable title, based on an honourable record no doubt. Would that we rightly respected trade in France. That is one of the nation's weaknesses. You have a mother and brothers?"

"A mother and two sisters—one married, the other at a convent in Quebec. My brother-in-law assists my father. We are very humble people."

"Why have you come to France?"

"Because I have admired it since a child, from my mother's stories at her knee."

"She came from France, then?"

"No, sir, but she was housekeeper in the house of Governor the Marquis de Beauharnois."

When he said this the youth blushed.

"How is it your accent is so good? It is quite that of our gentry."

"I learnt it at the Little Seminary, from the priests, who are gentlemen of Paris. There also the best families send their boys, and we young men grew up together. I have lived a little in Montreal too."

"Ah, what is Montreal now like? Are the town walls still standing?"

"They surround the city, but the commander-in-chief talks of replacing them by avenues and a Champ de Mars."

"The British garrison of course occupies the Arsenal, the British flag flies from the Citadel. Where does the British Governor reside?"

"At the Château de Ramezay."

"But why not at the Château de Vaudreuil, where Governor de Vaudreuil dwelt? It was larger and its gardens finer."

"That now belongs to Monsieur de Lotbinière."

"De Lotbinière! the new Marquis! Lucky devil; but blue death, what changes!"

They rose and strayed into the gardens.

"I seem to find in you already," said the warm-hearted old Chevalier, "one whom I love. There is something frank in your eyes which raises memories of my dead son. In you I see both my offspring's and my own youth recalled to me. You are Canadian—in you I can banish the coldness, hollowness, and degeneracy of Europe. Replace my boy. Let me call you 'Germain' and 'son.'"

The bar of evening glow was fading in the west and twilight falling on the walks. A chill breeze seemed to inspire a question, which Germain began.

"But——?"

"There is some hindrance then?" exclaimed the Chevalier in a disappointed voice.

"Alas, does your honour, perhaps, forget the differences of birth?"

"Differences of birth, my Germain, are illusions; you have the reality."

"Would that I had the illusion," thought poor Lecour.

CHAPTER V

MONSIEUR DE RÉPENTIGNY

For several days he revelled in exploring Eaux Tranquilles. He became familiar with the paths of the gardens, the different statues and fountains. Sweet odours continually seemed to fill his breathing. He sat dreaming in the trellised vineries, or wandered with his host along the walks overhung by carefully trimmed shade-trees. Sometimes he would ramble in the park, which occupied about a mile of hill across the mere; sometimes he strolled curiously about in the old castle, along devious passages and from chamber to chamber, wondering at its heavily tapestried walls, its gloomy dungeons with the water lapping just beneath, its small windows painted with little coats of arms, and its walls ten feet thick.

One of his strong recommendations in the eyes of de Bailleul was that he knew a fine horse and how to ride him. The Chevalier, being lord of a large extent of country, and a very conscientious man who sympathised energetically with the broad-minded schemes of the Duke de la Rochefoucauld for bettering the peasants, they did much visiting of curés and cottagers.

"Parsangbleu," he exclaimed to Germain. "What is more simple than that every one of the people is a man like any of the rest of us."

That was then new doctrine to society.

Just when they were starting off one day together, the Chevalier's groom handed him a note.

While they cantered outward he perused it and commented.

"Our visitors arrive from the Palace this afternoon. One is my very amiable friend, the Prince de Poix, of the family of the Noailles, colonel of bodyguards to his Majesty. With him of course comes his Princess. Make yourself agreeable to her, Germain, which is very easily done. She is the key of the situation for you. In her charge will be some ladies. Don't be afraid of the crinoline, my boy. There will also be some officers of the Prince's command, the Noailles company, namely, Baron de Grancey, Viscount Aymer d'Estaing, the Count de Bellecour, the Marquis d'Amoreau, and the Chevalier de Blair. They lead a famous corps, for every private in the bodyguard is a noble, and has the rank of captain. They have come to Fontainebleau with the hunt."

The news brought Germain a shock. Since his experiences at the "Holy Ghost" he had progressively arrived at the conviction that the only parallel to the distinction of caste between the hereditary gentry and all other persons as then drawn in France was the distinction between the heavens above and the earth beneath; the distance between was considered simply immeasurable and impassable except by the transmigration of souls. We cannot understand the extent of it in our day. No aristocrat is now so blind, no plebeian so humble, as to sincerely believe the doctrine. But in that age France was steeped in it. High refinement of manners had grown to really differentiate the Court from the masses, and the members of the governing order were jealous of the privileges of their circle to a degree which has no parallel now. To be suspected of being a farmer or a merchant, no matter how cultivated or wealthy, was to be written "ignoble." The higher *noblesse*, making up in their own society, by the acquisitions of descent and leisure, a delightful sphere of all that was most fascinating in art, music, dress, and blazonry, as well as power and fame, moved

as very gods, flattered with the tenet that other classes were an inferior species actually made out of a different clay. Genealogy and heraldry formed a great part of education. The members of the privileged families all wore territorial titles as their badge. The most beggarly individual who wore the sword claimed precedence of the most substantial citizen. Whatever name was plain, to them was base.

Now Germain's name was plain, and he knew his class was held by these people as base. His Elysian gardens, thought he, were about to be snatched away.

About two o'clock in the day he saw with beating heart a courier gallop up to the staircase of the main entrance, dismount, and wait.

The Chevalier's *maître d'hôtel* hastily caused the doors to be thrown wide open, and the hall swarmed full of servants. De Bailleul, donning his Grand Cross of St. Louis, placed Germain at his side, and stood at the foot of the steps.

The Princess arrived in a sedan-chair at the head of a procession of carriages, the first of which contained her chief servants and an abbé, who was her reader; those following held her husband and the other guests.

Germain blanched when he saw the latter descend. They wore that bearing which marked their class, and the dress of each seemed to him like the petals of some rich flower. The Canadian youth looked at them, fascinated. At his age the soul watches eagerly from its tower (what is a man but the tower of a soul?); each new turn of the kaleidoscope, each new figure crossing the landscape, is bathed in the rosy glow of morning. Yet he thought of them with a sense of imprisonment and sadness.

"I have not known till now what I desire; alas! I am nothing."

The Chevalier assisted the Princess to alight, and, kissing her hand, turned and said —

"Permit me, Madame, to present to your Excellency Monsieur Lecour, of Répentigny, in Canada."

This was the crucial moment in the history of the merchant's son. As he heard his name uttered the thought rushed into his mind how baldly and badly it sounded. There was a second of suspense, soon over. The great lady, arrayed in all the mountainous spread and shimmering magnificence of the Court costume, glanced at him with formal smile and impassive face, drew back, and made the *grande révérence* of the woman of high society. He noted it breathlessly, and as he returned it, full of quick-summoned grace and courage, he heard an inner music beginning to sound, loud, triumphant, and strange. He became seized of a new-found confidence that he could sustain his part. Every small doing now appeared of importance. The five Life Guards stood near. De Bailleul introduced Germain to Baron de Grancey and went away. Grancey, not having caught the Canadian's name, amiably asked Germain to repeat it.

He stopped, blushed, and faltered—

"Germain—Lecour——"

"De?" the Baron asked, supposing as a matter of course that a territorial title was to follow.

Lecour, in his confusion taking the requested "de" to mean merely "from," proceeded to utter four fatal words—

"De Répentigny en Canada."

The Baron turned to his nearest companion, and again the formula of introduction fell on Germain's ear—

"Chevalier de Blair, I have the honour of presenting you to *Monsieur de Répentigny*."

"Monsieur, I have the honour of saluting you," said de Blair.

Before Germain could collect his ideas he had bowed to each of the other Guards under the name "de Répentigny."

It cannot be said that, once he had recovered his self-possession after his narrow escape from being announced as a plebeian, any great qualms for the present overtook him. He reasoned that the title just attributed to him was not the result of his

own seeking. Though destined to bring on all the serious consequences which form the matter of this story and to change a lighthearted young man into a desperate adventurer, it came in the aspect of a petty accident, which but facilitated his reception at the hands of the companions who crowded around him.

"Have I not seen you at Court? Were you not presented six months ago in the Oeil de Boeuf?" inquired de Blair.

"I am only a provincial," he answered. "I know nothing of the Court."

"When I first came from Dauphiny up to Versailles," laughed the Count de Bellecour, "I spoke such a *patois* they thought I was a horse."

"You come from Canada? Tell us about the Revolution in the English colonies. It is not a new affair, but we army men are always talking about it."

Germain ventured on an epigram.

"That was simple; it was the coming of age of a continent."

"A war of liberty against oppression?"

"Rather, gentlemen, a war of human nature against human nature. We had experience of the armies of both sides in our Province."

"Would I had been there with Lafayette!" another Guardsman cried.

"You, d'Estaing!" exclaimed Grancey. "You would cry if an Englishman spoiled your ruffles!"

"Sir, my second shall visit you this evening!"

"Pray, you twin imitations of Modesty-in-Person, let us have a real tragediette in steel and blood," put in d'Amoreau, the fifth Life Guard.

D'Estaing and Grancey, drawing swords, lunged at each other. D'Amoreau and the Count de Bellecour each ran behind one of them and acted as a second, the Chevalier de Blair standing umpire, when the Abbé, the Princess's reader, entered. The blades were thrust, mock respectfully, back into their scabbards, and they all bowed low to the ecclesiastic.

A short, spare man of thirty with a cadaverous face, whose sharp, lustreless black eyes, thin projecting nose, and mouth like a sardonic mere line, combined with a jesuitical downwardness of look, made one feel uneasy—such was the Abbé Jude as he appeared to Germain's brief first glance.

"Never mind, gentlemen; one less of you would not be missed," he retorted to their obeisance.

"You would like a death-mass fee, Abbé?"

The Canadian, brought up to other customs, wondered how a priest could be addressed with such contempt by good Catholics.

"Is he a monk or a curé?" he inquired, when the reader had passed on.

"He is nothing," answered d'Estaing, with clear eye and scornful lip. "Paris is devastated by fellows calling themselves abbés. They have no connection with the Church, except a hole in the top of their wigs. This fellow is Jude, the Princess's parasite."

To Germain the Guardsmen made themselves very agreeable. The manners of the Canadian attracted men who held that the highest human quality after rank was to be amiable. The Baron took him violently into his heart. He was a large, well-made fellow of a certain grand kindliness of bearing, and wore his natural hair, which was golden. The rich-laced blue silk tunic of the Bodyguard shone on his shoulders in ample spaces, and he well set off the deep red facings, the gold stripes, big sleeves, and elegant sword, the coveted uniform, loved of the loveliest and proudest of Versailles.

CHAPTER VI

EPERGNES AND WAX-LIGHTS

Dinner took place at four, with the windows darkened. At the right and left of the host respectively were the Prince and Princess de Poix. Germain presided at the foot of the table, having on his right a Canoness and on his left a young lady to be described presently. As his glances passed down the two rows of guests he thought he could never have imagined a more perfect scene of its kind. He was dazed and intoxicated.

A soft but bright radiance was shed by a host of starry wax-lights in the chandeliers above. An indescribable air of distinction marked every face. Numerous servants moved about noiselessly, and the musicians of the château, placed in a recess, played upon violins and a harpsichord. The table was a fairy sight. Flowers, silver statuettes, and candelabra, were placed at intervals down the middle. Between and around these a miniature landscape, representing winter, was extended, with little snowy-roofed temples, an ice-bound stream, bridges, columns, trees and shrubbery, all dusted with hoar frost. The company uttered exclamations of delight at the ingenuity of the idea.

There was particular pleasure in eyes of the lady who sat at Lecour's left, the Baroness de la Roche Vernay. She was one of those startlingly beautiful beings whom one meets only once in a lifetime. Less than eighteen, and fragile-looking at first glance, Nature had given her an erectness and grace and a slender, unconscious symmetry which, characterising every feature, seemed to suggest the analogy of the upward growth of a flower. The purity of innocence and truth lightened her fair brow, at the same time that enjoyment of society shone from her sparkling eyes. Her soft light hair was worn, not in the elaborate manner of the ladies about her, but in the simplest fashion and with merely a trace of powder. The most unusual and characteristic element in her appearance was a white, translucent complexion with touches of colour, and as she was also dressed in white, lightly embroidered with gold, she seemed to Lecour, in the radiant, unreal wax-light, so ethereal as to have just come from heaven. So vision-like and wonderful to him was her beauty that he gasped when she turned to him to speak.

"Your *chef* is a real Watteau, Monsieur—a marvel at design."

"He doubtless dreamt what stars were to beam over his landscape, Madame," he answered, for he had at least kept grip of his wits.

"What stars, Monsieur?"

"My lady's eyes, n'est-ce pas?" he answered.

The stars thus eulogised brimmed with smiles and searched his face.

"Monsieur," said the Canoness, who was not quite so young, but very pretty, "you should have applied that compliment to *all* of our eyes. I am in the habit of pleading for the community, as we do in my convent."

"None of these ladies, including yourself, Madame, have any need of compliments, in my humble opinion."

"You deserve a reward, sir. Our Chapter is giving some Arcadian receptions, and you shall be one of the shepherds. We have absolute idylls of white sheep in our garden, though we cannot go to the length, of course, of wearing those old costumes of the nymphs and shepherdesses. How entrancing those costumes were," she added with a careless sigh.

The Canoness was an extraordinary curiosity to him. She was *pétite* and fair. Though a *réligieuse*, she wore crinoline and large paniers, and, was elegantly furbelowed. The colours of her dress were mainly white and gold, but a long light robe of black crape was thrown over her shoulders, and the jewelled cross of an order ornamented her breast.

"Did the ancient nymphs know any better?" cried Mademoiselle de Richeval, who sat a couple of places further on. "Do you not believe that if they lived to-day they would patronise our fashions?"

"Know any better? Do you think they were unconscious that to carry a crook is

becoming to the arm? No, they were as careful of their crooks as we of our rouges. What is *your* judgment, Monsieur de Répentigny?"

"It is a Judgment of Paris you require," he exclaimed, "and I have not been there yet."

Cyrène de la Roche Vernay touched her lovely hand quickly upon the table and turned to him with a delighted little laugh.

"As for me, I shall be glad if these tiresome fine clothes are ever to be banished," she murmured, twisting her wine-glass.

"Baroness, you have been reading the wicked Rousseau and his 'Social Contract,'" de Blair, who sat next to her, bantered.

"It surely ought to cost something to be noble," pronounced the Canoness, in whose convent every candidate was required to prove sixteen quarterings of arms, and received the title of countess.

"Permit me to agree with the Church," laughed Mademoiselle de Richeval; "we women ought to be as elaborate as possible, so as to frighten away all those who are not rich enough to marry."

"I believe I could say, Miss," asserted d'Estaing, "that nevertheless you yourself have brought to Fontainebleau at least twelve short dresses and five pairs of low-heeled shoes."

"More than that—a straw hat and aprons," Cyrène added mischievously, casting a smile also at Germain.

"Hold! hold!" de Blair cried. "This is certainly the revolution they say is to come. We are returning rapidly to the State of Nature."

"Do I hear a phrase of that man Rousseau, ladies?" the Princess called over, nodding her head-dress. "When I was little he was presented to me at the Prince de Conti's, and had no breeding. Is that not true, Abbé?"

"You speak with your unvarying correctness, Madame la Princesse."

"You hear the Abbé, ladies," she said languidly, sitting back again.

D'Estaing, to change the subject, took up the name of the Prince de Conti, and turning to the Canoness and Cyrène, told a story which he had often heard of him.

"Madame de Bouillon, being with the Prince, hinted that she would like a miniature of her linnet set in a ring. The Prince offered to have it made. His offer was accepted on condition that the miniature be set plain, without jewels. Accordingly the miniature is placed in a simple rim of gold. But to cover over the painting, a large diamond, cut very thin, is set above it. Madame returned the diamond. The Prince had it ground to powder, which he used to dry the ink of the note he wrote to Madame on the subject."

"There is a Prince!" cried Mademoiselle de Richeval.

"By the way, Montgolfier has sent up a new balloon which has carried four passengers," went on the volatile d'Estaing.

"Who is this Montgolfier with his balloons?" the Princess asked languidly. "Is he what the new coiffure is named after?"

D'Estaing looked around a little significantly.

"Precisely, Madame—the coiffure Montgolfier," Germain at once replied, for he had looked into hat fashions lately.

"Please describe it to me after dinner. All the world is speaking of it."

"To the devil with coiffures!" Grancey whispered to the Canoness, and struck up a pæan of praise on the lean hound Aréthuse who led the hunt the previous day.

"Yes, but I believe that dog is possessed of the devil," asserted d'Estaing. "Did you notice her eyes flash when she sprang down the hideous glen where we nearly broke our necks? The foresters once told me about that place."

"What about it?"

"It is the glen of the Great Hunter. The courtiers of King Henry IV were hunting in that part of the forest one day, when they heard a tremendous horn, saw the stag turn, and a strange pack of dogs in full chase fly after it across their path; and with the hounds they saw a hunter, riding on a great black horse. They stopped and shouted at the intruder, and searched about for him, when a gigantic savage of a frightful countenance sprang above the bushes and said in a voice which froze their blood: 'DO YOU HEAR ME?' Since then he has been seen many times by the foresters and others."

"I do not like the subject," shuddered Mademoiselle de Richeval, crossing herself.

"Pardon me," d'Estaing gravely said, bowing.

"Tell me something about those men ascending into the clouds," spoke the silvery voice of the young Baroness, addressing Germain.

He gladly told her all he knew of the late ascent, at which he had been present in Bordeaux; how Montgolfier and his brother made the balloon; how he stood by their enclosure and saw them fill the balloon with inflammable gas; how the brave four got into the car and everybody prophesied their destruction; and of the speechless thrill with which he saw at last the strange machine dart upwards and carry them swiftly higher and higher, until it was but a speck drifting across the clouds.

The vividness of his account pleased her, and at the end she was permitting him to drink her health, when they were interrupted by an exclamation, and saw de Grancey pointing to the table. A surprise of an ingenious nature was occurring before their eyes. The artificial hoar frost which gave such beauty to the miniature landscape was slowly melting with the heat of the room, and during the process the guests saw the thawing of the river, the budding of the trees, and the blossoming of the various flowers take place, as spring succeeded winter. A little cry of delight leaped involuntarily from the lips of the sweet la Roche Vernay and she smiled exquisitely on Germain, who, in that moment, wildly lost his heart.

CHAPTER VII

"THE LEAP IS TAKEN"

"Who is this Monsieur de Répentigny, Chevalier?—tell me," asked the Princess, who was holding her little evening court in full circle on the balustraded terrace behind the château. She sat well out where there was plenty of room for the swell and spread of her vast garland-flounced skirts,—a woman of something less than forty, the incarnation of inane condescension. At her feet were her two pages—rosy little boys, dressed exactly like full-grown gentlemen. The ladies of her circle sat around her, each likewise skirt-voluminous, all pretending to be negligently engaged unravelling scraps of gold and silver lace, the great fashionable occupation of the day. Her reader stood behind her.

The Chevalier, when addressed, had just remounted the steps from the lawn to the terrace with the Prince. He made a smiling bow.

"Monsieur de Répentigny?" he inquired. "I do not know of whom—ah, it is of Germain you speak."

Only the little Abbé, crouching, noted the first half of his answer. He treasured it away in his memory.

"Monsieur Germain then," continued the Princess—"this Canadian gentleman. Is he one of your relations?"

"One of my dearest, Madame. Why do you ask?"

"Because he is the most adorable of men. He has explained to me the *coiffure Montgolfier*."

"He is a picture," exclaimed Mademoiselle de Richeval.

"A man, Mademoiselle," returned de Bailleul warmly.

"Has he a fortune then, Chevalier?" she laughed.

"Perhaps he shall have mine," quizzed the old soldier.

"He must come with us to Versailles, Chevalier," said the Princess. "So agreeable a person will be indispensable to me."

Germain, dallying behind the Chevalier, approached the foot of the terrace steps.

"Monsieur-Germain," she cried to him, "will you do me the honour of returning to Versailles with us?"

What could the poor fellow do but thank her with his profoundest bow, though the situation set his head in a whirl.

"Is it the pleasure of Madame that I should read?" interrupted a harsh and ruffled voice. The Princess, for reply, took out of her work-bag a book of devotions and handed it to the Abbé. He received it with a cringing bow, but as he glanced at it a suggestion of repugnance flitted across his lips. "Or does she care first to hear the trifle of news which I brought from Fontainebleau?"

"What, have you dared conceal a scandal so long, Abbé? Let us have it instantly," cried the Canoness.

"He is certainly an offender," echoed Mademoiselle de Richeval.

"Ladies, listen to the Abbé," said the Princess languidly.

The pseudo-Abbé scanned the faces about him with a cunning look, especially that of Germain, as one he would read through and through were it possible.

"In the name of mercy, Abbé, proceed," the Canoness cried.

"It is a trifle, a piece of mere common talk," he said demurely.

"Speak, Abbé," commanded the Princess de Poix.

"Mademoiselle de Merecour——" he began deliberately.

"Hélène?" all exclaimed in astonishment. "Proceed—tell us."

"She is my best friend," the Baroness murmured.

"Mademoiselle de Merecour," he repeated, still delaying. "Have you heard why she looked so disdainful at the Queen's Game last evening?"

"We never guess your enigmas. Go on."

"She has need to look brave."

"She is about to marry Monsieur de Sillon," said Cyrène. "Perhaps that explains any unusual expression."

"Ah, Monsieur de Sillon—yes, Mademoiselle, Monsieur de Sillon—but, ladies, do you know there is no Monsieur de Sillon?"

"No Monsieur de Sillon?"

"Is Monsieur dead?" gasped Cyrène, her hand darting to her breast.

"Monsieur de Sillon will never die, Mademoiselle. It is a maxim of the philosophy of Aquinas that what never existed never ceases to exist. What a grand lord was this Monsieur de Sillon! How he bought himself into that colonelship of Dragoons, invented that band uniform, scattered those broad pieces at play, kept that stable of English hunters, and boasted of those interminable ancestries in Burgundy! Well, this Monsieur de Sillon, who rode in the carriages of the King by right of his four centuries of *noblesse*, whose coat bore no less than eighteen fine quarterings, whose crest was an eagle and his betrothed a Merecour, is the son of a tanner of Tours."

"Incredible!"

"Impossible!"

"You fable exquisitely!"

"The contract of marriage, they said, had actually been signed by the King——"

"Go on, you are a snail!" snapped the Canoness.

"Only then was it discovered that his father had amassed a fortune in ox-skins, that the son had picked up some manners, riding, fencing, and blazonry; none knows how; and that his first introductions were bought and paid for. He is now, some say, in the Bastille, some in Vincennes Dungeon, nobody will ever know exactly which. That is all, ladies."

"Let us thank the saints for Mademoiselle's deliverance!" cried the Princess piously.

Cyrène gasped and said nothing, but tears filled her eyes.

"The horror of but touching one of those creatures—those diners in the kitchen!" exclaimed the Canoness.

"Of his daring to approach a lady in marriage!" added Mademoiselle de Richeval.

"Were she one of *my* blood, he should die," asserted d'Estaing.

An uncanny, silent light passed across the half-shut eyes of Abbé Jude, and gleamed towards one and another of these haughty exclusives as they talked together so regardlessly before the face of him they thought the only plebeian among them. His eye at last met that of Lecour, and he caught a confusion on the Canadian's countenance which he stored away carefully with the words of de Bailleul.

The evening fell, and a faint silver moon rose in the sky and grew brighter and brighter over park and mere. The Princess went in to play cards, followed by the others. Germain and the Baroness walked up and down the terrace alone, talking of the stars and the delightful speculations about them in the book of Fontenelle.

Under the moonlight the girl's fragile beauty wove its fascination deeper over him. He launched himself upon the strange sea of emotions which were more and more crowding upon him.

"Oh, my God!" he thought, "am I walking the celestial gardens? Am I a spirit doomed to banishment? Am I at the same moment both ravished and damned?"

Once when they came to the end of the terrace they leaned on the balustrade and looked down at the water. Glossy dark in the shadows of the old castle which stood in its midst, and in those of the grove on the further side, it glittered tranquilly where the moonshine fell on its surface, and the foliage around it wore a soft, glittering veil. Some mighty witch, some spirit combining Beauty, Power, and the Centuries, seemed to reign over the lake, holding silent court in the peaked and clustered white walls and turrets of the ancient stronghold.

"Mademoiselle," he said very quietly, "*I* have reason to be silent; but tell me why *you* are so pensive?"

"I was sad for my friend Hélène. Love must be so sacred."

"Did you know her suitor?"

"Sillon—yes; he had *dared* to speak to me."

They were silent. It was not he who next spoke. Her clear eyes looked as if into his soul as she said after a long time—

"Monsieur de Répentigny, what would you do were you Hélène's brother?"

Germain's sword in an instant slid half-drawn from its sheath, and he gasped, "I would find him."

She drew her slender figure up in the dusk and looked at him with an approving glance as if to say, "*You* are of other fibre than the baseborn."

"Oh, sweet Cyrène!" he exclaimed, then checked himself, appalled at his presumption, and added, "Alas, what am I saying? Heaven knows I am mad."

"Hush, hush!" she shuddered, glancing back over her shoulder.

Germain turned and caught sight of a shadow advancing. It proved to be the Abbé.

"Excuse the messenger of Madame," said he. "She asks you, Baroness, to take a hand at piquet."

She courtesied graciously to Germain and moved away, followed by the Princess's black parasite. When she passed through the immense glass door which looked from the card-room upon the terrace, and his eyes could no longer follow her loveliness, Lecour turned towards the lake and exclaimed in a low voice—

"There must be some way to win the paradise on earth and this seraph. Castle of ages past, frown not too hardly upon me. You represent what I love—the grand, the brave, the historic, the fair."

* * * * *

As he paced his chamber after the household had retired, the recollection of the day became an elixir, exciting and delicious.

The room was in one of the four towers of the château. Sitting down, he looked out through an open window upon the peace of the night-world. There were the gardens, quiet, lovely and ghostly, the weird water, the stately grove beyond it. He sat by the window more than two hours, while the events just over crowded through his brain.

After a time the moonlight lit an unhappy countenance; next it grew fixed and studious. He paced the room, he threw himself back into his chair, rose once more, drew long breaths of cool air at the windows, and knelt at the *prie-Dieu* in the inmost corner. A violent tempest had arisen within. The sails and yards of the soul-ship were strained, and it was fleeing without a rudder.

At last he undressed quickly and got into bed. He could not sleep, but tossed from side to side. Finally he sprang up and sat on the side of the couch lost in swift, fevered thought.

"For her," he whispered in intensest passion—"yes, for her." Then he hesitated. Suddenly, with fierce decision, he added, "The leap is taken."

At once the inward storm subsided, sleep overpowered him, and he dropped back at rest. The moon laid its rays like bars of silver across the bed, and illuminated his unconscious face and flowing hair with a patch of brightness. Such is the serene look of heaven upon its wandering children.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ABBÉ'S DISASTER

The force of circumstances had proved too great. What strength had his training or his age to resist them? The old master, Love, the compeller of so many heroisms and so many crimes, from Eve and Helen to Manon Lescaut, had grasped him with his wizard power. Poor Germain, thitherto so worthy and so well-intentioned, rose in the morning an adventurer—an adventurer, it is true, driven by desperation and anguish into his dangerous part, and grasping the hope of nevertheless yet winning by some forlorn good deed the forgiveness of her who was otherwise lost to him.

As Dominique, the Auvergnat valet who had been assigned to him by de Bailleul—because he had been foster father to the Chevalier's son—tied his hair, put on his morning coat and sword, buckled the sparkling buckles on his shoes, and handed him his jewelled snuff-box, each process seemed to Germain a preparation for some unknown accident that might happen, and in which he must be ready to conquer. When he stepped down to meet his companions, it was distinctly and consciously to henceforth play a *rôle*.

He saw Cyrène sitting on a seat in the garden, putting together, with the critical

fingers of a girl, a large bouquet. There was a statue of Fame close by, and beside it a laurel. She had plucked some of the leaves to tie with her blossoms.

He went out to her and proffered a word of greeting. She was about to reply, but the meeting was interrupted by a voice, and the Abbé appeared from behind the pedestal.

"What! a laurel twig among your flowers, Baroness?" said he. "Excellent! for Fame herself is not a goddess more suited to distribute favours. Do I not in you Madame, see again Daphne, the friend of Apollo, who turned into that tree?" and, smiling atrociously over his classical sweet speech, he looked at Lecour.

"The insolence!" thought Germain, who also took it as a good opportunity to begin his *rôle*. "Well, sir," he exclaimed sharply, "talking of Apollo, did you ever hear that this god flayed one Marsyas for presumption?"

Cyrène flashed him a surprised and grateful glance.

"I have heard, sir," replied Jude, "that the Princess de Poix desires me to find and conduct to her Madame the Baroness de la Roche Vernay."

So saying, he carried off Cyrène again, like some black piratical cruiser, and she reluctantly accompanied him, looking back regretfully over her shoulder.

Lecour could not understand the eternal use of the formal orders of the Princess. He watched the two in a vexed stupor until they disappeared. Then he recalled the inanity and exacting requests of the great lady, and guessed how her reader was able to so boldly play his annoying trick.

Just then Grancey laid his hand on Germain's shoulder. There was so much friendship in the face of the golden-haired Life Guard that Lecour at once raised the question uppermost in his mind.

"Baron," said he, "tell me, who is Madame de la Roche Vernay?"

Grancey's eyes twinkled intelligently.

"It is an affair, then? I can keep secrets."

"An affair only on my unfortunate side," Germain admitted gloomily.

"As on that of many another. Your Cyrène is the bearer of a very great name: she is a Montmorency."

"A Montmorency!"

"Yes; she is a widow, you see."

"Never."

"While an orphan. Her father, the Vicomte Luc de Montmorency, who was a madman of a spendthrift, ended up in two bankruptcies, and was banished from Court. Cyrène was brought up in a mouldy old château near St. Ouen. When only thirteen her hand was sought by an ambitious financier, Trochu, for his son, Baron la Roche Vernay, who was then with his regiment in Dominica. Money was necessary to the Vicomte, and, in short, Mademoiselle was sold for two million livres, and the marriage celebrated by proxy, as both the fathers were impatient to finish the bargain. It appeared by the mails that the young man died of fever two days after.

"She wears no mourning," said Germain.

"Her father forbade it, and he brought her back with her dowry at once to his own roof, away from the Trochus."

"But why is such a beautiful woman not married again?"

"Do you not know that at the Court nobody except the bald and toothless marries, except for fortune. There are plenty of lovers, but no husbands. Because she is poor she is passed about in the family, sometimes as lady of honour to the Princess, sometimes to the Maréchale de Noailles, her grand-aunt."

Germain's feelings were trebly disturbed by the history of the child-widow. He made an effort to speak to her once more by inviting her to the tennis-court, but the Abbé informed them just then that she was requested to read correspondence to the

Princess.

When he was in his bedchamber having his hunting-boots pulled off after a badger hunt with the male guests, the valet, Dominique, began to talk.

"That is a queer priest—that Messire Jude, the Abbé."

"Yes, Dominique."

"Yes, Monsieur Germain. He talks very freely with us servants. This morning he inquired a great deal of me about your affairs. He said you were a close friend of his. Was *he* a Canadian?"

"Not at all. What more, Dominique?"

"He asked how long you had been here; and what relationship you bore to our master; and what were your intentions about staying; and your fortune and your rank; and how many were your clothes and jewels. Then he proposed to see into your chamber here."

"Did you let him?"

"I told him it was against my duty, sir; but he told me I must never dispute the Church, so he walked in and examined everything—*everything*; he even opened the cupboards."

"The thief! If you allow that man in my apartment again I will spit you both. Remember!"

Grancey and d'Amoreau came in.

"Curses on that black beetle," exclaimed the latter.

"Amen," profoundly echoed the former. "If it were not for the Princess I would feed my rapier with him."

"He has no right to such an honour; I would have him whipped by the lackeys. Répentigny, he has got her to take us back to the Palace to-morrow morning, and spoilt all our pleasure."

"That seems to be his vocation," Germain answered with warmth. "I would undertake to punish him myself."

"On a wager of ten to two half-louis?"

"Accepted."

The two officers laughed uproariously at the prospect.

"Répentigny, if you do this," cried Grancey, "we will speak for you to the King for something good."

After dinner Madame proposed a promenade in the park. Strolling in procession, they came to some marble steps by the lakeside, where the host proposed that the young men should take boats and row the ladies about, and he assigned Germain to Cyrène.

They were entering one of the shallops, when Jude suggested that the Princess should be taken too. She objected; she detested water.

"Well, I will enjoy it myself," he said, and with the utmost assurance stepped into the stern; while d'Amoreau and Grancey chuckled and looked at each other and Germain. The latter smiled and rowed down the lake.

On the other side was a clearing in the grove, where a stone seat was placed near the bank. Here Lecour drew to shore, and handed out Cyrène. The two Guardsmen were watching him closely. When Jude rose from the stem seat he felt a sudden strong turn given to the boat. He clutched the air, it did not save him; one black silk leg kicked up, and he disappeared under the water.

The face of Cyrène, who had seated herself on the stone bench, was for a moment one of alarm.

The depth was not, however, above the Abbé's waist, and when he rose his look of

furious misery was too comical for any pity. The water streamed in a cataract from his wig over his elongated countenance and ruined clothes. He had screwed his face into the black slime of the bottom; it was now besides distorted with his efforts to breathe, and he unconsciously held up his blackened hands in the attitude of blessing. The whole party could not contain their laughter. D'Amoreau, Grancey, and the other Guardsmen sent up continuous roars on roars from their boats. The Prince smiled; de Bailleul's efforts to control himself were ineffectual; the ladies all tittered, except Madame, who stood on shore, and even the considerate Cyrène could restrain herself no longer, but turned her head from the moving appeal of the unfortunate figure before her, and gave way to a silvery chime of undiluted enjoyment.

"Hush, cousin," cried the Princess de Poix, stilted as ever; "such a sad accident."

"Répentigny, by Castor and Pollux," swore d'Amoreau at the first moment of their meeting in private, "here are not five louis, but twenty. You were made for a Marshal of France."

"Dominique," Germain called out, "spend this with your fellows" (by instinct he knew it was part of his *rôle* to be lavish), "and tell them to drink to that meddlesome blackleg."

"In cold water," d'Amoreau added.

CHAPTER IX

A PHILOSOPHER BEHIND HORSE-PISTOLS

The procession of carriages containing the guests rolled back to the Palace through the forest.

The carriage of the Prince came last and in it sat the Prince and Princess, Cyrène and Jude, while Lecour rode alongside for some miles. How more and more he dreaded the revelation of his humble birth. He said his adieux at length and turned back with the keenest misery in his breast he had ever felt—such misery indeed that after a little he could not resist retracing his route.

The Prince's coach meanwhile had lagged behind the others at a point where the road cut through a small gorge. His Excellency was giving the ladies an account and history of the Chevalier's wounds, when in the middle of it the horses stopped with a jerk. A commotion without any words appeared to be going on outside. The Prince put his head out and found himself looking into the barrels of a horse-pistol, while a masked man of heavy build summoned him to be quiet. He saw moreover nine or ten half-naked fellows also disguised in rude masks, posted about, with muskets and pistols pointed at the grooms and himself. The Princess fell in a faint. The Abbé threw himself under the seat. Such scenes were being enacted every day on the highroads in that lumbering old handmade century.

The head of the man who had charge of the Prince was, as it were, thatched with a torn hat and his black hair straggled past his mask in tufts down to his shoulders.

"Purses!" he growled harshly, putting his head in at the window.

"Cut-throat!" cried the Prince. "You shall swing for this as sure as there is a Lieutenant of Police in Paris."

The big man's answer was a ferocious "Enough!"

And as his black finger twitched threateningly upon the trigger, Cyrène laid her restraining hand on her cousin's arm. She took out her purse with her other hand and passed it to the man. She promptly also pulled out that of the Princess. The Prince handed his own to her and it was passed over with that of his wife.

"Watches!" was the next order.

With the same coolness she passed these likewise.

He scowled next at the brooch Cyrène wore at her neck.

"Give me that," he commanded. She stopped and said firmly—

"Thou hast sufficient, thou."

"I must have that."

With a momentary impatience she tore it off.

"Consult thy best interests and go," she said in a stern voice.

He did not lack the necessary quickness of judgment, and signed to his mates who retreated into the woods, keeping the lackeys well covered with their firearms.

"My ladies and my Lord," said the big man, still holding his pistol aimed at the Prince. "We levy this tax in *the name of the King*." That is what you say when you steal from us, the people. "We commend you the consolation of your formula."

Having made this singular speech, to the infinite fury of the Prince, who would have drawn his sword and leaped out at him had it not been for Cyrène, he retired backward into the forest.

Germain came into sight at this juncture. The scene shocked and astonished him, he drove his spurs into the flanks of his horse, which, with bounds of pain, flew forward, and leaping off, he peered anxiously into the carriage. The situation was clear enough to him, for its like was then only too common, so, placing aside for the time being his rage at the villains, he lifted and straightened the insensible lady into a position on the seat-cushions, and sent a groom forward for help.

The gratitude of the Prince was profuse. Cyrène spoke not a word. The shock to her had been intense, and burying her face in her handkerchief she burst into tears, which more than ever agitated Lecour.

In a few minutes d'Estaing and de Grancey drove up. They were astonished at the speed and audacity of the affair.

CHAPTER X

THE GALLEY-ON-LAND

At three o'clock a search party of friends and gendarmes from the Palace, at which the occurrence had aroused something of a flutter, came back to the place.

The Guardsmen offered to scour the woods in a body. Lecour soberly recommended a different plan, which they adopted, and placing his six friends and several royal gamekeepers in Indian file he started at their head. They followed him without speaking and watched him closely as, with an intentness quite un-French, he bent down to see farther through the trees, examined the branches for newly-broken twigs, the displaced stones, the crushed mosses, disturbed grass, and soft places of the ground, and the little indications read and looked for by trappers and Indians. As he entered the woods the traces of the first rush back of the robbers gave a mass of easy clues and an initial direction. Following on they came to a marsh, where they found footmarks, and readily put together the number of the thieves and the physical character of each. In an open place the trail would be an unconcealed track across the grass; in dry woods perhaps it would be lost for many yards. Its discovery, of course, was not altogether so marvellous a matter as they thought. But it helped Germain's reputation afterwards.

At last they came into a tangled and difficult region called Âpremont, where the rocky ridges were broken into intractable ruins—the most savage portion of the forest. Strange cliffs of shale, eaten by weather and earthquake into the most picturesque columns and caves, confronted them. Here the signs became rare and the advance tedious, but the little column still breathlessly followed the woodsman. They were rewarded by finding a neighbourhood where the damp mosses showed many tracks

converging, and as Grancey thought he distinguished a distant sound Germain listened and heard what he judged to be the faint refrain of a song. He now adopted greater caution, placing his gamekeepers in a body to remain ready at call, and at different points setting his friends in easy reach of each other.

Grancey and he crept along, guided by the uncertain sounds of the song, but found that they grew fainter. On this they retraced their path and were gratified to hear the sound increase again. They discovered a point where it would not grow any louder, and here Germain paused. "I have the secret!" he whispered, and placed his ear to the ground. The Baron imitated him. True enough the singing was *below*. They caught other voices now. Lecour pondered a few moments. He followed an irregular rent in the rock and disappeared to one side. Returning on tiptoe, excited for the first time, he beckoned Grancey to accompany him and led the way with the greatest precaution to a long crack in the side of a hill, scarcely discernible without the closest scrutiny, through which the accents came quite audibly, and they caught sight of the objects below in a grey light. They made out a narrow, oblique cavern, formed by the widening of what geologists call a "fault" in the shaly rock. Eight men, all in rags with one exception, were sitting and lying about. Stretched on the ground, drinking alternately from a bottle, were two, one of whom was singing snatches of a rambling *vaudeville*.

Grancey touched Germain and pointed out that their firearms were in a heap at the entrance, and that a rope attached there and coiled loosely showed their means of exit down the face of the cliff.

The man who was not in rags was standing up, the centre of attraction. He appeared to be a visitor.

"Stay with us the night," said the leader, a big man of ferocious brows and keen black eyes. "Our friend, his Majesty, has sent us some of his venison."

"The Big Hog?" said the stranger.

A round of laughter echoed through the cavern. The stoutness of the King had given rise to this nickname among the people.

"When his head is ours it will be better than his venison," he added.

About this man's face there was something strikingly horrible and subtle. His countenance was the image of a grinning death's-head. Its intelligent, stealthy, and sinister sunken eyes, its depressed nose and heartless fixed grin aroused repulsion. Its bearing of distinct courage alone somewhat reclaimed it. His cloak was thrown back, showing a gold lace belt stuck with knives and pistols, while on his head was a green cap, which Grancey recognised as the cap of the galley felons.

"What news of the Galley-on-land, Admiral?" asked the robber leader.

"All goes well."

"How many at our oars?"

"Two hundred and forty-eight."

"Besides friends?"

"Besides thirty-four friends. We are all in the salt country now except yourselves and the bench at Paris. We reviewed in the pines of Morlaix last month. Such brave ragmen! Forty-seven had killed a hog."

The circle's eyes glistened.

"Yes, the hogs fear us, but the Galley is dark as wind."

"You should have seen the hogs to-day," cried the cave leader; "stupid beasts, too fat to jump."

"Why didn't you stick them?"

"Sacré Dieu! not here; it's too near the Big Hog."

"The Big Hog does not worry us at Morlaix. Since the salt-tax is raised four *sous* in the pound we are all in the Brittany marshes, passing salt into Maine. In Maine a poor

man can eat no meat because he can have no brine. You can guess that where the people squeal so there is room for our profit. We lie in the marshes; we gather our piles of salt; we creep out by night through the woods, and—flip—past the salt-guards into Maine. Guards, guards, guards—blue men, black men, green men—all over France. Sacré! they are an itch—a leprosy. Do we hate them, we all?"

"By the oath of the Green Cap," they cried all together.

"Well, we *were* vagabonds," he continued, "in the Morlaix woods. Our great fire lit up the pines at midnight and our men of rags crept up on all sides to the feast. Some brought white bread, some black, some a pigeon or two from the lord's dovecotes, and every one his bottle of wine. There we told what we were doing and planned the campaign. You may swear we were jolly that night. They have sent me to visit your bench of Fontainebleau, and pray you for the ransom-money of Blogue, who lies in Bordeaux prison to be hanged. Two of his guards can be settled for eighty livres. You are rich, they say, and can pay it."

"Yes, we can afford it," cried the cavern-chief boastfully.

"I thought so, handsome ragmen," returned the visitor. He dropped the point for a moment and suddenly throwing his right hand free from his cloak rose into a curious strain of eloquence which made manifest the nature of this strange organisation, or at least the aims which the man of the death's-head chose to claim for it.

"Let us never forget, comrades, who we are—that our Order is the avenger of the wrongs of the people. Give me each your sufferings that I may treasure them in the common treasury. Give me the tears that have been shed, the deaths, the starvations, the griefs, the insults, the cruelties, that I may heap them one upon another in a secret place, whence, on a day which I see rising very bright out of the days of this generation, we shall thrust them out all bleeding and dreadful to fly forth together swift as eagles for the hearts of the rich. Hugues de la Tour, what wrongs have you to tell?"

"Admiral," cried the young man hoarsely, after drinking a gulp from a bottle, his eyes bloodshot, and swinging his knife, "I have suffered till my blood runs like a current of fire against all who are in ease. I hate the King, the Church, the rich, the judges, the strong, the fair. My father was a noble of the Court, my mother a Huguenot, and wedded to him by the rite of the Reformed Religion, his own pretended faith. With this excuse he threw her off. He denied her the name of wife and us of his children. His servants pushed her from his door. She died in a garret at Dijon. I took my little sister by the hand, and travelling to my father's door in Versailles awaited his entry into his carriage. We caught his skirts and cried, "Our father!" With his own hands he threw us to the pavement. For years I felt, brothers, what you have felt—cold, hunger, and disdain—but I hoarded the thought of 'Justice' as the friend of the wronged.

"I at length petitioned the magistrature. My papers were unheeded. I appealed to the Minister. The Minister was silent. I found a way of presenting our griefs and claims to the King himself. For answer, a sealed warrant empowered the monster of our life to throw us into prison. There my poor sister died; I escaped. Join me to your galley-oars. I hate all monarchs, decrees, nobles, priests, courtiers. Crime is justice, justice is the system of crime!"

"Very good, Hugues la Tour," commended the Admiral, "you shall have your hands full of true justice."

"I," shouted a violent man of haggard countenance, "was a cultivator of Auvergne. By incredible hardship I made myself owner of a plot of ground. My woman and I lived scantily on our daily black bread and 'pepperpot'; we spent nothing; we had no comforts, but from year to year, as the *sous* were piled away in our hoard, we kept our eyes on the neighbouring acre of moorland. One year a drought came. Our *sous* were diminished by famine. It was then the tax gatherer came upon us, his claims heavier than in the years before, for one of the village tax commissioners was jealous of us. The rest of our *sous* were not sufficient; we could not borrow. A bailiff, a 'blue man,' was placed in our cabin at our cost. The suit went through the Court: we were discomfited. They took my possessions, as at the commencement they had designed to do. They starved my wife; they killed my children. I, too, will kill."

"I also," shouted another. "The tithe was my ruin."

"The worse avarice is the cassock's," said the visitor. "A day of blood approaches, a day of cutting of priests' throats and burning of churches."

"I—I can say nothing," another grumbled. "I have always been in rags and a vagabond. Is it my fault? Who taught me to steal, to strike?"

"Brave rowers," exclaimed the visitor, "I thank you, and as Blogue has to be ransomed, let us see what you have restored to justice."

"Here is for Blogue, and a little more," exclaimed the cavern-chief, throwing over a packet he had been making up, "when the disciples are lucky, the apostle must not lack."

He then spread out a large black kerchief, and placed upon it, one by one, in the sight of all, the watches, jewels and purses taken from the coach.

There was one part of this which was perhaps the only thing in their power by which they could have disturbed Lecour's self control just then. When he saw Cyrène's brooch in these felonious hands his blood boiled up and he stamped his foot involuntarily on the rock.

Horror! The loose shaly stones gave way with a rush beneath him. Down he slid into the cavern, saved in his descent only by the slope and ledges of the "fault." The astonished bandits fled back with a shout. Before Germain could move, however, the robber captain sprang upon him, and, locking him in a desperate embrace, they quickly rolled to the doorway where, in their struggle, the pile of firearms was swept out into the gorge. The giant lifted him bodily and threw him out down the face of the cliff. At this terrible moment the Indian quickness of his early life came to his rescue, for even as he fell he caught the rope, and slid down to the bottom. There he shouted for the gamekeepers. He could see the robbers looking over the entrance and seeming to debate. Immediately after, two bodies shot down upon him from the cavern, and he found himself face to face with the big man and the Admiral. They sprang upon him in concert, and while the former held him, the second sped off up the gorge and was lost to sight. The robber captain detained him with a grip of immense power, until three more slid down and made off. Then, hearing the shouts of the gamekeepers close at hand, he sprang towards the opposite cliff, climbed straight up it from ledge to ledge with miracles of muscle, and disappeared over the top. Three wretches who were still in the cave were secured, fighting savagely. One was la Tour.

CHAPTER XI

THE COURT

A week or so later, Germain sent his mother the following letter:—

"The Palace, Fontainebleau,
8th September, 1786.

"My dear Mother,—My good fortune is inexpressible. The whole of your dreams for me are fulfilled: can you believe it, your son has—but I will not anticipate. I can scarcely trust it myself to be true. I informed you in mine of three days ago, which goes in the same mail as this, of our capture of the gentry of the cavern. It left me pretty scratched.

"The morning following, a courier in a grand livery came riding to the château to bear me a command to attend the King's hunt. This command, or invitation, is conveyed by a great card, which I have before me, engraved in a beautiful writing surrounded by a border exquisitely representing hounds, deer, and winding-horns with their straps. It begins: '*From the King*.' Above are the arms of France, the signature is that of the chamberlain. You may think into what ecstasy it threw me when my valet handed me these. (You know everybody in society must have a valet here). My limbs seemed to lose their bruises, and I hastened to the Chevalier, who was much pleased with this testimony of the credit I appeared to have brought him, for, with the greatest affection and generosity, he continues to consider me in the light of a son. He told me

how to act at the ceremonies and the hunt, and to take care not to ride across the path of the King, for that is a thing which makes his Majesty very angry. We talked it over perfectly. The only point to which he took objection was that the card was addressed to "Monsieur de Répentigny."

"'I hope,' he said, 'there will be no trouble about this. There was a Répentigny in the army of Canada. We must try to get rid of this name.'

"'If I am at fault with it,' returned I, 'I will make public at once how it has come to be attached to me without my seeking. Even if an owner of it should occur, he must as a man of honour accept my explanation.'

"'True,' answered he, 'I am here to witness that. Do not change it for a day or two. It would be excessively embarrassing for you were it to be altered on this occasion, for the decrees have of late years been very strict about birth.'

"'Would these decrees exclude me from this invitation?' I asked him.

"'Unquestionably,' he replied. 'And that would be too cruel; you are as good a man as any of them.'

"'Very well,' I answered. 'Afterwards I can return to my proper station.'

"But, dear mother, you cannot think what these words meant to me, notwithstanding that I ought to have known it to be so. I left him at once and fled into the park in order to hide my suffering. Oh, it is too beautiful to lose—this sphere of honour and refinement, this world of the lovely, the ancestral, this supreme enchantment of the earth. Having tasted it, how can I return to the common and despised condition of mankind in general! Mother, you who have taught me that this is my true world, I leave it to you to answer.

"That afternoon we drove into the town of Fontainebleau, where there was a very fine haberdasher, just come from Paris, who agreed to make me the proper suit and to supply all the accessories. Two days after, I put on the uniform of a *débutant*, which cost me pretty dear but made a fine figure. When I looked at myself in the mirror, I longed for your spirit to have been in the glass only to see your son in such an array. The coat was dove-grey satin; waistcoat of dark red, finely figured, with silver buttons; small clothes of red, white silk stockings, and jewelled shoes with the red heels which are worn at Court. I also bought a new dress sword. It has an openwork silver handle and guard; the blade sheathed in a white scabbard, which is silver-mounted. I wore large frills and a small French hat finely laced with gold; and I bought besides long hunting-boots.

"I drove in our coach to the Palace. As I entered the gates the officer of the guard espied the livery of the Chevalier, and immediately caused his company to salute me, observing which all the gentlemen standing near took off their hats and bowed to me. I drove into the Court of the White Horse, a great square, one of the five around which this vast palace is built, and at the entrance door I was met by my dear friend Baron de Grancey.

"The Baron said to me, 'Did you not tell us you had never been to Court before?'

"I answered that I had not; and, indeed, my *débutant* dress and ignorance were sufficient witness to it.

"'You must, then, have all the honours,' he said. 'He who comes up for the first time registers his genealogy and has a right to ride in the King's carriages.'

"'Then it is a great thing to ride in the King's carriages?'

"'My dear friend, it is the right of the noble,' replied he, a little surprised.

"'Ah, yes, my mother once told me so,' said I. (Dear mother, is it not true that you said it?)

"'You shall also play cards with the Queen in the evening.'

"'Oh, no,' gasped I.

"'You must,' he returned. 'This honour also is indispensable. After your *début* is over you can be as modest as you please.'

"We arrived by that time at the end of a corridor and before a lofty chamber, the doors of which were emblazoned in colours with the arms and devices of France. Within we found the royal genealogist sitting in his robes of office with the heralds of the royal orders. Round about were large volumes, the registers of the *noblesse*, which they were consulting respecting the parchment titles produced by young gentlemen in person or through their secretaries; and I was told that before being presented one must show certificates of descent in both lines since the fourteenth century. I was so shocked at my situation that I became angry, so that, when the King's genealogist stretched out his hand for my papers, I answered proudly, 'I have none.'

"'What is my lord's name?' he asked most respectfully. Here my tongue refused to move. But the Baron interfered, replying—

"'Monsieur de Répentigny. He is far from home, and therefore cannot produce his titles; but I speak for him as a relative of the Chevalier de Bailleul.'

"'Monsieur,' replied the King's genealogist to me graciously, 'the name of Répentigny needs no parchments.'

"He ordered one of the secretaries to give me forthwith his brief of attestation (I still have it). Thus, dear mother, this Baron has won my gratitude for ever. But attend to what followed, for it is better still.

"It was in the great hall of the Palace, where the walls and the ceiling are tapestried with pictures of kings riding the chase. Baron de Grancey brought me to the Prince de Poix, who acceded to his request to present me to the Monarch. This Prince is, as I have told you, a very amiable man, and is obliged to me.

"The whole Court was there. There was the Archbishop of Paris; the King's elder brother, whom they call Monsieur; the Dukes and Peers of France, with their blue ribbons across their breasts; and a countless crowd of lords and great ladies dressed in state. Picture to yourself a garden full of the rarest flowers sparkling in the sun after a shower and bending gracefully to the wind; for such they resembled. I mentally named one my lord Violet, another my lady Rose, a third was the Eglantine, another the White Lily; so I pleased myself with distinguishing them.

"The trumpets sound, the music sweeps ravishingly into the air. In passes the King. He is attended by his guards of the sleeve and the princes of the blood. The Prince de Poix steps forward and speaks my name. I tremble. Everybody whispers and stares at us. Ah, mother, what a moment! I know not what passed. His Majesty said, 'You are the hero of the forest?' smiled, heard my incoherent whisper, and passed on with his train, smiling to others.

"Mother dear, I have seen the Sun-King! I have heard the voice to which Europe listens! I have spoken to Saint Louis and Charlemagne!

"I have not reserved enough money from the furs. Send me 3,000 livres as quickly as possible. I am writing this in my chamber here, for I am to be ready for the hunt early to-morrow morning. Every sound I hear tells of the presence of Majesty; every sight I get from the window of this dwelling of our ancient monarchs recalls a score out of the thousand legends which everybody has been telling me.

"Convey my deepest affection to my father and Angelique, and to Marie and Lacroix, and everybody in St. Elphège, and remember always that I am

"Your dear
"GERMAIN.

"To Madame F. X. Lecour,
"Répentigny, in Canada.
"(By way of London.)

"*Post Scriptum.*—The Queen's Game took place last night after I wrote the above to you. Their Majesties sat at a great round green table, surrounded by all the Court.

"There were some smaller tables, at which several great ladies and lords sat and played; but everybody's eyes were on the Queen, who is so marvellously queenly, and on the King with his stars and his blue ribbon. They two put down their gold (which was in perfectly new pieces) and dealt the cards a little. I was given a turn with her Majesty, who smiled and addressed me, at which I almost fainted. And, mother, the

Count de Vaudreuil, whom you used to see as a child, was there. I took special notice of him for you. He has a very fine figure and is one of the greatest courtiers.

"After that, we went off with our friends and had supper and played nearly all night.

"At daybreak everybody went to the hunt. I and the other *débutants* were driven to the rendezvous in the carriages of the King, drawn by white horses. There the grooms gave me a magnificent golden mare, who knew her work so well that she carried me in at the death of the stag next after his Majesty. (I tremble at what would have happened had I got there before him.) The Queen came up among the first. She enjoys the hunt.

"G. L."

CHAPTER XII

GERMAIN GOES TO PARIS

It appears from the foregoing letter that Germain, before his presentation, had vacillated in his purpose, so far as his using the name Répentigny was concerned. All such vacillation vanished in the excitement of his taste of Court life. The fresh fact—of which Grancey informed him—that Cyrène had been carried off to Versailles by the Princess (which he interpreted to mean by the Abbé) only enriched with a pensive strain, and allowed him to lend an undivided attention to, the fascinating scenes which surrounded him, full of rich life and colour like the splendid pictorial tapestries adorning the halls of Fontainebleau.

On his return to Eaux Tranquilles, the Chevalier advanced at the gate, where he had doubtless been waiting some time, and, drawing a small newspaper out of his coat, said in grave fashion—

"Germain, there is something in the *Gazette de France*, which, I fear, means mischief."

Lecour took the paper with a heart-throb and read—

"The Marquis de Gruchy, the Count de Longueville, the Chevaliers des Trois-Maisons and de Réfsentigny, who had previously the honour of being presented to the King, had, on the 8th instant, that of entering the carriages of of his Majesty and following him to the chase."

His face crimsoned. He looked at the Chevalier.

"I have mentioned," said the latter, a troubled look appearing on his sensitive face, "that the name of Répentigny was that of an officer whom I knew when our army was in Canada. He was a Canadian of the family of Le Gardeur, who still lives, bearing the title of Marquis, and is, I believe, Governor of Pondicherry or Mahé in our Indian possesions. Should the name reach him through the *Gazette* as being worn by you, it might lead to the Bastille. That I would not willingly see befall you, dear boy."

Germain was touched with the kindness in his friend's voice.

"What should I do?" he asked, faltering.

"Remain at Eaux Tranquilles, resume your own name, and enjoy life quietly, with all I possess yours."

Tears rose in the young man's eyes. "Your goodness, my second father, is incredible."

"You remain, then?" asked de Bailleul eagerly. The conflict of the moonlight night was once more going on in Lecour's breast. The forces on both sides were strong.

"Give me an hour to think, sir. See, this paragraph does not contain any risk; the word is printed 'Réfsentigny.'"

The Chevalier scanned it anew.

"True," said he. "But," he continued, "did you not know there is a shadow over this name? Have you heard the story of the 'Golden Dog'?"

"Of Quebec?"

"Yes."

Germain's eyes opened with interest.

"I have passed a great stone house there with a golden dog and an inscription above its door. I could not but remember it, the more so that my father refused to utter a word concerning it, though it was clear he knew some explanation. It was a curious black-faced house three stories high, eight windows wide, a stiff row of peaked dormers along the attic. From the edge of the cliff it looked over the whole country. There were massive steps of stone before it as if gushing out of the door and spreading on every side; above the door, which was tall and narrow, was the stone with the sculpture of the dog. Is that the golden dog you mean?"

"It is. There happened the most luckless deed in New France. The man who built that house was the citizen Nicholas Philibert, who had risen to wealth out of his business of baker, and was respected throughout the whole town. Bigot, the Intendant of the colony, was bringing the public finances to appalling ruin by his thefts and extravagances—for we all knew he was a robber—and was driving the people to madness. The Bourgeois Philibert was their mouthpiece. If the château of St. Louis stood out as the castle of the military officialdom and the Intendants Palace as the castle of the civil officialdom, the house of the Bourgeois Philibert was the castle of the people, standing against them perched upon the cliff at the head of the artery of traffic which united the Upper and Lower towns. It was too marked a challenge. Bigot determined to harass him. He sent Pierre de Répentigny, then a lieutenant in the provincials and a young fellow of the rashest temper, to billet in Philibert's house, though he had no right to do so, as Philibert, being a King's Munitioner, was exempt from billeting. Bigot knew there would be a quarrel. It turned out as he had foreseen. Philibert stood at his door and refused to allow Répentigny to enter. Répentigny insisted. Philibert loudly claimed his right, and the protection of the law from the outrage. Répentigny covered him with sneers, and pushed inward across the threshold. The merchant upbraided him for his want of respect for grey hairs and the rights of the people. Répentigny thereupon flew into a rage. He rushed on Philibert, drew his sword with a curse and thrust him through the body, which fell out of the door upon the street, and the citizen died in a few minutes."

"How frightful!"

"Philibert's remains were followed into the cathedral by a weeping multitude. A number of us officers attended as a protest against Bigot. In the evening Répentigny was burnt in effigy by the masses in the square of Notre Dame des Victoires in the Lower Town. Philibert's son swore eternal vengeance, and had inserted the great stone over the door of the mansion which bore the figure that you have seen, of the golden dog crouching and gnawing a bone, and underneath it the legend:

"*I am a dog who gnaws a bone,*
In gnawing it I take my rest;
A day will come which has not come,
When I shall bite him who bit me."

"Subsequently Répentigny was always held in disgrace, and after the loss of Canada he took refuge on the other side of the world. They say young Philibert has followed him thither. What do you think of the story?"

Germain shuddered and did not answer.

"Are you willing to wear the name?"

He shuddered again and hesitated. Finally he answered with a white face—

"I am willing to wear it long enough to see Versailles. But with your permission only."

"Not so, Germain, I entreat you as a free man."

"It is hard. It is to give up so much for ever."

"This sacrifice is the call of Honour, which stands above every consideration. Promise to remember that in deciding."

"I promise it," exclaimed Germain, who stood pondering. "Yet, sir, tell me one thing."

"Willingly."

"That should I decide to go, I am at least not to lose your affection."

"No, no, Germain, you have it for ever. Have no fear of that, whatever else. The heart of the father changes not towards the son. Nor shall ever your secret be lost through me. But, alas! I see you already resolving to do that that my honour, to which I refer every question, does not commend."

The old man turned away leaving him agitated and unable to answer. The tide of love swept over his miserable heart and the form of Cyrène rose in his thoughts. Her eyes turned the balance. How vast to him was their argument.

"I cannot," he exclaimed desperately.

The more he dwelt upon it the more he found this a settled point. Of us who think ourselves stronger, how many ever had such a temptation?

In a few hours he had left Eaux Tranquilles for Paris.

Dominique brought him to a house in the Quartier du Temple where there was an apartment which de Bailleul often occupied: there they installed themselves.

During the morning Germain would have in some obscure fencing or deportment master whose instructions he would adapt to suit himself. In the afternoon he would stroll off among the pleasure seekers who crowded the ramparts or the arcades of the Palais Royal, or would study the externals of high life in the Faubourg St Germain. His evenings were largely spent in the *parterre* of the opera.

His signature, in place of plain "Germain Lecour" now read: "LeCour de Répentigny," with the capital "C," or "Répentigny" alone, in a bold hand, with a paraph. And there appeared on his fob a seal cut with a coat of arms highly foliaged—azure with silver chevrons and three leopards' heads gold, which he had discovered to be the Répentigny device. With it he sealed the wax on his letters. He had bought indeed a pocket *Armorial*, the preface to which was as follows:—

"*To the Incomparable French Noblesse.*

"The Author presents to you, valiant and courageous Noblesse, the *Diamond Armorial*, which, despite the malice of the Times and the Flight of Centuries, will carefully preserve the Lustre of your name and the Glory of your Arms emblazoned in their true colours. This glorious heraldic material is a Science of State. Though it is not absolutely necessary that all gentlemen should know how to compose and blazon arms, it is Very Important for them to know their Own and not be ignorant of Those of Others. It is the office of the Heralds to form, charge, break, crown and add Supporters to, the coats of those who by some Brave and Generous action have shown their High and Lofty virtues; whereof Kings make use to recompense to their gentry this mark of Honour and Dignity; that so they may Impel each to goodly conduct on those occasions where Men of Stout Hearts acquire Glory for themselves, and Their Posterity...."

In his chamber, on the day when he bought it, he left it on the table and the open page began—

"The glorious house of *MONTMORENCY* beareth a shield of gold with a scarlet cross, cantoned with sixteen azure eagles, four by four."

CHAPTER XIII

A JAR IN ST. ELPHÈGE

At noon, on a day late in October, 1786, the Merchant of St. Elphège sat at the pine dinner-table in his kitchen, opposite his wife, resting his wooden soup spoon on its butt on the table. The windows, both front and rear, were wide open, for one of those rare fragrant golden days of late autumn still permitted it. He was listening, with some of the stolid Indian manner, to his wife reading Germain's letter. He vouchsafed only one remark, and that a mercantile one: "Seven weeks, mon Dieu! the quickest mail I ever got from France!" From time to time, while he listened, his eyes glanced out with contentment upon the possessions with which he was surrounded—upon the rich-coloured stubble of his clearings stretching as far as eye could see down the Assumption, with their flocks, herds, and brush fences; upon the hamlet to which his enterprise had given birth, and where he could see, in one cottage, his *sabotiers* bent over their benches adding to their piles of wooden shoes; in others, women at the spinning wheel or loom, making the cloths of which he had improved the pattern, or weaving the fine and beautiful arrow-sashes, those *ceintures fléchées* of which the art is now lost, yet still known as snowshoers' rareties by the name of "L'Assomption sashes"; his makers of carved elm-bottom chairs and beef mocassins; and, within his courtyard, the large and well stocked granaries, fur-attics and stores for merchandise contained in his four great buildings. His wife was dressed in cloth much more after the fashion of the world than the prunella waist, the skirt shot in colors and the kerchief on the head, which formed the Norman costume of the women seen through the cottage doors. Her silk stockings and buckled slippers marked a desire to be the gentlewoman. Her dark eyes struck one as clever. Her first husband had been the butler of the Marquis de Beauharnois when that nobleman was Governor of Canada, and she had never ceased to look back upon the recollections of high life stored away in those days in her experience.

"There!" she exclaimed, as she flourished the letter at the end of Germain's account of the reception—"Presented to the Court! Lecour, when you said I was my boy's ruin, when you grumbled at his abandoning the apothecary's shop to go to the Seminary and learn fine manners, did I not tell you my son was baked of Sèvres and not of clay? At the Court of France! and presented to his Most Christian Majesty! Among Princes, Counts, Duchesses and Cardinals! What do you say to *that*, Lecour?"

Her husband's eyes twinkled: "That for the moment you are General Montcalm, victorious; though I remind you that General Montcalm afterwards had his Quebec."

"Quebec or no, my son is at the Court of France."

"I do not dispute that."

He began assiduously making away with his smoking pea-soup.

"Let us proceed with the letter," said she, for she had indeed shown her generalship in stopping where she did.

"Ah," she went on, pretending to scan the next words for the first time, "Germain needs three thousand livres."

"What!"

"Only three thousand."

"But he kept three thousand out of the beaver-skins; the last draft was for nine hundred; whither is this leading? Have we not to live and carry on the business? and you grow more fanciful every day, as if we were seigneurs and not peasants."

"Certainly we are not peasants—*citizens*, if you please: anybody will tell you that a merchant is not a peasant. There are citizens who are *noble*, Lecour. Why should *we* not make ourselves seigneurs? Who is it but the merchants who are buying up the seigniories and living in the manor-houses to-day? That is my plan."

"Three or four jackasses. Let them be jackasses. I remain François Xavier Lecour, the peasant."

"Well, François Xavier Lecour, the peasant, *my* son, the noble, must have these livres."

Her black eyes flashed. "Will you have the poor boy disgraced in the act of doing you credit? Look at me, unnatural father, and reflect that your child is to experience from you his earliest wrong."

Lecour quailed. His powers of spoken argument were not great. He said nothing, but rose, threw off his coat suddenly, and sat down again.

"Yes," she exclaimed, angry tears rolling down her cheeks. "Your wife will sell her wardrobe and her dowry—little enough it was—for my son shall not want while he has a mother, and that mother owns a stitch."

It was when it came to meeting clap-trap sentiment that trader's inferior grain showed, and he faltered.

"I will go as far as a thousand. It is all it is worth."

By that word he exposed the small side of an otherwise worthy nature. She sprang to the attack.

"*Diable!* am I linked to a skinflint?"

"A skinflint, forsooth, at a thousand livres!"

"Yes," she cried in a fresh flood of tears. "A wretch, a miser. You are unworthy, sir, to be linked to a family from whom Germain takes his gentlemanly qualities. Had he nothing but you in him, he would be a grovelling clod-hopper to-day instead of a favourite of kings."

Lecour laid down his wooden spoon in his pea-soup-bowl. He phlegmatically took his clasp knife from its pouch, hung round his neck by a string, struck his blade into the piece of cold pork upon the table and cut off a large corner, in defiant silence. But his heart was heavy. It was no pleasure to wrangle with so able a wife. He had no wish to quarrel. Only, he knew the value of a livre. Germain was really becoming a shocking expense. He felt that his wife would in the end persuade him against his better judgment. In truth he liked to hear of his son's successes, but it went against his prudence. There was to him something out of joint in the son of a man of his condition attempting to figure among the long-lined contemptuous elegants who had commanded him in the army during his youth. The gulf, he felt, was not passable with security nor credit.

Just as he was hacking off the piece of pork, a high-spirited black pony dashed into the courtyard, attached to a calash driven by a very stout, merry-eyed priest, who pulled up at the doorstep.

Lecour and Madame at once rose and hurried out to welcome him. At the same time an Indian dwarf in Lecour's service moved up silently and took the reins out of the Curé's hands. The latter came joyously in and sat down.

"Oho," he cried, surveying the preparations on the table. "My good Madame Lecour, I was right when I said an hour ago I knew where to stop at noon in my parish of Répentigny."

"Father, I have something extra for you this time," she replied laughing, and crossing to her cupboard, exhibited triumphantly a fine cold roast duck.

"You shall have absolution without confession," he cried. "Let me prepare for that with some of the magnificent pea-soup à la Lecour. Oh, day of days!"

She went to the crane at the fireplace, uncovered the hanging pot, and ladled out a deep bowl of steaming soup. At the same time she told him excitedly of Germain's presentation at Court.

"What! what! these are fine proceedings. The Lecours are always going up, up, up. Our Germain's distinction is a glory for the whole parish. Lecour here ought to be proud of it."

Flattery from his Curé weighed more with Lecour *père* than bushels of argument. The wife saw her accidental advantage and took it.

"He does not like to pay for it," she remarked demurely.

"What! what! my rich friend Lecour. The owner of seventeen good farms, of three

great warehouses, of four hundred cattle, of untold merchandise, and a credit of 500,000 livres in London, the best payer of tithes in the country, the father of the most brilliant son in the province, the husband of the finest wife, a woman fit to adorn the castle of the governor," cried the ecclesiastic, finishing his soup and attacking the duck.

Lecour thawed fast. But he reserved a doubt for the consideration of his confessor.

"Is it honest to pass for a noble when one is not one?"

"I do not see that he has done so. It is not his fault, in the manner that he has explained it. Let the young man enjoy himself a little and see a little of life. We are only young once, and you laics must not be too severely impeccable, otherwise what would become of us granters of absolution. Furthermore, we must not be too old-fashioned. Our people here are getting out of the strictness of the old social distinctions. It may be so too in France. On my advice, dear Lecour, accept every honour to your family your son may bring, and pay for it in the station fitted to your great means, that I may be proud of all the Lecour family when I go to Quebec and boast about my parish at the dinner-table of the Bishop. Come," exclaimed he, at length, pushing aside his plate with the ruins of the duck, "bring out that game of draughts, and let us see if the honours of Germain have not put new skill into the play of a proud father."

Madame brought out the checkerboard. She brought besides for the Curé a little glass of imported *eau de vie*, and her husband, taking out his bladder tobacco pouch, commenced to fill his pipe, and that of his Reverence, and to smoke himself into a condition of bliss.

CHAPTER XIV

THE OLD-IRON SHOP

An enormous yellow and black coach lumbered and strained along by the aid of six lean horses, and many elaborate springs, chains and straps, from Brittany towards Paris. The autumn roads were execrable, for the rains had been heavy, and the ruts made by the harvest-waggons were deep. The lateness of the season intensified the deserted look of rural France. Little else was to be seen along most of the route than rows of polled trees lining the highway, and here and there an old castle on a hill, or a *commune* of a few whitewashed cottages, where the coach would pull up at the inn and perhaps change horses. The driver and guard remained the same; but various postillions took charge and then gave up their charges to others. Travellers of assorted ranks and occupations got in and out. Of the twelve for whom there were places in the coach some remained during long distances, some shorter, but only one was faithful from Brittany to the end. He was a short-statured, country *bourgeois*, whose woollen stockings and faded hat gave to him a certain look of non-importance. Moreover, he was always wrapped unsociably in a brown cloak, of which he kept a fold over his lower face, and in which he snored in his corner even when all the others jumped up to escape an upset.

After several days the aspect of the country suddenly changed. Immense woods and parks rendered it even more solitary, yet strange to say the increased solitude was evidence that the hugest capital in Europe was near, for these were the hunting domains of the princes of the blood and great courtiers, which encircled Paris.

During the night there was another sudden change. The forest solitudes disappeared, the horses sped forward on fine broad roads; and soon the coach dashed with a triumphant blast into the lights and stir of Versailles, crossed its Place d'Armes and turned again into darkness along the Avenue of Paris.

At length, in the first grey of morning, it rumbled loudly over a stretch of cobbled pave, and pulled up at an iron railing inside the City wall. Here the officers of the municipal customs came out. One of the first passengers visited was the *bourgeois*, and his dingy black box and sleepy expression received exceptionally contemptuous

usage.

"Haste, beast, open it! Dost thou think I have to wait all day? Take that," and the gendarme struck him a tap on the side with the flat of his sword.

For a second the *bourgeois* seemed another man. He drew up with such an inhuman gleam in his cadaverous eyes that the customs man drew back.

"Quick, then, a little," said the latter in something of an apologetic tone. The short man as rapidly recovered his self-possession. He leered in a conciliatory way upon the official and pressed a livre into his palm. The official passed the box through the gate. The coach proceeded into the City until it arrived at its heart and stopped at the entrance of that great and wide bridge, the Pont Neuf, the main artery of Paris, where most of the passengers alighted. They found themselves engulfed in a yelling multitude of porters, who scrambled for passengers and baggage as if they would tear both to pieces, which indeed they had no great aversion to doing.

The *bourgeois* singled out a tall man who had mingled in the scrimmage as if only for his amusement. Cuffing the others aside like puppies with his long arms, the latter lifted the black box out of the tussle and started away, followed by its owner. They plunged into that maze of tall, narrow, medieval streets of older Paris which Méryon loved to picture before they disappeared in the improvements of Napoleon. They crossed the Latin Quarter and thence wending eastward, entered finally the Quarter of St. Marcel, the wretchedest of the city, and came into a lane named the Street of the Hanged Man; where dilapidated rookeries leaned across at each other, their upper floors occupied by swarms of human beings. The *bourgeois* here stopped alongside his porter and spoke to him in the tone of an intimate.

"Is it far now, Hache? It is already some distance from the old place."

"Here we are; come in quick," replied Hache. He was a bold-looking, black-haired man, red-faced, unshaven, and battered with the effects of brandy-drinking.

They turned into a grimy old-iron shop. A woman sitting in a corner fixed her eyes upon them like a watch-dog. They stumbled through, climbed a dark stair, and entered a room where the traveller, without speaking to a man who lay there on a bench, locked the door, and Hache dropped the box on the table with a thud, shaking off a cap and bottle which were on it.

The man on the bench started at the noise, and got up on his elbow, his eyes opening with an effort.

"Great God, the Admiral!" he exclaimed.

The *bourgeois* had thrown off his hat, wig, and cloak. He was the visitor to the cavern of Fontainebleau.

"It is I, Gougeon," he returned, his death's-head face smiling.

Gougeon wore the garb of an old-iron gatherer. His countenance was unkempt, pale, scowling, with black eyes embedded in it, his hair coarse and long, his mouth hard and drooping. He pushed back the grey *tuque* with which his head had been covered, and without readdressing the Admiral, got up, slowly unwound the cords which bound the black box, and raised the lid. Hache looked on.

Gougeon first took out a couple of coarse articles of clothing, and uttered a grunt. His next grasp brought up a brilliant article of apparel. He raised it to examine it at the window. The garment shone even in the meagre light. It was a waistcoat of flowered silk, sown with seed-pearls. The Admiral stood by, smiling.

With the other hand Gougeon pulled out and lifted a magnificent rose-coloured dress-coat with silver buttons.

Having gazed at them all round and grunted to his own satisfaction and to that of Hache, he dived again into the box, where he fumbled around a large lump covered with linen, and at length drew out a shining article—a golden *soleil*, or sun-shaped stand for displaying the Host at the mass. Beside it was a finely embossed chalice of silver. His eyes and those of Hache were lost in wonder.

There came just then a tap at the door.

The articles were whipped back into their box and covered. The woman of the shop below walked in. All recovered self-possession. She bolted the door herself.

Gougeon's mate, who thus appeared among them, was a small woman of about forty, with the sharp grey eyes of a wild animal.

The coat and vessels were displayed to her by her husband.

"Admiral," she said, "where do these come from?"

The chief seemed to recognise in her a personage equal to himself. He bowed and said—

"Madame, the *soleil* and chalice were the Abbey of Pontcalec's, and were politely removed for safe-keeping by seven marines of the Galley-on-land."

"And this fine waistcoat?" said Madame, smiling.

"Was one of which the owner had no longer need," he said, looking at her.

"Indeed," she returned nonchalantly.

"It was a troublesome marquis who ventured home one night by a short cut. He was one of the fellows who does not believe in the necessity of a poor man living. He saw a fire of ours in the waste, and what does he do but ride up and over us. Luckily there is no blood on the waistcoat."

Madame's smile expanded. She looked the article over, picked the seed-pearls and lace with her little skinny hands, turned out the pockets, and inspected the flower-pattern of the silk.

Gougeon held the glittering *soleil* fast in his hands. He could not keep his scowling eyes off it. Hache took up the bottle from the floor, and poured some wine into the chalice, whence he drank it off. Madame lifted the dress-coat, and inspected it with the same feminine closeness as the vest.

"It is a good package," remarked she.

"You have not seen all," vivaciously replied the Admiral, and diving his hand into the box he drew forth and opened the black kerchief of the cave of Fontainebleau. Gougeon's hand snatched the watch of the Prince de Poix. Hache caught up the chalice, and executed a jig round the room while drinking it empty; and Madame arranged her neck to great self-satisfaction with Cyrène's necklace, while the Admiral told with no small exaggeration the story connected with the plunder.

"This brings us," he continued, "to the object of my coming. Bec, Caron, and la Tour, the three taken in the cave, are now in Paris imprisoned in the Little Châtelet. What can be done for them?"

"Nothing," answered Gougeon.

"Be still," enjoined his wife, flashing her eyes at him.

"Were it I, I would go to the galleys and get away just as I did before," exclaimed Hache.

"Hache, you have no head."

"Not so good as yours, wife Gougeon, I admit; but I escaped from the galleys."

"To force the guards is impossible," said she speculating. "Who are the witnesses?"

"I fear they are out of the question."

"Who are they?"

"The Prince de Poix."

"He will not appear in the matter. It is not like your provincial tribunals."

"Several gendarmes."

"They have their price."

"Granted; but another remains, a bad one."

"Who?"

"The aristocrat who fell into the cave. He is near us."

"His name?"

"Répentigny."

"I will do what I can. We shall see what the Galley is good for in Paris."

CHAPTER XV

THE BEGGARS' BALL

That evening there was a ball on the flat above. It was refreshingly democratic. The rag-pickers who lodged with Madame Gougeon and laid the foundation of her iron business, attended. Thither thronged the beggars, the knife-grinders, the old-bottle collectors of the neighbouring rookeries. The crookedest men of Paris, the most hideous women, the squalidest tatters were on hand. They whirled and jumped furiously in their unwashed feet; they became almost invisible in the clouds of dust; the odour sickened, the screeching and jumping deafened one. Bad, but maddening, wine was drunk in torrents. A man would kick his partner and the combatants tumble over each other in the midst of an applauding circle.

Who were these libels on women, these alleged men, these howling fiends? They were a driblet of two hundred thousand such wretches who overran and menaced the city, a product of the dense illiteracy of the time.

Wife Gougeon entered with the Admiral. They pushed their way to a long table in the corner where some sots were gambling, and sitting down on one of the benches around it, she shouted a couple of words to the man nearest to her, who bolted off into the dust and returned with a red-nosed beggar.

"Motte," said she, leering, "are you now on the Versailles roads?"

"Always," he said sharply.

"Do your division watch Versailles?"

"Without ceasing."

"This is the Admiral."

"The great Admiral? Of the Galley?"

"Certainly."

"I salute you, Chief," he said, raising a ragged arm.

"Have some brandy, Green Cap," the Admiral returned, rapping loudly for drink, which was brought.

"We want," said Madame engagingly, "to find a hog called Répentigny at Versailles."

The man snatched the bottle from the hand of the *garçon*, and pouring a glass off, greedily drank it before replying.

"I don't know the name. What age is he?"

"About twenty," the chief said.

"Don't you know any more about him?"

The Admiral described him as closely as possible. They took some time in the conversation. "He ought to be in the company of officers of the Bodyguard," added he. The beggar by that time was becoming unsteady with rapid libations. He nodded, dropping his head.

"Do you understand me?" shouted the Admiral.

"Répentigny," the other muttered, correctly enough.

"Can you meet us at the Place d'Armes of Versailles to-morrow?" wheedled Femme Gougeon.

He looked at her steadily and nodded deliberately.

"Is twelve o'clock too early?"

He shook his head a little.

"He will assuredly do it," she said to her companion.

The next second the beggar fell off the bench, dead drunk.

The following day at Versailles, at the entrance of the Avenue de Paris, two nuns were seen to stop and give alms to an old bent beggar. A conversation took place between them, and was interrupted by the approach of a gendarme.

"I have found him," was the beggar's whisper.

"Where?"

"At the Hôtel de Noailles. Am I to kill him?" he asked excitedly.

"No," said the taller nun.

The gendarme stepped up towards the beggar.

"I arrest you for mendicity," he said, just about to lay his hand on his shoulder.

The beggar—who bore a red nose—started back with an alacrity unexpected of so aged a man. He took to his heels, and, with tatters flying, fled like an arrow from the Avenue.

The gendarme furiously looked after him. When he turned, the pair of nuns also had moved on. They were slipping round a corner which led into a by-street of the old town.

Versailles, the City of the Court, was then in the height of its splendour, gay and triumphant. Everything in it looked towards the Palace of the King, the long and lordly façade of which, with its three concentric courtyards, faced the great square of the town, the Place d'Armes; and behind lay those delicious gardens, groves and waters, the mere remains of which, such as the Tapis Vert, the Basins of Neptune and Enceladus, the Trianons, and the Orangerie, are marvels even to our day. Thousands of costumes and equipages made the town a panorama of luxury; and countless thoroughbreds, of which the King alone possessed more than two thousand, glistened and curvetted in the streets.

The neighbourhood of the Palace was naturally that of the aristocracy. The vast mansions of the Princes of the blood and the Peers of France were clustered about the sides of the Place d'Armes and the streets immediately surrounding. One of these was the Hôtel de Noailles. Its range of buildings, for it surrounded a court, stood at the corner of the Rues de la Pompe et des Bons Enfans. Behind it were its gardens. Opposite, on the Rue des Bons Enfans, were the hotels of the Princes of Condé and the Dukes of Tremouille. The hotels of Luxembourg, Orleans, and Bouillon faced it on the Rue de la Pompe. The Noailles family were themselves many times of royal descent. Adjoining the hotel were the quarters of the Queen's equerries.

Germain sat in his apartment, watching, over the balcony of one of the windows, the incessant movement of lackeys, mounted officials, and carriages on the street near by. Raising his eyes across the gardens of the Tremouille Palace, he rested them with quickened delight on the elegant avenues and groves of the royal pleasure-realm, rich in the golden tones and clear air of an autumn morning.

In the midst the Basin of Neptune, glittering and shining, and with its white statues, seemed to inspire him with a happy suggestion, and he trolled to himself a ballad with a nonsensical chorus, popular in his native land—

"Behind the manor lies the mere,
En roulant, ma boulë;

Three fair ducks skim its water clear.

En roulant, ma boulë roulant.
En roulant, ma boulë.

Three fair ducks skim its waters clear,
The King's son hunteth far and near.

The King's son draweth near the lake,
He bears his gun of magic make.

With magic gun of silver bright
He sights the Black but kills the White.

He sights the Black but kills the White;
Ah, cruel Prince, my heart you smite."

A rap on the door interrupted him. Dominique put his head in, announcing—

"A woman, sir."

"A woman? Young and beautiful?"

"No, sir; old."

"On what errand?"

"She insists it is business."

"Let her come in."

A figure entered dressed in a faded black shawl, a red dress, and a blue linen apron, and her face shadowed in a hood. She kept back out of the window-light, and he thought she was in great distress.

"Madame," he stammered, putting aside his gaiety, and rose.

"Monseigneur, I supplicate your mercy," she sobbed.

"My mercy? I do not understand."

"Your mercy; I supplicate it," she cried in an agonised voice.

"My good woman, I would never injure you, I protest."

"I am their mother, sir; I am starving."

"Whose mother?"

She represented the prisoners as being sons of hers. When she mentioned the robbery, he recoiled. As she proceeded, however, he condoled with her and gave her a piece of money, which she took, expatiating brokenly on the dependance of her sons' necks on his evidence.

"Mon Dieu! Monsieur," she concluded, "do you know what it is to take three lives of poor men? Can you picture what it means to a parent? You have a heart—you have a God—you have a mother."

The flood of tears and hysterical sobbing were in the highest art of expert mendicancy. She advanced towards him, threw herself upon her knees at his feet, embraced his shoes, and writhed.

Germain was so shaken that for a moment he had an intention of running for a cabriolet to take him to Paris to intercede with the magistrates in the affair. He was about to follow his impulse when a consideration startled him. He had heard the Prince repeatedly speak with satisfaction of the capture of the highwaymen. To interfere with the arrests, he saw, would shock the robbed family; it would banish him, he thought, from the circle of Cyrène. The question troubled him. In a few moments he decided it: he must stretch out a hand of mercy to this woman.

Following the custom among beggars, she watched his countenance furtively during

her appeals, interpreting its changes more accurately than he himself was doing, and at its last expression her eyes flashed with triumph.

"Go; I will help you," he said to her in an agitated voice, and calling Dominique, added with great courtesy, "See Madame to the gates, and help her in any way you can."

But no sooner had she left the chamber than a thought which angered him came like a flash, and stepping to the door, he called them back.

"You say these men are your sons?" he said severely, when she had come into the room; "let me see your face."

She shrank from him and hid it more deeply in her hood.

"The man who was a cultivator is forty years of age; you are no more," he pronounced, "how can you be his mother?"

A few mumbled words passed her lips, but he did not listen to them.

"The three are from three different families, three different ranks, three different Provinces, and yet you have pretended to be the parent of all of them. You are the parent of none of them, but have come here to shamefully impose upon my feelings. What you are is a confederate of the gang. Had you been the woman you have pretended I was ready to make sacrifices for you, the extent of which you cannot know. But if, instead of returning sons to a mother, I am to loose again three most dangerous criminals upon the country, it is a different affair. Be well satisfied that I do not immediately have yourself convicted as their accomplice." In his anger he motioned her to be off, and she, dropping the piece of gold which he had given her, crept away with alacrity, not daring to venture a word.

It was only as she passed down through the Prince's halls behind Dominique that she allowed her fury full possession of her, and as she glanced about on the evidences of luxury, she gnashed her teeth and hissed half aloud—

"Ah, but I would stick your throats, you fat hogs!"

"What do you say, Madame?" inquired Dominique.

"Nothing at all."

Germain threw himself again upon his chair and gave himself up to misery.

CHAPTER XVI

BROKEN ON THE WHEEL

The prisoners were condemned to death, in the terrible form of breaking on the wheel. Wife Gougeon and the Admiral returned late on the last night before the execution to the old-iron shop, dismayed and ferocious. Her vanity was deeply hurt by the failure of her plan. In the back of the shop, among piles of horse-shoes, locks, spikes, and bars, a meeting of the Big Bench of the Galley-on-land was held to decide the course to be taken. The yellow light of the dip threw their shadows into the recesses and shed its flicker on their faces. Gougeon sat picking at the candle-grease in his apathetic way. Hache cheerfully threw himself on a long box. The Admiral stood wrapped in his cloak, melodramatic as usual.

Femme Gougeon pushed into the centre.

"Men, or whatever you call yourselves," she hissed, throwing her grimy arm into the air, "will you let la Tour, Bec, and Caron die like dogs?" and her deep-set eyes scintillated from one to the other.

A sullen silence ensued.

Finding no reply, she rushed to the window-sill at the rear and took down an

assortment of pike-heads and stilletti, with which were a couple of pistols. She thrust a dirk or pike-head into the hand of each, but to the Admiral she gave one of the pistols; the other she kept.

"There," shrieked she furiously, raising her arm to its full height with the pistol. "That is what I say about this."

They were still sullen and reluctant.

"What have you done, Motte?" the Admiral said, turning to the beggar of Versailles.

"I have seen Fouché; he is persuaded an escape is impossible."

"Who is Fouché?"

"A prison guard of the Châtelet, and belongs to our Galley."

"Did you tell him I had the money?"

"He says money in this case is useless; this is not an ordinary business; the Lieutenant sees to it in person on account of the King's interest in it; it is robbery from the person of a Prince, and a crime against the King on his own lands."

"Reasons only too clear," reflected the Admiral. "Where will the execution be?"

At the mention of the unpleasant word a grimace passed over Hache's face.

"On the Place de Grève," Gougeon replied, showing a little interest, "at eight to-morrow."

"How many guards will attend them?"

"Six by the cart, with their officers; and the streets are lined with the guards of Paris," continued Gougeon.

"You intend a *rescue*? Sacre!" vociferated Wife Gougeon. "I will be there too; they dare not arrest me. Greencaps, I tell you those white-gills fear us people, and we could kick their heads about the streets if we all stood together."

"Death to the hogs!" cried the beggar.

"Take care," Gougeon grumbled.

"What do you mean, beast?" retorted his amiable spouse.

"That there are plenty of *sheep*[1] on this street."

"Curse the *sheep*!" ejaculated the Admiral. "Go everywhere, all of you, and rouse the Galley and all ragmen for to-morrow at the Quai Pelletier at half-past seven. Return here by six sharp."

By six next morning the Council had returned, and their friends as they left the door hung about the street corner near by, amusing themselves by striking the lamp with their sticks.

At half-past six the Council issued, shouting—

"To the execution!"

Hache ran up the middle of the street repeating the cry in his stentorian voice, so that as he rushed along the dingy houses poured forth their contents after him like swarms of bees; boys, men, and women mingling pell-mell, half clothed, unkempt, fierce-mouthed, wild-faced, ignorant.

Motte, the beggar, took up the words and sped like the wind up the narrow side streets and lanes, shouting, "To the execution!"

Wife Gougeon screamed it. Even her husband opened his malign jaws from time to time and automatically gave vent to a harsh shout.

Thus sown, it became a cry springing up everywhere. The whole quarter of St. Marcel grew alive, and an immense crowd ran together into the neighbouring square. Little direction was needed to band them into a marching mob, waving clubs, pikes, and bottles, dancing, quarrelling and howling, with ribald songs and shouts of "To the

execution!" In one thing they differed notably from a similar crowd in this century, could such be imagined. Ragged and wretched though they were, they wore *colour* in profusion. The mass was a rich subject for the artist.

Among the women at the front was seen Wife Gougeon brandishing her pistol. The Admiral and Hache were at her side haranguing the leaders. Surging along, the demoniac screams of drunken women and the babel of shouting men, as they approached each new neighbourhood, seemed to stir it to its depths and to add to the rear a new contingent.

Thus their numbers swelled at every street, and the excitement increased to a pitch beyond description. They swept forward by the Rue Mouffetard and through the Latin Quarter till they reached the broad Boulevard St. Germain. Turning along the latter through the Rue St. Jacques they suddenly increased their speed and uproar, and thundered across the Petit Pont Bridge and Isle of France, and once more across a bridge—that of Notre Dame—where they saw the Quai Le Pelletier on the other side lined with a black sea of people. At least a quarter of the population of Paris were crammed together within the available space upon the quays and the neighbouring streets along the Seine, from the towered Châtelet—court-house and prison—some distance below, to the Place de Grève, some distance above, in front of the Hôtel de Ville. A line of blue-coated, white-gaitered soldiers on each side kept the space clear down the centre.

The people were looking forward to the spectacle of the morning with intense delight.

Meanwhile at the prison doors of the Châtelet the three poor wretches of prisoners were forced into a cart by gendarmes in the sight of the multitude. A man sat awaiting them in the cart, curled, powdered, dressed; and perfumed with foppish elegance, and his every motion made with a dainty sense of distinction. He was the people's hero—the public executioner. He took in his hands the ends of the rope which hung from the necks of his victims. Another figure mounted the cart behind them. It was a priest, who knelt, bent his head, and offered to each of them the crucifix; and the cart then proceeded slowly along the soldier-lined streets, accompanied by half a dozen guards carrying their muskets on their shoulders, bayonetted.

The emotions meanwhile of the condemned were told in their bearing. Young Hugues de la Tour stood up, and scornfully refusing the crucifix of the priest, looked around upon the scene with an air of irreconcilable indignation. His companions, Bec and Caron, the men who in the cave had spoken of themselves as ruined, the one by taxes, the other by the tithe, were more abject, and clutched the crucifix in despair.

Comments were shouted freely at the victims. Applause greeted the demeanour of la Tour, rough raillery the terror of his companions.

After this manner they jolted painfully along the cobbled paving, down through the swaying crowd towards the Place de Grève. Though the distance was not perhaps more than a couple of hundred yards the poor men underwent ages of tension. When they came to the Quai Le Pelletier, Hugues heard, as in a dream, a startling stentorian, familiar cry—

"Vive the Galley!"

His bloodshot eyes strained towards the place whence it came, and once more a voice, this time the shriek of a woman, pierced the air—

"Vive the Galley!"

The two other prisoners now raised their heads, still dazed and in a stupor.

Immediately a third voice, loud and shrill, but instinct with the thrill of command, took up the words. It was the Admiral, and his third "Vive the Galley!" was a signal.

Nine soldiers of the line of troops at the point nearest the prisoners were simultaneously thrown on the street, and a score of desperate men had broken into the centre and made a rush for the small guard around the carts. A cry, rising into a multitudinous commotion of shouts, went up from the gazing mob, ever on the verge of a tumult. At the same time there was a resistless swaying on all sides—the two lines of soldiers gave way for a few minutes, and people far and near rushed into the middle

of the street. The vortex of St. Marcellese, at the Pont Notre Dame, already filled with winey purpose, pushed forward with a sudden bound towards their leaders and the death-cart, triumphing over their old enemies, the gendarmes, and preparing for every excess.

Femme Gougeon, as leader of a horde of viragoes, was rushing among them shrieking more fiendishly than ever. While some held down the guard or wrested away their arms, the prisoners were lifted out of the cart and began to be hurried along towards the bridge, Bec and Caron struggling like maniacs with their fetters. The mob had at this moment complete mastery.

It lasted only a few seconds. Drums began to beat towards the Place de Grève. The tocsin bell of the Hôtel de Ville sounded. There was a shock—a check of the crowd's volitions. A heavy rolling-back movement took place, and a public roar of fear was heard. People on the edges ran to shelter, and in a few moments more a volley of musketry sounded down the street. The crowd broke in all directions. It scattered away as suddenly as it had risen, and through the clearing smoke the soldiers could be seen closing up and again preparing to fire in volley. The prisoners were left in the hands only of the Admiral and Hache.

"Come, come," cried the latter, urging them to run.

"Brave men, save yourselves; as for us we are lost," was the reply of la Tour.

So Hache and the Admiral disappeared.

Bec and Caron lay prostrate on the deserted pavement. Hugues stood up proudly until a musket-ball broke his arm and knocked him over.

Then the dead and wounded could be counted, scattered over the scene of the *mêlée*.

Sickening it would be to tell in full of the execution which followed.

The Place de Grève was surrounded by an entire regiment, keeping back the crowd, who soon, remastered by overpowering curiosity, struggled for standing room and strained their necks to see. A conspicuous platform had been erected in front of the Hôtel de Ville. Caron was the first to suffer. At the order of the executioner he was caught hold of by two assistants, thrown down, and bound to a large St. Andrew's cross of plank which lay on the platform. The black-robed confessor knelt down at his head and held up the crucifix before him, at the same time hiding his own face by his book and the sleeve of his gown. The executioner adjusted his wig elegantly, took up and minutely examined his crowbar, and casting first a coxcomb look at the breathless spectators, brought the bar into the air with a flourish, and down with a crash on the right thigh of the poor prisoner. The agonising cry of the helpless man was drowned in a tremendous outburst of applause from the crowd. When he had been disposed of in each of his four limbs, Bec was treated in the same manner. Then the assistants, seizing Hugues, threw him on the cross, bound him, and the executioner lifted his bar in the air——

CHAPTER XVII

THE SAVING OF LA TOUR

Jude, who had the instincts of a Spanish Dominican, kept the closest watch upon the judicial proceedings against the highwaymen. He was promptly at the Châtelet at the time of their brief and summary trial, and procuring a *calèche*, sped Versaillesward to retail the news to the Noailles household. Having done so with considerable *éclat* to her Excellency, he pictured to himself an entrancing dream—that of awaking a joyful sympathy between himself and Cyrène through this highly congratulatory matter. She would smile upon him so divinely, so highly applaud his zeal, and begin to compare him favourably with that new butterfly, Répentigny, whose day must thenceforth come to an end.

It was night before he discovered her whereabouts, for she was at a ball, accompanying the Maréchale de Noailles, chief lady of honour of the Queen. The Maréchale was just then occupying the suite of apartments allotted to her in the Palace, and there Jude waited impatiently until half-past three before the young widow arrived in her boudoir accompanied by her maid.

"You did not expect me here, Madame Baroness," he said.

"In truth I did not, sir," she replied with cold surprise.

"I am the bearer of good news to you."

"Indeed!"

"Madame was robbed last month at Fontainebleau."

"And you bring back my jewels, good Abbé?" She began already to seem more radiant to him than he had dreamed.

"Not that quite."

"You mystify me."

"Madame will remember that three of the villains were caught."

"And Monsieur de Répentigny has found the others?" she cried, her countenance lighting again.

The Abbé's face fell.

"No, I have more agreeable news."

"You are too slow, as usual."

"Complete justice has been done!"

Her face suddenly turned to motionless marble.

"You mean on those three men?" she asked, with horror, which surprised him.

"Certainly."

"How?"

"Their legs will crack this very morning in Paris at eight o'clock."

"Those living beings whom I have seen, that cruel death!" she cried. "Where is the Prime Minister? Christ help me!"

She took no heed of her flimsy, incongruous dress, her fatigue, her need of sleep. Her soul was overwhelmed with the Christian desire to save, and in her sudden energy the girl over-awed the reptile before her.

"Why do you wait, sir?" she exclaimed. "Conduct me to the Minister instantly!"

"What, at this hour? In this manner? Does my lady reflect what will be said to-morrow throughout the town?" he ejaculated.

"You have my command," she answered him, motioning to her maid to follow.

Sometimes leading, and sometimes instructed where to go, the Abbé preceded her through a long maze of chambers and passages, in each of which sentinels were posted, until they came to the antechamber of Monsieur de Calonne.

By good luck, the Minister, like herself, had not yet retired, but was signing papers.

His astonishment was unbounded at both her appearance and her agitated and remarkable request.

"Baroness," said he, "these men for whom you have such singular though meritorious sympathy have flagrantly wronged yourself and the King. How much better are they than the thousands who suffer the same fate every year under the well-weighed sentences of the bench?"

"What rends me, sir, is to see human beings die, into whose faces I have looked."

"That speaks well for your heart, Madame; but what about the laws?"

"Are laws just under which three lives are set against a few trinkets?"

"Well, Baroness, that is the business not of you nor me, but of the magistrates. You admit at least the guilt of the criminals against society?"

"What has society done for these creatures? What have we who live at ease in Versailles done to make them good citizens? But I cease to argue, my lord, and know that in doing so I am presuming beyond any rights I might have. Listen, then, with your good heart—for all France knows the good heart of Monsieur de Calonne—to the intercession of a woman for three of her dying, neglected, and miserable fellow-men."

"They have a fair and powerful advocate," he said, smiling agreeably.

Calonne no longer resisted her appeal, but wrote the necessary order. Putting profound gratitude as well as respect into her three parting curtseys, she flew with it to her chamber.

"Get me an *enragé*," she exclaimed to Jude. An *enragé* was one of those lean post-horses specially used for quick travel to and from Paris, a distance they could make in a couple of hours.

She would trust no one with the Minister's order, but rapidly threw on a cloak and cap during the absence of the Abbé.

Enragés were generally to be had on short notice day or night, but this night it seemed as if there were none in all Versailles; her anxiety and impatience increased, and she paced the room in agony of mind. At last Jude returned, and announced the vehicle.

Descending hastily, she stepped into it, still commanding the Abbé to accompany her. As it rattled forward, she kept her eyes fixed impatiently upon the face of her watch. Half-past six—three-quarters—seven—the quarter—the half—at length they were checked at the Châtelet by the crowd surging and swaying around them, with the wave-like confusion of the riot, heard the musketry, and learned from a guard who ran to protect her the cause of the trouble, and that the execution was about to take place on the Place de Grève.

Jude, in cowardly terror, fell back in a stupor, but the coachman was of that Parisian type to whom popular danger was like champagne, and on the promise of a louis he lashed his foaming horse to the Place de Grève. The shrieks of the second victim and the shouts and drums informed Cyrène only too well what was passing. She leaped from the cabriolet, and rushed for the platform.

The strange sight of a beautiful Court lady in ball dress, pushing her way forward in such agitation, had an instantaneous effect on the crowd, and they opened a way to the centre. Stumbling past them, she threw out the paper she carried towards the officer-in-command, and fell fainting at his feet. Hugues de la Tour thus escaped execution.

CHAPTER XVIII

MADAME L'ETIQUETTE

The Oeil de Boeuf, the famous hall of the courtiers, had a magical enchantment for Lecour. When he first rested his red-heeled shoes upon its polished floor, having entered in the train of the Prince de Poix, the courtiers were awaiting the passing of the King. There were many faces he had not seen at Fontainebleau, and even those familiar showed no sign that he was remembered here. The person who stood at his elbow was an old officer, who had likewise entered with the Prince.

"I am come from the Province of Saintonge," said he, seeming glad to unburden his confidences, "and I am at Court to obtain a great honour for my son, who deserves it—my son, sir, the Chevalier de la Violette, a very gallant youth. At Saintes, under de

Grasse, he led the boarding of two of our frigates, one after the other, which had been taken by the enemy, and recovered them both. After the battle, he was taken up for dead, wounded in eleven places. The deck was literally washed with his blood. I am positive the thing has only to be mentioned to the King himself for him to recognise my son's claims and appoint him sub-lieutenant in the Bodyguard. I seek that for him because of the great advantages and favours attached to it. The Prince de Poix must first be induced to recommend him, for the prize is in his company; but I have had the wit to secure in my favour the Princess's secretary, an Abbé to whom I have given forty good louis, and who is to have a hundred more in case of success. The secretary, sir, is very important. What a shame how these low-born knaves rob us poor nobles, and make officers and canons. We must, perforce, 'monsieur' them, and salute them a league off as if they were their masters. The secretary even of the wife is very important. The secretary is more important than the mistress nowadays"; and the old officer laughed at his provincial witticism.

Lecour's eyes fell on a young guard, standing with sword drawn at the door of the King's antechamber. "How secure is the place of these!" he sighed to himself; "how insecure is mine!" A friendly voice sounded, and he noticed Grancey stood before him. "Follow me before the King arrives," said he. "My service is on the Queen to-day." Germain followed. The air of mystery, characteristic of the courtiers, seemed concentrated in their looks towards him as he passed. Their speculations pieced together his entry with a powerful Prince and his familiarity with a favoured officer of the Bodyguard; and his pleasing figure was judged to give him the probability of advancement, to what height in the royal favour no one could foretell. Those among whom he passed bowed low to the mysterious fortune of the *débutant*.

The door through which they went led into the great Gallery of Mirrors, a much more vast and beautiful hall than the Oeil de Boeuf. It was the most attractive, in fact, in the Palace, for its range of long windows commanded, from the centre of the eminence, the whole view of the terrace and *parterres*, which was reflected upon the opposite side by mirrors lining the walls. Every space, every door-panel here, even the locks, was each an elaborate work of art. The ceiling was covered with the great deeds of Louis Quatorze from the brush of le Brun. Antique statues and caskets of massive silver, mosaic tables of precious stones, and priceless cabinets, encrusted with the brass and tin-work executed by the celebrated Buhl, furnished the Gallery.

Quitting Lecour, de Grancey stepped to the centre, and gave the word—

"Gentlemen of the Bodyguard, to your posts of honour!" and thus taking command of the detachment, who were gathered in a corner of the hall, he entered on his duty of disposing and inspecting them. No sooner was this completed than a rustling in the Oeil de Boeuf informed them that the King was passing. Shortly afterwards a noise like thunder was heard, and the throng of courtiers poured in from the Oeil de Boeuf, and filled the great Gallery of Mirrors. They had scarcely arranged themselves when Germain heard a cry of "The Queen!" and beheld the radiant Marie Antoinette advancing. The beautiful mistress of France passed along in state with her suite, bestowing on one and another the attention she considered due, to some a smile, to two or three a curtsey, to many merely a glance. Noticing the humble worship in Germain's eyes, his face and the exploit at Fontainebleau came back to her. She stopped, therefore, as was sometimes her wont, and said graciously, "Monsieur, we do not forget brave men," passing onward again. Instantly the Court noticed the event, and exalted him in its esteem accordingly. But before he could enjoy it, the entire scene was driven temporarily from his thoughts and became a-whirl about another figure of which in the passing train he became suddenly aware. It was the cold, impassive, scrutinising face of an aged dame of such overweening pride and keenness that he seemed to feel himself pierced through by her gaze. He had heard of the severity of the Maréchale de Noailles—"Madame l'Etiquette"—Cyrène's patroness, and knew intuitively that this was she. The danger of his situation became instantaneously real. The train, accustomed to confusion, continued their advance. Only then did he notice that in charge of this old dragon walked Cyrène, her look fixed brightly upon his face.

CHAPTER XIX

THE COMMISSION

Lecour returned to the Hôtel de Noailles overwhelmed with forebodings—one of those revulsions which come during long-continued excitement.

"End the farce, fool," he exclaimed to himself despondently, hurrying to the quarters of the Princess. She received him "in her bath,"—a circumstance not unusual and which meant a covered foot-bath and a handsome *déshabillé* gown.

"Madame," he said. An emotion he could not quite hide caused him to hesitate—"my days at Versailles are ended. I am come to present my gratitude at your feet for the great kindness your Excellencies have shown me. Believe, Madame——"

"Monsieur de Répentigny, you speak of leaving us?"

"It is too true."

"Truth is the only thing I find ill-mannered. Why should you leave us?"

"Because, Madame, it is my duty."

"No gentleman should have duties. Are you discontented with Versailles?"

"On the contrary it is the place where I should be most happy."

"This is a riddle, then. Plainly, you are indispensable to us. Can I tempt you by some pension, some honour, some office? I have a benefice vacant, but should dislike to see those locks of yours tonsured. What do you say to the army?"

"It is impossible, for me."

"The army, I say, it shall be."

"Madame——"

"To-morrow I will hear your choice concerning this commission—horse, foot, or artillery?"

One did not argue with Princesses—partly because Princesses did not argue with one. He humbly retired, revolving an undefined notion of flight.

By chance Grancey entered during the afternoon.

"Homesick, just at the nick of fortune? Do you know that a sub-lieutenancy is vacant in my company? Sub-lieutenant, with rank of a Colonel of Dragoons?"

"I did not."

"You must ask for it."

"That is out of the question, my lord." The gravity and humility of his demeanour astonished Grancey, who surveyed him quizzically. "Is this a new *rôle*, Répentigny, a part from *The Unconscious Philosopher*? Are you ill?"

"I am leaving Versailles."

"Nonsense."

"And France."

"Never!"

"It is the case."

"But I have named you for the sub-lieutenancy."

Lecour looked up; but it was not enough to revive him from so deep a slough.

"I must go, Baron."

"*Galimatias!* You shall not throw away a commission in the Bodyguard of the greatest Court in Europe. My brother-officers demand you, and you must not desert me, your friend—your *friend*, Germain."

Germain went over to a window and looked out, to hide the tears with which his eyes were filling. In the courtyard below a coach had stopped at one of the doors. Cyrène was entering it. Why was she brought before him just at that moment. This inopportune glimpse of her cancelled all reasoning. With fevered sight he watched her till the coach disappeared, and turning, said eagerly to de Grancey—

"Is not the Prince's consent required?"

"You agree!" Grancey cried, embracing him joyfully. "As to the Prince, comrade," said he, "the sole difficulty is that he will grant anything to anybody. We must get his signature—for which I admit it is delicate to ask him—before any other applicant."

Lecour's pulses sprang back to life.

"Could the *Princess* assist us?" he inquired.

"Perfect!" cried the Baron.

Germain returned to her apartment. The Abbé was handing her a paper and saying—

"An entirely worthy gentleman, your Excellency, and wounded in several of the King's victories, as well as of irreproachable descent."

Germain did not guess until it was too late that this was the petition of the Chevalier de la Violette.

She was stretching out her hand to take the pen which Jude passed to her.

"Madame," Lecour exclaimed breathlessly, "I have a prayer to make to you immediately."

"Yes, Monsieur de Répentigny?"

"For a commission."

"Delightful."

"A vacant commission of sub-lieutenant in the company of the Prince."

She dropped the pen in wonder and looked at the Abbé Jude, whose face turned sickly.

And so Germain obtained a great position.

"As a matter of form," said Major Collinot, the Adjutant of the Bodyguard, at headquarters, "Monsieur de Répentigny of course proves the necessary generations of *noblesse*?"

"Here is the herald's attestation, sir," replied Germain, producing that which Grancey's intercession had obtained for him at Fontainebleau.

Doubly past the strictest tests of ancestry and reassured in boldness he was now ready even to play cards with the dread Maréchale de Noailles—her who it was reported once said, "That although our Lord was born in a stable yet it must be remembered St. Joseph was of royal line and not any common carpenter."

The pomp and glitter of the new life appealed immensely to the youthful instincts of the Canadian. The Baron detailed to his fascinated listener the composition, privileges, and duties of the Gardes—

"We are thirteen hundred, Répentigny, in four companies—the Scotch, the Villeroy, the Noailles, and the Luxembourg, each over three hundred persons; we relieve each other every three months. Just now it is the turn of our company of Noailles. Of the three months, each man spends one on guard at the Palace, one at the hunting-lodge, and one at liberty; after that we withdraw to towns some distance apart, those of the Noailles company to Troyes in Champagne." He told with pride of what good stature and descent it was necessary to be to be received, how keenly sought after even the commissions as privates were, hence the fine picked appearance of the body. He dilated on the various instruments and startling costumes of his company's band; on the style of their horses and the magnificence of their reviews and parades; on the superiority of the pale blue cross-belts which distinguished them, over the silver and white ones of the Scotch company, the green of the Villeroys, the yellow of the

Luxembourgs. These differences, he asserted, were the greatest distinctions under the sun.

Let us in our colder blood add to his description that each of these companies consisted of one captain, one adjutant, two lieutenant-commandants of squadron, three lieutenants, ten sub-lieutenants, two standard-bearers, ten quartermasters, two sub-quartermasters, twenty brigadiers or sergeants, two hundred and eighty guards, one timbalier, and five trumpeters. Germain studied the roll with great interest.

CHAPTER XX

DESCAMPATIVOS

Winter passed. The company of Noailles returned from its quarters at Troyes to Versailles. Whatever he did, his passion for Cyrène coloured every thought and scene with an artist's imposition of its own interpretations. The world in which she dwelt was to him a vision, a poem, a garden.

A change had, it is true, come over his character; he became more desperate, but if was only because the deeper had become this affection. The incident of the reprieve of la Tour, which had meanwhile reached him, sank deeper into his heart than the whole round of his pleasures, and made him anxious for the moment when he might again meet her.

The society in which he found himself flying, like one of a tribe of bright-plumaged birds in a grove full of song, centred around the Queen. Marie Antoinette constantly sought refuge with her intimate circle from people and Court at the gardens and dairy of the Little Trianon, in the Park of Versailles, where it was understood that ceremony was banished and the romps and pleasures of country life were in order.

In the month of June Lecour received a command to a private picnic here. It was the highest "honour" he had as yet attained. As a Canadian he had paid his respects in the beginning to the Count de Vaudreuil. The latter was the leader in the pastimes of the Queen's circle, a handsome and accomplished man, and one of social boldness as well as polish. Though in his successes at Court he affected to forget that he was of Canadian extraction, he yet evinced an interest in Lecour on that account and showed courtesy to him. When the Count therefore one day heard the Queen refer with favour to the graceful Guardsman, he added him to the next list of invitations.

The guests, about forty, all approved by Marie Antoinette, included members of both the rival sets at Court. The young Duchess of Polignac, a simple, pleasant woman whom the liking of the Queen had alone raised to importance, was there with several of her connections and friends. The Noailles family, with its haughty alliances, its long-standing greatness, and its contempt for those new people the Polignacs, was to be chiefly represented by the amiable young Duchess of Mouchy, who came late.

No picnic could have been more free and easy. The Queen herself looked a Venus-like dairymaid in straw hat and flowered skirt, and it was announced that the game of the afternoon should be that called "Descampativos." The guests trooped like children from the Little Trianon to a sequestered spot where lofty woods combined to cast a Druid shade upon the lawn. Here Vaudreuil was elected high priest.

Assuming a white robe and mock-heroic solemnity, and standing out in the centre of the grass, he sang forth in a strikingly rich voice—

"Let us raise an altar to Venus the goddess of these groves."

Four attendants, moving quickly forward in response, carrying squares of turf, piled them into an altar as rapidly as possible. The party arranged themselves in a quadrangle around it.

The altar being completed, Pontiff Vaudreuil proceeded with the mystery thus—

"Listen, dryads and demi-gods, to the oracles of the divinity. The decree of Aphrodite

hath it that for the space of one hour there shall be fair amity between——" Here he named the company off in pairs, carefully pre-meditated. As pair after pair were called, they stepped forward on the lawn amid a chorus of laughter, and swelled a procession facing the priest and altar.

Lecour wondered as he saw the remaining number dwindle, who should be paired with himself. Strict rules of precedence he knew would govern it. At length, to his astonishment, he heard the words—

"Madame la Baronne de la Roche-Vernay, and Monsieur de Répentigny."

He looked hastily around.

It was then that two ladies were seen hurrying into the arena from the direction of the Trianon. One was the Duchess de Mouchy; the other, of the same age and dressed in a simple cloud of white tulle, came behind her, and Germain, as if in an apparition, saw his Cyrène. Her obeisances to the Queen and company over, she turned and courtesied very deeply to her lover, who trembled with delight under her smile.

He was quickly recalled by the voice of de Vaudreuil, this time crying—

"Her Majesty of France, and her Majesty's servant and subject the High Priest of the goddess."

It was the invariable custom of the ambitious and confident courtier to appropriate the Queen to himself.

Pausing at the close, he raised his arm ritually towards the trees and rested thus a moment speechless.

"Descampativos!" he suddenly exclaimed in a stentorian tone, throwing off his robe.

At the word, the pairs broke ranks, the ladies screamed with merriment, and all the pairs scampered into the woods in different directions to follow what paths might suit them, bound only by the rule of the game to return in an hour.

Germain and Cyrène strayed from the others into the groves, until the voices grew fainter and fainter and at last died away. They walked on without finding any necessity of speaking, for their glances and the ever sweet pang of love in their breasts sufficed. At last they found a little space with a fountain where the water spurted up in three jets out of the points of a Triton's spear, and there being a seat there, they took it, sat down, and looked in each other's eyes.

"My love," he whispered, kissing her cheek.

"Germain," breathed she slowly, her fair breast heaving, and suddenly threw her arms around his neck and burst into tears. Sweet, sweet, sweet, were the moments of their supreme bliss.

THE HOUSE OF THE GOLDEN DOG
From the model by Thomas O'Leary in McGill University.

CHAPTER XXI

Two old marquises sat together in a parlour in Paris.

"Bring us the best wine in the house," exclaimed one of them, a bronzed and dried soldier in a maroon coat, waving his hand to his lackey, who responded and disappeared.

"Nothing," continued the soldier, turning to his friend, "could be too good for my schoolmate Lotbinière. Here are two chairs worthy of us, generals among this spindle-shanked regiment. Sit down in that one while I draw up here opposite. Throw off the wigs; there. We shall see now how much of each other remains after our long parting. In India I never wore a wig except to receive the Maharajah."

"Excellent, Pierre! There goes mine. Let us sit back and talk ourselves into the good old days when you and I were youngsters."

"And a French king ruled Canada."

"And the French regiments marched its soil. Do you remember the hot morning we stood hand in hand watching the Royal Rousillons wheel into the Place d'Armes in front of the church?"

"How old were we then?"

"I was eleven; it was my birthday. Don't you remember?"

The wine came in and was set on a little table. The first speaker opened a bottle and poured out two glasses.

Pierre le Gardeur, Knight of St. Louis, Brigadier-General, Governor of Mahé and Marquis de Répentigny—for this was he—was a tall, spare man whose complexion the suns of the tropics had browned, whose hair was whitened with foreign service, and whose blue eyes and sensitive, handsome features wore a strange, settled look of melancholy. Evidently some long-standing sorrow threw its shadow over his spirit.

His friend, the Marquis de Lotbinière, was a person of much more worldly aspect, of largish build and beginning to incline to flesh, but whose dark eyes were steady with the air of business capability and self-possession. The care and finish of his dress and manner showed pronounced pride of rank—a kind of well-regulated ostentation. His family were descended from the best of the half-dozen petty gentry in the rude, early days of the colony of his origin. He had by his ability become engineer-in-chief under Montcalm. Yet from the point of view of the Versailles nobility—the standard he himself was most ambitious to apply—he was but an obscure colonel, and his title a questionable affair. He acquired it in this wise.

At the fall of New France the last French Governor, Vaudreuil, passed over to Europe and sold out his Canadian properties. De Lotbinière, who remained, bought them for a song, including the château in Montreal and several large seigniories, chiefly wild lands, but growing in value. In the original grant of one of them to the Marquis de Vaudreuil, he found that it had been intended as a Canadian marquisate, an honorary appellation, however, which the Vaudreuils never pursued any further. This lapsed marquisate of the former proprietors gave Lotbinière his idea; proprietor of a marquisate, he ought to be a marquis. He determined to find some way of procuring the title for himself. He visited Paris as much and long as possible, and, by various devices, kept his name and services before the War Office. During the American Revolution he conceived the project of secretly negotiating with the Revolutionists for the re-transfer of Canada to the French. He persuaded the War Office to permit him to try his hand in the matter without publicly compromising Versailles, and received, on pressing his request, an equivocal grant of the coveted title, to be attached to his Canadian seigniory, *but only if held of the Crown of France, and not of any foreign power*. His secret negotiations at Washington failed and were never heard of. He nevertheless called himself Marquis.

The two gentlemen were united by relationship, for besides the inextricable genealogical links which bound together the chief families of the colony, each had espoused a daughter of the Chevalier Chaussegros de Léry, king's engineer, an excellent gentleman, who, like de Lotbinière, had returned to Canada after its cession and become a subject, a truly loyal one, of the English Crown.

"I expect our good nephew, Louis de Léry, here in a few minutes," said Répentigny. "He is in the Bodyguard, his father wrote."

"Yes, the company de Villeroy—a fine position."

"I wonder what the boy is like. Has he grown up tall like the de Lérys?"

"Yes, he does them credit, is very distinguished looking, with an air which does not allow everybody to be familiar. Some call Louis cold, but we *noblesse* ought to have a little of that."

"No, no, Lotbinière, none of it to white men. Not even to blacks and coolies, but certainly none of it to white men."

"You speak from India where all French naturally are high-caste."

A look of pain came over Répentigny's features.

"No, Michel, that is not the reason. Alas! I once despised a man of lower degree. My God, how could I do it again!" And his head dropped upon his breast in profound dejection.

Lotbinière started and paused, looking at him with great sympathy, a cruel old remembrance awaking.

"By the curse of heaven, I have never forgotten it," continued the other.

"Stay, stay," said Lotbinière, leaning over and softly laying a hand on his arm, "you were blameless; young blood was not to be controlled."

"It haunts me for ever," Répentigny went on; "in my wanderings all around the world I see the blood of poor Philibert. I see again that steep street of old Quebec. I hold again in my hand the requisition for his rooms. I see the anger on his face, high-spirited citizen that he was, that I should choose me out the best in his house and treat its master as I did. I feel again my inconsiderate arrogance swelling my veins. I hear his merited reproaches and maledictions. Rage and evil pride overpower me, I draw and lunge. Alas! the flood of life-blood rushes up the blade and warms my hand here, *here*."

"Calm yourself."

"He follows me."

"Nonsense, Pierre. No one is present," exclaimed Lotbinière in a tone of decision.

"Philibert's son. I met him in Quebec before I fled to France. I met him in Paris before I fled to the East. I met him in Pondicherry. He settled near me in Mahé. Now he is in Paris again. It is dreadful to be reminded of your crime by an avenger. My death, when it comes, will be by his hand, Michel."

"Have no fear. In twenty hours we can have him safe in a place whence such as he never come out."

"That would be more terrible still. Shall I further wrong the wronged? God would be against me as well as remorse. No, when he strikes it will be just. I do not fear his sword, but the memory of his father's blood, and that would grow redder on my hand if I injured the son. Oh, Michel, is the Golden Dog still over the door of Philibert's house in Quebec?"

"Yes, Pierre; forget these things. Take a glass of wine."

"I remember its inscription"—

> "*I am a dog gnawing a bone:*
> *In gnawing it I take my repose.*
> *A day will come which has not come,*
> *When I will bite him who bit me.*"

"Philibert, the son, has cut the same on his house at Mahé."

"There, there, we must be bright when young Louis comes."

"With you too, good Michel, I should be brighter. Well, I have spoken of my sorrow for the first time in years, and now I feel freer. Yes, the wine is good, better than any they ship to India."

Répentigny and Lotbinière had just begun to regain their composure when Louis de Léry entered.

He wore the uniform of the Gardes-du-Corps, the same as Germain's company, except that his cross-belt, instead of being of pale blue silk was of green, the distinguishing mark of the company of Villeroy, of which he was a private. But then it must be remembered that with his commission of private in the Bodyguard went the rank and prerogatives of a lieutenant of cavalry.

On crossing the threshold he stood poised perfectly, and and bowed a bow which was a masterpiece. His greetings, though so painfully accurate, were obviously cordial, and after the first were over he smiled and said—

"I now, sir, do myself the additional honour of presenting to you my felicitations upon the happy event which has doubtless brought you to Paris."

"Dear nephew, it is the serious state of our possessions in India, owing to the advances of the English there, that brings me to France. Perhaps I misunderstand."

"I mean, sir, the addition to our family alliances of a Montmorency."

"Indeed, I am unaware of such a distinction. Pray inform me. I have so lately arrived."

"Is it so lately, sir, that you have not heard of the forthcoming marriage of your son, my cousin, with Madame the Baroness de la Roche Vernay? Pardon, if you please, my surprise."

"Still more mysterious to me! Of a certainty, my son Charles, your cousin, is at this moment with his vessel and the Biscay fleet off the coast of Portugal. I do not understand the chance which can have brought him to Paris, however much I desire it, nor his alliance to any one here, for I saw him in person three weeks ago at Lisbon, where he never made the slightest reference to any such matter. There is some mistake, I am certain."

"Is he not the only Chevalier de Répentigny?"

"There, can be but one of the name. It is rare."

"Has he not been lately appointed to a lieutenancy in the King's Bodyguard, company of Noailles?"

"Impossible. I left him captain of the ship *La Minerve*. He has not, I regret to say, the influence to become an officer of the Bodyguard."

"This is something strange," remarked the Marquis de Lotbinière. "Did you inquire who this officer was? Suppose, Répentigny, he should be some distant relative of yours: he might be an addition to our influence at Court. An officer of the Bodyguard, if we can claim him as a relative, would be better than any alliance we possess, except Vaudreuil, who does nothing for us."

"There can be no harm in Louis making inquiries."

"I will call upon him. Trust *me* to find some connection and make use of it."

"Are you still the marvel you were at genealogies, Michel!"

"Genealogy is a power. Louis, I am interested in this new relative. Can you tell us more about him? Do you know his Province?"

"He is said to be a Canadian."

"A Canadian! Does he say so himself?"

"So report goes."

"Astonishing. How could any Canadian but de Vaudreuil—who owes it to his exceptional gifts—acquire such influence?"

"They say this Sieur de Répentigny is extraordinarily handsome and agreeable."

"But his name! There are so few Canadian families, you can almost count them on your fingers—Fleurys, Bleurys, de Lérys, de Lanaudières, le Gardeurs, le Moynes, Beaujeus, Lotbinières, la Cornes, Salaberrys, and so forth. Can he be of these? He is not a le Gardeur, who alone in Canada could have a right to the appellation 'Répentigny.' Have you heard his family name?"

"He calls himself 'Le Cour de Répentigny.'"

The Marquis quitted his tone of alert judicial inquiry, and thundered out, like a criminal prosecutor—

"Heavens, I have it!"

"What, Uncle."

"He is an *impostor*. No Canadian named Lecour can be what he pretends—nay, not even a petty gentleman, for I know the whole list by heart to its obscurest members. No Lecour whatever is on it. Who of that name is at Répentigny? Only the merchant of St. Elphège, my old *protégé*. Can it be any of his people! What is the appearance of this fellow?"

"He is about middle height, cheerful, graceful, hair and eyes black."

"It is that well-looking boy of Lecour's—no other. His father would kill himself if he heard of his son duping the highest circles of Versailles. Poor man, he was the least of the very least when I knew him first—a private in my corps. I made him keeper of the canteen. How can the son of such a one be more than a 'pea-soup.' What insolence and folly! He shall learn that this kind of rascality is not permitted by the nobles of France. Beast! animal!"

"See that you make no mistake, Michel. If he is only some foolish young Canadian, would not a private monition be well?" said Répentigny.

"There is no mistake," answered Lotbinière, decidedly. "As for lenient dealings, do you think that is the way to keep down the lower classes? The strong hand and the severe example are the only guarantees of social order."

The irate Marquis rose from his chair and paced the room.

"Villain! The thought of him drives me beyond myself."

De Léry said little, but noted every word of his uncle's statement, and it slowly took shape in his mind in a steel-cold deadly contempt for Lecour.

The true Répentigny alone, his nature long purified of pride, felt no malice nor indignation against this usurper of his name.

CHAPTER XXII

THE SECRET OUT

Louis Réné Chaussegros de Léry, that model of blue-blooded elegance, was not the person to encourage any plebeian in basking in the smiles of aristocratic society. There was an inflexible honour in him, as well as pride, which was desperately shocked by the contrivings of Lecour. He therefore detailed the story, without any heat but without any mercy, to the mess-table of the company of Villeroy.

Two or three mornings later, Dominique came into Germain's sitting chamber at Troyes and taking up his Master's service sword looked closely at it as if to examine the polish on the goldwork. Such was his custom when he had something special to say. Dominique's pieces of information were invariably valuable. Germain therefore looked up from the comedy he was reading and gave attention. Dominique related briefly the rumour just come from Châlons: A Guardsman of the Noailles had related it to a comrade in the presence of his servant, and the servant had hurried to

communicate it, with many questions, to Dominique.

Germain paled, yet only for an instant. He laughed at the Auvergnat, who snorted apologetically—

"As if Monsieur *looked* like a pedlar!"

"This is a righteous punishment for being born far away, Dominique," he exclaimed; "all colonials must be either mulattoes or cheats; the next time I am born it shall be in Châlons."

There was no parade that day on account of a *fête*.

He dressed himself in exactly as leisurely fashion as he had previously intended and ordered a hack-horse to take him to Versailles. So far he was acting; the world and Dominique his imaginary audience.

Only when he got out of Troyes and, having left the beautiful old Gothic-cathedralled town some distance behind, was speeding along the high-road, did he, for the first time, feel himself sufficiently alone to face his thoughts. With a great rush of vision he seemed to see the whole world of mankind rising against him—in its centre the form and face of a scornful courtier—*the* Répentigny, withering his pretensions by one contemptuous glance, to the applause of the Oeil de Boeuf. He saw the look of Madame l'Etiquette, the ribaldry of acquaintances at Versailles, the studious oblivion of the Princess de Poix, d'Estaing, Bellecour, and even Grancey; the mess-table derisive over the career of the pseudo-noble; Major Collinot striking his name from the list of the company; his arrest by Guardsmen disgusted at having to touch him; the stony visages of the court-martial; the Bastille; the oar and chain of the galleys. Truly they made no pleasant fate. Behind these, a white figure, veiled in a mist of tears, at whose face he dared not look—deceived by her knight, contaminated by his disgrace, her vision of honour shattered, heart-broken, desolate, forbidden to him for ever by the law which changeth not, of outraged caste.

"Alas! that it all should lead to such an end," he murmured.

By evening he was in Paris, and mechanically went to his old lodgings where he tried to compose himself. A supper was brought which he left unnoticed on the table. From time to time he would rise and walk about the room, feverishly revolving events and fears.

"And these people," he exclaimed, "will dare to say that I am of a lower nature than they. In what am I not noble? in what not their equal? Have they not, for an entire year, approved of me, deferred to me, imitated me? What is this miserable *noblesse*? Have I not seen that it is the greatest boors that have the most claim to it. If it consists in antiquity, where are the ancient gentry?—a remnant of pauper ploughmen rotting on their driblets of land. If it lies in title, what is so divine in the rewarded panderers to some unclean King? If it is genealogy and parchments, with what mutual truth do they not sneer away, and tell their tales upon, each other's lying pedigrees? In what sense am I less well-made, less brave, nay, less truthful, than that cringing rout at Versailles? Yes, all of you! the unbreakable word of my old father encloses more real nobility than the entirety of your asinine struts and proclamations? We shall see, too, whether *noblesse* is necessary to courage, for here and now I defy you all and all your powers!"

A knock interrupted. It was the *concierge*, who handed him a card. Without looking at it, Lecour replied—

"Tell him I am ill and cannot be seen."

The words upon the card might well have produced his answer. When the door was shut he glanced at it, started, and held it in his hands, fascinated by apprehension. It read—

"Le Marquis de Chartier de Lotbinière."

In the name he recognised that of his father's patron.

"It is clear I must leave this place," thought he; and then it flashed upon him that de Lotbinière must have intended to call on *the other Répentigny*.

"Yes, he would lodge here. Without doubt the reason this is de Bailleul's resort is

that it is a meeting-place for Canadians."

Putting on his hat and cloak he went down to the entrance, and in passing out said as if casually to the *concierge*—

"Has the Marquis de Répentigny entered yet?"

"Yes, sir," the man returned.

Germain started out into the night, not knowing where to go. It was about nine o'clock and dark overhead, but the narrow towering streets of old Paris possessed a rude system of lighting and the life at least of a great city, so that he felt less lonely than in his rooms, and walked on and on for several hours.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE EXECUTIONER OF DESTINY

Lorgnette in hand, Cyrène was sitting in the music chamber of the Hôtel de Noailles, scanning the bars of a sheet of music sent her by her suitor. Near by was the harpsichord on which she was about to try it, when it seemed to her that a screen beside her trembled. Glancing for an instant at it she was reassured. Almost immediately, however, it again shook and fixed her attention, but after watching it for a few moments and seeing no repetition, she once more turned away, satisfied that she had been mistaken. Then suddenly she became aware that a man was standing beside her, sprang to her feet and would have screamed had his attitude not been so deferential.

He was dressed entirely in black, of the best materials and Paris cut; his age was over fifty, and his features well made, but pinched and of an ashen tint. His expression of strange woe roused her sympathy and quieted her fears.

"Who are you?" she said.

He took no notice of her words.

"Are you la Montmorency," he asked, "the *fiancée* of the Guardsman?"

"This is a strange question," she exclaimed. "How does it concern you, sir?"

"Deeply, deeply. These are matters of life and death."

"What do you mean?"

"Do not fear, your lover is safe. I could have killed him, but did not."

She became roused and agitated, and the thought flashed upon her that the man might be a maniac.

"You would not," she said, trying to reason with him, "have injured anyone so good and inoffensive as Monsieur de Répentigny?"

"Répentigny!" he cried. "It is because he bore that name that I tracked him to Troyes. It was a Répentigny who slew my father, and blessed was the light of the street lamp which showed me your lover was none of that brood."

"You would have killed him, you say?"

"I was to do so, but it was by mistake."

"Who are you, then?" she inquired with the greatest earnestness.

"The Instrument of Vengeance. Do you hear it?" he continued, as if listening. "The Voice of Vengeance in the distance, approaching, approaching, calling, calling? Nearer, year by year, month by month, day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment, until when it reaches my side I shall slay my enemy. When he fled to the farthest Indies, there he found me; now he is in Paris, and finds me here; wherever he goes he has found me. He knows his fate. He knows that I am the Instrument of Vengeance,

that a day shall come that has not come, that this hand is the hand of heaven, and this sword the sword of the Almighty."

"You say he slew your father?"

"Yes, thrust him through on the steps of our house—the House of the Golden Dog."

"What was your father's name?"

"The Bourgeois Philibert, of Quebec."

"And who do you say killed him?"

"Répentigny."

"But not my Germain!" she exclaimed eagerly and positively.

"No, he is none of that spawn of evil."

"You will bear him no ill-will at any time then?" she pleaded.

"On the contrary, he is now on my side. They are his enemies too."

"*Who* are his enemies?"

"The Répentignys; but fear not, Mademoiselle, he is far superior to them. He shall triumph and prevail, for I shall keep him, and heaven has appointed me its Instrument. Nothing they do can prevail against me and our side."

"Why do you say they are his enemies? They are not always enemies who carry the same name."

"Mademoiselle, I see you know not *this* name," he said with grave courtesy; "I see you know not *this* name—this name of sorrow, this name of blood—my father's blood—alas! alas! alas! alas!" and his voice trembled with infinite dolor.

"Oh, poor man," she cried, weeping. "I pity you."

He turned upon her a dazed glance, a glance out of a mind absorbed in an unspeakable grief, and returning into his absorption, left the room.

She had been so keenly excited from instant to instant by the statements of Philibert that she had not checked the interview. Apart from her pity for him, the safety of Germain was the single issue of her thoughts, and it was with alarm that she sat down and put together her impressions on that subject. The mixture of woe with triumph on Philibert's countenance affected her powerfully, and the words, "You know not this name of sorrow, this name of blood," troubled her. The vengeance, the killing, the family feud, to which he referred, what were they all? "Oh, Germain," she thought, continuing to weep, "some heavy cloud is hanging over you."

Meanwhile the scandal had spread to several circles in Versailles, and was lit upon by the Abbé Jude, who, too happy to contain himself, ran to Cyrène and invented an order to her from the Princess to attend in her chamber; and when he had led her into the presence of her Excellency, he addressed the latter—

"Madame has of course heard the new tale?" he said.

"Something fresh this morning, Abbé? Who does it concern?"

"Not the great Monsieur, the Prince, my lady, but a Monsieur of much nearer acquaintance."

"Indeed? Monsieur Who, then? How interesting! Make no delay."

"The difficulty precisely is to say Who, Madame; but it is he who *calls* himself Monsieur de Répentigny. There is in Paris at this very instant a *real* Monsieur de Répentigny—no relation to our one—who is publicly declaring our Canadian to have stolen his title, and to be nothing less than a cheat."

He gave a malicious look at Cyrène, who turned pale and caught at a chair. However, the great lady herself intervened.

"Stop, Abbé; stop, sir. This time you pass the bounds permitted you. How dare you come into the presence of a Princess inventing such slanderous monstrosities against

your superior. A nephew, sir, of the Chevalier de Bailleul, acknowledged by him as such to myself in his own château, is above the aspersions of a contemptible plebeian. Let this be a lesson to you, and never dare again to enter my sight. Footmen, conduct him out of my presence and service. No reply! I am irrevocable in this."

"What is the commotion I heard?" exclaimed Madame l'Etiquette, entering just after the reader's expulsion.

The Princess told her of Jude's insolent assertion.

"It is a serious matter. As likely as not it is true," Madame said, and looked severely at Cyrène.

"I know it to be a falsehood," the latter retorted, with fiery quickness. "Those people are his enemies. I have it on the word of an honest man and a Canadian."

CHAPTER XXIV

A CURIOUS PROFESSION

It so happened that about midnight Germain crossed the Seine by the Petit-Pont, a bridge not so public as the Pont-Neuf, and, regardless of the robberies always occurring, plunged among the crooked streets of the Latin Quarter. He had not walked far before a carriage, driving swiftly away from a small lane or passage, attracted his notice. At the bottom of the passage was a door having a lamp over it; upon the lamp some letters and a device. He stopped and read—

"MTRE. GILLES,
GENEALOGIST."

The street in which he stood was a small cross street. He walked on and left it, but the lamp, the inscription and the carriage haunted him like one of those things which so often takes part in our reasoning before we see its drift. All at once it became clear, he clutched at the hope, retraced his steps to the small street, arrived at the passage, and went up it to the door. The genealogist himself, a little red-faced man with an agreeable air, a brown periwig, and a smart suit of black Lyons' silk, was taking in his sign and preparing to put out the light in it.

"An instant, Monsieur Gilles," said Lecour, stopping him.

"With pleasure, sir," Gilles answered without surprise, and returning the lamp, opened the door, showing a narrow stair.

Germain mounted and passed into a chamber, whose furniture was of considerable elegance, and the gloom of which was relieved by a single wax candle on a brass-footed table.

On the table were a mass of parchments which the genealogist had been examining and tall cupboards, open drawers, and bookcases full of his library stood around. A host of old portraits of all kinds and sizes gave rich colour to the walls.

The stately manner of Germain caught his glance at once, and bowing deferentially he inquired the name.

"It does not matter," said Germain.

"A Normandy squire," thought the genealogist, from something in the accent. He invited his visitor to seat himself in the chair facing his table, and took his own seat at the opposite side.

"I am newly arrived at Court," said Germain. "What is the best way to become acquainted with the history of the great families?"

"Not in the least likely you come to me for that," thought the expert. "It is simple,"

said he aloud. "Read my *Repertory of Genealogy*, which is to be had for fifty livres of the bookseller Giraud, No. 79, Palais Royal, and which is the infallible standard upon the subject, and is read by the whole of the Court, the *noblesse*, the magistrature, and in general the French nation."

"Very well, I shall obtain it," answered Germain; "but can you now answer questions about some of the less conspicuous lines?"

"I have only, sir, to be told a name, and I guarantee for twenty livres to relate in written abstract the history of every branch of it which was ever noble. I also, for a fee, according to the difficulties, make a specialty of resuscitating genealogies which have been dimmed by lapse of time or by those misfortunes which often make it seem to the inexperienced that such blood is ignoble—an impression which is without question in itself the most deplorable misfortune of all in such cases. I have discovered barons in chair-menders, and viscounts in cheese-hawkers," and he looked at Germain cheerfully.

"Such things do not concern me," was the haughty reply. "I am interested in a family named Lecour. I desire an account of the titles now or heretofore possessed by persons of that name."

The professional consulted a register "L" on a shelf behind.

"The name is a common one, sir, yet the list is not long. Indeed so common is the name, and so short the list of its stocks of distinction that there have been but two. One is the well-known family of Amiens, the other is now obscure."

"What branch is the latter?"

"The LeCours de Lincy, formerly a conspicuous race in the annals of Poitou and very ancient. Their device: a golden lion rampant on an azure shield."

"A golden lion rampant on an azure shield," repeated Germain musing.

"By chance the last of the de Lincys is known to me, and sleeps not far from where we are sitting—a noble so old and poor that he never enjoys firewood, and apparently lives solely on the sight of his precious proofs of *noblesse*; a food which, excuse me, Monsieur, is, in my opinion, very innutritious."

A ray of hope crossed Germain's mind.

"Would he sell these proofs?"

The genealogist at once understood Germain's position, but he would take no mean advantage; he was honourable within his calling. He merely answered—

"No, sir."

"Could you not obtain copies?"

"For fifteen louis."

"Here they are," replied Lecour, opening his purse and handing over the gold.

The genealogist's ruddy face twinkled.

"Now," said Germain, "this gentleman of whom you spoke is my relative. I desire to see him."

"To some men," replied the other, "I would say Monsieur de Lincy is part of my professional plant, and I cannot give you the information. To you, sir, it shall be different, for I take you for a man of honour, and all I desire is your word that nothing will be done by you without payment of such fees as I may ask."

"Agreed," returned Germain, repressing his expectancy.

"Then you can be conducted to him in the morning, and it must be by myself, for otherwise he would not trust you. Will you accept a lodging with me, a plain room, but no worse than at an inn."

Lecour only too gladly accepted the refuge; but before retiring he said—

"My name is Lecour."

"I knew it," returned the genealogist. "Have no fear of my confidence. I am not like the vipers who throng my profession. To proceed a step further, I venture boldly the theory, sir, that you are the Monsieur Lecour de Répentigny about whose title there has just been some little question."

Germain's heart jumped, and he sat for a moment speechless.

"It is true," he said at last.

"You wish me to advise you?"

Lecour nodded.

"With my advice, then, the thing will be simple. First quit the name of Répentigny, which will always create jealousies. I leave to yourself the excuses you will make for having borne it—that you bought the seigniory of that name or that you possess another of the same appellation, or that it was very anciently a possession of your family. The armorials show there were LeCours de Tilly; there were also LeGardeurs de Tilly, related to the LeGardeurs de Répentigny. You might thus claim possible relationship. But, as I have said, I leave to yourself the choice of excuses on that point. Secondly, we must carry out your design of allying yourself with old de Lincy, who is in such horrible need of a friend, that it will be a benefit to you both; and thirdly, you must see to the correction of all marriage contracts, baptismal and death certificates, and other registers by the insertion of the noble appellation which will then belong to your family. This is your case in brief."

Lecour looked at him, heaving a deep breath of relief, and rising, allowed himself to be shown to the sleeping chamber.

When about to breakfast the next morning, on the rolls and wine sent up by the genealogist, he found a tiny package on his plate, opening which he saw a handsome old watch-seal fitted with a newly-cut stone in intaglio, showing a lion rampant on a shield.

The genealogist had had a jeweller cut on an old seal during the night the arms of the de Lincys.

Speculating much, but saying little in reply to Gille's garrulity, he set off with him to the old noble's attic. A voice, broken by asthma, feebly called upon them to enter, and Germain's eyes fell upon, lying on a tattered mattress by the window, the last wreck of a gentleman, with whom he instantly felt the greatest sympathy. The rotten wood floor and partitions of the room were bare of furniture except a worn box and half a dozen dingy oil portraits of ancestors. The occupant's features were pinched with sadness and starvation. His hair was white. He raised himself with dignity to a sitting position, however, and received them with a grave courtesy.

"Pardon us, Monsieur de Lincy!" the genealogist exclaimed; "I have made a discovery which will be so interesting to you that I have hastened to break it without waiting for the sun to rise higher."

"The hour is nothing," de Lincy replied; "I have always received visitors in bed."

"But not always relatives."

A lofty look passed over the other's face.

"I am the only de Lincy."

"Will Monsieur lend me his seal?" said Maître Gilles to Lecour. Then, handing it to the de Lincy, he exclaimed, "Here is a discovery of mine!"

"What, are these my arms?" cried the old man.

"Yes, sir, preserved for generations in a distant colony by a branch that does you honour. Permit me, sir, to introduce you to your cousin, Monsieur LeCour de Lincy, of Canada, officer of the Bodyguard, and who longs to make the acquaintance of the head of his family."

De Lincy bowed ceremoniously, and, glancing again at the ring, examined it with avidity.

"The arms are those of my ancestors; and you say, sir, that this is an heirloom of

your family in Canada."

Lecour nodded.

"Your name is really——"

"LeCour."

"Discovered to be your cousin by Maître Gilles, the expert in genealogy, remember, Chevalier."

"You are very good, I admit," the old noble replied. "Yes, yes," he mused aloud on recovering, permitting his eyes to rest on Germain's face, "he resembles the portrait of my grandfather—that portrait on the right. There is a tradition that a lost branch was flourishing somewhere in distant countries. Maître Gilles, under my pillow you will find the key of my box—my muniment chest. Please to open it and hand me the genealogical tree which is on the top of the parchments. Very good; here then is the branch of which I speak, the progeny of Hippolyte, lieutenant in the marine in 1683: it must be this line. The saints be praised that the grandeur of our fortunes still has so worthy a representative, and that I set my eyes once more upon a LeCour de Lincy. To you these precious portraits of our forefathers and the priceless titles to our nobility and to the ruins of our château shall descend. They shall not be lost, despised and scattered. *O mon Dieu!* I thank thee."

With tears he reached his arms to Germain and embraced him, and so strange is human nature that Germain, enclosed in that pathetic embrace, began to believe himself really a scion of the lost branch of the de Lincys, descendants of Hippolyte.

Gilles departed, Germain remained. He insisted on aiding the Chevalier to dress, and on supporting his trembling footsteps down the stairway and to the nearest *café*, where they fittingly celebrated the occasion. The Chevalier eagerly brought Germain back to look over the chest of documents, and gave him permission with joy to obtain authenticated copies, and on parting, towards the end of the day, actually pressed upon him one of those portraits, precious to him as his life-blood.

CHAPTER XXV

FACING THE MUSIC

Germain hastened back to Troyes, taking up Dominique on the way. It was evening when his coach brought him past the gate sentry and through the stray groups in the courtyard of the Quarters, so that he noticed nothing particular until he entered Collinot's office to report himself. The Adjutant received him with unusual stiffness. When he, soon after, descended in his uniform and mounted to take command of the change of sentries, the crisis arrived. A large, turbulent Guardsman refused to salute him. Germain stopped, marked the man, and ordered his arrest.

"*You* arrest me!" the private shouted, conscious of his equal rank with the officers of the ordinary army; "you reptile, you huckster's son! You order gentlemen about!—*you*, Lecour, the man of the stolen name!"

"Monsieur Brigadier, conduct this gentleman to the guardhouse," firmly ordered Lecour.

He did it with so much dignity, despite the whiteness of his face, that the Guardsmen —who had all been about to mutiny with their comrade—recognised their duty, and obeyed his further commands. Their hasty impression that the Canadian was an impostor was shaken by his manner, and they silently agreed to await developments.

Immediately this brief service—which he performed to the letter—was over, he changed costume quickly and walked into the card-room, where a large company, including several Guards from Châlons, were engaged at conversation and play. All eyes turned to him. He was seen to march straight to the centre, and to stand a moment, pale and determined, until all murmuring hushed.

"Gentlemen," he began, "I have just been insulted. I have been insulted, but not so much by the man who lies under arrest, as by him, unknown to me, who has been the cause of his offence. I am under no possible doubt that all you who are present have heard the malignant falsehoods which are being circulated about my origin within the past few days. Their author, I am informed, is one Léry, a native of my country, who has obtained in some way a position in the ranks of the company de Villeroy. I wish to proclaim that I am about to demand of him a just alternative—retraction or death."

"Bravo!" exclaimed a friendly voice—Grancey's. Germain had been listened to with breathless attention, and approval appeared on many countenances. His fellow-officers moved towards him. Even one of the Guardsmen from Châlons, of de Léry's regiment, swore the latter had no right to malign such a brave fellow.

"Adjutant de Collinot," he continued, "I appeal to you."

Collinot—the oracle of militarism—who was playing picquet, rose.

"Sir," said Germain, "I desire that this matter be regulated in the manner that shall best preserve the honour of the company of Noailles, of which you are the custodian. I must explain to you, for the regiment, the facts concerning my title of Répentigny. The Marquis of that name, it is true, is a Canadian, and was, until the British conquest a generation ago, possessor of the estate of Répentigny, of which his family, the LeGardeurs, have borne the name as their principal designation. But this Léry, a man of very inferior pedigree, notwithstanding his pretensions, has in his ignorance and presumption overlooked a fact into which he should have at least inquired before lying about a gentleman. He ought to be aware that the LeGardeurs have ceased to possess Répentigny since the year 1763. Has he asked himself what has become of it in the mean-time? Know then, sir, and gentlemen of this company, that that seigniory being sold again, and again regranted by the British Crown, has long ago become the property of my father in perfect title. Does Monsieur Léry dispute the rule that a gentleman may take the name of a property of his own or of his father's? Yet, in case there be a technical defect for the purposes of a name in France, in the fact that we unfortunately hold Répentigny of a foreign power, I am ready—and indeed from this time forth intend—to recur to another name about which no petty cavil can rise—for we are not so poor in titles as to be confined to one—the original illustrious name of my family—LeCour de Lincy. You, sir, have my attestation by the herald, in the strictest form, and some of you, gentlemen officers, know under what circumstances you have seen me in the family of the Chevalier de Bailleul. I have one thing now to add to these evidences. As guardian, sir, of the regiment, do me the honour and justice of examining these papers"—here he handed him his new documents, and passed around the family seal with its coat-of-arms. "Know me henceforth," he added, "proven, by a designation above all question, error, or calumny, and noble among the oldest in the kingdom—my ancestral name of LeCour de Lincy. Adjutant, I respectfully demand your decision."

"The rules of the army," the latter answered, precise as usual, "are satisfied by the attestation of the best authority in the realm on your antiquity. The Company cannot take official notice of an unsustained attack upon you; the defence of your honour in such a matter rests with your own sword. Still, gentlemen, though not formally necessary, I am pleased to hear a voluntary explanation so satisfactory to our military family, whose duty it meanwhile is without doubt to support our comrade."

And he saluted Germain.

The company present buzzed with agitation, and many began to speak low together. Those from Châlons fixed their eyes towards a corner behind Lecour.

And now in that direction a figure wearing the green cross-belt of the company of Villeroy rose, pale, aristocratic, coldly calm, and said, "I am de Léry."

The pallor that suddenly blanched Lecour's countenance as he turned in the direction of the voice left it as quickly when he fully faced his opponent. He measured him instantaneously, and the man he saw became stamped indelibly on his mind's eye—a picture, in typical contemptuous perfection of feature and dress, of the French aristocracy of the old *régime*. The very chair on the back of which his hand rested seemed a part of the type—one of those beautiful white chairs of the period, on which, on snowy, glittering tapestry, was woven a Fable of Lafontaine in matchless Gobelin dyes.

"Do you admit, sir, that you have defamed me?" Lecour cried, grasping the hilt of his sword and advancing a foot.

"I defame nobody," Louis answered coldly.

"Have you not disseminated statements that my name is stolen?"

"I have said that the noble designation of Répentigny did not belong to you—that its rightful owners are my uncle the Marquis of Répentigny, now in Paris, and his family."

"Did you not know——"

"Stay, sir. I have also asserted that you are an impostor, the son of a tradesman of Canada, formerly a private soldier of the Marquis de Lotbinière, and that you have not the slightest claim to consort with gentlemen, still less to belong to the Bodyguard, and less again to become an officer."

"Liar! liar! liar! Léry, it is *you* who are the impostor! You are afraid of those who can tell the truth about you, but I did not conceive that you would carry our colonial jealousies so far as this. Do you persist or do you retract?"

"The scene becomes disagreeable," said some of those present to each other.

"It is colonial jealousy, of course," said others. "What have we to do with it?"

De Léry stood looking at Lecour without moving, in imperturbable contempt.

"I demand satisfaction," the latter hissed.

De Léry moved only slightly.

"The laws of honour," said he, "would bid me answer the challenge of a gentleman. But do you flatter yourself they compel me to cross steel with such as you?"

This was the cruellest blow, and under it Germain winced wrathfully. It was so cruel that those present murmured, and some cried "Shame!"

"You *shall* meet me! You *must* meet me! Besides a slanderer, you are a coward. Your company, whom you disgrace, have honour enough to make you meet me," called Germain in tones of rage.

"Accept! accept! accept!" cried the Guardsmen of the company of Villeroy.

"You ask me to dishonour myself?—to cross swords with an animal?" exclaimed de Léry, turning angrily to his comrades.

"Shame! shame!" was the cry around the room.

"Gentlemen of the Bodyguard," said Collinot, "I must remind you where you are."

D'Amoreau and the Baron led Germain off to his chamber. There they sat down, and d'Amoreau wrote out a challenge, which Grancey, whom Lecour chose as his second, delivered without delay.

Germain was strung to a frightful tension. When his companions, at Grancey's suggestion, left him alone, he locked the doors and a storm of apprehensions took hold upon him. The situation presented itself in two deadly alternatives, either his annihilation in eternal darkness, or else that his rapier must let out the red life-stream of a man who, hateful though he might be, was but a speaker of the truth. In that case, all would come out and justice have to be settled with, both human and divine. Yes, that extreme justice—to be banished for ever out of the world of Cyrène. Was it not the better alternative to permit himself to die by the first thrust of de Léry?

CHAPTER XXVI

A DUEL

Nothing pleased de Lotbinière better than shaping a policy. His dark eyes were

constantly full of plan, whether they looked at you or into the masses of a boulevard flowing with people, or at his own prospects or those of his family pictured in the future.

Upon the mother-of-pearl writing-desk in front of him lay his journal, containing, in a close and perfect handwriting—of a piece with his skill as a Royal Engineer in military designing—an industrious account of whatever incidents seemed from day to day of use to him. The entry visible at the head of the new page read—"Répentigny absolutely refuses to prosecute the impostor."

The Marquis, however, was for the moment engaged upon a letter pressing his interests with the Minister, and in which he was composing the sentence—"Thus, my Lord, I find myself again in possession of the happy privilege of humbly recalling to you my services, resulting, with those of General Montcalm, in the great victories of Ticonderoga and Fort William Henry, and I——"

He reached the bell-rope and pulled it. His servant immediately entered.

"You will take this letter which I am signing to the Palace of the Louvre, where you will ask for the third supernumerary private Secretary of the Minister, to whom you are to hand it with the money there on the table, and say that it is sent by the Marquis de Lotbinière. Repeat the name *twice* very distinctly to him, and see there is no mistake about *third* or *supernumerary* or *private*. Here it is. Seal and carry it. Have you brought me no mail this morning?"

"I was about to hand you this note, Monseigneur."

De Lotbinière looked methodically at the seal, the handwriting, and the date of the postmark.

"Go," he said to the servant.

The incoming letter was from Louis de Léry, begging his uncle's advice in the affair of Lecour.

> "The horror I have," wrote he, after relating the circumstances, "is not of death, for in that respect I shall not be found unworthy of our ancestors. It is solely the horror—the disgust—of being compelled to measure myself with a being so ill-assorted. I cannot limit myself in expressions at my comrades who force this upon me, nor of detestation and repugnance towards *the creature itself*. What am I do? Your experience just now would be invaluable to me.
>
> "Louis R. C. de Léry."

"*Peste*, what a fine mess for us all!" de Lotbinière exclaimed. "The persistence of this fellow is incredible. They say de Bailleul supports him. I shall begin, then, by removing the support of de Bailleul. Louis must not fight this duel."

He picked out a sheet from his pile of gilt-edged note-paper, laid it down, selected a quill and tried it, then wrote de Bailleul a sharp letter, as follows—

> "Mon cher de Bailleul,—They tell me to my amazement that it is you who are the protector of the young Canadian Lecour, who is just now making such a noise as an adventurer. He has at least obtained a high commission in the Bodyguard by the use of your name. I have no doubt that you are aware that he is the son of Lecour of St. Elphège, my former *cantineer*. Can it be true that, knowing his birth to be so base, you go so far as to permit him the use of your position in these intrigues? If that be so—for I hesitate to credit it—let me go farther and remark that a most serious consequence has just followed his indiscretion. He challenges my nephew, de Léry, for a date fixed and imminent. We consider you responsible for this situation. I consequently trust that you will find some way to suppress your brazen-faced *protégé*.
>
> "And I have the honour to be, sir, &c.,
> "The Mis. de Chartier de Lotbinière."

"That will end him," remarked he, and reading it over, he folded, addressed and sealed it, and putting on his hat and gloves proceeded to the General Depôt of the

Post. There he took out his watch, noted the hour and minute, and handed in the letter.

The Chevalier was then in Versailles, so that Lotbinière's note reached him quickly, and he replied—

> "My dear Sir,—Your note is a great shock to me. I have not slept nor lain down all night, on account of the matter of our young countryman, which is one of the most unfortunate in the world. He is as a son to me; and out of my feelings for him I beseech you to treat him considerately, for you cannot know how sensitive and fine-minded he is; the immediate ruin would kill him. Let us rather combine to withdraw him more gradually from his false position. Cannot the quarrel between the young men be softened by gentle means? As for myself, I am ready to use my best influence with you in that direction."

The Marquis read the letter over twice.

"He is asking quarter," he ultimately pronounced; "clemency is asked of the victor: well, I will be clement. Lecour shall first write a humble retraction of all his claims. This shall be left in my hands by him for thirty days, during which the pretender shall leave France. De Léry will then exhibit the retraction, with attestations both by myself and de Bailleul."

De Lotbinière contemplated the cupids frescoed on the frieze urbanely. He was victor.

A knock came, and the Marquis de Répentigny was ushered in.

"See," said he, "what is going all over Paris"; and he gave a newspaper passage to de Lotbinière to read.

The item ran—

"The duel between the two Bodyguards, Monsieur de Léry and the Chevalier de Répentigny, took place this morning at four o'clock in the woods of Bois du Lac. It is said that on account of some provincial quarrel, the former had insulted the latter by denying his gentility, of which, however, the Chevalier had made the amplest proofs on entering his regiment. During the duel, he displayed the firmest yet most amiable spirit, and having disarmed M. de Léry upon the *coup de tierce*, magnanimously refused to draw blood. The seconds then interfered and declared the honour of the combatants satisfied."

"Devil! *Peste!* Species of pig!" de Lotbinière cried, his rage finding too few words.

"I just now heard some more details from an officer of of the Lambesc Dragoons," Répentigny continued. "My namesake was perfectly silent; Louis, on the contrary, quite unlike his ordinary manner, made no attempt to control himself. He never ceased to exclaim, 'Clodfoot! Impostor!' and to taunt the stranger at each stroke with his father's origin. Finally Louis was disarmed, whereupon, with the same silence, Lecour handed back his sword—'with great dignity' said the Dragoon, and Louis refused to receive it."

"'With great dignity!'" shouted de Lotbinière—"You speak as though you had no feeling."

"On the contrary," replied Répentigny, "I am very sorry for every one concerned."

"Save your pity! I shall now bring up my heavy guns."

CHAPTER XXVII

JUDE AND THE GALLEY

The Council of the Galley-on-Land were gathered again in Gougeon's shop at two in the morning. All Paris was sleeping, and even the orgies of the Beggars' Ball had sunk to silence. There was animation among the Council, for in a corner, not at first visible, lay a subject of debate—a prisoner tightly bound with a rope. Each man held some piece of sharp iron, Wife Gougeon her pistol. The Admiral sat wrapped in his brown cloak.

"*I* caught him!" shouted Hache hilariously; "I caught him myself."

"Who is he?" the Admiral asked.

"The sheep that followed me. They have followed me ever since the breaking of Bec and Caron. This one was the worst. He follows you along like a lizard under a wall; but I caught him, I caught him!"

A stifled struggle with its fastenings were heard from the bundle in the corner.

"Bring him over," order the Admiral.

Gougeon and Hache went over, lifted the bundle, and deposited it in the centre of the group, where the candle rays brought out amidst it the lines of a face. A woollen gag was across the mouth, the eyes were bloodshot and fear-distorted, but the features were unmistakable. They were those of Jude.

Jude, when deprived of the favour of the Princess, had offered his services to the police administration. He was set on the track of Hache, whom he successfully shadowed and was about to expose, together with the Gougeons and their den, when his victim caught him.

Gougeon took hold of the prisoner's hand roughly, and bound a new gag under the chin and tightly over the head; he then loosened the mouth gag and turned away, without any interest in the sequel, to pick at a driblet of grease running down the side of the candle.

The change in the gags allowed of speech between the teeth while preventing the prisoner's mouth from opening to cry out.

"Spy," said the Admiral severely. "You are in the service of the Lieutenant of Police?"

"Oh, no, sir, I pray you," Jude hissed. "I am no spy, a poor Abbé only; and in the name of the Church——"

"The Church is one of our enemies."

"But I am not in orders—a secular, a reader, a poor companion. Oh, let me go and I will do you no harm. I have some money—eighty-five florins—at my lodgings; let me but go and bring it."

"And betray us all!" screamed Wife Gougeon. "No, Monsieur Abbé. When you go from here it will not be to sing."

"Monsieur will doubtless sign an order for us to draw this sum," said the Admiral most suavely.

"Immediately on my release," gasped the Abbé.

"It is more just that we should have the money first."

"But I am dying of fear. I have no courage. Listen, listen, I pray of you good people. I shall give you all I have and fly from you for ever as far as I can."

"Unbind his right hand," commanded the leader. "Is there any paper here?"

"His own book. I took it from his pocket," said Wife Gougeon, handing over a note-book.

The Admiral pounced upon it. The first entry he read aloud was headed "*Hache—ex-convict*," succeeded by a description; following it were memoranda concerning several others of the gang; further on, the number and street of the shop, and at length an entry: "*The Admiral, an individual of Brittany, who seems to have some connection with these people.*"

"Oho!" he cried, "Monsieur Abbé, what do you say to this?"

A hoarse, long groan was the reply.

Femme Gougeon came over to him, and putting her glittering eyes just over his, caught his neck with her left hand, and stretching her right up to Gougeon said "A knife!"

"No," the Admiral exclaimed peremptorily. "What would you do with the blood? To the rats with him rather, like the others. Hache, the trap."

The ex-felon staggered across a pile of scraps, and raised a triplet of planks which covered a pit. A sickening odour arose.

"Down with him," continued the robber Captain.

"But his money?" murmured Gougeon.

"Never mind it."

All the men present caught up Jude and hurried him quickly over the gaping hole, in which he could hear a scuttling of vermin feet and a chorus of squeaks.

"May the next be Répentigny!" the Admiral began. "Now up with him——"

A death-like hiss rose from Jude's lips, "Répentigny? He is my enemy too. I will be your slave. I have too much fear of you to ever harm you. Let me tell you about this Répentigny. Life, life, I beseech—I beseech—beseech you!"

"Back a moment!" the Admiral commanded.

Jude was carried once more into the candle-light.

"Who is the Répentigny you say you know?"

"The officer—of the King's—Bodyguard."

"What do you know about him?"

"I lived in the same house at Versailles—the Hôtel de Noailles."

"Then you are an aristocrat?"

"Oh, no, sir; do not accuse me—only a servant—one of the people—and I was dismissed."

"A reader, you said. Well, what of this Répentigny?"

"I could inform you concerning all his movements were you only to release me."

The Admiral looked away and reflected several minutes. His sinister countenance was watched with terrible constancy by Jude. At length the victim caught what he took for a relaxation of the cruel look on the face of the Admiral, who rose and tapped upon the box on which the candle stood.

"Ragmen," he said. The spy's breath stopped in his suspense. "Ragmen, carry him back."

It was a terrific blow to Jude, who still, however, retained consciousness, though now incapable of even hiss or contortion. He was held over the trap again, and the leader once more commenced speaking. "Spy," he said, "you have been condemned by the Galley-on-Land to the death which now yawns beneath you. Men, lift him up till I give my final order." He paused a time; it seemed an eternity to Jude.

"Monsieur Spy," continued he. "Are you ready, in return for your life, to serve the Galley-on-Land, of which I am Admiral, before all other masters; to go where I bid you, to do what I command, to inform me of whatever will protect us; to succour a ragman before every other consideration!"

"All," the prisoner gurgled, with his last strength.

"Then live."

They hurried him back and laid him down on the floor unconscious.

"Yes, the order must be reversed: Répentigny first, this one afterwards," mused the Admiral, who could do nothing without indulging his turn for brutal melodrama.

CHAPTER XXVIII

ANOTHER DUEL

Lecour's temper gave out at the irreconcilability of Louis during the duel, and as soon as he reached the quarters he commenced to return insult for insult. He exclaimed among his companions that *Léry*, as he called him, and his family were petty skin-merchants of Quebec and kept a shop in their house; that his father had acquired some contemptuous favour with the British Governors on account of his having been the first Canadian to turn traitor to the French King, and that *Léry's* lies and slanders were just what was to be expected of a breed so base. The sympathy of the company was with Germain. All took his part, and his statements were reported to the officers of the Villeroy. The latter insisted on de Léry's vindicating his and their honour by another challenge, and compelled him to write it the same day; and Germain received it during the evening. The second who forwarded it politely requested that the time to be named be soon, as the Villeroys desired to return without delay to Châlons.

"Let it be immediately," answered Lecour. "There is a full moon and no need to wait another hour."

So the adversaries, with seconds and surgeon, rode out to an open spot in the same wood as before, where the two stripped off their coats and waistcoats, tucked up their laces, were handed their rapiers, and commenced.

From the first it was evidently to be a deadly fight.

Conscious of this, however, they were both on the watch, and it was some minutes before more than a pass or two was made, and these without result. The moonlight, too, though the seconds had placed them as fairly as possible, was at best not absolutely clear and enforced prudence, for even the brightest moonlight is deceptive.

At last de Léry, with a clever movement, got in a savage thrust, from which Lecour only saved himself by extreme alertness with a little graze of the neck. De Léry was the better trained swordsman of the two, and it was evident that his loss in the previous duel was due to his furious recklessness on that occasion. Now that the blood of both was up de Léry had again the superiority.

No sooner had the seconds permitted the fight to continue, after the scratch to Germain, than the latter, stung by rage, instantly thrust and hissed—

"Son of a traitor!"

The wild passion which these words aroused in de Léry saved Lecour. As it was he was nearly disarmed, and was subjected for several minutes to a series of onslaughts, which called on all his activity and the whole strength of his wrist.

"Hound! hog! soul of muck! *canaille!* adventurer! cheat!"

Such epithets came thick and fast with the strokes of de Léry, and were answered by "Slanderer! reptile! traitor! liar!" from the set lips of Lecour.

At last, with a fiery spring, de Léry, having lost all self-control, threw himself upon his enemy, and received a terrible slash up the sword-arm, which finished the battle and threw him sidelong on the ground, while bright red blood spouted all over his breast, and the surgeon and seconds ran to attend to him. He lost consciousness and fell back, limp and ghastly.

No sooner had he fallen than a figure in black sprang out of the wood, brandishing his sword, and shouting—

"Well done, our champion! I will finish your work"; and rushing at the prostrate man, over whom the seconds were bending, he pushed them aside, and was on the point of driving the weapon into his body.

Lecour threw himself forward and struck up the steel with his own.

"Coward!" he shouted, preparing for further defence of his late antagonist, while the astonishment of Grancey and his fellow-second at the apparition held them momentarily helpless.

"I am no coward, but the Instrument of Vengeance. His blood has slain mine. The scales of heaven are nice to a hair. Let me kill him!" and the stranger's sword glittered again in a sudden movement. But this time Grancey seized him, and his colleague assisted in overcoming the man's struggles.

"It is a madman," said the surgeon, his hands occupied with his bandages; "keep him safe till I can finish this work."

"A madman, yes!" shouted Philibert; "and who made me mad? It was one of this man's race of murderers and traitors. Justice will only sleep when he too dies by the sword, like my father, whom they slew. Let me strike! let me kill him! or, if you will not let me kill him, I will depart, for the hour of Justice it seems is not yet."

"Depart quickly then," sternly said the surgeon, taking advantage of the turn in his mood, and at the words the seconds released the maniac.

Philibert ran again into the woods and disappeared.

"There is too much loss of blood—too much," the surgeon remarked gravely.

Lecour, wondering and agitated, divined, while the others were occupied, the identity of the visitant.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE LETTRE DE CACHET

Lecour had succeeded for a time in baffling the forces arrayed against him.

The next turn was made by de Lotbinière, who entered in his journal his intention of now speaking to the following persons, in their order—

The Minister,
Répentigny,
The Chevalier de Villerai,
Vaudreuil,
The Genealogist of France,
The Prince de Poix,
The Maréchale de Noailles,
The Baroness de la Roche Vernay.

He went to the first on the list and obtained an interview in private with his chief secretary, from which he issued with a large sealed envelope, which contained a handsome parchment in blank, signed "Louis." It was a *lettre de cachet*, one of those warrants by which a man might, without warning to his friends or any charge laid, be arrested and imprisoned in one of those fortresses whose walls were so many living graves. He took it to the lodgings of Répentigny.

"Pierre, I am on the campaign against your namesake!" exclaimed he.

"Then you have heard the latest news?"

"Not if it is fresh to-day."

"An hour old. There has been a second duel between our Louis and Lecour. What a pity!"

"A pity? it is an infernal outrage! Another duel? Oh, my God!"

"Lecour became impatient——"

"*Impatient*, forsooth!"

"And exclaimed among his companions that *Léry*——"

"Curse his insolence!"

"That *Léry's* family were skin-merchants."

"The pig and scoundrel! he shall sting for this. Why do you hold yourself so calm, Répentigny, when your family is insulted?"

"Frankly, because it is not altogether untrue."

"*We* in trade? Our nobles skin-merchants? Is it thus that you will allow the King's permission to our order to engage in the fur trade to be stigmatised?"

"I have, Michel, seen the ways of many peoples. I have learned to look on the castes of our Canada with the same eyes as I look on those of India, the eyes of amusement, for I find in mankind everywhere the same tendencies and the same pretensions."

"But this beast of a Lecour is a liar and impostor."

"Both."

"Then I will show you your duty. Open this envelope. You have only to fill Lecour's name into the warrant it contains, and he goes under lock and key in the Bastille."

"I cannot."

"Why?"

"He is a brave man."

"Tut, you madden me, Pierre. The worst felons are bold."

"But not generous. Lecour saved Louis's life from the blade of a madman at this duel. I know too well how that madman would have thrust. We are both mad—he and I, pursuer and pursued—I have brought it down on both. Poor Louis! have I pulled down the wrath of God also upon you? What is this, Michel, that you have brought? Consider what you ask me to do? To think that any man of our free colony would use a *lettre de cachet*, and against a brother Canadian! The thing is damnable," and he flung the parchment into the fire, where it curled up instantly as if sensitive to the flame, and cracked loudly with bursting blisters.

"Pierre, you are a cursed fool!" de Lotbinière retorted violently, and left, while Répentigny's face became clouded with an unspeakable torture of sadness.

The Chevalier de Villerai, who was next on de Lotbinière's list, was one of the quartermasters of Louis' company, and de Lotbinière, to see him, would have had to journey to Châlons, some fifty miles away. Being a relative, he instead wrote him. He received a reply, enclosing one from de Léry, who was lying ill of his wound. From the embittered sentences of his nephew, de Lotbinière learned of the insistence of his comrades on his sending Lecour the challenge, and of the result to de Léry's right arm. Louis vowed that he would more willingly seek him the next time, and that the fight would be at sight without any formalities. He told nothing of Lecour's act of mercy, of which he was apparently uninformed.

The quartermaster was an easy-going, large-framed man who regarded most things as an occasion for drinking and joking. He willingly undertook to assist de Lotbinière to act for the de Léry party among the Guardsmen, and to take charge of any petitions which might need to be presented to a military court. He protested good-humouredly, however, that "he was a *sabreur*, not an advocate." De Lotbinière, having made these arrangements, went to Versailles and saw the Count de Vaudreuil. The Count blandly alleged himself "ready to oblige Monsieur de Lotbinière in any manner in his power."

The Genealogist of France was much interested in the Marquis's story, and certified in writing that the family name of the Répentignys was not Lecour, but Le Gardeur.

The Marquis now went to the Prince. He asked for a private audience and was admitted. Though Poix had not the remotest idea in the world who he was, yet he received him with obliging courtesy, combined with a certain customary hauteur.

"'Lecour,' you say, Monsieur? Is that the name?"

"Yes, Prince," the Marquis returned.

"I do not know any such person."

"His stolen appellation is Lecour de Répentigny."

"Répentigny? ah, I know, I know."

"As I have said, sir, the man is a cheat. Here in my hands are proofs of it, and I, myself, am personal witness against him."

"Ah, this is serious, this is serious," repeated the Prince in a disturbed tone.

"Your Excellency will, then, order his expulsion from the company?"

"Ah, you ask much, you ask much. I refer you to my adjutant. He manages those things," and with a slightly impatient gesture the Prince bowed, and de Lotbinière knew that he must go.

He next proceeded to Troyes to see Collinot. That officer examined particularly the Genealogist's certificate, went to the records, compared it with the former attestation, arrived at a conclusion. He treated the matter as of its full importance, and the only respect in which he disappointed de Lotbinière was that he did not share the latter's violent feelings.

"The young man has been an efficient officer," he said regretfully, "and his conduct that of a gentleman. He is very unfortunate at an age when a man feels such misfortune keenly. It is regrettable for all of us. But, no doubt, we must do our duty."

"And preserve our young officers from consorting with the scum of the people, Monsieur Adjutant."

"He is scarcely scum, sir. One must allow that in point of form he is *parfaitement bien*. It is likely that the fortune of his father has led him quite naturally to believe himself fit for the regiment."

"He ought, instead, to have been standing aproned in a pork-market. He deserves the galleys."

"You are interested, Monsieur, and look at the affair with personal annoyance. As for me, I am guided solely by the royal ordinance requiring proofs of sixteen quarterings for entry into the Bodyguard. If Monsieur Lecour—who is now de Lincy—not Répentigny—cannot show them satisfactorily, he does not fulfil the ordinance, that is all. He is to-day at a shooting party."

"This Lincy name is a worse imposture than the other. I tell you, Monsieur Adjutant, it is *impossible* for such folk to have nobility."

"Pardon me, sir," said Collinot, taking out his watch. "May I invite you to review the force?"

"I must deny myself this great honour, inasmuch as I am not ready with your new infantry drill," returned de Lotbinière, intensely flattered at an invitation to review Bodyguards.

Besides, he had at last, he said to himself, effected his point. So he ordered his carriage and departed for Paris to pursue the rest of his plans.

CHAPTER XXX

THE HEAVENS FALL

When Germain returned from the shooting party, he was sent for from Collinot's office, and upon his entering, the door was closed.

As the closing of Collinot's door was an unusual proceeding, and was known among the regiment to denote something very particular, speculation and excitement immediately became rife, and the news that Lecour was closeted with Collinot spread like wildfire.

Germain, rosy and active, saluted his superior gallantly. The latter returned the

action with a non-committal countenance.

"A gentleman calling himself the Marquis de Lotbinière has just been here. Do you know him?"

Germain braced himself.

"I have heard of him in Canada," he said, "but his Marquisate is not believed in there."

"You Canadians have strange tales of each other. He is apparently a very respectable man, and supported his allegations about you—which are in substance the same as those made by Monsieur de Léry—by a certificate from the Genealogist that the family name of Répentigny is LeGardeur, not Lecour."

"Did he admit that he is an uncle of my adversary, de Léry, and has the natural malice against me of a relative of my antagonist?"

"I have made due allowance for his bias, Monsieur Lecour."

Germain's heart sank at the form of the name in which he was addressed.

"The difficulty," proceeded the Adjutant, "is in your papers; for, however the truth may stand as to your position, your proofs to the regiment were made under the title of Répentigny, a designation which you have abandoned. My position, as representing and protecting the regiment, therefore, is that I hold no proper proofs that you possess the generations of descent which you are aware are necessary. I now have the honour of calling upon you to produce such proofs."

"Very well, sir," answered Germain, and leaving the room, strode to his quarters and returned with the de Lincy copies.

Collinot scanned them carefully. Germain, waiting silently, noticed that on the whole he was not displeased.

"Only the past two generations are lacking," he pronounced, "your certificate of baptism and those of your father and mother, together with their marriage contract. Why are they not supplied?"

"I have no doubt they can be. With your permission, I shall send at once to Canada for them."

But Collinot was silent again, looking over the documents.

The story de Lotbinière was likely to have told crossed Germain's mind, and he went on—

"I have no doubt the enemies of my family mentioned every disadvantageous fact. If it is that my father is in trade, let me say yes—as the greatest merchant in his country and the equal of any one there—and let me add that the decrees of our King always permitted *noblesse* in Canada to engage in commerce, from the circumstances of the country, just as those of Brittany are permitted to enter the commerce of the seas. That is therefore no derogation."

"It is not that which troubles me, lieutenant," Collinot answered, "but the certificates in themselves are incomplete in lacking the links I mention. Without them," he said, rising to his feet and looking at Lecour calmly, "you can no longer serve in the Prince's company."

The blow fell hard.

Germain sank down in a chair and turned his face aside.

"My God, she is lost to me," he murmured. Collinot caught the words. The natural kindness of the man overcame the formality of the disciplinarian, and he went and placed a hand upon Lecour's shoulder.

"You know, sir," he said kindly, "that one is not master of his birth, but of his conduct. Yours has been blameless. I sympathise with you greatly."

"Anything but this! Ruined, ruined—what ruin and disgrace!"

"Not so, my boy; there is no disgrace in being less wellborn—it is only that one

possesses a few privileges the less."

"How am I to leave, sir? Shall I not have permission to seek my proofs in Canada and return?"

"If you can obtain the proofs you shall have your place again."

"Grant me but a few days to arrange my affairs."

"In your own interest let me advise you not to make it more than twenty-four hours."

"Twenty-four hours?"

"Twenty-four."

"Twenty-four hours!" repeated Lecour, dazed. "Can I have the privilege, then, at least, of wearing the uniform until I leave France?"

"That cannot be."

"May I ask but a certificate of having served, with honour in the company?" he gasped.

"It is due solely to those whose original right to have entered the corps is without dispute."

"Alas! all who have known me in my former state will ask why I have ceased to retain it." Pallor and despair seemed to have transformed him.

"Were I not a soldier," sighed Collinot, making a great effort to repress his own feelings, "I should under these painful circumstances most gladly write you a certificate. Remember me ever as one who would have liked to be your friend."

"Oh, sir, you have been too kind to me," Lecour cried, in a voice of agony, his eyes running tears; and grasping the hand of the Adjutant, he wrung it affectionately, and could speak no further. Sobering himself and turning quickly, he made his exit. Many curious eyes furtively followed him and guessed the secret as he strode along to his apartment.

Grancey came to him in a few moments, furious.

"The whole company holds there was never such a conspiracy—what can we do?"

"Nothing—nothing—nothing."

CHAPTER XXXI

ONE DEFENDER

Cyrène passed down her favourite oleander path at sunset to the great vinery in the Noailles garden. The oleanders were covered with their roseate blooms, and their beauty and that of the garden in the soft sunset light mysteriously deepened with an undefined regret the sadness and fears which were hers of late.

"Why do you not come to me, Germain? Why have you not at least written me a few words in reply to mine? Only a few words, my dear one—only the least line," she murmured to herself.

She passed on to the vinery, where sitting down under the interlaced green she became still more abstracted.

"Oh Germain, some great danger is above you. Who are those enemies of whom the Instrument of Vengeance spoke? What is this web of murder and madness in which they are involving you? I pray God to keep you safe, my love. Ah, what bliss to have you mine, *mine*, and be yours. At last, at last we shall have somewhere a sweet *chez nous* to ourselves."

The loveliness of the oleander blossoms and the sunset over the garden made a

harmony with her dream. To the widow who had been no wife, the girl who had seen no girlhood, the child who had never had a home, the lady who was losing her life in gilded servitude, that dream was dear.

The sound of a silver bell broke in, the signal that she was in request by old Madame l'Etiquette. A sigh escaped her, and she hastened to the house.

To de Lotbinière, to have effected his point had not been enough. To humiliate Lecour with the ladies with whom he had ingratiated himself was yet, in the opinion of this vindicator of public interests, demanded by justice to society, so he had wended his way that afternoon to the Hôtel de Noailles and applied at the portal of the Maréchale. There he was kept waiting while his name was sent in.

"The person is not on my list," she said. "Present my regrets." Covering his irritation with a smiling face, as courtiers must ever learn to do, he asked for ink and paper and patiently wrote her on the spot a respectful and pointed warning on the danger to Cyrène. His missive struck the dominant chord in the breast of Madame.

"What," she cried on reading it "de Lincy a cheat! No questionable person shall ally himself with the royal blood of the Noailles and Montmorencys! This is what comes of relaxing the old rules, the old customs, and admitting new people. It is what comes of this Austrian Queen." Ah—she glanced around quickly to see that none but her lady-in-waiting heard those last words.

"Show the man in," she added. The lady-in-waiting transmitted the order. De Lotbinière appeared, and at Madame's request began his narrative.

He had not proceeded far when the Maréchale sent for Cyrène. It was the kind of opportunity in which de Lotbinière gloried. As soon as he commenced she scanned him with intense attention, saying to herself, "This is one of Germain's enemies." As he told his tale he too watched her closely. The courage with which she listened to the development of a story so deeply affecting her honour and her heart, and her perfect dignity, unexpected by him, baffled him, from point to point of his careful narration, where he had expected to produce effects.

"Of all women," he thought, "she is the strangest. Are my skill and effort to be wasted on a girl?" But guessing correctly all at once and rightly attributing her reticence to preparation and distrust of himself, he stopped and said—

"He has doubtless told Madame a very different version."

"He has told me nothing of these things, sir," she answered quietly.

De Lotbinière was nonplussed, but he had not yet come to the duels. He now mentioned them.

"There have been two duels."

"*Mon dieu!*"

"I hope that your nephew punished him sharply," La Maréchale interrupted.

"The brute, unfortunately, has wounded my nephew, Madame."

"Is your brother-in-law, the Marquis de Répentigny, whom you mentioned, he who killed a man named Philibert in Quebec?" now demanded Cyrène.

It was as if a thunderbolt struck de Lotbinière.

"Who spoke to you of that?" he exclaimed hastily.

"Do you hear?" Cyrène cried excitedly, turning to La Maréchale. "Do you hear this admission of murder?"

"It was no murder!" de Lotbinière interrupted, trembling with feeling.

"You apparently wish some finer term to describe it," she retorted. "Sir, any charges made to me against my affianced must be supported by individuals more free of terrible records. *I* shall trust his innocence through eternity." And with these words, uttered frigidly, she left the room, the Maréchale looking after her astonished.

Now Germain, having fled from Troyes, came to the hôtel. He entered one of the

great salons, and, miserable and desperate, sent up his name to Cyrène for a last interview. While he waited to be ushered up, to his surprise, she herself appeared at the end of the salon, advancing with a tearful expression. The sight of her, dragged down into his pit of misery, sent him distracted. All was forgotten for a few moments, as she tearfully clasped him in her arms and murmured—

"Germain, you are no adventurer, no Sillon. Though all the world be against you, I shall die with you."

Intoxicated with surprise that she did not repel him, yet overcome with the belief that it was to be their last embrace, he lost himself for the time in mingled remorse and mad bliss. They clung to each other as so many others have clung in those short moments which are the attar of a lifetime. At length he grew more conscious, and the delirium of holding that face and golden hair to his breast triumphed over the pain of guilt. At that moment they simultaneously perceived a shadow and started.

"Baroness," said a severe voice, "you make me blush for my house."

Cyrène and Germain sprang apart in alarm.

"*You*," Madame l'Etiquette said, addressing Germain, "have dared to enact such a scene here. You, the apothecary's apprentice——"

"Madame," Cyrène cried, her eyes flashing, "withdraw those words! I demand it!"

The situation aroused all his faculties.

"Madame la Maréchale," said he quite coolly, "has taken, I observe, the word of my enemies without asking for the facts. I shall not fatigue her with arguments, as I am on my way to produce the proofs."

With two profound bows, the first to Cyrène, the other to Madame de Noailles, he withdrew.

CHAPTER XXXII

A STRONG PROOF

Remorse in all its horror seized him with the last glance of Cyrène's tearful eyes. He could not but feel the demand of those eyes for fine honour in the man on whom they rested in love. She was to him the white flower sprung of the truth and fearlessness, as well as the grace, of long descended chivalry, and who must not be associated with anything base. He had never before fully faced his Répentigny impersonation in the aspect of a falsity to her. Now, after his direct lie to her, self-contempt threatened to altogether overwhelm him.

He mechanically went on to Paris, whither Dominique had gone before to secure his lodging. The evening of his arrival was spent in grief.

"The fault is mine, but why?" he asked himself with impatient gloom. "Why has Providence so unfairly divided the honours and the guilt of life? Why are there rich and poor? Why good and bad? Why should an unfortunate like me, who has meant only well, be entangled in such a mesh of accidents? Why were my eyes designed but to see, my breast to love, my Cyrène, at such frightful cost?"

Next morning, the sunlight gilding the pinnacles of the Louvre, the cries of Paris, the fascinating dash of the metropolis, brought back to him his gift of animal spirits. Were he, he thought, but to successfully outride his present troubles, he would accept a post which had been offered him, as commandant of a cadet school on the far away estates of the Duke de la Rochefoucault, and thither retire quietly with Cyrène, away from the jealousy and criticism of the Court, and make open confession to her.

By appointment made at Troyes he went to meet Grancey in the Palais Royal garden.

Germain took his friend's arm and led him along the antiquated quarter of the Marais, where he had secured a room in a quiet neighbourhood for the old Chevalier

de Lincy. His heart beat lest anything should have occurred to arrest the old noble's illusion. His intention was to introduce Grancey into the apartment of the old man, and there to let him gather from the lips of the occupant words that would link Germain with a house so ancient and respected. They arrived at the door, rang, and demanded of the landlady whether the Chevalier was in. She looked at them curiously as she held the door open.

"Is one of you Monsieur de Lincy's cousin!" she inquired.

"I, Madame," replied he.

"Come in, sir. Have you not received the letter posted yesterday by the priest?"

"By the priest?" Germain stopped, with his friend, on the threshold of the chamber into which she had led them. "Is he ill, then?"

"The saints protect him, sir, he has finished his last illness. He lies upstairs in his beautiful mortuary chamber draped by the Sisters of the Hospital."

"Poor old de Lincy," he murmured, yet could hardly realise it.

"Are you not Monsieur de Lincy, too, sir?" she inquired.

"Certainly," he replied quickly, checking himself, "but he was the head of the house. Alas! let me see him."

She led them up two flights and into the death chamber, which was heavily hung with black and the windows darkened. Two tapers at the head and two at the feet showed where the corpse lay, and near by stood an altar with lights and flowers, beside which two Black Nuns knelt motionlessly. The visitors crossed the room with bowed heads and looked down at the face of the dead. It had lost its worn look and was at peace. A faint smile, as of proud pleasure, rested on the lips, and Lecour knew that smile was for him. It brought him a strange emotion; he felt as if, though condemned by so many of the living, he was loved by the dead; and a great tenderness towards his pathetic relative welled in his heart. He bent over the face and earnestly wept.

"He loved you, Monsieur le Chevalier," the landlady said, weeping also, "and bade the notary leave with me a copy of his will for you. When Monsieur descends, I shall give it to him."

"Did he talk much before he died?"

"A great deal. The confessor said there was a high fever. He talked of a castle upon a mountain—and about you, Monsieur, a good deal. He was not strong when he came to us: I said from the beginning 'He is on the short way to heaven': he seemed like one who had suffered too much."

They followed her out of the chamber. Lecour could not help some eagerness concerning the will, and perusing it closely when she handed it to him, found it bequeathed him all the testator's possessions. He passed the deed silently to his friend the Baron, who read the first half and caught the drift.

"Your proof is incontestable," he said briefly.

"The difficulty is but the completion of my proofs. I have to go to Canada for that. But assure the company of my return."

"We shall appeal in a body to the Prince."

"I pray you not."

"What can we do for you, then?"

"Thank the others. Invite all my friends in Troyes to a banquet in my name this day week, at which you will preside for me. Spare no expense. You shall be witness for me while I am absent in Canada."

"If to serve you is the programme, I shall live happy."

The Baron returned to Troyes and, duly presiding at the dinner given to the Guards in Germain's name, related excitedly what he had seen.

The young men heard the story with outbursts of delight, drank Lecour's health standing on their chairs, heaped his place with roses, sang over and over a chorus in his honour, and parted swearing vehemently that the dismissal of such a good fellow was a wrong to the company of Noailles concocted as an insult to the whole of them by the rival company of Villeroy.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE REGISTER OF ST. GERMAIN-DES-PRÉS

A hazy hope concerning his descent had haunted Lecour for some months past. That the Chevalier de Lincy was really in some manner his relative became his belief. He argued that his own fitness for aristocratic society must have a hereditary explanation and that, were he able to trace his lineage a short distance backward he would discover some higher status fallen from by his family through misfortune. On the day of de Grancey's departure, he began to place together the straws of information which might guide him. He had once heard his father speak of having left France at the age of twelve years. Was he a kidnapped and deported heir? Was he a cadet of some reduced family?

Again, on one of the rare occasions when Lecour senior referred to the past—a winter's evening chat by the fire-side with the curé of the parish—he had described his boyish recollection of the interior of the Paris church of St. Germain-des-Prés, then the family church of his family. Was his own name taken from its patron saint? Would its registers contain records of the Lecours?

He knew at least his father's age—born in 1736, it would make him—yes, and also his birth month, June. Here were straws to start by.

He lost no time in crossing the Seine and seeking the church. As he passed the middle of the Pont Neuf—near the equestrian statue of Henry IV., a small man, meanly dressed, glided out of the shadow of a vehicle, and moved stealthily after him, his motions wary as a cat's. This man was Jude.

Germain arrived at the edifice, which adjoined the great abbey of the same name, and scanned its ancient spire and dilapidated façade for some moments before he entered, full of thought—"for here," said he "is the temple of my forefathers—the visible link that binds my origin to France." He passed in, regarding every pillar and ornament of its quaint, dark, Norman interior with the same fascination, and traversing its length, came to the sacristy behind the high altar. A young priest was standing there overlooking the operations of some workmen, and muttering his breviary.

"Messire, I am seeking information for which I wish to examine your parish registers," said Germain.

"It is an honour, sir," replied the priest. "What is the year?"

"1736."

"The books are here, sir," opening a cupboard in which various large volumes leaned against each other on the shelves. "This is 1736. May I assist you in finding the entry?"

"I am not sure what I need."

"I fear Monsieur will not find some of the entries easy reading."

"Time is not important to me, father," answered Germain cheerfully. "May I take the register to this table near the light?"

"With pleasure; but should the handwriting be difficult, speak to me. I am the archivist of the abbey." And thus saying he turned back to his workmen.

Lecour examined the volume with beating heart. He nervously fingered the leaves at first without receiving any distinct impression of the contents, his brain was so full of

other thoughts. At last he noticed that the entries were regular and consecutive, and though written in different hands, were clear to follow. He reached the month of June, read its entries slowly, one after another—a birth, a marriage, a death, then another death, then a birth again, and so on, with the names of the parties and their parents, some high, some low, until he came to nearly the end, when suddenly one seemed to stare at him out of the page.

"The 27th,—Took place the baptism of François Xavier, tenth son of *Pierre Lecour, master-butcher, of this Parish*, and of his wife, Marie LeCoq. He had for godfather, Jean LeCoq, tinker, and for godmother, Thérèse, wife of Louis Bossu, Charcoal vendor."

From the moment he read the word "master-butcher," his head swam, his heart sank, he felt a blow as if it were the stunning thud of a heavy weight upon it, and an unconscious groan escaped him.

"Monsieur is sick," exclaimed the priest to his men. "Bring wine."

"No, father," returned Germain, slowly rising, and steadying himself, "it is nothing," and he walked forward and left the sacristy.

The room had two doors leading inward to the high altar, one on each side. Just as Lecour passed out by the left one, Jude glided in by that on the right, and crossing boldly to the open book, pounced upon the entry of baptism.

CHAPTER XXXIV

AT QUEBEC

Germain was now committed to the most desperate courses to maintain his assumed character. He left France, and by way of London, took ship for his colony. The Canada of 1788 was a quaint community shut away out of the great world. It consisted of a few widely separated hamlets, keeping in touch with each other by means of a long road on each shore of the St. Lawrence, and having as chief cities the two tiny walled towns of Quebec and Montreal. It possessed a population of perhaps a hundred and fifty thousand souls, all French except a couple of British regiments, and a handful of officials and tradesmen. Some bodies of refugee Loyalists of the American Revolution had recently also come in. The driblet of population thus strung scantily along the banks of the vast river seemed as nothing in the mighty forest by which it was surrounded. The country therefore had in great part the virgin look of the primeval solitude.

After an eight weeks' stormy voyage in the London barque *Chatham*, Germain cast his eyes with relief on the tawny, lion-like rock of Quebec, with the fortress above and the little town about its feet, and straggling up its sides. The vessel at length drew up to moorings, the anchor dropped, and a boat came out for the passengers. He disembarked with his boxes, and inquired for a good lodging in the Upper Town. A *calèche*-driver undertook to find him one, and leaving the heavier luggage with a merchant near by, lashed his brisk little horse with the ends of the reins, and inspired it into a cat-like climb by which Lecour was whisked up the precipitous windy street called Mountain Hill, from the busy Lower to the aristocratic and military Upper Town.

After some searching they found a certain Madame Langlois, a widow who lived in a comfortable house on St. Louis Street, and could give the gentleman a front room on her first floor. There he could see the principal doings of the town, for it was not far from the Place d'Armes and the Castle. It suited him and he installed himself. As it was late in the afternoon, he occupied the time by unpacking his effects until called to supper by Madame Langlois. At the meal, he noted that his landlady—a thin, civil woman of thirty-eight or so, was simply dying of discreet curiosity. He vouchsafed her only his name, and that he was just arrived from France. He, however, asked a number of questions about the Castle, the Governor, his staff, and the prominent people of the town, and inflamed her interest as much by his questions as by his dress and manners.

Then retiring till dusk fell, he went out and wandered about the neighbourhood.

The rock of Quebec is like a lion couchant beside the St. Lawrence. On the head is the fortress, on the back the Upper Town, around the feet nestles the Lower Town, while the River St. Charles flows around the hinder parts.

The city was no vast place: its population was but some seven thousand souls, with about two thousand of a garrison, and the occupied area in the Upper Town covered a few streets only, the remainder consisting of grassy fields stretching to the fortification walls. The citadel, picturesquely crowning the summit of the rock, stood several hundred yards higher, at one side. The Castle of St. Louis, the main ornament of the place next to the cathedral, overlooked the cliff, resting on a series of tall buttresses ribbing the side of the precipice.

At every point along the "lion's back," or upper edge of the cliff, where Germain was, a magnificent view greeted him. He stopped to enjoy it. The harbour lay glimmering far below in the moonbeams, across it the heights of Levis stretched along the weird landscape. The lighted windows of the Lower Town, of which he could see little more than the shimmering dark roofs, shone up obliquely. All was domed over by a dark-blue sky in which the harvest moon rode.

He walked back from the cliff along the Rue St. Louis to the city wall, and returned by the Rue Buade. In doing so he scanned the fortifications with military interest, and returning, remarked the dark, low pile of the convent of the Jesuits, and also the cathedral and the seminary adjoining. He remembered once hearing his father say this cathedral of Quebec had been designed by one of the de Lérys. From the place in front of it he could make out dimly, down the slope of Ste. Famille Street close by, the de Léry mansion itself.

"The father and mother will be there," he cogitated. "They will have had letters about me from France by this time."

He turned again along Buade Street, and continued his stroll with an object, for at the point where the sharp descent towards the Lower Town began he brought up before a stately house of stone, of an antique architecture, on the face of which, over the door, something indistinctly glittered. It was the house of the Golden Dog; and as he surveyed it and tried vainly to read the letters of the inscription, his shadowy visitor at Troyes once more arose vividly before his imagination, and the terrible scene of Philibert's murder seemed to be enacted again upon the flight of steps before the door. Absorbed in the gruesome story with which he was so strangely connected, he returned to his chamber, and retired.

Twice he heard the tramp of a change of guards passing along the street. Once a convent bell rang, perhaps for some midnight burial.

The next day at breakfast he learned from his hostess that the presence of the strange gentleman lodging with her had been remarked by several young women, and that it was already the gossip of the Upper Town. In the course of her stream of news she mentioned Monsieur de Léry. The hand with which he was about to lift his cup to his lips stopped, and he casually asked—

"Who is *he*?"

"The Honourable Monsieur de Léry," she exclaimed. "I thought he was known to all the world. He is the senior in the Governor's council, and his lady is the best customer of my brother-in-law's shop. The old Chevalier de Léry never did a wrong to any one, and if he is a little stiff, he still walks the straightest man in the town of Quebec."

Lecour withdrew to his chamber, and opened a miniature portmanteau covered with purple leather and stamped in gold with the de Lincy arms. He drew out a parchment, which he placed on the table. Then, taking from his clothes-box the uniform of his lieutenancy in the Bodyguard—which he had been so expressly forbidden to wear—he dressed himself before the glass with the greatest care, and having finished, put on his sword, placed the parchment in his bosom, took up his hat, and went forth with his ordinary air of ease and command. Passing along the street and across the Place d'Armes—at the insignificance of which, comparing it with that of Versailles, he laughed almost aloud—he entered the gate of the Castle.

The tow-headed Briton who was performing sentry duty at the gate, though he

challenged him like an automaton, was astonished at the sight of a uniform, the like of which, in style, brilliancy, and ornaments, he had never before seen.

"Be blowed to me, Bill," he soon afterwards remarked to a comrade of the guard-room, "if I didn't take 'im fer ole General Montcalm come back from blazes; 'e looked so grand an' Frenchy-like, an' come on me so sudden."

The Governor's *aide-de-camp*, de la Naudière, a dashing Canadian officer, was almost as surprised at the sight of Lecour's uniform as the sentry, and receiving him with profound deference, read the passport which the new arrival handed him. He was not aware how closely the eyes of Germain watched his face. At the name "LeCour de Lincy, Esquire," in the paper he gave a slight start, but by the time he came to the end his manner recovered itself, and he greeted him cordially.

"The French army, Monsieur, never lacks honour in the Province of Quebec. You bear a uniform and a rank which commend you to our best hospitalities. Will you permit me to share my good fortune in meeting you with our Governor, Lord Dorchester?"

"I have heard of Lord Dorchester," replied Germain, "how gallant a man he is, and how true a friend to our nation."

"Nothing is truer, sir; every Canadian will tell you he is the soul of kindness and sympathy with us, and that he has quite withdrawn the sting of our being a conquered people. Here I am, a Catholic and a Canadian, yet as well pleased as if I were in the service of France. His friendship with our gentry is like the relation of a veritable father to his family."

"Were not his services very great in the American Revolution? I have heard General Lafayette speak highly of his name."

"Yes, Monsieur; his services preserved this Province from the enemy, and we have named him 'the Saviour of Canada.' Pardon me a moment to announce you."

While waiting to be summoned to the Governor, Lecour glanced around. The part of the buildings in which he stood was the Old Château, a picturesque structure of the French times, dating from 1694, crowning its conspicuous position as a landmark by a mediæval roof of steep pitch; while a gallery two hundred feet in length ran along the outside, supported by tall buttresses, which, clinging to the cliff-side, gave it beneath the same elongated lines as the steep roof above. The result was exceedingly quaint and castellated. He remembered that he had often seen it thus from the river. His present point of view gave him, through the windows and over the gallery, another form of his view of the harbour and Point Levis, one of the most striking landscapes in the world. Looking closer about the room, the low-raftered ceilings of an older time brought another thought to his mind.

"Is not this," he exclaimed to himself, "the very chamber where Count Frontenac, a hundred years ago, must have received the envoy of Admiral Phipps with request to surrender, and returned the reply, 'I will answer your master by the mouth of my cannon.'" He imagined he heard the gallant veteran say the words.

Turning to the windows towards the courtyard, he saw opposite the handsome new range of buildings lately erected, and nicknamed "Castle Haldimand," in which were the apartments of the Governor and his family, and which, on their further side, fronted on the Place d'Armes.

As a boy he had once looked into the courtyard, and contemplated its precincts with juvenile awe. Now, he was standing a guest of honour in the then inaccessible arcana. He was not given much time to continue his reflections. De la Naudière came back, brought him across, and conducted him into the reception chamber of Governor Dorchester. His Excellency, who was a large, finely-made man of a ruddy and generous countenance, received him with that trained, lofty courtesy which marked the meeting of distinguished men of that time, and Lecour, as he reciprocated the salutation, saw that he had nothing to fear from him.

"I recognise your uniform, Chevalier," said he, "which revives to me some pleasant memories of Versailles."

"Your Lordship is, then, acquainted with my Sovereign's Court? His Majesty knows

how to appreciate a brave man."

"He has too many in his service to do otherwise; but I have no pretensions on that score."

"The world well knows, your Excellency, 'The Saviour of Canada,'" Lecour replied, "and my country honours you as one of the worthiest of former foes."

"Tut, tut, Monsieur le Chevalier—excuse the freedom of an old Englishman in turning the conversation. My lady will die of curiosity over the appearance of a Garde-du-Corps in this out-of-the-way quarter of the globe. How can I answer her as to the cause?"

"Private business with my family, my Lord, connected with an estate in our mother country."

"Ah, your people are Canadians?"

"My father is generally known as the Merchant Lecour of St Elphège. His full name is LeCour de Lincy."

"That is the name on your passport," interrupted de la Naudière. "I never knew he was a noble."

"He has never boasted of it," returned Lecour.

"An honest old fellow," Dorchester commented. Then, remembering himself, added, "You will, of course, do us the honour while in Quebec of being a guest at the Castle?"

"Your Lordship's invitation is a command, but I am here for a few hours only."

"Let us enjoy these hours then; eh, la Naudière? See that Mr. de Lincy's luggage is brought to the Castle."

"We review the garrison, in a few minutes," continued Dorchester, "then we luncheon. After that we are to drive to the Montmorenci Falls."

A beautiful and haughty-looking woman of over forty years entered the room. She stopped when she saw Lecour, but concealing her surprise at his uniform, stood graciously while her husband—for she was the Governor's wife—turned and said—

"Lady Dorchester, allow me to present the Chevalier de Lincy, whom we have just acquired as our guest, and whom you will recognise as a Garde-du-Corps of the King of France."

"The Milady Dorchester," as she was called among the people, was of the famous line of the Howards, daughter of that Earl of Effingham who refused in 1776 to draw his sword against the liberties of his fellow-subjects in America.

At her table many a scathing dissertation on the nobodiness of nobodies had been given the youthful gentry of the Province, a fact not unknown to Germain. De la Naudière himself had experienced her sharpness when he was first introduced at her table. On that occasion in carving a joint he had the misfortune to spill some gravy on the cloth. "Young man," cried Milady, "where were you brought up?" "At my father's table, where they change the cloth three times a day," he quickly retorted, and captured her favour.

A Garde-du-Corps, however, was sacred from reproach. To have with them for the day an inner member of the Court of France, fresh from delightful Paris, and from still more delightful Versailles, was really more than an exiled lady of fashion in her position could just then have dreamt. How he acquitted himself in her coach at the review and during the beautiful afternoon drive to the Falls, how he kept the table smiling at dinner, and of their walk in the Castle garden, with its low cannon-embrasured wall along the cuff, it would scarcely profit the reader to hear, except in one particular.

On the shady lawn at Montmorenci—a name which thrilled him with sweet associations—he stood in the midst of the picnic party and sang them one of the current songs of the Bodyguard:—

"Yes, I am a soldier—I,

And for my country live—
For my Queen and for my King
My life I'll freely give.

When the insolent demagogue
Loud rants at this and that,
Not less do I go singing round,
'Vive an aristocrat!'
Yes, &c.

To the Devil, Equality!
Your squalor I decline,
With you I would no better be
Nor sprung of older line.
Yes, &c.

March on, my comrades gay,
Strike up the merry drums,
And drink the Bourbons long, long life
Whatever fortune comes.
Yes, &c."

Next morning her Excellency rose early to see him start upon his journey up the river.

One result followed, of which he did not know. La Naudière described his visit to the de Lérys in connection with the account received by them from Châlons. They again read over the paragraph and discussed it, and de la Naudière pronounced decidedly that the man could not be the same—the passport of the present individual did not bear the name of Répentigny, and he was too perfect a gentleman.

CHAPTER XXXV

AT ST. ELPHÈGE

All afternoon of the day of his arrival at St. Elphège, lofty clouds had been moving in threatening masses across the sky. When the Lecours were rejoicing together at supper, a storm came on, producing a raw, wet evening, which was not unwelcome to the reunited family, for it kept them undisturbed.

Old Lecour, to denote his satisfaction at his son's return, brought forth his fiddle and played some of the merry airs of the Province, an action which touched Germain's heart.

"Is this the noble," exclaimed he to himself, as he looked, with a heart full of affection, at the roughly-dressed, homely figure, "whom I would produce to the Noailles, the Montmorencys and the Vaudreuils, as my father? Perhaps not; but I would offer him before sounder judges as their superior." But notwithstanding his goodwill, there is a limit where content is impossible in such things.

The Versailles *élégant* could not but see in everything about him an inevitable contrast with his late life. He felt unable to re-accustom himself to the low-ceiled chambers, the rude appliances, the rough dress, the country manners, the accent and phrases of his family—things in respect of which he had at one time believed them quite superior. Whole-heartedly concealing his impressions and his dejection, however, he made himself as pleasant as possible. Madame had thrown open her parlour, a rare occurrence.

When the rain began to beat against the windows, the old man called in the Indian dwarf, and with his assistance made a fire of logs which crackled merrily in the fireplace and threw cheerful, light and warmth upon the circle.

Madame lit her precious sconces of wax tapers for the first time since her daughter's wedding, and all drew closer to listen to the accounts which came from the lips of the long-absent son. The father put his violin aside, seated himself in his tall-backed arm-chair and gazed alternately into the fire and at his son's face. The mother hung upon her favourite's words and movements as mothers ever will. The convent girl, his youngest sister, worshipped him with eyes and ears—to her he was the hero of her family, whom she could measure in the lists against the vaunted brothers of her proud Quebec school-mates, Lanaudières, Bleurys, la Gorgendières, Tonnancours and those others, who, familiar with the doings of the Castle, looked down upon the trader's daughter.

"What about this new name?" said the mother at length; "they have given you a title in France?"

"Not at all, mother," he replied.

"But they call you 'Monsieur de Lincy,' you say."

"It is not a new name; it is the real one of the family—you are entitled to it as well as I."

"What does that mean, son Germain? Have we been ignorant of our own name?"

"It means that we are gentlepeople—and that in my father there, you behold the real or principal Chevalier de Lincy. I am but the younger Chevalier."

The family, at this announcement, gave voice to a mutual cry. The father looked up and said soberly—

"You mistake, my son."

"In no respect, dear father. I have learnt our descent in France, and am glad to inform you that you are what you deserve to be—a noble."

"There, François Xavier!" exclaimed the wife. "You are not going to deny it."

"Many good stocks forget their origin in going out to the colonies," added Germain. "You, sir, crossed the sea at a very early age."

"At twelve years old," asserted the merchant.

"You were too young to make those inquiries which I have completed. You knew little of your parents."

"My father was a butcher of Paris; I know that."

"That is an error, sir. Those you regarded as your parents were but foster-parents, though they bore the same name."

"Who, then, do you pretend was my father?" cried the merchant in amazement. "There was no question of that matter before I left France."

"Because your mother had died, and your father, who was a poor man, though a gentleman, had departed for service in the East Indies, and there was heard of no more."

"In any event I do not care about these things. I shall always remain the Merchant Lecour," the old man said, with steady-going pride.

"But François Xavier!" cried his wife. "Have you no care about your children and me? Is it nothing to us if we are *noblesse*? Will you be forever turning over skins and measuring groceries when you ought to have a grand house and a grand office, like the gentry of the North-West Company at Montreal, who dine with the Governor, and are yet no better off than you? I am sure *they* are no Chevaliers de Lincy".

"I cannot believe it, wife. I know where I came from, and that I was nothing but a boy sent out with the troops by the magistrates of Paris"—Germain started—"then a poor private, and by good conduct at length a *cantineer* of the liquor. Chevaliers are not of those grades, as I well enough know, and I never heard of any good from a man getting out of his place."

The convent girl looked up in suspense at her hero for reply.

"Listen, father," exclaimed Germain with a kind of gaiety, appreciating the melancholy humour of the situation, "I have not only traced you up, but shall show you the evidence. Carry in my little box while I bring the black one."

They brought the boxes in, and the small one—that with the gilt coat of arms, from which Germain had taken his passport at Quebec—was put on the table. Germain unlocked it, and brought out the de Lincy genealogical tree.

"Here," said he to his father, while the family crowded to look over their shoulders, "you are the son of this one; I have seen and read your baptismal register which records it, in the Church of St. Germain-des-Prés."

"True—that was my parish," the old man answered. "Are you certain that my father was not——?"

"Positive."

"Very well, then," old Lecour answered, somewhat reluctantly.

"What a romance!" the married daughter cried.

"I am about to show you some precious relics of our past," Germain continued. "See what a store of parchments. Here are grants of *noblesse* from the King, grants of titles, dispensations signed by the Popes—do you know what these are?" he cried, taking out and putting on his breast a couple of beautiful jewels, standing up as he did so.

"Tell us!"

"This," said he, "is the Commander's Cross of St. Louis; and that the Order of the Holy Ghost."

While they pushed forward in excitement to look closer at the decorations, he bent, lifted the lid of the large black box and with both hands raised before them an oil portrait of a gentleman in full wig, velvet coat and ruffles.

"That," said he, surveying it with becoming pride, "is our ancestor Hypolite LeCour de Lincy. Sir," said he, laughingly turning to his parent, "behold your father against your will."

"Bravo, Monsieur my son," cried Madame Lecour.

"Now I can make my old man dress like a gentleman. The next time I go to Montreal, Lecour—or rather my Chevalier—I shall spend some of your money on a peruke and a scarlet coat for you."

"Holy Mary, save me!"

"About that please the ladies, father," Germain put in; "but there is another matter. Who drew your marriage contract?"

"D'Aguilhe, the notary," his mother returned.

"Is he of St. Elphège?"

"Yes."

"He has, of course, omitted mention of your nobility."

"He knew of none," said the merchant.

"Then we must go to him with our titles, and he must rectify it to-morrow."

"As you please, if it will suit you better," the merchant murmured.

"I must be a Prince, for I create nobles," pronounced Germain, shaking with fevered laughter, as he drew the sheets over him in the state bed that night. His merriment was a pitiful cover for his desperation. In his favour it is well to remember the dictum of Schopenhauer: that the English are the only nation who thoroughly realise the immorality of lying; and we must also keep in mind that the extent of his disorder was a measure of the power of that passion which was its cause. Better things were yet in him.

CHAPTER XXXVI

AT MONTREAL

Next morning, after old Lecour had, with a heart full of content, and a pipeful of tobacco, taken his son the round of his warehouses and granaries, his piles of furs, his mountains of wheat, and the rising vaults of what was to be his newest and greatest building, they set off down the village street to the Notary's house.

D'Aguilhe was of a famous breed of notaries, who had driven the quill and handed it down from father to son from the earliest days of the colony. When Lecour discovered that he was founding St. Elphège, one of the first things he did was to jolt up to Montreal, and catch a young scion of this race of d'Aguilhes, and here he had kept him making a comfortable living at his profession ever since. It was therefore not improper that the man of the *paraphe*—and a wondrous *paraphe* his signature had, flourishing from edge to edge of a foolscap page, in woolly and laborious curves—should, when called upon next morning, treat his best client to his best office manners.

"Monsieur d'Aguilhe," commenced old Lecour, "here is my son, who thinks me a noble—and upon my honour I cannot argue against him; he is too able for me."

"Aha!" returned d'Aguilhe, pricking up his ears, and saying to himself, "This looks like something important."

"We desire," said Germain, taking the business into his own hands, "to see the marriage contract of my father and mother."

"Certainly, Monsieur Germain," he answered, and going to his cupboards, took his package of deeds for the year 1765, picked out the document and handed it to Germain, who read a few lines at the beginning.

"I see," the latter said, "that my father is improperly described here, as you will observe by these documents I now place before you. He is entitled to be called in this contract 'François Xavier LeCour, Chevalier de Lincy.'"

"A—ah!" exclaimed again the Notary, solemnly, raising his eyebrows and poking over Germain's parchments.

"Are they not correct?" asked Germain.

"Without a doubt."

"Is not my father the Chevalier de Lincy?"

"It seems so."

"Then we have only to ask, as it is a family matter, that you add this name to the contract of marriage, and give us a copy."

"It cannot be done, sir."

Germain felt a check. He was silent.

"Do not say that, d'Aguilhe," the merchant said; "if the boy wants it, let him have it. What do I care?"

"No sir, it cannot be done."

"Cannot be done? for *me*? Have I done nothing for you, M. d'Aguilhe? Have I not been a good client to you?"

"Nevertheless, sir, nothing can weigh with me against the rules of my profession," pompously replied the Notary. "A Public Person must not allow himself to be swayed by private considerations."

"In what lies your difficulty in changing this deed?" Germain asked.

"A deed once deposited in the archives of the Notary is sacred."

"But you see a mistake has been made?"

"Etiquette, Monsieur."

"You see that the honour of the family is concerned in rectifying that mistake."

"Etiquette, Monsieur."

"But is there no way? If I offer fifty livres for your advice upon a way, for instance?"

"Ah, Monsieur, that is different; the heart of the professional man should open, and his knowledge be accessible to his client. There is a way."

"What is it?"

"Obtain an order of the Judge upon me to add the required paragraphs to my deed."

"Here are your fifty livres."

"I thank you, sir," and, so saying, d'Aguilhe put his quill behind his ear and showed them politely to the door.

Germain and his father—the father arrayed by Madame in his best black coat—set, therefore, off for Montreal. They crossed the ferry near Répentigny church, and drove through open country along the riverside till, as evening drew on, they came in sight of the walls, the citadel hill, the enchanting suburban estates and green Mount Royal in the background, which denoted the city.

They drew up in the court of a bustling inn, stabled their horse, went to bed, and the next morning sought the house of a celebrated advocate, the great Rottot. The great Rottot was chiefly known for his imposing proportions, and no sight was thought so beautiful by the *habitants* as that of his black silk leg, as, with his robe fluttering out in the breezes, he seemed to be flying from his office across the street to the court-house, followed by a bevy of clients.

He listened, standing, to the respectful request of Lecour, helped out in his explanations by Germain, who desired to have the pleader obtain for them the requisite order of the Judge.

"Ah," said he, "I see, gentlemen, you do not appreciate the importance of your case. Such a matter ought to be made the subject of the profoundest studies, and we should at length approach the Legislature itself with a petition and demand the passage of a private bill. The affair tempts my powers."

"But we have no special wish for publicity."

"Gentlemen, you know not what would be your good fortune. It would make you the talk of the Province. *In re Lecour* would be a great precedent."

"Such is not our desire."

"What! not to establish a precedent?"

"No, Mr. Advocate," Germain said firmly; "a simple petition to obtain this order is what we want. We must have it, and quickly, and nothing more."

"Ah, then, this is what you want," said he. "I will draw it for you," and, sitting down, he wrote out a document as follows:—

> "To the Honourable Judges of the Court of Common Pleas of the District of Montreal:
>
> "The petition of François Xavier LeCour de Lincy, Esquire, residing at St. Elphège, respectfully shews:—That when he contracted marriage with Mademoiselle Lanier, he knew not that he was of noble origin, having left Europe at a very early age with scarcely any knowledge of his family; that since then he has learned of his extraction and obtained his titles of *noblesse* which he now presents to your Honours in evidence.
>
> "Wherefore may it please your Honours to grant an order upon Maître d'Aguilhe, Notary, of St. Elphège, to add to the minute of his contract of marriage the name and title of 'de Lincy, Esquire'; and you will do justice."

"Sign, sir, please."

François Xavier attached his signature.

"It will do," Rottot sighed; "but I should have preferred the precedent."

They crossed the road and entered the court-room.

A rubicund, easy-going old judge, Fraser by name, sat on the bench, the royal arms painted large in oils on a canvas behind him. In front were a lawyer or two and a few clients—a slack court. Rottot, with a flourish, read the petition.

The judge smiled. "Only a *habitant* from the country," he mused, good-humouredly, "who wants to add some mouldy flourishes to his name. Well, if it pleases him, let him have them. Does anybody oppose the petition?" he said aloud. "No? Well, it is granted. Hand it up for my signature."

The astute Rottot had added the words—"Granted as prayed for, as well as to all other deeds and writings."

This gave Germain great satisfaction. With the precious order in his pocket he spent a few hours reconnoitring the town, and especially the headquarters of the garrison and the Governor's residence, the Château de Ramezay.

Returning to St. Elphège, he presented the order of the Court at once to Maître d'Aguilhe, and obtained a copy of the amended marriage contract, which he stored in his box as proof for use in France of the titles of his father in Canada.

While in Montreal he had determined to make that place also useful to him. So, after a decent delay, he found lodging at an elegant little house which suited him in St. Jean Baptiste Street, secluded behind the great Convent of the Grey Nuns and yet not far away from garrison headquarters.

Germain Lecour at the House in St. Jean Baptiste Street.

His first act when he was left alone in his room was to don his uniform, his next to take out of his pocket the certified copy of the marriage contract of his parents which had been made for him by the Notary d'Aguilhe. He conned it a minute, standing by the Louis XIV. mantel, which may still be seen in that house, and sought but his mother's name. "Dame Catherine Lanier," it read. He drew out his little inkstand and quill, and, seizing a scrap of paper, tried some marks on it. Finding the ink to his satisfaction, he carefully touched the point of the quill to the contract and rapidly inserted the particle "de," making the name "Catherine de Lanier."

Rushing out of the house—it was afternoon—he sought relief in the open air and garden-like freshness of Notre Dame Street, a thoroughfare up to which the serried buildings of the "Lower Town"—for Montreal also had a Lower and Upper Town, even within its contracted width—had not yet crept, and which, situated on the top of the long, low ridge of the city, commanded free views of the river, the town, and all the prominent landmarks on one side, and of the fortification walls and the beautiful country seats on the slopes towards Mount Royal on the other. At first he noticed these alone, but gradually the wind from the west cooled his blood, and his eyes

became conscious of military men and frilled and powdered people of fashion promenading the street to and from the barracks, and of his uniform becoming, as at Quebec, a subject of public curiosity. He stopped at length to note a prisoner in the town pillory, when a promenader of somewhat frayed attire and a countenance which bore marks of dissipation looked at him closely.

"I know your face very well," said he, coming forward, "though I cannot recall you. Do you remember any one of the name of Quinson St. Ours?"

"Quinson St. Ours? I should think I do. Are you my old schoolfellow of the Little Seminary?"

"Yes, it was at the Little Seminary—I have not been wrong then—but it is your name, my good schoolfellow, which escapes me; and now you look so distinguished that I hope you are not going to forget a schoolmate on that account?"

"Never, sir. My name is the Chevalier LeCour de Lincy, officer of the Guards of His Most Christian Majesty. I am the boy whom you knew as the little Lecour of St. Elphège."

The somewhat humble and seedy Quinson, black sheep of an excellent family, was glad to brighten up his tarnished career as the cicerone of so brilliant a butterfly, and only too proud to be the means of introducing Germain to the young bloods of the city. At the end of the week, when departing, Lecour gave a banquet, to which he invited all the choicest spirits, and having brought the feast well on into the drinking he said, casually—

"I am about, gentlemen, to go from here into the American colonies before I return to Europe and have a letter drawn which is necessary to identify me, when requisite, in places where I shall be totally unknown. Will you all do me the favour of signing it?"

"By Pollux and Castor we will!" shouted St. Ours, decidedly vinous.

"Certainly, friend," cried the others, and each in turn affixed his signature to the paper laid on the table. It read—

"Montreal, *September 19, 1788*.

> "We, gentlemen of Montreal, voluntarily attest to whomsoever it may concern that Mons. Germain LeCour de Lincy is a gentleman of good character and standing in Canada, and son of Monsieur François Xavier LeCour de Lincy, *Esquire*, an honourable person of St. Elphège.
>
> (Signed) "Quinson de St. Ours,
> "Longueuil,
> "De Rouville, *fils*,
> "St. Dizier,
> "Louvigny de Montigny,
> "La Corne, *fils*,"

and over thirty others.

In this paper Germain had secured the apparent attestation of his claims by many of the principal younger *noblesse* of the country. He made off with it to St. Elphège, where he spent a week, drawing from his mother a crowd of tales about the de Lérys and the LeGardeurs, which had been gossiped around her when she was housekeeper to Governor de Beauharnois. Then, under excuse of pressing business in France, he left St. Elphège again.

CHAPTER XXXVII

ONCE MORE THE SWORD

The widow Langlois was surprised to see her lodger return so soon to Quebec. He saw quickly that she was dying of curiosity, and concluded that he and his affairs had been the subject of town gossip since his departure. He therefore contrived to give her

an occasion to talk to him.

"There are certain malicious stories going about," she said to him tentatively, "which I have been thinking very ungracious on the part of our people."

"Ah, yes, Quebec is always the same little hole. Do these stories relate to me?"

"I admit it with shame, Monsieur, and our Quebec, as you say, is a little hole. Quebec people have nothing to talk about but the strangers."

"What can they invent about *me*? Have I scandalised your house or ill-conducted myself at the Castle? God's-death! you promise me entertainment. It will make this dull village amusing to hear the product of their gigantic imaginations. Begin, I entreat you."

"Some say you are not a Bodyguard, sir."

"Ha, that is news; I shall have to tell that to Lady Dorchester. These good judges know so much more of the Court of France than she does. What else?"

"It is alleged that you are no noble, your father being the Merchant of St. Elphège."

"Yes? My father's parchment titles would answer that. I will take the occasion later on to show them to you."

"And that you carried in France the name of the Marquis de Répentigny."

"Who is the author of these tales, if you know him?" he said with dignity. "What source first spread them among the people, for such things have always an instigator?"

"I would prefer not to tell, Monsieur."

However, by a little flattery he won the point. She told him how her brother-in-law, the Merchant Langlois, of Mountain Hill, had heard at his own shop, from Madame de Léry herself, that a letter had been received from Paris relating the doings of a young Canadian calling himself de Répentigny, but who was identified by two other Canadians as young Lecour of St. Elphège, and afterwards how he had fought with Louis de Léry, of the Bodyguard, and nearly killed him, and had departed for Canada in disgrace.

"And it is most maliciously reported," added Madame Langlois, "that you, sir, are without doubt the person in question."

"Madame," exclaimed he, rising abruptly, as cold as an icicle, "I shall see to this immediately."

The widow was frightened.

"I entreat you say nothing of this to Madame de Léry," she cried in distress.

"On that point you have the word of honour of a French officer," he replied.

As he hastily dressed himself he muttered, "Something radical now."

He went, without delaying, to the de Léry mansion and was admitted face to face with the Councillor.

The house was a long, low, old-fashioned one, covered externally with dark blue mortar in French provincial style, and internally presenting every appearance of hospitality and comfort. The parlours in which Germain was shown into the presence of the owner were hung about with mellowed tapestry, and their doors and windows were open, leading out upon a gallery and thence into a luxuriant garden. The old Councillor, a fine-looking man, frank, hospitable, and perfectly bred, welcomed Germain with a kindly manner just tinged with a shade of curiosity, and awaited mention of his business.

Lecour lost no time in coming to the point, stating the story that had been circulated about him and that report attributed it to the de Lérys.

"Nor is it, sir," concluded he, "the first time I have had in such matters to complain of your family, for I have been given great trouble in the Bodyguard by the reckless allegations of your son Louis, who was unknown to me, but who circulated, of his own

accord, the most injurious accusations. Among other things he has stated that I was not noble, because of my father being the Merchant of St. Elphège. Yet you knew very well, sir, that my father is not a petty trader, and I have brought here to-day documents by which I am ready to prove to you beyond question that we are of good descent."

"I regret," the Councillor answered, much disturbed, "that there have been such unfortunate occurrences as you say. I am sure that from your appearance and frankness in thus coming to me, there must be some mistake. My son Louis is a man of strict honour; he must have acted on hasty information. To do you entire justice, I shall make it my duty to look over these documents, which are doubtless entirely correct, and will then do the best in my power to rectify this injury so painful and regrettable. A moment, sir."

He went to the gallery and called out—

"Panet."

"Coming," a hearty voice returned from the garden.

"It is my friend the Judge," remarked the Councillor, returning to the room; "he will serve you as an excellent witness of the evidence you are producing."

"Upon my word, your grapes this year are divine," exclaimed the Judge entering, holding up a large bunch in his hand. He stopped and bowed to Germain.

"Monsieur LeCour de Lincy here has some papers to show us," de Léry proceeded, "which refute that unfortunate report arising from the letters of my son."

Lecour produced his papers, and on perusal of them for some time, both Panet and de Léry pronounced them perfect.

"I owe you the sincerest formal apology, Monsieur de Lincy," de Léry said.

"More than that, sir," Germain returned stiffly. "You minimise the damage done. A written retraction is due me, to exhibit in those quarters where I have been so deeply injured, and without which I can never wholly regain my reputation."

"Not demurring, sir, I freely admit that we owe you this reparation. If you will draw up and send me what will be useful to you, I shall gladly sign it."

"Stop, gentlemen, let me say a word," Judge Panet interposed. "Such a writing being so delicate a matter, to be just to both parties, ought to be drawn by a third. I think I am in a position to do this; will you leave the matter to me?"

"I am the person who was injured, and the only one who knows what will effectively right me," Lecour answered;

"He is correct," said de Léry.

Panet did not push the point further but turned away, and the Chevalier showed the young man out of the house.

By noon, the following letter was received to sign—

"At Quebec, *the 2nd October, 1788*.

"Monsieur,—It is with much pleasure that I consent to grant you the satisfaction you ask. I hereby confess that I have been wrong in spreading the report that you have taken another name than that of your family. I retract it publicly and I assure you in that respect with the greatest frankness that I am fully convinced that the story which led me to commit this indiscretion is absolutely false and unworthy of you. I make you this reparation as being due to your character, and I am sincerely mortified about the misunderstanding which has caused you so much trouble.

"And I have the honour to be, sir,
"Yours, etc.

"To M. LeCour de Lincy, officer of the Bodyguard of the company of Noailles."

The old Councillor, one of the most respected men in the colony, grew red with shame.

"It is impossible for me, as a man of honour, to sign such a paper," he said to himself. After walking up and down in his parlours, therefore, he wrote a reply.

The story of the Chevalier's life will help us to understand him in the matter.

He had, in his youth, under the French *régime*, won distinction as a Canadian officer by many important services, and was entitled by written promises of the Government of France, to money rewards alone of nearly a hundred thousand livres. On the fall of the colony, however, when the Canadian officers proceeded to the home country, they found a cold shoulder turned upon them in the departments of Versailles, so ready to waste immense sums for those in power and to ignore the barest dues of merit. Among the rest, de Léry, his bosom burning with the distress of his family in Paris, paced the corridors of the Colonial Office for nearly two years. Monsieur Accaron, the cold and procrastinative ex-Jesuit deputy of the First Minister, would reply—

"I agree with you, sir, that these services are very distinguished; still, Canada being no longer ours, it is to be admitted they have all been useless."

"Monsieur," the soldier would return, "I have never understood that the misfortunes of the brave lessen their rights."

"Well, well, if you will but wait——"

"I shall be enchanted to wait, and I beg of you to inform me of the means of doing so. I have in Paris my wife and four children, and the twenty louis to which his Majesty has reduced my allowance would not support us in the most favoured province of France."

After making such fruitless attempts, he said boldly to them one day—

"I will return to Canada and try my fortune under a different Crown."

"Do not so easily abandon hope," remarked Accaron coolly.

De Léry, for reply, went to the British Ambassador, told him he had heard high reports of the British nation and offered to become a subject of the English King. In due time a man of so much sense and spirit was received by George III. with satisfaction, as the first of the Canadian gentry to enter his service, and as the Chevalier carried out his new allegiance with the strictest sincerity, time only added to his esteem and he became the favourite Councillor of Governor Dorchester.

The same principles of honour, dignity, and good sense marked his feeling in the present difficulty with young Lecour. The reply ran: that the terms of the proposed letter were a surprise to him, that he was anxious to serve his young friend and especially to place in his hands the means of rectifying any injury done to him by unfortunate remarks or rumours, but that it was impossible to grant the letter requested, and he offered the following substitute:—

"At Quebec, *the 3rd October, 1788*.

> "Monsieur,—It is with great pleasure that I consent to testify in your favour against the injurious rumours concerning you which some persons have assumed to base upon my authority and that of my family. After conversing about your papers and yourself with Judge Panet and other persons of position, I am, equally with them, of opinion that you have proven the falsity of the said rumours, and that you are not the person to whom they relate, your father being of great possessions in the country about St. Elphège, and of repute throughout the whole Province as an honourable man.
>
> "J. G. C. de Léry."

Germain tore the answer into pieces in a passion. "Not the person to whom they relate!" he cried, "Who am I then, and what shelter would this precious epistle give me against the son?" Stepping to his escritoir he wrote back the following fiery note:—

"*To Monsieur de Léry, Chevalier of St. Louis, at Quebec.*

"MONSIEUR,—After having employed all honourable means to induce you to grant me that satisfaction which you owe to me, I hereby notify you that you can avoid dishonour only by one of two alternatives: either by signing the letter sent you by me, unaltered in any particular; or by being present this day at four of the clock at the place called Port St. Louis, to render account on the spot of the reports which you have been purposely spreading against my honour, and to accord to me in your person the satisfaction they deserve. I shall expect your answer at once upon your reading this, and if by mid-day I have not received it, I shall prove to you my exactitude to my word.—I am, sir (if you accept either proposal), your servant with all my heart,

"LECOUR DE LINCY."

While he was hotly engaged in penning this letter to the father, the incidents of his duels with the son Louis crowded before him—the counsels of his friends, the choosing of the weapons, the deadly tension of the combat, the look of furious contempt in his adversary's eyes. It was only after he had sent off Madame's man-of-all-work with it that the incongruousness of challenging so old a man struck him.

The Chevalier, on receiving the challenge, perceived at once the gravity of his own situation. The code of the time demanded his acceptance. He knew that, however a duel might be laughed at by boasters, the sober truth was that it brought a man face to face with death, and that the present cause of quarrel was not worth any such sacrifice. In short the thing seemed to him foolish and unreasonable.

No time was to be lost. He had therefore recourse for advice to his boon companion Panet, who pronounced it a bad business.

"Really," he said, moving nervously, "you must recognise, my dear de Léry, that men of our stiffness and weight can have no chance pitted against a young fellow from the fencing schools of Versailles. He has a wrist as limber as a fish no doubt. Try to end the affair some way."

De Léry, annoyed and disappointed that the judge did not rise to the occasion, and thrown back on his own resources, went to Lord Dorchester himself, requesting his mediation.

The Governor read over the letters which had passed, especially that sent by LeCour for signature.

"Tut, what a young fool. Tell LaNaudiere there to send for him," he exclaimed.

So in about half an hour Germain appeared.

Guessing the state of the matter, he began by complaining of his wrongs on the part of the de Lérys. He was listened to to the end by Dorchester, who then, with the greatest politeness, but firmly, pointed out the impossibility of any man of honour signing the proposed confession.

"Do you both agree, gentlemen, to leave the form of the letter with me?"

Germain could not do otherwise.

The Governor sat down at a writing-desk, laid the epistle before him, and produced the following:—

"MONSIEUR,—It is with great pleasure that I consent to testify in your favour against certain injurious rumours affecting your reputation and family name, which have been circulated by unauthorised persons in the name of my household. You have clearly proven to me that the rumours in question are calumnies without any foundation, and I am sincerely affected concerning the pain they have given you."

Dorchester read what he had written.

"There is my award," he pronounced. "It is, in my opinion, all that one gentleman ought to demand of another. Do you consider it fair each of you?"

Each declared it satisfactory.

"Then sign it, Mr. de Léry," said the Governor promptly. De Léry signed it.

Dorchester gave it to Germain.

"Are you satisfied?" he asked.

"Perfectly, your Excellency."

Germain thrust the letter in his breast and bowed himself out. On sober thought he preferred it to his own. The same evening he sailed for Europe. But not before he had secured the signature of the Bishop of Quebec to a copy of his birth-certificate, altered according to the judge's order procured at Montreal.

Onward, onward, he impatiently counted the leagues of the sea by day. A ravishingly fair face beckoned in his dreams by night.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE RECORD

On New Year's morning de Lotbinière was crossing the great courtyard of the Louvre, when he heard the voice of Louis de Léry calling him. The Bodyguard was hurrying forward with a curl of disgust on his lip, and holding out an open letter.

The Marquis, stopping, took it with a glance of inquiry.

"More of the beast!" ejaculated Louis.

The letter was one from Madame de Léry, relating with a woman's indignation the proceedings of Germain during his first visit to Quebec.

"*Mon Dieu!* how disgusting," Louis exclaimed.

"More than that—it is felonious," almost shouted the Marquis, great veins swelling upon his forehead and his hand shaking with rage. "Should the monster ever land again upon the shores of France from which I drove him, my God, I will hang him! Leave me this letter."

"The fellow is gross enough to return," said Louis scornfully. "What could be plainer—his movements speak for themselves."

Here a shabby individual stepped up, handed the Marquis a note, and at the same time beckoned the two into a corner out of the crowd. The billet was a scrap on which was written only—

"LECOUR."

Mystery had a fascination for de Lotbinière. Not so for Louis, who was impatient that so seedy a person should presume to stop them. Still, on being handed the paper, he condescended to remain.

"Craving pardon, my Lord," said Jude—it was of course he—in a low voice, "I have word for you in this affair. Your powerful movements are known to me."

"Indeed?"

"I know your sentiments on the impostor."

"And you wish me to buy some information from you?"

"Monsieur le Marquis—he is my enemy also: I ask no price, only your co-operation with a humble individual like myself."

"Speak on."

"It is all letters to day, my Lord. I heard you both discuss that of Madame de Léry."

"You are a spy, then?" asked Louis tartly, scorn flashing across his face.

"An *observer*, Monsieur—one of the King's secret service."

"A 'Sentinel of the nation,'" the Marquis said, only the more deeply interested, smiling and tendering his snuff-box to Jude graciously.

"And next?" added he.

"Next, too, is a letter. I watched the mails addressed to his correspondents and friends here. This is a letter to his valet."

The Marquis took it. It read—

"DOVER, *6th January, 1789*.

"MY DEAR DOMINIQUE,—Prepare for me within ten days after you receive this.

"DE LINCY."

"*Peste!*" hissed the Marquis.

Jude pressed a folded paper into his hand, slipped behind a pillar and disappeared, and the two relatives joined the crowd. The Marquis that day made copious entries in his journal.

His life was now entirely engrossed in the controversy with LeCour. As a Frenchman the occupation was dear to his heart. What Norman does not love a lawsuit? What Parisian, politics? The journal became even more complete and exact on the matter and teemed with expressions of contempt thrust home to the heart of the absent adversary. It recapitulated minutely the manner in which LeCour had been discovered wearing the Répentigny name; the refusal of the slayer of Philibert to punish him; the change of name to de Lincy, which de Lotbinière shrewdly attributed to the genealogist; the conduct of de Bailleul; the real origin of the Lecour family, with the history of the father; the duels with Louis, and his vexations on account of the matter; the writer's journey to Châlons, Troyes, and Versailles, the circumstances of the disappearance of Germain, and the news of his actions in Canada.

After bringing his account down to date with a description of the written proofs collected, he laid the journal aside, opened the drawer of his secretary and took out a folio sheet of an exceedingly heavy wrapping-paper. This he bent over so as to make it into something resembling the cover of a book, then cut a lining of white unruled foolscap for this improvised cover, and taking out his paste-pot, fitted it neatly to the inside. Next he clipped up a length of linen tape and by means of wafers attached eight pieces of it as ties to the top, bottom, and sides. The whole constituted one of those record-covers which he had been taught to make for the papers of special enterprises in his profession. On the outside he pasted a small square labelled:—

PAPERS

RELATIVE TO LECOUR,
RÉPENTIGNY, DE LINCY,

ET CETERA.

There was, he considered, a fine turn of irony in "*et cetera*."

The record-cover completed, he surveyed it front and back with satisfaction, tried the ties, read the inscription over once more, and opened it. In it he placed a long "*Extract from my journal*," written with care in his beautiful handwriting and bound with a tiny ribbon.

Next, he added some letters of Collinot to himself and de Léry. These were followed by copies of his own to the latter. His epistle of reproach to de Bailleul came next.

Then a genealogical memorandum of the family of LeGardeur. Then Madame de Léry's letter from Canada; after it a solemn statement which he had caused to be drawn by Quartermaster Villerai of Châlons. Then the folded paper left by Jude, which was a copy of the damaging entry discovered by him in the books of the church of St. Germain-des-Prés. Some lesser documents added to these made up the nucleus of a *dossier* or Record—an armoury of weapons which were to be gathered for the complete and final destruction of the usurper, should he again set foot in France.

Only a day or two passed when another letter came to him from Madame de Léry. It related the actions of Germain on his second visit to Quebec, dwelling, with the rage of a proud woman, on what had passed between her husband and the young man. Judge Panet, too, had joined his efforts to hers, and rapidly tracked Germain's intrigues from Notary d'Aguilhe to the Judge and the young gentlemen of Montreal, and from the Governor at Quebec to the sacristy of the cathedral. He therefore was able to enclose a packet of letters and affidavits arranged in order, and which included among others—

1. A long foolscap statement by d'Aguilhe, in which the Notary of St. Elphège took care to duly magnify his own dignity and precautions.

2. A copy of the Lecour petition to insert the titles into the contract of marriage.

3. A letter from Chief Justice Fraser about the granting of the petition.

4. A copy of the marriage contract of Lecour's parents showing the alterations.

5. A letter from Lord Dorchester on the duel arbitration, addressed to Madame de Léry, and sealed with his seal.

6. One from the Bishop of Quebec.

7. A copy, signed by him, of the true birth-certificate of Germain.

8. A total repudiation by Quinson St. Ours of the affair of the banquet at Montreal.

9. A letter from General Gabriel Christie, Commander-in-Chief of the forces in Canada and proprietor of the Seigniory of Répentigny: "I declare upon my honour that I have never sold my Seigniory of Répentigny."

Letters and certificates from nearly all of the most prominent of the French gentry of the colony concerning Lecour, his family, and his pretensions.

The affair was causing a rustle among the entire alliance, and the letters were full of the terms, "my dear cousin," "uncle," "brother," &c.

D'Aguilhe (No. 1) said, among other things, "The probity and good faith which should be the basis of the actions of all men, and more particularly those of a *Public Person*, preserved me from condescending to the reiterated demands made upon me by the Sieurs Lecour, father and son, to myself make the additions of the titles in question to the said contract, a thing which I refused absolutely, giving them plainly to understand that a deed received by a Notary, made and finished in his notariat and enregistered, was a *sacred thing*, to which it could not BE PERMITTED TO ANY ONE TO MAKE THE SLIGHTEST ALTERATION WITHOUT PROFOUND DISGRACE."

Chief Justice Fraser (No. 3) wrote: "Some time ago I heard some rumours current about Monsieur LeCour, but I had no idea I had played a *rôle* in the affair. Here are the facts: In September last a Guard of his Majesty the King of France presented himself with his papers, which appeared to me as much in proper form as foreign papers could seem to me. He presented a petition to me to be permitted to add the names 'de Lincy' and 'Esquire' to his documents. I allowed it. I had no suspicion that the Guard or his papers were impostures. In any event, I reap from this incident the pleasure of corresponding with Madame de Léry."

The letter of Quinson St. Ours (No. 8) read: "Sir and dear relative,—I should deem myself lacking in what I owe both to you and to myself were I to neglect to destroy the suspicion you have formed of my conduct in the affair of Monsieur, your son, against Lecour. I can give you my word of honour that I always refused to give my signature to his different petitions. My brother informs me that you say 'that several of your friends, and even of your relations at Montreal, certified that Monsieur Lecour was a gentleman.' I am not of their number, and I do not know that family."

The Marquis eagerly read the packet through, digested its contents, blessed his ally Panet for his professional methodicality, and placed the papers in order in the Record.

After the flight of more than a century, this Record, yellow and faded and a little worm-eaten, but complete even to its wax seals, its wire-headed pins, and the thin gilt edges of the correspondence paper, lies before the writer of these pages, a vivid fragment of the old *régime*, a witness to the hatred, the activity, the very thoughts, as it were, of the enemies of Lecour, and revealing his perils from their inner side.

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE MARQUIS'S VISITOR

On the very day after the Panet documents were added to the Record a visitor called upon the Marquis.

"The 25th of January," records the latter in his journal, "there entered my apartments, about half-past ten in the morning, a young man, wearing a sword and a hat with a white plume, his suit entirely of black knitcloth with trimmings to match, of middle height, firmly built and well-looking, skin fine with plenty of colour, eye nearly black, soft and somewhat large, surmounted by a black eyebrow."

"My name is Monsieur de la Louvière, Gendarme of the Guard," he said. "I come on the part of the Chevalier de Bailleul respecting the matter of Monsieur LeCour."

"Be seated, sir," replied the Marquis with interest, indicating a chair near his writing-desk, at which he himself sat down. "Is this Lecour known to yourself?"

"I am a friend of his," replied M. de la Louvière.

"Where is he now?"

"A week ago he was in England."

"Have you not heard that he is an impostor?"

"I only know, sir, that he is a very unfortunate man, and that you, who have so interested yourself against him, have only to show him leniency and kindness and you would be surprised at his gratitude. I carry the appeal of the Chevalier to you, desirous of seeing whether the trouble cannot be amicably arranged."

"Tell the Chevalier de Bailleul, sir, that all who bear the name of Canadian have a claim upon my good nature, particularly any son of a servant once in my employ. I shall oppose him no further, provided he but at once replace himself in his own rank. I only, secondly, exact that the honour of Monsieur de Léry, as the nephew of Madame my wife, be completely cleared and sustained with his comrades and officers." The Marquis here noticed that the Record was lying upon the table under the eyes of the stranger, but the latter continued the conversation.

"That can be done. But it ought to be so arranged as not to interfere with the standing, for the present, of Monsieur Lecour, because, Monsieur le Marquis, one of his protectors, the Duc de Liancourt, has arranged to bestow on him the commandancy of his cadet institute in the provinces."

"An infinitely better position for him than remaining in the company of Noailles," remarked de Lotbinière, removing the Record from the table, "seeing the Bodyguards have caught the rumour of his birth."

"But it is a part of the arrangement that he should stay in the Bodyguard eighteen months longer."

"Why should such a person be so much considered? Monsieur de Léry has done nothing more than tell the exact truth, which is the duty of a man of honour when pressed by his superiors. He has been most properly avenged; I see nothing left to arrange."

"But he would be still exposed to a challenge to fight."

"His officers have forbidden him to fight with an inferior."

"There remains the certainty of a caning."

"What do you wish to be done?"

"That Monsieur de Léry should merely say off hand before his friends that what he had told of Monsieur Lecour was said at hazard."

"Then, sir, tell the Chevalier de Bailleul that when I said I was willing to arrange that affair amicably I did not know that he would dare to propose that I commence by consenting to the formal and complete dishonour of Monsieur de Léry. Judge, now, whether a proposal of the sort could be made to me about the cousin-germain of my children?"

"Excuse me, Marquis, this was not exactly my meaning, nor that of Monsieur de Bailleul."

"Inform Monsieur de Bailleul," cried de Lotbinière, "that he must feel it impossible, and that all is finished and over by the orders given to each of them by their respective adjutants."

"No, sir," the stranger sternly cried, in reply, "all is *not* finished, for so unpardonable have been the offences of Monsieur de Léry towards Monsieur Lecour that *only one of them must live*."

"Then let him kill Lecour instead of some one of his comrades, who would make life intolerable to him were he to show himself such a coward as you have proposed. Has he not proved a brave man to have fought so often, and with that fellow so below his dignity? As for me, knowing what I owe to myself, I should refuse most scrupulously to compromise myself with any one who was not of my station. Were I attacked in a street by such a man, I should defend my life with the greatest spirit; but never under the arrangements of an affair *en règle*. Such has always been my way of conduct, according to the truest principles of honour."

"Of honour!" the stranger exclaimed sarcastically; "and who taught de Léry to apply these principles to a fellow Bodyguard?"

"He acted, as I have said, under the advice of his superior officers, especially of Monsieur de Villerai, who is his relative, and a Canadian gentleman of distinguished ancestry."

"Ancestry! de Villerai of distinguished ancestry! This, then, is the man who has undertaken to crush my friend Lecour on the question of extraction! All the world knows that his paternal uncle, of the same name as he, is a common carter in Quebec, and his children in the last ditch of squalor and degradation."

De Lotbinière's countenance changed as quickly as though he had been stabbed.

"To the sorrow of his family, you speak but too truly, although the father was educated very differently. His misfortune was to have married a fool, who supposed herself obliged, as the wife of a gentleman, to dissipate their substance in innumerable petty entertainments; but from this the only rightful conclusion to be drawn is that that branch has derogated from *noblesse*, and can no longer pretend to enjoy for the future the state of its ancestors. But Monsieur Lecour must know well that, as for the branch of the Chevalier de Villerai, the further back you go in his family tree in Canada the more brightly his *noblesse* stands forth in splendour."

"His grandfather," the stranger retorted scornfully, "was a runaway bankrupt out of the prison of Rouen. And who is this de Léry? His father, during the siege of Quebec, instead of confronting the enemy, went buying up cattle in the parishes to sell over again to the commissariat at the expense of the misery of an expiring people."

"Who told you that?" cried de Lotbinière in a passion. "Who is the author of such an infamy? I have heard that story told of Monsieur de Lanaudière, but it is as false of one as of the other. It was to Captain de Lanaudière that the compulsion of farmers to bring in provisions was entrusted, but even he went out as an officer doing duty, and never as a trader in beef. Lies, all lies!"

"Let that pass, then," said the unknown Gendarme of the Guard; "but though I can understand de Léry's reporting to his superior on being pressed for information, it was nothing less than ignoble and disgusting of him to have spread these tales concerning my friend among his comrades."

"What!" returned de Lotbinière, "when Lecour was wearing the name of his uncle!"

"If he wore it he did not seek it; it was his companions who gave it to him."

"To have worn it at all, sir, admits of no excuses."

"It was never dishonoured by him; it suffered in nothing."

"That may be, but it does not destroy in the slightest this most sacred principle of society, that each one carry his true name and not that of another."

The stranger lost patience.

"Eh, but, sir," he cried, "this name is not so precious! This name is not so precious, I say, after the adventure of the eldest of the family, who was hung in effigy in that country for having assassinated a worthy citizen of Quebec on his doorstep at the entrance to the Upper Town. And my friend Lecour possesses the proofs of it. It was Panet who was the judge that condemned him for the assassination and ordered him hanged in effigy."

"Hold," returned the Marquis, "Panet the judge? Does your friend not know that Monsieur Panet was only a simple attorney in the days of the French *régime*? I see that you are very badly informed. He of whom you speak was my best friend from childhood, and without question one of the most estimable men Canada ever produced. This is what befell: His quarters as an officer were given him upon Philibert, a man who, having kept a bakery, furnished the King's store with bread for the soldiers at Quebec, whence he grew to look upon himself as the King's *munitionnaire*, and exempt from providing quarters. Monsieur de Répentigny presents his order for lodgings. Philibert refuses. Répentigny replies, 'This must be settled either with the Lieutenant-General, whose written order this is, or with the Intendant—but I must be lodged either by you or by some one else.' Philibert, who was a brute, and filled himself with wine at every meal, goes after his dinner and insults the Intendant, who threatens him with prison unless he arranges for Monsieur de Répentigny. The man, leaving there, rushes, drunk with anger and wine, to Monsieur de Répentigny, whom he covers with the most insolent and revolting expressions. Répentigny turns him out of his chamber. Philibert, continuing his outrageous shouts, ends by delivering the officer a violent stroke of his cane. Monsieur de Répentigny then, as one might well do on such sudden pain and provocation, drew out his sword and ran him through the body, so that he died a couple of days afterwards. That, sir, is your assassination without cause! Then the Sovereign Court of course was obliged to order his decapitation in effigy—not his hanging, as you say; and such is the measure of truth in the information which is given you by that young man on the occurrences of his native colony."

The Marquis's voice having risen in a towering fury, it was impossible to say any more to him, and the Gendarme of the Guard, with a smile, rose and bowed himself out. Immediately after his departure, the Marquis uttered a sudden exclamation.

He hastened to the lodging of his nephew, and asked him, in great excitement, what was the personal appearance of Lecour. By close comparison he arrived at the confirmation of his suspicion—that his visitor had been none other than the adventurer himself.

CHAPTER XL

AN UNEXPECTED ALLIANCE

Fortified with the glimpse into the camp of his adversaries which his bold call upon de Lotbinière gave, Germain lost no time in making his preparations for the

approaching battle. Grancey, at Troyes, received a hasty line from him—

"Complete proofs now ready; am coming."

The Baron was among a group of comrades in his chambers when the note arrived. He immediately ordered wine, over which they discussed in heated terms of sympathy the persecution of their friend and comrade.

When Germain appeared at the gates it seemed as if sunshine had returned to the company. To him their happy faces were an exhilaration, and he felt as if he were living once more. His fellow-officers rushed towards him, and the Guardsmen crowded around. He was besieged with questions, refreshments were brought to him, and they carried him in triumph to his former chambers, which they had decorated with flowers. As soon as he could he made his way to Collinot, and asked that a time be fixed for the hearing of his case.

"This day fortnight at ten of the clock before noon," Collinot said in his decisive, military manner.

Lecour saluted and retired, and the Adjutant wrote a notice for de Léry to prepare his counter-proof.

Both sides entered into the contest with the utmost activity.

Germain's party gave him a banquet, whereat he, crowned with honours and elated by the surrounding enthusiasm, made an oration which sent all those present forth after the festivity to spread again the burning conviction of his stainless honour and of the shameful conduct of his enemies. It was all a desperate game, as he knew perfectly well. But the stake was high—the object of his life—Cyrène.

Louis de Léry immediately sent to de Lotbinière the notice he received from Collinot. The measures of the Marquis were varied and vigorous.

First he took the Record with him, and travelled posthaste to Châlons, where he asked de Léry to take him to their relative, de Villerai.

"You are the man to present this, my dear Villerai," said he. "Being in this distinguished corps, you have an influence to which none of the rest of us can pretend. I leave the papers in your hands. You have merely to hand them to the Prince de Poix or Adjutant Collinot to secure absolutely the obliteration of that *canaille*."

"Certainly, certainly. Leave them with me. They shall be perfectly safe in my possession. Believe me, dear de Lotbinière, I shall do everything excellently for you."

De Lotbinière, reading the easy-going face of the bluff epicurean in uniform, said to himself, "If it required any brains I could not trust you."

The Record was therefore left in de Villerai's charge.

De Lotbinière next went to Paris and wrote to Collinot, stating that de Villerai would be on hand on the day appointed, prepared to present the de Léry side of the case. He furthermore wrote to the Count de Vaudreuil, reminding him of the Canadian connections of his family, and invoking his exalted interest at Court against the intruder upon their social rights. The Prince de Poix was likewise reminded by him, in a letter, of the decision he had expressed against Lecour during their interview some months before.

These precautions taken, he remained in Paris, confidently awaiting the outbreak of his powder mines and the destruction of the *parvenu*. Matters lay in a condition of suspense until the fateful hour.

In the afternoon of the day previous the Châlons diligence brought a stranger who sought out Germain in his quarters. The face was so familiar that Germain's attention was riveted upon him.

"You do not know me, I see," said the man; "but I am come to do you a good turn, a fine turn, a noble turn."

By something erratic in his look Lecour recognised the would-be slayer of de Léry, and his hand crept towards the hilt of his sword.

"Don't be afraid of me," said the maniac; "we are allies."

"I am not afraid," Lecour answered. "What do you wish of me?"

"To give you this," Philibert exclaimed gaily, handing him a packet. "Take it; your battle is won."

With incredulous wonder Lecour looked at the parcel.

"Do you know who I am?" the stranger cried.

"You are Philibert," replied Lecour.

"I am The Instrument of Vengeance," the other corrected, and departed without a bow.

On opening the packet Germain, to his utter astonishment, found de Lotbinière's Record, the precious armoury collected with so much labour by his enemies and so necessary to their case.

As he looked over the documents it contained and felt the sharpness of the different thrusts, he turned hot and dizzy; but the fact that this great find was in his possession, and lost to his opponents, gave him inexpressible satisfaction. He pored over them till far past midnight, when at last his feeling of exultation gave way to overwhelming remorse. His aspect suddenly became that of haggard misery itself; his head dropped, and he murmured in a low, agonised voice, "Is poor Germain Lecour really a liar, a pretender, a forger, a——" Aghast, his lips refused to pronounce the word.

His head dropped still lower; at the movement something fell out of his breast upon the floor. For some moments he did not perceive it. "Yet these things—liar, pretender, forger—what are they more than words contrived by the powerful to condemn the doings of the weak? Whom have I wronged? Have not I only defended myself? Why should the contrivances of society—not mine—stand between me and all that is worth living for?" His glance at length lighted upon the object which had fallen from his bosom—a large locket. The fall had sprung open its lid, and he was face to face with the miniature image of Cyrène. The light of his consuming passion flamed in his strangely transformed eyes.

"For you, everything," he murmured, sobbing.

CHAPTER XLI

A POOR ADVOCATE

The Prince, as Colonel of the company, came specially to Troyes by the desire of Collinot, though the trouble bored him, for he liked Germain, and would never have raised the question concerning his birth had it merely come to his knowledge without the scandal of formal charges. To keep the company in as aristocratic shape as possible as part of his establishment was a thing in which his princely *éclat* was concerned. He came bringing with him his wife's father, the Duke of Beauveau, Marshal of France. The Marshal, whose white hair, stately form, and liberal ideas were universally blessed throughout the kingdom, was a man of singular firmness and kindness in what he considered to be right. He it was who, as Viceroy of Languedoc, had released the fourteen Huguenot women who, on account of their religion, had languished in the dungeons of the Tower of Constance till their heads became blanched with age, and who had fallen at his feet when the Tower was opened for his inspection. The frantic demands of bigotry and the repeated orders of the Minister on that occasion produced no effect upon his pitying heart.

"For justice and humanity," he answered, "plead in favour of these poor creatures, and I refuse to return them under any less than the direct order of the King." The King, to his credit—it was Louis XV.—stood firm also. Beauveau it was, likewise, who refused support to Maupéou's infamous scheme to stifle the whole magistracy and rule the country without a court of justice.

The garrison of Troyes and the company considered the advent of the Marshal their

opportunity for a grand review, and an invitation had been sent to the company de Villeroy, who came over from Châlons. Nominally the Lecour affair did not enter into the consideration of the authorities, but there was no doubt that it was the grand topic of excitement among both corps of the Bodyguard.

At ten of the clock—the appointed hour—the Marshal, accompanied by the Prince, entered the hall where Germain stood ready for the investigation. The breast of the old Commandant was covered with stars and well-earned distinctions, and the glittering Order of the Holy Ghost, with its crust of great diamonds, scintillated upon it. Before him, on the table was Germain's document-box open. Collinot sat beside it, examining the papers, one after another. Nobody else was present.

The Marshal was given the great chair of honour, and the Prince another beside him. The latter sat furtive and uncomfortable. Lecour experienced a sensation of his own immense inferiority to the grand soldier who was sitting as his judge, and he felt helpless and uncertain in such hands.

"Adjutant," began the Marshal, "where are the parties? Is this gentleman Monsieur de Lincy?"

Collinot assented. Germain bowed and turned ghostly white.

"Have you examined his credentials, and how do you find them?"

"They appear correct, my Lord Duke."

"Are the accusers not here?"

"Perhaps they are delayed, my Lord."

"It is a grave thing to keep a man in suspense over an accusation."

All waited silently several minutes. Every second seemed to pull with the tug of a cable on Germain's beating heart.

The door opened. In hurried the Chevalier de Villerai, heated, rubicund, confused, and his uniform partly in disorder, saluting the Marshal as if bereft of his senses.

"Your Excellency—your Grace, I mean—I—I—most humbly—your Excellency—ah—pardon me, your Grace."

"Entirely, Quartermaster. You represent Monsieur de Léry, I presume?"

"Yes, but—but—but——" Villerai stammered, and stopped, his face growing redder.

"Proceed quite tranquilly, Monsieur de Villerai," the Marshal remarked. "What accusation do you bring against Monsieur de Lincy?"

Villerai cast an uncomfortable glance at Germain, then he blurted out "That he is—an—some say an im——. I confess I know nothing against the gentleman myself—he seems to be a very nice young man, but Monsieur de Léry says he is something of that sort."

"And that his proper title is not de Lincy, but that he is the son of a merchant in Canada who is no noble?" Collinot added.

"You know nothing against him yourself?" Beauveau asked of Villerai.

"Nothing myself, very true."

"You bring evidence, then?"

"My Lord—Marshal we have no evidence. I throw myself on your goodness—I had some papers with the contents of which I am unacquainted—but where they are I—I—pardon me your Excellency—this is a very unfortunate affair."

"I think so, Monsieur de Villerai. Your friends have brought to trial a perfectly innocent man—they have allowed him, for several months, to remain under the intolerable vexations of the ban of society, and to stand deprived of his birthright as a gentleman—have destroyed him at Court—have almost blighted his career—have forced him to expose his life to the ocean, to take far-off and highly perilous journeys to collect his defences—and have compelled him more than once to brave mortal combat. They have done all this, as it appears, while his claims were perfectly regular,

and while they themselves fail to produce the slightest atom of evidence against him beyond the unsupported assertions of their own family. What am I, as patron of this regiment, and a military man of sixty years' experience, to say to this state of things?"

"Excuse my—my Lord," de Villerai cried in desperation. "I said our proofs are lost."

"It was your duty to have properly kept them. The opportunity for trial has been given. The accused has responded and cleared himself. You may depart, sir."

"Monsieur de Lincy," continued he, addressing the latter, with an alteration from his severe tone to the kindest of voices, "it almost moves me to tears to think of the indignities to which you have been subjected. Your honour is absolved, and Major Collinot is requested to make entry of this fact on the registers of the company, to avail you in case these charges should ever be repeated. You are reinstalled with your full rank and record, and moreover, in order that your reinstallment may be unequivocal in the eyes of the public, I appoint you my special *aide-de-camp* for the review of this morning. Horse yourself and report at my apartments."

Lecour had stood throughout the interview perfectly motionless—almost statuesque, except a slight clinching of the hands at times. His feelings, however, were at the highest possible tension, and his eyes observant of the slightest changes on the faces of those concerned, and when he found de Villerai—who was a stranger to him—so helpless, a feeling of triumph unexpectedly possessed him. He knew, of course, about the Record—- divined that de Villerai had been entrusted with it—in fact, through the mysterious means related, it was safe above their heads locked in his own sleeping chamber. But what he had been uncertain of was what sort of a man the Quartermaster would turn out to be as a representative of de Léry—what kind of a case he would make without the writings—how much of them he would recite—how that recital would be received by the tribunal—and whether the tribunal would have any regard whatever to the evidence or condemn him by some instinct of caste prejudice. While turning these thoughts over like lightning in his mind, they were brought to a standstill by the pronouncement of Marshal de Beauveau and the sudden relief and violent sense of gratitude produced by the old soldier's sympathetic address to himself.

He felt he had won Cyrène.

He mounted the staircase to his apartment as if his feet were winged. The quarters were deserted. The company had already mustered and marched to the review ground, a levelled field adjoining the boulevarded rampart, surrounded with willow trees and known as the Champ-de-Mars. Germain, as he approached it, riding with the Marshal and the Prince, felt as he had not since he had first put on the uniform of the Bodyguard. His spirit seemed to prance with joy like the horse beneath him. He had now that security, the want of which had caused him such an ocean of misery; he felt that his enemies were now conquered, and that Cyrène was at last his.

Thus they rode to the Champ, where he could see the various regiments, drawn up at the "attention," in a long, brilliant line, their arms shining in the sun, the two companies of the Bodyguard mounted, in their centre, with their magnificent standards and gorgeously arrayed bands. It was a thrilling and beautiful sight.

When they came to the edge of the Champ, the horses of the Marshal and his staff quickened pace, and soon, galloping down the field, they passed in front of the whole division, every eye both of soldiers and spectators levelled towards them. Lecour was the object of intense interest. At this conspicuous moment the Marshal called him to his side and entrusted him with a general order to pass to the commanders of the regiments.

Germain galloped first to the company of Noailles and passed the order with a grave salute to the Prince, who had taken his position in front of it as Colonel. As he did so, the enthusiasm of his companions got the better of their discipline, and they broke into a loud, prolonged cry of "Vive de Lincy!" The members of the company of Villeroy had, as a body, always felt more or less contrary in the affair to their companion de Léry, and there was a party who had strongly favoured Germain. The proof, now so clear, that Louis' accusations had been rejected, suddenly converted the rest to Lecour's side and an enthusiasm similar to that of his own company broke out in their ranks too, resulting in a continuation of the cry, "Vive de Lincy!" This extraordinary scene excited the other troops. The whole line broke out again and again into the

repeated cry of, "Vive de Lincy!" while Germain rode rapidly along. The crowd of spectators took it up, and added tremendous shouts of approbation. Nor did the cry end with the parade. He heard it everywhere; at mess-table it was the greeting as he entered, the response to numerous toasts to his health, and the last sound he heard as he sank to sleep at night.

The feelings of de Léry were very different. The shout was to him his social doom. He stood his ground and executed his duty without an external sign, but his heart withered when his comrades there and then commenced to shun him and drive him into Coventry. No protestations, no statements that he could make, would, he knew, have been of any avail; so he spared himself the trouble. Withdrawing entirely into a proud reserve, he was soon banished from the regiment and from society, and driven to find a refuge over the ocean in Canada, where, hidden from the eyes of European criticism, he entered upon a new career.

The Marquis de Lotbinière heard of the loss of the documents first by a letter from de Villerai. On the same day he received the following from the Count de Vaudreuil—

"At Versailles, the 13th February, 1788.

"I should always be well disposed, sir, to oblige persons who, like Monsieur de Léry, might have aroused my interest; but *it is impossible for me to become the accuser of anybody whatsoever*. *Such a maxim is absolutely opposed to all my principles* and to the invariable law which I have made for myself and from which I cannot depart. It is the place of the Prince de Poix to examine the candidates who present themselves for admission to the Bodyguard; that duty is entirely foreign to me. Be convinced of all the regret I feel in being unable, in this case, to do what would be agreeable to you, and accept fresh assurances of the sincere attachment with which I have the honour to be, sir,

"Your very humble and obedient servant,
"The Count De Vaudreuil."

A worse blow followed, in a brief newspaper account conveying word of the total defeat of the accusations.

Great movements, he heard, had been aroused among the highest circles of Court, in Lecour's favour; the Prince de Poix had proved a broken reed, while the Bodyguards of both companies had clamoured for their de Lincy. The Marquis vented his rage upon de Villerai behind his back, but after a few days concluded it advantageous to make no further references to the son of the cantineer.

Germain's first action was to rush to Versailles and clasp in his arms the love of his life. She, her eyes brimming with the happiness, faith, and trustfulness of a pure young girl, rejoiced in the vindication of her insulted knight.

News of another addition to his possessions arrived, while it brought a grief. Events had been too much for the Chevalier de Bailleul. He died in the latter part of the month of February, and a letter from the intendant of his estates informed Germain both of the sad event and at the same time that the veteran had bequeathed him Eaux Tranquilles and his fortune. The intendant, a local attorney named Populus, quoted the clauses of the will, and asked instructions from his new master.

CHAPTER XLII

A HARD SEASON

The first few days by Germain and Cyrène, after the death of de Bailleul, were spent in genuine sorrow. Their thoughts were recalled to those dear and delicious weeks at Fontainebleau, and they decided that Germain should revisit Eaux Tranquilles and prepare it for their bridal. Wishing to do so undisturbed by business he sent no word

to his intendant, but set out on the journey mounted on a good horse, along the road by Bicêtre and Corbeil. It was the beginning of March, the end of a winter so severe as to have surpassed the memory of living men. The Seine had been frozen over from Havre to Paris for the first time since 1709; and, added to the horrors of famine arising from destruction of the last summer's harvest by hail, the icy fields and gleaming river now had a terrible aspect to the shivering poor; and even to him, Canadian though he was, accustomed to think of winter as a time of merriment, for he thought of the misery of the people.

Towards evening he was forced by a hail storm to stop at the inn of Grelot, a hamlet which adjoined the park of Eaux Tranquilles.

In the morning he was roused by voices in the village street, and saw by the sunlight pouring in at the window that the day was well up and the storm over. The number of voices, though not many, seemed to him unusual for such a somnolent place at Grelot, so that he rose, took up his clothing, which had been dried over night by the host and thrust in at the door at daybreak, partly dressed himself, sat down at the window and looked out from behind the shutters.

On the opposite side of the road he saw, sitting under a spreading oak on a bench, the persons who were talking. The long boughs of the tree were gnarled and leafless, but they overspread most of the little three-cornered space which constituted the village green, and the sun upon their interlacing surfaces cheerfully suggested the coming of spring. Three famished peasants sat on the bench. The bones protruded on their hollow faces, and their eyes were sunk deep in their sockets. They were all over fifty; one was much older, and leaned feebly on a cudgel. Their dress was mean and patched; their battered sabots stuffed with straw and wool. One was whittling with a curved knife. He was a sabot-maker.

"It is not possible to live this way," he protested. "People will not buy sabots nor bucket-yokes."

"They need food before sabots," remarked the old man.

"But I too must have food. Are we never to have good bread again? Three years ago we had good bread."

"This barley, half eaten away, produces more bran than flour," said the old man, trembling with weakness. "To make bread of it, my woman is obliged to work it over several times, and each time there seems so little left that she weeps. We must soon die."

"Yet there is always a fight for it at the wickets, when it is distributed," said the third man.

"And one must fight to keep his share. I go to the wickets with my big knife out," the sabot-maker added fiercely.

"And when one eats it, it gives him inflammation and pains," continued the old man. "I have seen many years of famine, but never so little bread, and that so hard and stinking."

"As for me I have found a secret," gravely said the third man, whose hollow countenance displayed an unnatural pallor. "Over in the Seigneur's park, above the little spring of water, there is a ledge of rock. Below that ledge there lies plenty of white clay. That clay is good to eat. You are hungry no more when you have taken breakfast of that."

"My God! is our parish reduced to eating earth?" exclaimed the oldest of the men. "What is to become of France? Heaven is against us."

"I came here before my children woke, because it pierces my heart to listen to their crying," the sabot-maker said dejectedly.

"Yet everybody knows there is so much good grain in the barns of the new Seigneur," the earth-eater said in a whining voice.

"While Monsieur the Chevalier lived none starved, at least," the old man said, his head bowed in despair upon the top of his staff. "What is to become of us now?"

"It is the fault of the bad people about our King," remarked the earth-eater.

Every syllable sank into Germain's heart, for *he* was the new Seigneur.

A loud clattering sound as of some person running rapidly up the street arrested the conversation of the trio. A countryman, a clumsy, frowsy fellow, in a terrible fright, stopped under Germain's window out of breath and turned at bay on his pursuer. The pursuer, likewise out of breath, was also clumsy, but rather from stoutness than stupidity; he was a short man of about forty, and his dress was that of one in the lower ranks of the law. Everybody in the place ran out of doors to see what the race was about.

"Monsieur Pioche—I—only—want—your—vote," the Attorney panted, closing up with his victim.

"Let me go, Master Populus," the peasant cried, clasping his hands and falling on his knees. "Faith of God! I can swear that I have none of that. I never saw one, I assure you, Monsieur. Search my person and see if you find one of those things. No, Monsieur Populus, I am only a poor little bit of a cottager, I have never broken the laws in my life. I assure you I have no such thing on me. I never saw one, Monsieur."

"My good Pioche—*Monsieur* Pioche, citizen of the bailiwick of Grelot—do not go on your knees to one whose only aim is to be the servant of our citizens."

A suspicious, defensive look was the only expression on the rustic's face as he rose and peered furtively round to calculate his chances of escape. A little crowd was meanwhile closing up.

"Know, sir," continued Populus, "that the King, in the plentitude of his goodness, has learned of the misery of his people and desires to hear their grievances and set them right. He has ordained that the grievances of Grelot be set forth for him in due form, and I undertake, sir, to act in this operation as the humble mouthpiece of my native place. More particularly his Majesty decrees that the august people do declare its will upon the formation of a constitution and other grave matters, by appointing representatives of the Third Estate to the Assembly of the Estates-General."

"I don't understand anything about all that."

"My dear Monsieur Pioche, that does not matter in the slightest. It is the best of reasons why you should appoint me your representative."

"I do not understand," the rustic persisted stolidly.

"*Mon Dieu!* Monsieur Pioche," Master Populus continued, "it is very simple; promise me your vote. See what I can do for you. You pay the Seigneur twenty-six livres annual feudal rent of your holding."

"No, twenty-seven."

"Well, say twenty-seven. Now I am the intendant of this new young fool of a Seigneur, who is away all the time at Versailles. I have the sole control. Let us strike a bargain. Give me your vote and I will quietly let you off ten livres of rental. If I wish, I can find some reason for reporting you at seventeen."

Pioche's eyes assumed an uncertain light of cunning and greed.

"Don't do it, Pioche," cried a one-eyed cobbler. "Notary Mule offers to abolish all these Seigneur's rights if we elect *him* to the States-General."

"Shut up, you tan-smelling bow-legs!" the enraged Populus retorted at a shout. "Who is this Mule, that he should represent the majesty of the bailiwick of Grelot? A cur whose very name is enough to relegate him to limbo; whose deeds are atrocities in ink, whose——"

"Nevertheless he is going to lift our dues. Master Mule is the people's man," the cobbler returned valiantly.

"What, Mule!" cried Populus with still greater scorn. "Where has he the power? Am I not the intendant? Is it not I who alone control the dues in my own person? Yes, gentlemen, who will deny that I hold, so to speak, the keys of heaven and earth in Grelot, and whom I bind shall be bound and whom I loose shall be loosed, notwithstanding the impotent cajolery of all the long-eared Mules in the kingdom?"

The whole population of the village were by this time gaping around him.

"What, you clapper-jawed thief," a voice thundered from behind, "you venture to malign my name—the honourable appellation of a respectable family! Know, sir, that I spit upon you, I strike you, I say bah to your face!"

Maître Mule was a little round-faced man, forced by his physical inferiority to Populus to take out his valour by word of mouth.

The two went at it with recriminations, from which Germain learnt much of his own affairs. The noise of the pair shouting and threatening to fight together, and the riotous cries of the crowd, "No dues!" "Notary, give us bread!" grew at length so great that the innkeeper rushed out exclaiming, "Peace, Messieurs, peace. I have a gentleman from Paris sleeping upstairs. See, there is the baker's shop just open."

The word "baker" operated better than magic. The rioters rushed over to the wicket, which was fixed in the door of the shop, and fought and snarled with each other for their slender purchases of the bread of famine.

Such were the daily incidents which were leading men on to revolution.

CHAPTER XLIII

BACK AT EAUX TRANQUILLES

Wrapping his cloak closely round him and lowering his hat to prevent recognition he mounted his horse in the courtyard of the inn and rode on.

He might have taken a path directly through his own park to the château, but he preferred the highway to Fontainebleau, and, passing the gates of Eaux Tranquilles, entered the great forest.

With what emotions did not the sight of that neighbourhood thrill him. He slacked rein to a walk, rode thoughtfully through the bare but smiling woods and picturesque openings, and stopped with deep feeling at the spring where he first met the generous benefactor of his life. It was now sparkling like crystal—its basin fringed with ice. Tears rose in his eyes and fell freely as he brought his steed into the same position as when the Chevalier had first addressed him, and he eagerly strained his sorrowful imagination to discern again the kindly features of the old man's face and look into his eyes once more.

"I was unworthy of you, my benefactor," he exclaimed. "Oh, may some path out of my misdoings be yet found which will satisfy your stainless standard!" Turning back he retraced his route and entered Eaux Tranquilles.

MARIE ANTOINETTE D'AUTRICHE
Reine de France
1755-1793

The gardens were deserted. He tied his horse to a seat and walked about. Amidst his emotions and reminiscences the beauty of the place, even in its wintry garb, gradually introduced into his thoughts a subdued, scarcely conscious strain of delight in its ownership. He came at last to the château, stood before it, and looked contemplatively along its façade. It was almost too grand to seem by any possibility his, yet in very truth he was lord of Eaux Tranquilles and all its manors.

Sounds of unseemly revelry within fell upon his ear. He listened a moment, and then stepping up to the great door struck the knocker. The butler himself opened. He was half drunk, and as he was a man who had been engaged from Paris since Germain's visit he did not know the latter.

"What do you want, disturbing gentlemen's diversions?" he exclaimed insolently. "Who told you to come to this estate?"

"Its master."

"You lie. Do you want me to set the dogs on you?"

"You will neither set the dogs on me nor tell me I lie," Germain said quietly, and stepped past him into the hall.

"What do you say?" the butler shouted, foaming at the mouth and trying to seize Germain, who foiled him by drawing his sword. "Jacques! Jovite! Constant! 'Lexandre! here; put a *canaille* pig out who defies me!"

The door of an adjoining chamber opened, showing a table covered with glasses and bottles of choice wines, and three or four footmen in disordered liveries rushed out with some of the bottles and glasses in their hands. At the sight of Germain's face one after another stood stock still and fell upon his knees.

The butler swore savagely. He saw what had happened.

"Who is this man?" asked Germain severely of the footmen.

"Cliquet, the butler, Monsieur," stammered Constant, the oldest. "He was not here when your lordship was."

"Take him out of the gates," replied the new master, "and send for my intendant."

Not long after Master Populus entered his presence, bowing and scraping, with a dozen smiles at once on his face.

"So you are the intendant?" said Germain.

"I have the honour, Monsieur le Chevalier—the greatest honour in seven parishes, Monsieur."

"Be good enough to pardon me—you have no honour at all, sir.'

"How? what?" gasped Populus.

"None whatever. You are a rascal; but as long as I can make you behave yourself you shall remain intendant. You misrepresent my rent-rolls."

"Not at all——"

"Listen to me. You bargain away my dues with my *censitaires*."

"Nev——"

"You permit my butlers to drink out of my wine cellars. I warrant you have the pick of them at your own table."

The Attorney did not know whether he was standing on his head or his heels, for the hit was correct.

"Finally," Germain went on deliberately, "you 'hold the keys of heaven and earth in Grelot,' and snap your fingers at 'this new young fool of a Seigneur who is away all the time at Versailles.'"

Master Populus seemed powerless to move or speak as he stood fiery-faced in the middle of the floor, looking despairingly at Germain, who was seated, very coolly glancing him over.

"Well, Master Populus, what do you think?" he proceeded, smiling, after, pausing a moment. "Do you wish to continue the holding of the keys of heaven and earth? If so you must do it on *my* terms. And *my* terms are these—no more lying, no more false accounts, no more stealing from my poor, no more liberties taken with the property and people in your charge. Do you agree?"

The boldness of the opponent of Master Mule had evaporated. Two meek and scarcely whispered words alone left his lips—

"Yes, sir."

"Another thing. Are you willing to choose my intendancy at a fair profit rather than election to the States-General and glory?"

A white wave passed over Populus' countenance. At length, however, he again whispered—

"Yes, sir."

"Well, then, Monsieur Intendant, we can proceed to business. How much grain have I in the granaries? I have the books here."

"About four thousand bushels of wheat."

"In the book are entered two thousand."

"That is my mistake, sir."

"And of barley how much?"

"Seven thousand."

"You entered it four here. Another mistake, no doubt. See that there are no such mistakes in future. My instructions to you then, Monsieur Intendant, are to take the whole of this wheat and distribute it among our starving people under the instructions of the parish priests. Superintend this at once."

CHAPTER XLIV

SELF-DEFENCE

Dominique made an incomparable butler. It boots not to tell how, under his military sway, the servants seemed almost to acquire the new Prussian drill; the stores and cellars were listed with the system of a commissariat, dust disappeared like magic from gildings and parquetry, and order and state surrounded "the young Chevalier" in all his movements.

But above all the new *maître d'hôtel* energetically carried out the immediate wish of his master, and soon everything was ready for an event to which Germain was looking forward with supreme delight—the coming of Cyrène to see her future home. The day arrived. The Canoness accompanied her. The ecstasy of the lovers as they clasped each other in the place of their first meeting may be left unwritten. Very often was the Canoness constrained to absorb herself in her little illuminated prayer-book.

Eight or nine days after the event, the time arrived when it was customary at Eaux Tranquilles for the tenants to pay their feudal dues, and Germain was alone in the office of the château, looking over the ancient titles of de Bailleul's inheritances, preparatory to receiving the "faith and homage" of his subjects.

"I must go no farther," he was saying to himself. "She must not marry me without knowing everything. The time has come for confession, and I must spare myself in nothing. What will she think of me when she knows how false I have been?"

At that point Dominique stepped in gravely and shut the door.

"They are at some mischief in Grelot," he said.

"Against me?"

"It looks that way."

"How? I saw nothing of it yesterday."

The day before being Sunday, Germain had gone over alone in his coach to attend High Mass in the parish church. The people standing about the front doors greeted him respectfully, and he passed up the aisle and took his seat in his raised and curtained pew. The priest, as was customary, had named him in the prayers as patron of the church, he was the first to be passed the blessed bread, and the congregation even received with subdued approbation a warm reference in the sermon to his distribution of wheat to the poor. His leaving was treated in as respectful a manner. How then, one day later, could the Grelotins be at mischief against him?

"It was that Mule and that trash of a Cliquet. They were haranguing the people after Mass—something about a thing Mule calls the Third Estate. Nobody knows what it is—but everybody thinks it belongs to himself and that the aristocrats want to take it from him. So everybody got into a rage against the aristocrats (save your honour), and Mule brought them over to the tavern hall, ordered everybody's fill of brandy, and read out something from the King. He told them the King was on their side, and for all to tell out their complaints against the Seigneur. So everybody began to think if he had complaints, and Master Mule wrote them into a copybook. When Mule read it out, the people groaned and cried that they never knew they had had so many miseries. Cliquet shouted that you were the cause of all these miseries; that you had grain while the peasants were starving, and that they ought to drive you out of the country and then would all be well."

They were startled by a musket-shot so near the house that Dominique hastened to the window to look. Germain sprang up too. The office faced at the rear, close to the old château and lake.

A rough fellow with a gun was coolly standing near the great dovecot and shooting at the pigeons. Dominique threw open the window and shouted. The answer was a gesture of derision.

Germain rang furiously for the lackeys. For answer Jovite and 'Lexandre ran up, pale, and out of their wits, reporting that "the brigands" were invading the front of the house.

"Go and find what is the matter, Dominique," Lecour said, and sprang up to seek for Cyrène, but checking himself, crossed the corridor and went to a front window.

He saw a multitude trooping down the gardens from the gates and walls, over which in the distance he could descry them swarming, and forming a sort of semicircle around the entrance door. The vanguard were led by a drum and a violin. The expressions on the faces of the men were wild and haggard, most wore greasy bonnets of wool, some huge wooden shoes, some hobnailed ones, and over their shoulders or in their hands protruded their weapons—pitchforks, scythes, flails, knives, clubs, and rusty guns. All must have been several thousand, collected from every hamlet in his territory. They seemed like a legion of some spectre army of Hunger and Ignorance. In the commander Germain recognised his discharged butler.

The Canoness he descried escaping, unseen by them, with the aid of a gardener, across the pond into the park. He withdrew from the window and fled quickly towards the chamber of Cyrène. She likewise was seeking him, and in a passage they rushed into each other's arms.

"Where is the Canoness?" she exclaimed.

"She is gone, she was warned," he said. "You know there is danger, love?"

"I see it," she answered.

"Come," he urged her, "the office is strong, we may have to defend ourselves."

Thither, therefore, they returned and anxiously awaited Dominique, each fearful of the safety of the other. For the moment the protection of the house had to be trusted wholly to the Auvergnat.

Dominique was absent about fifteen minutes, during which Germain could hear the

servants barring the doors, and voices surrounding the house in all directions. The valet returned and related his observations. After making the doors fast and collecting the female servants in the hall, he had carefully looked out of the wicket of the grand entrance, and seeing no one approaching, opened, and going out to the head of the steps, inquired of the mob their errand. He was met by a hurly-burly of cries.

"Long live Liberty! Long live the King! Death to the aristocrats! Long live the nation!"

"What do you seek of Monsieur le Chevalier?"

"His head!" cried Cliquet.

"Bread, bread!" shouted the sabot-maker.

But two others came forward and more rightly interpreted the chief and quaint demand of the ignorant peasants. They demanded all his parchments and title-deeds to burn; "for," said they sententiously, "we shall then be freed of rents and dues, which are now abolished by the King." Some of the bolder rioters had even started a fire to burn the documents.

"And if he does not give them up?"

"We must cut off his head and burn down his château. We are sorry, but it is the King's order."

Dominique, in reporting, made no suggestions; instead, he waited for instructions. Lecour thought a moment. He came to the conclusion to try severity. "Tell them," said he, "that unless they are quiet I will make parchments of their skins."

Cyrène caught his arm, but the answer had already gone.

Dominique dropped the *rôle* of butler for his old ones of soldier. He saluted, and marched down to deliver the message. A hush was heard for a few moments, then the entrance door slammed, and an instant after all the windows in the mansion seemed to shatter simultaneously before a tremendous volley of musketry and stones. Every wall and casement shook with the shouts and racketing sounds of a fierce and general attack.

Germain and Cyrène shuddered. The noise awoke them to the seriousness of the situation. It brought them face to face with that terrible storm whose thunderclouds were now thickly darkening over France—the death-dealing typhoon of the Revolution. A proud thought came into his head. "My time is come. I shall die defending her."

"Do you and all the servants save yourselves," he said to Dominique. And he took two pistols from the drawer and laid them on the table, looking into Cyrène's eyes.

"No, my master," Dominique returned, "if you die, I will die with you. I know my duty. But let us at least defend ourselves well."

"See that the others escape, and especially the women. It is not right for them, who are from the country here, to be embroiled with their relatives. Tell them on no account to open the outer doors, or they run the risk of massacre, but to make terms through their friends in the mob."

It was only a question of minutes when the besiegers should succeed in breaking a door or scaling the walls to the windows and making their entrance. From the office windows they could see a score of those in the rear running forward across the grounds with a ladder which they had secured in the stables. Passing again to the front of the house, Lecour saw the mob angrily tearing up garden benches and summerhouses for the same purpose. An active crowd besides, under the urging of Cliquet, was battering the main door with a beam. The fire, lit for his parchments was blazing merrily, and a man with a shock of matted hair, by a sudden impulse snatched a long brand and raised the cry of "Burn him up!" Others sprang forward to do the same, and fought for the blazing pieces, but Cliquet bounded down the steps and knocked the matted-hair man down.

"Curse you!" he shouted. "You will spoil the whole business. You don't know how many good things are in there for us."

Dominique returned from the servants. "They are well arranged for," said he.

Cyrène tremblingly caught Germain's arm, excited with a new idea. "To the old château! not a moment to lose!" she cried, and seizing Lecour by the arm hurried him into the passage which communicated between the new mansion on land and the ancient one in the lake, while Dominique followed. Half-way across was a decayed wooden door, which once had done duty as a gate behind the portcullis. They shut and bolted this with all speed, and then turned to look round them. The crash of the main door falling and the shout of the mob which followed, penetrated to their retreat.

"We have plenty of powder and pistols," Dominique exclaimed; "there is the armoury just at our backs."

The armoury, in truth, was close at hand and in it an ample selection of old-fashioned weapons.

"Let us place this to command the passage," Germain said, touching a bronze cannon, after they had taken some pistols and powder.

"Very good, my General," Dominique assented excitedly, and pushing the rusty trunnion they got it into position. It was an ornate affair, which had been for centuries discharged by the de Bailleuls on the birthdays of the family. Cyrène had the good judgment to remain in the armoury.

It was several hours before they were discovered. The reason, as they concluded by listening at the door in the passage, was the exploring of the wine-cellars by the besiegers, under the guidance of Cliquet. Blows, shouts, and crashes indicated numerous acts of destruction. Inevitably, however, they were at last found out by Cliquet himself, who could not forego the delights of revenge. He came to the wooden door.

"Baptism, dame, I have you now, you cursed young white-gill!" cried he. "Break it in, my boys, smash, hack. We'll roast *him* in place of his parchments—the man who will make parchments of our skins."

Lecour ran back to take a moment's glance at Cyrène. She was kneeling at prayer. He withdrew, grasped his pistols with renewed determination, and stood at his post.

Lecour and Dominique were quite ready—the latter with his fuse, the former with a pistol in each outstretched hand and the need of saving Cyrène in his fast-beating heart. They were disciplined soldiers, the mob was not. No sooner had the door fallen in and the crowd of attackers rushed into the passage, than the roar of the cannon was heard, its flame was seen, a cloud of sulphurous smoke thickly filled the passage, and a mass of mutilated and shrieking creatures covered the floor. A terrible sorrow for his suffering tenants surged over Germain. A dreadful silence fell upon the rest of the house, followed by mingled sounds of confusion in the distance, and soon the main multitude itself appeared, pressing forward towards the passage.

Lecour, with his pistols undischarged, again stood immovably covering Dominique, as he deliberately and rapidly reloaded, and once more while the crowd still pressed on a torrent of shrapnel poured into them, sickening all finally of the attempt.

The two army men thus remained temporary masters of the situation, but they knew that the advantage could not serve them long.

As for Cyrène she was weak with the shock, but insisted on making no complaints. He watched her anxiously and tenderly until she seemed somewhat recovered, but it was evident by her trembling limbs that a grave illness was but briefly postponed. The groans which came from the passage caused her to make several attempts to go to the sufferers, and she had to be gently restrained and removed by them to another part of the castle.

As dusk fell the two defenders moved cautiously forward among the horrors of the dead and dying, and once more rudely fastened up the door. It became clear that they must attempt an escape, for with the dark came fresh dangers.

Dominique remained on guard, while Lecour, taking a candle, went through the old castle, making a rapid survey. The night was clear and cold, the moon had not yet risen, and the darkness was sufficient to favour them. He selected a window for the attempt. Then, reckless of treasures, he cut down some of the old tapestries which lined the chambers, and slit off enough to twist into a rope. This would bring them to

the level of the water, now thinly covered with ice.

"But will the ice bear us?"

"No, Monsieur, I started across this morning and it broke."

"Of what nature is it?"

"Soft, and bends, and your foot sinks through it."

"Very well, we can cross it."

He hurried back to one of the chambers where there were some of the de Bailleul portraits hanging, pulled them down with his own hands, and tore the frames of several apart. Their sides he attached as cross-bars to others, by means of strings ravelled from the canvas of the tapestries. The result was a makeshift for snowshoes. With these they escaped across the ice to the park, unnoticed by their enemies, who, by the lights in every part of the mansion, they could see were active and uproarious.

When at last, arriving at the gate of a château miles onward toward Paris they looked back they saw an immense blaze in the distance, and the heavens aglare from east to west with the conflagration. But the saving of Cyrène made up in Germain's heart for the loss of his mansion, and he felt as if by that as he had taken a step towards redemption.

CHAPTER XLV

THE NECESSITIES OF CONDITION

All through the long illness of Cyrène, which followed the revolt at Eaux Tranquilles, and especially after her first grief for the misguided men who had fallen in the corridor, her heart dwelt with great intensity on the destruction of her hope of a home. She recurred to it again and again in her conversations with him, until he ventured to mention to her the offer once made to him by Liancourt of the position of Commandant of the cadet school on his estates.

"Could you retire thither," said he, looking into her eyes with emotion, "away for ever from your friends, away from your rank, from the Court, and all that is so brilliant and belongs to you, to live your life along with a man of humble birth wholly unworthy of you? You speak of a quiet hearth and of abandonment of the world, but could you make a sacrifice so great as this?"

"Germain, love, do you not know me yet?" she answered, returning him a look of affection which profoundly troubled him. He knelt and kissed her hand in silence. "Is not love life itself?" she said, rising with difficulty from her arm-chair. "Let us go without delay and obtain permission," and, taking his hand, led him with steps slow and pitiably uncertain into the presence of the Maréchale.

Madame was seated alone, mumbling to the count of her rosary, but on their appearance dropped it in her lap and resumed her usual bearing of dignity.

"Grand-aunt," began the Baroness, "we have a great boon to ask of you."

"What is it, Baroness?" she said.

"Grand-aunt," Cyrène repeated falteringly, "have you ever known what it is to love?"

The question astonished Madame l'Etiquette. For a moment it seemed as if a slight mounting of the blood to her wrinkled cheeks was visible. In the next her features resumed their stiffness, and she answered, "Tush! that is the business of citizenesses."

"You too have had your dream; I have heard of it," Cyrène persisted. "Women are women, whatever their sphere."

"Say illusion, perhaps, not dream; but the subject must cease. What do you want of me after this very *malàpropos* preface?"

"I ask you to consent to our immediate marriage," Cyrène said with desperate directness, and tremblingly taking the chair which Germain proffered, sat down with white face, watching Madame de Noailles anxiously.

The latter did not reply.

"Grand-aunt," pled the young woman, "you have felt like us in your day, the longing for a home, a sweet refuge from the wretchedness of life. You had a lover to make you feel how sweet it might have been."

"Get these silly ideas out of your head," responded Madame l'Etiquette, ignoring Lecour, but speaking in a not unkindly manner. "Your rank demands an *establishment*, not a home. Monsieur understands that his position and yours are very different, and that two things at least are necessary in order to make your marriage possible—his standing as a Bodyguard, and a complete establishment. The riotous condition of his province makes the latter very dubious. You understand this, Monsieur de Lincy?"

"It must be admitted, Madame la Maréchale," Lecour said sorrowfully.

"You have some sense, I observe."

"But I can live without an establishment. A position is open to Germain in the provinces as Commandant of a school," Cyrène exclaimed.

Madame uttered an exclamation so energetic, and she rose so fiercely from her chair that Cyrène stopped in dismay.

"Saints of heaven!" went on the Maréchale, "is the family on the brink of a catastrophe? Can the Noailles, the Court, and the Crown afford to allow a Montmorency to annihilate herself? How dare you, forgetful of your relatives, your position, your descent from a hundred kings, advance such a proposal to the Chief Lady of Honour. I am something, Madame, and I intend to be considered, and to see that your family shall be considered. A pretty idea this, of rustic innocence and rural retirement, of straw bonnets and shepherding, of the new school to which you belong and who are the enemies of everything permanent. You are destroying customs to make way for theories, manners for boon comradeship, chivalry for finance, elegance for vulgarity, religion for atheism, and character for sentiment. You are to blame for all the present disorders, and such as you have brought about the burning of your own château. No, Madame, I will not permit the marriage. How dare you propose it to her, sir?"

Lecour said nothing. He could not.

Cyrène continued bravely.

"The matter is of the deepest concern—of infinite importance to us."

"I have decided it. I am the guardian of your future, and I intend to remain so."

"You are the lady head of the family and guardian of my future under the will of my father, but let me say without disrespect that I am a widow, and legally control my own right to dispose of my hand."

"You think you could disobey me? I could easily see to that. The King would refuse to sign the contract of marriage, and there my power would only begin."

"You cannot prevent us from at least marrying. The humblest French peasants have a right to that without any royal signature."

"Yes I can, and I will show you the power of the old school!" cried the dame, straightening herself with an inconceivable triumph and shaking out the folds of her brocade. "Monsieur de Lincy here knows well that I am right in preventing you from sacrificing your position. I call upon *his honour as a noble* not to allow this disgrace to fall upon you. I call upon it to sustain the head of your house. I call upon it to reverence the wish of the dead and the will of the King. You admit me right and just, Monsieur de Lincy? I call upon your honour as a noble. Answer me."

"There is but one way of replying," he returned slowly; and Cyrène in her very anguish showed her pride in his response to the fatal appeal to his honour.

"Well, then," Madame cried, partaking in that pride and changing her manner to one

of much kindliness, "you have done well and are good children. Believe that my strictness shall endure no longer than is necessary. It is true that in the name of order I forbid your marriage, but I consent to your remaining affianced until these troubles of our country pass away or Monsieur obtains some establishment, no matter how small, if sufficient, and even though that should take as long as your lives may last. Kneel and receive an old woman's blessing."

With what disappointed and mingled feelings they knelt before her and bowed to the conquest of nature by the Old *Régime*.

CHAPTER XLVI

THE PATRIOTS

At midnight the full moon, silver-gilt, touched the house-fronts of the Street of the Hanged Man. They lit the figure and slouched hat of Jude, who, carrying a package, slunk up to the door of the Gougeon shop and was admitted. The Big Bench were in session. The light of the tallow-dip seemed to concentrate itself on the wicked smile of the Admiral as he watched Jude opening the packages.

"Do you know who sent this, gentlemen?" the spy cried, enjoying the importance of being the bearer of some surprise.

"We are not gentlemen, and we do not know," retorted Hache.

"It was a high personage, rowers—no less a personage than a prince—a royal prince."

"What have *we* to do with princes?"

"With the Duke of Orleans, much; rival to the throne, he is the friend of the people."

"Ah, yes, the friend of the people, and he wants us for something. That is a good contract," the Admiral interrupted. "Whose windpipe does he want to cut, and what does he promise to pay for it?"

"Nothing so risky; only some shouting, and as for the pay, here, Admiral, is the nose of the dog," and he handed him a full bag of coin.

The Admiral tore it open, and exhibited the metal to his greedy-eyed subordinates. Hache grabbed at a couple of the coins, and joyfully flipped them up to the ceiling.

"Now what does our friend the Duke of Orleans want? Our *friend* the Duke of Orleans, *gentlemen*," the Admiral added, smiling ironically.

"To wear these badges and shout for him," replied Jude, displaying the contents of his parcel, a couple of dozen red woollen tuques.

"No objection," the Admiral answered; "no objection in the world, but what is the object?"

"Well, Monsieur Admiral——"

"Shut up with your 'Monsieurs', spy," called Hache. "Do you want us hunted for aristocrats?"

"Well, Citizen Admiral then, you know how things have been going since last spring. In May there was the holding of States-General; in June the National Assembly confront the nobles and swear never to disperse; in July the Court menaces to suppress the Parisians by the army; on the eleventh the people slaughtered by the Dragoons; on the fourteenth——"

"The Bastille taken—I was there."

Exultation lit the ring of faces.

"Ragmen, we have had good times since the 14th of July," said the Admiral. "It is

now becoming our turn. I always told you it was coming, but I am going to give you better still. You are going to learn to love the sight of red blood better than red wine."

"The aristocrats," Jude continued, "have been skipping over the frontiers; the people starving and rising to their rights; we hung Councillor Foulon to the lantern——"

"And put grass in his mouth, the old animal!" exclaimed Wife Gougeon with vicious hate.

"The King——" proceeded Jude.

"The Big Hog," shouted a Councillor savagely.

"The Big Hog, then, has had his bristles singed with all this: the people despise him. Orleans is the people's favourite. What if the Galley-on-Land should put Orleans on the throne?"

"Good!" cried the Admiral.

The Big Bench broke into excited comment.

"Citizen Jude is admirable." Their leader went on, "Nothing could be more acceptable than the money of a friend to the people. I tell you, ragmen, our time has come. There is nothing we cannot try."

"Let us garrott every gendarme."

"They keep well out of our way now, at least when single," another boasted.

"We don't loot enough houses," a third grumbled. "What is the good of belonging to the nation?"

"It is the sacred right of the citizen to oppress the oppressor," chimed Jude.

"Ragmen, you don't know what I mean," vociferated the Admiral sharply. "We are to be the great men—the Government. I have seen this ever since our sack of Reveillon's paper-factory. Everything belongs to the boldest. You will yet see our Big Bench legislators of Paris and me a Minister of France."

"Bravo; bravo the Admiral!"

The man who last entered, the Versailles beggar, now came to the centre.

"Listen, friends. You know that what I learn at Versailles is worth something to the Galley-on-Land."

"Invariably," said the Admiral.

"The Big Sow, you know, she they call Madame Veto, has been cursedly working to keep the Big Hog with the cursed hogs. The people are afraid of more Dragoons, and are crying, 'The King to Paris!' Well, now, this is the third of October. Yesterday afternoon the Bodyguard, as they call them—all fat hogs, mark you—gave a dinner in the theatre to the Flemish Dragoons. They were so glad to have Flemings to sabre Paris that the Big Sow came in, and they all spat on the people's cockade, and put on the White Hog colour, and also a black one, and vowed they were cocksure of shutting us up. They brought in the Big Hog from his hunting, and he is in the mess, too. At the end they all followed Madame Veto home, shouting everything to vex us patriots. *I* am a *patriot*," he added winking. "It is an outrage on the nation. We must go to Versailles. We must bring the Big Hog into our bosoms, away from the Bad Hogs. Do you see?"

"I am in it," cried Hache.

"An incomparable scheme," said the Admiral. "Brave Greencaps, don't you see before you all the swag in the great château of Versailles? My God! it is a pretty scheme—a scheme worthy of a Galley-on-Land."

Even Gougeon seemed to be waked up, and fixed his greedy black eyes on Motte.

"Citizens," the Admiral continued, addressing Wife Gougeon. "This is better begun by the women. This morning you will go the Fish-market and stir the fishwomen up. You must learn the lingo of patriotess. Scream hard that 'The nation is in danger!' 'Down with the enemies of the republic!' Talk of 'the excellent citizen,' 'the true patriots,' 'the good *sans-culottes*.' Be 'filled with sacred vigour' against 'the vile

aristocrats.' We 'work for liberty,' we 'bear the nation in our hearts,' and 'fulfil a civic duty.' 'Against traitors, perpetual distrust is the weapon of good citizens,' and 'away with the prejudices of feudalism!' You can pick up carts-full of the lingo at the Palais Royal."

"I don't understand that bosh," blurted Hache.

"You learn it in two instants, Hache."

"Wait till I tell you another thing, Admiral," Motte interposed. "There are now twenty thousand ragmen from the provinces encamped on the hills of Montmartre, fit for everything good. I have been through them, and when a St. Marcellese holds his nose, you may fancy. Man never saw such a choice crowd of breechesless. Get *them* started and go to the women to-morrow."

"To-morrow, then, let it be. The cries are to be 'Bread' and 'The King to Paris,' the fishwomen to lead; the Big Bench sign to be the red wool of '*our Friend Orleans*'; then sack the bakers; then the Hôtel de Ville; then the château of Versailles; and death to every black or white cockade."

CHAPTER XLVII

THE DEFENCE OF THE BODYGUARD

Word passed about at the stately tea *à l'Anglaise* of the Princess de Poix that there was danger at the Palace.

"Germain, my knight," whispered Cyrène at the harpsichord, the bright tears in her eyes, "I must not keep you now. Go to the Queen. It is for times of peril that descendants of chivalry were born."

Tenderly kissing her hand and saying adieu, Lecour drove to the Palace and reported for service.

The great Hall of the Guards in the centre of the Palace faces the top of the Marble Staircase. To the left a landing leads to the Hall of the King's Guards and thence, to the apartment of the King; to the right another to the Hall of the Queen's Guards and the chambers of Marie Antoinette.

The Marble Staircase was approached by the Court of Marble, the smallest and innermost courtyard of the vast château, looked out upon by the royal apartments and paved with white marble. The exit from this was to the Royal Court, whence through a grating to the Court of the Ministers, and thence through the outer grating by the entrance gate to the Place d'Armes.

Though the season was yet early in October, it was as gloomy and forbidding a night as one in the worst of November. The darkness and chill were aggravated by a wearisome drizzle. They were further aggravated by the discomforts of an anxious situation. About fifty Bodyguards, lying and sitting under arms in the Hall, were trying to spend the night, or rather the early hours before dawn, entertaining each other. They were mainly of the command of the Count de Guiche, then in its turn of service, but a number among them wore cross-belts of other companies, for the need had been pressing, and all within reach had been hastily summoned. The reason for anxiety was a great invasion of women from Paris on the afternoon of the previous day headed by "a conqueror of the Bastille." A deputation of twelve of these women were led to the King, who satisfied and pleased them by his kindness, but the rest of the crowd, brandishing knives through the railing, accused these of treachery and tried to hang them. Outside the Palace on the Place d'Armes the numbers were increased by horde after horde of men marching from the slums of Paris, armed with pikes, muskets, and hatchets, and full of drink. After dark many had filled the streets, knocking at the houses demanding food and money, and terrifying the town. The sentinels, the Bodyguards, and the Flemish regiment had with difficulty rescued the women of the deputation, kept the gates and held the mob at bay. They were jeered at and even fired on, whereat one or two of the Bodyguards had fired back. The filthy furies,

drunken and degraded to an extent of degradation almost unknown to-day, were especially foul-mouthed regarding the poor Queen. As for Wife Gougeon, she had stood out on the very floor of the Assembly, flourished her dagger and screamed "Where can I find the Austrian?"

At length rain and night brought a certain cessation, and with them hopes rose. The troops were withdrawn at eight. The main portion of the Bodyguard were sent to Rambouillet in the vicinity, as they seemed to excite antagonism among some companies of the National Guard or militia of Versailles. About twelve in the evening, General Lafayette, of American fame, came up at the head of the militia of Paris and took command of the external defences of the château.

The mob were still, however, permitted to camp out on the Place d'Armes.

"What are they doing now?" a tired officer of the Bodyguards asked of another, who had come in and was giving his dripping cloak to one of the King's lackeys.

"They are mostly asleep, on the Place. It is all over hillocks of rags."

"In the rain?"

"So it seems; it does not wet that sort."

"They must be hungry."

"Not at all. They have each his or her bottle of drink; besides, they roasted and ate our comrade's horse that they shot by the light of their bonfire. It was looking on at a cannibal's feast to see them dancing round it, men and women."

"More so had it been an ass's carcase, perhaps."

"Say a wolf's. If there is a breed of human wolves, I have had it proved to me to-night. The difference between these and the kind in the Menagerie is that it is we who are within the bars."

"You need not offer the breed as a novelty; I saw plenty of them at Eaux Tranquilles."

The speakers were Grancey and Germain. The Baron's face was full of indignation; Lecour's of platonic contempt.

The door of the Hall of the King's Guards opened, and the sentinels saluted for a Duke, while the Prince of Luxembourg entered. The Guards who were awake aroused their comrades. All sprang to their arms and saluted.

"Gentlemen," said the Prince, "you will be glad to know that his Majesty has such trust in your faithfulness that he is sleeping as quietly as usual."

A shout of "Vive le Roi!" arose.

The Prince withdrew. From the opposite door—that of the Hall of the Queen, now came out Monsieur d'Aguesseau, Mayor of the Guard, who was making the disposition of sentries.

The contingent, who were still standing, turned to him with looks of anxiety, and Lecour, as spokesman for the rest, said respectfully—

"How sleeps the Queen?"

"Her Majesty, alas! does not sleep. She starts up continually, haunted by the foul insults of yesterday and the immense unmerited hatred of the people of France. What a load for a woman to bear!"

The cry of "Vive la Reine!" which had been ready went forth only as a low murmur.

"Gentlemen," said d'Aguesseau, "our duty may be grave before long. General Lafayette has, it is true, assumed the external defence of the Palace with the National Guard of Paris. At the same time, we must remember that that Guard are now scattered among the churches of the town and fast asleep, while the invaders are a countless multitude at our doors, and we but a handful. On us depend, as on a thread, the lives of our King and Queen and of all these helpless persons of the household. Remember, sirs, that your time to die, the soldier's hour of glory, may now have come."

A shoot of "Vive le Roi!" from every throat was again the response. It echoed through the windows across the Court of Marble and down the Great Staircase. It was memorable as the last loyal cry of the household of Versailles.

"The hour has arrived to change guard," Mayor d'Aguesseau went on. "Will you, Monsieur de Lincy, take command in the Hall of the Queen?"

D'Aguesseau passed on to inspect the precautions at other points of the Palace.

No sooner had he left than the men disposed themselves with serious faces for active work. A sympathetic feeling of devotion displayed itself. Suddenly Des Huttes, the best voice in the company of Noailles, struck up solemnly that tender reminiscence from the opera of "Richard Cœe Lion"—

"Oh, Richard, oh my King, the world forsaketh thee,"

and the Bodyguards, overcome with emotion, one and all stood still with bended heads.

It was then about three o'clock.

In four hours' more the French Monarchy was to fall and the ancient *régime* to pass like a dream. The east wind dashed a terrible gust of rain against the windows and shook their panes like a summons.

* * * * *

"Oh, Richard, oh my King, the world forsaketh thee," haunted Germain as he paced the Hall of the Queen's Guards. Recent political events connected with the drawing up of a national constitution, and the hunger of the poor, which they naturally blamed on those in power, had, he knew, raised deep animosity towards Louis XVI. and the Queen. Her thoughtless life of gaiety in past days, and the greedy demands of her friends the Polignacs, had made her particularly the mark of venomous hate. As d'Aguesseau said, "what a load for a woman to bear!" The thought raised in Lecour the deepest pity. Opposite him was the door of the first antechamber, called the Grand Couvert, where had posted Varicourt, and within it some dozen others. There Varicourt stood, handsome and elegantly uniformed, at that beautiful door in that fine hall. Yet behind all this elegance what misery! The Canadian could not suppress the vision of the tortured Queen starting out of her sleep in her chamber a few paces away. This suffering woman was in his charge—he must be loyal to her and lay down his life before hers should be taken. Well, he had faced death before—it had not yet quite come to that; but he would be loyal and true. Oh, if he could only cross for a few minutes to the Noailles mansion and have a word with Cyrène. Was she in danger too? His heart ached with anxiety.

So the hours of the night passed.

A little before six, while he was resting on a bench and all seemed quiet, he suddenly heard shouting. He was startled, for it was much nearer than the Place d'Armes. Yes, there was no doubt of it; he heard a pistol-shot close by, and at the same time he sprang to his feet. There was a simultaneous stir in the Great Hall of the Guards, and de Varicourt, at the entrance to the Queen's antechamber, rapidly drew his sword. So did du Repaire, sentinel at the door to the Marble Staircase.

Germain ordered Miomandre de Ste. Marie, another faithful Guardsman, who was posted at the door of the Great Hall, to go down the Marble Staircase and bring back a report of the trouble.

It afterwards appeared that the two of Lafayette's Paris militiamen posted at the outer gateway had betrayed their trust and let in the mob of viragoes and armed brigands who pressed for admittance early in the morning. Now commenced a season of terror in the Palace.

No sooner had Miomandre reached the head of the staircase, and Lecour looked after him out of the open door, than they both saw the court below alive with a lashing ocean of pikes and furious faces.

The two Swiss sentinels who kept the foot of the staircase had managed to check the rush, and for a moment the brigands checked themselves to get each a hack at an object they had thrown down. Lecour saw instantly that this object was a man—a

Bodyguard—who, as with a tremendous effort he threw off his assailants and stood up, the streams of blood pouring over his face, he recognised as poor Des Huttes. Germain's first impulse was to bound down the steps to his rescue—but discipline did its work and checked him. Should he leave his post, what would become of the Queen? Des Huttes during the moment of this quick reflection, was brained from behind by a man in a red cap, and fell, pierced with countless pike-wounds. His eyes still moved when the rag-picker Gougeon ran in, and, placing his foot on the chest, chopped the head from the body with blows of an axe. In an instant it was stuck on the point of a pike and triumphantly carried away.

Lecour, his brain on fire, drew back and steadied himself to retain presence of mind.

An instant after he could hear the roar of the mob as it surged up and the voice of Miomandre shouting to them, "My friends, you love your King."

They rushed on Miomandre and tried to kill him as they had done Des Huttes; but he was quick, and springing to the embrasure of a window, defended himself, while the yelling booty-seekers, athirst for easier-seized treasures, turned to press forward into the apartment of the Queen. The attack came quickly, but Germain shut the door in time and locked it, and thanks to the perfect make of the lock its bolt held out against the onset. That could not long be, however, as he knew the panels must give way before their axes.

"Stand firm, du Repaire!" he cried, and ran across the hall to where de Varicourt was guarding the door of the Queen's antechamber. Before passing in, he grasped the hand of the devoted Bodyguard, who understood that his hour had come, crossed himself, and answered with a look of unalterable devotion.

Germain closed the door of the antechamber lovingly and regretfully, locked and bolted it.

The howling pack were but a few minutes in breaking in. He could hear their shouts of triumph and the shameless cries of the women against Marie Antoinette.

Astonished at finding themselves in the inside of the Palace, the first comers were dumbfounded, but a red-nosed beggar in a red cap immediately sprang towards de Varicourt, shouting, "This way to the Austrian!"

"Vive la Nation!" roared men who were looting the tapestry from the benches.

"Death to the Sow!" was the shriek of Wife Gougeon.

"Death to the aristocrat!" shouted the Admiral with a devilish laugh, leading the rush on de Varicourt.

The latter defended himself with all his strength, first with his clubbed musket, then with his sword. For some seconds he kept the murderers at bay, and it seemed to du Repaire, looking eagerly across the hall, that after all the impossible might be accomplished, and the valour of his comrade stem the accursed horde. To no purpose. As he turned like lightning to deliver a thrust to the left, a blow from a billhook on the right crushed his skull; he dropped, and his bleeding body was instantly robbed and dragged out to the Place d'Armes.

Meanwhile du Repaire, inspired by the heroic conduct of de Varicourt, took advantage of the momentary diversion to slip across and occupy his fallen comrade's post. The assailants, some of the boldest of whom had suffered from de Varicourt's sword, were astonished and daunted by the sight of another Bodyguard in the same place.

"*Canaille!* we know how to die!" he cried, and stood ready to strike the first on-comer.

"So do we!" cried the Admiral, and struck at him, but tripped and was pulled back.

"Save yourself, du Repaire, if you can," commanded Germain from within the door.

Seizing the moment's confusion, du Repaire sprang through the weakest part of the semicircle around him, and scattering the tramps in the rest of the hall before him, reached the door of the Great Hall of the Guards opposite, not without several wounds. The door was fortunately opened and Grancey, who opened it, emptied his pistol into the foremost pursuer and killed him, obtaining time to lock and bolt again.

The crowning instance of the spirit of the Bodyguard was now given. Miomandre de Ste Marie, who had sheltered himself from the first rush of the mob in the window embrasure at the head of the staircase, seeing the crowd rush after du Repaire, and not knowing of the command to abandon the post, sped over and stationed himself in the same position. Meanwhile, during the few minutes in which all this took place, Germain had opened the door of the Queen's drawing-room and said quietly to a lady of honour, "Save the Queen; they want to kill her." The ladies of honour bolted the drawing-room door, hurried to the Queen, hastily dressed her, opened a secret door in a panel near her bed, and hurried her by a passage to the chamber of the King.

Miomandre, meanwhile, was attacked like Varicourt and du Repaire. Knocked down from behind with the butt of a musket, he would have been despatched but for the scramble of the Galley men to rob his body of his watch, and by the diversion of the rage of the crowd against his companions shut in the Great Hall.

While Ste Marie lay insensible, those in the Great Hall were actively piling up benches against the door and removing the stacks of arms to the Oeil de Boeuf, which adjoined it, and where they proposed to make their next stand in the way to the apartments of the King. The Count of Guiche and the Prince of Luxembourg worked like the rest, and just as the door crashed through the last of the weapons were brought into the Oeil de Boeuf and its entrance closed. The Hall of the Courtiers seemed to receive the unusual invasion with the inperturbability of a courtier. One scene of bustling life appeared to suit it as well as another, even though death were so near to follow. The little reserve were drawn up in order, determined to fight it out there together.

And now a long, low sound was heard in the distance. It approached, and as it grew the shouts of rage in the Great Hall ceased, and a roar of scuttling feet was heard. Lafayette's National Guard were approaching, and as the serried lines, advancing at the double, reached the Court of Marble, their drum-beats suddenly burst into a thunderous roll, and the Court, the staircase, and the halls were cleared of the cowardly rabble.

Such was the glorious defence of the Bodyguard. And so the Queen was saved.

The Queen was saved; the King was saved; the household was saved—at least for the present—but the monarchy was lost.

His Majesty left Versailles at one o'clock. The Queen, the Dauphin, Madame Royale, Monsieur, Madame Elizabeth, the King's sister and Madame de Tourzel, governess of the children of France, were in his Majesty's carriage.

A hundred deputies of the Assembly in their carriages came next. The advance guard, which was formed of a detachment of the brigands, set out two hours earlier. In front of them Hache and Motte danced in triumph, carrying the pallid heads of Des Huttes and de Varicourt aloft on their pikes.

They stopped a moment at Sèvres in front of the shop of an unfortunate hairdresser. They caught hold of the latter and forced him to dress the gory heads; a task which made the poor man a hopeless maniac the same evening.

The bulk of the Paris National Guard followed them closely. The King's carriage was preceded by Wife Gougeon and the fishwomen and a rabble of prostitutes, the vile refuse of their sex, all raving with fury and wine.

Several rode astride upon cannon, boasting in the most horrible songs of the crimes they had committed themselves or seen others commit. Those who were nearest the carriage sang ballads, the allusions in which, by means of their gestures, they applied to the Queen. In the paroxysms of their drunken merriment these women stopped passengers, and pointing to the carriage, howled in their ears, "Cheer up, friends, we shall no longer be in want of bread; we bring the baker, the baker's wife, and the baker's boy."

They pointed to waggons which followed, full of corn and flour, which had been brought into Versailles, and formed a train, escorted by Grenadiers and surrounded by women and bullies, some armed with pikes and some carrying long branches of poplar. This favourite part of the *cortège* looked at some distance like a moving grove, amidst which shone pike-heads and gun-barrels. Above and in front of the motley

procession which accompanied them, mounted high on one of the waggons, rode Death himself, so the spectators thought, grinning, triumphing, and directing the whole, in the shape of the skull-like countenance of the Admiral of the Galley-on-Land.

Behind his Majesty's carriage were the remnant of the Bodyguard, some on foot and some on horseback, most of them uncovered, all unarmed, and worn out with hunger and fatigue. The Dragoons, the Flanders regiment, the Hundred Swiss and the National Guards, preceded, accompanied, or followed the file of carriages.

Lecour, weak with the night's anxiety and the frightful disappointment of the day, had scarcely strength to drag himself along between two Grenadiers, who from time to time supported him, and one of whose great hairy caps he wore as a token of fraternity. All at once hell seemed to have risen about him. He heard a united yell from many savage throats, and saw a ring of red-capped brutes lunging and striking at himself, and a little woman-fiend sprang at his breast and buried something sharp in it.

The last thing of which he was conscious was the satanic revengefulness of her eyes.

CHAPTER XLVIII

SISTERS DEATH AND TRUTH

At a second-story window, in an unpretentious part of the Rue St. Honoré—known just then as the Rue Honoré, for the saints had been abolished, together with the terrestrial aristocracy—a young woman was sitting one late July afternoon employed in sewing. She was pale, thin, and poorly clad. Her fingers were very nervous as she hurried on with her work.

For three years the surges of the Revolutionary deluge had succeeded one another with ever-increasing rapidity, and at last threatened to swallow the entire inhabitants of the city. "The generation which saw the monarchical *régime* will always regret it," Robespierre was crying, "therefore every individual who was more than fifteen years old in 1789 should have his throat cut." "Away with the nobles!" was shouting another vicious leader, "and if there are any good ones so much the worse for them. Let the guillotine work incessantly through the whole Republic. France has nineteen millions too many inhabitants, she will have enough with five." "Milk is the nourishment of infants," announced another; "blood is that of the children of liberty."

The new doctrine was not merely being shouted; it was being carried into practice as fast as the executioner could work, and sometimes in a single afternoon the life-stream of two hundred hearts gushed out through two hundred severed necks on the Place de la Révolution. The King, and at last the Queen, were among the slaughtered. None knew but that his or her turn, or that of his dearest ones might come next. A too respectable dress, a thoughtless expression, the malice of an extortionate workman, or the offending of a servant, meant death. Even the wickedest were betrayed by their associates to the Goddess of Blood, and citizens, as they hurried along the deserted and filthy streets, looked at each other with suspicious eyes. On the throne of France's ancient sovereigns sat a shadowy monarch from hell, and all recognised his name and reign—The Reign of Terror.

In the midst of that thunder-fraught atmosphere sat this poor girl, mechanically glancing down the street from time to time at the silent houses, each with the legal paper affixed stating the names of the inmates, for the information of the revolutionary committees.

Her bearing, though humble, announced her as one of the hated class, and by scrutinising her thin features we see that she is "the Citizeness Montmorency, heretofore Baroness."

She was absorbed in thought. Recollections, one by one, of the changes which had made her an old woman in experience at the age when most maidens become brides, were crossing her mind. She recalled the alarming news brought to the Hôtel de

Noailles of the march of the viragoes on Versailles, and with that news her suspense for the safety of Germain; the entry of General Lafayette (who was married to a Noailles) into the hotel towards morning, smilingly assuring the family that all was well; her agony upon word of the attack on the royal apartments; the deadly illness of Germain at the Hôtel-Dieu Hospital, whither some National Guards had taken him; the pauper bed and gown in which the Sisters of the Hospital kept him hidden from the roused populace who searched the wards for him; her own assumption of the humble dress of a servitor to nurse him; his pretended death and burial by substitute; his long delirium, her joy at his return to life; his gratitude and convalescence; the forced dispersal of the Sisters, and with it her removal of her charge to the half-deserted Hôtel de Poix; the mob sacking mansion after mansion around them and their inexplicable exemption; an anonymous warning at length to flee, and the subterfuges of Dominique to cover their removal to the present house.

She thought also of the faithfulness of Germain to the King throughout his misfortunes, and how in order to be ready for service in case of a royalist opportunity, he had refused even her own entreaties to flee.

And sewing on and looking with habitual apprehension down the street, she thought of the blanks in the old circle—sadly, but without tears, for she had grown beyond tears over memories, so often had she been called to shed them for events.

With sorrowful recollection she saw again her good friend, Hélène de Merecourt, and her own sister Jeanne, disappear out of life.

There was that terrible day when the King was beheaded, and that other when the Queen followed him; Bellecour, d'Amoreau, the Canoness, Vaudreuil, the Guiches, the Polignacs, were in exile. Others were concealed, scattered, outlawed, some perhaps included in the massacres; some perhaps lost among the immense number crowded into the seventy prisons of the City. When would *her* turn arrive? When Germain's?

A distant sound made her lips part in alarm. It was the too well-known surging murmur of a mob approaching. She hastily rose and closed the window. The Rue Honoré was one of the highways particularly exposed to persecution, for its chief portion was lined with mansions where dwelt many of the "aristocrats." The great *porte cochère* and street wall of one were in full view of her window, coated with insulting placards and painted in huge letters, "NATIONAL PROPERTY—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." How far the property had become national may be inferred from the fact that the patriot commissioner who took its chattels into his charge, and whose name was signed with a mark at the bottom of the placard, was—Gougeon.

In this quiet part of the street, however, the smaller houses usually passed unscathed, and the neighbourhood had the advantage of its residents not being so prying as in quarters still poorer. So that by aid of some bribery of patriots of the section, discreetly done by Dominique, their slender stores of money had thus far seemed to suffice to obtain them immunity. We say seemed to suffice, because there was something very remarkable, after all, in the escape of a Montmorency, and particularly one so intimate with the obnoxious Maréchale de Noailles.

The mob of women and red-capped men swarmed up the street, led by a drum, and singing "Ça ira"—

"Ah, on it goes, and on it goes, and on it goes!—
The aristocrats to the lantern!
Ah, on it goes, and on it goes, and on it goes!—
The aristocrats, we'll hang them."

In front of the confiscated hotel the *Sans-culottes* stopped, and, joining hands in a circle, whirled around in the wild Revolutionary dance, "the Carmagnole," singing the words—

"Madame Veto had pledged her word,
Madame Veto had pledged her word
To put all Paris to the sword,
To put all Paris to the sword,

Thanks to our canoneers.
Dance, dance the Carmagnole,
Hurrah for the sound,
Hurrah for the sound,
Dance, dance the Carmagnole,
Hurrah for the sound of the cannon!"

She watched the dancers, involuntarily fascinated. All at once an object tapped against the window, and she noticed many eyes turned up to her in malicious amusement. The object was pushed up to her on a long pole and again tapped on the window; she dropped her sewing and sprang back with a scream. It was a human hand. A shout of coarse laughter met her ears, and the hand was withdrawn. She sank back in her chair and burst into tears.

"Wretches!" cried a woman, darting forward from behind her and shaking a fist at the window.

"Oh, be careful," Cyrène gasped, pulling back the arm. "Have they seen you?"

"I fear so," was the answer, as dismayed as her question; and a number of blows and thrusts sounded against the door below. But it was only a momentary diversion; the crowd had work cut out for it somewhere else and the drum drew them onwards.

"Oh, Germain," she said hysterically, "why do you risk your life so?"

"Because it is worthless," replied the apparent woman, pulling off his hood and throwing aside the rest of his disguise. But I am a fool to endanger you that way. Oh my darling, you who saved my life, is it not rather to comfort you at times like this that I live?" and he knelt and kissed her hand.

"Dearest," she answered softly, "you make my life happy in the very midst of horrors."

"I am unworthy of your love," he returned mournfully, rising to his feet.

"You say that too often; but have not the old reasons lost their force? Even here we could make a home. Let us defer our marriage no longer."

"We cannot marry," he said slowly.

She thought he spoke of the prohibition of Christian rites by the law, and said—"But Dominique knows of a priest, who is hidden in a cellar at his cousin's."

He shook his head and she read a soul of infinite sorrow in his eyes as they rested on her face.

"It is the thought of his own death," was the interpretation that flashed upon her.

A rap was heard.

"Come in, Dominique," said he.

The list of inmates affixed to the front of the house would have explained Germain's disguise. It read—

"The Citizen Dominique Levesque, boarding-house keeper.

"*The Citizeness Marie Levesque, his wife.*

"The Citizeness Montmorency, sempstress."

"Citizeness Levesque" was sometimes observed about the house by the neighbours, but the family, like many others, cultivated no intercourse. Wearing the garb only whenever absolutely necessary, he took part each day in whatever work was obtained to support the household, and at night went out to keep track of what was happening.

At the time of the guillotining of the Queen, he was restrained with difficulty from throwing his life away in an insane rush upon the murderers.

"My Lady Baroness," Dominique said, clinging to all the old delicate form of his respect—for the faithful servitor was as chivalrous as any knight—"I regret to report that there is a new law compelling everybody to take out cards of civism, as they call

them, at the Hôtel de Ville. During the trouble at our door a few moments ago, some of the *Sans-culottes* threatened to return. I consider it absolutely necessary that Madame and I should go at once and obtain these credentials."

"Is there no way of getting them without Madame? It looks to me dangerous," Lecour said.

"The demand must be made in person, Monsieur le Chevalier. I have thought that question over very carefully."

"If is the most dangerous thing yet."

"I do not conceal the risk, Monsieur."

"Dear Dominique," Cyrène put in firmly, "I am ready to do all you say."

"Yes, our more than parent," Lecour added in tears, "she is ready to trust her life in your hands," and going over to Dominique he put his arm upon his shoulder and kissed him.

The old man's lip trembled and he withdrew, and at the same time Cyrène also left the chamber to prepare for the ordeal.

Then did Germain fully realise the sharpness of dread. She whom he loved was in the direst peril. He saw the gulf which had swallowed so many others yawning for her life, and he trembled as he had never trembled before. It must be said for him that he had always valued his own life little and had been willing to risk it for another on more occasions than one. It was when not he but his heart's beloved was in such danger that his eyes were opened to the greatness of the fact of death. Moreover he felt that he was helpless to lessen the peril. For him to accompany her to the Hôtel de Ville was to make her fate absolutely certain. That charge must be left to Dominique, and—God!

God! He had not dared to think of God for years; yet now the Divine Face appeared through the dissolving vision of things mortal, and he suddenly saw it looming dim and awful as the one changeless Reality.

Her step sounded returning and he composed himself. Both tried to be brave. Both were thinking of the other's happiness.

"Have no anxieties, my dear one," she exclaimed, coming close to him, her eyes moistened and voice trembling slightly, "I have our good Dominique to take care of me, and we shall soon return."

"I do not doubt it," he replied as cheerily as he was able, bending and gently kissing her forehead. "Prudence and Courage!—all shall go rightly."

But at the touch of his lips she started, threw her arms around his neck and passionately drew him to her.

"And what, my beloved, if it should *not* go rightly?—what for you to be left behind?"

"Darling, darling, do not say it," he cried, fervently returning her embraces. "All must and will go rightly. We cannot live without each other. Trust in Providence."

Ah, what those words meant for him!

"I do," she murmured, "but would that Dominique's priest were here. I long for the eternal union of our souls."

He pressed her to his breast in great emotion, then loosed his arms and stood looking sorrowfully at her again, as for the last time.

"*Au revoir*," she whispered, her eyes intensely searching into his.

"*Au revoir, ma chère*," he answered, mastering his voice with all his strength.

Then she and Dominique left the house.

CHAPTER XLIX

CIVIC VIRTUE

Dominique and the citizeness proceeded as unobtrusively as they could along the Rue Honoré. He hurried her past the Rue Florentin, down which he knew, without looking, was to be seen the tall machine of execution on the Place de la Révolution.

At first they passed few people, but on approaching the centre of the City they saw numbers in front of the *cafés* and even going to the theatre. Flashy carriages of thievish men who had enriched themselves under the new conditions, rolled frequently by. The basis of their power, the squalid element with jealous, insolent eyes, also increased on the pavements.

At the Rue de la Monnaie they turned towards the Quays. Just as they were turning, a young woman, whose head was covered with a shawl, glided from a gateway and addressed them.

They both started suspiciously, but the poor creature proved to be only seeking charity, and Cyrène, struck by a certain desperation in her tone, turned to give her a couple of *sous*. In passing the coins their eyes met, and the mendicant started.

"Great God! Madame Baroness, you do not know me?"

The voice, though altered in quality, recalled other times. Her features became recognisable, and the identity of their owner came over Cyrène.

"Mademoiselle de Richeval!" she gasped.

The sprightly companion of princesses was begging her bread. Her wit and beauty had disappeared, the once bright eyes were sharp, the once blooming cheeks were wrinkled and shrunk.

"Ladies, remember the spies," said Dominique.

"Go to our house, my dear," Cyrène whispered hastily. "It is No. 409, Rue Honoré, you will get supper there, and await us."

"409, Rue Honoré," the other repeated, and hastened to the promised food.

Continuing, the two reached the Hôtel de Ville at seven o'clock. Though early, the spacious building was lighted from attic to basement, and slipping in through a swarm of *Sans-culottes* who surrounded the doorsteps, they entered the great hall. As they were going in the "Marseillaise" began to be pounded, and the entry, from the opposite direction, of persons of much more importance than they, attracted the eyes of the men and women who smoked and knitted round the hall. The incomers were the President and heads of the Commune of Paris, each arrayed in his tricolor *carmagnole*, red bonnet, and great sabre.

The President was the Admiral. His glittering eyes swept the chamber, and singling out Cyrène as by premeditation, rested upon her face. He was unknown to her, but at his smile she shuddered.

These exalted personages—robbers, murderers, tavern-keepers, kettle-menders—sat down on their raised tribune, while Cyrène and Dominique were pushed by the guards into some rows of benches in front of but not facing them. The individuals on these benches were as yet few, and Cyrène looked apprehensively around the place, while Dominique took mental notes. They saw, forming the sides of the hall, two amphitheatres filled with Jacobin women knitting, patching trousers or waistcoats, and watching the benches of supplicants for the cards of civism, and made remarks to one another aloud.

"That one's not *Sans-culotte* enough for me," called out a young woman in a red bonnet, and crossing over with the stride of a Grenadier to Cyrène, stood before her, arms akimbo, and cried shrilly, "Saint Guillotine for your patron, my delicate Ma'mselle."

The use of the prescribed address "ma'mselle" was evidently regarded as a witticism, for shouts of laughter filled the place.

Just then the President rang his bell, and as he did so he looked at Cyrène

significantly. Shrink as she might from his leer, she could not but feel grateful, for he had evidently rung purposely.

A secretary began the minutes, which consisted of resolutions of Jacobin joy at the capture of a once idolised patriot who had lately been denounced by Robespierre for counselling mercy to prisoners.

The name of Robespierre excited enthusiastic applause.

A set of benches facing those of the applicants had stood thus far empty. They were now filled by the entry of a body of representatives furnished by certain of the forty-eight sections of the City, whereupon the "Marseillaise" was again beat, and several of the councillors lit their pipes.

The principal sections represented were those of the Pikes and the Fish-market.

Some one called for "Ça ira." It was succeeded by a harangue of the Admiral against the captured ex-patriot. Cyrène followed with horror every word of his oratory, every movement of his declamation, the air of pride with which he played upon the passions of the *Sans-culottes*, and the wicked sweep of the principles he announced.

"That all mankind deserve massacre," he cried, smiling, "is the philosophic general rule; the sole exceptions are the true patriots. By title of liberty, the possessions of all belong to them alone. And how can we know the true patriot? *By his red cap and his red hand.*"

Finally the long suspense of the applicants was brought to a close; the secretary called the first on the list.

"Citizeness Montmorency."

At the once great name a silence fell over the place.

Then a murmur ran through the benches of the Jacobin women, while Cyrène summoned her courage. The murmur was not long in taking shape.

"The Montmorencys are a brood of monsters," energetically called the young Jacobiness, rising in her place.

"The aristocrat to the guillotine!" shouted a drunken man.

"The guillotine!"

"Yes, yes—to La Force immediately!"

These and similar cries resounded. They fell upon Cyrène's ears like thunders of hostile artillery in a battle. Dominique sat quite still. His mistress rose. Now that the instant of danger had actually come she felt an inconquerable courage well up in her, which, as she stood with brilliant eye and glowing cheek, made her very beautiful. This was not in her favour with the envious knitters; but while they commented in frightful language on her gentle build, the secretary said—"Are you the person?"

"I am," she answered clearly.

"Are you not," he continued glancing at the audience for approbation, "the late aristocrat Baroness of that name?"

"I am," she replied, in a tone still clearer and more fearless.

The President's face gleamed with admiration. He rang his bell sharply and the clamours subsided. His glittering eyes devoured her features, while he said—

"Does anybody know the citizeness and answer for her civism?" He hurriedly added, "Adjourned; call the next."

Dominique caught her by the arm to make their exit, for though he could not assign a reason for the Admiral's device of favour, he was ready to take advantage of it.

As they started, one of the section members sprang up and exclaimed—

"I answer for the citizeness."

He was a man of less than thirty, and of open, enthusiastic expression, and wore the uniform of a National Guard.

"You, citizen la Tour?" the Admiral exclaimed.

Cyrène eyed the member in grateful but intense wonder. She had never to her knowledge seen him before.

"Yes, citizen President," he replied earnestly, "I answer for the citizeness because she saved my life."

The crowd hushed by a common impulse.

"You all know me, brothers," he cried, "my record for the Revolution, my passion for liberty—Liberty, Liberty, Liberty! It has been my dream under the stars, my labour under the sun, my love and my desire. I was, as all know, a patriot proscribed and condemned to death before the Revolution began. I was of the first at the hanging of Foulon, at the sacking of Reveillon, and at the walls of the Bastille. I was wounded in the stand against the Dragoons of Lambesc, and all know my scars in the battles of the North. I name these things only to prove the claim of this woman to civic rights. By her pity she saved my life in the old days, at the last moment before my breaking on the wheel. Imagine to yourselves that moment. Ask how I can feel other than gratitude and devotion to my benefactress. In the evil days of the aristocrats she was a friend of the poor. I present her now to you when it is in our power to confer liberty upon her who set at liberty, life upon her who saved life. I, the child of the Revolution, pray this as my right; she claims it also for herself as a heroine of civic virtue. Give your suffrages."

"Vive la Tour! vive the citizeness!" resounded in shouts through the hall. Once more the Admiral rang his bell, and silenced followed.

"Yes, citizeness," he said, addressing her, "your courage is French courage, your virtue French virtue, and the good heart of the nation sees in you a daughter of the people. Incarnating the spirit of the race, be welcome at the tables of fraternity, and accept the homage of all hearts."

At a motion of his hand the secretary hastily filled in her certificate, and Dominique, without waiting for his own, hurried her away. Even as they left they heard Wife Gougeon scream—

"Death to the aristocrat!"

They hastened across the Place de Grève, but had not yet reached the corner of the street beyond, when in the dusk Cyrène heard the sound of rushing wheels, felt herself choked by a gag from behind, and was pushed helpless by rough hands into a coach and driven away. Behind her she heard a sound of scuffle and the voice of Dominique cry aloud in anguish—

"They have finished me!"

"Be quiet, my lady," spoke the voice of Abbé Jude.

She knew no more till she woke in darkness.

CHAPTER L

JUDGMENT DAY

Germain, left alone in the house, bolted the door, returned with trembling limbs to the room above and threw himself down in his chair blanched and nerveless. They who have experienced the minutes when a well-loved one hangs between life and death can alone know what he suffered. It was now that the fleeting poverty of the ideals he had been following became visible. The elegance, the pride, the historic glamour, the fine breeding of the Old *Régime*, by which he had been fascinated, had they not fallen to pieces like a flower whose petals are scattered in the tempest? Even the burning hope of his heart, the dream of a life of earthly bliss with his love, was showing its insecurity and dropping asunder. His ship was sinking in the ocean of Eternity. How futile his intrigue, how mean his deceptions, how insufficient his excuses. The

Everlasting Presence gazed through them, and in its all-illumining blaze they fell and sank away. He saw that that which underlies life and death and all that is, is a living Conscience, to which all must perforce conform. Pride, deception, selfishness, uncontrol of passion, the taking of that which was not his, and the injuring of honourable men—these excrescences he saw upon his soul, and that without their surgery it would never be divine. He remembered the prophetic warning of his father that "Eternal Justice calls us to exact account"; and the pertinacity of Retribution in the matter of the Golden Dog. He saw that the justice of this life and the next are one, and are absolutely complete in their demands. One great conclusion came to him with overwhelming force; he saw that it was the plan of Heaven that *no man must profit by any fruit of his wrong*. He now himself must meet that justice and make that retribution.

At length, leaving the room, he dragged himself up the stair leading to his own chamber, a cramped place in the flat above, bearing small resemblance to his luxurious apartments of former days; yet around it were hung the de Lincy family portraits; his sword of the Bodyguard lay on the mantel; and in the space behind the door were the old Chevalier's iron-bound muniment-chest and his own little portmanteau gilded with his arms.

With fevered face and icy hands he opened the latter and sought out the packet of his proofs of *noblesse*. Then turning to the fireplace beneath the mantel, he threw the papers one by one into it—his falsified birth-certificate, his father's altered marriage-contract, the letter of the gentlemen of Montreal, the apology of Councillor de Léry, the will of the Chevalier de Lincy and the attestation of the Genealogist of France. He took a flint and steel from the mantel and quickly struck spark after spark into them until they sprang into flames. Then he added his great genealogical tree of the de Lincys, whose branches withered and quivered, like his heart, as the fire attacked the broad folds of the parchment. Packet after packet the precious archives of the Lecours de Lincy went upon the pile until he had emptied the muniment-chest; the fire raged and reddened into a solid mass, and they were irrevocably gone. Next he took up de Bailleul's will—sorrowfully and hesitatingly, for it was his title to Eaux Tranquilles—but the following instant he threw it also on the flames. Then he deliberately cast in his Grand Cross of St. Louis and the insignia of the Order of the Holy Ghost. His *Diamond Armorial* followed, he tore his seal, cut with the pretended coat-of-arms, from his watch-chain, broke up with his foot his little portmanteau, and tearing down the de Lincy portraits one by one watched all blaze up and consume together. At last, on the top of the heap, he mournfully laid his sword of the Bodyguard and saw its golden handle and delicate blade begin to glow and discolour.

"Disappear, old dreams;" he murmured, "Eternal Justice visit me for all! But afflict not *her*; spare thine angel for her own sake. Oh, spare *her*."

One packet remained, which he had intentionally not destroyed. When the fire settled down a little he took a strong paper and cord, wrapped and sealed it, and addressed it for mailing as follows—

RECORD OF PROOFS AGAINST G. LECOUR,
THE PROPERTY OF MONSIEUR LOUIS R. C.
DE LÉRY,

Late Bodyguard of the King of France,

AT QUEBEC
IN CANADA.

Humbly he descended the stair once more, and placing the package on the table of the sitting-room, sank again feverishly into his chair, prepared to confess all should Cyrène safely return.

A knocking sounded in the lower part of the house. He went to the door; the wicket showed a beggar woman, but on Mademoiselle Richeval mentioning her name he recognised her and let her in. His mind was so absorbed that he felt no surprise. As food was what she wanted he set before her everything in their little larder; and while she was eating like one famished he forgot her presence completely. The two once so

sociable persons were for a while dumb to each other.

At length, however, having satisfied her ravenous hunger, she commenced to speak of the changes which the Revolution had brought to them and to wonder at his strange want of interest, when the noise of a mob crowding around the door was heard.

Lecour saw what might happen.

"Fly, Mademoiselle," he said; "in the courtyard there is a door on the left, take it and pass into the next house where are good people who will not abandon you. I must stay here."

He then went to the door at which pikes and gun-stocks were beating.

"Citizens, I am the only person in the house," said he, at an opening they had broken in one of the panels. "What do you wish?"

For answer several pikes were thrown in; he stepped back beyond their reach, calmly fronting the fierce faces.

"Tell me what you want. I am ready to do your will."

There was a short period of indecision outside. A muscular man in a carmagnole swinging a formidable axe pushed forward and the others fell back at his rough order.

"I arrest you, citizen Répentigny," said Hache, for it was he. "We mates of Bec and Caron that you quartered have had it in for you for a long time. I am a commissioner now, and they call this my domiciliary visit. If you will come, I will see, on the faith of a brigand, that you get to prison safely; if not, I will see that you don't. Do you come?"

Germain calculated the seconds he had been able to save for Mademoiselle Richeval. They were ample.

He opened the door and gave himself up.

CHAPTER LI

LOVE ENDURETH ALL THINGS

Cyrène, when she found herself in darkness, had a confused idea that she was waking from a dream and lying in her bed at the house in the Rue Honoré. Under that impression she drew a breath of relief. A curse from a woman's voice somewhere near by made her realise the truth; the cry of Dominique, "They have finished me!" and the circumstances of his disappearance from her side returned vividly, and her heart sickened. But misery is like a thermometer; after reaching a particular degree it can fall but slightly lower. The death of Dominique only benumbed her brain. Her next impression was that this place in which she lay must be a dungeon, and as her eyes could make out nothing whatever in the darkness she concluded that the woman she heard must be a prisoner in an adjoining cell.

In a short time a stealthy step approached. It stopped, a wooden door swung back, and a band of greyish light showed a low room of rough beams without a window. At the door Wife Gougeon peered in, and behind her was the cheerless perspective of the shop, additionally cheerless in the grey of early morning.

"Well, wench, how do you like being a *Sans-culotte*? You slept too soft in the Old *Régime*."

Cyrène had not noticed how she had been sleeping; she now saw that her bed was a pile of straw on a box.

"Get up, you sow, and sweep my floor!" exclaimed the ragman's wife. "Get up!"

Cyrène's first instinct was to lie still in tacit disdain. The recollection of Germain, however, crossed her mind. Rather submit to anything than exasperate his enemies; so she rose, with an effort. Her limbs felt heavy.

"Out now, take this broom, you sot, and sweep the floor."

Cyrène came out and proceeded to brush aside the dust between the piles of metal. Wife Gougeon sat back on a block of wood and laughed, in immense enjoyment.

"So you were a baroness once, one of the heretofores? Well, I like baronesses to do my dirty work for me and Montmorencys for my sweeps. You never thought the people would arrive at this, eh? You thought, you aristocrats, that you could have the fine houses and we could do all the scullery work. How do you like it? Oh, I have dirtier work than that that I will make you do. This is only the commencement. Sweep that board clean, you pig!"

The woman fumed at Cyrène's silence.

"Have you no tongue, animal? Why don't you answer when I speak? I'll teach you," and, her eyes glittering, she picked up an iron bolt and threw it at her victim. It struck Cyrène's arm, bruising it severely. The girl winced, but continued wielding the broom as meekly as before.

"Ah," went on Wife Gougeon, "do you know what I will do with you? I will have your head sliced off. What nice necks you 'heretofores' have. I've seen many a one chopped through."

"Hush, hush, dear citizeness Gougeon," said the Abbé, appearing near by. "I brought the citizeness to you for protection; I wish to speak to her apart—say in the chamber there."

Cyrène looked at him in sorrowful relief.

"Citizeness," he said, making the greatest effort at ingratiation, "I have a few things to speak to you. You will excuse us, citizeness Gougeon?"

"Republicans do not excuse and excuse like you 'heretofores.' If it were not for the Galley, I would slice your neck to-morrow too. Go, and be quick about it, Blacklegs, while I wait to see her sweep for me again."

Cyrène staggered after him in her weakness into her chamber again, and, while she sat upon her pallet, he shut the door, took a candle down from a beam, and lit it.

"Do not mind her," he said while doing so. "She is a Jacobiness."

She looked at him as closely as her fevered sight permitted, and saw that he was shivering with excitement and his long face and downcast eyes contorting.

She sat speechless, unable to comprehend him.

"Madame Baroness," said he, "have you never wondered at your long escape from the perils of these times? When the mansions of others were burned, your house has been free from molestation; when their goods were appropriated by the nation, yours have been left intact; when all aristocrats have been sent to the guillotine, you have slept in safety. Have you not thought this strange?"

The questioning seemed to be lost upon her, except for a nod.

"Did you never," he went on, "suspect that some power was protecting you, and ask by whose influence you were thus surrounded and your peace secured? Did you never recognise a faithfulness which relaxed at no moment, a care which was unlimited—in a word, a secret friend at the source of affairs? Madame, I was that friend."

He stopped and looked at her, his increasing excitement overcoming his stealth. She was moved, and tears brimmed in her eyes.

"I am grateful, Abbé Jude; let me say it from my heart. You have been wronged by us. We believed you were different."

At the tribute his eager look intensified itself into a piercing gaze which made her feel dread of him.

"Yes, I was that secret friend," he cried. "It was I who protected you at the sections, I struck your name from the lists of proscriptions, I diverted the marches of the patriots from your portals. Do you think all this would be done for three years without true faithfulness?"

"You have indeed proved yourself a loyal friend."

"More than that," he exclaimed; "it was more than loyalty, it was worship! Madame, believe me your name has always been to me a sacred adoration, a passion, an affection beyond expression. Do you doubt it? Know that I loved you from the first moment I saw you in the house of the Princess de Poix. I loved you, I adored you secretly, I sought for a favourable time to declare my passion."

Her eyes opened wide as she listened, and she would have given worlds to escape, yet her feeling was mainly of pity.

"This is very unfortunate. Calm yourself, Abbé. I will ever have a lively feeling of gratefulness for your devotion. Think of me on those terms."

"Ah, Madame, those were the only terms which might have been possible in former days; but they do not belong to the new *régime*. We are all equal now. Nothing will satisfy me short of possessing you entirely."

"Abbé, you are excited."

"No, citizeness, I have long been determined you shall be my mate." She shrank from the word and the uncanny passion of his gaze.

"When you will have reflected a few hours you will see that this is impossible."

"What! impossible? And why impossible? Ah, yes, I know, it is because of your pretty-faced lover Répentigny. I know all about that. I could have crushed him between my fingers; and I will crush him yet. What!—that man between myself and you! Why, then, did I bring you here? Was it to allow his interference with my object? After all I have done for you, am I to be met with answers of this sort?"

"I appreciate entirely your services, Abbé; they are too great to be underrated."

"They shall be more, citizeness. In these days it is *my* turn to dictate."

"Am I to understand that this has been your aim all along?"

He hesitated, but replied boldly, "It has, and were it not for that, I might long ago have pointed out both you and your doll-head lover to the Committee of Public Safety."

"Then your whole service has been abstention from positive treachery for your own ends?"

"You dare me? Caution, citizeness! You are in my power."

"In your power? You are a coward as well as a knave, then?"

"Remember still more," he hissed, losing all control of himself, "that your lover also is in my power; he is captured."

"My God! you have brought us to this!" she cried.

The door creaked and the Admiral entered.

"Be off, you cur!" said he, standing sternly over the Abbé, who shrank as if struck. "Go to your work, you——"

A look of terror upon his countenance, Jude precipitated himself through the doorway.

The Admiral closed it, and returning, sat down by the candle and began to talk to Cyrène. Seeing his features so close and large and accentuated by the candle-light, their coarseness and horror filled her with wonder.

"So that fellow boasts of his fidelity!" he exclaimed, in a repulsively modulated and familiar tone. "What a wealth of tenderness such a kidnapping shows! Possibly you knew his profession, citizeness?—that of salaried spy. Your protector he claims to be? Excellent—when he could not turn a straw in your favour. He has deprived you of your freedom; that was easier in these times. I, on the other hand," he added, smiling yet more hideously, "am here to return it to you."

"I thank you," she replied wearily, without hope.

"I shall reveal to you the true reason of your immunity for so long from the wrath of

the people. It was because of Répentigny, not of yourself. I arranged it, and you were then unknown to me. Through him Bec and Caron, two friends of the people, had died six years ago, in the days of the tyrant. It was I, as avenger, not the worm Jude as lover, who watched over your household in the Rue Honoré, reserving Répentigny for prolonged punishment. It was I whose power surrounded you as it has surrounded all Paris." He paused proudly.

"Citizeness, last night I saw you for the first time. Your wonderful courage, your astonishing beauty, overcame the most martial of hearts."

She started and shivered violently. Was she to endure two proposals within the hour, from such revolting creatures, and at what violence would their outrages end?

"Come," he said, offering to embrace her. She started back in terror.

"Do not tremble," he went on patronisingly; "you have nothing to fear from me, everything to expect. I am able to give you whatever you ask—mansions, carriages, jewels, pleasures, unlimited wealth, unlimited power. These are in my hands. I rule Paris—yes, France—and shall rule Europe. You shall sit by my side, and the whole world shall serve you. They shall fear or love you as you will, but I am able to see that they obey you or sink under my hand. Do not fear the squalor of these brutes whom I govern; you shall see nothing of them, for we shall sit upon the heights of the Revolution. Around us Paris shall always be gay and fascinating. Tell me your slightest wish, citizeness; it shall be yours."

"You will grant me a wish?" she exclaimed.

"Assuredly," he answered.

"Take me, then," said she, "to him you call Répentigny."

"Répentigny or Lecour?" he said, pointing to the name. "Citizeness, he is unworthy of you—totally unworthy."

"Maligner!"

"Keep your coolness, Madame; the man has long deceived you. The story that he is a plebeian is true. I can prove it."

"I asked you nothing of that sort; take me—only take me to him. Keep your promise."

"Very well, citizeness, there is but one condition. He is in the Conciergerie—in going to him you must, like him, be committed to be condemned."

"Gladly! gladly! Take me to him—take me to him—for the love of heaven."

"I love not heaven very much, citizeness, but, curse you, you seem fool enough to be granted what you ask. Look out of this door."

Obeying, she saw that a crowd of *Sans-culottes* had filled the shop.

Carmagnoled and sabred, they lounged in slothful consultation and obscured the air with bad tobacco-smoke. On the Admiral opening the door, they rose in a disorderly way and made him a sort of salute.

"Arrest her," he ordered, beckoning the two foremost and waving his skinny hand back to Cyrène. They came forward and grasped her arms.

"To the Conciergerie!" he said, "and each of you answers for her with your head."

As terrified as she, the two guards tied her hands and marched her off through the Street of the Hanged Man.

In times of great misery strange things bring us happiness; the thought of her condemnation to death lifted her like an aerial tide, because being with Germain went with it.

CHAPTER LII

THE SUPREME EXACTITUDE

Whoever passed within the walls of the Conciergerie was counted lost. Of the prisons of the Revolution, it was that to which the accused were transferred from the others on the eve of sentence; and underneath it was the hall of the pretended court infamous to all time as "the Tribunal of Blood." The *fiacre* containing Germain and the National Guards in whose charge Hache placed him, was followed by the mob to the doors, and at times it appeared as if he would certainly be torn away and hanged to a lantern rope. In front of the Conciergerie, whose portal was lit luridly by two torches, a delighted audience of *Sans-culottes* received his approach with clapping.

"Another!" they shouted.

And, as an arrest was brought in from the opposite direction just afterwards, they clapped again and repeated their shout of "Another!"

His guards dragged him into the presence of the concierge, who eyed him from his arm-chair with a drunken glance.

"Dungeon," he muttered.

With a banging of bolts and a creaking of doors, two turnkeys led Lecour down into a region of darkness. The turnkeys, like their chief, were surly sots. They took him along a low passage where mastiffs which patrolled it eyed him, threw back a cell door, thrust him in, and disappeared with their lanterns.

Shut in by low, dark walls, and a roof and floor of stone, reeking with damp and filth, the cell, though but twenty feet by ten or twelve, was already the habitation of at least a score of persons.

Their features could not be easily discerned, since the only light in the obscurity was that of a single candle.

"Comrade, the floor is soft," exclaimed one of the group nearest him—a man of one eye lying on a pile of straw. "Let me present you to our *confrère*, the parricide."

"Shut your gob, thief," shouted a voice, and a heavy scuffle ensued.

Germain leaned against the wall to recover his nerves.

The other inmates had been holding a mock revolutionary trial and condemning one of their number to execution. Some acted the part of judges, some of jury-men, two of guards.

The man on trial turned indignantly on the criminals who had first accosted Lecour.

"I pray you, Monsieur," said he courteously to the latter, "Do not take that for your reception here. Those men are the disgrace of the cell. The rest of us have been used to a happier condition. Let us introduce ourselves. I am the Baron de Grancey; my friend, the judge president, is the Count de Bellecour."

Germain's surprise would have been great had he been less in misery. As it was he was surprised at nothing. Here it was but another stab in his heart. Unable to answer he sat down on a stone bench.

"Friends, we must change the diversion," Grancey said sympathetically. "Perhaps our comrade might feel better over a hand at picquet."

"Ten straws a point!" exclaimed Bellecour. "Dame, it seems to me I know his face. Where have I met you, sir?"

"De Lincy, *pardieu*!" Grancey echoed, scrutinising the new-comer's features. "Friend Germain, this is a sorry place to welcome you, but you will find it brighter than you think; there are wit, forgetfulness, society, and some happiness, even in the Conciergerie. Wait until you get up to the corridor to-morrow; you will meet enough of your friends to hold a respectable reception."

Still Germain could not answer. They did not realise his sorrow and embarrassment in the presence of the old friends to whose friendship he felt he had no right. His head remained bent. Of a sudden the candle flickered out and relieved him of the need of

speaking. They withdrew wondering to their pile of straw.

He did not move from the bench where he sat. Soon, except for the heavy breathing of his companions, silence enveloped the place. He became absorbed in anxious imaginings.

What had happened when Cyrène and Dominique returned to the house? What accidents overtook them at the Hôtel de Ville? Where was she? What were her thoughts at that moment? And what her sufferings? Then a picture flitted across his consciousness of the early days of their meeting, the life at Fontainebleau, the charm of old Versailles. At the memory of that taste of a beautiful existence, an unearthly, sorrowful, prophetic longing came over him, not for himself but for others, for a clime where falsity, grief, change, and pride should be winnowed completely away from loveliness. He dreamt a world to come wherein the poor, the low-born, the deformed, yes, the debased children of crime itself should become of strong and perfect forms, of sensitive and rich artistic sense, wealthy as imagination in castles, parks, and solitudes, pure and keen of honour, spiritually sweet of thought, and so live serene for ever, for ever, for ever.

As morning grew, a dim light became perceptible from the corridor, and the prisoners one by one awoke. But Lecour was so weary that he fell asleep on the bench.

His shoulder was roughly shaken. "Stand up," said a turnkey. Germain opened his eyes and staggered to his feet.

"Salute the President of the Commune, you——" Before him was a short man in carmagnole and sabre, whom the other prisoners eyed with resentment and alarm.

Lecour bowed.

"You have met me before," the stranger said mockingly. "Once in the Royal hunting grounds of Fontainebleau. It was accidental. Perhaps I should not presume on the acquaintance."

Lecour perfectly recalled the visitor to the cave. That face once seen could never be forgotten, and he was overcome by the ominousness of the meeting. However, he recovered enough to answer sternly—

"Take your revenge; my neck is in your power."

"Judgment must be pronounced on you first. Listen to your judgment, Sieur de Lincy, or Répentigny. Inasmuch as, years ago, you hunted brave men who through you were condemned to death, which they suffered on the wheel; inasmuch as you wickedly murdered the starving peasants of the parishes of Eaux Tranquilles while in the pursuit of liberty; inasmuch as you resisted the sovereign people and sided with the cut-throats of Versailles, when you participated in the crimes of the Bodyguard; inasmuch as you have been of the party of conspirators against the Revolution, and have plotted with the tyrant Capet and his widow for the Counter-revolution; inasmuch as you are a suspect, inasmuch as you are an *emigré*; inasmuch as you are a rich and an aristocrat; inasmuch as you, Germain Lecour, son of François Xavier Lecour, peasant of Canada, and grandson of a butcher of Paris, did thus oppress the people without the excuse of hereditary illusion, but were a cheat and adventurer sprung from their own bosom; inasmuch as in order to do so you have broken many laws of the land and natural rights of mankind, have outraged the sacred names of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, and have brought, especially upon yourself, the retribution of that Order of the Galley-on-Land, part of which was assembled before you in the cave of Fontainebleau; know now then, for the first time, that through all these dealings you have been tracked by them in your every movement; that your misdeeds were collected, not forgotten; that our vengeance was on your path and waited but the time that suited us; that to hundreds unknown to you it will be a day of feasting to see you die; that they will drink wine for your blood and eat bread for your flesh, and when your head drops into the basket, they will regret the days of tyranny for this only—that the humanity of these times does not allow of breaking you in turn on the wheel."

"You are frank," returned Germain bitterly.

The Admiral was taken aback. He had counted on more effect for his harangue.

"I have one more '*inasmuch*,'" said he, with a sting in his tone and a gleam in his eye.

"Inasmuch as by your imposture you deceived and misled a heart too pure and lofty for such as you to have dared towards——"

This shaft was aimed to strike deep, and so it did. Germain's defiant bearing fell, he dropped his head and groaned.

"Strike him!" roared Grancey. "You must die anyway. Strike, in default of a sword to run him through!"

"He dares not!" the Admiral exclaimed to the group of aristocrats. "You take him for one of yourselves. You are his dupes like the others."

"You admit this *inasmuch*?" he inquired triumphantly of Lecour.

"It is true, true, true," moaned Germain. "I may not deny it—the greatest crime of all my crimes."

The Admiral turned with a snort to Lecour's former companions. They were aghast.

"Had he denied it here are the proofs, absolutely beyond question!" the Admiral exclaimed, waving the Record, which he held in his hand.

"By the saints! what a conclusion," Bellecour exclaimed, curling his lip. As for Grancey he slowly turned his back, threw himself down on the straw on his face, and did not move. The Admiral again faced Germain.

"Shall I tell you something?"

Lecour's heart leaped. His eyes bespoke his suspense. Everything this man had to say seemed of such import that what went before faded for the moment.

"She is here."

"Here? Merciful God! alas, alas, poor Cyrène!"

The Admiral allowed him some moments. Ultimately he said, eyeing him keenly—

"You love her—would you like to save her?"

"Is there a hope?" Lecour said hoarsely, looking up with bloodshot eyes.

"Certainly, if you will do what I demand."

"Anything God will permit."

"The condition is this. That you make her with your own lips, in my presence, a confession of your imposture, of which, remember, I besides hold the proofs. Otherwise she dies to-morrow. Are you willing?" And the Admiral bent eagerly towards him with eyes full of flaming lights.

Lecour's heart stopped. His head flushed to bursting, the shame of years overcame him. His assent was expressed by more a groan than a word. The frightful thought was that she would repulse him for ever.

Yes, that too must be faced and done with—bitterness of bitterness. The old dream so marvellously won by deception must be shattered in every point. The Eternal Justice said to him: "NO MAN WHO HAS PROFITED BY A WRONG SHALL KEEP ITS FRUITS." Ah, what fruit of fruits, her love!

"It will finish him with her," the Admiral muttered, watching him. But Lecour did not hear. The *Sans-culotte* President rapped on the iron door with his boot, a turnkey replied, and in a few minutes four of these men appeared with Cyrène. As soon as she saw Germain she clasped her hands to her bosom and uttered a strange cry, a cry full of wild gladness and fierce agony, such as a soul writhing in the flames of purgatory might give at a sudden opening of the gates of both heaven and hell, and she sprang forward to press him to her breast.

Not such was the will of the Admiral. As quick as she, he interposed himself, and standing in front of Germain grasped her arm and said to her firmly—

"This fellow has something to say to you first."

Then, turning to Lecour, who stood with head down and feelings worse than those of his condemnation to death—

"Speak, butcher's grandson!"

He withdrew a step to allow Germain to face Cyrène.

The condemned man fell upon his knees and broke into sobs.

"Speak, housekeeper's son!" the Admiral cried exultantly.

"You are a devil!" screamed Cyrène to him, and bent down her arms to Germain.

To her bitter surprise the latter shrank back, and seizing her hand covered it with kisses instead.

"No," he sobbed, "no, Madame Baroness; it is all true—I am not your equal. I am baseborn, an impostor, an adventurer, the son of the peasant and the servant, the grandson of the butcher. I am no de Lincy nor Répentigny. My titles were false, my credit stolen, my position came to me by accident, and my defence was one long falsehood. De Léry was right. In him I wronged a man of honour, and my retribution is the judgment of God. Forgive me all the awful wrong I have done you. Forgive me as a creature whose only excuse has been an irresistible worship of even your footsteps."

"Stop!" the Admiral cried. "Citizeness, ponder your treatment by this varlet, who has deceived you, besmirched your life, and contaminated your hand. Another career is yours; leave him to his punishment."

The words of the two men reached her, but their meaning was not credible. Her lover—her Germain, her knight—a deceiver, an impostor? She could not realise it. Then the truth of the scene rushed over her; its logic became inescapable.

"Oh," she wailed in one long, agonised moan, sobbing and writhing in the intensity of her torture, "how can I bear this?"

"Come," said the Admiral, but she was oblivious to all except the storm of her distress.

"Come," repeated the Admiral, but she heard not.

"Come," repeated he once more impatiently; but her tear-filled eyes were fixed upon Germain. The horror of his falsity was strong within her, but his chivalry and tenderness throughout their long association could not be so quickly forgotten, nor the bonds of her affection so instantly blotted out. The mystery of his long sorrow dawned upon her, and his utter self-accusation appealed to her pity. Their differences of rank became as nothing.

"Come away," said the Admiral again, with soft-uttered persuasiveness.

Cyrène's nature, in those moments, had felt, thought, concluded with lightning swiftness. Her soul swept through a great arc of intuition.

"No, no, there is something I do not understand!" she cried. "My Germain, God has made you for me. You loved me and were led astray, but you are honourable and faithful in the sight of heaven, my eternal love. Let us kiss each other. Let us press each other to our breasts and die; in a few hours we shall be together for ever."

Before the Admiral could prevent it they were clasped in a passionate, feverish, last embrace.

"Very well," the Admiral sneered frigidly. "I keep my promises. Apothecary's apprentice, to-day you die. As for you, citizeness, I give you your freedom."

"I reject it—I will die with him," she answered.

"Not at all," he returned. "I promised him your liberty. I keep my promises."

"Wretch! you would separate the betrothed from the dying?"

"Go, beloved," said Germain, releasing her. "It is just that I should die, but not you. I shall love you in the grave. Remember not my errors."

"No, I will never leave you, Germain. Oh, Germain, I will die with you."

"Take the woman off!" growled the Admiral to the turnkeys. They obeyed him instantly.

Germain rushed after them to the door of the cell, but it was closed upon him, and he caught only a shadow through the grating and heard her last cry of grief.

CHAPTER LIII

RETRIBUTION ACCOMPLISHED

When Cyrène was pushed out of the outer portal of the prison she was met by her good friend the patriot Hugues la Tour.

"Do not despair," said he. "My influence is great; he shall yet be saved."

"Oh, for the love of God, try, citizen," she sobbed. Supporting her he signed for a *fiacre* and drove her to his room not far away, where he left her with the housekeeper, and bidding her trust in him, flew back and obtained an interview with Lecour in his cell. He explained the object of his visit and the history of his connection with Cyrène.

"And now I am come to return her life for life," he ended.

"But mine is not worth it," Germain answered soberly. "Save hers. How can you risk yourself for me? I was once the cause of your condemnation."

"What matters that. It was but what was believed right at the time. In our glorious Revolution we do not think of revenge; we only seek to strike at the enemies of human rights. You are not really an aristocrat. Plead that before the judges: your liberty will not be hard for me to obtain."

"Noble-hearted man——"

"Take care—the word 'noble' is forbidden."

"You are generous, citizen. My conscience tells me it would be base to do as you urge. After plucking life's blossoms as an aristocrat I must grasp the thorns."

Nothing could save him from his determination. He had lived as an aristocrat—it was incumbent on him, he said, not to shirk death as one.

At last la Tour left him and sought for the Admiral. He could not find the latter until about two o'clock, and then at the prison. The concierge said he was in the courtyard and la Tour found him engaged in a singular business.

The women's courtyard was separated by an iron railing some fifteen feet long from the men's. Here the imprisoned ladies communicated with their male friends as gaily as if each were not foredoomed. The Faubourg St. Germain was transferred to the Conciergerie. The toilets were the freshest and the manners most well-bred in Paris. The guillotine was the subject of facetious remarks up to the very hour of parting for the mockery of the trial below, and at evening vows of love were breathed between the bars. La Tour found a crowd on both sides enjoying the cramped promenade. Amid this crowd was a "sheep"—one of those vile spies who acted the part of pretending to be a fellow-prisoner of the rest in order that he might entrap them into unguarded expressions and denounce them.

The *Sans-culottes* commissioners were selecting their daily list of victims at random. In doing so they seized the "sheep." The Admiral was present and the "sheep" appealed to him, protesting his occupation. The Admiral only laughed at him.

"Correct," said he to the guard, chuckling, and the guard needed no more. They began to drag the "sheep" away.

The "sheep" was Jude.

"I am yours—you promised me my life," he desperately screamed back. The Admiral smiled contemptuously; his eyes were very bright and hard.

"I promised that Répentigny should die first; you afterwards; I grant you the privilege of going second." The *Sans-culottes*, their noisy laughs resounding through

the corridor and echoed by the baying of the mastiffs, dragged the spy away.

La Tour could not move the Admiral to any leniency for Germain. The bandit followed each of his prayers by a sinister silence. At length la Tour was compelled by lack of time to give him up and speed to the revolutionary tribunal itself, in session underneath. He was just in time to make his appeal, for Lecour was already brought before the jury and the five judges.

The strenuous efforts of Hugues were nullified by the persistent refusal of the Canadian to take advantage of the device proposed to him, by his would-be preserver —of declaring himself a non-aristocrat. La Tour vehemently urged him at least to cry —"*Vive la Republique!*" At that Lecour seemed to conceive an idea, and stepping forward cried instead in a voice of decision—

"Long live the King!"

His sentence was signed immediately.

Sanson's death-carts rolled into the courtyard. The hour for the daily public show had arrived. The rest of the prisoners on trial were peremptorily shoved through the mill of condemnation and all were hustled up to the toilette of the executioner. Hands tied, hair cut, feet bared, half a dozen were pushed up into each cart, seated three on a side, and the carts set out. Seven in the line, the roughest, rudest vehicles in the town, they jerked over the uneven cobbles, rumbled across the Pont-Neuf, and crept along the Rue de la Monnaie and then along the Rue Honoré, regardless, both they, their carters, their executioner's men, and their Dragoon escorts, of the agony they freighted. The streets themselves wore unfeeling faces. The merchants had closed their shutters and across the façades of many houses were large inscriptions such as, "THE REPUBLIC ONE AND INDIVISIBLE," "LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY, *or Death*." And the sun poured down its untempered rays on the condemned. But more pitiless than carts or streets or sun were the coarse Jacobins who ran alongside.

With what fine wit they shouted—

"Long live the razor of the Republic!"

A newsvendor began to sing, and was joined in chorus—

"Doctor Guillotin,
That great *médécin*
Love of human kind
Preoccupies his mind."

As to the company of the lost in the carts, they consisted of a strange variety. In the first, the principal persons were a majestic woman and her two daughters, sitting erect, with hands tied, costumed freshly and invested still with the old carefulness of manner; but the eyes of the youngest were staring with horror. There was a large dog in the same cart, condemned for carrying despatches. In the next a National Assembly-man, betrayed by Robespierre, tore his hair and raved on his fate. Opposite him two poor sewing-women, falsely accused by a neighbour, sat helplessly, their eyes shut, their lips incessantly repeating prayers; by their side, a boy of eight, with bright, fair features, sobbing, his little hands tied, as the executioner's man showed the crowd with a laugh. His crime was that his father had been a Count. Third came the cart containing Germain, to whom all eyes were directed. On the seat opposite him was Jude, frantically entreating the saints, the driver, the guards, and the crowd to take pity on his soul.

"Buy the bulletin of the revolutionary tribunal; judgements of to-day! The horrible aristocrat Répentigny brought to justice! Here he is! here is the one who defied the jury!"

"Bodyguard of Capet!"

"Here is the one who killed Bec and Caron!" shrilled Wife Gougeon.

"Long live the Galley-on-Land!"

These cries gradually roused Lecour, and for the first time, putting it all together

and recognising faces, he realised the truth of the Admiral's boast that he had been pursued all these years by the crew about him—the organisation of the cave of Fontainebleau. The long-lit hatred of so many eyes stabbed his heart to the quick. Yet of the inward Passion of his journey there was no outward appearance. He sat quiet of visage, clinging to the one underlying thought that he had been able to free Cyrène. Alas! how long even yet could it be before she would be riding the same ride?

Suddenly Abbé Jude in front of him lost his frantic gestures and sobbed violently. Germain put aside his own concerns, and bending over whispered gently, "Courage, my brother, for a little."

"Admit even now that you are not an aristocrat," cried Hughes from beside the cart, "and I will move heaven and earth to reprieve you."

But Germain went steadily forward.

The Place de la Révolution, now completely transformed into the Place de la Concorde, that ornament of Paris, was then unpaved and unfinished. In the middle stood a plaster statue of Liberty and near it the gaunt machine of fear—a plank platform reached by a narrow stair having a single handrail, and, pointing out of it towards the sky a pair of tall beams between which, on touching a spring, the knife fell on the neck of the condemned.

From early morning Cyrène had been waiting, racked with fear, at the house of la Tour on one of the small streets not far from the Place. At the sound of the shouts which showed that an execution had begun, she flew there and by despairing force crushed her way through thousands of spectators, towards the guillotine, on whose platform figures could already be seen appearing and falling one by one. She moaned and gasped at each fresh obstacle to her frantic efforts. Her lips were white, her eyes staring.

The patriotesses, who sat knitting on the stand erected near the machine for their daily delectation, agreed that she was an excellent diversion.

All at once her difficulty in pushing forward ceased and the brutes around her made way.

"Give her a good place," she heard one cry, and many hands impelled her to the foot of the guillotine. Bloated faces, wicked jests, fists grasping pipes and bottles, a tumult of the coarse and passionate, swayed, about her, organised under one being, the Admiral, jeering in his low power. Never had his head, his face, shown more completely their resemblance to a skull.

As he stretched up his arm with a gesture of ferocious, gleeful malice, the wretches around the scaffold, as one man, broke into intoxicated laughter, joined hands and swayed in and out in the popular dance—

"Hurrah for the sound
Of the cannon."

Meanwhile two of his henchmen held Cyrène before him.

"Look!" he cried to her. "See!" and pointed up to the guillotine. Her eyes involuntarily followed.

She saw the flash of the descending blade. Wild and speechless, she hung petrified on the arms of the two men holding her. But now she was oblivious of everything except that another head, another form, far above all else to her, was on the platform. His face was pallid, his bearing sweet, solemn, and brave.

"Death to the aristocrat!" shouted the excited mob. His lips moved with a brief appearance of words. Had she been closer she would have beard him say quietly: "It is just."

The executioner Sanson turned from the last victim and seized him. At the very instant he felt the grasp he caught sight of the face of his beloved, held there in the grasp of the two Jacobins. This was the crowning agony. The immensity of his retribution swept over him in an overwhelming flood.

"Oh God, does Justice require this too?" he cried.

Sanson's sinewy assistants thrust him against an upright plank. In the last remnants of her congested, distorted vision, Cyrène saw the bright knife fall like a lightning vengeance.

At night in the Cemetery of the Madeleine near by la Tour, searching anxiously with a lantern, found her lying across the common trench into which the bodies and heads of the executed were indiscriminately thrown and hastily covered. There, her arms stretched across as if to embrace as much of it as she could, her wonderful golden majesty of hair strewn upon them, her white complexion still dazzling in its purity, her blue eyes half closed, lay the *fiancée* of the false Répentigny. Her soul had flown to be blent with that of him who had suffered his punishment, in the bosom of God, the place of social justice, where all ambition and all forgiveness melt satisfied and surpassed in Love Divine.

* * * * *

A wave of the Revolution swept out to India. In Mahé, under the eyes of the new Golden Dog, Philibert killed the Marquis de Répentigny.

THE END.

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